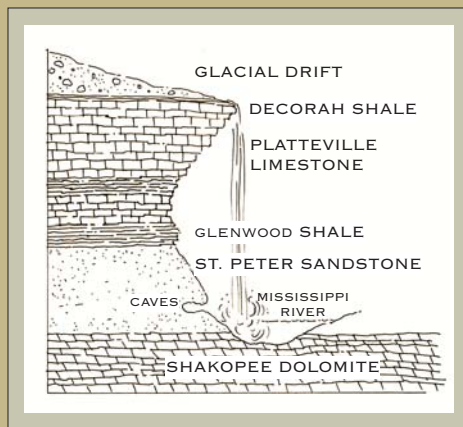


SHADOW FALLS

Shadow Falls are hidden in a deep ravine north of Summit Avenue, where Shadow Falls Creek flows over layers of limestone, shale, and sandstone. The layers expose the recent geological history of the Mississippi River Gorge, and are part of the story of Glacial River Warren and the retreat of St. Anthony Falls more than 11,000 years ago. Shadow Falls is one of several small waterfalls cut into ravines along the sides of the gorge. When the soft St. Peter Sandstone was eroded by the seepage of groundwater springs, the ravine and waterfall were created by collapse of the overlying layer of hard Platteville Limestone. The Decorah Shale layer contains excellent examples of Ordovician fossils deposited more than 400 million years ago, including bryozoans, crinoid columnals, brachiopods, and gastropods.



*Generalized cross-section of the falls.
(Minnesota Geological Survey)*

Shadow Falls were a very popular destination for picnickers, hikers, and riverboat tourists during the late 19th century. In the 1880s investors proposed to build a summer resort. Influential landscape designer H. W. S. Cleveland,

This is one of the most charming woodland possessions of the city.

Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners, 1902



Shadow Falls were enjoyed by visitors in 1875.



1

1. Macalester College professor David Kingery standing behind Shadow Falls in winter, ca. 1900. (Macalester College) 2. Memorial Day at the Soldier's and Sailor's Monument, 1935.



2

however, encouraged the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis to preserve the forested bluffs of the gorge for public use. Early park planning focused on development of Mississippi River Boulevard from the Minneapolis border to the Fort Snelling Bridge.

In 1899, John Ireland, Archbishop of the Diocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, donated 18 acres of land to the City of St. Paul, including Shadow Falls. The parcel extended from Summit to Marshall Avenues. It was the first major acquisition for the future river boulevard. Shadow Falls Park was created in 1902. The ravine and riverbank were left in their natural state, although Shadow Falls Creek was combined with several other small streams to ensure maximum flow over the ledge. The maple-basswood forest around the falls still shelters plants such as wild ginger, Solomon's seal, leatherwood, and smartweed. Many plants were valued by native people who used them for medicinal, cooking, and spiritual purposes.

Nearby, in 1923 the St. Paul Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution placed a memorial dedicated to the soldiers and sailors of World War I at the foot of Summit Avenue. The 36-foot octagonal monument is carved in granite quarried near Cold Spring, Minnesota. It was designed by St. Paul architect Thomas Holyoke (1866-1925) of the firm Holyoke, Jemne & Davis.

*Photos courtesy Minnesota Historical Society unless noted.
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