

## Southern Minnesota

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Southern Minnesota is split between high plains, timbered ravines and slow-flowing Mississippi tributaries in the east, and the drier, flatter prairie and checkerboard farmland of the west. In the scenic southeast, spared a filing down by the last glacial advance, attractive small towns sit along the Mississippi, or on bluffs above it, in the ninety-mile Hiawatha Valley. Mississippi shipping helped sustain easygoing communities like Winona, Red Wing, Lake City (where water skiing was invented about 1922) and Wabasha, all of which share well-preserved old homes and hotels. The agricultural and college center of Northfield, off I-35 thirty miles south of the Twin Cities, annually commemorates the Jesse James gang's foiled attempt to rob the town bank in September 1876. Harmony, almost in Iowa and near Minnesota's largest Amish colony; Lanesboro, with a storybook setting on the hillsides of the Root River; and Mantorville have all kept at least one foot in the nineteenth century. Further west, New Prague and New Ulm were prime targets for the beleaguered Sioux during a six-week war with the US government in 1862.