

A Brief History of SCANDIA MINNESOTA



Inside the Scandia Mercantile (Mark and Dawn McGinley Collection)

The first inhabitants of the area now known as Scandia were Native Americans. For centuries, they lived and traveled along the St. Croix River, establishing villages and developing trade with other groups both near and far. Seasonally, they migrated between spring maple sugar camps, summer villages, fall wild rice gathering and hunting grounds, and winter camps. The arrival of the European fur trade in the 1600s greatly altered the Native American lifestyle, trade patterns, alliances, and territorial control. By the early 1800s, the valley was home to both the Dakota and the Ojibwe, and the area around Scandia was disputed territory.

In the 1825 Prairie du Chien Treaty, the Ojibwe and Dakota agreed to the creation of a boundary line between them, starting "at a place called The Standing Cedar," now known as Cedar Bend on the St. Croix River in northern Scandia. Though its practical effectiveness as a boundary between the nations was limited, the boundary made it easier for the US government to negotiate for cessation treaties. In 1837, the Dakota and Ojibwe ceded this area to the United States. Over the next two decades, settlers moved in, and farming and lumbering quickly altered the environment.

In 1850, three young men from Västergötland, Sweden, arrived and established Minnesota's first Swedish settlement in what is now Scandia, starting a wave of Swedish immigration. In 1856, Swedish settlers built a log church near Hay Lake, which they quickly outgrew, and established Elim Lutheran Church near its current location. A small village center soon grew up around the church, starting when young entrepreneur Frank Lake built the Farmers Store in 1879. Soon the village boasted a bank, post office, butcher shop, barbershop, blacksmith, feed mill and store, and dairy cooperative. Despite the lack of a railroad line, the community continued to thrive – its shared Swedish heritage keeping it strong. With the town's increased independence, it split from Marine Mills (now Marine on St. Croix) to form New Scandia Township in 1893.

Primarily an agricultural community, Scandia was beginning to change by the 1960s. Suburban expansion, highway development, and farm mechanization led to fewer farms and more housing. The residents of Scandia have striven to preserve their community's character, and visitors today will find many reminders of mid-19th century Swedish immigration as well as small-town charm.

Today, Scandia remains proud of its heritage. Scandia Heritage Alliance was formed in 2016 to promote Scandia's History and to draw visitors. We hope you enjoy your tour of historic Scandia!

HISTORIC PLACES IN SCANDIA VILLAGE CENTER

1. Marine Country Church (Gammelkyrkan) and First Scandia School Gammelngrden Museum, 20880 Olinda Trail North

Scandia's Elim congregation has its roots in this modest 20-by-30-foot log structure – the oldest Lutheran church building in Minnesota. In 1856, Swedish immigrants erected what they initially called the Marine Country Church on land donated by Johannes Abrahamson near Hay Lake and Sand Lake.



Gammelkyrkan. (Gammelgrden Museum)

The congregation soon outgrew its original building, and in 1860, donated it to the school district. In 1866, the building was disassembled and relocated to a site on the south side of Hay Lake, where it continued to serve as a schoolhouse until 1896.

The structure was moved twice more: first to a nearby farm where it was used to store hay, and finally, in 1981, to its current home at Gammelngrden Museum, where it was carefully restored. During summer months, Elim Lutheran Church hosts Sunday services in the building, now known as Gammelkyrkan ("Old Church").

2. Präst Hus (Elim Pastor's House) Gammelngrden Museum, 20880 Olinda Trail North

The Elim congregation built this first Präst Hus in 1868 on 40 acres of land beside the church and cemetery. Pastor L.O. Lindh, the first resident of the parsonage, earned an annual salary of \$400 plus use of the farm and barn.



The Nelson family at Präst Hus. (Gammelngrden Museum)

The second pastor, Eric Hedeén, arrived in 1879 and soon suffered two tragedies: first his young son died, and a year later, his wife Clara died. Hedeén blamed their illnesses on the home's location near the cemetery. He urged the congregation to build a new parsonage east of the church, which they did in 1883.

The Präst Hus was sold in 1885 to Peter Magnus Nelson and his wife Lovisa Marie Petersdotter Nelson. There they raised their five children – Josephine, Axel, Annie, Hannah, and Isaac. Annie lived in the home until 1970, when, at age 88, she sold the property back to the Elim congregation to start Gammelngrden Museum.

The oldest existing Lutheran parsonage in Minnesota, the Präst Hus was built using traditional Swedish style hewn logs with dovetail corners.

3. Elim Lutheran Church and Cemetery 20971 Olinda Trail North

The story of Elim Church is one of resilience. Over the years, the congregation has built six different church structures.

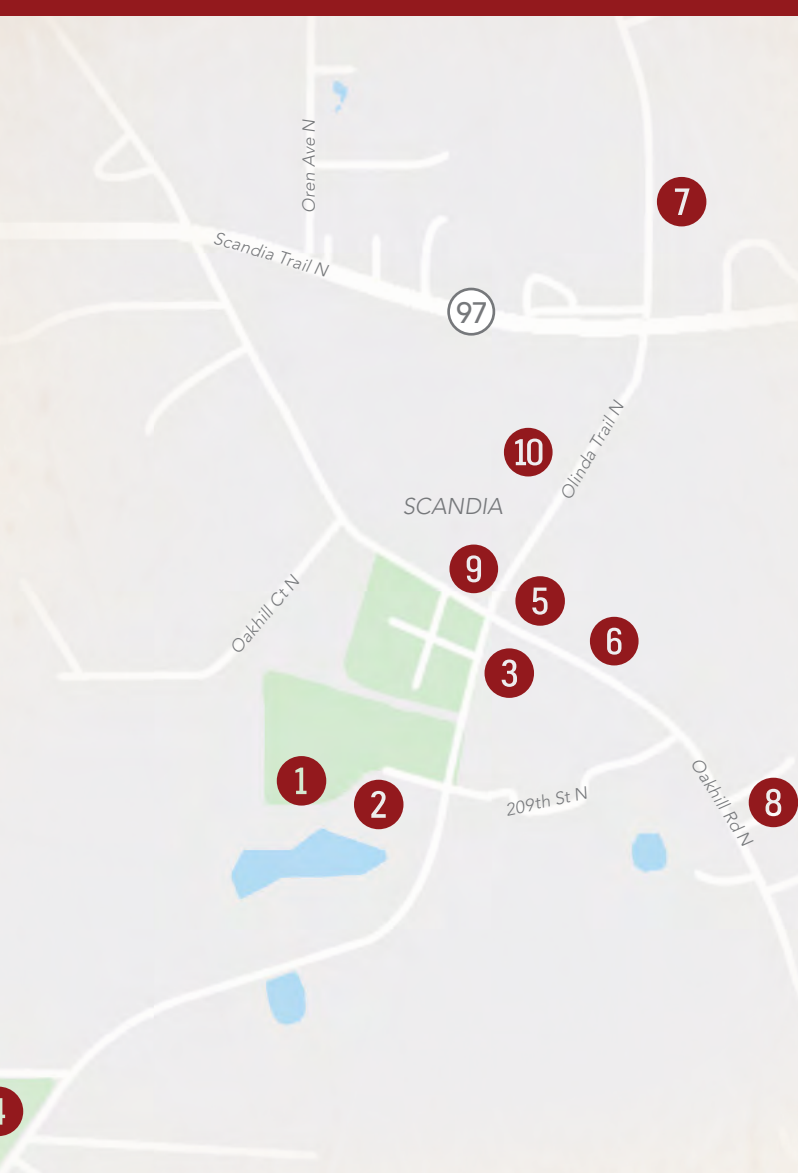
The Elim Congregation dates to 1854, when Swedish immigrants first gathered to worship in Daniel and Margareta Nilson's home near Hay Lake. In 1856, the congregation erected its first building (see Gammelkyrkan), a modest log church near Sand Lake and Hay Lake. In 1861, a larger, 50-by-36-foot log church was built where the Elim Cemetery now sits. The third church went up in 1874 at the present church location, but it was destroyed by a tornado in 1884. A fourth church, brick veneered and with an organ, was struck by lightning and burned to the ground in 1907.



The fifth Elim Church and Cemetery. (Elim Archives)

The fifth church, a brick and masonry structure with turrets and arched fenestrations, was destroyed by fire in 1930. Brave congregants formed a bucket brigade and managed to pull out the pews, altar, pulpit, and the statue of Christ – which stood safely in the doorway of the Scandia Mercantile while the church went up in flames. Despite the Great Depression, the congregation was able to quickly rebuild with insurance money. Completed later in 1930, the current, sixth church includes many of the salvaged items. Church services at Elim were held in Swedish up to about WWII.

Just across from the church is the Elim North Cemetery, established in 1860. Many of the early settlers were buried here.



4. Historic Swedish Methodist Church and Cemetery Olinda Trail North and 205th Street North

This cemetery is the last physical evidence of a Swedish Methodist congregation. This congregation initially built its church on the east end of Long Lake in 1884, then a second church between Hay Lake and Sand Lake. In the early 1890s, it built a new church at this location and established this cemetery. The church was active until 1915. In 1917, the property was sold to Elim Lutheran Church, and the church building was demolished in 1920. Today, the cemetery is managed and used by Elim Church.

5. Farmers Store/Scandia Mercantile 14758 Oakhill Road North

The Scandia Mercantile has been an essential fixture in the community for generations. In 1879, 18-year-old Frank Lake established a small store. Lake, who emigrated from Sweden



Frank Lake's Farmers Store. (Mark and Dawn McGinley Collection)

with his parents, had worked as a traveling peddler in the nearby Bonny (Bone) Lake area, as well as a clerk in a Center City grocery store. In 1883, he built a two-story general store. Originally called the Farmers Store, it was renamed the Scandia Mercantile Company in 1910. Over time, Lake built several additions, and the complex eventually included sheds, a storage area, and a unique water tower barn, which was powered by a windmill and provided water to local homes and other businesses.

For many years, the store was the center of local life. For a while, a post office was located inside the store. Scandia residents could buy virtually anything they needed here, ranging from hardware to clothing and groceries. Farm machinery and home appliances were available by special order. In the early days, one could even purchase a coffin.

In 1930, the store became a corporation called Scandia Store with shares selling for \$100 to community members. In 1963, the Engquist family purchased the stock and fixtures. The Scandia Mercantile has had numerous renovations, different names, and various owners since then.



Water Tower Barn. (Barn illustration by Jerome Fearing and wagon by Clayton McGinley)

6. Farmers State Bank of Scandia 14760 Oakhill Road North

This building was constructed in 1919 for the Farmers State Bank of Scandia. When it opened the next year under officers Peter Ekdahl and H.W. Swanson, it was the second bank to serve the community. Under pressure from the state bank commissioner, the Farmers State Bank was merged with the State Bank of New Scandia in 1929 to form Scandia State Bank, and this location was closed (see #9). The bank then sold this building to Carl A. Larson, who used it to house a meat locker for several years.



Farmers State Bank. (Susan Dickens)

At some point, the Farmers State Bank vault was moved to the Scandia State Bank building (where it remains today) – and the Scandia State Bank vault was given to Elim Lutheran Church to store its records.

STATEMENT FARMERS STATE BANK SCANDIA, MINN. AS CALLED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF BANKS, ON DEC. 31, 1923	
RESOURCES:	LIABILITIES:
Loans and Discounts..... \$ 68,676.88	Capital..... \$ 15,000.00
Overdrafts..... 25.36	Reserves..... 3,000.00
Bonds and other Securities..... 45,500.00	Undivided Profits..... 526.51
Banking House and Fixtures..... 6,700.00	Reserve for Depreciation of Bonds..... 1,000.00
Other Real Estate..... 4,750.00	Deposits..... 117,201.29
Cash Reserve..... 11,201.20	
	\$136,798.51
P. N. Nelson, President	Frank Sandefelt, Vice-President
E. L. Swanson, Cashier	Mabel Swanson, Assistant Cashier

Farmers State Bank Annual Report. (Mark and Dawn McGinley Collection)

7. Scandia Cooperative Creamery 21279 Olinda Trail North

In the 1890s, Scandia's leading entrepreneur – Frank Lake – caught wind of farmer cooperatives. He and A.E. Morrison traveled to Albert Lea to learn how other communities were



The Scandia Creamery was established in 1893, and a creamery building was built in 1894. This second building was erected in 1913 and still stands. (Mark and Dawn McGinley Collection)

pooling farmer resources to purchase state-of-the-art equipment and share profits. Morrison later wrote, "Mr. Frank Lake ... is what you can call one of the wide-awake fellows. Whenever a project came up for the betterment of the community, Frank Lake was right there, pushing and pulling till the thing went through."

Lake and Morrison organized 60 local farmers to establish the Scandia Cooperative Creamery in 1893 and opened the first creamery building in 1894 on land donated by P.G. Hawkinson and John Bengtson.

The cooperative was a success. Farmer-members took turns collecting milk from local farms and transporting it to the creamery. In 1901, they established a skimming station at Big Lake. In 1913, the cooperative replaced its clapboard-sided building with a new brick creamery at the same location, a building that still stands today.

By 1944, the creamery was producing over 2,000 pounds of butter per day and over 20 barrels of milk powder. However, by the 1950s, agricultural changes, food safety regulations, and economic pressures were forcing dairy farmers to consolidate, expand, or close. The Scandia Creamery ceased operations in the 1960s. Subsequently, the building housed a wire manufacturing company, a plastics company, and an event center.



Original creamery building. (Minnesota Historical Society)

8. Shalander Store 14808 Oakhill Road North

This property was originally the site of the John R. Larson store, which operated from 1890 to around 1911. At that time, the store was purchased by C.A. Benson, who added a line of fresh and salted meats to the offerings.

In 1930, Hjalmer and Myrtle Shalander purchased the store. Unfortunately, the original building burned down later that year. Undeterred, the Shalanders purchased an existing hardware store (built in 1904) in nearby Copas, moved it here, and transformed it into a dry goods store.

When Prohibition ended in 1933, the Shalanders divided the business into two, with groceries on one side and a beer tavern on the other. Infamous gangster John Dillinger – known to have spent time in a cabin on Big Marine Lake – and two companions are said to have come into the bar for beers once and left quietly.

In 1946, the Shalanders sold the business. Since 1957, the building has served as the landmark Meister's Bar and Grill.

9. Scandia State Bank 21060 Olinda Trail North

Banking in Scandia dates to 1907, when the State Bank of New Scandia was established. The bank's first officers were James Melin, Frank Lake, and Hjalmer Johnson. A newspaper announcement highlighted that the new building was equipped with a burglar-proof vault, which two would-be robbers tested in December 1908. The vault withstood their effort to blast it open with nitroglycerin, and the local newspaper reported, "All the dastardly villains got was \$1.33, which God be praised, won't feed them long." The burglars were arrested the next morning after sleeping in a local hay loft.

In 1919, the competing Farmers State Bank of Scandia opened. Under pressure from the state bank commissioner, the two banks merged in 1929, and the new entity was named the Scandia State Bank. The following year, the bank built a new building here. Unfortunately, the bank was unable to survive the Great Depression. It closed in 1933, and its assets were liquidated in 1936.

10. Frank and Ida Lake Home 21120 Olinda Trail North

Frank Lake was just seven years old when his family migrated from Sweden in 1868. In 1879, he started the Farmers Store, and in 1886 he married Ida Peterson. In 1893, they built this handsome brick home, where they raised their four children. Frank was a leading businessman and served a period as Board Chair of New Scandia Township. He is the person most often credited for starting Scandia's commercial center.

The Lake home included all the latest features. It was wired for electricity, and it had an inside bathroom plumbed with running water and a bathtub. The brick for the house was made locally by Wood John Johnson and fired in his kiln north of Scandia – the same source of brick used for many other homes and businesses in the area.

When the house later sold to Henry Johnson (who ran Scandia State Bank) and his wife Minnie, the bank's burglar alarm was wired to a bell on the ceiling of the home's library.

Note: Private home not open to the public.



Frank and Ida Lake. (Elim Archives)



Frank Lake House. (Mike and Heather Benson)

See the photo of Lake family members in front of the Farmers Store on the front cover of this map.



This map was developed by Scandia Heritage Alliance to preserve and celebrate Scandia's rich history, culture, arts and rural character. Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve and celebrate Scandia's rich history, culture, arts and rural character. Alliance is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve and celebrate Scandia's rich history, culture, arts and rural character.

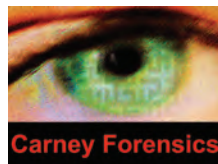
SCANDIA'S HISTORIC SITES



SCANDIA Heritage Trail

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Thank you to the following businesses who sponsored printing of this map.



SCANDIA PLAZA BUSINESSES



For additional information on the history of Scandia and these sites, please visit our website at: ScandiaHeritage.org/Heritage-Trail



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HISTORIC PLACES IN GREATER SCANDIA

11. Knapp's Cave

Cedar Bend on the St. Croix River

Knapp's Cave is the largest natural cave in the St. Croix River Valley. Archaeological evidence suggests that it was used as a temporary camp by Native Americans as early as the Archaic period (7000 – 500 BC). Abundant clam shells, fish bones, and turtle shells reflect how the Native Americans relied on the St. Croix River for sustenance. Nearby Cedar Bend was once marked by a large cedar tree and was considered a boundary marker between the Ojibwe and Dakota.

The cave has been known as Leslie Cave and Judge Stone Place, but is best known as Knapp's Cave, after boatbuilder and steamboat captain Oscar Knapp, who lived in nearby Osceola, Wis. Knapp was one of the many captains to transport passengers and goods up and down the river in the 1850s and 1860s.

During the height of Swedish immigration, newcomers sometimes used the cave for temporary housing until they could build a suitable home. It was rumored that a thief once stashed 16 head of cattle here in the 1870s.

Note: The cave is not viewable from the river during the summer or accessible by road. The location is marked by a gravel bar just downstream from Cedar Bend. The path from the river to the cave is steep and unimproved.

12. Cedar Bend Swing Bridge

Cedar Bend on the St. Croix River

In 1887, as part of an effort to bypass Chicago tariffs, the Minneapolis, Sault Ste. Marie and Atlantic Railway built a line from Minneapolis to the East Coast through Canada. The railroad crosses the St. Croix River a mile south of Cedar Bend, where a swing bridge was constructed to allow for steamboats to pass below. The year after the bridge was built, it became part of the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault Ste. Marie Railway, known as the Soo Line. The bridge is now owned by the Canadian National Railway.

Note: Bridge is viewable only from the river, not from the road.

13. Log House Landing and Historic Otisville

20457 Quinnell Avenue North

What is now known as Log House Landing was first used by Native Americans who travelled along the St. Croix River. During the 1850s and 1860s, it was a scheduled steamboat stop for immigrants. In 1853, once the government opened this land for sale, parcels along the river's edge were quickly claimed. The nearby log cabin is believed to have been built in 1862.



Log House Landing. (Mark and Dawn McGinley Collection)

In 1886, the railroad came through and established a sidetrack and platform on the higher ground. A grain elevator and a potato warehouse were built. That year, Charles Ekdahl built a general store to serve the rail and steamboat traffic. A post office was added, and the area became known as Otisville. In 1902, Charles and his wife Stina platted out the village of Otisville. Just two years later, the railroad abandoned its sidetrack, and the dream of a proper village died. Otisville eventually became a cabin community with many St. Paul families establishing summer cottages. The post office operated until 1914.

After steamboat traffic died, the landing continued to be used for private boats. In 1935, the Ingersoll family donated the land around the landing to Scandia for use as a public park. During the 1930s, the WPA built a stone fireplace, which remains today. A boat launch was constructed in the early 1940s. In 2021, a sign was added honoring local resident and Vice President Walter Mondale for his role in protecting the St. Croix River. Today, the landing is a rustic locale with a rich history.

Note: Private home, not open to the public.

14. Point Douglas to Superior Military Road

St. Croix Trail North and Quinnell Avenue North

Early Native Americans developed trail systems between major points, and one such trail ran along the west side of the St. Croix River. When the first settlers arrived, they used the existing trail and developed it. Once Minnesota Territory was established in 1849, the federal government took charge of improving existing paths or building new ones.

The Military Road was first surveyed in 1851, and construction took five years, from 1853-1858. Although intended (and financially justified) as a highway for troop movement, the Military Road attracted a flood of civilian and business traffic.

(cont. above)



The Point Douglas to Superior Military Road. (Mark and Dawn McGinley Collection)

Many travelers came on stagecoaches, which ran regularly until the 1880s. The road meandered to avoid large trees and swampy areas and crossed over streams on narrow bridges. In the summer, it was dusty and bumpy. Until 1934, when it received its first coat of blacktop, the road was entirely dirt or gravel.

Highway 95 now follows most of this route, but part of the original road followed Quinnell Avenue in Scandia.

15. John Copas House and Historic Vasa/Otis

19489 St. Croix Trail North

This area was particularly attractive to early settlers. In addition to the woods, fields, river access, and an established Native American trail, a local stream flowed strong enough to power a mill. Once the government opened the area for legal settlement in 1853, settlers began to pour in. In 1854, Italian immigrants John Copas and John Columbus built a small general store nearby to serve these travelers.

In 1856, John Columbus and Benjamin T. and Mary Jane Otis platted Vasa Village just north of here. Soon, Vasa was booming. By 1857, Vasa had a steamboat landing, a sawmill, a store, a post office, and a saloon. In 1857, John Copas and John Columbus built this house. Later that year, John Copas married Caroline Peterson.

Unfortunately, luck turned. After the Panic of 1857 – a financial crisis that quickly spread across the country – the Vasa mill went bankrupt. Other businesses and residents pulled up. John Columbus died in 1859 and was buried in a mound on the property alongside his favorite dog. That same year, Vasa was renamed Otis when it was discovered that another Minnesota town had the same name. In 1860, Otis was annexed into Marine Mills (before Scandia was established.)

In 1861, John Copas closed his store and went back to farming full time. In 1864, he served in the Civil War, then returned to Caroline and their children. Together they raised five children and ran a large farm. The house (which was expanded in the 1880s) was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

Note: Private home, not open to the public.



John Copas House. (National Register of Historic Places)

16. Copas Depot and Ghost Town

Near the historic Soo Line Railroad and 199th Street – and inside William O'Brien State Park

In 1904, the Soo Line built a sidetrack and depot just west of the old Vasa/Otis town. The station was named Copas after local settler John Copas. The station attracted further



The town of Copas (Christine Maefsky)

development, and in 1904, Frank Lake and John A. "Olly" Hawkinson built a lumberyard, a feed and planing mill, and a grain elevator. Eventually, a wide variety of businesses were established, including a warehouse, a harness shop, a telegraph office, a post office, a shoe repair shop, and a hardware store. Stockyards and holding corrals accommodated the trade of livestock and horses.

Copas was busy into the 1920s but did not fare well through the Great Depression. Once passenger rail service was cancelled in the early 1960s, the businesses died. In 1963, the Copas Depot was sold and moved to Nye, Wis., where it became a private home. Remnants of the town's foundations are still visible, and an interpretive sign is located at the west end of the Wetland Trail inside William O'Brien State Park.



Copas Depot. (Mark and Dawn McGinley Collection)

17. Otis/Copas School House

19707 St. Croix Trail North

Founded in 1874, the Otis School began with 25 pupils under teacher Andrew Holm. For classes, the building had one large room with a single iron stove. A cloakroom in the front contained a rope attached to the bell in the tower above. Outside, one could find a woodshed, a water pump, two outhouses, and some swings and seesaws for recess. Children walked or biked to school and brought their lunches from home. In addition to textbooks provided by the school district, the Washington County Library in Stillwater often provided books on loan. When the area became known as Copas in 1904, the school became the Copas School. In the school's final year, 1944-1945, only eight pupils attended.



The Copas School. (Mark and Dawn McGinley Collection)

18. Swedish Settlers Monument

Northeast Intersection of Olinda Trail North and Old Marine Trail North

This monument marks the site of the first Swedish settlement in the State of Minnesota. On Oct. 18, 1850, Oscar Roos, Carl Fernstrom, and August Sandahl arrived near this location. Together the three friends built a log cabin, staked out 40 acres of land, and spent the winter hunting, fishing, and trapping.



Unveiling of the first monument in 1900. (Washington County Historical Society)

The first monument was a temporary structure of wood covered with cheesecloth and wallpaper erected in 1900 for the 50th anniversary of the arrival of the three men. The permanent granite monument visible today was unveiled at a dedication ceremony in 1902. Minnesota Governor Samuel Rinnah Van Sant was one of the speakers, saying, "This monument which has been raised to the memory of the Swedish pioneers may crumble and pass away, but the deeds of the Swedish people will live in the pages of Minnesota's history."

19. Johannes and Lisa Erickson Log House

14020 195th Street North

Johannes Erickson and Lisa Svendsdotter immigrated to the United States in 1866. In 1868, Johannes and his 13-year-old son Alfred, with help from some neighbors, constructed this log house.



The Erickson Log House. (Washington County Historical Society)

In 1873, the Ericksons' daughter Hulda died from a foot infection. Johannes, who never took to life in Minnesota, returned to Sweden in 1889. Lisa continued living in the log house for another seven years until her death in 1896.

Alfred built a new home on the family's property in 1904, and the original log house was used as a granary, a garage, and a playhouse. In 1974, then-owner Vernon Jellum transferred the log house to the Washington County Historical Society. In 1975, the log house was moved 1.5 miles to its present location. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

20. Hay Lake School

14020 195th Street North

The Hay Lake School served generations of local students from 1896 until 1963. This brick building was constructed in 1896 to replace an earlier log schoolhouse on the same site (see map entry 1). Like many rural schoolhouses, the Hay Lake School was a community focal point and the setting for countless social events.

In 1963, the school closed and the building was boarded up. In 1970, local citizens, including many alumni, cleaned the building and started giving tours. The schoolhouse was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970, and the Washington County Historical Society purchased the building from the Forest Lake School District in 1978. Today, the building is open for scheduled tours and events.



The Hay Lake School. (Washington County Historical Society)

21. Camp Lakamaga – Girl Scouts

12303 Lakamaga Trail North

In 1926, local Boy Scouts started camping on part of the old Rask Farm on the south shore of Big Marine Lake. In 1930, the Girl Scouts purchased the land and developed Camp Lakamaga. Early buildings included a Dining Hall and the Edgewood Infirmary. For the first decade, the campers slept in tents, but platform tent sites were erected in the 1940s, greatly improving the experience.



In the 1930s, the Girl Scouts developed a campsite on the shores of Big Marine Lake. (Mark and Dawn McGinley Collection)

22. Schwartz/Kuno/Big Marine Lake Store

19261 Manning Trail North

In 1902, German-born Oscar Schwartz opened a general store at this location. Schwartz purportedly didn't get along well with his Swedish-American neighbors, and he soon went bankrupt. The store stood vacant for a few years. George and Ella Kuno purchased both operations and the lot for \$1,700 in 1909.

The Kunos lived in the apartment upstairs. George ran a butcher shop and sold steer and pig hides. In the 1920s, they converted a shack at the back of the store to an icehouse to store and sell ice harvested from Big Marine Lake. Apparently, George was so customer service-oriented, he once sold the Kunos' stove from their apartment because a customer needed one immediately.

Ella died in 1931, and George continued to run the store through age 67. In 1946, he sold the store to his cousin's son, Ray Kuno, who operated it with his wife Myrna until 1972. Since then, the business has had a series of owners. The store was featured in a scene from the 1994 movie *Grumpier Old Men*. A popular and thriving business, it is known today as the Big Marine Lake Store.



The Kuno family lived in the second floor of the store. ("Pioneers of the Big Lake Community" book, Washington County Historical Society)

Prehistoric Sites and Burial Mounds

Throughout the Valley

Recent archaeological digs in the area have uncovered evidence of Native American villages and habitation sites from the Archaic, Woodland, and Late Pre-Contact periods. Petroglyphs still remain along the bluffs of the St. Croix River.

Prior to settlement, as many as 27 Native American burial mounds existed in the area. Unfortunately, most of them were destroyed through farming and other developments. At least two burial mounds were used for the remains of early settlers. A burial mound in William O'Brien State Park once measured 40 feet wide by 80 feet long by three feet high. It is much smaller today due to repeated plowing and cultivation over the years.

