

*DEDICATION OF STATE HISTORIC SITES
AT ST. CLOUD STATE COLLEGE*

Sunday, May 4, 1969 - 1:30 p.m.

Halenbeck Hall

This is your invitation to visit the four sites approved by the State Historical Society on the St. Cloud State College campus. The Dedicatory Address by Fred Hughes, St. Cloud Attorney-at-Law, is a special feature of the Centennial Celebration.

FORT HOLES

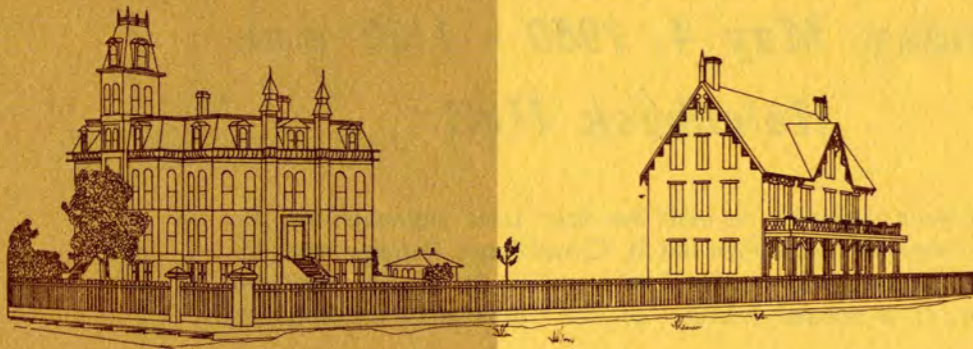
On the ridge near this site stood Fort Holes, for a brief time a reminder of the panic accompanying the Sioux Uprising of 1862. As fighting flared, frightened settlers streamed into the nearest villages where stockades were erected.

Fort Holes was one of many such stockades in central Minnesota. Named for Samuel Holes, whose advice had been followed in its construction and who helped build it, the Fort overlooked the river, the "flats" to the south, and the river landing at the foot of what is now Tenth Street.

Erected under the direction of H.Z. Mitchell, Fort Holes was built to house all women and children in St. Cloud. Jane Grey Swisshelm described the Fort: "The outer wall is a framework put together and planked up and down the outside from ten to twelve feet and shelving outward so that it cannot be scaled with a ladder. The wall is three feet thick at the base and one and one-half at the height of six or seven feet and filled with soil.... There are two entrances at which are hung heavy gates...." The inner room was lined with berths.

Fort Holes never was used by St. Cloud residents because the danger of attack faded; it did house refugees from the countryside. By 1864 the Fort was rapidly disappearing as new settlers carried off the lumber. By 1875, it had vanished.

Located near the entrance of the Gray Campus Laboratory School.



OLD MAIN BUILDING

STEARNS HOUSE

Near the edge of the bluff overlooking the Mississippi, about 200 feet directly east of this Marker, stood the Stearns House, a widely-known resort hotel which became the first building of what is now St. Cloud State College. Erected in 1857 by C.T. Stearns, the hotel with its ornate trim became known as one of the most interesting buildings in this part of the country. Contemporary accounts describe the hotel's deep carpets, red velvet drapes, beautiful ornamental lamps, heavy imported furniture, large comfortable beds and excellent food. By 1865, however, the tourist trade was declining and Stearns sold the property to W.M. Hooper.

Plans to establish a Third State Normal School at St. Cloud soon were under way. A committee headed by General C.C. Andrews of St. Cloud considered four sites. On February 16, 1869, the State Normal School Board, lured by the beauty of the site, the magnificent view of the river, and the presence of a building which could be remodeled, decided to buy the Stearns property for \$3,000.

The first school term began September 13, 1869, with "forty females and 10 males" and Ira Moore as principal. In 1874, the central section of the three-story granite structure known for many years as "Old Main" was completed and the Stearns House became a women's dormitory, the "Ladies Home." After 1885, it was used as a rooming house for male students. Ten years later, in 1895, the Stearns House was torn down.

Located between Stewart Hall and Riverview.



STEARNS HOUSE

JANE GREY SWISSELM'S NEWSPAPER OFFICE

Jane Grey Swisshelm, reformer, abolitionist, feminist, was during her lifetime one of the best-known women in America. Her career reached its peak between 1857 and 1863 when she lived in St. Cloud. Famous in the East as a newspaper editor, Mrs. Swisshelm became editor of the St. Cloud Visitor. Her office—also her home—stood "opposite the steamboat landing," down the hill from this marker at the foot of what is now Tenth Street.

Forthright in her views, she often was sarcastic and caustic in her writing—but never dull. Champion of women's rights and abolition of slavery, she aroused the enmity of Sylvanus B. Lowry, a powerful man in central Minnesota. One night, Lowry and two other men broke into the Visitor's office, destroyed the press and threw the type into the river. Sued for libel, Mrs. Swisshelm agreed never again to mention the feud in the Visitor. Undaunted, she continued to publish the paper, simply changing its name to the St. Cloud Democrat.

This remarkable, combative woman has been described as having "liquid blue eyes," brown hair, a "slight figure, of less than medium height, with pleasant face, eyes beaming with kindness, soft voice and winning manners," and a smile "truly enchanting."

In 1863, she sold the paper to her nephew, William B. Mitchell, and left for Washington, D. C., to work for the Union cause. She never returned. After the war, in poor health, she retired to a small estate near Pittsburgh which had belonged to her husband. There she lived quietly until her death in 1884.

Located on the northeast corner of Shoemaker Hall lawn.



DEMOCRAT OFFICE

MITCHELL-WHITNEY HOUSES WM. B. MITCHELL HOUSE

In 1884, William Bell Mitchell, pioneer St. Cloud newspaper editor, historian, and resident director of the college for 24 years, asked a St. Paul architect to design a home suitable for his large family of active children. Beginning its career with a masquerade party, the Mitchell mansion, on the site of what is now Mitchell Hall, became a center of the city's cultural and social life.

William B. Mitchell was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Z. Mitchell. He was assistant editor of the St. Cloud Democrat, edited by his famous aunt, Jane Grey Swisshelm, and he bought the paper in 1863 when she left St. Cloud. Later, as the St. Cloud Journal Press, the paper was one of the best-known in Minnesota before becoming part of the St. Cloud Daily Times.

In 1877, Mitchell was appointed resident director of the college, then known as the State Normal School at St. Cloud. He served until 1901, the longest term of any resident director. During the 1930's, the mansion housed a college fraternity until the magnificent three-story house was torn down.

Whitney House, the stately brick mansion which houses the college administrative offices, was built in 1916 by A. G. Whitney. Born in 1861 on a farm near Robbinsdale, he settled in St. Cloud in 1887. Until his death, he was a prime mover in many enterprises, including real estate and public utilities. The college acquired his home in 1954, after the death of Mrs. Whitney.



WM. B. MITCHELL HOUSE

MITCHELL-WHITNEY HOUSES HENRY Z. MITCHELL HOUSE

One of the first frame houses to be built in "Lower Town," the section of St. Cloud which extended south from the old ravine between Third and Fourth Streets, was the home of Henry Z. Mitchell, pioneer St. Cloud merchant, and his wife, Elizabeth Cannon Mitchell, sister of Jane Grey Swisshelm. This charming house stood across the street from this marker.

The house originally was built in 1857 by Mitchell on the "flats" south of the present Tenth Street, near the steamboat landing. In August, 1861, when Mitchell was appointed postmaster by President Lincoln, he built a small frame structure at the corner of the present Fifth Avenue and Third Street South and moved his store goods there. The Mitchell house was moved up the First Avenue hill to the corner of First Avenue and Fifth Street South, where it stood for many years as the family residence. A two-story wing was added at the back for a kitchen, pantry and maid's room. It had spacious, tree-shaded grounds and a lovely garden tended by Mrs. Mitchell.

During the 1930's, the Mitchell family opened the house to the public as Grandmother's Tea Garden, a name by which it still was affectionately known when it was torn down in 1959.

Located near the entrance of Mitchell Hall.



HENRY Z. MITCHELL HOUSE

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