

Aitkin County Historic Places descriptions



1. **1916 Northern Pacific Depot** – Aitkin – (20 Pacific Street S.W.) 1916 Northern Pacific brick depot. Now houses the Aitkin County Historical Society. Was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 16, 1982. (46 degrees 31'54"N, 93 degrees 42'28"W)



2. **Aitkin Carnegie Library** – (121 – 2nd Street N.W. Aitkin) 1911 Classical Revival Carnegie library. Now home of the Jaques Art Center. Was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 16, 1982. (46 degrees 31' 59" N, 93 degrees 42'34" W)



3. **Aitkin County Courthouse and Jail** – (209 & 217 – 2nd St. N.W.) 1915 Jail & 1929 Brick and stone Beaux-Arts Courthouse. The two story courthouse is constructed of Bedford stone and art brick. Inside are marble stairs and wainscoting and terrazzo floors. The cost of the building was approximately \$155,000. Was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 16, 1982. (46 degrees 31'59"N, 93 degrees 42'37" W)



4. **Andy Gibson (shipwreck)** 1884 140-foot steamboat, the largest operating commercially on the Upper Mississippi headwaters. Was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 28, 2012. (46 degrees 32'25" N, 93 degrees 43'01"W)
5. **Pulley House** - Located north of the Mississippi River where the VFW is located. This is where they cranked the bridge open for riverboats to pass. (46 32.453'N – 93 42.437'W)
6. **Welton's Ferry Boat Crossing-** Located in Aitkin Township between sections 17 & 20 (46 32.832' N – 93 46.872'W)
7. **Original location of Aitkin** – Located close to the airport (46 32.598' N – 93 41.682'W)
8. **Captain VeBons House** – Captain VeBon built and operated three of the riverboats on the Mississippi river: Irene – (1898 – 1908), Oriole (1908 – 1911), and the Lee (1911 – 1917).
9. **Ojibwe encampment** – located where the Mississippi and Ripple Rivers meet east of the fairgrounds. (46 32.518'N – 93 42.007'W)
10. **Patrick Casey House** – (4th Street S.E & 2nd Ave.) 1901 frame Queen Anne/Classical Revival House of a prominent merchant. Was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 16, 1982. (46 degrees 31'36" N, 93 degrees 42'13" W)



11. **Potter/Casey Company Building** – (E. Minnesota Ave. between 1st and 2nd Streets N.W.) Large 1902 brick commercial building. It is considered one of the region's finest examples of extant early 20th century structures. Was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on April 16, 1982. (46 degrees 31'58" N, 93 degrees 42'23" W)
12. **Bethlehem Lutheran Church** – (Off County Highway 12) 1897 frame church serving the Swedish immigrant population. The Bethlehem Lutheran congregation was organized on June 11, 1891. Today it is the oldest active congregation in Aitkin County. Was placed on the National Historic Places Register on April 16, 1982. (46 degrees 28'34" N, 93 degrees 37'00" W)



1917 Opera House, Aitkin, Minn.

13. **Hodgedon-MacDonald building** – (301 Minnesota Ave. N.) Samuel Hodgedon, a local merchant, built this structure in 1902. It housed a general merchandise store, a bank, a seed and feed warehouse, a buggy and wagon warehouse, hardware supplies and the Aitkin Opera House. Today it is known as the Butler building. (46 degrees 31.970'N – 93 42.375' W)



14. **Rialto Theatre** – (220 Minnesota Ave. N.) Charles Lyons celebrated the grand opening of his movie theatre on April 30, 1937. The front of the Art Deco style building is characterized by cut stone, polished granite, vitralite and plate glass. The marquee lights the theatre's name in neon and electric lights. Except for the box office having been moved inside, the façade is almost unchanged. (46 32.051'N – 93 42.381'W)



15. **First National Bank Building** – (210 Minnesota Ave. N.) Built in 1914 at a cost of \$30,000, the two story art brick structure is distinctively ornamented with brown stone and terra cotta. The bank shared space with the Royal Clothing House until 1954 when it expanded into the entire first floor. The second floor contained business offices and lodge meeting rooms. (46 32.012'N – 93 42.411'W)
16. **Putney Ferry Boat Crossing** – Located north of Aitkin in section 24 where the VFW is located. (46 32.541'N – 93 42.384'W)

17. **Francis Lee Jaques Homestead** – The Francis Jaques family moved to this site in 1906. “Lee” as he preferred to be called went on to become a world renowned wildlife artist. (46 35.465’N – 93 39.861’W)
18. **Diversion Channel** – To help alleviate the flooding of the City of Aitkin, this channel was constructed in the early 1950’s and completed in 1954. The only one of its kind on the Mississippi River at the time of construction. (46 35.390’N – 93 39.806’W)
19. **Libby or Lee Ferry Boat Crossing** – Located in Libby Township section 11. (46 49.559’N - 93 21.248’W)
20. **Waldeck Landing** – A well-known riverboat landing. A store, boarding house, post office and residences moved on after the riverboats stopped making their weekly routes in the early 1920’s (46 40.386’N – 93 36.339’W)
21. **Bain** – (Ghost Town) William Bain homesteaded 160 acres in the early 1900’s. On May 7, 1908 he was given clear title to the land by President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1909 the Soo Line Railroad came through the town. Bain became a trading center for a large area. Unfortunately in October of 1918 a forest fire wiped out every building but one house and the school. Between World War I and a flu epidemic the town faded away. (46 47.480’N – 93 35.408’W)
22. **Sheriff Lake Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church** – still stands in Section 5 of Salo Township at the site of the Salo Township Cemetery. Constructed of logs in 1898, it is the oldest institutional building in the township, and one of the few log structures that survived the 1918 fire. (46 34.649’N – 93 10.524’W)
23. **Rice Lake School** – The third school built for the community in 1919, a one room school for grades one through eight opened at a site along the eastern side of present-day Kestrel Avenue and just slightly south of its intersection with 395th Lane.
24. **Libby** – A small settlement growing up in the 1910’s Coming of bloom in the 1930’s. Now is the site of the Army Corps of Engineers Recreation Area. (46 47.245’N – 93 19.223’W)



25. **The Ark** – Once running the Mississippi River between Aitkin and Grand Rapids, the riverboat Oriole was dismantled and the shell was pulled up on shore and used as a store and hotel. The Ark had to be taken down when State Highway 65 was built. (46 46.092’N – 93 19.456’W) Located one mile south of government dam.
26. **American Fur Company Post** – The post originally the Northwest Post on Brown’s Point, in 1822 the American Fur Company moved its post to this location. One of the posts clerks was William Aitkin the county and city’s namesake. (46 45.920’N – 93 19.258’W)
27. **Verdon Ferry Crossing** – Located in Libby township section 26. (46 52.377’N – 93 21.907’W)
28. **Northwest Fur Company Post** – Built in 1794 this was one of the earliest inland trading centers in this part of Minnesota, used to supply the fur trade expansion. (46 47.249’N – 93 19.418’W)
29. **Wold’s Ferry Crossing**– Another of the several ferry crossings on the Mississippi River that was needed to serve the area in getting settlers from the east to the west side of the river. The ferry

operated from 1910 to the early 1930's, charge was 10 cents a person and 50 cents for a team. Located in Workman township section 9. (46 44.801'N – 93 23838'W)

30. **N.W. Wire Grass / Twine Co.** – One of the unique areas of the county that naturally grew wire grass that was used in the making of twine. The company was in operation from 1898 to 1926 and was later called Crex Carpet Company. (46 36.117'N – 93 21.575'W)
31. **Ude** - Is it Ude or Lansford? (Ghost Town) Depends on who you talk to, but either way the small community was another development of the Northern Pacific Railroad that died with the passing of the steam engine. (46 36.052'N – 93 24.146'W)
32. **Kimberly** – Another of the many railroad developed towns. In its heyday four passenger trains ran daily, a community hall with all night dances, two school teachers and over 50 students. Kimberly also had three cream stations as well as four gas stations. The decline of the town started after World War II as with many small communities. (46 33.669'N – 93 27.926'W)
33. **Darina** – (Ghost Town) A train stop on the old Soo Line. The Soo Line Railroad leased common track from the Northern Pacific Railroad between Deerwood and McGregor in the 1920's and towns like Darina on the old rail line disappeared. (46 32.300'N – 93 29.016'W)
34. **CCC Camp** – The only CCC camp in Aitkin County established to develop the Rive Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The camp started in 1935 and was terminated in 1941 and had 200 enrollees. (46 32.032'N – 93 21.244'W)
35. **Axel Eng Sawmill** – Site of present township park, Eng ran his sawmill here from 1912 to 1920. (46 38.216'N – 93 29.137'W)
36. **Thor** – A community who's telephone service started in 1914. And who's first electricity was from a power plant located in the basement of a local resident. The plant provided power for both the resident and the school. (46 28.574'N – 93 25.239'W)
37. **Malmo** – An unincorporated community with no official population count, but has been settled since the 1880's. In 1899 J.V. Browser mapped 128 Indian mounds in the Malmo are, some possibly dating back to 1180 B.C. (46 20.035'N – 93 31.059'W)
38. **Battle Site** – In the struggle for hunting rights this was a scene of tribal battles fought between the Sioux and Ojibwe people. (46 45.936'N – 93 15.255'W)
39. **Malmo Mounds and Village Site** – Pre-historic archaeology site on the National Register. Placed on the National Registry on April 3, 1975.
40. **Nichols** – A former resort community along Mille Lacs Lake. Named after Austin Nichols who moved to the Garrison area to run a trading post around 1875, Nichols found this scenic spot north of this post and moved his family there. The settlement grew having visitors camping along the lakeshore and the establishment of a post office in 1885. In 1990 vandals burned the Nichols house to the ground. (46 19.309'N – 93 48.098'W)



41. **Mariah Chapel** – In the 1880's eight families from Sweden settled southeast of Aitkin. They built the church so their children could have religious instruction like they were used to in Sweden. The Swedish Evangelical Maria Church was organized on March 14, 1888. Community church with a turn of the century flavor. (46 27.663'N – 93 41.504'W)
42. **Black Cemetery** – Located in Wealthwood township section 9. (46 23.771'N – 93 38.215'W)
43. **Jones Farm** – In the 1920's Doctor Jones started this large truck farm to give area residents some employment. (46 10.163'N – 93 20.309'W)
44. **Cedar Lake School** – This one room School started in the early 1900's with each settler having to contribute several logs to help in the building of the structure. The school closed in 1949. (46 13.662'N – 93 23.918'W)
45. **Red Top** – Stakes were driven for town lots in 1908 with the Soo Line Railroad coming through a couple of years later. Popular legend has the town of Red Top being named after a red haired Swedish immigrant girl who was a cook at various establishments in the area. (46 10.588'N – 93 23.702'W)
46. **Exposed Bedrock** – Bedrock outcropping from the Pre-Cambrian geological period is classified as Warman Quartz Monzonite. (46 19.855'N – 93 18.388'W)
47. **Solana** – (Ghost Town) The community of Solana existed because of the Soo Line railroad and logging camps. One of the more colorful legends of how Solana got its name tells of a logging camp cook named Anna, who talked slow, walked slow, did everything slow. Thus they named the town "Slow Anna" or Solana. (46 16.501'N – 93 13.258'W)
48. **Tronnes** – (Ghost Town) – In 1901 a post office opened at Peter Anderson's farm. A school was built in 1904 and closed in 1916. Building purchased by Pliny Township for Town Hall and church until 1949 and continued to be used for Township meetings until sold to the Logging and Threshing Show and moved to the historic setting of the Logging and Threshing Show. The location presently is complete with farms. (46 17.228'N – 93 15.722'W)
49. **McGrath** – In 1907 James McGrath started the town with two general stores and a saloon. McGrath also had a large lumber company. (A) Soo Line recreation trail, (B) This block held a hardware and general merchandise store, barber shop and pool hall. All of these buildings were burned in a 1922 fire. (46 14.602'N – 93 16.377'W)
50. **Half-Way House** – In the early 1900's this place was half way between McGrath and Finlayson. Travelers could rest their horses and spend the night when traveling between the two towns. (46 11.245'N – 93 6.884'W)

51. **Bloemendal** – (Ghost Town) - a post office was needed in the area between McGrath and Finlayson. Coenard Bloemendal volunteered a 60 foot log home that included a post office and store. Right north from the house was four tents of Indians. The Indians did what they could for the family. Post office quit in 1912. Log home with store dismantled in late 1930's. Now location of family homestead. (46 11.216'N – 93 6.883'W)
52. **Giese** – (Ghost Town) – In 1918 a post office was established. A store and church were also found at the location. Presently you will find a bed and breakfast run by Dan and Evelyn Peterson, one-half mile south of Giese. Across the road a very short distance further south you will find a cemetery with a tomb stone that read William Woodward, Civil War Vet, Drummer boy. (46 12.964'N – 93 6.980'W)
53. **Veteransville** – (Ghost Town) After World I the government and veterans groups were looking for ways to help give disabled veterans an opportunity to start over. This was one of several communities in southern Aitkin County that was to help give disabled veterans a new start. Most of the veterans left by the late 1920's. (46 19.961'N – 93 11.924'W)
54. **White Pine** – (Ghost Town) – Formerly Longfellow until 1909 when James E. McGrath built largest local sawmill. A fire did major damage to the sawmill site in 1921. At location there are only a few cement slabs left that are noticeable from County Road 2. About 1 ½ miles from Hwy 65. (46 19.961'N – 93 14.256'W)
55. **Silver Star** – (Ghost Town) A McGrath banker offered inexpensive farm land to disabled veterans of World War I. The families started coming in the winter of 1922. About 20 families came to make Silver Star their new home only to find out it wasn't ready to farm. Between the tree stumps and the rocks most families only stayed two years. (46 11.715'N – 93 14.766'W)
56. **Exposed Bedrock** – In a county that is comprised mostly of marginal marsh lands, spruce and tamarack covered lowlands and deciduous high grounds, exposed bedrock isn't a typical geological formation thought of in this area. (46 19.901'N – 93 17.582'W)



57. **Arthyde Stone House** – (County Road 27) A 1922 fieldstone bungalow dating to post-logging period. Was placed on the National Registry of Historic places on April 16, 1982. (46 degrees 21.265'N - 93 degrees 5.368' W)
58. **Ronald** – Starting up before the turn of the century, the community slowly declined until the post office was closed in 1926. (46 26.822'N – 93 3.321'W)
59. **Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuge** – Excellent area to view wildlife as well as an area of historic significance with prehistoric mounds. (46 32.266'N – 93 17.050'W) Town of East Lake.
60. **Lawler** – Once a thriving town on the Soo Line railroad with Temperance Hall, hotel, bank, stockyard and lumberyard was almost totally destroyed in the fire of 1918. (46 32.247'N – 93 10.233'W)
61. **Grayling** – (Ghost Town) In the late 1800's Grayling was called Sandy River Crossing. It boasted of a railroad depot, several general stores, post office, hotel and a ½ mile log cord wood pile, wood that was used by the steam locomotives. During the great drought of the 1930's cattle were brought in to graze on the swamp land around Grayling. For about half a decade large herds of cattle were herded by cowboys on horseback. (46 39.850'N – 93 12.260'W)
62. **Northern Pacific Train Derailment** – In the early 1870's a Northern Pacific Railroad train derailed killing two men. The engine is rumored to be buried under 60-feet of peat. (46 39.218'N – 93 6.174'W)

63. **Railroad Turn Table Site** – As the railroad was being built in the 1870's the engines would haul material this far, unload, turn around and head back toward Duluth. (46 39.619'N – 93 4.375'W)
64. **East Lake** – Another early settlement of Aitkin County. The town sported a hotel, restaurant, school, community hall, post office and general store. Now it is part of the East Lake Indian Reservation. (46 32.312'N – 93 16.998'W)
65. **Wooden Ware Stave Mill** – This was a mill and logging camp operating in the 1920's. (46 59.333'N – 93 35.575'W)
66. **Marcus Nelson Logging Camp** – Marcus Nelson not only operated a logging operation, but produced ties for the railroad, fence posts and has a mercantile. (46.82580 – 93.21583)
67. **Wild Rice Area** – Traditional wild ricing area of the Sandy Lake Ojibwe people. (46.69028 – 93.28335)
68. **Battle Island** – Also called Ghost Island, the island was a site of refuge for the Sandy Lake Ojibwe (young & old) during one of the many battles between the Ojibwe and Sioux. (46.76287 – 93.25818)
69. **Savanna Portage State park** – Savanna is a historic 6-mile portage dating back hundreds of years, used by Native Americans, explorers and fur traders. The portage was a link between the Mississippi and Great Lakes systems. (46 degrees 49'42" N, 93 degrees 10'32" W)
70. **Jacobson Landing Recreation Area** – Near this area is the site of Swan River Logging Camp, and the site of the derailment of car No. 508 of the Mississippi, Hill City & Western Railroad. (47.00447 – 93.26160)
71. **Steamboat Fawn Sinking** – The Fawn sank at the mouth of the Swan River in 1894. (47.00415 – 93.26808)



72. **Torrey's Ferry Crossing** – Located in Ball Bluff township section 9. (46.99968 – 93.27035)
73. **Wooden Ware Logging Camp** – Steam haulers were used to bring timber out of the woods to help supply the factory in Hill City. (46.86663 – 93.17510)
74. **Man-made Judicial Ditch No. 3** – Ditching was done throughout Aitkin County from the early 1900's to the mid 1930's to drain marginal land for agricultural use and settlement. Ditch No. 3 was dug in 1913. (46.96860 – 93.09987)
75. **Feero's Ferry Crossing** – Located in Verdon township section 22. (46.89595 – 93.35455)
76. **Rabey** – Now a ghost town with only a few depressions left in the ground it was a stop on the Mississippi, Hill City & Western rail line from Hill City to Mississippi Junction now near the present village of Jacobson. Rabey had a post office, potato warehouse, log yards, school, a minister and store. (46.99877 – 93.37917)
77. **Bauer** – Nothing is left of this ghost town but in the early 1900's Bauer was a rail siding on the Rabey Line with a store, school and several residences. A typical community that grew around the economic boom of logging and convenience of the railroad. (46.96825 – 93.51623)
78. **Hay Point** – Settled by Joshua Tibbetts in the early 1870's it was a rest stop for travelers with a hotel and livery stable. Joshua along with his brothers Nathaniel and James were among the first white homesteaders in Aitkin County. (46.89955 – 93.61410)

79. **Swatara** – Established in the early 1900's the community was revitalized with the building of the Soo Line Railroad in 1910. In the early 1970's Swatara was the proposed site of a futuristic automated, domed city called MXC. (46.89560 – 93.67585)
80. **Quadna Mountain** – The highest point in Aitkin County at 1589 feet above sea level. (46.96312 – 93.58730)
81. **National Woodenware Company Superintendent's Residence** – (SW Elm St. and Lone) 1910 housing for the supervisor of a mill that manufactured barrels and tubs. Was placed on the National Registry on April 16, 1982. (46 degrees 59'35" N, 93 degrees 35'40" W)



82. **National Woodenware Company** – The National Woodenware factory was owned by the Armour Company and was built at a cost of \$250,000 in 1910. The factory employed about 250 men with a starting wage of around \$9.00 a week making wooden tubs for lard, fish, pickles, butter and many other items. (46.98/888 – 93.59292)
83. **Ostlun (Ghost Town)** (46.27505 – 93.38892)
84. **Eastwood (Ghost Town)** (46.26145 – 93.47237)
85. **Wild Rice Area** – (46.80762 – 93.27792) (46.80570 – 93.24690)

The printing of this map was made possible from grants by:
 Aitkin Tourism, Mille Lacs Energy Round-up, and Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe.
 and memorials from: Allan Westerlund and Jennette Zilverberg.
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