

Walk and EXPLORE



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CITY OF BROWNS VALLEY

This walking map was created to encourage walking and exploring in the beautiful city of Browns Valley, MN. Browns Valley community members chose walking routes and historical features that allow the walker to learn about the community while being physically active.

Browns Valley lies on the Continental Divide. The marker is on Highway 28 west of town. Lake Traverse, on the north side of the road, flows north into the Red River and further on to the Hudson Bay in Canada. Waters on the south side of the road, by way of the Little Minnesota River, wind through Browns Valley into Big Stone Lake. They continue on to the Minnesota and Mississippi River until they reach the Gulf of Mexico.

This walking map is brought to you by:



ROUTE 1 1.49 miles

Browns Valley School – The Browns Valley School serves about 140 students in grades Pre-K – 8th Grade. The District is located on the west central edge of Minnesota between Big Stone Lake and Lake Traverse, and shares a border with South Dakota. The Browns Valley District occupies 46 square miles in Traverse County and also serves a number of students living just across the border in South Dakota. High school students generally attend Sheldon High School (Sheldon, SD), approximately 12 miles west of Browns Valley. In 2022 Browns Valley School District was fortunate to receive a Federal Renovation Grant of nearly 1 million dollars.

United Methodist Presbyterian Church – In 1800 a group of Methodist worshippers purchased Lot 6, Block 20 for \$250, and began construction of a church. The building was dedicated in September of 1801. In 1975 the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations agreed to merge. The building on the corner of Broadway and 2nd Street was the home of the United Methodist Presbyterian Church until the new building was erected and dedicated in 1994, and continues to be active in the community.

Platow/Stevens Cemetery – The Platow, or Stevens Cemetery, is a pioneer cemetery established in 1883. It is located in the North East Quarter of Section 33, Fallston Township in Traverse County. The Stevens Cemetery is the final resting place of Sam Brown, his wife, child and brother.

Little Minnesota River – The Little Minnesota River flows through town. Waters on the south side of the road by the Little Minnesota River, runs through Browns Valley into Big Stone Lake. They continue on to the Minnesota and Mississippi River until they reach the Gulf of Mexico. Browns Valley lies along the Little Minnesota River between the northern end of Big Stone Lake and the southern end of Lake Traverse, which is separated from the Little Minnesota River by a low and narrow continental divide that skirts the northern edge of the river. The city, both lakes, and the river lie in the Traverse Gap.

ROUTE 2 1.74 miles

St. Anthony Catholic Church – A true history of St. Anthony does not begin with the building of the first church in 1911, but can be traced back to the early 1600s with western migration. With the westward migration, some missionaries and priests with the goal of proselytizing the Word of God to the large population and boarding settlers. In 1695 permission was granted, and St. Anthony Roman Catholic Church of Browns Valley was officially established. The first priest, Father Camille Thiébaud, was sent to a commodious 28 family parishes. As the small parish grew, the need for a larger worship space became apparent. Under the direction of Fr. Thiébaud, land was purchased and a large Gothic brick church was built in 1911. Tragically, an Easter Sunday 1934, a fire broke out destroying nearly everything in the church. The wooden interior was entirely gutted, and the external brick wall structure salvaged. Under the leadership of Fr. Peter Laue, in 1934, a new church was erected, enhancing many of the qualities from the original 1911 church. Because of the expense, the stained glass windows were omitted.

The Carnegie Library – The first public library in Browns Valley was formally opened in 1908, upstairs in the old Tribune Building. In 1913 Father Thiébaud of the Catholic Church obtained funds from the Andrew Carnegie Foundation to build a new library on a "half-acre site" as required by the Carnegie Foundation. With the help of Mrs. Ed Paul, and many others, the Carnegie Library opened its doors in 1917, with about 500 books. In 1985, the Carnegie Library was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church – St. Luke's Episcopal Church dates back to 1882. In 1877 it was moved to the location that is now the Carnegie Library location. In 1915 the land was sold to the library board, and the church building was moved to its present location. In 1975, the land was sold to Donald and Darlene Nigg. The church is no longer an open special occasion.

Browns Valley Man – In 1933, while laying gravel for his driveway, W.H. Jensen discovered bone fragments and a stone tool, prompting him to investigate further. After several hours of sifting through the gravel he found more than three fragments belonging to a man dated roughly 9,000 years old, a date confirmed by the flintic flake tools discovered at the site. The Browns Valley Man was a Paleo-Indian, the first people to arrive to the Americas from Asia. During the same time, it is believed that Browns Valley was a Paleo-Indian burial site, one of few in the country and the only one in Minnesota. During the time in which the Browns Valley Man lived, the world's climate was stabilizing from the Ice Age. Because of this, humans were able to lead a more sedentary lifestyle, leading to a rise in population and technological advancements.

Browns Valley Health Center – Since its origin in 1963, St. Francis Health Services has provided services to the aging. Presently, the services of this faith-based, non-profit organization include assisted living, home healthcare, a full range of therapies, center housing, skilled nursing and transitional care, and community and residential services to people with developmental and mental disabilities and mental illnesses. St. Francis Health Services began as the Will of St. Francis in 1963 when it completed its first nursing home. In the last 50 years, there has been steady growth and expansion of services. In 1990, it brought in two more PCS group homes and SFHS purchased its second nursing home, Browns Valley Health Center.

ROUTE 3 2.34 miles

Zion Lutheran Church – Zion Lutheran Church was organized on December 26, 1859, by seven men who purchased a building called Library Hall on Main Street. In 1859, the congregation began to explore the idea of building, as their membership had outgrown the Hall. They purchased the land that the current building sits on, and in 1940 bought several buildings in Decorah, Minnesota. Members did most of the work of taking down the old buildings and hauling the materials to Browns Valley. The new Zion Lutheran Church structure was dedicated in 1941, where it is still active today.

City Park – The City Park offers hook-ups for campers and a modern bathroom. It also has a gazebo that can be used for family events. The park is a wonderful place to pick apples in the fall, and enjoy the open space by having a picnic with your family and friends. The park is used for carfests, and other events, during the year, and is especially active during Sam Brown Days.

Sam Brown's Cabin – The Log Cabin was originally built in 1863 near Fort Ridgeway, which is now known as Fort Stevens. In 1865 major Joseph Brown purchased the house and moved it to Browns Valley. The Cabin was used as a trading post, a post office, family home, stage stop and hotel. In 1986, Sam Brown's Memorial Park was added to the National Register of Historic Places. Today the Cabin is open as a museum. The log home is still standing today in the center of the village. Samuel J. Brown, the son of the founder, opened a post office in the log home and became the first postmaster. The settlement and a post office were first named Lake Traverse Station and Browns Station, but were renamed Browns Valley after the death of Joseph Brown in 1870. The Village of Browns Valley was platted in 1858 and incorporated in 1861.

Backus Field – Backus Field was the name given to the area that was an active baseball park in the early 1940s. Herman Backus was instrumental in the renovation of the park, which he served as the manager of the local baseball team for over 20 years. Backus was also an active community member, and owner of the Valley Drug Store for over 30 years. Backus field has not only been the location for baseball, but also has been used for summer recreation, softball, endurance, and athletic events, and it is where the Browns Valley Thunderbirds play their football games.

CALORIES BURNED

ACTIVITY (1 HOUR)	130 LB	155 LB	180 LB	205 LB
Walking, under 2.0 mph, very slow	118	141	163	186
Walking 2.0 mph, slow	148	176	204	233
Walking 2.5 mph	177	211	245	279
Walking 3.0 mph, moderate	195	232	270	307
Walking 3.5 mph, brisk pace	224	267	311	354
Walking 4.0 mph, very brisk	295	352	409	465