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**An Invitation to take a
Driving Tour of Carver County**



Carver County
1855-2005

Carver County is home to a variety of historic homes, churches, and other places of historic significance. To commemorate the County's Sesquicentennial, take this Driving Tour to see and learn about some of these places in a short amount of time.

Most of the properties on this driving tour are privately owned and the residents have consented to be included in this tour. In order to respect their privacy, please do not disturb the residents. Thank you for your cooperation.

A Very Brief History of Carver County

by Leanne Brown,

Exec. Director of the Carver Co. Historical Society

Carver County has been home to many different cultures throughout time. One of the best documented early native peoples is the Woodland Culture who lived in this region from 1200 B.C. until 1700 A.D. Their nomadic hunting and gathering patterns depended upon the seasons and resources of the land. More recently, the Dakota Indians used the area for hunting and temporary lodging. With the signing of the treaty of Traverse de Sioux, however, this area was opened for settlement by white pioneers.

In March of 1855, Carver County was organized by the Minnesota Territorial Legislature. The county was named in honor of the explorer, Jonathan Carver. The original county seat was San Francisco Township but in 1856 voters moved it to Chaska.

Much of the east central part of Minnesota, including Carver County, was covered by the Big Woods; a dense forest of oak, elm, maple and cottonwood trees. The density of the Big Woods made it difficult for early settlers to clear the land for farming.

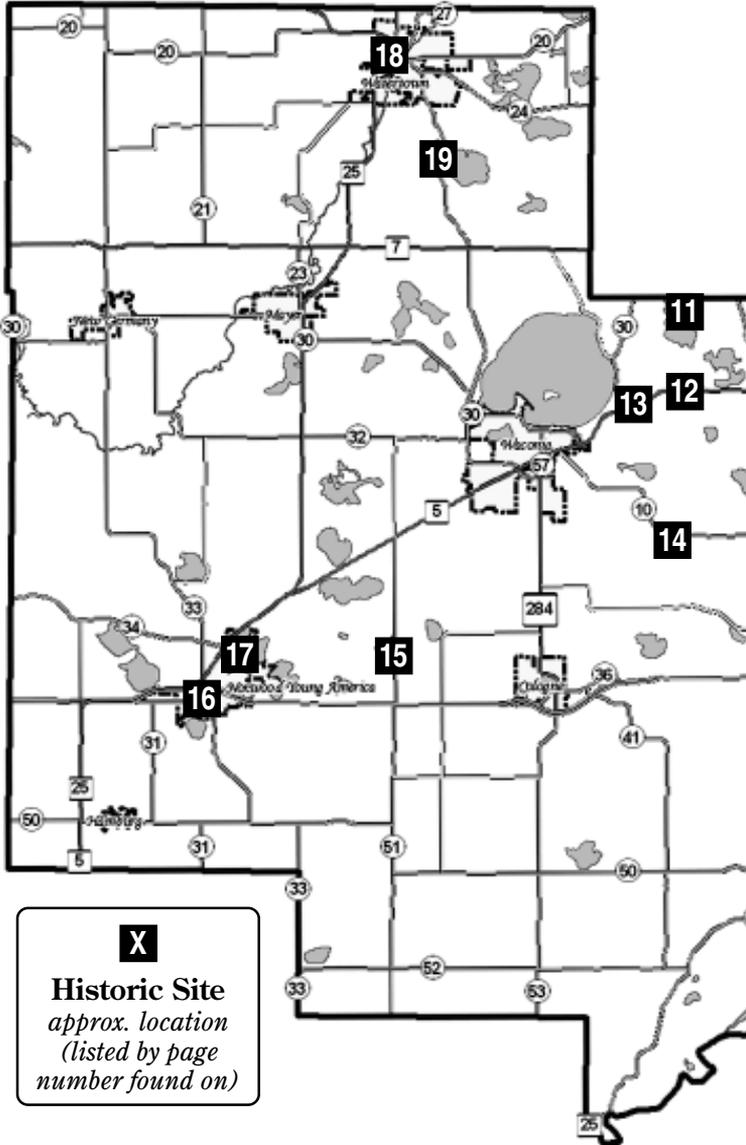
Many of Carver County's initial settlers were from eastern states but by the 1860s most new settlers were immigrants from Germany or Sweden. The Germans founded towns like Hamburg, New Germany and Cologne while the Swedes settled in East Union and Watertown. Most immigrants became farmers but some living in Chaska became laborers in the brick industry.

Located along the Minnesota River, Chaska had good deposits of clay for brick-making. The cream-colored brick became a favorite for building houses in Chaska and the surrounding rural area. The bricks were also used in the foundation of the Minnesota Capitol building when it was constructed 100 years ago. Slowly the brickyards closed until the last one shut down in the 1950s.

Farming was the chief occupation of Carver County for 100 years. While many grew crops, others were dairy farmers. Creameries were numerous and the county claimed for itself the title of "The Golden Buckle of the Dairy Belt." Bongards Creameries and until its recent closing, Oak Grove Dairy in Norwood-Young America have been important links to our dairy heritage.

Today, farming is no longer the predominant occupation in the county. Carver County has seen an explosion of residential development in Chanhassen, Chaska, Waconia, Carver and Victoria. Many now commute to jobs in Minneapolis or its suburbs. Carver County's current estimated population is 85,000 people.

Carver County – Western Area



Carver County maps are available through
Carver County Public Works.



St. Ansgar's Academy

Across the street from East Union Lutheran Church,
15180 County Road 40, Carver



During the 1860's, an increasing number of Scandinavians were entering Minnesota and the need for Lutheran pastors to serve them was great. Because of this need, the residents of Carver County thought it would be beneficial to have somewhere to school these future pastors. After some politicking and fund raising, a school that was located in Red Wing was moved to East Union, near Carver, in order to prepare more students for the seminary. It was named St. Ansgar's Academy in 1865 in honor of St. Ansgar, the first Christian missionary to Sweden. About half of the students attending were from Carver County. Some students were as young as 10 but many were grown men. In fact, the oldest student entered the academy at age fifty-six!

With hopes of strengthening the school financially and increasing attendance, the Lutheran Synod moved the school program from East Union to St. Peter in 1876. The school was re-organized as Gustavus Adolphus College. The original school building remains at this East Union site.

The Gables

201 Fourth Street
East, Carver



Situated on two lots once owned by Governor Alexander Ramsey, the eastern half of the house was first a separate house and is one of the oldest structures in Carver. A few of Carver County's most important early citizens lived in this home. The first person to live in this home was Levi Griffin. Griffin was one of the original owners of the Carver Land Company that invested and platted the town (Carver) for development. In addition to being the first sheriff of Carver County, he was the Carver County Assessor, a merchant, a hotel owner, a ferryboat operator, a stage line operator, a landlord, a general store owner, and a large landowner. Levi Griffin's wife, born Eliza Torrey, was the first European woman in Carver, and their daughter, Eliza Griffin, born in 1855, was the first European born in Carver and may even have even been born in that house!

For the majority of the late 1800's and early 1900's, Carver pioneers by the name of Hebeisen lived in and owned the home. John Hebeisen and his wife Sophia (Samberg) Hebeisen purchased the entire property around 1881-1882. They are the owners who fused the two neighboring structures into one large, single family dwelling in the Eastlake/Queen Anne Victorian Revival style. When the Sioux Uprising of 1862 occurred, eighteen year old John Hebeisen volunteered in the Minnesota Ninth Infantry to help quell the uprising. He stayed in the military service for Minnesota and fought in many battles of the Civil War before returning to Carver. In 1868 he established hardware and farm implement stores. The Hebeisen family occupied the property until 1965 and since then it has undergone more than four decades of restoration by succeeding owners. In recent decades it has served as a venue for art, craft, and antique shows, an antique store and museum, and is now again a private residence.

Brinkhaus Livery Stable

205 East 4th Street,
Chaska



One of Chaska's
earliest pioneers,

Herman Brinkhaus, arrived in Chaska in 1856. In 1872, Herman Brinkhaus purchased this property for \$300 from John and Anna Eitel, to be used as a horse stable for the customers of the Minneapolis Hotel and Saloon. The original frame livery burned down and this Chaska brick building was constructed in 1890. The property remained in the Brinkhaus family for four generations, before it was sold in 1952 to Frank Salden, owner of Salden School bus Service. More recently, the building was an auto parts store.

The Livery is architecturally significant and an important part of the historic fabric of Chaska. It has a simple gable roof which is accentuated by stepped corbelling at the front of the building. Both gable ends extend beyond the roof to form parapets. At one time a cupola was on the roof. The eight windows facing west delineate earlier stall sections for horses. Windows and doors have segmented arched window hoods and brick sills like so many other Chaska brick buildings. Historically, the large central front door was an entrance for carriages and horse and wagons. It was flanked by windows on each side. Overhead is the door to the hayloft.

The story goes that Jesse James and his gang played poker with sheriff F.E. DuToit and friends in the lobby of the Minneapolis Hotel in the 1870's. It is said they housed their steeds in the Livery Stable the night before the famous raid on the Northfield bank. The Livery Stable is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and also has local historic designation by the City of Chaska. The newly restored Livery Stable became the Chaska History Center in 2003. If you are interested, you can ask to take a tour. Call 952-448-6077 for open hours.



C.H. Klein Mansion

314 North Walnut Street, Chaska



Charles H. Klein bought a frame house on this site in 1903. After becoming well established in the brick and banking businesses and as a legislator from 1903-1912, he replaced that house in 1910 with this mansion. After his death, the Klein family deeded the mansion to the City of Chaska with the provision that it be used for public purposes. In 1967 it became the public library until that moved to the new City Hall in 1988. In recent years, it has become part of the Carver-Scott Co-op Learning Center and is currently a charming bed and breakfast called the Peacock Inn. Tours are available by appointment during business hours at a cost of \$5.00.

**Other interesting historical sites nearby:*

A few eroded Indian mounds remain in City Square Park directly across the street from the C.H. Klein Mansion. These mounds, technically called “earthworks”, were made by American Indians. The park’s three Indian mounds are only slight swells of the earth and are best viewed at a walking pace. The City of Chaska has worked with the Mdewakanton Sioux Community to properly respect the mounds, which were created at least 1,000 years ago.

August Vogel Homestead

(Straw Hill Farm)

10151 Great Plains Blvd.,
Chanhasen



The August Vogel Homestead was built in the mid 1850's of native sandstone and handmade brick which was formed and fired on site. Its original Bank Barn was destroyed by a storm in 1998. The site still retains its original summer kitchen which was restored in 1997. Summer kitchens were built so that cooking should not heat the main house unnecessarily during the summer.

August Vogel and his two brothers immigrated from Eastern Germany and settled on these bluffs along the Minnesota River. This area was known as "Vogel Hill" by the locals. The current owners have restored the farmhouse back to its earlier days because it is truly a Carver County "gem". One other Vogel brother build the house that now serves as the Bluff Creek Inn on Bluff Creek Drive.

**Other interesting historical sites nearby:*

On Highway 212, west of Highway 101, is an ecological area unique to Carver County. The Seminary Fen is a 90 acre calcareous fen, Minnesota's most rare form of wetland. The property was once home to Mudcura, a sanitarium that used the mud to help treat numerous ailments. Later the property became a seminary. The property stood empty for many years and most of the buildings have been razed. Efforts have been made by the state and local government to purchase the property in order to protect the fen from development.



Old St. Hubert's Church

78th & Great Plains Boulevard,
Chanhassen



Back in the 1860's there were more and more German Catholic immigrants who were settling in the area and had few places to worship. Church services were held in people's homes and were led by missionary priests who began to visit families in what would later become Chanhassen. In 1865 Father Magnus



Maria Mayr, O.S.B., formally organized a parish. They named it after Saint Hubert, patron saint of hunters. Father Mayr believed that the immigrants needed to recreate a German culture in America. German Catholics should settle together, worship together, and go to school together. In Chanhassen, he would encourage the Catholics to begin a small community centered around a church.

The first step was to build the church. Henry Pauly Sr. gave five acres for a church and the parish purchased an additional forty acres of the woods to the north. The congregation built a crude log cabin measuring 18 x 24 feet. Some of Pauly's land was reserved for a cemetery.

The Reverend Father William Lette was appointed pastor of the parish in 1872. He announced to the parish that he refused to offer mass until they built a new church. Many poorer families objected and left. Most families of the church went to work with their pastor to erect a new church. A frame building went up on the site west of the present Chapel Hill Academy. In 1877 Father Aloysius Wewer replaced Father Lette. He was the first of a long line of Franciscans to serve Saint Hubert's. The new church became a magnet for new immigrants during the years following the Civil War. Most came as family groups including the Kleins, the Masons, and the Kerbers. Although the St. Hubert's congregation has outgrown that facility, a Protestant church now uses the building, which also serves as a reminder of Chanhassen's history.

The Historic Victoria Creamery

7929
Victoria Drive,
Victoria



The Historic Victoria Creamery has more lives than a cat! It was started in the spring of 1897 as a Creamery Cooperative and operated for 20 years, was demolished and resurrected as the current structure in 1917. In 1938, a second story was built on and milk dehydrators were installed in preparations for World War II. The Creamery served as one of the main suppliers of dehydrated milk from Minnesota to our troops during the war. The dehydrated milk was conveniently shipped on the railroad tracks that are now a crushed limestone state trail along Steiger Lake. After it no longer operated as a creamery, the building housed restaurants, shops, light industry and even the Victoria Gazette over the years. This grand historic building has withstood many owners and plans for demolition on more than one occasion.

This solid architectural landmark has been lovingly restored by current owner and award-winning artist in residence, Dean Anecki. The solid, tornado proof architecture of brick, concrete, steel beam and post construction has been lovingly renovated. The historic, European-style sculptured faces on the front of the building include Chief Chaska and Saint Victoria. They are of native Minnesota sandstone and red calamite. The interiors are renovated with historic slate, marble and hardwood and house sculptures, stained glass and paintings. As long as you are driving by, stop in and see a locally historic mural on the walls of the Victoria House Restaurant next door to the Creamery building, also painted by Dean Anecki.



Wendelin Grimm Farmstead

Grimm Road, off County Road 11 in Carver Park Reserve



Wendelin Grimm was born in 1818 and grew up in a rich farming area of southern Germany where opportunities for farming were limited by the land inheritance practices of the time, and the social and economic changes taking place there in the middle of the 19th century. By 1857, at age thirty nine, Wendelin Grimm, husband and father of three children, relocated to Minnesota. He came to Carver County with a small wooden chest containing a sack of alfalfa seeds among its other contents.

By 1900, over 50% of Minnesota's alfalfa crop was grown in Carver County. This is most likely due to his work developing a winter resistant strain of alfalfa which he shared and traded with area farmers and eventually with our neighbors to the north—Canada. Each spring, he replaced winter killed alfalfa with the seeds of survivors and did this year after year. By 1863 he had “fat cattle” to show as the results of his work. In 1867 he sold 480 pounds of his alfalfa seed and for years to come he'd continue to do so. Grimm alfalfa was widely used throughout North America from 1910 until 1940.

Andrew Peterson Farm

*(currently the
Rock Isle Farm)*
8050 Highway 5,
Waconia



In 1853, Andrew Peterson claimed 160 acres in what was to become the settlement of Scandia, near the southeastern shore of Lake Waconia. He remained here for the duration of his life and received recognition for his diversified farming methods and his horticulture research in the field of pomology (fruit cultivation).

Peterson's daily diaries and ledgers, dated from his departure from Sweden in 1850 until a few days before his death in 1898, provided inspiration and source material for Vilhelm Moberg's novels that were inspired by his daily research. You can learn more about Peterson by reading *Andrew Peterson and the Scandia Story*, written by Josephine Mihelich. This book is available through the Carver County library system.

Efforts are underway to help preserve the buildings on Peterson's farm. If you'd like to get involved, please contact the Carver County Historical Society at 952-442-4234.



The farm is open to the community to step into the past and enjoy a tour. Hay and sleigh rides are available. For more information, call 952-442-2688.



At The Farm

8880 East Highway 5, Waconia



“At the Farm” was originally the Hubert Lohmar farm and according to a 1880 county map, it was located in the exact center of Carver County. The barn is a 1890’s German bank barn with stone walls. The foundation is field stone. This keeps the barn cool throughout the summer and becomes a great place to store and sell fresh produce.

Present day owner, Donna Frantz, operates this farm as an organic vegetable farm complete with brown chickens producing brown organic eggs. In addition to fresh produce, jams, jellies, relish, and antiques are for sale. Flower gardens are open to tour. The nostalgia of a farm visit is a wonderful experience. The barn is handicapped accessible.

Check their website, www.atthefarmwaconia.com or call 952-442-4816 to learn about special events, open hours and what’s in season.

Zoar Moravian Church and Cemetery

8265
County Road 10,
Waconia



In 1858, a group of Moravians formed a congregation in Chaska. Numerous church members lived in Laketown Township and in 1863 they built the Zoar Moravian Church. The church was constructed in the Greek Revival architectural style and the steeple was moved in 1908 to form the belltower.

The Moravians, or the Brethren's Church, are Protestants whose church was formed in 1457. The Moravian Church grew quickly but was often persecuted in Europe. Many immigrated to America in search of religious freedom. The Moravians who formed the Chaska congregation were originally from Pennsylvania.

Zoar's congregation disbanded in the 1940s. Most of the members joined the Waconia Moravian Church, which took over the care of the Zoar Church and Cemetery. The Waconia Moravian Church still uses the Zoar Church for special services, including the Easter sunrise service, and continues to use the cemetery. The Zoar Moravian Church and Cemetery were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

This picturesque church and cemetery have been used as the set for commercials as well as the 1998 movie, "A Simple Plan".

District 28 One-Room Schoolhouse

12125
County Road 51,
Cologne



Many years ago, nearly 70 one-room schoolhouses dotted the Carver County countryside. The school year often ran from November through March so that the students could help with the family farm. Both boys and girls attended school and they ranged in age from 5 to 21 years old. Eighth grade was the highest level taught in most area one-room schoolhouses.

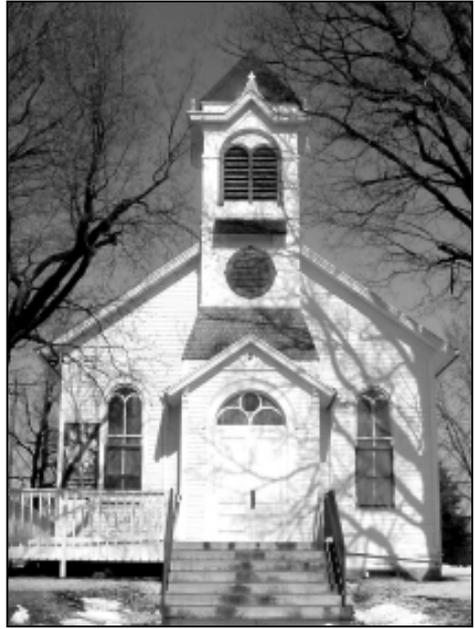
Students in a one-room schoolhouse focused much of their time on the “3 R’s” (reading, “riting,” and “rithmetic”). Other subjects included geography and natural earth science. Penmanship was worked on diligently in these days before the typewriter became the norm.

During the first half of the 20th century, most of the area’s one-room schoolhouses were closed. Students began to attend larger schools in nearby towns. In some cases, the old one-room school house was abandoned. In other cases, the building was used for other purposes. Currently, a number of one-room schoolhouses are being used as residences throughout the county.

The school house located at 12125 Co. Road 51, near Cologne was built in 1904 for a mere \$4500. It was used as a schoolhouse till the early 1960s. In 1970 the current owners bought it and have made various improvements to it since moving in. It has been used as a residence ever since and will continue to be used for that purpose for many years to come.

Norwood Methodist Church

224 Hill Street West,
Norwood Young America



The Methodist Church of Norwood is one of the oldest churches in the area. In 1858 there were a few Methodist families scattered throughout the country surrounding Norwood. Among these early pioneers was a Rev. Black, who established a home on a claim near Glencoe. He preached the Gospel among the Methodist families of the country, going as far south as Chaska.

On the circuit of Rev. Black was a small settlement in the Tiger Lake region which was later to be known as Norwood. Here he found faithful Methodists who gladly opened up their homes for religious services. These meetings were the very nucleus for the establishment of a Methodist Church in Norwood.

During all these years, Norwood was not established as a village or town. Services continued to be held in private homes until about 1873, at which time the schoolhouse was secured as a place of worship. This held services until 1876. A church was built in 1876 on the present site. Rev. J.L. Faber was pastor of the church at the time of its dedication in 1876.

In 1961 a basement was put under the church. Then in 1966 a large addition was added on to the north which provided much needed additional space. Throughout the years many families have presented memorials to the church in memory of their departed loved ones. This memorial custom has enabled the church to add enhancements that you see today.

Young America City Hall

102 2nd Ave. SE,
Norwood
Young America



In 1907, a special election was held in Young America for \$7,000 in bonds to build a new city hall. The proposition passed by a vote of 46 for to 26 against. Young America City Hall was completed in 1909. The first floor was used by the city council, firemen, and civic organizations. The second floor was used for entertainment like basketball, sheephead tournaments, bullhead fry, bingo, wedding and graduation receptions, and firemen receptions.

What was Young America like when the city hall building was constructed nearly 100 years ago? In the 1904 inaugural issue of the Young America Eagle, the newspaper went into detail describing the community. The village was home to 400 residents and the business community consisted of three general stores, two hardware/agricultural supply stores, one drug store, one furniture store, one millinery shop, one lumber yard, one cobbler, one blacksmith, one confectionary shop, one shooting gallery, four saloons, and one butcher shop. There were also mills, churches, and a school in Young America.

Once the city hall was moved, the building was first used for commercial purposes. It is now a private residence.



Watertown Cottage Hospital

201 Westminster SW, Watertown



The Watertown Cottage hospital, at the intersection of White and Westminster, in Watertown, was originally built by Dr. Harry Halgren in 1905. His prowess as a physician and surgeon was recognized throughout Carver County and neighboring counties, thus initiating the need for a local hospital.

It was built to be used as a home for his family, a nurses quarters on the third floor and a hospital. The turret on the second floor was used as the surgery room.

In 1935, Dr. R. E. Pogue leased the Hospital from Dr. Halgren and continued to use it as a hospital until July 1958 when a new Community hospital opened in Watertown. It has been used as a residence ever since.

The Cottage Hospital was just one of two Hospitals located in Watertown during this time period. Mr. & Mrs. Nathan Johnson have recently purchased it and are in the process of refurbishing it.

This residence will be included in the Watertown Fine Arts Council House Tour in early December. Please watch for more information about the house tour through the local newspapers this fall.



Swede Lake Cemetery

West side of County Road 10, 2 miles north of Hwy. 7, Watertown



The first Swedish settler to arrive in the wilderness near Swede Lake was Daniel Justus who came here in August 1856, an immigrant from South Halsingland, Sweden. In his wandering through the heavy timber, he came upon a small lake and then staked out for himself a piece of land. The following winter Jons Jonsson, Ulrik Ingemanson, and Carl Swenson came here, all of them settling around this small lake which subsequently became known as Swede Lake.

As the community around Swede Lake grew, they formed a congregation called the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Gotaholm Congregation, commonly referred to as Gotaholm. The original log church was built on the shores of Swede Lake and the cemetery located here was used for burials from 1860-1877. The log church was used until a new church was built in a different location in 1870.



The congregation changed their name from Gotaholm to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1948. Trinity's current church building and cemetery are located in Watertown.

Carver County Historical Society



Established in 1940, the Carver County Historical Society is a private, not-for-profit organization whose mission is to collect, preserve and interpret the history of Carver County. Located across from Bayview Elementary School in Waconia, the Historical Society's museum was expanded in 1998 to better serve the public. The museum houses five local history exhibits, a veterans' exhibit and a local history and genealogy library. There is no charge to visit the museum or library.

Researchers are welcome to use the Historical Society's non-circulating library. The library contains records and materials dealing with Carver County including census materials, naturalization records, local newspapers, maps, photographs and local history books. The library is fully staffed to help answer questions. The Historical Society museum and library are open Monday through Saturday, call or visit our website for hours.

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Email: historical@co.carver.mn.us
www.carvercountyhistoricalsociety.org



Help preserve history by joining the Carver County Historical Society!

Help us achieve our goal of adding 150 new members during the County's 150th Anniversary! Why become a member? Enjoy genealogy library benefits, a quarterly newsletter with a local history feature article, members-only events, discounts on programs, and the knowledge that you're helping preserve our local history. Membership forms can be downloaded from our website.

