

Our goal is that you will find this tour to be an enjoyable outdoor activity, and educational as well. A tour, such as this, would not be possible without our research volunteers. We thank them for their hours of time and dedication.

We have many volunteers who do a variety of tasks. If you would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities, or how to become a member of SCHS, please contact us.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

*Stevens County*  
**HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM**

116 West 6<sup>th</sup> Street

Morris, MN 56267

320-589-1719

[info@stevenshistorymuseum.com](mailto:info@stevenshistorymuseum.com)

[www.stevenshistorymuseum.com](http://www.stevenshistorymuseum.com)



*making history come alive*

**City of Hancock**  
*Self-guided Walking Tour*

Some of the best historical artifacts are right before our very eyes. Take a walk back into time and learn a little bit about some people that helped structure Hancock as we know it. The homes/structures on this walking tour were built by many of the folks who began businesses, churches, community organizations and were influential in helping Hancock and Stevens County become a thriving place to live, work and play.



**PLEASE DO NOT ENTER PRIVATE PROPERTY AND OBSERVE ALL SAFETY RULES REGARDING PUBLIC STREETS AND ROADS.**

## 1 6th Street / Main Street

Hancock was officially platted as a village in 1872 by the St. Paul and Pacific Railway Co. The naming of the town has long been disputed, with three different versions. Joseph Wood Hancock, an early missionary among the Native Americans, is one of the names credited. A post office was founded and streets were platted in 1872. A rail station was built and Hancock was incorporated in 1882. By 1899, there were 38 businesses in town and had a population of 400 people. Many original buildings on Main Street (6th Street) have been removed to make room for new replacements over the years. Atlantic Avenue, previously called Front Street, was also once filled with many thriving businesses.



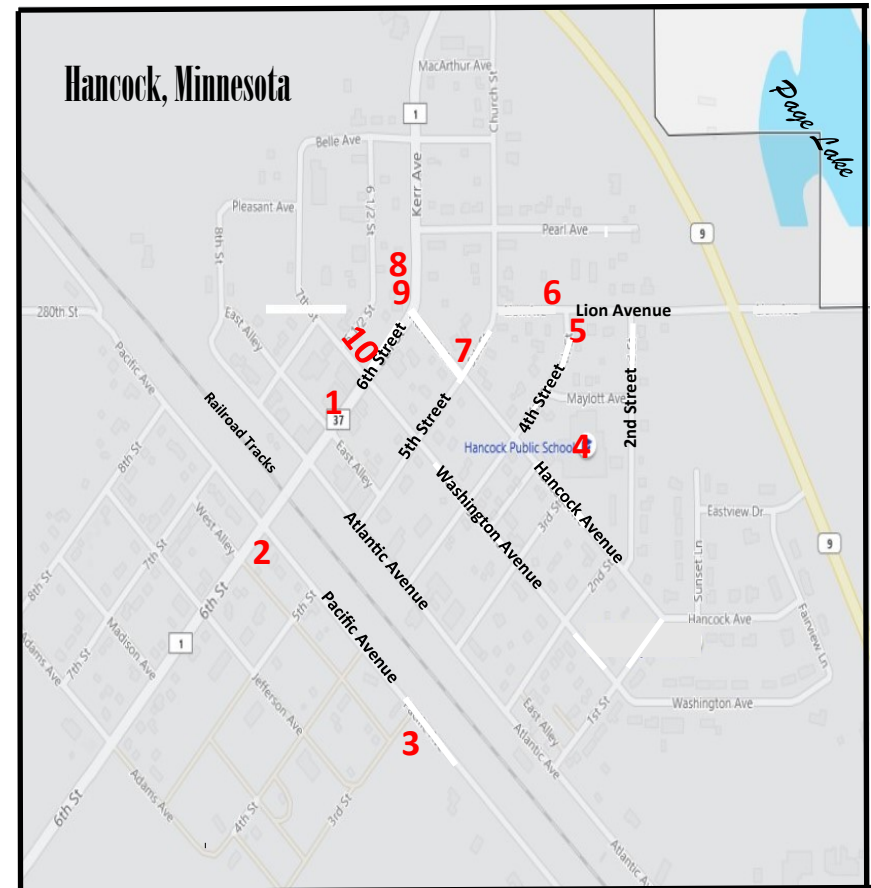
Main Street late 1890's



Crowd on Main Street 1915



6th Street/Main Street Hancock - 1950's



 **Hancock**®

Thank you to Hancock Concrete  
for sponsoring this walking tour!

10

### 663 Washington Avenue

This house is known as the "Ransom House". As many as 3,000 individuals can say that Dr. Mathias Lent Ransom delivered them into this world. In fact, he was greeted by an excited father at the



train station upon his arrival in August of 1903 and delivered his first baby in Hancock just hours after declaring this his home. Doc Ransom married Alfaretta Stinson in 1910 and they made their home in Hancock. During the first ten years here it was the old horse and buggy that took him on house calls, followed by "Old Muddy" his Model T Ford Coupe during the next ten, and newer autos after that. Doc Ransom served the Hancock community for over 40 years. July 13, 1947 was declared "Doc Ransom Day" and a Homecoming Parade was the highlight of the day. Hundreds of his "babies" of all ages marched in the

parade, organized by decades. The well-known Starbuck Band also played a concert at the baseball field in his honor, and he was given a gift by the community for his years of service.

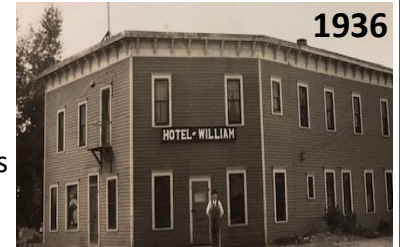
Alfaretta Ransom died in 1925 from scarlet fever that began with tonsillitis, only 10 years after they wed. Doc Ransom passed away in 1958, at the age of 86. He was loved and respected by all who knew him.



2

### 558 Pacific Avenue

For over half a century, the **Hotel William** was one of the most popular stopping spots for weary travelers, hungry businessmen, land seekers and hunters. Located near a trail that connected to the Oregon Trail, travelers would stay in one of the 19 rooms and enjoy fine dining.



The Hotel was built in 1895 by Isaac Lemaster who ran it as the Columbia Hotel. The next owner was Arthur Thorpe who purchased it in 1904. The Thorpe name was one of prominence in the Hancock community, owning many properties. Under Thorpe, William Anderson took over the management in 1908. Anderson and his wife, Matilda, moved to Hancock from Minneapolis where William was a professional chef and baker at Sheik's Restaurant. Under the Anderson's management, the Hotel soon gained prestige as one of the best establishments in Stevens County. Mr. Anderson was soon dubbed "Hotel Bill" and was very well liked in the community. Matilda, and their daughter, Freda, were famous for their excellent Swedish food. With only 12 tables, people came from miles around and made reservations to ensure a place to sit.

A popular customer was the hunter. Hancock was known as the "Pheasant Capital" of Minnesota. Hunters would make reservations for days, weeks, or even a month.

Hotel William remained in the Anderson family until 1945. Freda Anderson operated it for several of those last years before selling it to the Steinbrings, who owned the car dealership across the street. Without Freda's cooking, the business faded away. Since then it has been the Braaten Rest Home and also a group home called "William Home", after the long time owner. It is now a private residence.



3

### 138 Pacific Avenue



In 1916, Henry Schmidgall moved to Hancock from Illinois where he was employed by a bridge contractor. Henry built a few bridges in the immediate area before acquiring the concrete drain tile factory in Hancock, which we now know as Hancock Concrete. In 1928, Henry built this concrete home. This home is constructed of 8 inch concrete block covered with stucco on the outside walls, lathe and plaster on the inside walls. The basement floor was concrete, and underneath the basement floor were four 24 inch concrete tubes that went to the outside perimeter of the house and came up through the middle of the house. The cold air was to circulate back under through the furnace. A series of water pipes in the furnace and a water supply tank in the bathroom on the second floor provided free hot water in the winter when the furnace was used. The main floor was a solid reinforced concrete floor about six inches thick. The second floor also was solid concrete. This took a lot of doing to mix this concrete in a little hand mixer, as the sand gravel had to be shoveled into the mixer along with a sack of cement. Then it was loaded in the wheel barrow, and with a rope on the front, was pulled up the ramps to get to the top floor of the house to pour the concrete. After the rafters and the roof boards were placed, the roof was shingled with concrete shingles. This was considered a fireproof house at the time. A two-car garage was built out of concrete blocks to match the house. This house, which is 92 years old, is still as sound as the day it was built and is probably Hancock's oldest concrete legacy. In recent years there have been some

additions and changes made to the property. The home has remained in the family and is currently occupied by the family of a grandson of Henry Schmidgall.

1928



8

### 767 6th Street



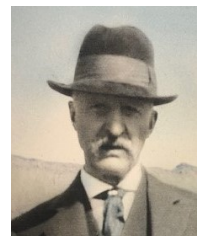
John Erickson came to Hancock in 1874. He married Flora Comstock, from Maine, in 1878. They made their home here and this house is known as the "Erickson House". John Erickson was the founder of the hardware store in 1885, which is the oldest in Stevens County and one of the oldest in the Hall Hardware Company, now known as Our Own Hardware stores. John also had many other business interests, including lumber yards, and, for a time, a mortuary. After John's retirement, the hardware store was managed by his son Andrew until the time of his death. It was sold in 1945. Alice Isabelle "Belle" Erickson, one of John and Flora's daughters, married Harry F. Frisbee and lived next door.

9

### 761 6th Street



This is known as the "Frisbee House". Harold (Harry) F. Frisbee married "the girl next door", Belle Erickson, in 1906. Harry was the President of the National Bank. He died at the young age of 52. Belle continued to live in this house with their son, Harry E. "Bud" Frisbee. Belle passed away in 1965. Bud was wounded in the European Tour of World War II, twice, and returned to Hancock for the remainder of his days. Bud was in the business of insurance and real estate, but most known for his active role in firearm training for area youth. He was very active in many area community clubs.



Harry F. Frisbee



Bud Frisbee—WWII

7

### 751 5th Street

#### Congregational Church



The First Congregational Church of Hancock was incorporated under the laws of the State of Minnesota on January 10, 1878.

The first meetings were held in the schoolhouse and it was not until the spring of 1883 that the first church building was completed and occupied. It was located on the corner of what is now Pearl and Church Streets. In 1889, it was moved to the corner of 5th Street and Washington Avenue, where it remained until 1934 when it was moved to the corner of 5th Street and Hancock Avenue and fully remodeled. But on June 26, 1964, the Congregational Church had a fire that poured from its roof. Fortunately the fire did not do much damage, but the church was filled with smoke and everything was water soaked. The beautiful stained glass windows had to be replaced with more modern ones.

The Congregational Church held its last Sunday service on December 22, 2019 and closed after the Christmas Eve service on December 24, 2019. It has since been purchased with plans to become a residence.



The original Congregational Church



Congregational Church 1970's

4

### 371 Hancock Avenue—School

The Hancock Public School was organized on September 9, 1872, when the county commissioners granted a petition to form School District Number 3 in the town of Hancock. It was the third district to organize in Stevens County. The first school building, pictured below, was located on the current site of Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church. The 1912 school, pictured below, was the third building built by the Hancock School District, but the first one built on the present location. In 1920 the Board voted to float bonds for \$110,000 and build a new high school. In 1960 the district added a building to connect the two original ones. In 1999, the 1912 building was taken down and the existing elementary was constructed, as well as other renovations. A new addition and renovation in 2019 completes the thriving progress of the Hancock Public Schools, which has an enrollment of approximately to 400 students.



The first school building built in 1883-84



September 2020



The 1912 school building the day students moved in.



1912 building on the left , 1920 building on the right.

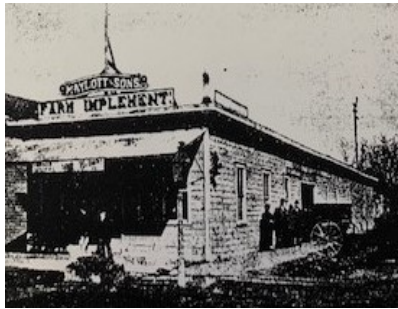
5

278 Lion Avenue



Albert and Margaret Maylott moved to Hancock in 1903, residing in this home, known as the "Maylott House". They had three sons (Archie, pictured below) and one daughter. Albert owned and operated an implement business for 35 years called *Maylott & Sons*. One published review of his business had this to say:

*In this business review of the many varied industries of Stevens County, we find stock in the mammoth establishment known as Maylott & Sons. Their lines are the best the market affords, lines of world-wide reputation, such being the Deering binders, haytools, Emerson gang and sulky plows, Mandt and Stoughton wagons, Henney buggies, Clover Leaf manure spreaders, etc. They also have the distinction of having the largest capacity elevator in Stevens County.*

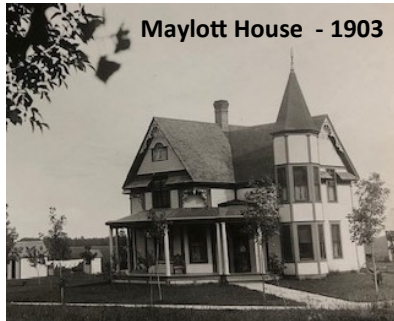


Maylott & Sons Implement - 1910's

Albert Maylott passed away in his home in 1938. His son, Alfred, carried on the family business for many years after his father's passing.



Archie Maylott—WW1 Recruit



Maylott House - 1903

6

371 Lion Avenue



This stately and historic home has remained in the same family for over 100 years.

In 1895, this lot was sold to Walter and Jeannie Muir for \$100. They built the original house on this property. The Muir's had aging parents who could not take care of themselves, so a second house was moved into town with horses and placed next to the original house. The house was moved from east of Hancock. (The parent's name was Dutcher and the large slough just east of Hwy.9 is called Dutcher's Slough) The location of where the two houses were joined can be seen on the floors upstairs.

In 1897, Tosten and Maret Lien purchased this property for \$1,150. Their daughter, Annie, and her new husband, Nels Selland purchased the home in 1910. Nels Selland operated a Mercantile in Benson and after marrying Annie, he opened the Selland Mercantile in Hancock. He operated this store until the early 1930's when it burned down, and was never rebuilt. Nels and Annie lived in this house until their deaths. In the 1930's, when the depression hit, one and sometimes two bedrooms were rented out. One notable person who rented a bedroom was Mr. Josten, who later became the owner of Josten's, the class ring company. The rental of rooms ended in early 1950's.

Their daughter, Mae, and her husband, Edwin A. Stettner, were married in the 1940's and moved in with Annie. After Annie's death in 1966, Ed and Mae Stettner took ownership. Mae was elected City Clerk and her office was in the dining room of this house, where folks would come to pay bills, get permits, etc. (She passed away in 1977)



Eddie (son of Edwin and Mae) and Karen Stettner moved into the house with Edwin in 1978. (Edwin passed away in 1980) They raised their family here and still live here. Some updates have been made to preserve the house over the years, but the wood work, floors, and window sizes remain intact.