



14. 1105 Greenbrier St. Built in 1916 in the Beaux Arts style, this building was the original Arlington Hills Library and was one of the three Carnegie Libraries built in St Paul. Today it is home to the East Side Freedom Library which, among other things, is home to the Hmong Archives (hmongarchives.org)

13. 682 E Magnolia Ave. This house was home to Zebulon Olson who immigrated to the area from Sweden in 1886. Olson was a hosting engineer who worked on the Minnesota State Capitol Building. It was during the construction of the Capitol building that hosting engineers were unionized.

12. 1077 Payne Ave. Today the façade obscures the past life of this building as the neighborhood's cinema. From 1915-1977 (first as the Venus Theatre and then as the Capitol Theatre), 1077 showed movies. Those who grew up in the neighborhood fondly remember spending their Saturdays here with their friends.

11. 1020 Payne Ave. This two-story blue wood and brick building housed the Nelson Brother's family grocery store from 1908-1970. Arthur Nelson, a first generation Swedish American, originally opened the grocery store at 999 Payne Ave in 1903 when he was 19 years old. In 1908, the business was moved to 1020 where it served the Swedish community for 67 years.

10. 983 Payne Ave. Built in 1917, 983 was part of the East Side's vibrant Scandinavian commercial district. As Scandinavian immigration to St Paul reached its highpoint in the early-20th century, Payne Avenue also saw a boom in commercial development. A 1937 Swedish magazine devoted a whole issue to Swedish St Paul. Payne Avenue was featured prominently in one article, "The All-Swedish Street in St Paul: Payne Avenue." 983 house Charlie Olson's meat market where residents could find open barrels of lutefisk ready to take home. Right next door at 987-989 were Palmquist Brothers Grocers and Anderson Brothers Meat Market.

9. 965 Payne Ave. Built in 1923 in the Beaux Arts style, it was home to the Payne Avenue State Bank. It served the Swedish, German, Italian, and Irish immigrants in the neighborhood, and was known by locals as the "Old Swedish Bank." One of the banks important functions was to help facilitate remittances back home.

8. 960 Payne Ave. 960 is distinct among all the building lining Payne Avenue (or the Twin Cities for that matter) due to its mansard roof. Built in 1886, this building's steep roof with ornate decorations was more commonly found in Paris than in the upper Midwest. The sharp slope allowed for greater use of the attic space, including for apartments.

7. 932 Payne Ave. Built in 1900, 932-936 housed the H F Peterson Dry Goods Company. In pre-refrigeration days, dried foods were important because they wouldn't spoil. Drying foods also allowed them to be shipped long distances so that, for example, immigrant residents of the East Side could get foods from back home. Diagonally across the street, on the southwest corner of Payne and Simms, is Plaza Latino Centro Commercial. Inside is a market where local immigrant merchants from Latin America can rent stalls with reduced overhead.

6. 876 Payne Ave. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this building was home to the Independent Order of Foresters. During the Great Northern Strike of 1894, striking rail workers would meet here.

5. 858 Payne Ave. Marcus Lindgren constructed this building circa 1885 as a saloon just down the street from Hamm's Brewery. In 1903 Hamm's Brewery bought the saloon and began operating it as a "tied house," meaning that only Hamm's products were sold there. Prohibition put an end to this relationship, though the building continued to be a bar from 1933-68.

4. Payne Avenue Viaduct. The construction of the Payne Avenue Viaduct in the 1880s opened up the area north of the railroad tracks to commercial and residential development. The viaduct also played an important role in the Great Northern Strike of 1894 as striking laborers attempted to disrupt the lines and dissuade strikebreakers by throwing, among other things, rotten vegetables.

3. 658 Bush Ave. This plot has two historical dwellings on it. The one on the street (656) is the Francis M Williams House. 658 is located at the back of the property. It is a small, two-story square house build in the 1880s. It was originally located down in the hollow and was moved up the hill around 1912. This house was larger than most in Swede Hollow, and it would have been home to two families of four. Perhaps the building's movement up and out of the hollow mirrored that of its residents whose geographic movement up was a reflection of their upward movement economically.

2. 688 Minnehaha Ave E. The Theodore Hamm Brewing Company was established in 1865 by German immigrant, Theodore Hamm. Hamm had inherited the brewery from his business partner, A F Keller, who had established it over artesian wells over Phalen Creek. Hamm's became one of the largest, if not the largest, brewery in the state. During Prohibition (1920-33) Hamm's stayed in business by producing soft drinks and other food products. At its height, the campus off Minnehaha Ave had a brewery, wash house, bottling plant, powerhouse, malt house, grain storage, stock houses, shipping docks, offices, and much more. In 1965 the company was acquired by Heublein Inc., and it has since changed hands several times. In 1997 Stroh Brewing shut the doors on this complex. Recently, Flat Earth Brewing has started making beer here again.

1. Swede Hollow. [Druery St entrance, 637 Beaumont Ave]. Beginning in the mid-19th century Swedish immigrants moved into the hollow and used whatever building supplies they could find to construct make-shift dwellings. The area was close to the various industries where the men would find jobs and to wealthier neighborhoods where the women could find work in homes. Phalen Creek was not only a source of water but also was the sewer system. By 1915 most Swedes had moved out, but the hollow continued to be home to new waves of immigrants (Italians and Mexicans) until the city of St Paul ordered everyone out and had the buildings razed.

The tour begins towards the southern end of Payne Avenue at Swede Hollow. It follows Payne Avenue, the commercial heart of the East Side, north approximately 1.5 miles. As you learn about the neighborhood's history, take time to look, smell, and hear what is going on around you. This is still an immigrant community, though from different parts of the world: what commonalities do we find between these East Side immigrants past and present?

From Then to Now: Immigration & the (Re)Making of Saint Paul's East Side



Payne Ave & Sims Ave circa 1905 and 2015.

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Introduction

There are communities like this one all across the United States and, in fact, across the globe: Neighborhoods that have welcomed and continue to welcome newly-arrived immigrants. For the last 150+ years, St. Paul's East Side has been home to many waves of immigrants. In the mid-nineteenth century it welcomed arrivals from Scandinavia and Germany. Later in the century, Irish and Italians would settle here. By the 1920s, the East Side began to welcome Mexican immigrants. Today, the neighborhood is home to Salvadoran, Mexican, Karen, Hmong, and many others.

At the heart of this tour is Payne Avenue. Since the 1880s, Payne Avenue has been the commercial and social center of the East Side. Payne Avenue is named after Rice W Payne, an investor who came to St Paul from Virginia in 1856. He purchased 20 acres northeast of downtown. Before returning to Virginia to fight for the Confederate Army during the Civil War, he developed a street and had it named after himself. These 20 acres around Payne Avenue, cut off from the rest of St. Paul by railroad tracks, sat undeveloped for over two decades, until the Payne Avenue viaduct was built in the 1880s.

Development along Payne Avenue grew apace with the upward mobility of many of the area's first immigrants. By 1900, Swedes who had been confined to the shanties of Swede Hollow were prospering and establishing business, banks, churches, and homes "up hill" from the hollow. Today, as one walks Payne Avenue, immigrant life is omnipresent. The Swedish businesses have largely given way to those operated by immigrants from Latin America and Asia.

