

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only

received MAY 28 1980

date entered JUL 21 1980

1. Name *Chisago County Multiple Resource Area (Partial Inventory)*

historic Historic Resources of Chisago County (Partial Inventory)

and/or common

2. Location

street & number The County Limits of Chisago County, Minnesota not for publication

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ congressional district 8th

state Minnesota code 22 county Chisago code 025

3. Classification -- Multiple Resources

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<u>_____</u> district	<u>_____</u> public	<u>_____</u> occupied	<u>_____</u> agriculture <u>_____</u> museum
<u>_____</u> building(s)	<u>_____</u> private	<u>_____</u> unoccupied	<u>_____</u> commercial <u>_____</u> park
<u>_____</u> structure	<u>_____</u> both	<u>_____</u> work in progress	<u>_____</u> educational <u>_____</u> private residence
<u>_____</u> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<u>_____</u> entertainment <u>_____</u> religious
<u>_____</u> object	<u>_____</u> in process	<u>_____</u> yes: restricted	<u>_____</u> government <u>_____</u> scientific
	<u>_____</u> being considered	<u>_____</u> yes: unrestricted	<u>_____</u> industrial <u>_____</u> transportation
		<u>_____</u> no	<u>_____</u> military <u>_____</u> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple Ownership -- See individual forms

street & number _____

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Recorder's Office -- Chisago County Courthouse

street & number Main Street

city, town Center City state Minnesota

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Statewide Survey of Historic Resources

has this property been determined eligible? _____ yes _____ no

date 1979 _____ federal ☒ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Minnesota Historical Society -- 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

city, town St. Paul state Minnesota

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED MAY 28 1980

DATE ENTERED JUL 21 1980

Chisago Counth MRN

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 1 PAGE 1

This Multiple Resource Area Nomination is based on a survey of standing structures conducted in Chisago County by the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office as part of a long-range statewide survey of historic resources. The properties included in the nomination represent those which illustrate significant aspects of the history of the county and which have been deemed eligible for nomination at the conclusion of the survey. Additional information and new perspectives for evaluation of specific types of historic properties are continually being gained as the statewide survey progresses, and it is quite possible that additional Chisago County properties will be nominated in the future. These may be presented individually or as parts of thematic groups when the entire survey is completed. For this reason, this Multiple Resource Area Nomination should not be construed as representing all properties in Chisago County eligible for nomination.

(The above disclaimer is based on an agreement between Charles Herrington, HCRS, and Russell Fridley, Minnesota SHPO, August 31, 1979.)

CHISAGO COUNTY

The basis of the survey for this nomination is an inventory of structures which are indicative of various aspects of the county's history. Structures were identified and inventoried during a county wide survey conducted during the late summer and fall of 1979.

Selection of structures for the inventory included both field reconnaissance of pre-identified sites and isolation of sites on a purely visual basis. Pre-identification of sites was limited to a small number of the most significant locations (those unique on a county wide scale, or significantly linked with some aspect of county history.) County histories, individual community histories, and photographs from both the state society and private collections were researched for site-specific information. General references to common buildings were not noted.

Township maps from the 1888 Chisago County Atlas were copied for field use. Plat maps on file in the county recorder's office were researched for original plat information (proprietors, survey and filing dates) and for additional dates. The filing dates for the various platted areas were noted on current highway department city maps. This collection of maps was useful in gaining a localized sense of development for areas of the county.

All city streets were walked or driven. All rural non-farm structures, pre-identified sites, and locally suggested buildings were visited. The roads connecting these dispersed sites provided a strong sampling of the rural landscape. Pre-identified sites were inventoried regardless of integrity. Other buildings with unusual integrity or unique features were also inventoried. In general, structures built before 1940 were considered for an inventory.

Follow-up information (both localized specific and generalized contextual) on some sites was gathered to help establish significance.

In each region of the county, at least one and in most cases several local contacts were made through the county historical society and by random inquiry. These were most often helpful in locating information on selected properties, but also in pointing out additional locations for inventory.

From the inventory of over 200 sites, eleven individual structures and one district were selected for nomination to the National Register, mostly on the basis of their significance within the county. Information and photographs on all sites are recorded on inventory forms for a permanent record.

CHISAGO COUNTY

The area now known as Chisago County lies along the central part of Minnesota's eastern boundary, about fifty miles northeast of St. Paul. The St. Croix River forms the county's irregular eastern boundary, separating it from Wisconsin's Burnett and Polk Counties; the Minnesota counties of Washington, Anoka, Isanti, and Pine border the county on its southern, western, and northern sides. With the exception of the eastern St. Croix boundary, the county's borders follow the straight lines of the government survey system.

The majority of the county is covered by a fairly level gravelly plain. The northwestern portion is more rolling in contour with low rocky hills. The St. Croix River Valley on the eastern side of the county has a deeply varied topography characterized by magnificent rock formations and deep gorges cut through by the swift river currents. Numerous lakes are scattered across the county, the most noted being the large chain of lakes located in the south central portion of the county. The county's name originated from the Chippewa word for these lakes, "Ki-Chi-Saga", meaning "fair and lovely".

Prior to settlement, the southern third of the county was covered by a thick deciduous forest. The central third was a sandy wasteland covered with a brush and scrub forest. Pine forests were located along the St. Croix River near Taylors Falls and followed the river northward in an ever widening belt, covering most of the northern portion of the county.

Like other Minnesota counties, Chisago County has an early history of Indian occupation and white exploration and fur trading. The area was located within a zone of contact between the Chippewa and the Sioux, and both tribes occupied the area. Before the land was ceded to the United States Government in 1837, it was in the hands of the Chippewa. The earliest known white exploration in the area dates back to 1679 when French-Canadian Sieur du Lhut descended the Brule and St. Croix Rivers. During the century that followed his entry into the area, both the French and the English developed an extensive fur trade in the Taylors Falls and Sunrise areas.

The cession treaties of 1837 opened the way for Euro-Americans and permanent white settlement was soon to follow. The earliest comers to the county were native-born Americans from New England and the mid-Atlantic states, who engaged in lumbering and subsistence farming in the St. Croix Valley. By the late 1830s and early 1840s several lumbering posts were established in the region. Gradually Taylors Falls developed as a community; its downtown area was laid out as early as 1850.

The establishment of Taylors Falls in the late 1840s and early '50s and the organization of the county from part of Washington County in 1851 began the systematic settlement of the county. Native-born Americans made most of the original land purchases and platted eleven townships, hoping to profit by resale of the land. As in other parts of the state, many of the speculative townships of this period failed; only three of the county's ten incorporated communities date to this period.

The 1850s saw the arrival of a larger group of immigrants who were responsible for settling most of the county. The early Swedish immigrants settled primarily in the Chisago Lakes region and engaged in the first extensive agricultural activities in the county.

Taylor's Falls, at the head of navigation on the St. Croix, became the primary landing for settlers travelling to the area. By 1858, the Swedish immigrants were joined by Germans and Irish. Settlement spread westward from Taylor's Falls and its downstream neighbor Franconia and eastward from the Chisago Lakes area. Some lumbering settlement occurred during the mid 1860s in the northern townships, but the sandy outwash along the Sunrise River acted as a deterrent to settlement west and northwest of Chisago Lake. Between 1868 and 1872 the influx of immigrants increased and quickly filled in most of the county. By 1872 all of the county's twelve townships had been organized.

The most dramatic changes taking place in the county during the late 1860s and early 1870s were the result of the construction of the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad (now the Northern Pacific) along the western side of the county. As in other parts of the state, the railroad transformed the county, not only providing easy transportation into the sparsely settled northern parts of the county but also providing impetus for the founding of several market towns along the road. Three towns were platted by the Western Land Association, a subsidiary of the railroad, to encourage settlement and trade along the road; two other towns were also established along the road by local promoters.

In 1880 a spur line was completed between Wyoming and Taylor's Falls, providing improved access to the Chisago Lakes communities. Lindstrom was platted and pre-existing Center City and Chisago partially relocated to take advantage of rail service. The construction of a second spur line in 1884 between Rush City and Grantsburgh, Wisconsin completed the county's rail system.

By 1890 most of the county's towns had been established. Its 1860 population of 1,743 had swelled to 10,359, over two-thirds of its 1920 peak.

The county's layout has remained intact since the completion of the railroad system in the 1880s, although both spur lines have since been removed. Rush City, North Branch, and Lindstrom all became important local centers during the railroad era while the earlier logging centers declined. Remnants of small crossroad communities remain in the regions never reached by rail, and several of these small communities continue to service the surrounding agricultural area. Between 1880 and 1920 area agriculture became more diversified and dairying became important, and rail centers became significant regional processing and distribution points. The period saw the rise of tourism and resort industry that has continued to this day to be important to the county economy.

In recent years the county's proximity to the Twin Cities has assumed an increasing importance. Those communities located along Interstate 35 and in the Chisago Lakes region have experienced significant growth with a large influx of a commuting population.

Chisago County's architecture follows the building patterns common in other rural midwestern counties. The earliest buildings were of log, sod, or dugout construction. These were replaced by frame structures in later years. Wood is the primary construction material in both domestic and agricultural buildings, and was also used in the construction of early commercial buildings. By 1880 masonry construction replaced most of the frame commercial buildings in the county's larger urban centers. Brick was manufactured locally in most regions of the county and some brick houses are scattered in both the rural and urban parts of the county. Architectural ostentation is rare; those buildings that are architecturally distinctive tend to be located in the larger urban centers.

Urban structures in the trackside communities are situated on streets that follow a strict grid system, while the plats of river and lake oriented urban communities have been modified to fit the topography. Many of the county roads follow the grid pattern of government survey lines when uninterrupted by lakes and rivers.

Many of the county's lakeshores are lined by lake homes and cottages. The cultivated rural landscape is broken by the groves and buildings of individual farmsteads, occasional rural schools and churches, scattered townsites and crossroad communities, numerous lakes and scattered woodlands.

CHISAGO COUNTY

The significance of the area now known as Chisago County lies in its history as a region of early Euro-American settlement and as a region characterized by a changing rural landscape, first dominated by lumbermen, then by agricultural development precipitated by an immigrant population and the railroad, and later by a limited but important influx of a seasonal tourist and commuter population.

Initial lumbering activity, beginning as early as the 1830s, had centers near the head of navigation on the St. Croix River. Structures in Taylors Falls and Franconia associated with the lumbering industry and the first group of Americans to settle the region are the Angels Hill Historic District (1850s-1870s, Taylors Falls, placed on the National Register in 1972), The Munch-Roos House (1853, Taylors Falls, placed on the National Register in 1970), the Taylors Falls Public Library (1854, 1887, Taylors Falls, placed on the National Register in 1970), and the Franconia Historic District (1850-1885, Franconia Township, nominated to the National Register as part of St. Croix Scenic Riverway nomination group).

The period of intense Swedish immigration which followed the lumbering and townsite speculation activity centered in the Chisago Lakes area. The county seat was moved to Center City during this period and the Chisago County Courthouse (1876, Center City) was constructed. The community became the center for the Swedish population of the county; the Center City Historic District (1888-1910, Center City) includes the central Swedish Lutheran parish, the Chisago Lake Evangelical Lutheran Church (1888), as well as a well-preserved collection of turn-of-the-century residences.

The increased development accompanying railroad construction through the county led to the construction of several notable structures. The Sayer House (ca.1875, Harris) reflects the speculation that accompanied the railroad in one of the smaller trackside towns. The Grant House (1896, Rush City), the Johnson Block (1897, Rush City), the J.C. Carlson House (1899, Rush City), and the C.A. Victor House (ca.1905, Lindstrom) all reflect the prosperity experienced by the larger trackside centers at the turn of the century.

Agriculture became increasingly important as the county was settled. The Diffenbacher Farmhouse (ca.1868, Rushseba Township) is representative of the frame farmhouses constructed to replace the earliest structures. The Moody Barn (1915, Chisago Lake Township) is a link with family operated dairy farms, an aspect of area agriculture which has been significant since the turn of the century.

The turn of the century also brought increased resort and tourism industry development around the county's scenic lakes. The summer home "Fridhem" (1898, Lindstrom) is associated with the seasonal summer population.

The domestic structures of the county are particularly significant as a representation of popular building trends as interpreted in rural Minnesota counties which span a wide range of settlement. Some of the earliest structures show the influence of native-born American builders with Greek Revival, Gothic and Italianate overtones. These include the Munch-Roos House (1853, Taylors Falls, listed in the National Register in 1970), the Angels Hill Historic District (1850s-1870s, Taylors Falls, placed on the National Register in 1972), the John Daubney House (ca.1870, Taylors Falls), and the Franconia Historic District (1850-1885, Franconia Township, nominated to the National Register as part of the St. Croix Scenic Riverway nomination group). The Diffenbacher Farmhouse (ca.1868, Rushseba Township) and the Sayer House (ca.1875, Harris) show the overtones of popular styles but are simpler than the residences in the river communities. Other structures notable for their attention to stylistic detail are the Italianate Gustaf Anderson House (ca.1879, Lindstrom), the summer residence Fridhem (ca.1898, Lindstrom), and the collection of modestly ornamented turn-of-the-century homes in the Center City Historic District (1888-1910, Center City). The J.C. Carlson House (1899, Rush City) is an especially distinctive Queen Anne residence designed by St. Paul architect August F. Gauger.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheets

10. Geographical Data -- See individual forms

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT References

UTM NOT VERIFIED
ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale _____

A

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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

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E

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F

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G

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Britta Bloomberg -- Research Historian-Survey

organization Minnesota Historical Society

date February 1980

street & number 240 Summit Avenue-Hill House

telephone 612-296-0101

city or town St. Paul

state Minnesota

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

___ national

___ state

___ local

-- See individual forms

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

Russell W. Fridley

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date

5/14/80

For HCERS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for
Atty
Keeper of the National Register

date

7/21/80

Attest:

Kristen O'Connell

date

7/18/80

Chief of Registration

CHISAGO COUNTY BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Maps and Atlases:

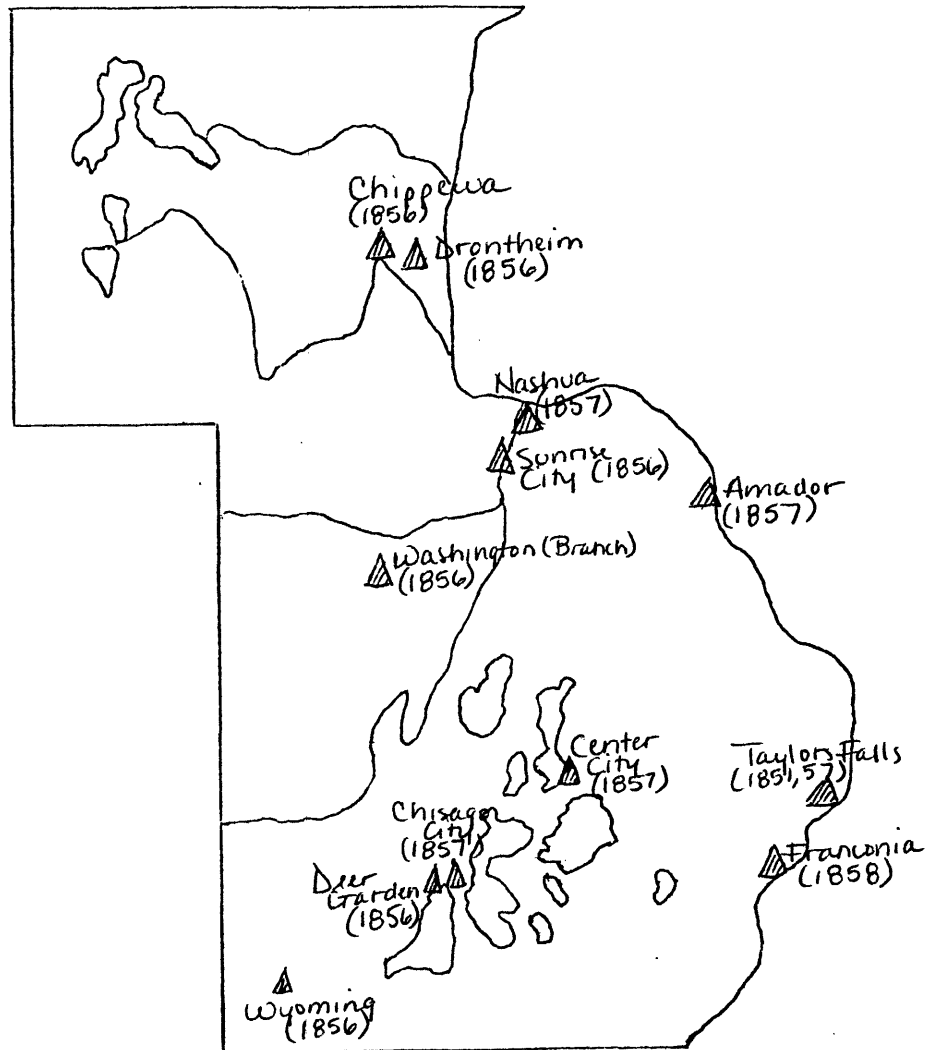
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Chisago County:

Townsites Platted During 1850's



Chisago County:

Townsite and Rail Development

- Key to map symbols
- ▲ Platted community, pre-railroad origin
 - Platted community post railroad
 - ⊕ "CROSSROADS" community, unplatted
- ① Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad Co. (1868-70)
- ② Taylors Falls and Lake Superior Railroad Co. (1878-80, discontinued 1948)
- ③ Grantsburgh, Rush City, and St. Cloud Railroad Co. (1884, discontinued 1948)

