

116 Cascade N

(Spanish Garden Theater)

Originally, this was the home of the Spanish Garden Theater which opened in the fall of 1931. The interior of the lobby was done in hammered gold to create the effect of colored stone and featured water flowing from the mouth of a lion's head. The waifs of the theater were covered with three-dimensional replicas of a Spanish town. The theater originally cost \$20,000 to construct. The name was eventually changed to the Star Theater. It showed films until the late 1950's. The building has since been a clothing store and furniture store.

117 Cascade N

(Stoltzman & Johnson Building)

Previously known as the Osceola Mercantile Company and Koch's Store, this building was built in 1898 to accommodate a general store. The current building front retains the same look as when it was renovated in 1928. This renovation formally introduced the new merchandising methods, which changed the business from a general store to a department store.

120 Cascade N

(Bill Olson's Store)

Geiger General Merchants or Lunde's Store - the doors still open at an angle on the corner of the building as it did when it was originally built. Large glass windows covered both the front and north side of the building, a portion of the glass has been covered over during the years.

102 2nd Ave W

(C.W. Staples Drug store)

This corner has been a business location since the late 1850's. Charles H. Staples constructed a rustic drugstore here when Osceola was still known as Osceola Mills and was little more than a steamboat landing. Osceola had other businesses during this time, but they were below the hill on the riverfront and consisted of a gristmill, blacksmith shop and a small trading post, which according to tradition did business with mill hands, lumberjacks and Indians impartially. Charles' son built the present building

in 1904. Inside the stamped metal ceiling is still in place and wonderfully restored.

201 Cascade N

(Polk County Courthouse)

Veit Geiger, a German immigrant and brew master, built Osceola's first stone building in 1875 at a cost of \$3,500. It served as a saloon and storage depot for the products produced at the Geiger Brewery. The second story was added in 1877. When the county took over the building in 1882 the beer barrels were removed and the basement was converted into a four bed jail. The sheriff and his family lived on the second floor in the rear while Judge Ole Larson had the front two rooms. This structure was used as the Polk County Courthouse until 1899 when the county seat was moved to Balsam Lake. This building, as well as those housing the Cascade Bar, Osceola Sun and PY's Bar & Grill, is constructed out of limestone quarried in this area. Leopold Stickley, father of mission-style furniture maker Gustav Stickley, worked on the construction of the Geiger Building.

202 Cascade N

(Mobil Oil Station)

This is the only barrel-shaped Art Deco Mobil Oil Station still in existence in Wisconsin. It was originally built in the 1930's by Mobil Oil Corporation and featured the flying red horse. Over the years it has been home to several retail businesses including an art gallery, a clothing store, a sporting goods store and a gift shop.

205 Cascade N

(Dr. C.F. Mitchell Building)

Built in 1909 this building has served as a furniture store with accompanying undertaking business, a Co-op Grocery Store and a recreation center where young people danced to live music.

209 Cascade N

(Lynn Law Office)

Originally built as a law office, (pre-1910) it served as a restaurant from 1945 to the 90's. Nine different

owners ran the restaurant with eight of them using some form of the words "Coffee Cup" in the name.

213 Cascade N

(Zorn Auto Building)

This one story brick structure functioned as both an automobile retail location as well as an auto garage. The center featured an arched garage door, with plate glass show windows flanking either side. The side and back walls were made to last, being built of 8-inch fireproof tile. Ford automobiles were sold here from 1916-1919 before becoming the local dealer for Buick and Chevrolets. At one time Graham trucks were also sold here. An addition was added on to the south some years later; this addition currently houses the Century 21 office.

215 Cascade N

(Farmers Mutual Telephone Company)

Built in 1925, this one story brick building has a name and date plate on the front, and is very intact, with only replaced or covered windows. A small addition is set back and built to the north side of the building. It originally housed equipment for the telephone company, but now is home to the Ludvigson Law Office.

217 Cascade N

(Spitzer Ford Garage)

Constructed in 1915 this simple brick building has a pediment and corbelled cornice with a decorative brick diamond pattern at the pediment peak. It originally served the community as a Ford Automotive Dealership and currently houses Lucky Panda Chinese Restaurant.

105 3rd Ave W

(Hotel Osceola)

Local investors formed a stock company and opened the Hotel Osceola in 1917. This three-story building is constructed of Twin Cities wire-cut brick with white Dunville-cut stone accenting the trim, sills, caps and Copings. The hotel could seat 100 in the main dining room. The second and third floors had 19 boarding rooms each. The going room rate was \$2.50 per day or \$3.00 with private bath. There were 170 guests at the grand opening on May 25, 1917. During prohibition, a "blind pig" operated out

of the basement. Today the building is used as an apartment building.

201 3rd Ave E

(First Baptist Church)

In 1863, the Baptists erected the first building dedicated to the worship of God in Polk County. Previously service had been held in a boarding house. The current stone building was constructed in 1910 for a Wisconsin Baptist Convention. The cobblestone work was a gift to the church by local stonemasons Chris Green and Eric Klung. The stained glass windows are memorials for Elder and Julis Catlin, Rice Webb, and Reverend B.K. Burbor.

306 River

The white framed Methodist-Church building dates back to 1867, but the Congregation was organized as early as 1854. Over the years the building has been remodeled. The bell tower and entrance were originally on the west side of the building, but were later repositioned to the southwest corner. Downed Hall was added in 1986. The 520-pound bell that hangs in the tower was delivered to Osceola on the steamboat Cutter in November of 1867.

River Street

This is one of the first streets laid out in the Village. The former Osceola Medical Center (corner of Third Avenue and River Street) had its beginnings in 1933, in the Charles C. Ladd home. The St. Croix River Inn is a bed and breakfast originally known as "Stoneleigh". It was built as a private residence for C.W. Staples.

The Emily Olson House, home of the Osceola Historical Society, is located at 408 River Street. Several other private homes from the 1800 and 1900's line this tree-covered street, overlooking the St. Croix River.

Mount Hope Cemetery – 3rd Ave & Summit St

This was the first cemetery association to be formed in Osceola. It began on June 27, 1863. The first person buried was Jennie Kent, granddaughter of

Osceola's founding father, William Kent. Jennie and her fiancé, Edward Armstrong, ice-skated into an air hole in the St. Croix River and both drowned. Three months later her younger sister, Nellie, was also buried in Mount Hope Cemetery. Nellie died from burns after a wood-burning kitchen stove caught her clothing on fire.

Brick Italianate House – corner of Cascade & 6th

The distinctive two story Italianate house with the bay window on Cascade Street and Sixth Avenue is on the National Register of Historic Places. One feature of the Italianate style is the cathedral windows. It is a private home. Inside there is a marble fireplace and a stairway that looks like the one in "Gone with the Wind." It makes up a full ninety degree turn about three quarters of the way up. The house was built by businessman A. A. Heald in 1880. It was referred to at that time as the "Osceola Palace" and the construction cost was \$3,500.

Osceola Historical Society
PO Box 342 • Osceola WI 54020
osceolahistorical@gmail.com

**Osceola Chamber Of Commerce and
Mainstreet Program**
PO Box 251 • Osceola WI 54020
osceolachamber@centurytel.net
715-755-3300 or 800-947-0581

Village of Osceola www.vil.osceola.wi.us

Osceola Wisconsin Historic Walking Tour



The history of Osceola on the River St. Croix dates back to May 14, 1844 when William Kent (considered the founding father of Osceola) and others made the first land claims in the area. On a return trip from St Croix Falls, they stopped to investigate the origins of a creek that flowed into the river on the east side. When they saw Cascade Falls, they immediately recognized its potential for power production. By 1845 a flutter wheel powered sawmill was in operation. Osceola has been the home of many flour, grist and lumber mills.

Since its beginnings in 1844, Osceola has evolved from a busy logging town to an industrious steamboat manufacturing hub, to a pastoral farming community, then to what it is today: a bustling little community offering its residents and visitors the charm and atmosphere of a small town with close proximity to the many amenities of a metropolitan area.

Soo Line Depot - 114 Depot Road

This depot was built in 1916 to replace the original wooden depot that was destroyed when a westbound

freight train crashed into freight cars parked at the platform. The new depot featured red Twin Cities wire-cut brick with sandstone trim. It had both ladies' and gentlemen's waiting room and separate indoor washroom facilities. The Osceola Historical Society purchased the depot in 1993. It is now home to the Osceola & St. Croix Valley Railway. Once again you can purchase train tickets in the 1916-style inside this fully restored depot.

**Mill Ponds/Cascade Falls/Wilkie Glen/
Osceola Bluff**

Mill Ponds: There are three Mill Ponds. Upper, Middle and Lower located on the Osceola Creek.

Cascade Falls: The Osceola Creek feeds into the St. Croix River via a beautiful 25-foot waterfall that drops 108 feet.

Wilkie Glen: Franz Wilkie, a German-born sea captain and later the Osceola postmaster, left money to the village and the schools. The village then purchased the glen area below Cascade Falls from the Archer-Daniels Midland Company on November 4, 1940. The cost was \$2,675, and the area was named Wilkie Glen.

Osceola Bluff: Standing stately over the Village of Osceola this bluff has served the area well as part of the Chippewa Indian ginseng trail. The Soo Line Railroad used it as a picnic grounds and dance pavilion area where they would have employee functions for as many as 1500 at a time in the late 1800's. Purchased in March of 2000, it is now being preserved as a natural green space by the Village.

99 Cascade N

(Osceola Mill and Elevator Company)

This building was once the mill office for the Osceola Mill and Elevator Company. Built in 1902, the mill sat on the peninsula bordered by the creek, the falls and the glen. Part of the foundation wall for the mill can still be seen. Mills had been located on this site since 1844. When wheat became a cash crop in 1853, William Kent abandoned the sawmill and in its place built a flour mill. Milling continued here until 1919.

101 & 103 Cascade

(Dr. Combacker's Office/Ernest Dodd Building)

These three buildings have been home to a wide variety of businesses over the years. Occupants have included a variety store, a dress shop, a jewelry store, an undertaker parlor, a restaurant, a tailor shop, a barbershop, a meat market, a coin-operated laundry, a doctor's office, a pizza parlor, a gift shop, a game room, a small regional publication office, a bookstore, a coffee shop and an art gallery. The windows on the south and west side face Cascade Falls and offer a magnificent view year-round.

108 Cascade N

(Heald & Thyng Building/Masonic lodge)

This two story building, built in 1884, with a brick façade and stone sidewalls originally housed the Masonic Lodge on the upper story and the Herald & Thyng Building on the lower level. Currently the lower level of the building has been divided in two. The original back bar is still in place even though the brass rail has given away to bar stools for the convenience of patrons. Osceola has been home to a local weekly newspaper for more than 100 years, with the majority of them being published and printed in this building. Note the second story still features its original corbelled window hoods and corbelled cornice.

112 Cascade N

(Osceola State Bank/Osceola Dental Building)

Downtown Dental has been a dentist office since its construction in 1931 and has remained virtually unchanged. The Spanish Tile roof, constructed to match the Spanish Garden Theater next door, can still be seen. Unlimited Styling was originally built as the Osceola State Bank in 1916. It opened with capital stock of \$20,000 and had a \$2,000 surplus. The State Bank merged with the Bank of Osceola during the depression. The building has housed several businesses since then, some of them being the Blue Lateran Cafe, a pizza parlor, game room, ceramic shop and currently a hair salon. This one story brick building features a stepped cornice, with a nameplate directly below.

