

Stroll back in time.

Imagine yourself walking along Third Street in the middle of the day in 1890. People are bustling all around you, hopping off the streetcar, window-shopping at Choate's, and hurrying to business lunches at the newly built Winona Hotel. When you hear a train whistle, you remember why Winona is such a busy city: it is a national leader in flour milling and lumber, using the railroad to bring in grain for processing and to carry lumber to farmers building homes on the prairie. Winona residents have made their fortunes in these trades. Popular in the later part of the nineteenth century, the Italianate and Queen Anne architecture that dominate the Third Street Commercial Historic District are symbols of this prosperous time. While the decline in the flour-milling and lumber industries would soon divert commerce to other parts of the city, the buildings remain to give us a glimpse into Winona's past.



Historical postcard of Winona Hotel dining room



Hannibal Choate

The district was listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NR) in 1998.

WINONA COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (NORTH SIDE)

Welcome to the Island!

Although you won't be greeted with a Hawaiian lei, the "Island City" of Winona has made hospitality a tradition since the mid-19th century. Over time, it has welcomed steamboats (Captain Orrin Smith founded the city in 1851), trains (the Winona and St. Peter Railroad was the longest in the state in 1870) and, more recently, automobiles.

River navigators in particular have viewed Sugar Loaf, the distinctive rock formation atop Winona's bluffs, as a welcoming sign, a guide through a part of the Mississippi that Mark Twain called "The Thousand Islands."

A window to a colorful world.

As you'll see, Winona's architecture may be considered one of its defining characteristics. Its beauty is enhanced by another of Winona's notable attractions, its stained glass windows. With several major studios devoted to stained glass restoration and repair, Winona is an unusual resource for this highly skilled work. While several of Winona's early 20th-century buildings boast remarkable stained glass installations, it wasn't until 1946, when James E. Hauser opened his studio, that stained glass restoration and repair became a trademark of Winona.



Interior of Watkins Administration Building

Find your favorite spot in Winona.

Whether you're a history buff or a bluff climber, Winona will make you feel right at home. It's what we've been doing for over 150 years.

Visit the interpretive signs on the corner of Third St. and Walnut St. for more information about historic downtown Winona.

If you lived here, you'd be home now.

Winona has always drawn a diverse group of people to its shore, attracted by the lumber and flour-milling industries that made Winona a booming town in the late 19th century. Notable citizens included John D. Ford, a physician who helped establish the first State Normal School in Winona in 1860; J.R. Watkins, whose pharmaceutical company continues to operate today; and Charles G. Maybury, an early settler and architect who designed many of Winona's now-historic buildings. And, yes, the parents of future Hollywood celebrity Winona Ryder were so taken with the town that they named their daughter after her birthplace.



Lumber magnate Abner Hodgins

Explore HISTORIC DOWNTOWN WINONA Minnesota

You'll see

- Soaring spires!
- Landmark banks!
- Handsome hotels!

And so much more...

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Anger's Block
116-120 Walnut St.
Built: 1872 NR: 1978
Architect: C.G. Maybury

Built for meatpacker Gustave Anger, this Italianate block is one of the earliest downtown buildings with surviving architect's plans.

Merchant's National Bank
102 E. Third St.
Built: 1912 NR: 1974
Architect: Purcell, Feick & Elmslie

This architectural landmark of the Prairie School style is by one of its finest practitioners, the Minneapolis firm of Purcell, Feick & Elmslie, who designed 18 banks in the Midwest. The design is rooted in the concepts of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, whose colleague-George Grant Elmslie-designed the ornate terra cotta and stained glass. Rescued from demolition in 1969, an addition in 1971 allowed the interior to be saved and restored from original drawings.



Odd Fellows Block
78 E. Third St.
Built: 1884 NR: 1998
Architect: C.G. Maybury

Winona Odd Fellows organized German members of the Winona Odd Fellows organized as the Humboldt Lodge and met on the third floor of this Queen Anne brick commercial block.

Architectural Styles and Details in Downtown Winona

One of the pleasures of walking through historic downtown Winona is noticing the diversity of architectural styles and ornamentation of the buildings. Many of the buildings in the city's commercial historic districts were built in the second half of the 19th century, when Winona was becoming a center of trade, industry and wealth.

After the fire of 1862, which destroyed much of the downtown, property owners rebuilt using brick and stone. They hired architects to design distinctive buildings in a variety of styles that were popular at the time, including Italianate, Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival. With plentiful raw materials, builders and craftspeople created a wealth of detail and ornamentation in stone, metal and brick.

Architectural style and detail turns a walk through downtown into a treasure hunt. Every time you venture out, you see something you didn't notice before.



WINONA COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT (SOUTH SIDE)

German-American Bank
129 E. Third St.
Built: 1890 NR: 1998
Architect: C.G. Maybury

Highly ornamented Richardsonian Romanesque.



Beck Building
109 E. Third St.
Built: 1886 NR: 1998

Romanesque Revival commercial building for the C.C. Beck Hardware firm.



Choate Department Store
51-55 E. Third St.
Built: 1888, 1895 NR: 1976
Architect: A.E. Myhre

Built for Hannibal Choate, "the merchant prince of southeastern Minnesota." The 1888 building was expanded with the "Annex" in 1895.



Slade Block
101 W. Third St.
Built: 1886 NR: 1998
Architect: C.G. Maybury

Romanesque Revival commercial block.



Schlitz Hotel
129 W. Third St.
Built: 1892 NR: 1982

Commissioned by Milwaukee's Schlitz Brewing Company, the brick Romanesque Revival hotel had a \$1 million renovation in 1979.



Winona Hotel
157 W. Third St.
Built: 1889 NR: 1985
Architect & Builder: George B. Ferry

A brick and stone block, designed in the Romanesque Revival style. Renovated in the 1980s.



THIRD STREET