

During the late nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, Rocksylvania Avenue was the main conduit for travelers entering Iowa Falls from both the north and the east. Road signs today proclaim that it served both the Jefferson Highway coming from Winnipeg in Canada and the 1926 alignment of US Highway 20 which originates in Boston. In addition, train passengers and freight arrived at two stations both located on either side of this street. Prominent residences, important manufacturing and businesses lined both sides of Rocksylvania Avenue. Historic signs erected during the summer of 2021 identify some of these historic sights that are still extant. The following locations are given in east to west order. Buildings that succumbed to perceived progress of preceding years include the stone Quaker Meetinghouse, East Side School, business buildings that ringed Rocksylvania Town Square, the Arling Hotel across from the Illinois Central Depot, and the Ellsworth Mansion on the corner of Rocksylvania and Oak Street.

Order of signs from East to West

1. Julia O'Neil Park
2. Mills Tower
3. E.Olin Soule Tree and Plaque
4. Illinois Central Depot
5. Ellsworth Hospital
6. L.E. Jones Mansion
7. First Baptist Church
8. Carnegie— Ellsworth Building

Iowa Falls, Iowa



Historic
**JEFFERSON
HIGHWAY**
1916-1926
jeffersonhighway.com



IOWA FALLS HISTORIC PRESERVATION



For more information, contact
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Rocksylvania History Tour



IOWA FALLS

Collaboratively sponsored by

Iowa Falls Historic Preservation Commission
Iowa Falls Historical Society
Iowa Falls Chamber / Main Street

Rocksylvania History Tour - 8 locations

JEFFERSON HIGHWAY 1916-1929
WINNIPEG - NEW ORLEANS

Julia O'Neil Park
JEFFERSON HIGHWAY HISTORIC SITE

Originally this land was the town square for Rocksylvana, the Quaker settlement plotted by B.J. Talbott in 1854. It was renamed in 1943 for the beloved teacher Julia O'Neil (1871-1941) who served the East Side School for nearly fifty years.

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JEFFERSON HIGHWAY 1916-1929
WINNIPEG - NEW ORLEANS

Illinois Central Depot, Iowa Falls
JEFFERSON HIGHWAY HISTORIC SITE

Replacing a wooden depot from 1866, this brick depot was constructed in 1904. E.S. Ellsworth, town benefactor, insisted upon brick. Described as stylistically eclectic, it is typical of the stations built during the era. Acquired and restored by the Iowa Falls Historical Society in the early 1990's, it is furnished with early railroad equipment.

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JEFFERSON HIGHWAY 1916-1929
WINNIPEG - NEW ORLEANS

First Baptist Church
JEFFERSON HIGHWAY HISTORIC SITE

Baptists first organized in Iowa Falls in 1862 and in 1866 purchased the land which the present church occupies. Built in 1898, it is the only remaining nineteenth century church building in Iowa Falls. The architecture and magnificent stained glass windows are good examples of the Victorian style popular at that time.

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Ellsworth Hospital

JEFFERSON HIGHWAY 1916-1929
NEW ORLEANS - WINNIPEG

Mills Tower
JEFFERSON HIGHWAY HISTORIC SITE

Mills Tower was built in the early 1900's to electrically control the double diamond crossing and switches connecting the many railroad tracks around Iowa Falls. Abandoned in 1992, it was acquired by the Iowa Falls Historic Society and restored in 2003. It contains much of its original equipment.

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JEFFERSON HIGHWAY 1916-1929
NEW ORLEANS - WINNIPEG

Carnegie-Ellsworth Building
JEFFERSON HIGHWAY HISTORIC SITE

Constructed in 1904 with funds from Andrew Carnegie and E.S. Ellsworth, this building served as the town public library until 2000. Interior features include a stained glass dome and elaborate woodwork. After restoration and additions, it now houses the Sue Crotty Historical Museum, Pat Clark Art Exhibit, and Iowa Falls Chamber Main Street.

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JEFFERSON HIGHWAY 1916-1929
WINNIPEG - NEW ORLEANS

E. Olin Soule Tree and Plaque
JEFFERSON HIGHWAY HISTORIC SITE

Soule arrived in Iowa Falls in 1864. He was a druggist, but quickly started working for the railroads, serving in various capacities from brakeman to passenger train ticket agent. He was an accomplished ball player, directed the town band, and served as fire chief. The tree and plaque were placed here in 1922 by the Illinois Central Railroad.

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JEFFERSON HIGHWAY 1916-1929
NEW ORLEANS - WINNIPEG

L.E. Jones Mansion
JEFFERSON HIGHWAY HISTORIC SITE

Constructed in 1904 at a cost of \$50,000, this opulent home was designed by Smith and Gage Architects of Des Moines for the Jones family. Sheathed in Indiana limestone, the three stories boast solid mahogany and oak woodwork inside, imported Italian stained glass and a Steuben glass chandelier. It has served as both a Masonic Lodge and private residence.

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