

MINNESOTA - THE SAGA OF THE NORTH STAR STATE  
COPY

by the  
Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey  
Senator from Minnesota  
March 5, 1949

-----

Through its hundred years of history, Minnesota has produced sturdy and self-reliant persons, whose sons and daughters we are. The pioneers and their descendants erected a high civilization, known throughout the Union for its contributions to a liberal, democratic society.

It is a considerable part of our country we are discussing today. Minnesota is eleventh in size among the States, 400 miles from north to south and 240 miles in average breadth, standing at the center of the North American continent and at the top of the Republic. From its average elevation of 1200 feet flow three river systems, the Red River towards Hudson Bay, the St. Louis towards the Great Lakes and the Atlantic, and the Mississippi towards the Gulf of Mexico. With this advantage in location, her products and her ideas have circulated freely throughout the world. The two are closely related. Minnesota people developed their attitudes toward life, shown in their social and political in

life, shown in their social and political institutions, during  
the process of making a living together.

COPY

The story of the State therefore begins with the varied resources which nature has provided. Ancient mountains, worn down by erosion, left knobs of granite; forgotten oceans, late in geologic time, which invaded north central Minnesota, left sediments from which the Mesabi Iron Range was formed; and four great ice-sheets came down from the north in turn. These, advanced and retreated, scouring ridges of rock, polishing knolls, unloading tons of rich soil, and as they finally melted leaving heaped-up debris which dammed ten thousand lakes. These are an aid to a great dairy industry and the joy of skater, swimmer and fisherman. In the south they are broad and shallow, but in the north they lie in deep and rocky basins in the midst of deep forests. Watching the reflections of the clouds in these waters, the Indians gave the region the name of Minnay Soter or "Cloud-Tinted Water."

In the northeast are ridges, almost mountainous, and evergreen forests, to the south along the Mississippi are stands of hardwoods, and west and north the prairie stretches into the Red River Valley.

In the center of the State the village of Rockville is said to rest on a granite outcrop five miles wide and thirty miles long.

At Red Wing on the eastern border, high above the wide Mississippi, pottery and clay pipe are made. At Embarrass, the Finns still drop stones into pools to make the steam bath and the women with deft fingers card their wool by hand, spin and knot, and make moccasin boots. Minnesota is remarkably varied in resources and people. Nowhere else in this country have two cities so close together as Minneapolis and St. Paul, born almost at the same time, grown to a size so nearly equal. What is even more remarkable is that each of the twins has kept a distinct flavor and character, perceptible even to the tourist on his first visit.

When the early explorers and fur traders came, they found two very different types of Indian cultures. In the northern and eastern forests were the Chippewa, a forest people who had got firearms from the French and driven out the previous Sioux or Dakotas. These went west and became hunters of the buffalo on the prairie.

# COPY

Artists and writers went with the traders and explorers on many expeditions. Their pictures and books, from the seventeenth century onward, drew the attention of the outside world to Minnesota, and gave us a picture of the primitive life. Among the famous artists were George Catlin, Thomas L. McKenny, Peter Mindisbacher, and Frank B. Mayer.

They lingered about the frontier forts and councils  
-4-  
where treaties were made, sketching the Indian dressed for play or mourning, for the war path or the council ceremonies.

The Chippewa and the Sioux had themselves been artists for many ages before the white man appeared. The exhibit presented by the Library of Congress for this occasion includes some evidences of their skill in carving wood and stone, of their women's patience in making clothing and household utensils. Several thousand Chippewa live in the State today, but under the impact of modern civilization their old culture has largely disappeared.

COPY

The Indian could hunt, fish, carve and fight, but

usually could not even read the treaties in which he

-5-

signed away his land with a mark.

It is believed that two French traders, Radisson and Groseilliers, penetrated Minnesota as early as 1655 to 1659. Then in 1679 came Du Luth, for whom the lake port is named, who set up the standard of King Louis XIV of France in the wilderness. On his second visit, the following year, Du Luth had an amazing experience. When he reached the Mississippi, he met another party of Frenchmen who had been sent by the great LaSalle to explore the upper river — Accault, Auguelle, and the famous missionary, Father Louis Hennepin. The priest and his companions had been captured by a band of sioux and held near the present town of Mille Lacs. On this expedition Hennepin discovered and named the Falls of St. Anthony, and afterwards he wrote a book about Minnesota which became a best-seller.

In 1689 Nicholas Perrot, another French trader, proclaimed the sovereignty of France over the whole region, and six years

COPY

later another Frenchman, Le Sueur, set up a trading post

on Prairie Island in the Mississippi River between Hastings

and Red Wing. Five years later he went up the Minnesota

River as far as the Blue Earth region and built Fort L'Huillier.

For many years thereafter France was involved in wars

in Europe. Her occupation of Minnesota was suspended until

1727, when the Sieur De La Perriere built a fort and the

Jesuits a mission on the west side of Lake Pepin. During the

next twenty-five years La Verendrye and his sons explored the

northern lake country rather thoroughly; the region from Lake

Superior west to Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods has since

become known as the Highway of the Voyageurs. They build

Fort St. Pierre on Rainy Lake and Fort St. Charles in the

"Northwest Angle" of Minnesota, on Lake of the Woods. From

the time of their visits until French rule ceased in 1763,

the French fur traders paddled over the water routes now

followed by the summer vacationist in his canoe.

In 1762, the French secretly ceded to Spain the territory

West of the Mississippi; thus for a short period Minnesota

COPY

was technically under the Spanish flag. But in 1763,

when France lost the French and Indian War, the British took possession, and for half a century the British fur barons controlled the region.

Even as they hoisted the British flag over the forts, the first adventurous Yankee appeared. Jonathan Carver spent the winter of 1766 to 1767 among the Indians of the Minnesota Valley, publishing an account of his adventures which rivaled Hennepin's book in popularity. Another Yankee, Peter Pond lived in the Minnesota Valley from 1773 to 1775, and a trader for the British Northwest Company, David Thompson explored northern Minnesota as the century drew to a close.

Already, by the treaty of 1783 which acknowledged the independence of the United States, northeastern Minnesota had become American territory. But the British fur traders were slow to learn, or perhaps to appreciate, the news. They stayed at their posts until 1816.



COPY

In 1803 the United States acquired the western part

of the State as a part of the vast Louisiana Purchase.

President Thomas Jefferson decided to assert the authority

of the United States and satisfy his personal curiosity about

Minnesota. He sent a young Army lieutenant, Zebulon M. Pike,

to investigate and inform the British that they no longer

owned it. Pike went up the Mississippi as far as Leach Lake

and upper Red Cedar or Cass Lake. Visiting the chief British

trading posts, he hoisted the Stars and Stripes. For 60 gallons

of whiskey and \$200 worth of trinkets he bought from the Indians

military sites at the mouths of the St. Croix and Minnesota

Rivers, including most of the present Twin Cities. Fort Snelling,

built in 1819 on the site he purchased, was for many years the

northwestern military post of the United States and the center

of the fur trade.

Other forts planted at strategic points became little island

of civilization, centers of the fur trade and refuges in time



COPY

of danger. For the next 30 years after the Pike expedition

the Americans penetrated the mysteries of the wilderness.

In 1820 Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan Territory set forth to find

the source of the Mississippi River. His expedition did not

succeed, but a member of the party, Henry R. Schoolcraft, came

back in 1832 and found the source of the Father of Waters at

Lake Itasca. A great student of Indian lore, Schoolcraft made

studies of the legends of the Chippewa. From Schoolcraft's

writings, the poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow derived the

inspiration for his HIAWATHA; and within a few years Minnesota

made Minnesota famous throughout the nation. She was probably

the most effective press-agent Minnesota ever had, attracting

settlers from New England and all parts of the country.

Major Stephen H. Long, in 1823, first revealed the fertility

of the Red River Valley, destined to be one the granaries

of the world. With him was an Italian gentleman named

Giacomo Beltrami, looking for the source of the Mississippi.

He wrote a book about his adventures, giving a copy of his book

to President Jefferson, and his name to Beltrami County.

COPY

One of the greatest of the explorers under the American regime was a Frenchman, Joseph N. Nicollet, who traveled all over Minnesota in the late 1830's, keeping a record of his canoe trip down the Mississippi from Fort Snelling, illustrated with maps so accurate that we can still trace his course and his camping places from hour to hour. Another pioneer who came to Fort Snelling as a drummer boy, Joseph R. Brown, will be long remembered; many years later, during one of the last of the Indian attacks, his son Samuel Brown rode 120 miles through a night storm to warn the settlers. The house of this western Paul Revere is still preserved in a State park.

Relations with the Indians were not always strained. For twenty years the influence of Fort Snelling upon the tribes was effective through the quiet work of its humane agent, Major Lawrence Taliaferro. He had come up from the south in 1823, on the first steamboat to reach St. Anthony Falls, bringing with him the first group of Negro slaves to reach Minnesota.

Later, he freed them all. As agent of the fort, Major

Taliaferro supervised the fur trade, issued licenses to traders, and tried to keep the peace between Chippewa and Sioux.

Recognizing his impartiality, the Indians called him

"Four Hearts."

Fort Snelling and Mendota, across the river, were the centers of the fur trade. The Americans began to make up ox-carts in trains of 50 to 100, to bring the furs in wholesale lots from the Red River country; for many years, the squeaking of the ungreased wheels could be heard for miles through the wilderness.

The fur trader was apt to be a French-Canadian or a Scotchman, and his assistants were often half-breeds, who had already formed a large and interesting settlement in the Red River Valley, where they wore the skins of the animals they hunted. Negroes were also active in the early days of the trade, as interpreters and independent operators.

The pioneer fur trader could handle the half-wild hunters, trappers and voyageurs, spoke the Indian's language, and

knew the way through the maze of lakes, rivers and rap-

and knew the way ~~through the maze of~~ lakes, rivers and portages.

COPY

Many of the traders were remarkable men, equally at home in the woods and in the duties of forming a government and building a civilization. Fur traders helped the missionaries to translate the Bible and other books into the Indian languages. The famous trader Henry H. Sibley became the first territorial delegate to Congress, and afterwards Governor. Martin McLeod, another trader, wrote the first Minnesota law for public education. They gave their family names to cities, towns and counties: Sibley, McLeod, Faribault, Crookston, Brown, Renville, and many others.

Early Catholic missionaries traveled with the coureurs de bois . Protestant missionaries came to Fort Mendota in 1829 and made plans for work among the natives. Both Catholic and Protestant preached to the primitive Indian and the white pioneer, and as far as they could, tried to bridge the gulf between them. There is something attractive and noble in the picture of the French Catholic fur traders, the Renvilles of Lac qui Parle, sitting down with Protestant missionaries like Samuel and

Gideon Pond, Dr. Thomas S. Williamson, and Stephen R. Riggs,  
to translate the Bible into the Indian tongue. The first

church for white settlers was organized by the Presbyterians  
at Fort Snelling in 1835.

Downstream Father Lucian Galtier came in 1840 as a priest  
to the populace at Mendota, which had originally been called  
St. Peter's. Across the river he built a little log church  
which he dedicated to the great missionary apostle, and from  
this church the settlement round about took the name St. Paul.  
Father Augustine Ravoux of Mendota, Bishop Cr  tin, Father  
Frederic Baraga, Father Pirec and the Abbe' Domenech were famous  
Catholic pioneers. Bishop Henry B. Whipple of the Episcopal  
Church was a lifelong friend of the Indians.

But the day of the explorer, the missionary and the fur trader  
was passing, for the surge of white settlement was becoming  
irresistible. In 1837, by treaties with the Chippewa and the Sioux,  
the United States acquired the land between the Mississippi and  
the St. Croix Rivers. In 1848 a land office was opened at  
St. Croix Falls, and the first great wave of settlers came - -

COPY

lumbermen from Maine, farmers from the mid-Atlantic States, tradesmen and craftsmen from the cities. People were gathering around Fort Snelling, and at St. Anthony, now a part of Minneapolis. Soon there were villages at St. Paul and Stillwater. Before they numbered 5,000, the settlers began to ask for an independent government.

Under the American flag Minnesota so far had been shuffled around from one territory to another; it had been a part of the old Northwest Territory, and the territories of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa and Wisconsin. When the State of Wisconsin was created in 1848, the Minnesota part was left practically without an administration. The people took matters in their own hands. They elected the famous fur trader, Henry Hastings Sibley, as a territorial delegate to Congress, claiming that the old territory of Wisconsin still existed. When Sibley got to Washington, somewhat to his surprise Congress actually seated him, and he began at once to agitate for a territorial government. The law creating the Territory of Minnesota was signed on March 3, 1849. Alexander Ramsey was appointed Governor, and the first

territorial legislature met in September 1849.

COPY

Getting the Indian's land for the farmer and lumberman was uppermost in the minds of the members. By the treaties signed in 1851, the Sioux ceded practically all their lands, and treaties of 1854 and 1855 secured most of the territory of the Chippewa. The Government offered land at \$1.25 an acre, and the great river made a highway for the outgoing products of Minnesota and the incoming people. Steamboats came in with settlers and left with loads of flour. Merchant milling began in 1854 at the Falls of St. Anthony; other mills sprang up along nearly every river and creek. Almost from the first the high quality of Minnesota flour was acknowledged, and as early as 1861, the New York market quoted it at a premium. The rivers were choked with logs, the sawmills were taxed to supply lumber for houses. By 1856 there were 253 Minnesota postoffices. The boom was on. Immigrants were coming from Great Britain, Canada, Ireland, Germany and Scandinavia, led by the booster William G. LeDuc, who kept the presses busy printing guidebooks about the territory. "Minnesota, the Lily of the West," was a popular song, and the Minnehaha waltz or polka



was the rage in dancehalls of the East.

COPY

Sharpers also flocked in, claiming inside information on future railroad routes. A wild speculation in land began to grow, reaching the point at which Eastern capital found takers in the Territory at 3 percent a month. Ambitious Minnesota took its first census in 1857, showing 150,000 people. Statehood was in the air.

In the nationwide business panic of 1857, the Minnesota boom collapsed. In some ways the disaster was a blessing in disguise, for the people turned immediately to farming the land in earnest; by the following spring of 1858, the cultivated acres in the Territory had more than doubled. And on May 11, 1858, Minnesota was admitted to the Union. Rival conventions, Democratic and Republican, had met in separate sessions at St. Paul in July, 1858, producing two drafts of a State constitution, which turned out to be almost identical in their phrasing. The Protestant missionary Stephen Riggs painstakingly translated the new State Constitution into the Sioux language, and printed it for the Hazlewood Republic, a short-lived farming community

which the missionaries had established for the Indians.

COPY

Already, much of the pattern of future Minnesota life had been set. The New England settlers brought with them singing schools and lecture courses, and planted shade trees in the new towns. The first newspaper, the Minnesota Pioneer, was started in St. Paul in 1849 by James M. Goodhue. The telegraph came in 1860. In that eventful year the farms numbered 22,000, producing more than five million bushels of wheat, nearly four million bushels of oats, and about two million each of corn and potatoes. The invention of farm machinery was making possible farms the like of which the world had never seen; one Minnesota farm of that decade had boasted 30,000 acres.

Henry Sibley was elected Governor in 1860, and Minnesota cast her first electoral votes by a heavy majority for Abraham Lincoln, the Republican candidate. On the day after the President's war proclamation, Governor Sibley issued a call for her famous First Regiment, which reached the front in time for Bull Run. Two years later, at Gettysburg, the First Minnesota stopped Pickett's charge, the highwater mark of the Confederacy and the turning of the tide.

COPY

With the population numbering only about 200,000 the State sent

more than 22,000 men to the Union armies. At home the farms

poured out wheat to feed the Republic and for export. Meanwhile

the ousted Sioux were watching the advancing farms.

Under the Indian treaties, some of the speculators had taken advantage of the red men, and the administration of the treaties was less than just; the missionary Bishop Whipple had warned President Lincoln of the danger. Now, with many of the white men away at war, the Sioux suddenly rose in the autumn of 1862, crossed the Minnesota River, and caught the settlers by surprise. They devastated the Minnesota Valley, killing more than 350 settlers and taking 300 prisoners. A company of soldiers from Fort Ridgely was ambushed and almost wiped out. On the south side of the river the Germans at New Ulm barred the way; fifteen hundred settlers, refugees and volunteer fighters withstood an Indian attack. But the town was almost a total loss, and was afterwards abandoned.

With stronger forces, the Indians were repelled, and nearly 2,000 were captured or voluntarily surrendered. Of these more

than 300 were condemned to death; but after Bishop Whipple  
asked Lincoln to show mercy towards his "red children", only

38 were executed. Most of the Indians left the State, and  
with

there were reforms in the Indian administration. Today  
Minnesota. He has

some 14,000 Chippewa live in Minnesota, many on the White  
St. Paul in a Red River cart

Earth reservation, while direct descendants of the Sioux

of that uprising still live at Pipestone and along the Minnesota

River between Granite Falls and Redwood Falls.

A more important event for the future than the Indian  
uprising was the appearance in 1862 of a wood-burning locomotive,  
the William Crooks by name, pulling a train on a ten-mile  
track between St. Anthony and St. Paul. By 1870, there were  
nearly one thousand miles of railroad in the State, and the  
population had leaped to nearly half a million.

About the greatest of the Minnesota railroad-builders,  
James J. Hill, there are many stories; according to one, Hill  
first left Canada as an adventurous boy of 18, with the intention  
of sailing to China or India by way of Minnesota. He had  
planned to continue westward from St. Paul in a Red River cart-train,

but finding that he came too late for the last trip of the year  
he was forced to stay over. In St. Paul he found work as a  
shipping clerk on the wharves, and made the city his home for  
the rest of his life while he built a mighty transportation  
system.

The railroad and the State Board of Immigration sent  
agents to Europe and issued pamphlets in every language.  
By 1870, Europe had sent 40,000 Germans and nearly 60,000  
Scandinavians. This was the true Norse settlement. Whether  
or not the Kensington Rune Stone, as many believe, tells of  
an actual visit by 30 Norsemen to Minnesota in the year 1362,  
the descendants of the Norsemen who came after the Civil War  
very largely made the State what it is today. They worked  
in the woods and mines and on the farms, bringing their songs  
and legends, and a strong tradition of personal independence  
and social cooperation. The Scandinavians introduced the  
farmers cooperatives in which Minnesota leads the nation.

At one time, the people of Minnesota were 71 percent  
foreign-born. Today, the proportion is less than 15 percent,

called the Grange, the movement swept Minnesota rapidly. By  
1869, out of 49 Granges in the United States, 40 were in Minnesota.  
of which almost half are still Scandinavian.

In 1874, Grangers were in control of the State. State Olesch, a Congressman gave the State Governors Johnson, Nelson, and Olesch, and pushed through State legislation, and Federal action followed soon after to regulate transportation in the public interest. Charles A. Lindbergh, Sr., as well-known in Minnesota followed soon right as his son who flew the Atlantic in 1927.

Minnesota remembers the blizzard of 1873,  
The railroads brought in the people and brought out the crops,

and in so doing aroused among the farmers one of the first great popular movements for which the State is famous. Many farmers in the older settlements complained that bumper wheat crops were of little value with markets far from home; they charged the railroads with discrimination and unfair practices, and began to organize to protect themselves. In 1867 a Minnesota man, Oliver Kelley,

founded the Patrons of Husbandry in Washington, D.C. Popularly called the Grange, the movement swept Minnesota rapidly. By 1869, out of 49 Granges in the United States, 40 were in Minnesota.

In 1874, Grangers were in control of the State legislature and pushed through State legislation, and Federal action followed soon after to regulate transportation in the public interest.

Minnesota remembers the blizzard of 1873, which took the lives

COPY

of 70 persons on the prairie, and the business panic of that year. Duluth, which had been enjoying a speculative railroad boom, became almost totally bankrupt within a few days, and suffered a drop in population from 5,000 to 1,300. And then came the grasshoppers. By 1876 they not only devoured every leaf and spear of wheat, in the Western and Southwestern Counties, but ate clothing and wood as well. Private charity and public appropriations kept thousands of old settlers on the prairie, and newcomers in their sod-huts, from starvation. The Governor appointed a day of State-wide prayer in the spring; and afterwards, although the hoppers hatched as usual, they took flight when fully grown and left Minnesota.

Railroad building resumed after the panic. The early lines were formed into great competing systems which served the State well, and new waves of immigrants came in. By 1885, after the Twin Cities were connected with the Pacific Coast by rail, the population passed the one million mark. Many of the newcomers were from Ireland, for whom Archbishop Ireland provided shelter in immigrant houses. The railroads found shelter for others.



Sometimes the railroads provided whole towns. By 1900

the meat-packing houses also needed European labor, recruited in

the Balkans, Poland, Lithuania and elsewhere, until the

whole map of Europe was represented in Minnesota.

More than once the State has enjoyed get-rich-quick hopes, only to find that real prosperity lay in another direction. So it was with the mineral resources. In 1865 the presence of iron ore was known, but a report started in that year that gold could be found, and the gold excitement - although it collapsed the following year - delayed the development of iron. It was not until 1884 that the first load of 100 tons of ore was shipped in five cars from the Vermilion mines to Two Harbors. The first ore found on the Mesabi Range was not thought good enough to warrant mining; but Leonidas Merritt and his six brothers, all timber cruisers, believed otherwise. In 1890 Leonidas took out 141 leases, and by 1895 twenty mines were producing nearly 3 million tons. By the 1920's, Minnesota supplied three-fifths of the nation's iron ore and last year Minnesota took nearly 70 million tons of iron from its earth - -

COPY

over 2/3ds of the national production. The great ore docks of Duluth and Two Harbors, the spectacular pits of the iron range, support mining towns which are like few others on earth - equipped with municipal electric plants and other utilities, and splendid community houses, parks, libraries, and schools.

The Finns were recruited originally from the old world to work in the iron mines. But they took to farming rather than mining. By this time much of the north woods had been cut over, and many Finns settled on low-cost homesteads. The going was hard. The ground was difficult to clear, a language barrier separated them from their neighbors. It was by force of circumstances, because every penny counted, that the Finns developed the consumer cooperatives in which Minnesota is a leader.

The economic and social development of Minnesota moved forward on every front, only temporarily checked by Indian uprisings, grasshoppers, business panics, and wars. The growth of one industry aided another. Thomas B. Walker, who came to Minnesota in 1862 as a surveyor for the St. Paul & Duluth Railroad,

bought great tracts of land in Cass County and became a leader  
in the lumber industry. The genius of a French immigrant enabled  
the flour mills to overcome an obstacle which temporarily  
threatened the prosperity of the prairie-farmers.

As the spring wheat of Minnesota came into competition with  
the winter wheat grown elsewhere, the flour made from the spring  
wheat was found to be darker and inclined to be speckled.

Edmund LaCroix, a member of a French family which had come in the  
1860's, developed a secret process which eliminated the difficulty.  
Farmers came for hundreds of miles to Dundas, to marvel at the  
rows of vibrating sifters. LaCroix took his process to the  
Washburns in Minneapolis. Through the use of the middlings purifier,  
vast stretches of the Northwest were opened for the growing of  
wheat, which could be milled into the whitest of flour. And today,  
the State mills 11 percent of the nation's wheat, more than  
3 billion pounds.

The opening of the Panama Canal was a severe, if temporary,  
set-back to Minnesota, as traffic from the Orient no longer flowed  
from the Pacific Coast to the Atlantic through Duluth. In later

years the development of large traffic on the Mississippi  
has checked high freight rates by rail, and St. Paul, Minneapolis  
and Duluth have grown steadily as distribution centers. When and  
if the St. Lawrence Seaway is completed, Minnesota once more  
will ship the products of the Northwest region direct to European  
ports.

In 1862 the Rev. Lars J. Hauge, a Baptist minister, had  
led a group of Danes to Freeborn County. He was a dairying enthusiast,  
and almost 30 years later, in 1890, he took a hand in the organization  
of the first cooperative creamery in the State, at Clark's Grove.  
The cooperative movement spread gradually; after the legislature  
in 1919 drew up a code of laws to protect farmers' cooperatives  
they expanded more rapidly. To their research work in production  
and marketing, in cooperation with the State University, is  
due much of the prosperity of Minnesota. As lumbering and  
wheat began to decline somewhat in importance, a golden flow of  
butter helped to take their place. In butter production, Minnesota  
today leads the country with 18.4% of the United States butter  
churned, and stands second in the production of milk -

COPY

8 billion pounds in 1948. Although it is still a great milling State, the acreage of corn is now five times that of wheat and the record corn crop of 1948 produced 272,055,000 bushels. At the same time, the State harvested 11% of the nation's oats. Two-thirds of the farmers in Minnesota own their land; and the Minnesota State Fair, largest in the United States, is famous everywhere.

Minnesota has some 1,800 farmers' marketing and purchasing associations, including creameries, grain elevators, livestock and produce-shipping cooperatives; the number of cooperative members is more than half a million, the largest in the nation. In consumer cooperation, the small independent Finnish storekeepers in the iron range and Duluth area met in 1917 to form their first wholesale pool. Since that time, the oil-distributing societies have become well-known, and with varying degrees of failure or success, consumer cooperatives have undertaken to operate telephones, electric lines, credit unions, bookstores, dry cleaning, insurance, trucking, and even newspapers.

COPY

The cooperative spirit, however, is not limited to

those who engage in this particular form of business organization.

While Minnesotans were fighting in Europe and the Pacific during the Second World War, a small city, Albert Lea, won honors at home. For its voluntary, cooperative postwar planning to make jobs for the veterans, the businessmen and other citizens of Albert Lea were nationally publicized as an example.

In the census of 1940 the population reached 2,800,000 and the town population of Minnesota for the first time equalled the rural population, as a result of a remarkable rise in variegated industry, but perhaps more important, as a result of mechanization of farms. The mechanical skills of the early immigrants who worked in the shops and mills has been passed on to their descendants. The State today is known for manufactured dairy products, malt liquors, pulp and paper, canning, linseed oil, cake and meal, foundry and machine-shop products, and electrical goods. There has been a rapid development in electric light and power.

In state politics, Minnesota has generally remained with

# COPY

the Republican Party. From 1860 until 1932 she elected only four non-Republican Governors: John Lind, 1899-1901; John A. Johnson, 1905-1909; W.S. Hammond in 1915 and Floyd Olson in 1930.

Governor Olson was elected on the Farmer-Labor ticket.

Ever since the time of the Granger movement, the State had been hospitable to independent, radical, third-party movements, of American inspiration. The Farmers Alliance movement began to show potential strength in the State in 1881. In 1886, as industry grew in the cities, the Knights of Labor joined forces with the Alliance and drew up a strong railroad and labor platform which it pressed the Republicans to accept in full. By successfully backing candidates pledged to support agricultural and labor interests, the coalition virtually controlled the legislature. In 1890 it strode out upon the field as a third party; and two years later the nation-wide Populist Party was born, largely through the efforts of Ignatius Donnelly, Minnesota's "Prophet of experiment."



COPY

Governor Lind, first to break the long string of Republican Governors, was elected with the support of Democrats, Populists and "Silver Republicans". In 1912, Minnesota voted for the Progressive Republican, Theodore Roosevelt. From 1920 to 1938 the progressive movement expressed itself through the Non-Partisan League and the Farmer-Labor Party, and from 1932 by support of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal and Harry S. Truman and his Fair Deal. Minnesota was represented in another early progressive move, by Secretary of State Frank B. Kellogg, who sought world peace through a treaty of all nations, the Kellogg-Briand pact - - a plan of world disarmament.

But no party or coalition of parties has a copyright on the progressive spirit in Minnesota life, which has shown itself in the non-political cooperative movement, in arts and letters and sciences, and in state and local legislation. The territorial government established public schools and the first Normal School west of the Mississippi, and took steps towards establishing a university. In 1872 the state board

of health was established, the first child labor law  
was passed in 1909, and a minimum wage act for women and

minors in 1913. In 1917 the legislature enacted 37 laws  
for the protection of children. The state government was  
completely reorganized in 1939, when Minnesota established  
a Department of Social Security, with divisions devoted  
to social welfare, employment, and public institutions.

The State has 57 State parks, recreational reserves,  
way-sides and monuments, and a larger area in game refuges  
than any other State -- more than 3,300,000 acres, an  
area greater than Connecticut. Minneapolis and St. Paul  
are outstanding among large American cities for their park systems  
Minnesota's most recent wave of national publicity is making  
known the cold bright days of winter sport, and the summer  
life of lakes and parks within easy reach of nearly all citizens.

Minnesota writers have had strong local roots, and  
for the most part a serious turn of mind. Ignatius Donnelly  
was not only a political experimenter, but a scholar who  
surprised his colleagues on the Senate floor by quoting

Epictetus in Greek. He was a leading exponent of the  
Baconian theory of the authorship of Shakespear's plays.

One of his novels, CAESAR'S COLUMN, is reported to have  
sold 700,000 copies at home and abroad. It contained a  
prophecy that industrialized America in the twentieth century  
would become a dictatorship, which happily has not come true.

Thorstein Veblen, brought by his Norwegian immigrant  
parents to a Minnesota farm when he was 8 years old, studied  
at Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota, and began to  
read the social philosophers from Hume and Kant to Spencer.  
Here he found his direction as a critical analyst of modern  
industrial civilization. He was a clear-cut radical of the  
authentic, home-grown kind. It is said that after returning  
from Yale with his Ph.D., he spent seven years at home, apparently  
doing nothing, and was stumped by his neighbors as a failure.  
Then he became famous as the author of the THEORY OF THE  
LEISURE CLASS and other economic classics, and for his translation  
of an Icelandic saga.

In belle-lettres, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Charles Flandrau,

COPY

Martha Ostenso and Margaret Gullik Banning are well-known to America at large. Ole Edvart Rølvaag, a Norwegian fisherman, came to Minnesota almost penniless. He won a professorship at St. Olaf's College, where he taught until his death in 1931. In GIANTS IN THE EARTH he wrote a perceptive account of pioneer life which seems assured of permanence in American literature.

Local pride was hurt in 1920 when Sinclair Lewis, a native son, published MAIN STREET, a criticism of the narrowness and materialism which the writer believe were typical of the American small town. MAIN STREET at once became one of the most influential books in our history, both among writers and the general public. If "Carol Kennicott" today would find life in "Gopher Prairie" more interesting than she did in 1920, part of the credit belongs to Lewis - who was known as "Doodle" in his Sauk Center days.

The lumberjacks created the most famous literary character in the history of the State, the fabulous hero Paul Bunyan and Babe, the Blue Ox. As part of national folklore, they are

COPY

rivalled today only by Uncle Remus and his friends from Georgia. In Minnesota, the activities of Paul are still marked on the map, as in the case of Onion River, which derives its name from a difficulty Paul faced in checking the tears of his loggers, as they cut timber in a region of wild onions. Close by, incidentally, is Temperance River, named in the logging days because it was the only northshore stream with no bar at its mouth.

The Germans brought music. Long before the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra was organized in the 1890's, the first string quartet was formed by four Germans in St. Paul, and the Germans in Winona and the Czechs in New Prague each had an orchestra. The Lutheran pastors everywhere saw to it that their people had trained choirs. The a capella choir at St. Olaf's College, the only one of its type in America, owes much to the genius of its conductor, F. Melius Christiansen.

In music, Minnesota has an unbroken tradition - or many traditions - extending back to its early days. Today, Minneapolis is a center of music, with weekly concerts of its

famous symphony, with two artists series, one master  
piano series, chamber concerts, and annual visits of the  
ballet and the Metropolitan opera company. In the arts,  
there has been more of a deliberate effort at a revival.  
The people retained for a long time much of the domestic  
folk art that preceded the machine age in the countries  
from which they came; in this respect, they were closer than  
they thought to the Indians whose culture they displaced.  
The farmer had to make his own tools, his wife made her  
own bedspreads, the Red River hunter made his own dogsleds;  
the Yankee farmer and Swedish house wife, all had to be  
craftsmen. As factorymade goods prevailed, the home arts  
vanished, and were in danger of being forgotten until artists  
made illustrations of them in recent years for the Index of  
American Design.

As the machine age began in Minnesota, the women, long  
before Carol Kennicott complained of the flatness of life in  
Gopher Prairie, took an interest in the encouragement of art.  
In 1903, largely through their efforts, the legislature passed

# COPY

an appropriation for a State Society of Art. Among artists

of our time, the work of Homer Dodge Martin, Cadwallader

Washburn, and Nicholas Brewer, among others, is well known.

Carl Bohnen is noted for portraits, Carl Rawson for his

paintings of woods and waters, Jack and Paul Fjelde, father

and son, are noted in the field of sculpture.

In science, Minnesota's outstanding contribution had its beginnings in 1883, when a cyclone struck the town of Rochester.

The Sisters of St. Francis offered their convent to a local health official, Dr. William Worrall Mayo, to care for 100

injured. Six years later, this order opened St. Mary's

Hospital which they placed under the care of Dr. Mayo and his

two famous sons, William J. and Charles. Here they first did

the work which has since brought them national recognition,

and to many thousands of Americans has made Rochester the most

famous place in Minnesota. The Mayo Clinic works in close

association with the State University.

The arts and sciences, agriculture and industry in



Minnesota have all had close ties with the State University, which has gathered a brilliant society of poets, novelists, teachers, scientists, critics and historians. It is not the oldest college in continuous service in Minnesota, for church colleges established before the Civil War are still teaching American youth. While the University was chartered in 1851, it did not begin its real development until 1857-68 under William Watts Folwell. The University has grown steadily as a focal point for the life of the State. Pioneer leaders like the miller, John S. Pillsbury, have served it loyally and contributed generously. Today it is second in size of enrollment only to California.

The public school system dates from the first year of the Territory, 1849. Today it is one of the best in the United States, serving more than half a million children. The early immigrants of Minnesota were for the most part literate people - many had read about the State in the guidebooks scattered over Europe - and all were eager for more education for themselves and their children. It is largely in the schools that Minnesota

COPY

has made what many consider its chief contribution to the country as a whole - progress in the art of learning to live together.

The churches of the State stem from the work of the early missionaries, who had comparatively small success in converting the Indians in large numbers, but who built a firm foundation for the work of the denominations today. The Roman Catholic Church, with some 600,000 adherents, is the largest, the Lutherans second. All the leading Protestant Churches and the Jewish faith are represented. In the cities are fine, large houses of worship; in the countryside, the modest white steeples of the early days still serve the needs of farming people. Religion is a living element in Minnesota's past and present, a source of inspiration for her social progress, and for her faith in the democratic future.

Even before it was a State, Minnesota had an historical society. It was the first institution incorporated by the State Legislature. In the year when statehood was attained a

history was published, bearing the seal of the Territory.

That seal shows a pioneer with his hand on the plow, gazing toward the setting sun. Above him is a motto, Quo Sursum Volo Videre, "I wish to look forward."

We have the duty not only to honor the founders, but to pass on their faith and fire, to look forward as they did.

(end)



# Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



[www.mnhs.org](http://www.mnhs.org)