



Swede Hill was approximately all of the above area on the east side of the river except South Afton (12).

Afton State Park is south of the dark line (—) into Denmark Township.

26. Ilwaco Springs Resort
 Ilwaco Springs was located on the Wisconsin side of the St. Croix River, just above where Trout Brook runs into the St. Croix. There was a railroad flag stop for this resort, property No.26, on this map. There was a cinder platform about 50 to 60 feet long. This stop was printed on the railroad timetable.

Herbert Walden remembered buying a train ticket at Stillwater to the "Ilwauco Springs" stop and walking home as a high school boy (1920).

The resort hotel, run by two widowed ladies, also boasted a few cottages and was the destination for Black Bass fisherman. There were also some concrete vats where the spring water ran through along side a little store. The peak years for this resort were from 1908 to 1910. With a signal from the "Peanut" train, a launch would come across the river to pick up or deliver guests.

Ilwaco Springs (and there are many recorded spellings) got its name, so legend says, because there was no road down the bluff on the Wisconsin side and the incline was steep with thick undergrowth—thus, "ill-walk-o". Some years later, the hotel burned.

from *I Remember* by Herbert Walden and *The Hudson Star Observer*

Historic AFTON

South Afton † Glenmont Mills † Swede Hill



South Afton

The hamlet sometimes referred to as South Afton, was located about one mile south of Afton Village, on the River Road. C.S & J.M. Getchell built a steam planing and shingle mill in 1857, but the mill was shut down in 1861. In the same year Getchell erected another sawmill on the River Road near where the power line crossing is today. In 1863, that mill was sold to W S. Getchell. In September 1876, this mill was destroyed by fire.

There was a general merchandise store located a short distance south of 4524 S. River Road and close to the river. The general merchandise store was owned by J.P. Furber and operated by B.P. Squires. It was destroyed by fire in the early 1880s. Mr. Getchell moved to Afton Village and built a store in the block south of the village square.

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A warehouse and elevator, operated by steam, 30' x 60', was built by James Coop and Thomas Hackett on their property in South Afton in 1869. It is believed to be the first elevator in Afton.

Quadrant Ave. was the main road to Denmark Township from Afton Village and South Afton. This road dated back to the earliest settlers. The stone bridge on this road dates back to 1900. If you look at the map you will see the road went around that ravine. This road had 3 small bridges crossing Trout Brook Valley, which were washed out often. This road was also the early mail route from Afton through Denmark in 1900. Some early Denmark farmers used the South Afton general store to buy goods and the elevator-warehouse to sell crops.

In 1878 a rust epidemic destroyed much of Minnesota's wheat crop, which spelled disaster for many farmers and grain elevator operators. The elevator was sold to J. P. Furber. The elevator was eventually razed and rebuilt north of the Village when the railroad came through in 1882

Mr. J. P. Furber built a rope ferry in the fall of 1879; it was operated by Nels Melander. Jutting out into the lake on the Wisconsin side, was a sand bar (Black Bass Bar) which served as an unloading point for the freight brought in by steamboats. At times this sand bar was piled high with goods for merchants in nearby towns of River Falls and Afton and other settlements without railroad service. There are few or no traces left of this business area.

Glenmont Saw Mill

The Glenmont Saw Mill was built in 1857 by L. I. Olds. Because in 1857 the congressional township extended on the east side of the lake and there was difficulty in obtaining title to lands, it was considered an Afton mill. It was 44' x 80', with boiler house 30' x 50', capacity sixty thousand feet in twenty-four hours. The mill was run by Olds until 1872, when he sold a half interest to J.H. Lord. They made dimension-sawing specialty lumber. The mill employed 160 men. One band saw cut 80 to 100,000 feet of lumber in 10 hours. Twenty steamers a day pushed logs tied together by booms. A "carry" was a wagon on skids which traveled back and forth to take logs to saw. On the river bank was a hotel and several houses where families lived. Many mill workers also lived in Afton and went to work by boat. In 1872 a large dock, about a thousand feet long, was built near the mill site which made the town of Glenmont and the mill more accessible to the prosperous shipping industry on the St. Croix.

In Joseph Shaw's May 1857 letters to his wife, he says "Two or three steam saw mills are going up on east side of lake, and one at St. Mary's. There is one hundred twenty acres of water covered so completely with saw logs that a person can walk over them and there are thousands and thousands floating on the lake and fast on the shore."

In the early 1900s Glenmont Mill moved to Cass Lake.

Swede Hill

In the late 1860s, 1870s 1880s, the Swedes arrived in Afton. They wrote home in such glowing terms of the opportunities here that soon their uncles, aunts, and cousins also arrived here.

The early, non-English speaking Swedes were considered "foreigners". But they were industrious, hard-working, religious folk and there were jobs here, at the mills, in the forests, in the farm fields, and as domestics.

Besides having to live in fear of Indians and wild animals, they had to learn the language and customs of this new country. They were forced to endure the ridicule and scorn of those who came before them and called themselves Americans.

They were persistent, and took up claims, cleared land, pinched pennies, and prospered. They loved the hilly, rocky lands near the streams and rivers. This was not the best farm land, but it reminded them of Sweden and they knew how to get the most out of the soil. In the year 1900, Swedes outnumbered Yankee and German immigrants in the township. Most were truck gardeners in the summer.

These early Scandinavian families formed the very successful "Afton Berry and Produce Association", also called the "Afton Farm and Produce Association". They were able to bring their crops to Afton Village and sell them to be shipped to market.

They also built two churches in the village, the Swedish Methodist Church and the Swedish Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Many bushes and plants of the early berry farms can be found in the valley ditches, pastures and parks today, most replanted by animals and birds.

1. Thomas Persons
Thomas was born in Littleton, New Hampshire in 1814. He moved to Waterford, Vermont and came to Afton in 1854. He married Maria Huntley. They had 4 children: Simon, Phinias P., Curtis J., and Edgar. Thomas was the town supervisor for 13 years. He owned 200 acres. He sold his 40 acres in Sec. 22 to Nels Hawkinson. Nels came to America at age 17 from Skane, Sweden, and worked on P. Peterson farm. He married Amelia Anderson in 1891 and moved to this farm in 1893. Nels was a powerful man and proud of his perfectly plowed field. When he finished, he would carry the plow on his back so it would not mar the perfect field. They had four children: Ned, Sylvia, Agnes, and Crystal. In the 1940s Charles Berglund purchased this farm and rented the house to the Jack Brewster family.
2. Jacob Hedstrom
Jacob was born in 1837 in Skane, Sweden. He was employed as a Coachman in Sweden and in 1869, he worked at a pharmacy. He came to Afton in 1875 and married Amanda E. Schelin. He worked at the Getchell Mill and purchased 40 acres in Section 22. He died in 1928. His children were Charles, Jennie, and Julia. His small farm was purchased by Charles Berglund.
3. Nels Jacobson
Nels came from Sweden in 1872 with his wife Helen. Their children were Helenor, Albin, George, Alice, Anna, and Hattie. He was a truck gardener. This land was purchased by C.H. and Helen Asp in the 1940s and later owned by W. and A. Dieperink.

4. Thomas Lowry
Thomas and his brother erected a Sawmill at the village of Afton in 1854. They cut about one hundred thousand feet of lumber when for some unexplained reason they closed the mill, sold the machinery, and the mill was gone. In 1901, the property west of the Coulee Road was owned by John C. Hedstrom. The remainder was owned by Charles Pennington. By the year 1912 Matt Mattson purchased the John C. Hedstrom acreage and B.B. Baskin had purchased the Pennington acreage. An 1938 map shows Preston owned the Baskin acreage which was later owned by the C. V. Johnson family.
5. Charles Berglund
Charles immigrated to Minnesota in 1871. He was a shoemaker in Sweden. Charles worked in the forests, bought an 80-acre farm in 1885 from the Isaac Jacobson family, and married Martha (Benson) in 1886. They had 8 children: G. Fred, Albert, Edwin, Elvira, Arthur, Emmett, Esther, and Herbert. They were berry farmers and later expanded and started a dairy herd. Charles was on the school board for Dist. #66. They eventually had two hundred and sixty-five acres of land.
6. Isaac Jacobson
Isaac immigrated to Afton from Sweden in 1875, married Johanna, and had one son, Axel. He owned a 160-acre truck and berry farm. Isaac sold part of his acreage, north of Coulee road to Charles Berglund. Isaac sold his remaining acreage to Albert Peterson. The land was eventually sub-divided and Penfield Ave. was constructed.
7. Peter Granberg
Peter was born in Skane Sweden in 1830. He married Christine Swanson in 1865. They came to Afton in 1881 and had five children, two of whom died in infancy. The surviving children were Nels, Peter, and Ellen. He was a truck and berry farmer. His son Nels and then grandson Earl continued farming on the homestead. The farm was sold to Alvin Fuchs and later sub-divided by Collinwood Farm.
8. Asa Tracy
Asa came to Afton from Maine in 1857. He married Flora and had the following children: Willie, Ernest, and Ellen. Asa was a Civil War Veteran, a shingle maker, and sawyer. He moved to Afton village after a mill accident. He sold 40 acres, in section 27, to Magnus Parson and 160 acres to the John Peterson family. John was born in Sweden 1856, came to Afton 1882, and married Nellie Lofgren in 1884. John died 1909. Their children were Pauline, Hiram (who died at age 3), Emma, John, Albert, Sidney, Ervin, and Elmer. Albert and Esther (Swanson) Peterson and family were the last Petersons to farm in Sec. 27.
- 8A. Thomas Cooney
Thomas was born in December 1853 in Chester, England, to James and Mary Dunn Cooney. In 1859 Tom, his mother and older sisters followed his father to Afton. Tom attended local schools and the St. Croix Valley Academy in Afton. It was here he learned the basics of surveying. In 1874 he entered the University of Minnesota to study engineering. He helped survey the Northern Pacific route from Brainerd on west.

He later became a lieutenant of engineers in the Spanish American War in 1898. He was employed for 19 years as the land agent for the Northern Pacific Railway.
9. N. P. Brown
Nels was born in Skane, Sweden in 1852. He married Johanna Nord and came to Afton in 1883, after working in the mines in Michigan. They had 8 children: Arthur, Albert, Walter, Annie, Minnie, Nettie, Hulda, and Lydia. They were truck and berry farmers. Albert and wife Edna (Young) continued on the farm.
10. Simon Persons
Simon was born in Vermont in 1833 and came to Afton in 1855. He enlisted in Company C, Seventh Minnesota in 1862 and was discharged in August 1865. He bought a farm in 1867 and married Annie Cooney in 1868. They had 6 children: Sarah, Marion, May, William, Ralph, and Bessie. He was a General Farmer and sold 2 acres for Swede Hill School #66. He served on that school board. The farm was later sold to Magnus and Arthur Parsons.
11. Andrew Benson
Andrew was born in Sweden in 1850. He married Ellen Paulson in Hudson in 1884. They had four children: Alice, Edwin, George, and Frank. Son Frank died in World War I of influenza. Andrew was a truck and berry farmer. The farm was sold to Barbara Smith and then Phil and Peggy Thuma.
12. James Coop and Thomas Hackett
James Coop was from England and moved to Afton with wife Nancy and children in 1862. James enlisted in Company C Minnesota and fought in the Civil War. He was discharged in 1865 and built his home in 1866.
12. John Anderson
John was born in Smaland, Sweden in 1853 and came to Afton in 1882. He married Nellie Swanson in 1875. They had four children: Antone, Victor, Arthur, and Alma. He served on the town board for four years and served two terms on the school board Dist. #66. This property was purchased by Myron Herreid in 1940.
13. P. B. Parsons
P. B. married Carrie Johnson and came from Sweden to Afton in 1868. In 1872 he bought the twenty acres and lived there until he died. He was a berry farmer. This farm was sold to Charles and Ida Lambrecht around 1900.
- 13A. Magnus Parsons, son of P. B. Parsons
Magnus was born in Sweden in 1855. He Thomas Hackett was born in Vermont in 1827. He married Lydia Robinson from Maine. They arrived in Afton in 1864 with children William T., Edwin P., and Capitola.

The Coop family and Hackett family both lived in the same house. James and Thomas worked together at the Getchell Mill. The two families managed to save enough money to erect an elevator and warehouse in 1869. The grain elevator was operated by steam and measured 30'x30'. It had a capacity to store nine thousand bushels. It was probably the first elevator in Afton. The grain was shipped by barge until the railroad came through. The property was sold to Mr. J. P. Furber and then to John Anderson in 1885.

worked on his father's farm until 1879 when he purchased forty acres. In 1885 he married Anna Johnson. They had two children, Hattie and Arthur. He was a stockholder in the Afton Rural Telephone Company, clerk of Afton Camp Lumber 5999 Modern Woodmen of America, and was also treasurer of school Dist. #23. In 1908, Hattie Parsons married Monce Mallberg. They were all farmers. The Magnus Person homestead was purchased by the Charles Berglund family.

14. C. G. Forsburg

He was a Methodist minister from Sweden. He married Anna and had three children: Jennie, Edward, and Emma. He also farmed until the early 1880s. The north 80 acres was later purchased by Fred Johnson. The 80 acres south of the road was purchased by Mable Dockstader. The Fred Johnson farm was then sold to the Monce Mallberg family, circa 1910. Monce married Hattie Parson and they had 3 children, Louis, Ruth, and Dean and they were farmers. The Dockstader acreage was sold to Anderson and then to August Swanson, now the Afton State Park Prairie.

15.J. S. Hartmon

J.S. was born in New York and came to Afton in 1863. He married Harriet Jefferson, a relative of Thomas Jefferson. He was a carpenter. Their children were William, Clara, and Harvey. They farmed the land that was sold to Albert Peterson and purchased a farm in Section 30, circa 1900 (see 8), later owned by Edward Hunskaar.

16. C. W. Webb

C. W. came to Afton in 1875 from Pennsylvania. He boarded with James Coop and worked at the Getchell Mill. He sold his property to W. P. Jones who came to Afton in 1882. W. P.

Jones and Susan had five children: Squire, Myrtle, George, C. Preston, and Fred. The property was later sold to J.G. Hedstrom.

17. Bengt Swanson

Bengt came to Afton in 1871 from Sweden. He married Nellie Lundahl. They had two children, Elizabeth and Charles. Elizabeth was a school teacher and married Walter Johnson. This farm was purchased by Emmett and Flora Berglund. Emmett was a carpenter and they subdivided the farm in their retirement.

18A. Peter Johnson

A. P. came to Afton in 1865 from Sweden. He married Johanna Anderson. They had children Anna, Peter, Mary C., A. Walter, Bettie, Charles, Pauline, Edward, Hattie, and Effie. They were farmers. Walter married Elizabeth Swanson and ran the farm until their children Lawrence and Doris inherited it. The property is now part of the Afton State Park.

19. Nels Johnson

Nels came to Sweden in 1885 and married Mary C. Johnson. The children were A., Pauline, Harry, Louis, Irwin, Ellen, Herbert, Sydney, Florence, and Victor. They were farmers. Herbert Johnson was the last to farm here and he subdivided and moved to the village where he and his wife, Ella, ran a grocery store.

19A. John Young

John Young came to Afton in 1890, followed by his wife Mathilda and three children. They had three more children after their arrival. They farmed, raised cows, chickens, hogs, and some crops. In July 1904, Nellie, Edith, and Ellen, ages 15, 13, and 11 went to the river to swim after berry picking. The girls all drowned after being swept into a drop-off by the waves of a large steamer. The remaining children were

William, Edwin, and Edna. They farmed until the 1940's.

20. Richard Siebold

Richard was born in Prussia in 1858 and came to Afton with his parents in 1867. He married M. and had two children, was widowed, and then married Bettie Johnson in 1888. They had children Edwin, Amy, Henry, Roy, and Stella. They farmed. This farm was purchased by Oliver Charley in 1919. It is now part of the Afton State Park.

21. Reverend August Olson

August was born in Guttenberg, Sweden in 1827. He traveled back and forth between New York and Sweden. During the Civil War he engaged on the ship "John Wesley," which was a battleship used as a house of worship. In 1864 he returned to Sweden as a missionary of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1866 he came to St. Paul and served several churches in Minnesota and retired with his second wife Albertina Johnson and family to farm on Swede Hill. The children were Albert, Augusta, Elizabeth, Hannah, Mary, Arthur, and Ernest.

Swede Hill School Dist. #66

August 25, 1884 – Purchased school House Site - \$35
September 3, 1884 – laid foundation - \$35
September 20, 1884 – Built School House - \$687
October 18, 1884 – School furniture - \$151
October 18, 1884 – Wood burning stove - \$18.96
November 25, 1884 – Built fence around School - \$21.80
November 1885 – Insurance (15 yrs.) - \$22.67
1887 – Wood (for stove) - \$25
1888 – Teachers Salaries - \$317
School sold to Cournoyer, Classen, & Kontola
Swede Hill School File, Swedish Evangelical Church Anniversary Book (1932), Museum files.

23. Christ Persons

Christ came from Sweden in 1875 with Cornelia. Their children were Annie, Peter, Mary, Celia, Ellen, and George Washington. They were farmers. William VanAlstine bought this acreage plus the Monce Hall farm around 1910 which later became the Beedle farm.

24. E.M. Cox and Gustaf Swanson

E.M. Cox came to Afton from New York with his mother Abigail and made a claim in Afton in 1852. He built a stone house on County Rd. 18 where he lived with his wife Eliza (from Mass.), his mother, sister, and seven children: Cora, Edith, George, Marie, Lizzie, Fannie, and Edward. He purchased 360 acres, including 160 acres in section 34 in Afton and farmed. He served as chairman of the Afton township board and many years on the Evergreen Cemetery board.

Gustaf Swanson was born in Smaland Sweden in 1863. He came to Vesta in 1885. He married Nellie Young and had three children: Salmer, Gilford, and Roy. They purchased the Cox farm in Afton in 1913 which is now part of the Afton State Park.

25. J. P. Lofgren

J. P. came to Afton in 1881 from Sweden. He married Inger and had four children: Otto, Parson, Fred, and Emma. They were farmers. This land was later owned by Charles Swanson who came to Afton in 1890. He married Celia Persons who died in 1905. Their children were Theo, Gladys, and Clifford. They were farmers. In 1950 the land was owned by A. Nelson and is now part of the Afton State park.