Hastings is blessed with a rich and visible historical heritage. Through individual initiative, community planning, and a measure of luck many historic sites have been preserved.

This brochure introduces you to sites, buildings, and homes contributing to the Hastings story. Today, some are memories, most can be seen, and many are National Register historic sites.

The first American settler

In 1850 Alexis Bailly obtained government approval for a trading post on the west side of the Mississippi River in Indian territory. Bailly, his son Henry, and friends Henry Sibley, and Alexander Faribault believed the territory would soon open to settlement. A year later, as anticipated, a treaty was signed. The group commenced to plat the future city of Hastings. William LeDuc later bought out Faribault. Bailly's cabin became the city's first hotel and tavern, the Buckhorn. At the Buckhorn the group of four placed suggested town names in a hat. After indecisive votes they agreed on Hastings, Henry Sibley's middle name. While lots were sold as early as 1853 the sales were not legal until 1855.

The right place to grow a community

Selection of the Hastings site was not by chance. The location offered an excellent Mississippi River landing for steamboats and a good crossing point for a future ferry or bridge. The terrain rose gradually from the river with timber, limestone outcroppings, and beds of clay for constructing buildings. To the west and south lay rich farmland along the Vermillion River trail. The Vermillion River crossed through Hastings dropping 100 feet in a series of rapids and falls promising ample water power to turn mill wheels and stones.

A point of entry for people, business, and skills

Hastings was a natural entry point for pioneers of Dakota County's fertile heartland and it became their commercial center. Hastings mills ground the grain and merchants supplied products and services. Industries soon formed attracting skilled tradespeople. In 1857 Hastings became the Dakota County seat of government.
Hastings Heritage Sites Map

This map identifies 31 Hastings Heritage sites with descriptions starting on the next page.

A Hastings National Register site map of homes and churches follows.
Three Symbols of Hastings Heritage
A memory, a beautiful structure, and nature's gift

1 The Spiral Bridge
Built for wagons in 1895, the bridge crossed the Mississippi River spiraling down to the alley before 2nd Street, the business street of Hastings. The spiral bridge carried horse and engine powered traffic for over fifty years. Many claimed they designed it. Many travelers went out of their way to cross over it. The landmark was replaced with a straight bridge in 1951.

2 Hastings City Hall - former Dakota County Courthouse
The Dakota County Courthouse, built in 1871, is Minnesota's second oldest county courthouse building. A major structural modification was made in 1912. In 1974 Dakota County built a new government center. However, a portion of the county court system occupied the old courthouse from 1975 through 1989. The City of Hastings purchased the property in 1991 and following a beautiful restoration it was rededicated as the Hastings City Hall on December 11, 1993. The building is a National Register site.

3 Vermillion River and Falls
Named for its red clay banks, the Vermillion River crosses Dakota County's farmlands entering the Mississippi below Hastings. The river provided water power for three Hastings mills at the end of the "Pioneer Wheat Trail" which extended to Northfield. Today, the Vermillion's falls and rapids are settings for Hastings city parks including the Vermillion Falls Park.

Places, Products, and People in the growth of Hastings

4 Bailly's Trading Post
Site of H. G. Bailly's 1850 trading post near the intersection of today's Vermillion and 2nd Streets. Bailly's log cabin became the city's first hotel and tavern, the Buckhorn.

5 Mississippi Ferry Crossing
The ferry connected Hastings, at the foot of Vermillion St., with Washington County, Denmark Township in 1854. A toll for horse and rider was ten cents. The city made it "toll free" in 1867. It closed when the spiral bridge was completed.

6 Early Gardner Mill
Harrison Graham built a mill at Vermillion Falls in 1854. After ownership by LeDuc in 1856, and the Harrison Brothers in 1860, it became the Gardner Mill in 1863. Master miller, Stephen Gardner, installed America's first "all roller" mill. His "Patent Flour" became an industry standard. More recent owners have been King Midas, Peavey, and Con Agra.

7 Libbey Steam Sawmill
Founded by LeDuc and Stowell in 1855, the mill passed through several hands until acquired by R. C. Libbey in 1873. In 1865, lumber production reached 100 wagon loads per day. The mill closed in 1909 when the timber stands of central Minnesota were lumbered out.
8 Pringle Hardware Bldg.
Established in 1856, the current Pringle building was constructed in 1863, and a third floor added in 1901. It is believed to be the oldest hardware business in continuous operation in the state.

9 First National Bank
The bank was founded in 1856 and is the second oldest National bank in the State of Minnesota.

10 Estergreen & Sons
The John Estergreen wagon business, formed in 1859, was the largest in Hastings selling up to 400 wagons, carriages, and sleighs annually. He learned his trade in Sweden where he had been commissioned to make the first carriage for King Karl XV.

11 Hastings and Dakota RR
Affectionately called the "High and Dry" line. Incorporated as the Minnesota River & Red River of the North RR in 1857 the name was changed to the H & D in 1867. The H&D rail line extended to Montevideo just short of the South Dakota border.

12 Ramsey Mill
The Alexander Ramsey and Dr. Thomas Foster flour mill built in 1857 at the lower Vermillion Falls, attained 100 barrels per day. Fire destroyed the mill in 1894. The charred stone walls were made a Minnesota Historic Site in 1958.

13 Hastings Foundry
The 1859 foundry became a leader in the region. In 1866, as the Star Iron Works, it became known for quality ornamental grill work and in 1868 for reinforcing tie beams with cast star ends. A National Register Site.

14 Stroud Humphrey Mfg. Co.
Formed in 1885, Stroud purchased the Star Iron Works in 1904. Products included boats, motors, marine engines, pumps, and automobiles. In 1906 Charles Stroud paid $2.00 for a permit to operate his Stroud in Hastings.

15 W. Sondermann Brickyard
Sondermann opened the business in Prescott, Wisconsin, and moved to Hastings about 1870. The largest brickyard in the area, it made the salmon colored bricks for the County Courthouse and other local landmarks. It closed in the 1890s when clay deposits ran out.

16 Kuenzel Brewery
Bat Steffan opened the brewery in 1885 and sold it to Austrian Master Brewer Adolph Kuenzel in 1902. His Hastings Brewing Co. dominated the city breweries.

17 Covered Bridge
The covered bridge replaced an earlier Vermillion River bridge in 1867. Two years later the bridge, dislodged by an ice jam, floated down river and over Vermillion Falls.

18 Hastings Malting Company
In 1862 A.W. Gardner built a 30' by 120' stone grain warehouse. In 1885, after several additions, it was converted into a malting company providing malt to the brewing industry. Prohibition forced its return to use as a grain elevator until demolition in 1965.

19 Diamond Starch Company
Diamond operated in the Whaley warehouse on East First St. from 1889 to 1898 producing starch from locally grown potatoes. The first year 60 thousand bushels, purchased at 20 cents per bushel, produced 250 tons of starch.
20 2nd St. Toboggan Slide
Tobogganing was an early 1900s fashionable Hastings sport. The city built several slides including a lighted run down the center of 2nd Street from atop Swede Hill into town. Well packed side-by-side tracks carried challenging clubs.

21 Todd Field
Originally a limestone quarry and gravel pit the site eventually became a watering hole for cattle. In 1932 the city filled and leveled the area for a high school athletic stadium. The WPA added stone work in 1934.

22 Vermillion Linen Mill.
This building housed the Linen Mill on Eddy Street in 1899. Originally the building was part of the Ennis Flour Mill moved down river for the Cadwell Grist Mill. In 1911 the building moved down river, again, becoming part of the Gardner Mill.

23 Hastings State Hospital
The 1900 hospital included large brick buildings housing up to 900 patients. It was known as the Insane Asylum. On the complex's 460 acre farm patients produced garden and dairy products for the hospital. In 1979 it became the Minnesota Veterans Home.

24 Milwaukee Road Depot
The depot, built in 1904, replaced a wooden depot razed by fire.

Smead started in St. Paul in 1906 and moved to Hastings in 1907 renting a second floor room in the Gazette building on 2nd St. It had developed a unique "handleless" file for documents. The company grew, acquiring buildings along the block. In 1962 Smead purchased acreage and relocated on East 10th Street. Smead has become the world's largest manufacturer of diversified office filing products.

26 H.D. Hudson Company
The Brandt Mfg. Company, owned by Hudson and Thurber, moved to Hastings in 1909 changing its name to the H. D. Hudson Mfg. Co. in 1916. At one time the company supplied 90% of the sprayers and dusters used in the world. Hudson was the city's major employer for years.

27 St. Paul Southern
The St. Paul Southern electric RR connected Hastings and St. Paul from 1914 to 1928. Stops included Spring Lake, Pine Bend, Inver Grove, and South St. Paul. The Hastings to St. Paul fare was 50 cents.

28 Standard Engraving and Cut Glass
Standard operated from 1919 to 1923 in the city's First National Bank Building. A.W. Goranson, owner, apprenticed at Sweden's famous Orrefors glassworks.

29 R. Brownson Company
Brownson started making horse collars, in 1915, followed by a variety of products until closing in the 1950s. Many were company inventions. Brownson's catalog included horse sweat pads, nose guards, feed baskets, dust mops, ash sifters, paper weights, shovels, fly swatters, can openers, fly nets, paper shopping bags, and pre-cut houses.

30 C.A. Lund Co.
Manufacturer of skis and birthplace of the modern hockey stick. During World War II the Army asked Lund to produce snowshoes. Over 400 pairs were produced daily. Fire destroyed the plant January 6, 1945.

31 Fasbender Clinic
Thomas H. Olson, in 1957, asked Frank Lloyd Wright to design this clinic for his friend Doctor Herman Fasbender, Jr. The design features a copper clad roof with wide eaves. Construction was completed in 1959 after Wright's death. A National Register Site.
A total of twelve homes, two churches, and eighteen Hastings buildings have received recognition as National Register Historic Sites. Three were described in the preceding pages; the Dakota County Courthouse, the Hastings Foundry, and the Fasbender Clinic. The other registered buildings comprise the East 2nd Street Commercial District. The West 2nd Street Residential District includes six registered homes.

For the visitor a stroll along 2nd Street is a step back in time.

A West 2nd Street Residential District
The Residential District includes the Strauss, Norrish, Thorne, Pringle, Pringle-Simmons, and Olson homes. The Olson and Norrish homes date from 1857 when Hastings became the Dakota County seat. Part of the Olson home is older, having been moved from Nininger.

B East 2nd Street Commercial District
The Commercial District presents a variety of buildings in many architectural styles. Included are the Mississippi Belle, Adsit Hospital, Ye Olde City Hall, Masonic Block, Gardner House, and commercial businesses known as the Michael Schaller, Jacob Schaller, Griffin, Hageman-Humm, Pitz, Mertz, Reissner, Bathrick, Pringle, and Finch buildings.
C Le Duc-Simmons Mansion
1629 Vermillion Street
The Gothic Revival style mansion was completed in 1865 by William Gates LeDuc. He was a lawyer, businessman, author, soldier, and Commissioner of Agriculture in the Rutherford B. Hayes cabinet.

D Thompson-Fasbender House
315 Pine Street
William Thompson, grain dealer and lumber miller, built this house in 1880. In 1929 it became St. Raphael's Hospital under Dr. Herman Fasbender, Sr. It is now the Thorwood Bed and Breakfast.

E Wright-Eckert House
724 Ashland Street
Constructed in circa 1857 as a parsonage by G.W.T. Wright, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Designed entirely in wood, this Italian Villa style features a cupola and front porch.

F Van Dyke-Libbey House
612 Vermillion Street
This imposing Second Empire style mansion was built by banker W.J. Van Dyke in 1862. Lumber mill owner R.C. Libbey lived here from 1880 to 1911.

G McDonald-Todd House
309 West Seventh St.
A.W. McDonald, a staff member of Scientific American Magazine, also edited the Emigrant Aid Journal in this house when it was located in Nininger. It was moved to Hastings in 1868 by Irving Todd, Sr.

H Latto House
620 Ramsey Street
Rudolph Latto, brewer and president of the German American Bank, built this Victorian mansion in 1880. The house was left to the city in 1914 to establish a hospital. It is now the Rosewood Bed and Breakfast.

I Howes-Graus House
718 Vermillion Street
An 1860s Italianate style mansion built by Byron C. Howes. The three story tower is known as a "campanile."

J Methodist Episcopal Church
8th and Vermillion Streets
The design combines Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, and Italianate styles. It was constructed in 1862 on 5th Street and moved to the present location in 1871.

K First Presbyterian Church
6th and Vermillion Streets
Organized in 1856 the church's congregation moved to its present location and building in 1876. Lightning ignited a fire in 1907 destroying the roof but the walls were saved by rain. Reconstruction was finished in 1909.
A Timeline of Hastings History

1849  Minnesota Territory created on Mar. 3, 1849.
      Dakota County established October 27, 1849.
1850  Henry G. Bailly opened trading post near
      Vermillion and 2nd Streets.
      The first territorial road, authorized from
      Mendota to Wabasha, through Hastings.
1851  Signing of Treaty of Mendota opening Dakota
      lands west of Mississippi River to settlement.
      Bailly’s Trading Post became the Buckhorn
      Tavern and Hastings’ first hotel.
1853  The future town of Hastings was platted.
1854  Hastings selected as town name at Buckhorn.
      First school house built on Spring Street.
      Harrison Graham builds the first of three
      mills on the Vermillion River.
1855  LeDuc and Stowell establish the first sawmill.
      Pringle Hardware store established; probably
      oldest in Minnesota.
1856  Hastings first newspaper, the Dakota Weekly
      Journal, published.
      First National Bank founded; second oldest
      National Bank in Minnesota.
      First Presbyterian, St. Lukes Episcopal, and
      Guardian Angels Catholic churches built.
      Masonic Dakota Lodge #7 chartered.
1857  Hastings incorporated as a city.
      Estergreen Wagon Works established, largest
      in Dakota County.
      Hastings, Minnesota River and Red River of
      the North Railroad Company chartered. Became
      the Hastings and Dakota Railway Company.
      Hastings selected as Dakota County seat.
1858  Numerous elevators constructed on the river
      front at the end of the Pioneer Wheat Trail.
1859  German Teutonic Society establishes a theater
      group; later builds an opera house.
1861  Hastings men volunteer for First Minnesota
      Regiment answering President Lincoln’s call.
1867  "Covered bridge" spans Vermillion River.
1871  Dakota County Courthouse completed.
1878  President Rutherford B. Hayes visits Hastings
      as guest of William G. LeDuc.
1880  Hastings Union Industrial Assoc. established.
1888  First electricity in Hastings.
1895  Completion of Spiral Bridge across Mississippi.
      Albert Jacobson became first city policeman
      to lose his life in the line of duty.
1898  Meloy Park, dedicated as first Hastings park.
      Telephone Company founded with 27 patrons.
1899  Christmas Day fire proves most destructive in
      city’s history.
1900  Construction begun on State Insane Asylum.
      Beethoven Club organized.
1907  Smead Company moves to Hastings to produce
      "bandless" file started in St. Paul in 1906.
      Construction underway on Hastings’ first
      sewer and water system.
1909  H.D. Hudson Company starts sprayer production.
1914  St. Paul Southern Electric RR begins service
      between St. Paul and Hastings.
1915  Brownson opens horse collar factory.
1919  PTA organized; drafts constitution.
1927  Lock and Dam #2 construction begins.
1934  WPA completes Todd Field.
1940  Public school hot lunch program begins on
      trial basis
1948  Mississippi River nine foot channel completed
      at Hastings.
1951  High Bridge, replacing Spiral Bridge, opened
      to traffic; Spiral Bridge demolished.
1953  Regina Memorial Hospital opened.
1955  First sewage treatment plant goes on line.
1957  Hastings celebrates centennial year.
1958  Hospital Auxiliary organized.
1963  Radio Station KDWA began broadcasting.
1965  Year of record flood.
1968  Chamber of Commerce organized.
1971  City establishes 109 acre Industrial Park.
1974  New Dakota County Government Center
      completed.
1979  Minnesota Veterans Home opened.
1987  Hydro Electric Power Dam dedicated.
1993  Old Dakota County Courthouse building
      renovated as Hastings City Hall.

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