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Alfred M. Potekin

CLAY COUNTY

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The STORY OF CLAY COUNTY  
(In the Red River Valley)

Alfred M. Potekin

- Week of May 26, 1938 -

- Chapter I -

"BEFORE WHITE SETTLEMENT IN THE RED RIVER VALLEY"

*water*  
The ~~Great~~ Divide - - A Fertile Fence

Have you a large map of Minnesota in your classroom?

Look along the western border in the southwestern part of the state. ~~Th~~  
There you will find Lake Traverse and Big Stone Lake, two important  
bodies of water which form an angle and separate Minnesota from  
South Dakota at a point near where these states and South Dakota meet.

Look <sup>more</sup> closely and you will see that  
the lakes do not quite join. The  
stretch of land between them is not very large  
but it is an interesting point in  
~~geography~~ ~~for it is one of~~  
~~the "divides" between the two great~~  
~~water systems of Hudson Bay and the~~  
~~Mississippi~~ ~~see~~  
geography because from it flow the waters of  
two great systems, those of Hudson  
Bay and the Mississippi, in opposite  
directions.

From Big Stone Lake  
the Minnesota river <sup>flows</sup> to the Mississippi



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which at the mouth of its long  
course reaches the Gulf of Mexico.

From Lake Traverse, flows the Bois  
des Sioux river, a main branch of  
the Red River of the North which  
glides north for many miles along the  
edge of Minnesota, across the Canadian  
border and ~~into~~ into Lake Winnipeg.  
From this lake the Nelson river leads  
northeastward to Hudson Bay.

The divide between Big Stone lake  
and Lake Traverse though it sends water both  
northward and southward is not as one  
might suppose a high hill. It does not resemble  
a camel's back. In reality it is  
a low-lying strip of meadow, a  
valley more than 100 feet deep and  
more than a mile wide, dotted

and then I bought the

with rich farms and stretches of  
wild grasses.

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with ~~rippling~~ <sup>rich</sup> wild grasses and fertile farm lands.

#### A Fertile Valley

Famous scholars of nature, known as Geologists, explain why ~~this great plain country~~ and the valley of the Red River of the North is one of the ~~richest~~ most fertile ~~valleys~~ of the whole world. They have been able to ~~find out~~ <sup>learn</sup> why this <sup>black</sup> soil is ~~so black~~, and ~~rich~~, and ideal for the growth of ~~wheat and~~ grains, and vegetables, and why it is wonderfully adapted for the growth of grasses and forage for cattle which give us milk, cream, butter, cheese and meats.



## The glaciers

These geologists tell us that years, and years, and years ago, ~~some of the~~ ~~gigantic~~ ice ~~sheet~~ ~~three different~~ ~~g~~ This region was three times covered with gigantic ice sheets which pressed southward from the Arctic regions. As they moved ~~over the~~ they gathered ~~up~~ great quantities of rock and ~~powdered~~ crushed it. When the ice melted it dropped deep layers of ~~the~~ ~~powdered~~ powdered rocks and ~~fat~~ ~~which~~ form our soil.

## Lake Agassiz

The ~~last~~ melted ice of the last of the water left by the last of these ice sheets formed an enormous lake which covered about 111,000 square miles. Scientists named this glacial lake Lake Agassiz, <sup>from</sup> a famous naturalist. As the years passed this huge lake



slowly drained off and dried up.

after it ~~totally~~ disappeared it left  
a flat plain ~~of which~~ ~~is~~ of which  
the Red River valley is a part

Thick vegetation grew up. When fires  
swept over it the ashes gave the  
soil the rich black color which it  
has today. This vegetation as it  
decayed or was burned over gave the  
soil the rich black color which it has  
today.

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## The Red River of the North

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Years ago the early Indian tribes and white explorers were struck with the beauty of the Red River of the North and its valley. On calm summer evenings the unruffled surface ~~of~~ reflected the blood-red sunset and from this reflection it received its name. Because there is another Red River in the South the geographers add "of the North" ~~to our river but in speaking of it~~ but we do not usually use the whole title in speaking of it.

The valley of our river stretches from Lake ~~Lac~~ Lac Traverse.

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## The Red River Of The North

Here flows the great Red River of the British-American Northwest, the "Nile of the North." <sup>Years ago the early Indian tribes</sup> The picturesque scenery of <sup>and white explorers were struck by the beauty of the river and the valley,</sup> the river and valley entranced the early Indian tribes and white adventurers and explorers. On calm, windless summer evenings, the unruffled surface of the stream reflected the blood-red sunset and <sup>from this wine-red reflection it received the name "Red River."</sup> produced a wine-like, vermillion color from which it received its name "Red River."

Its valley stretches from Lake Traverse and Breckenridge (Wilkin County) for about 300 miles between Minnesota and North Dakota, and continues north to its mouth in Canada. ~~This offers a water route from northwestern Minnesota through Canada to the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and to the semi-arctic regions, the "land of the Midnight Sun."~~ The stream borders six Minnesota counties on the west and has served as <sup>an important</sup> ~~a famous~~ avenue of transportation for the early savage Indian, the <sup>and voyageurs</sup> ~~voyageur~~-explorer, the fur trapper and trader, ~~the half-breed Bois Brule, the adventurer and soldier, the~~ <sup>and</sup> early white settler and the farmer of today. <sup>immigrants, settlers and tourists</sup>

## A Wild Region Many Years Ago

This entire countryside long ago <sup>was</sup> ~~surrounded~~ a wild and dangerous ~~unsettled~~ region. Only venturesome Indians and brave traders, trappers and Coureurs des bois (runners of the forest) dared to roam here. Wandering tribes of Sioux, Chippewa, and <sup>probably other Indian sped</sup> ~~Assiniboines~~ sped their birch-bark canoes and dugout "pirogues" through the deep, ~~flowing~~ <sup>and</sup> waters, through wild rice marshes in search of wild fowl. Their moccasined, <sup>soft</sup> ~~soft~~ tread carried them silently through the <sup>forest and across the</sup> ~~narrow deep-~~ wooded trails, in quest of <sup>the wild animals they needed</sup> ~~the fur-coated animals of the forest.~~

"Red River Trails,"  
Grace Flandrau,  
p. 9

for fur and food



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9-9  
# They were following the customs established by their forefathers many, many years ago, centuries before the first white settlers came to this desolate land. So, we can be sure when we say that more than 200 years ago, even before the first explorers came here, this wild land was isolated and lonely and only the savage Indians, the birds, and beasts knew its secrets.

#### Bird And Animal Life

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Wild ducks and geese nested in the wild rice marshes and the tall water grass and quacked and lifted their wings high over the valley. Colored birds sang and preened their wings in the treetops and now and then the villainous eagle and hawk circled downward in search of prey. Colonies of beaver and muskrats swam and plunged in the deep streams and built strong homes of sticks and mud. Chattering squirrels skimmed through the heavy branches and gathered nuts and food for the long winter months. Occasionally, wary beasts slinked to the edge of cool springs to drink, and then scurried away into the depths of the forest.

The nights were lonely and frightening. Crys of hunted animals, the ghostly cry of the loon, and the howl of the wolf and coyote filled the valley with terror.

The huge buffalo roamed in the deep-worn trails on the sea-like prairie and plain, and bands of elk and deer wandered through the deep prairie grass. Here grew sweet, wild berries and fruit and various wild flowers. Summer was alive with the beauty of undisturbed nature, but the winter was bleak and cold, an ice-covered, snow-bound world.

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## The Redman - How he lived

This ~~abundant~~ abundance of wild life made the region a paradise for the Sioux, Cheyenne and probably other tribes ~~who made it their~~ had their hunting grounds ~~here~~ who occupied it at various times. Here they lived on the river banks in their lodges of buffalo stretched over high frames of raised poles. They fished in the streams, hunted with spear and arrow, gathered ~~for~~ wild rice, berries and fruit, ~~and~~ tapped the honey-sugared maple trees, and with crude methods raised a little corn and a few pumpkins.

In the spring and autumn they organized great hunts for the

Buffalo and the fleet-footed elk.

The shaggy buffalo served the  
redman with many necessities. ~~Not~~  
~~only was it~~ Its meat was Tasty even  
after it had been frozen for a long  
time. The skins provided warm robes  
for clothing and bedding, ~~even~~ for tipis  
tipis and bags for pemmican. Its  
~~sinews~~ sinews were used for bow  
strings. Even the bones were not wasted  
moccasins and leggings, rugs, bridles, <sup>lashes,</sup> and  
thongs <sup>as well as</sup> bags for pemmican and wild fire.  
~~not wasted but were worked into~~  
spear heads, knives, needles, scrapers and  
punches. In the ~~stomach~~ <sup>stomach</sup> ~~were~~ <sup>were</sup> wild  
Horns made convenient cups. Even the  
bones were not wasted but were  
~~used for~~ worked into spear heads, needles,  
knives, scrapers, fish hooks and punches.



Thus the Indian made the most of  
the resources which nature provided.

But the coming of the coureurs and  
the fur traders changed the whole pattern of  
his life.

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## The Redman - How He Lived

Only the sound of the nature-loving Indian revealed the presence of man, and human life. Here <sup>the tribes</sup> they lived on the river <sup>in their lodges of buffalo skin stretched over high cones of raised poles</sup> banks, in ~~cleared groves of heavy timber, which sloped to the water's~~ <sup>Their homes were lodges of buffalo skin stretched over high cones of raised</sup> edge. They fished in the streams, hunted and trapped, gathered <sup>poles.</sup> berries and wild fruit and tapped the honey-sugared maple trees. In <sup>the</sup> Spring and Autumn they <sup>organized great hunts for the</sup> lurked after the ponderous buffalo and the fleet-footed elk.

Perhaps the redman plowed small patches of ~~fertile~~ soil and raised wild grains and squaw corn. We have learned that he made rude plows from the sharp shoulder bones of the buffalo. The ~~congested~~ wild rice in the streams was gathered in canoes and dugouts, <sup>while</sup> The shaggy buffalo served the redman with many necessities. <sup>not only was</sup> Its meat was very tasty <sup>even when kept for a long time, but</sup> and could be kept for long periods. It provided warm robes for clothing and bedding, sinews for bows, shields and harness, kettles, boots, saddles, rugs, wigwam skins, bone lance-heads, sieves, pemmican bags, ~~and~~ rawhide, and horns for musket powder. Thus, trapping and hunting <sup>were the Indians</sup> was his favored occupation for it provided furs, meats, and trinkets. Primitive life here was kind, but the coming of the first Coureurs des bois and fur traders changed the entire life of the redman.

## Traders And Adventurers

Open your geography books and find the map of North America. Now place your finger on Lake Superior and follow the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River into Canada. Can you find Montreal and Quebec? The activity in and about Montreal many years before George Washington's birth had a great deal to do with the future explorations of the Northwest region of Minnesota. How? -- We shall see!

"Fur Trade and  
Hudson's Bay Co." (1856)  
Chambers Repository;  
Boston of P. 4, 5.

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*Lawrence river country*  
 In the early part of the seventeenth century ~~this locality~~ *the St*  
 teemed with French traders, adventurers, and Indians of the Ottawa  
 and Huron tribes. The crafty French valued the fine furs and pel-  
 tries of the north like gold. The Governor-General ruled like a  
 king and each year he held a primitive fair and conference with  
 his subjects. Savage, half-naked Indians paddled swiftly down the  
 streams to the celebrations, their light, birch-bark canoes filled  
 high with rich furs, ~~oil~~, dried and salted fish, *bead work* and beautiful feathers  
 and quills. They carried their canoes up the bank and pitched tents  
 in a cluster about the field. Then the celebration began.

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p. 5

In the center sat the Governor-General in a throne-like chair,  
 dressed in his finery. Voyageurs, half-breeds and savages sat cross-  
 legged in semi-circles, puffing long-stemmed pipes. Speeches were  
 made and presents exchanged; then the trading began. The savages  
 scampered from shop to shop, offering costly furs for firearms, kettles,  
 axes, blankets, colored cloth, and rum. They did not know the true  
 value of their furs and were cheated and swindled. But they were glad  
 to receive the white man's luxuries.

p. 5, 6

When the celebration ended, the Indians returned to their wilder-  
 ness homes, their canoes loaded with French goods and weapons. They  
 followed the St. Lawrence and Ottawa Rivers, and the Great Lakes into  
 the *upper Mississippi country*. ~~the northern part of the United States~~. Traders and Coureurs des bois  
 generally joined ~~their possessions and set off~~ *after them* in birch-bark canoes *bound*  
*bound* for the Indian villages nestled along the ~~many little~~ streams which  
 interlaced the forests. They spent many months with tribes, learned  
 their customs, *and language*, and then returned to the main post loaded with furs.  
 Many times they intermarried and were accompanied by faithful villagers.  
*Sometimes they married Indian maidens and gave up*  
*the way of white men entirely.*



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## Fur Competition And Military Posts

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The Governor-General and his loyal Frenchmen began to realize that these free-lance traders were stealing their business. They formed a plan and built military posts at special points to protect trade and drive others away. The men in charge of the posts were called "Commanders." The plan was not effective and competition became very keen. The British and Dutch at New York began to draw trappers to their posts. They offered clever promises and expensive gifts. This was a blow to the French . . . . . but the fur trade ~~began to branch out into all northern regions.~~ *continued to grow.*

The Hudson's Bay Company.

France lost her North American possessions to England in 1663. Seven years later in 1670, King Charles II issued a charter to a group of adventurers who had organized the Hudson's Bay company. and granted them a vast territory in the newly acquired ~~America~~ possessions. ~~this territory is greater~~

## The Northwest Company

In the winter of 1783, following the independence of the American colonies, a fur trading partnership was formed, which later became the Northwest Company. This company and the Hudson's Bay Co. were bitter ~~enemies~~. ~~Their employees were known to ambush and~~ competitors. Their employees were known to ambush and ~~kill~~ kill rivals on the open trail and in the solitude of the forest. The conflict of interests was not ended until 1821 when the two companies were merged under the name of the Hudson's Bay Company. From that

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year the British ensign and the company's flag flew triumphantly from the many trading posts. The company's flag was a British red ensign with a red cross and the white letters: H. B. C. (Hudson's Bay Company) Altogether they had about 100 trading posts about 300 or 400 miles apart, in a territory which covered about 4,000,000 square miles.

"South From Hudson's Bay;" (NOVEL) By E.C. Brill →

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#### Westward To The Red River Of The North

The furs reached almost all of the world markets for they were light and could be shipped over long waterways and troublesome portages with ease. Thus, many years before Minnesota was settled, traders, ~~and~~ half-breeds, voyageurs and missionaries pushed their way to the Mississippi Valley and west along the northern chain of lakes to the Lake of the Woods, the most northern point of our State and the United States. Then posts were erected and traders appeared on the upper reaches of the Red River of the North.

Chambers Repository,  
P. 31  
[and]  
"Red River Trails;  
Grace Flandrau;  
P. 12-16.

[also]  
"Saskatchewan Settlement  
and Settlement," Chas. N.  
Belly (1874)  
P. 1

#### The Water Routes

Cargoes of furs and robes were transported to ocean ports by two popular routes. The first route was east by way of Lake of the Woods, the Rainy River and Rainy Lake, the chain of lakes along the northern border, then by the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River to Montreal, Quebec, and to the the Atlantic Ocean. This route was more than 2,000 miles long. The second route was north along the Red River of the North, Lake Winnipeg, thence by the Nelson or Hayes Rivers into Hudson Bay. The latter river was better adapted for navigation. From Hudson Bay, sailing vessels carried the cargoes to European markets. At this early date there were no steamships.

↑  
P. 12-16



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## The First Settlers On The Red River Other Than Fur Traders

For many years the traders reaped a golden harvest from skins and highly-prized furs. They realized the importance of protecting their wealth, and discouraged any attempts at settlement and colonizing. Explorers, voyageurs, and visitors occasionally returned to European countries with stories of the beautiful, opportune Red River Valley. Interest was aroused.

## The Selkirk Colony

In the early 1800's, Lord Selkirk, the Scottish fifth Earl of Selkirk visited the Red River north of the boundary. He saw the possibilities of establishing a white colony in the valley. He bought more than 100,000 acres of land from the Hudson's Bay Company and the Cree and Sautaux Indian tribes. This purchase, in 1811, was known as the "Assinaboia Grant." The land lay on both sides of the Red River and westward along the Assinaboine River. ~~It was wild and lonely, visited only by savage tribes, half-breeds, and traders of the fur companies. Then Selkirk returned to England.~~

Selkirk persuaded poor people from the Highlands of Scotland to come to the valley and establish homes. They accepted his offer and the first band of emigrants reached the North American Continent in the winter of 1811, but were locked in the far reaches of the north by snow and ice. The following year they reached their destination at the mouth of the Assinaboine River. Here the colony was joined continuously by other Europeans <sup>for several years</sup> ~~until 1816~~. They <sup>endured</sup> ~~fought~~ countless hardships, suffered from lack of food and clothing, and were set upon <sup>by fur</sup> ~~by employees of the North-West Company~~ who resented their colonizing.

They fought ~~floods~~, famine, and frost, grasshopper raids, rats and pests, and white murderers. Their homes were flooded or burned,

"Selkirk Settlement & Settlers," Chas. N. Bell, (1894) -

{ols.} "North-West Passage By Land," Milton & Cheadle, (1865) Chap. III. p. 36-39. etc; etc.

[Many References]

company

↑

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their meager crops destroyed. Several times they fled to the half-breed settlement at Pembina on the west bank of the Red River below the border. Here lived the friendly half-breeds known to traders as Métis or Bois Brulés. They furnished food and lodging.

#### People Of Courage

The settlers had courage ~~and~~ <sup>each time</sup> faith. Three times they returned to their devastated colony but were forced to flee. They salvaged some of their simple possessions and the women managed to save some seed from the wasted crops. Selkirk learned of their suffering. He hired a band of veteran soldiers from the War of 1812 to protect their settlement from attack. These ~~outlawed~~ soldiers, known as "De Meurons," lived in huts in the vicinity of the settlement. ~~Governor McDonnell of the Hudson's Bay Company, known as Governor "Sauterelle," the "Grasshopper Governor," because of his destructive habits, punished the settlers and made their lives miserable.~~

"South From Hudson's Bay," (Novel) E.C. Brill.

#### Conditions Improve

The existence of the settlers became improved when the two fur companies joined in 1821. They had ~~small~~ farms and raised some crops. Other settlers came and the colony expanded. They are credited <sup>1</sup> as the first agriculturists of the Red River Valley. Settlements began to spring up along the banks of the Red River from Pembina north to Fort Garry (now Winnipeg) in Canada. The inhabitants were Selkirk Settlers, fur company employes, soldiers and officers, fur traders, half-breeds and bois brulés, and brigades of buffalo hunters. They were people of French, English, Scotch, Swiss, Irish and American descent, and half-bloods and Indians ~~from every northwest tribe.~~

By the year 1840 there were more than 5,000 persons living

<sup>1</sup> See chapter on Agriculture: post p.

"Red River Trails,"  
Grace Flandreau,  
p. 17 [etc].

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in the settlement which stretched from Pembina to <sup>11.</sup> between the settlement of Pembina and the fort in Canada. South of ~~Pembina~~ the border were smaller settlements, American Fur Company posts, <sup>and a few scattered</sup> and the half-breed settlers from Pembina, St. Joseph and St. Vincent.

### The Swiss In Selkirk's Colony

Lord Selkirk died in southern France in 1820. His representatives <sup>persuaded</sup> ~~enticed~~ families in Switzerland to join the <sup>Red River</sup> colony. These settlers, numbering about 171 persons, knew nothing of farming nor hardships of pioneer life. They were skilled workers, clock makers, wood carvers, and musicians. They spent the winter of 1821 in much suffering. <sup>Some of them</sup> The stronger element then decided to seek <sup>a</sup> better homes. <sup>location</sup> The traders from Fort Snelling and lower Minnesota told them that the Minnesota Valley was more suitable than the Red River Valley and suggested that they remove to that region.

### On To Fort Snelling

<sup>Accordingly five of these families</sup> During the next several years Swiss immigrants made their way <sup>in the military</sup> to Fort Snelling and settled about the reservation. They formed the first permanent colony of white settlers in Minnesota. As time passed, they were joined by other Swiss and French-Canadian families from the Red River country. The more adventurous wandered into the French settlements of adjoining eastern states. <sup>further down the river.</sup>

### On The Site Of Saint Paul

~~Some of the unlawful members peddled whiskey about the fort~~ <sup>But After several years the</sup> resulting in fights and bad morals among the soldiers and civilians.

<sup>P. 103</sup> The United States War Department ordered the colony of "Squatters" <sup>to</sup> ~~to move outside the Ft Snelling reservation those who did not obey were~~ from their claims and destroyed their shacks by removing the roofs. <sup>removed forcibly.</sup> Their homes and fences were destroyed. Many left Minnesota but others settled along the east bank of the Mississippi below the fort, and formed a tiny, straggling settlement.

"Selkirk Settlement and Settlers," Chas. N. Bell; p. 28-29.

[and] "MINNESOTA - The Star of The North;" By Mary Vance Carney; (1918) P. 102

P. 102, 103



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From this simple village has developed the great city of Saint Paul, the Capital of Minnesota.

A Lower Red River Trade Route

*We have already read of*  
~~On page 8 I have mentioned~~ two main water transportation routes, east and north, which were long, ~~tiresome~~, and filled

with danger. As settlement pushed westward, a new outlet was provided. At the ~~junction~~ *junction*

~~tion~~ <sup>the</sup> of the Mississippi and Minnesota was a growing civilization centered about Fort Snelling and the headquarters of the American Fur Company at Mendota. Here congregated white settlers, trappers, and

~~travelers~~ and ~~merchants~~. Here the traders brought their furs and secured their supplies and merchandise. Gradually, the trade between the Pembina settlement and Mendota increased.

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Norman W. Kittson - Commercial Pioneer

Norman W. Kittson was an early fur trader on Minnesota's northwest frontier and he realized the possibilities of <sup>still further</sup> enlarging this trade. To this man belongs the credit for commercializing the half-breed buffalo hunter's cart for merchandise transportation.

Kittson entered the adventurous fur trade as a boy of 16 and served an apprenticeship in the service of the American Fur Company. In 1830 he became the chum of Henry H. Sibley who was then a young lad of 19 years.

Thirteen years later these two strong young men became partners in fur trading. Sibley had established himself at Mendota (St. Peter's) where he was appointed chief agent of the fur company. Kitt-

"Norman W. Kittson -  
A Fur Trader at Pembina,"  
Clarence W. Rife, Minn.  
Hist. Quart. - Vol. 6 - (1905)  
p. 226

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son, during that period, had served as sutler's clerk at Fort Snelling, general supply merchant and trader ~~at Cold Springs~~, and business associate of Franklin Steele ~~at the mouth of the Minnesota River~~. This special partnership was called the "Kittson Outfit," and Sibley furnished the trading goods from Mendota. ~~The trading was to be done in winter and the furs delivered to the agency in summer when the trails were open and the prairie grass high enough for forage.~~ Kittson had a great distance to cover, from the ~~Upper~~ <sup>mouth of the</sup> Minnesota to the Red River of the North at the border. The fur frontier was slowly shifting north and Kittson decided to build a post at the Pembina settlement. The Pembina traders welcomed the Mendota service in preference to the tedious wait for supplies from England. Kittson journeyed to that frontier settlement and was extremely satisfied.

#### The Pembina Or Red River Carts

For many, many years, ~~probably before the Revolutionary War period~~, the Red River half-bloods used an awkward two-wheeled wagon for hauling meats and robes from their exciting buffalo hunts. ~~The~~ <sup>Kittson adopted the same method for the transportation of furs</sup> carts were entirely of wood, without nails, screws, rivets, or any solid metal. The large wheels were one rounded/piece or rounded from Bent wood. A large wooden box rested upon the wooden axle between the wheels and could bear a load upwards to 1,000 pounds. These carts were drawn by a single ox or a small shaggy pony harnessed in the shafts by wide strips of buffalo hide known as "shagganappy." No axle grease was used.

When multiplied by a caravan of several hundred carts, the greaseless wheels squeaked and creaked and could be heard for many miles. They could be heard before they were seen and announced their approach like a thousand rusty hinges moving at once. But the carts

(Many Refs)

Minn. "The Star of the North," Mary V. Carney

P. 70, 71.

[Neil - Folwell, etc.]

and Supplies.



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were sturdy and could readily be repaired, for wood and Buffalo hide could always be obtained.

In 1844 Kitson started six of these heavily laden carts on their way to Sibley's post, bearing a cargo of ~~valuable~~ valuable ~~fur~~ furs. ~~Small~~ Shipments of Red River furs had already been made to that point, but this was the beginning of the heavy period of traffic which was to continue for ~~more than twenty years.~~ ~~nearly twenty~~ some twenty-five years.

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were sturdy and could be repaired easily, for wood was plentiful.

Kittson chose this manner of conveyance for his trade. In 1844 he started six heavily-laden carts on their way to Sibley's post, bearing <sup>a</sup>the first cargo of valuable furs. This was the <sup>real</sup>beginning of Red River <sup>the heavy</sup>traffic to ~~lower Minnesota~~ <sup>the mouth of the Minnesota</sup>.

"Red River Trails" - G.  
Flandrau, p. 19

#### Time Of Seasonal Departures

In early Spring, when the trails were clear and grass plentiful, ~~caravans were sent to Pembina stations to haul in the furs~~

~~and pelts from the past winter's trapping and trading. Then they were gathered~~  
<sup>at Pembina. Then they</sup>  
were sorted and packed in tight bales, and the loaded carts were ready for the long journey. They started about the middle of June or early July and advanced across the open prairie in single file, like a huge, winding snake. Each half-breed driver managed several carts under the supervision of a brigade chieftain. The return journey was made about October.

Minn. Hist. Quart.,  
Vol. 6 - p. 246.

#### The Appearance And Dress Of The Drivers

The half-breed drivers were known as "Metis" or "Bois Brules."

They had dark-skinned, swarthy complexions, the shade of "burnt wood," long, dark hair and dark, snapping eyes. They wore colored-blanket coats or hide-jackets or shirts, trimmed with large metal buttons. Their cloth <sup>trousers</sup> ~~pants~~ were bound at the waist with red or yellow sashes. Some wore soft fur caps while others were bareheaded, their foreheads bound with colored ribbons tied in back. They wore deer-skinned moccasins and leggings, and carried beaded fire-bags, sharp bladed knives and pipes and tobacco.

"Red River Trails,"  
Flandrau, p. 18.

#### The First Red River Trail

When the traffic began, the favored trail was south from Pembina along the highland some 20 miles west of Red River. Here the

Minn. Hist. Quart., Vol. 6 -  
p. 246

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shallow sources of the Red River's branches could be forded easily. Upon leaving the valley, the route headed southeastward to the Minnesota Valley. Then the trail ran parallel with the stream to Traverse des Sioux (now St. Peter) and northeast to Mendota. This was the "West Plains Trail." When the rains were heavy and the streams too deep and swift for the caravan crossing, a rude log raft or simple log bridge was hastily constructed.

The trail wound over wide, open prairie, through marshes, mud and small ponds under an unmerciful blazing sun or <sup>through</sup> drenching storms. At times the lumbering carts and trudging beasts became mired in the marshy earth. The heavy saplings, grass and brush had to be filled in to allow a sure footing. The maximum daily mileage was some 15 or 20 miles and night camp was made on the open prairie in a wide circle for protection against marauding redskins. Animals were unhitched to graze and the men relaxed beside blazing camp fires. At dawn the caravan continued to crawl across the prairie accompanied by barking wolfish dogs and the screeching of heavy, greaseless wheels.

### Three Red River Trails

As traffic increased in the passing of time, three well-marked, recognized trails connected lower Minnesota with the Northwest. They were the "West Plains," "East Plains," and "Woods" trails. The first has been mentioned; the second became popular in the early 1850's and led <sup>South</sup> from the post east of the Red River through St. Cloud on the Mississippi and down this stream to St. Paul and Mendota. The third became a popular route from St. <sup>Paul</sup> north through the "Big Woods" country along the Mississippi to Crow Wing, north of St. Cloud, and from there west to Otter Tail Lake and north to Wild Rice River,

"Red River Trail," Chas. Hallock; (Harpers New Monthly Mag.) Apr. 1859.

"The Red River Trails; (Notes & Documents) By: Grace Lee Nute; (P. 279-282) Map. P. 278.



May 26, '38

16.

forming a fork with the "East Plains Trail." The trails generally merged into one route north from Pembina to Fort Garry in Canada.

#### Cart Traffic Increases

The seasons passed and the Red River caravans increased in number and in length. From six carts in 1844, they increased to 102 in 1851 and 500 in 1857, and by 1858 some 600 carts carried tons of furs and robes to markets. The trails were clearly visible, deep and rutted, highways from primitive settlements to civilization.

*Lower & the Red River cart as a method of*  
~~Red River~~ transportation held its popularity until the early *seventies*.  
 latter 1860's, when ribbons of steel marked the coming of the rail-  
 road. Until that time, the arrival and departure of ox-carts created  
 jubilant excitement, and residents of tiny communities along the  
 routes hurried from their cabins to witness the spectacle and shout  
 "Hurrah!" "Here come the carts."

(End Chapter I)

L.V. 5/31 '38

"Red River Trail,"  
 Chas. Harlock, (Harper's)  
 (April, 1859)  
 (also)

"Settlement In Clay  
 County," (1870-1900) By:  
 Dora J. Gunderson -  
 Master Thesis, U. of M., 1929.  
 (Manuscript Room)  
 State Hist. Bldg.  
 P. 7.

## - Chapter II -

## STEAMBOATING

17.

15 pages

For hundreds of years the streams had been the highways of the wilderness. Indians had skimmed their canoes and dugout "pirogues" over lakes, rivers and creeks. Traders, voyageurs, explorers and missionaries traveled to distant places in long "mackinaw boats," birch-bark canoes and crude skiffs. Flat-boats, keel-boats, and rafts followed the foam-churning steamers which docked at landings along the Mississippi. <sup>For many years</sup> Water transportation <sup>speedily increased</sup> was speedy and safe.

In the late 1850's the Red River Valley merchants began to realize the possibilities of carrying freight and supplies by river boats. The Red River <sup>for much of its course was navigable</sup> was a deep navigable stream, like the Mississippi, with many branches and hundreds of miles of flowing water from Breckenridge, Minnesota, north through the channel to Fort Garry, Canada. "Why," they asked, "cannot we have steamboats to ply this fine stream?" Then we could build wharfs, docks, warehouses and landings. Then freight coming overland from St. Paul and Mendota could be carried downstream to important landings and furs and skins from the Hudson's Bay posts could be brought upstream and then carted overland to the Minnesota <sup>outlets</sup> markets." The merchants reasoned well, but . . . how to start? Let us look back and visualize an early attempt.

## By Water And Land

In the winter of 1819-20, needy settlers facing starvation in the Selkrik Colony made their way to Prairie du Chien, now in Wisconsin, to buy seed-grain. They started for home the following April in three large "mackinaw boats," loaded heavily with 330 bushels of wheat, oats, and peas. They paddled up the Minnesota River to its source, continued <sup>and</sup> through Big Stone Lake, then dragged the loaded boats over the portage into Lake Traverse, and descended the Bois des Sioux and the

"Opening of The Red River to Commerce"; By Capt. Russell Blakeley; Minn. Hist. Socy. Collec.; Vol. 8; (1895-98) (p. 45-66)

"Steamboating On The Red River of the North"; Capt. Fred A. Bill; No. Dakota Hist. Quarterly; Vol. 2- No. 2 - Jan., 1928;

p. 100, 101

Red River. They reached their homes in June and the trip was a success.

#### Flatboats

p. 101 As the years passed, flatboats became popular. Freight was shipped overland from the lower Minnesota settlements into the valley and then carried down river by barge-like boats. At the conclusion of the trips the boats were knocked apart and sold for lumber. This type of transportation was popular and was continued for years after the coming of the steamboats. Flatboats proved invaluable during low <sup>periods, especially in navigating the shallows</sup> water <sup>sieges, and, above Moorhead, the shallowness, sandbars, and rapids</sup> ~~required the use of the safe flatboat.~~ <sup>along that part of the river south of Moorhead</sup>

#### Steamboat Interest

p. 101 Captain Russell Blakeley, an early river pilot, inspected the Red River in 1858 to investigate its navigability. The tour was sponsored by <sup>the members of</sup> the St. Paul Association of Commerce who were anxious to develop its trade. Blakeley was satisfied with his tour and he sent a report that navigation was possible was several months of the year. Interest was aroused and the possibilities were discussed by river pilots and merchants. They knew that if a steamer were placed on the Red River <sup>more</sup> many would follow. ~~Then offers were proposed.~~

p. 103 The Hudson's Bay Company offered ~~their~~ support. If steamboats would be successful on the Red River <sup>the company officials</sup> they <sup>to</sup> guaranteed to import their merchandise from England through New York, through St. Paul and thence by way of the Red River of the North to their Canadian posts. They would plan to employ about 100 ox-carts capable of transporting a haulage equal to 40 tons, divided into 800 pieces of 100 pounds each. They favored three annual trips from St. Paul to Fort Garry. The offer was encouraging.



### Anson Northup

p. 101

Captain Maxwell from the Minnesota River offered his boat the "Wave" for duty on the Red River for a sum of \$3,000. Then Anson Northup made an offer. His steamer the "Anson Northup," formerly the "North Star," was then in the Crow Wing River near the mouth of the Gull River. He said he would place his boat at a suitable point on the Red River for \$2,000. His offer was splendid, but . . . how would the steamer be brought more than a hundred miles overland? Northup had his own plan. He would haul the machinery, boiler, and other metals overland.

19.

by oxen, horses, and a great crew of men to the river edge. Then they would build a hull on the water, about 100 feet long with a 20 foot boom which would be able to carry freight and passengers with comparative safety. The plan was fine but when, he was asked, would this be accomplished? Perhaps by April 15, he suggested, for the season of 1859.

### A Steamboat Moves Overland

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p. 102  
Northup began his task immediately. He hired a Captain A. R. Young and Jesse B. Young to supervise the mechanical labor and then he left for Gull River. The Youngs knew the steamer from stem to stern. The machinery in this boat had been installed in the "Governor Ramsey" in 1850 at St. Anthony by Captain Young and was the first steamboat built above the falls at St. Anthony. This machinery had been reinstalled in the "North Star," later the "Anson Northup," which was to become the first steamer on the Red River.

p. 102  
p. 103  
Soon pounding hammers echoed in the Crow Wing Valley. The boat was being taken apart. The cabin and machinery was taken out and the timber discarded, and lumber for the new hull was cut at the Chapman mill at Gull River. Then an overland route was planned and arrangements made for supplies and teams. They got 13 yoke of oxen, 17 span of horses, and a crew of 30 men. In late February the expedition left the frozen Leaf River, in Wadena County, and headed in a westerly direction toward the Red River, over an ice-covered, snow-bound region some 140 miles away. The men expected to reach their destination in one month.

p. 103  
Thus began an historic expedition, a plodding mass of men, oxen and horses, struggling over a wild, frozen and almost uninhabited country. It was very difficult to drag heavy sleighs loaded with lumber, machin-

ery, freight and supplies, in sub-zero temperatures. All the tools and supplies had to be taken along. In that early day there were no stores or shops where supplies could be purchased. They had to overcome many hardships and had to be prepared for any emergency in cases of breakage and sickness. It was a hurculean task for men and beasts.



"Clay Co., Minn., and its  
Resources;" Moorhead  
Independent Holiday  
Supple, D.W. Meeker, Pub,  
Moorhead; Fri, Jan 5, 1900.  
(Article under "Probstfield")

Bottom of  
P. 103 (above)

Min. Hist. Collec.  
Vol. 1. 17 (Nomenclature)  
(Clay County)

The expedition advanced slowly over the familiar Hudson's Bay and Red River cart trails until it reached the vicinity of Oak Lake, now in Becker County. From that locality they were faced with an almost unopened, unknown country practically buried in snow. At times it was necessary to send out men to find hay and forage for the stock. ~~Trees were cut down to enable the ponies to live.~~ When the trail became too difficult to follow, some men were sent out to look over the country and to find a <sup>more</sup> suitable passage. After several days of waiting the expedition would catch up with the pathfinders. Slowly but surely the outfit headed toward the mouth of the Sheyenne River on the Dakota side of the river below Georgetown in Clay County, and about 14 miles north of the present city of Moorhead. Here was believed to be the head of navigation on the river.

Bits of machinery were left behind due to bad roads, to be haul-

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21.

ed in later. On the last day of March the party touched the bank of the Buffalo River in Clay County, about six miles east of Red River, and soon the weary group reached their destination at the now vanished settlement of "Lafayette." This was a stroke of fortune for they were now entirely out of supplies.

After a good rest the men set about to build the boat. A deep pit was dug on the river bank and a whip saw was put in use to cut the lumber from the felled trees. The saw was operated by two men, one standing in the pit and the other above. In this fashion about 250 feet of frozen timber was cut each day compared to about 175 feet of unfrozen lumber. It was a tiresome process.

#### The First Trip

The completed boat was 90 feet long with a 22 foot beam, and drew 14 inches of water light, and, about seven weeks after arrival, the boat slid into the Red River ready for service. C. L. Northup, the owner's eldest son, christened the vessel. The elder Northup suggested that the boat be renamed the "Pioneer," but the proud crew persisted in retaining the old name.

A trial trip was made, and one week later the steamer left upstream for Fort Abercrombie just north of Breckenridge. On the second day she arrived at the now vanished townsite of East Burlington at the mouth of the Upper Wild Rice River. Here she was loaded with wood for fuel, cut by a handful of enthusiastic residents. When the boat reached the post the commander offered to furnish lumber for the cabin and the steamer remained until the fifth of June. On that day she left Breckenridge downstream for Fort Garry, Canada, arriving at Pembina on the eighth and Fort Garry the ninth. She was rewarded with hilarious welcomes at all points. From Fort Garry an excursion was run downstream

"Steamboating On Red  
River of North", Capt. Bill,  
P. 105

P. 104.

P. 104

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to Lake Winnipeg, returning the fifteenth with 17 passengers, including several ladies. At Fort Abercrombie the steamer was tied up for minor improvements in care of a carpenter.

#### For Sale

At this time the merchants clamored for the steamboat's service, but Northup replied "he had agreed to place a steamer on the Red River for a bonus, but that nothing had been said about running her." The vessel was offered for sale and purchased from the owner by the Burbank Company of St. Paul for \$8,000.

Northup's work accomplished, he left with his crew for St. Paul. The steamboat passengers from Canada were transported overland by teams. A passenger destined for Toronto in eastern Canada later related that six days were required by ox-team to Swan River and two days by stage coach to St. Paul.

#### An Attempt By Way Of The Minnesota River

In this same year a Captain John B. Davis, later Major of the Second Minnesota Regiment in the Civil War, headed his powerful square-bowed steamer the "Freighter" up the Minnesota River from St. Paul toward its source. The captain had hopes of taking his boat through Big Stone Lake, Lake Traverse, and then through the Bois des Sioux River and into the Red River of the North. The water was high and the plan seemed very likely to succeed but the trip was started too late in the season. The crew failed and the steamer was left grounded about eight miles from Big Stone Lake.

#### A Man Of Patience

The stranded vessel was left in charge of a little Welshman "until something could be done to get it off the rocks." Weeks passed into months and four years went by; the luckless boat was almost for-

Quotation from "The Fargo Forum," Souvenir Edition, 1927, article on "Red River Traffic Develop-  
ment"

P. 105

P. 106

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P. 109

(also)  
"opening of Red River to  
commerce," Capt.  
Blakeley, Hist. Collec.  
Vol. 8 - p. 59.

"Fargo Forum," Souvenir  
Edition, 1927, Fargo N. Dak.,  
3rd Section - 155 page - last column;  
Box Type "slugged"  
"Patience of Job."



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23.

[Cond. from previous page]

gotten. Then the Burbanks bought the remains and a crew was sent to remove the machinery and boiler to Georgetown, the Hudson's Bay Post in Clay County. They found the little Welshman still on the job and quite happy. He had lived on the boat all the time, leaving only when necessary to hunt for food. The little man answered the questions of his astonished rescuers and then remarked, "Well, I guess I'll go back and see the wife. I've been away from home quite a while. She probably wonders where I am."

#### Steamboat Importance

The coming of the steamboat shifted the commercial spotlight on the great Red River Valley region and the growing St. Paul was drawn closer to the Northwest. Merchants prepared for prosperous times and shipment increases. This progress influenced the expansion of stage lines and brought about improvements in roads. The <sup>adjoining area in</sup> northwestern <sup>Canada</sup> Canadian territory also expected a period of development.

Before the steamboat commerce the region controlled by the greedy Hudson's Bay Company was practically isolated. Red River settlement was discouraged. Lower Minnesota wanted trade but the company wanted furs and favored the simple <sup>half breed</sup> trapper and half-blood rather than the aspiring white man. When the steamers began to ply the streams it was hoped that the land would be thrown open for settlement, especially northwestern Minnesota.

#### Burbank Stage Line And Steamer

When the Red River commerce became assured, the St. Paul owners of the Minnesota Stage Company, J. C. & H. C. Burbank and Captain Russell Blakeley, established a stage line between St. Paul and Fort Abercrombie in partnership with Allen & Chase, who had the contract for the northern stage routes. They built roads, bridges and stations. With

P. 105, 106  
P. 106  
Minn. Hist. Collec.  
Vol. 8, p. 50, 51

these improvements, passengers and valuables would be carried speedily and safely overland to the steamboat landings, to find passage on their steamer. Sir George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company offered the owners a five-year contract to transport hundreds of tons of freight to Fort Barry.

#### Georgetown Becomes Important

At this time, Georgetown, the Hudson's Bay Post in Minnesota named for Sir George Simpson and located just north of the present site of Moorhead in Clay County at the mouth of the Buffalo River, *in what is now Clay County* was chosen as the head of navigation on the Red River. This was ~~so~~ because the stream above from here south to Breckenridge was too shallow and troublesome for boats to pass through. ~~This choice was a great honor for the future Clay County.~~

#### Trouble Commences

In the meantime the "Anson Northrup" lay moored at the fort. Captain Edwin Bell was hired to take charge and the Youngs became pilot and engineer. Freight was piled in the hold and the boat steam-ed off on its first commercial venture into Canada. The trip was very disappointing. The river was low. At Goose Rapids, about 100 miles north of the present Moorhead, the crew found trouble. Huge boulders emerged from the water; the current was swift and a high gravel bar at the foot of the rapids stood defiantly in the boat's path.

But these early river sailors were ready for any emergency. They unloaded the freight on the bank where waiting wagons hauled the merchandise overland. The boat started over the rapids. The men waded in the shallow mud, dug holes beneath the boulders and the boat pushed them into the pits. The gravel bar was overcome by a temporary

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25.

p. 107  
brush and wood dam. Time was lost and when the boat arrived at Fort Garry the shipping season was almost over. Pilot Young saw the futility of returning upstream and the steamer was taken below to the Indian River to be protected from the blasts of winter. The crew returned to St. Paul by a cart train.

#### Repairs And Renamed

p. 107  
The Burbanks bought Blakeley's share during the winter and after an inspection found that the steamer was in poor condition. The machinery and boiler were worn and old. The lumber was of weak green pine and decayed. Repairs were made and the boat was renamed the "Pioneer." Mississippi pilot Captain Sam T. Painter took charge and the Red River received the remodeled craft in Spring. After a profitable season the good ship "Pioneer" was tied up at Georgetown, the head of navigation.

#### The "International"

p. 109, 110  
The machinery and boiler taken from the unfortunate "Freighter" was hauled to Georgetown in the winter of 1863 by a crew under C.P.V. Lull. Timber was cut here in the Buffalo and Red River lowlands and named the "International," a hull was constructed. This new craft/was to succeed the "Pioneer" in the Red River business. The magnificent boat also had bad luck. At one time she pierced the timber on the winding bank and tore off her smoke stacks. Norman W. Kittson, early ex-cart trafficker, served for a time as commander. He had his hands full with Indian troubles.

The redmen complained that the smoke-belching, churning steamboat and its "unearthly whistle scared away all the wild game; killed the fish, and disturbed the spirits of their fathers in their graves on the river banks." They demanded money for their peace. They wrote a letter to the Burbanks demanding "four kegs of yellow money," or "stop running the boats." Once the boat was grounded and abandoned

Minn. Hist. Collec.  
Vol. 8; Capt. Blakeley  
p. 59, 60

"Capt. Bill"  
p. 110



on a downstream voyage. The freight and passengers were continued by wagons.

~~(End Chapter II)~~

Later ~~steamboat~~ efforts were more successful than these early ventures and Red River steamboating became important.

## - Chapter III - SETTLEMENT

27.

<sup>1</sup> That era beginning with the <sup>first</sup> steamboat and fading with the building of the railroad northward into Canada coming of the railroad to the Red River greatly developed the commercial importance of the valley. But this period was not an important one for mass settlement in Clay County. Concentrated settlement came with the arrival of the railroad. ~~Georgetown was proud of its popu-~~

In the steamboat era, Georgetown ~~early~~ became an important center as the official head of navigation and the site of the Hudson's Bay supply post. Let us turn back several years to its origin when the first permanent settlers came.

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R. M. Probstfield - "Clay County's First Permanent Settler"

Randolph M. Probstfield was a Prussian by birth and came to St. Paul in 1853, as a courageous young man of 21 years. Two years ~~he~~ before he had arrived in America from his native country. He tried his fortune in the timber lands of Wisconsin and northern Michigan and the lumber camps about Mankato. Here he took up a claim but at the conclusion of a government survey it was found that his claim was on school land and Probstfield, in disgust, left for an unknown destination down river. He returned to Minnesota Territory in 1856 and went into the hotel business at Chicago City. Following business difficulties he returned to St. Paul where he held several political offices. Then followed the panic of 1857 with the financial failure of the banks. Probstfield lost everything.

He heard of the rich, opportune Red River Valley and decided to seek his fortune in that undeveloped country. He left St. Paul February 26, 1859, accompanied by George Emerling and Gerhardt Lullsdorf. Emerling kept the first hotel in Fort Garry, now Winnipeg; Lullsdorf had been in the hardware business at Mankato. The journey was extremely severe and they encountered no snow until they reached the

Clay Co., Minn., and its  
Resources; Moorhead Indep  
Holiday Supply; L.W. Meeker,  
Moorhead, Jan. 5, 1900.  
(first part)  
Official paper, City of Moorhead  
(1900)



*Continued from  
Previous page*

Sauk Rapids settlement. At or near the present Little Falls they left their wagon and continued by sled. Crow Wing settlement, some 15 miles below the present Brainerd, was then the outside point of civilization, except for a land office at Otter Tail City where resided two land officers and a half-blooded Indian trader and family. Journeying onward from this place, the group met Northup's expedition enroute to the Red River. They cast their lot with the party and accompanied the entourage.

When the expedition ran out of forage, Probstfield trailed to the south end of Otter Tail Lake where he found good hay. The trip consumed three days. The snow continued to fall and the wilderness was buried in a thick blanket of white. When they reached Oak Lake Probstfield accompanied the exploring group to find a suitable passage. When the expedition reached the bank of the Buffalo<sup>O</sup>/River Probstfield pushed onward toward the Red River. Late in the evening he rode into a townsite located below Georgetown on the opposite side of the river, to secure provisions for the entire group.

### *had been* Lafayette

*"Settlement of Clay County"  
(1870-1900) Dora J. Gunderson,  
Masters Thesis - H. of M.  
March, 1929 - typed and  
Bound - P. 3.*

This site ~~was~~ <sup>had been</sup> platted early in the year by a group of wealthy land-dealers from St. Paul and Minneapolis and named "Lafayette." The location was at the mouth of the Sheyenne River at a place <sup>then</sup> believed <sup>future</sup> ~~then~~ to be the/head of navigation on the river, about 14 miles above the present Moorhead and Fargo. The speculators built a large hotel of logs for they hoped for an immediate rush of settlers here "for wasn't this on the direct Red River Trail and the future headquarters for Red River shipping?" Perhaps . . . . but they were destined for disappointments.

### Three Early Pioneers

Probstfield purchased pork, flour and other supplies and spent

the night baking biscuits. Early the next morning he left for the ~~camp~~ <sup>the camp where he had left his</sup> ~~camp~~ of his comrades, and that same night the expedition reached the Lafayette townsite. returned to

#### The Only White Settlers South Of Pembina

In that entire far-reaching wilderness, there were only a small group of <sup>white</sup> settlers. At Lafayette were Edward Murphy of Montreal, Canada, and Charles Nash and Henry Myers of New York. On the opposite side of the Sheyenne River two men were holding down a townsite known as Dakota City for a group of speculators of Minneapolis headed by Pierre Bottineau. The men were Frank Durand and David Auge. Richard Banning lived one and one-half miles north of Sheyenne City and he was neighbored one-half mile north by George W. Northrop and his partner a Mr. Claren, at a nameless place. Northrop was popular as a great hunter and trapper and was often employed by English noblemen on buffalo hunts. He was killed in the Indian war, July 28, 1864.

Robert Davis lived at "10 mile point," some 10 miles south of the Sheyenne River, in the vicinity of the later home of Probstfield. The home of John Hanna lay some 80 rods north of this place. At the mouth of the Wild Rice River were the shacks of Edward Griffin, later of Fargo, and James Anderson who was popularly known as "Robinson Crusoe." This comprised the entire white population in the Red River Valley south of Pembina, and Georgetown as yet had not been established.

#### Back To St. Paul

Probstfield left for St. Paul April 22, accompanied by Robert McNeil, James Ryan, and David Auge in a Red River cart drawn by four horses. Arriving at St. Anthony, Probstfield brought news of Northrup's success to his family who had been without word since the steamboat owners departure. The return trip had been very perilous due to heavy

Mooshead Independent  
H. Supple. (1900)  
(First Part)

snows, flooded streams, and bad trails, and they reached their destination in 17 days. He started back for "Lafayette" in early July, accompanied by Adam Stein, and arrived July 12.

In the meantime Georgetown had been established at the mouth of the Buffalo River by the Hudson's Bay Company under James McKay, and the stage line was extended to this place from Fort Abercrombie. The original site was about a mile northwest of the present village. A trading post and warehouse was erected to serve the needs of its employes.

Probstfield busied himself about the "Lafayette" townsite and then made a trip to Europe. The following summer he returned and located on Section 32, Town 142, Range 48, about one and one-half miles south of the Georgetown site. He was accompanied by three brothers and two cousins and arrived at St. Paul May 25 and the Red River June 22. While enroute he purchased 5 yoke of cattle, 10 cows, and 30 head of young beef.

In the fall of this year, Probstfield journeyed to South Bend, Indiana, in quest of a bride, and was married to a sister of the Goodman Brothers who became early settlers in the valley. The newlyweds journeyed from St. Paul by ox-team and covered wagon to his claim, arriving in 18 days. In 1864 Probstfield bought 24 head of sheep at Fort Garry for \$100 in gold. He brought them to Georgetown on the first return trip of the "International".  
Adam Stein

Adam Stein, who accompanied Probstfield to "Lafayette" in July 1859, lingered about the site until Spring 1860. Then he accompanied several men to St. Paul expecting to receive a commission to build a road to Oregon. Their plans failed and Stein returned to Georgetown with David Miller and Henry Black. When the land about Georgetown was opened to settlement, he filed a claim in the northwest one-quarter of Section 30 (NW  $\frac{1}{4}$  Sec. 30) where he built a home.

The freight cost

was \$40. In less

than one day,

23 sheep were

killed by dogs of

the Hudson's Bay

company, and the

last one was

killed by the beasts

when the post was

abandoned during the

Indian uprising.

(also)  
"Hist. of Wheat Raising  
in Red River Valley" by  
Hon. Geo. M. Humphrey,  
Minn. Hist. Collec.  
Vol. 10 - part 1.  
P. 12



## Company Claims Land

The Hudson's Bay Company claimed Stein's land and resented his intrusion <sup>t</sup> but he insisted on his rights and remained. Then the company sought to drive him away by orders given to the Burbank Stage Company but the settler hung on. He managed to exist by cutting prairie grass and hay which he sold. On December 24, 1861 he enlisted in Co. G, Fourteenth Minn. Inf. for Civil War duty and was notified by the War Department that by enlisting, his rights as a settler would be upheld.

In March, 1862, Stein marched off to war under the command of Captain Lueg and after serving commendably on the battlefields of the South he was honorably discharged at Chicago in February, 1865. He returned to Minnesota, paid up his homestead which was conceded by the Hudson's Company and then went into business at St. Cloud. He was married the following year and returned to his claim in 1868 with his wife and small son. Here he operated a ferry, kept a hotel and farmed some land. In 1870 he sold the hotel, then built a permanent log home with log barns and graneries.

## E. R. Hutchinson

A member of the crew in Northup's expedition to the Red River in 1859 was E. R. Hutchinson, Clay County's third permanent settler. He helped to build the first steamboat. Then for some years he sailed *he continued to manufacture boats and sailed* the river and tributaries and manufactured boats. He settled land and pre-empted a claim on a site on the bank of the Red River about two miles south of Georgetown near the old site of the vanished "Lafayette." Here he built a log house where he resided with his family and followed a farming occupation.

The history of Clay County dates from the coming of these three

P. 17.  
Hist. of Wheat Raising, etc.  
Hist. Collections,  
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32.

courageous men who became its first permanent white settlers. They lived well beyond the turn of the century and saw their county develop into one of the most productive of the counties in the now famed Red River Valley. Although the townsite of "Lafayette" lives only in memory, it remains in history as the site of the coming of Clay County's founders and the place where the Red River's first steamboat was built.

Real settlement in Clay County did not begin until the early 1870's, when the railroad was reaching over the prairie and steamboat commerce reached its peak. The anticipation of good transportation facilities here greatly influenced the settlement, growth, and development of the county.

#### Colonizing

At this time the Minnesota State Board of Immigration began to advertise this region hoping for migration here. A Norwegian writer was sent into the valley to inspect its possibilities. This man, Paul Hjelm Hansen, came in 1869. He was delighted with what he found in that region between Fort Abercrombie, and Georgetown in Clay County. He wrote many interesting letters which were published in Scandinavian papers. He told of the desirable transportation accommodations and commerce, trade points, and convenient markets, the railroad coming, and its benefits.

"Settlement of Clay County" (1870-1900)  
Dora Grunderson's  
Hofm Masterthesis  
p. 10

p. 10, 11

As the result of his tour he 47  
wrote many interesting letters which  
were published ~~in the~~ in Scandinavian  
papers. In these letters he

P. 11

clearly described the region and told about the lands that remained  
to be settled. He offered the best plans and methods for settlement.  
He knew that most of the pioneers who were eager to settle here were  
greatly alarmed over possible Indian attacks and so he advised them  
to settle in groups. He favored the settlement of the region lying  
between Fort Abercrombie and Georgetown in Clay County.

P. 13 -

To him belongs much credit for  
influencing many Scandinavians to  
settle in the valley.



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## Scandinavian Settlement

A group of seven Norwegian families came to the Red River Valley in the Spring of 1870 from their former homes in north Houston County, in the extreme southeast corner of Minnesota. These people came to America from Norway in the 1860's. Among this group were the families of the Thortvedts, Tauges, Skrees, Andersons, and others. They piled their worldly goods in "prairie schooners" and set out in a northwesterly direction from Mound Prairie near the Root River in Houston County. Their route led them through the early Rochester community and northward through Minneapolis. From here they continued along the Mississippi to St. Cloud, thence along the Minnesota Stage Company road through Osakis, Alexandria, to Fort Abercrombie in the Red River Valley.

They followed the road north along the Minnesota side of the river and finally reached Georgetown. They crossed the Red River by ferry <sup>to</sup> in Dakota Territory near the ~~xxx~~ site of the present Argusville, N. Dak. Here they stayed for about a week and searched for a suitable location to acquire land. They were dissatisfied. In the Spring of this year the river waters had somewhat flooded the lowlands. They believed this land was too wet and low to grow crops. These Scandinavian people desired land close to the river, for the banks of the streams offered many benefits to soil tillers. Here were sturdy trees for fuel, building, and shade, and protection against bad weather, and a lasting water supply for stock and household needs. Downcast and disappointed, they decided to return to their former settlement in Houston County along the picturesque Root River.

Settlement of Clay County; (1870-1900)  
By Ilova J. Gunderson;  
Master Thesis; Def. M. Mar. 1929;  
P. 27, 28, 29.

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34.

## They Meet Probstfield

They recrossed to the Minnesota bank and met Mr. Probstfield, Clay County's first settler, near his homestead at Oakport some four miles north of the present city of Moorhead. Probstfield had been living here since May, 1869, on some 71 acres of acquired land. In the Spring of 1863, following the Indian uprising, he sought the protection of Fort Abercrombie by military order, then removed to St. Cloud in June and returned to Georgetown in May, 1864. He ran a post boarding house and served as postmaster. A group of men who shared his hospitality were engaged in building river barges for steamboating. He served as company agent until 1868 and then occupied his homestead in Oakport where the Norwegians met him and where he spent his remaining years.

## Where To?

Upon meeting the returning group, Probstfield inquired as to their destination. "Back to Houston County," they replied. Probstfield thought of a plan. He was busy cultivating potatoes and he needed help. He said, "If you will put two young men to work on my land, I will go with you and show you good land that has been surveyed." For a moment they looked at each other for consent and then all nodded in agreement. Probstfield escorted the hopeful group about 7 miles east to the Buffalo River to a splendid location which was adapted to all their desires. They were delighted and soon made preparations for permanent settlement. This locality became the Town of Moland. As most of this land was owned by the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, the settlers bought homesteads and pre-empted one-quarter sections of land.

## A Previous Norwegian Settler

These Norwegian settlers were not the first within the boundaries of the present Clay County. As early as 1862, John O. Tansem, for whom

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[also]  
Minn. Hist. Collec.  
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p. 14, 13, 12.

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"Settlement of Clay Co."  
1870-1900  
Dora J. Gunderson  
p. 30.

"Clay Co. Minn. And Its  
Resources," Holiday Supple.  
Moorhead Independent, Moorhead,  
Jan. 5, 1900.  
p. 43, 44, 45.

Continued  
from Preceding  
Page.

Tansem Township is named, found his way into the southeastern corner of the county after a difficult journey from Fillmore County, in the southeastern part of Minnesota. Coming from Norway in 1861, Tansem set out for this wilderness the following year with his young bride. They made their way by foot in a northwesterly direction from Willmar (Kandiyohi County) through Alexandria (Douglas County) to the edge of the timber in the vicinity of the present Tansem. Here they made their home, *and started to develop their farms.* ~~suffering privations and frontier hardships.~~

Supplies were very expensive and Tansem was forced to go to the crossing of the Otter Tail River for flour which cost \$7 for 100 pounds. The Tansems and their distant Becker County neighbors subsisted largely on wild game which they divided. They had a meager supply of salt and when the weather was warm the meat was weighted down with stones in the cool springs and in this way managed to keep it fresh. To this type of pioneer, Clay County owes its progress and importance.

#### Reason For Late Settlement

*P. 31  
Settlement of Clay Co.  
(1870-1900)*

~~When the success of the first settlers here reached the distant~~ *older* ~~countries, immigration in this direction took rapid strides. That is the~~ *there are several reasons* ~~reason~~ why this great fertile valley was settled much later than the southeastern Minnesota sections. Outsiders knew almost nothing of the real possibilities of this region. They believed this valley to be inhabited only by savage Indian tribes, half-civilized mixed-bloods, and wild beasts.

*Many References!*

They had heard false tales of hungry, monster-like locusts which settled in clouds upon fields and stripped the countryside bare, and were told strange stories of sweeping floods, and bitter cold winters, in a land believed to be ~~much~~ colder than the North Pole. Little wonder then that ~~the first~~ *was slow* ~~settlement here came much later.~~ But soon other pioneers cast



than that the first settlement was slow. But when the truth about the region began to reach the older ~~common~~ counties of the state ~~from~~ the people living here, settlers began to arrive in greater numbers.

~~longing eyes northwestward to this promised land which was soon to claim an honored reputation as the "Granery of America," and the "Bread Basket of Minnesota."~~

#### More Scandinavian Settlers

When the first Norwegian settlers became firmly established along the picturesque Buffalo River, they were eager to draw their Minnesota relatives and former neighbors to this opportune region. Their happiness and satisfaction was shown in the occasional letters sent to Norwegians in southeastern Minnesota. Soon, a steady cavalcade of covered-wagons crawled northwestward to the Red River, and in the summer of 1871 another Norwegian group from Houston County arrived at Buffalo River to become permanent members of the settlement.

#### Into Other Sections

In this same year several Scandinavians from Fillmore County settled in the present Tansem Township. Then followed settlers from Winnishiek County, in <sup>northeastern</sup> northern Iowa, to this locality. Other settlers followed and pre-empted suitable land in the present townships of Eglon, Parke, Tansem, and Skree, east and south of Hawley, and Cromwell, Highland Grove, and Keene, north and East. All this surrounding prosperous farm land was developed through the courageous efforts of Scandinavian settlers in the early 1870's. Holy Cross Township, in the extreme southwestern corner of the county, also developed through the influence of Norwegian settlers. This township was named for a simple wooden cross located on the prairie by a cemetery, about a half mile west of the Red River, in Dakota Territory, in the midst of a Catholic community of French-Canadian farmers. The land on both banks of the stream formed the "Holy Cross neighborhood."

Clay Co., Minn., and its  
Resources; Holiday  
Supplement to Moorhead  
Independent; Moorhead,  
Jan. 5, 1900 -  
P. 43, 44, 45.

Minn. Hist. Socy  
Collec. Vol. 17 -  
Minn. Geo. Names;  
P. 117

(cond)

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P. 32, 33.

## 1870 - Ninth Census Of United States

By the time the first Norwegian group had permanently chosen their homes, all the land in Clay County had been surveyed. The land in Range 48 had been surveyed in 1859. This land along the east bank of the Red River was the first in the region to carry the imprint of the early traders, voyageurs, and settlers, as they journeyed through the valley.

The United States Census of 1870 showed a total of only 92 persons living in the county, scattered in the three towns of Georgetown, Oakport, and Kurtz, all in Range 48. This population was made up of French, Half-bloods, and whites. There were only four farmers engaged in cultivating land for crops, with some 12 acres to each farm. This was the outlook of the future Clay County at the beginning of Norwegian Settlement.

## Settlers Without Commercial Facilities

The railroad had not as yet penetrated through Clay County, although its tracks were being laid <sup>from Duluth</sup> through the prairie west to the Red River. At this stage of the story, Moorhead, later important as the "Key City of the Frontier," and ~~the rail terminus of the valley,~~ was yet unborn. ~~The tracks were slowly reaching west to Glyndon on its way to the river and Dakota Territory.~~

Until then it was no easy matter for the settlers to find markets for their first crops wrested from the newly broken soil. The Hudson's Bay Company at Georgetown charged very high prices for their merchandise and farm equipment. The settlers could not afford these prices. As the nearest land office was at Alexandria, in Douglas County, some 65 miles southeast from Clay, the settlers chose to do their buying, trading and selling there. A round trip took about 12 days by

Settlement of Clay Co.  
(1870-1900) - S. J. Gunderson - M.T.  
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P. 26.

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P. 31



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(from proceed. page)  
team. Trips were made at certain times and provisions were purchased for neighbors and sometimes for the entire community. The land office was later removed to Oak Lake, then to Detroit (Lakes) (Becker County) and finally to Crookston (Polk County).

## The Birch of Moorehead.

When the Great Northern came nearer and nearer to what is now Clay county there was considerable doubt about where it would cross the Red River. Whatever point should be selected was sure to ~~be~~ become the site of an important city.

Some thought that it would be at Oakport on the Probstfeld farm. The Lake Superior and Puget Sound Land Company, organized to establish townships along the railroad, ~~farmed~~ was owned by the railroad company. The officials favored

a crossing at the present site of  
Moorehead because the land there was  
high and safe from Red River floods  
and was well ~~sited~~ suited to be  
the location of a city. But they  
were not yet ready to let the  
people know their decision.



The best of land

The site was ideal but the railroad did not own it. The real owner was

p.34  
also highlights from  
Souvenir Edit. of  
Fargo Forum, Fargo, N.D.,  
Jan. 18, 1927 - 6<sup>th</sup> Section.

owned by Joab Smith of Alexandria who had once pitched a tent on his claim and now ran a stage line. He had a government title to the land. The title had to be bought secretly because they did not wish to arouse suspicion from residents of adjoining sites. Andrew Holes, an early settler, acting for the Railroad and company, was sent overland to

The <sup>Townsite</sup> company decided to buy it before he realized how valuable it was soon to become. Andrew Holes, an early settler was sent out to find Smith at Alexandria. Part of the way he walked.

to buy the one-quarter section from Joab Smith. He walked part of the way.

*P.34*  
To allay any suspicion, ~~the road~~ <sup>the railroad stakes a line</sup> ran a line to Oakport to make believe that this site was actually chosen. Settlers expecting a building boom hurried to the false site and pitched tents. Several men built <sup>put up</sup> business buildings at this place. Two weeks passed, and Andrew Holes returned with the land deed in his pocket. Then it was announced, to the astonishment of ~~neighboring land holders~~ <sup>the owners of rival sites</sup>, that the trains would cross the Red River several miles south of Oakport. <sup>At this crossing was established a camp of tents which became</sup> This location became the present city of Moorhead.

#### Progress

*Souvenir Edit. of Fargo Forum-Fargo, N. Dak. Jan. 18, 1927-6th Sec.*  
The Northern Pacific Railroad reached the Red River at Moorhead in 1871 and the bridge across the river was built in September. John Ross served as <sup>the</sup> contractor of <sup>the</sup> road to the terminus. The first engine reached the site on December 12. Washington Snyder was the engineer and Alex Gamble, the fireman. The engine drew a snow plow to clear the heavy snow drifts and was in charge of Captain R. H. Emerson.

*P.37*  
When the railroad connection was made between Moorhead and eastern Minnesota the settlers ~~in this colony of tents~~ were given splendid <sup>good</sup> transportation facilities and avenues for markets. The markets and <sup>settlers</sup> trade centers were drawn closer. Many <sup>found</sup> added employment. Actual settlers were hired to improve the land along the rail for cultivation. They were paid \$5 an acre for breaking. Many farmers needed work when their crops were destroyed by grasshoppers.

*P.34*  
The Moorhead lots were <sup>priced</sup> very high <sup>but</sup> they were valuable and were sold fast. Regular-sized lots sold for \$250 each. At Fargo, Moorhead's competitor on the opposite side of the Red River in Dakota Territory, lots sold for \$100 each ~~by the rail company~~. The competitive burst of

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*Moorhead promoters*

settlement at Fargo gave the land company considerable worry. They reduced the Moorhead land prices in the passing months and the community grew rapidly. It became the traffic center of the Red River. Prairie schooners wound their way into the settlement, piled high with domestic goods and trailed by farm stock. Settlers pitched tents in the open until favorable homesites could be found.

P. 35 Foot Note  
#17.

*Every train unloading a stream of  
immigrants.*

Not all the settlers came by train, for day after day prairie schooners wound their way through the community piled high with domestic goods and trailed by farm stock. ~~Some of the~~ ~~wings~~ On all sides were signs of activity and hope.



## Settlement Growth

60

Immigration was now moving into all parts of Clay County, largely encouraged by the Great Northern railroad. This company had been

given a land grant of <sup>numbered</sup> odd public land sections within a limit of 20 miles on either side of the track in Minnesota.

(above p. 13.) Perhaps this can be made more clearer. As you know, your Clay County map is divided into townships and each township is divided in <sup>to numbered</sup> ~~36~~ sections. Each section, away from a stream, has one square mile of land and the townships, generally, comprise an area of 36 square miles. By receiving this public land within a limit of 20 miles on either side of the track, it can be easily seen that the railroad owned about ~~half of Clay County.~~

61  
half of clay county. When you study state history you will find that the land grant made to help the railroads consisted of ~~the~~ the odd numbered sections in a strip of land six miles wide on each side of the right of way. But when the railroads began to build, many of these sections in the older part of the state had been taken by settlers, so to make up for it the railroads were given extra land in clay and other new counties.

L. W. Tenney & Company of Duluth agreed to sell the railroad land in clay county for a commission.

They began to advertise. They had hopes of selling two-fifths of the entire area during the first year (1872), and expected 400 families to come here in that season. They were quite sure that

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9.14 they would be rid of the whole tract by the end of May, 1874, and that 1,000 families would be settled within its limits. The Duluth firm was to receive 10% of the land sales and the settlers were to have the finest cooperation by the railroad company.

Hawley or Glyndon

In preparation for the arrival of settlers the ~~company~~ railroad company decided to put up a Reception House where immigrant families could live while looking around for land, the piece of land they wanted.

At this time it was thought that the St Paul and Pacific now the Great Northern which runs south from



63  
the northwest corner of the state  
would cross the Great Northern at  
what is now Hawley. For this  
reason the Great Northern started to  
build a Reception House there.

But when the route of the  
 St Paul and Pacific was decided upon,  
 the junction point was fixed at what is now  
 Glyndon. Accordingly the work at  
 Hawley stopped. The building material  
 was moved to Glyndon and a ~~Reception~~ Reception  
 House and ~~Camp~~ Hospital put up  
 at a cost of \$11,000. ~~The Rev. James~~  
~~Gurley, a Methodist missionary, took~~  
~~charge late in 1872.~~ The building  
 was two stories high

160 feet long and 32 feet wide. The lower floor had 11 rooms, and the  
 upper, 3 sleeping rooms. Here was sufficient space to accommodate 100  
 persons, with bunks, beds, pillows, blankets, cooking stoves and utensils.

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heating stoves, dishes and tables, all free  
to the ~~settlers~~ immigrants until they  
could find a home of their own. There  
were even hospital facilities ~~in~~ in  
case any of them should be taken sick.  
Here too a land agency was established.

### The Red River Colony

The time had now come to bring  
in more settlers. An office was opened  
in New York in ~~the spring of 1872~~ ~~the~~  
~~the spring of 1872~~ under the direction  
of Minister of Immigration.

Families from the eastern United States  
of ~~high~~ high moral character were  
especially desired. To attract these



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people, an office was opened in New York in the spring of 1872, under the direction of ~~Immigration~~ Immigration Commissioner. As the result of this effort a group of New Englanders organized the Red River Colony and a few of them were soon on the way to Glyndon with their families.

### Dissension

For a time everything went smoothly and everyone was happy. In four months 600 members pledged themselves to the venture by paying a fee or fee of \$20. Suddenly a bad feeling arose against the Colony and the Railroad.

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It was claimed that the freight rates for household goods were higher than the members had thought they would be. Those who were already here found conditions entirely different from the comforts they had left and they wrote home about it. The same old stories about the long cold winters were circulated.

The result was that by mid summer only about 100 families had arrived. But these people set about undaunted to establish their homes. The company with strong hopes planned a church and a school to be built from membership fees and continued the effort to bring more people here. ~~In time their hopes were realized~~

### The English Yeovil Colony

P.19  
At this time a movement was started in England to bring settlers to America, led by George Sheppard, the London agent, <sup>for the land company</sup> and aided by Reverend George Rodgers, Congregationalist Minister and South England local agent. In August, 1872, a number of men with Rodgers left for America to inspect Minnesota's Northern Pacific lands. The Minister's main purpose was to help English farmers find a livelihood in a new land.

P.20  
When the group arrived, the land agency gave up four townships to enlarge the colony. In this was included the land near Hawley and Muskoda where settlement was planned. This was to be separate from the Red River Colony, but similiar in a religious and moral way. They favored cultural societies. Rodgers returned to England and lectured about



p.21  
the new venture. When the year ended, the colony claimed 1,000 persons who were willing to come there. About 200 were ready to sail with their families during the following spring and summer.

#### The "Yeovilites" Arrive - Ill Feelings

p.21-  
The first group arrived at Hawley by April, 1873. The group comprised about 52 single and married men who came to "look about." Almost immediately there arose an enmity between the men and the land company. The colonists were angry because the ~~Lake Superior~~ and ~~Puget Sound~~ <sup>reserved</sup> Company had ~~taken~~ most of the favored land near the Hawley Station. They did not want to locate away from the station.

p.22  
The company tried to compromise; the colonists refused. They blamed <sup>Mr.</sup> the Reverend Rodgers. Rumors swept the colony that the members were going to mob him. Rodgers was so overcome with fear that he hid for some time in the church building.

#### Other Causes Of Dissention

p.22,23  
The colonists expected too much. They were all from England but from different sections and were strangers to each other. Many were not farmers and were unaccustomed to the hardships of frontier life with its many dangers and needs. Others were poor workers without finances other than their transportation fare. Also, at the time of their arrival, the weather was bad and their spirits low. Parts of the railroad track were washed away by strong rains. They could not reach Glyn-don, and Hawley was too small to take care of them all. Several left, but many stayed. <sup>Some</sup> They claimed homesteads up to 80 acres and others preempted one-quarter sections (160 acres). This activity was centered northwest and southwest of Hawley, and north and south of Muskoda.

#### Loss And Gain

p.24  
These colonization attempts were unsuccessful but they helped

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P. 24, 25  
in later settlement. They brought the English-speaking peoples who rated second in proportion then with the county population. The enthusiasm and advertising helped to bring other nationalities, for incoming pioneers welcomed homes near schools, churches and ~~shops~~, stores, places where they could buy and sell and have livable accommodations. Thus the colonies ~~aided in~~ helped to breaking the soil and lay the foundation for Clay County's future newcomers. Glyndon was an important center for many years.

#### Settlement Moves With Progress

Migration moved into all sections of Clay County when the Nor<sup>thern</sup>

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the Georgetown river traffic headquarters was removed to Moorhead. Moorhead became a stirring center of business, a productive oasis on a surrounding fertile frontier. Improvements were in order; buildings arose as if by magic. Up came hotels, taverns, homes, stores, churches, schools, halls, and shops. Trade and marketing increased in leaps and bounds. The Red River Valley, ~~supported on the Minnesota side by Moorhead and Glyndon,~~ had awakened to contribute to the future prestige of Minnesota.

Passenger Service



Thousands of Canadian-bound  
 travelers came to Inverhead by rail  
 and continued their journey by  
 boat and stage. At first the  
 service was rather crude, the trains  
 being made up of mixed freight and  
 passenger cars. The trip from Duluth  
 to Inverhead took two days. It can  
 now be made by railroad ~~in about~~

~~hours or over 250 miles by~~  
~~an automobile in between seven or eight hours~~  
 or automobile in less than one sixth  
 that time.

At first there was no station 73

~~at~~ or agent at Glyndon and freight was taken through Glyndon to Moorhead and then carted back to Glyndon by team. This was a waste of time and effort. Later the service was improved. Comfortable passenger trains were provided and more freight trains were added. The St Paul and Pacific was built north from Glyndon and a station opened there. In time other railroads were built and Clay county came in closer and closer touch with the outside world.

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### U.S. Mail And Post Office Service Development

p. 38

From the period of early settlement, mail was very important to the pioneers. They were lonely and stranded in an far-flung region, infested with many dangers. Neighbors were few and far between. Eagerness for news from outside civilization, friends and relatives was genuine and heart-felt. Pleasures were limited and time hung heavy. Any little news was relished by all and the first letters and papers were read over and over. Occasional strangers brought in papers and outside news. Settlers of foreign birth longed for news from their native countries, and eagerly welcomed such as they could get.



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The first mail came through the valley by Red River carts in the warm seasons. In winter the mail was carried by dog teams. A postoffice was established at Fort Abercrombie in 1858.

Red River  
Capt.  
Vol. 8  
p. 48  
In October, 1858, while enroute from the Red River, Captain Blakeley relates that he "met Albert Evans, mailcarrier, between St. Cloud and Fort Abercrombie, near the 'old crossing,' on foot, with his mail upon his back."

~~From the fort~~, William Tarbell and George W. Northrup had the contract for carrying the mail from the fort to Pembina.

A postoffice was established at Georgetown in 1860. The scattered settlers had to travel there after ~~the~~ their mail, and ~~the brought business to the little hamlet.~~

A mail-carrying contract was given  
to Captain Russell Blakely and  
C. W. Carpenter in the early 1860's.

They brought the mail by stage ~~by~~  
from St. Paul by way of Minneapolis,  
St. Cloud, and Fort Abercrombie. Three  
trips each way were made every week.

Holy Cross, in the southwestern part  
of corner of Delay county, had a postoffice  
in 1869. With the coming of the  
railroad offices were established at  
Moorehead, Glyndon, Muskoda and  
Hawley, along the railroad line.  
Beginning with 1879 other offices were  
added.

### Population Increases

Clay County boasted 1,451 residents in 1875 living in six townships and one village . . Moorhead. Population was distributed as follows: Town of Glyndon [including Elmwood-Elkton-Riverton-Spring Prairie) 244; Town of Hawley, 162; Town of Lund (now Tansem) 135; Town of Moland, 135; Village of Moorhead, 475; Town of Moorhead (with Oakport) 110; Town of Parke, 190. This population was mainly along the Red River, Buffalo River, Northern Pacific line, and in the southeastern corner. The Norwegian element predominated with 355 persons, comprising one-fourth of the total county population. A total of 255 native-born residents were from Minnesota.

(End of Chap. III)

L.V.

Note. This should be checked before typing. The total native born should be given as well as shown the total from Minnesota. The 255 is also to be questioned. There is nothing in the story to indicate that at this early date there had been any considerable influx of native born from other parts of the state.



## Chapter IV - Agriculture

Before the actual settlement of Clay County and the coming of the railroad, the few settlers in homesteads along the Red River south of the Canadian boundary raised no wheat. They fished, hunted and trapped. They found fresh meats on the plains and fish in the many streams. They raised some garden vegetables, some barley and oats for their stock, and a little squaw corn for roasting ears. Wild hay and grasses were kept for winter feed. These settlers had no mills for grinding flour. The flour for their daily bread was purchased from the Selkirk wheat raisers in their settlements in Canadian territory.

## First Agriculturists

Here was the beginning of wheat raising in the famous Red River Valley, near Fort Garry, now the great city of Winnipeg. The first Red River farmers were the impoverished people sent by Lord Selkirk in 1811 to their colony near the junction of the Assinaboine and the Red River of the North. As related before, these colonists suffered greatly, for the fur company traders objected to the cultivation of this valued fur country by the colonists. They also suffered from floods, drought, frost and crop pests. Nevertheless, these humble Selkirk settlers are honorably credited as the first Red River Valley farmers.

## Harvest Plagues

Lord Selkirk, known as "Silver Chief" by the Indians, visited <sup>his</sup> ~~them~~ <sup>colonists</sup> in 1817 and gave them farming tools, seed grain, and other needs.

But this season was almost ended and the settlers were desperately in need of food. They removed to the Half-breed settlement at Pembina in Dakota territory on American soil, and were given food and shelter. They returned to their homes in the spring of 1818 and plowed and seeded the land. Overnight, when the harvest was near, a hungry horde of

"Hist. of Wheat  
Raising in the Red River  
Valley;" By Hon. Geo.  
N. Lamphere; MINN.  
Hist. Socy. Collec;  
Vol. 10 - Part 1.  
p. 11

p. 2

p. 3, 4

(cond) locusts harvested the crops and left a bare countryside. They left their eggs in the fertile soil which hatched the following year. Their offsprings resumed the feast and crop destruction. Again famine swept the settlement and the colonists returned to Pembina for help.

As ~~related on page 17, paragraph 3,~~ <sup>we have learned</sup> some of the settlers made their way through Minnesota to Prairie du Chien (Wisconsin) <sup>in the winter of</sup> to buy 1818-19 seed-grain to replace that destroyed by locusts, and returned the following summer by water with several hundred bushels of wheat, oats, and peas.

See Note p. 17  
The journey and grain cost Selkirk 1,000 pounds (about \$5,000). The grain was sown in Spring; it ripened successfully and the autumn harvest was bountiful.

#### How Farm Land Was Divided

[Lamphere Quoter Hargrave p. 79]  
"Red River, By: J.J. Hargrave; Montreal, Canada; (1891) Chap. 5- p. 80"  
When the Earl of Selkirk died in 1820, his representatives sold the land for a small sum. The prices ranged from 5 shillings, to 7 shillings and 6 pence per acre. (about \$1.20 to \$1.75 per acre in American money). The farms or "lots" were laid off and bounded by two parallel lines reaching out two miles over the prairie, starting at right angles from the Red River as a base line. The higher-priced "lots" were those that had the largest "frontage" to the river. This "frontage" varied in length from three to ten "chains." (Note: Webster's International Dictionary defines a "chain" thus: "a measure of distance equal to 4 rods or 66 feet in length; 10 square chains equalling 1 acre; each link being 7.92 inches)" (with 100 links to a chain).

Ps. 176, 177, & 178.  
(J.J. Hargrave)  
There was a special reason why the farms reached out only two miles over the prairie. Within this area the land was considered safe for cultivation; beyond the land was swampy and untested, although fertile. Here outside the "two mile line" prairie grass grew thick and tall. Hay

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49. 80

(cond)  
cutting was an important part of the autumn work, and, in spite of the unlimited forage, hay usually became scarce towards Spring. Then its value was 10 to 20 shillings (\$2.40 to \$4.40) for a cart-load weighing 800 pounds. It was unlawful to commence this work outside the line before August 1.

" The cut hay was stacked on the prairie and when the stacks were completed, ditches or rings about 8 feet wide were dug or burned around them about 20 feet away for protection against prairie fires. This manner of fire fighting was well known to the frontiers people for they had seen slight obstacles, such as a well-beaten cart track or a deep rut, stop raging prairie flames.

P. 80, 81  
Each purchaser was given a land deed and his claim was registered in the land company's office. In 1836, the Hudson's Bay Company bought the Selkirk land back from his heirs for a sum of 84,000 pounds (more than \$400,000). This was done to quiet the many grievances of the troublesome colonists.

#### Early Methods Of Cultivation

"Hist. of Wheat Raising  
In Red River Valley"  
Lamp here;  
Vol. 10-Part 1;  
Hist. Collections-  
Pg. 4 &  
7  
The first methods of land cultivation in the valley were rude and primitive. An English or Scotch-made plow was used, about 10 or 12 feet long and entirely of iron from tip to the end of the handles. The plow share was shaped like a brick-mason's trowel, it was drawn by one horse. The finished grain was cut with sickles and the bundles were tied with willow withes, flexible, slender twigs or branches, and then stacked in the barnyard.

" In winter, the wheat, barley and oats were threshed on the barn floor with a flail, <sup>and</sup> beat by hand. Then the grain was winnowed or cleaned. This was done by placing the grain baskets or large wind scoops on the person's breast in the face of a good wind. With a strong blow the



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grain could be cleaned fast. Men, women and children helped in this work.

#### A Colony Of Plenty in 1851

Bread was rare in those early days at Pembina, before the Minnesota Territory was admitted as a State in 1858. The daily food consisted mainly of pemmican, <sup>(shredded)</sup> dried buffalo meat, fish, and some potatoes. In 1851, <sup>Minnesota</sup> when the entire/portion of the Red River Valley was a wild, unsettled waste land, where only the Indian lived and the wild beasts roamed, the Selkirk Colony, in comparison, was a "land of plenty." In that year there were but four white men at Pembina living with many Half-bloods and Indians.

At the Selkirk Colony, between the ~~Upper and Lower Fort Garry~~ <sup>(the at what is now Winnipeg and the old fort at the mouth of the stone fort)</sup>, bread was in abundance and life was full. It was harvest time. Barnyards were crammed with stacks of wheat and barley, oats, and peas. There was enough for several years. The land in this picturesque location was divided into <sup>as we have seen</sup> ~~strips~~ <sup>narrow strips</sup>, six "chains" wide, fronting the Red River and extending back two miles. The settlement looked like a long, straggling village along the road from Fort Garry to the lower fort. Everywhere, in clear view, could be seen the dwellings, barns, and the livestock, horses, oxen, cows, sheep, and pigs.

Although the land had been laid waste by bad weather conditions and crop pests, time and time again, the settlers managed to reap good crops which lasted for several seasons. They saved some seed and sold crops and seed to the Hudson's Bay Company who depended on the soil tillers for wheat for their outflung fur posts. At times the farmers were forced to borrow from the company but they repaid with succeeding crops.

The cleaned wheat was ground in large windmills and bolted fine and clean. The finished product made splendid bread. In 1851 there were 15 windmills here grinding flour, which sold for 8 or 10 shillings per hundred weight.

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Housewives today, perhaps, would not like this quality of flour, for certainly it was coarse and not so clean, but its taste was comparable to our popular Minnesota flour from the Minneapolis mills, which today reach almost every civilized port in the world.

#### Wheat Is Seeded and Harvested On American Soil

P. 12  
In the early 1870's, Charles Bottineau had a cultivated field some four miles above the Neche Settlement, on the north side of Pembina River in North Dakota Territory, west of the Red River. He tilled 10 acres to garden and then seeded the land to wheat. Bottineau is reputed to have raised 50 bushels of No. 1 hard wheat to the acre.

P. 12  
Two seasons later, Charles Grant raised a small field of wheat some two miles west of Pembina. This farmer claimed an average yield of some 40 bushels per acre. All this wheat was taken to the Selkirk Settlement for grinding. At about this time, Vere Ether preempted land on the Pembina River, several miles east of Neche. He began farming and became the first settler in the vicinity to make wheat-raising his main occupation. His yields, as recorded, averaged between 15 and 40 bushels per acre, according to the variation of weather conditions and the destruction by crop pests. It is known that his crops were always bountiful and successful.

#### Pembina's Proud Claim

P. 11  
Before the middle 1870's, steamboats picked up several shipments of grain at landings along the stream. From Pembina came the largest shipment by boat. Frank C. Myrick, a commission man of the 1860's, made the recorded steamboat shipment. On board were 500 bushels of wheat collected from the so-called "back country" on the Pembina and Tongue Rivers, tributary to the Red River of the North.

#### An Influence On Settlement

P. 11  
This rising of wheat importance decidedly influenced the incoming

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P. 11  
hopeful settlers. They thought of wheat as the sole staple of cultivation in the valley. This encouraged settlers and families who settled north from Grand Forks to Pembina. They had heard tales of remarkable crops raised in the Canadian Selkirk Settlement, crops brought forth from the earth by primitive implements and tools, and yields which averaged from 20 to 50 bushels per acre. "Why, even Deacon James McKay," they were told, "produced 75 bushels per acre, experimenting by garden cultivation."

P. 11  
"If such bountiful crops and large yields could be raised with rude, old-fashioned farm implements, why then," they pondered, "can't we produce better and more successful crops with modern implements, farther south in the valley." Their reasoning was logical. They set their thoughts in motion, began work in earnest. The following years were successful and produced bountiful yields. But . . . greed overtook them. They began to cultivate more land, to enlarge their yields. One-quarter sections (160 acres) expanded into whole sections (640 acres) and then came seasons of failure. They soon learned that a small job done creditably produces greater results than a large job done poorly.

#### Pioneer Farmers In Our Clay County

P. 12  
The first farmer in Clay County was its oldest settler, Randolph M. Probstfield. He spent his remaining years on his farm in Oakport, some three and one-half miles north of Moorhead. The events of his life have already been related in Chap. III (Settlement).

P. 12  
Upon returning to his home here from Europe in 1861, the Red River had flooded the valley and Probstfield was forced to seek haven elsewhere. He returned in June and found two strangers, Roundsville and Hanna, living here. They had sown some wheat and planted potatoes. Soon they were called elsewhere, and they arranged with Probstfield to harvest the grain and dig the potatoes. He was repeatedly threatened by trouble-



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some Chippewa Indians. The wheat was destroyed by hail. But Probstfield dug the potatoes.

P. 12, 13  
He brought some cattle from St. Paul and a flock of sheep from Canadian Fort Barry. Then he cut some hay on land later occupied by Jacob Wambach, on the Buffalo River near Georgetown. Later Probstfield established himself at the Georgetown post, where he became the Hudson's Bay Company agent. Then followed the Indian uprising and General Sibley's order in 1863 for the white settlers to seek refuge at the Fort Abercrombie post. All settlers fled the Clay County region. The marauding redskins burned Probstfield's buildings on the later Wambach place along the Buffalo River.

P. 13  
At the beginning of the uprising in 1862, the Georgetown company had seeded some wheat but it never was harvested, because of the abandonment of the post ~~when the Indians ran rampage, and the flight of the men.~~ When Roundsville and Hanna left their land for good, Probstfield occupied it as a homestead in May, 1869. He had returned to Georgetown in 1864 and remained until 1869. Here on the bank of the Buffalo River, some three and one-half miles above Moorhead, Probstfield lived well beyond the turn of the twentieth century and saw Clay County develop from a wilderness into the "Banner County of the Red River Valley."

P. 13  
When the <sup>farm was first</sup> land was occupied it comprised 71 acres but ~~it~~ later grew when Probstfield <sup>later</sup> purchased more land for \$1.25 per acre. He broke <sup>more</sup> land for a garden, seeded oats and barley, and planted potatoes. No wheat was planted because of the lack of grinding equipment. There were no threshing machines nor mills here then. So, from 1870-73 he cultivated 10 acres to oats, barley, corn and garden.

P. 12.  
In 1874 the Georgetown Hudson's post bought a thresher, a horse-power machine. Walter J. S. Traill, agent, "offered to thresh any wheat

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54. 45

that was grown." Probstfield broke up 15 acres and seeded it to wheat. He harvested 28 bushels per acre which sold for about \$1.50 per bushel. This was the prosperous period of steamboat and rail activities and mass settlement in Clay County, which offered ready markets and a quick disposal of farm products. Produce was in demand, especially at the growing Moorhead, and <sup>at</sup> Fargo, on the opposite side of the Red River in North Dakota Territory.

Adam Stein and E. R. Hutchinson, co-settlers with Probstfield and early comers to the vanished "Lafayette" townsite in 1859, later followed Probstfield's occupation. They pre-empted claims and became soil tillers. They farmed land in Clay County for many years.

#### Other Early Farmers

In 1874 Nels Larson raised a little wheat at a place about two miles above Moorhead, which became known in later years as "Dr. Brendemuehl's farm." In this same year Ole Thompson, H. Anderson (Hicks) and Jens Anderson raised wheat south of Moorhead. The grain was sold to a Fargo Elevator. The later popular Bruns & Finkle elevator and mill in Moorhead had not yet been built.

#### Comment On Fertility Of Red River Valley Soil

James J. Hill, the great "Empire Builder" spoke at a meeting of the Minnesota Historical Society in 1897. He praised the richness of Red River soil and said, "About 20 years ago <sup>most</sup> ~~(1877)~~ people thought you could not <sup>profitably</sup> raise wheat in the Red River Valley, that the land was too cold and sour and wet, that it might do for grass but would not do for wheat; and, after it was demonstrated that it would raise the most bountiful crops of wheat and oats, it was then settled that it would not raise corn. But, now, for the past two seasons, I have seen corn growing in the Red River Valley, as far north as the Goose River, some 40

"History of Agriculture  
In Minnesota," By  
James J. Hill; Minn.  
Hist. Socy. Collec.  
Vol. 18. An address  
at annual meeting  
of Minn. Hist. Socy.,  
Jan. 18, 1897.

P. 287, 288

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(Cond)  
miles north of Fargo (Moorhead); and I can further tell you that the next best field of corn I ever saw was in the Red River Valley and in the Goose River Country. It was the strongest, the most even in growth, that I ever saw, and there is no reason why, with intelligent farming, we cannot raise corn as far north as Crookston; I am certain that we can, and possibly as far north as the northern limit of the State.

<sup>8 Mrs.</sup>  
~~Thus spoke the great industrialist,~~ J. J. Hill, who died in 1916, ~~but~~ lived to see his prophecy come true. Today's farmers in the rich Red River Valley and especially in Clay County have acres and acres of tall, waving corn fields, and rich grain and potato fields, large modern barns and graneries, and thousands of head of fine livestock.

#### Henry A. Bruns - Pioneer Wheat Raising Promoter

P. 18  
One of the ~~most~~ outstanding personalities of Moorhead and Clay County was Henry A. Bruns, a ~~great~~ wheat-raising pioneer who did much for the welfare of the Red River farmers. In the winter of 1871-72, Bruns bought 500 bushels of wheat seed which he gathered along the Minnesota River and farther south and east. He transported this grain hundreds of miles by sleds and distributed the seed among the hopeful farmers of Clay County and other Minnesota and North Dakota farmers of the valley. He knew that the facilities for wheat-raising were very poor and that the farmers were cursed by destructive grass-hopper raids. He did everything to help them.

P. 19  
Years later Bruns said, "In the fall of 1873, I shipped the first carload of wheat from the Red River to Lake Superior, which, by personal hard work in cleaning, was graded No. 2, though it certainly was No. 1, none like it ever having been shipped in the history of the world before." Bruns was proud of his achievements.



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P.19  
In a personal letter he wrote, "In the fall of 1874 I commenced to grind about all the wheat then grown in the Red River Valley, and in the fall of 1875 I gathered wheat and other grains, not as before by the thousand but by the tens of thousands of bushels, and with wheat and flour of my own grinding supplied the Canadian Government and Mennonites (Russian Canadian Colonists) with seed and bread throughout Manitoba."

P.18  
Bruns originally came west from St. Cloud. He looked around for business opportunities, was satisfied, and then returned to St. Paul where he bought a load of provisions and ready-made clothing and hauled it to the Red River. In June, 1871, he came to Oakport, Probstfield's home, then a community of tents, like an army encampment. Here he associated with business men and his future partner, Finkle.

P.18  
He laid out his merchandise in a tent and began to sell. Later he formed a partnership with Finkle. When the Moorhead/<sup>town</sup>site was staked out, in preference to Oakport, almost all of the residents flocked to that site. This place became the Red River railroad terminus and head of river navigation. This all took place in September. At Moorhead, business as usual was done in tents throughout the winter and <sup>almost</sup> the entire settlement was a city of tents. ~~At~~ One eye-witness later related that "he has seen as many as 1,100 Mennonite immigrants camped at Moorhead, waiting for passage by boat for Manitoba." Their tents were pitched on the bank of the Red River.

P.16  
P.18  
In march <sup>Bruns</sup> he went to McCauleyville, north of Breckenridge, bought lumber, hired teams and hauled it to Moorhead. Then the firm of Bruns & Finkle built a frame building, 21x50 feet. Here they did business until 1877, then built a large brick store. Bruns formed a stock company in 1874 which erected the first flour and sawmill. The results

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proved the superiority of Red River Valley wheat for strong flour and excellent bread, and the flour was awarded first honors at the Minneapolis and Minnesota State Fair for two successive seasons. The flour mill found ready outside markets at Manitoba and Northwest Territory, and later the Upper Missouri and Black Hills regions, and the Yellowstone country. For a number of years it offered a market for the wheat produced in a wide radius, <sup>seldom</sup> paying <sup>seldom</sup> less than \$1 per bushel.

#### First Steam Elevator In Valley

P. 19

Bruns & Finkle, in 1878, realized the need for a larger storage for the ever-increasing production of wheat. They erected a large steam elevator at Moorhead, with a capacity of 110,000 bushels. This was the first steam elevator built in the Red River Valley.

#### Early Bonanza Farming

"Early Bonanza Farming  
In the Red River Valley  
of the North," By:  
Harold E. Briggs, in  
Agricultural History,  
Vol. 5-8 (1931-34)  
Vol. 6 - No. 1, Jan., 1932.  
P. 26, 27.

The once-important so-called Bonanza wheat farms in the Red River Valley originated from the financial panic of 1873. The Northern Pacific Company created a plan to sell pieces of land to ambitious settlers.

Times were bad, money was scarce, and the settlers were not impressed.

*realizing that there was little hope of receiving an*  
The plan failed. But through this plan was born a new agricultural idea *income from their Great Northern railroad bonds many*  
... the beginning of Bonanza farming.

*of the bondholders*  
Holders of railroad bonds in 1875 traded their shares for a large area of land in the valley. The president of the railroad, George W. Cass, exchanged his bonds for a tract of eight sections of land (5,120 acres) about 20 miles west of the Red River, which was later increased to 10 sections (6,400 acres). An adjoining eight sections was allotted to another bondholder. J. B. Power, a clerk, was instructed to choose the ideal land and prepare a large area, at an early date, for the cultivation of wheat.

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## Oliver Dalrymple

p. 29

The name of Oliver Dalrymple is closely associated with the history of Red River Bonanza farming. Dalrymple was an experienced early Minnesota wheat grower. In the Spring of 1875 he examined the land and then contracted with the owners to assume charge of the Bonanza project. He broke 1,280 acres and seeded ~~the~~ <sup>it to</sup> grain. The first harvest in 1876 yielded 32,000 bushels of choice wheat, an average of 25 bushels per acre. When the excellent results of this elaborate experiment became known, the Red River region was widely advertised.

p. 29, 28

At this time other farmers shifted from diversified or mixed farming to large-scale wheat production, for the cultivation of this grain as a single crop. Because of the panic, land prices were very low. The valleys soil, land surface, rainfall, and climate were ideal for wide-scale farming. The Red River country was acclaimed as the "Nile Valley of the American Continent," and the "Land of 'Number one' Hard wheat." The region was placed in the limelight.

l Hist. of Clay County,  
John Turner Vol. 1 p. 71

p. 28  
(above)

The reputation of the famous Twin Cities' flouring mills was made upon the hard spring wheats of the Red River Valley. American flour demand increased, mainly that made from hard spring wheat by a new patent process <sup>called the</sup> (middling's purifier) which produced a good grade of flour at one grinding.

p. 28, 29

The Bonanza project influenced the coming of immigrants from Northern Europe's farming districts, and bonanza farming prospered. In 1877 Dalrymple seeded 4,500 acres of wheat. Also this year the Grandin Brothers of Tidioute, Pa., bought nearly 100 sections of Red River land (64,000 acres) and hired Dalrymple as manager.



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## Governor Pennington's Observation

p. 29

In September, 1877, Governor H. Pennington of Dakota Territory, recorded the following about Bonanza Farming: "Along the line of the Northern Pacific Railway west of Fargo (across river from Moorhead) for 20 miles or more the wheat fields stretch out on both sides of the road as far as the eye can reach. At Casselton, 18 miles west of Fargo, we could see 8 threshers going in different directions, and were told by Oliver Dalrymple that the yield ran from 25 to 30 bushels to the acre. Dalrymple and Associates have 7,000 acres in wheat this year and next year (1878) propose to have 12,000 acres."

## Some Bonanza Statistics

p. 29

In 1880, 82 farms nestlin<sup>g</sup> in the Red River Valley comprised more than 1,000 acres <sup>each</sup> and many exceeded 10 sections (6,400 acres). Some 164 farms had less than 1,000 acres but <sup>were</sup> at least 640 acres in size. Oliver Dalrymple managed the Grandin, Cass, and Cheney farms comprising 55,000 acres in Dakota Territory, and the Lockhart and Keystone farms in Minnesota. Most of the large wheat farms were on the Dakota side of the river.

p. 30

The land cultivated for crops on the larger farms was subdivided into areas of about 2,000 acres and each tract was under a superintendent and foreman and <sup>had</sup> a separate bookkeeping system. Each subdivision had its own buildings, houses for the heads, graneries, tool <sup>and machinery</sup> sheds, <sup>and</sup> stables. The farms required many men <sup>and</sup> horses, and elaborate equipment. The Grandin Farm of 38,000 acres had 300 men, the same number of horses, 100 plows, 50 seeders, 75 binders, and 10 separators.

## More Bonanza Facts

p. 31

Average large farms had about 12 binders. The farm foreman

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P.31  
carried out his duties on horseback. The grain of the larger farms was never stacked. When the grain cutting was finished the threshing was begun. *Under the best conditions* About 1,000 bushels of wheat were threshed and cleaned *while even on days which were not so favorable there was* each day ~~under splendid conditions, in comparison to an average of~~ 750-800 bushels ~~on fair days.~~ Each threshing crew, comprising 23 men under a foreman, and using 10 teams of horses, cleared about 50 acres daily.

P.32  
Most of the valley wheat crop was marketed after threshing, the grain being hauled to the rail and shipped to Minneapolis and Duluth. In that early day each car held about 400 bushels. Some wheat was stored in graneries and private elevators to await a rise in market prices. Most of the straw was burned while some stacks were saved for litter.

P.32  
When the harvest work was completed, the crews began to replot the stubble for a new breaking. This was called "back-setting" or "cross-plowing." With the coming of frost, or at the conclusion of cross-plowing, the extra hired men were let go, as it was only necessary to keep a small crew for farmyard chores. Most of the Bonanza farm supplies were shipped in, lumber was purchased in wholesale lots, machinery and equipment came direct from the manufacturing plants, and horses and mules were purchased in large lots at a great animal market in St. Louis, Missouri.

P.36  
~~This ends a factual picture of the beginning and development~~  
of the famous Dakota and Minnesota Bonanza farms *then* which held ~~its~~ popularity until the turn of the century and gave the great Red River Valley of the North international importance. Mass wheat production in that period became a historical feature of American Agriculture.

## Clay County Potatoes

When some of the Clay County farmers began to raise potatoes for home and seed, they inaugurated the present system of diversified or mixed farming, *In time the demand for clay county potatoes became so great that many farmers gave up small grain growing. This great industry was started simply, and the demand for raising, and potato raising became an important industry.* Clay County potatoes became so great that the industry became one of the region's most important.

Henry Schroeder, Sabin Village's "Potato King," began potato raising in 1893. This potato leader came to Clay from Douglas County in 1878, and settled on a one-quarter section of land which he added to in time. In 1900 he had 1,200 acres of splendid land near Sabin in Elmwood Township, near the south branch of the Buffalo River. *Recognized as the pioneer grower in this territory, Schroeder built up a large business from a small beginning and became an extensive grower of the finest seed potatoes. It is recorded that until 1899 he harvested 34,000 bushels from 260 acres.*

In 1894 Schroeder shipped eight carloads of potatoes to places in central and southern states. Four years later some 143 carloads of potatoes were shipped from the vicinity of Sabin, mostly from *Schroeder's* farm. In 1900 it was estimated that 170 carloads left the Sabin region. *At that time Schroeder had 1,200 acres under cultivation.* Schroeder's farm was an attractive model for the Red River agricultural region. The potato vine rows on his land led for almost a mile to the distant horizon. He employed the best of machinery and built large potato cellars, where they were protected from the harmful elements in sub-zero temperatures. The root-cellars, today, are as numerous in Clay County as corn cribs in other Minnesota localities.

"Some facts showing the wonderful development of the Banner County of the Red River Valley in Minn.; By D.W. Meeker, In Clay County, Illustrated, Minn.; Moorhead, Minn., Mar., 1916. (136 pages)

Clay Co., Minn., and its Resources. D.W. Meeker, Pub., Moorhead Independent - Holiday Supplement, Moorhead, Minnesota, Fri., Jan., 5, 1900. p. 32



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## Grasshopper Invasions

The grasshopper was the most destructive of the crop pests which brought grief and misery to the pioneer farmer. Known as the Rocky Mountain Locust, this insect came into Minnesota in hordes from the hot and dry belt in the west and north. This destructive scourge was mentioned as early as 1766 in this region by Jonathan Carver in his "Travels Through the Interior Posts of North America." He relates "Repeated occurrences every seven years."

Many tales have been related describing the locust invasions, how they destroyed crops, and their methods of laying eggs, the hatching, and the destruction which followed. It has been recorded that they came in such great swarms that they blotted out the sun and darkened the sky. Flying high, millions of grasshoppers reached across the heavens like a huge trailing comet flashing golden in the sun. The movement of their wings created a roaring noise which almost became deafening when they descended and sounded like an approaching prairie fire. Scientists tell us that the golden glint was due to the color and transparency of their wings and legs, and their color-blending of yellow, brown, red, and coral-red.

## Some Early Locust Invasions

The first recorded invasion in the Red River Valley was in the Selkirk Settlement in 1818-19. This was a bad attack and added to the sufferings of the colonists. The insects flew in from the west on an afternoon in the latter part of July, 1818. They ate every <sup>growing</sup> green thing in sight and then deposited their eggs which developed the following summer into a crawling mass and completed the destruction.

In 1856-57 the insects invaded the Upper Mississippi Valley. Beginning <sup>in the latter part</sup> of the ~~end~~ of July, they moved southward on both sides of

"The Grasshopper or Rocky Mt. Locust and its Ravages in Minnesota; Special Report to the Hon. C. K. Davis, Governor of Minn.; 1896. St. Paul. (50 pages) P. 5

(also) →  
Hist. of Minn.;  
Rev. E. D. Neill  
P. 316-317

(above)  
See Antep. 49,  
Par. 3, (Harvest Rodgers).

P. 9.

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Alfred M. Potekin

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the river devouring every crop except pea-vines. The unharvested grain was destroyed suddenly and completely. Where the "corn was too hard for them, they devoured the leaves, leaving bare stalks and ears." They stripped the leaves off potatoes, destroyed turnips, beets, onions, buckwheat, and most garden vegetables. They nibbled clothing hanging upon lines; entered houses and attacked curtains and cushions, and ate 'tobacco, shoes, and even thick cowhide boots.'" "Some farmers gathered them by the bagful, dipped them in scalding water, and fed them to their hogs."

~~On July 15, 1874, a fresh invasion headed into Minnesota from~~

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From 1873 to 1877 the state suffered  
from another grasshopper scourge. On  
July 15, 1874 there was an  
especially serious invasion into Minnesota from

p. 112  
Map of Grass-  
hopper Invasion -  
Folwell, Vol. 3  
p. 106

the Northwest. "On that morning, boosted by a fresh northwest wind, swarms entered the State and appeared as far north as MOORHEAD." ..... huge in numbers and extending 100 miles east and west, and 200 miles north and south. "They repeatedly came for about three weeks, along the northwest borders, and swarms continued to pass over parts of the western half of Minnesota. Some 28 counties reported grasshopper damages in this year, and millions of bushels of wheat, oats, corn, barley, flax seed, and potatoes were destroyed.

"The Locust Scourge  
In Minn. By Rev.  
David R. Breed;  
American Tract  
Society, N.Y., 1878.  
(19 pages)  
p. 3, 4

Two years later the insects covered the entire south and west parts of Minnesota. They seeded an area of more than two-thirds of the State with eggs, 150 miles wide and 350 miles long, embracing about 50,000 of the 80,000 square miles. The crop destruction was tremendous.

(End Chapter IV)

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The next year the eggs hatched as usual but in the summer the hoppers suddenly took flight and disappeared. No one knows what became of them.



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## - Chapter V -

## Thumb-Nail Sketches Of Clay County's

## Communities

In 1900

Barnesville

64.

Barnesville, lying in a fertile country in the south-central part of the county, in the township of that name, was settled in the 1870's, incorporated as a village November 4, 1881, and received its charter as a city, April 4, 1889. Barnesville, today, is the second largest city in Clay County, bowing only to Moorhead.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the extensive Great Northern repair shops here offered steady employment to more than 100 skilled men. Its railroad importance was based on its <sup>being a</sup> division point of the Great Northern system ~~through the county~~. This importance guaranteed its progress and value to the development of <sup>the</sup> ~~its~~ county, ~~and state~~.

Barnesville's birth resulted from the completion of the rail south to Breckenridge, then the old St. Paul & Pacific. The city was named for George S. Barnes, an early merchandise and wheat buyer and grower, who was also active in wheat production and shipping at Glyndon. In the 1870's, wheat was loaded from the track and shipped by the thousands of bushels to Duluth. Barnes' clerk, Peter E. Thompson, took over his duties in 1889.

In 1885 a movement was started to incorporate an addition to be known as "New Barnesville." ~~A special election was held.~~ The following year the village was incorporated by ~~a~~ unanimous decision. The relations of the two villages became very unfriendly. They tried to outdo each other <sup>and</sup> by sponsoring local improvements, ~~to~~ gain popularity. For many months there was much discussion and wrangling. Then in 1889 it was agreed to combine both villages' governments ~~and land divisions~~ and

Clay County, Minn., and  
its Resources; The  
Moorhead Indepen-  
dent Holiday Supplement;  
D.W. Meener, Pub;  
Moorhead; Jan. 5, 1900.  
P. 62, 63

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65.

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organize one city. A committee acted; a city charter was adopted which became a law April 4, 1889. The community progressed and prospered. General civic improvements followed, such as the erection of brick buildings, the organization of a municipal light company, the installation of a splendid water system, and the organization of a fully-equipped fire-fighting unit. Combined with improved roads, fine churches and fine educational facilities, Barnesville, in 1900, gazed proudly into the future.

### Glyndon

P. 41, 42  
Glyndon, the "little city of the plain" in Glyndon Township, has the distinction of being the oldest town in Clay County and of having organized the first school district, No. 1. Glyndon in its early days was a commercial and industrial rival of Moorhead, ~~for county honors~~. The first Clay County fair or Agricultural exhibit was held here in 1892.

Here is the grand crossing of the railway trunk line, Northern Pacific (east, west) and the Great Northern (north, south). The latter road, originally the St. Paul & Pacific and then the St. Paul & Manitoba, laid 63 miles of track from Glyndon to Crookston in 1872. Because of the 1873 financial failure, the community waited five years for the <sup>extension to the south</sup> southern connection with the present line. The "Breckenridge Cut-Off" of 45 miles was built in 1877.

↑  
(from Fargo Forum;  
Sept. Jan. 18, 1927;  
6th Sec.  
"Moorhead")

Pioneers here were the Red River Colony<sup>ists</sup>, temporarily housed in their N. P. Reception House, a 160x32 feet, 2-story building. The destructive grasshoppers of the '70's added to the hardships of these settlers, following the panic. The hopes of the community were crushed. Many of the leading citizens moved to Moorhead, Fargo, and other opportune locations. The newspaper, Red River Gazette, held out until 1875, then became the Fargo Times under its original publisher.

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" A series of fires leveled the community in the fall of 1886. The first grain elevator in the valley, which introduced the great N. P. elevator system and was built here by George S. Barnes & Company, was destroyed <sup>in one of these fires.</sup> by flames. Throughout this period, grain and farm stock were low-priced, causing a noticeable disadvantage to farmers. These unfortunate circumstances slowed the progress of the locality.

" A glimpse of the community in 1900 revealed: grain elevators, general stores, farm machinery agencies, blacksmith and carpenter shops, a union depot, a newspaper jobbing office, a lumber yard, a village hall building, a 2-story, 2-grade school, an undenominational church, and an enclosed park, all surrounded by a picturesque countryside penetrated by fine country roads.

Hawley (southeastern Clay County)

P. 42, 43  
Hawley, directly east of Glyndon in Hawley Township, was originally called Bethel. The locality, surrounded by fertile farm land, was founded after the coming of the railroad in 1871 and was first settled by an English Colony. The name "Bethel" was given to the townsite by <sup>Lake Superior and</sup> the Puget Sound Land Company, but the village was renamed for General Joseph Russell Hawley of Connecticut, an original stockholder of the Northern Pacific Railway. The village was incorporated February 5, 1884.

" It was a common sight in the fall seasons of the early 1870's to the early 1880's to see long lines of heavily-loaded ox-teams reaching from the tracks to the south county bridge, or from the rail to the north outskirts of the village, waiting to unload cargoes of wheat at the elevators. The, gradually, diversified or mixed farming and dairying replaced the cultivation of wheat as the only production. The farmers were mostly settlers from southeastern Minnesota and Wisconsin, who came in groups in the early '70's. The first mill was built by Lieut.



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Jacobson on the Buffalo River below the town.

Development here came in the early 1890's. The railroad lands were thrown open for sale in 1894-95, and its value increased. Hawley lost an unusual opportunity to become the junction point of the Winnipeg branch of the G. N.-N. P. systems through the county north to Canada. This Clay County community was offered the honor on the conditional payment of a small bonus to the railroad, but refused. Their rejection of the offer has proven regrettable. The Manitoba (Winnipeg) junction point is now several miles northeast from here.

Hawley's commercial enterprises and cultural organizations in 1900 comprised: general stores, hardware and furniture establishments, lumber yards, grain elevators, blacksmith and repair shops, a department store, weekly newspaper, harness shop, and several stores, also 3 church organizations, and fine school facilities.

In addition, this community offered market, rail, and trade facilities to the prosperous farms/with in its surrounding townships.

#### Felton

8 47, 48  
Felton lies in north-central Clay County in Felton Township and was named by officers of the G. N. in honor of S. M. Felton, whose name was given to its station. Lying along the Crookston line of the road in a fine farming section, Felton was first homesteaded in the Spring of 1880, in the northwest half of section 10. In June, a general store was opened and a postoffice acquired. The town was originally located one and one-half ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ ) miles south of its present location but moved up in 1883.

From that date its growth was gradual until 1895. When the State drainage canal was finished, a great "boom" was started. The drainage reclaimed thousands of acres of wet land unfit for cultivation, due to

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" the obstruction of the water's natural flow. When the railroads placed their lands upon the market, settlers arrived from Southern Minnesota, Iowa, and other states. With this increase in population, farms improved and business prospered.

" Felton's claim to fame was its probability of being the largest shipper of baled hay in this region. Hundreds of bales were shipped from this section at the turn of the century. The community supplied lumber camps in the timber country with carloads of hay, and oats, and tons of dairy products and provisions.

#### Hitterdal

p. 48

Hitterdal lies in eastern Clay County on the Manitoba (Winnipeg) branch of the Northern Pacific Railway, some six miles north of the junction. Here was the favored trading point for the farmers of the northeastern part of the county and western Becker County. For some years the Great Western Elevator Co. handled thousands of bushels of grain here, then in the fall of 1899 the Dakota Elevator Co. built a large warehouse here for the handling of grains. This section was also noted for its production of fine oats.

The region supports many churches and schools.

#### Ulen

p. 65

Ulen lies along the south branch of the Wild Rice River in the extreme northeast corner township of that name. The village and township were named after its first settler, Ole O. Ulen, who came here in 1873. When the Northern Pacific branch was built north from Winnipeg Junction in the fall of 1886, settlers located at this station. Then merchants opened stores and the village grew.

"

In 1896 it was decided to incorporate the village. A 5-room school house was built during this fall. The community grew rapidly from the

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" middle 1890's. The growth and prosperity of the surrounding countryside helped mainly to develop Ulen as an important market center because the trade of the farmers was steadily increasing.

" When the year 1900 approached, Ulen proudly claimed a 75-barrel roller mill and several grain elevators and flat houses, <sup>also</sup> ~~and comprised~~ lumber, hardware, drug, and clothing stores, metal, harness, and blacksmith shops, a machinery warehouse and lumber yard, and schools and Scandinavian churches.

#### Georgetown

P.10 The early Georgetown Settlement at the confluence of the Red and Buffalo Rivers has been mention<sup>ed</sup> repeatedly in this text. Here was the Hudson's Bay Company's warehouses and post, on the <sup>direct route of the</sup> Pembina and Red River Trails, the head of river navigation, the building place of river steamers and barges, and the original site ~~of~~ settlement of Clay County's first pioneers.

P.10 When the Moorhead northern rail was laid in 1884, the Georgetown business enterprises swung over from the Red River to the present townsite on the railroad. This community, surrounded by ideal fertile farm land on which stand the fine homes of well-to-do farmers, comprised the typical village business interests which identify the small prosperous communities. Georgetown is a Catholic community.

#### Sabin District

P.11 This locality in Elmwood Township lies in the celebrated "potato belt" made famous by German farmers west of the Buffalo River's south branch headed by potato "King Schroeder." The community was settled in the early 1870's. W. C. Krabbenhoft settled north of Sabin in 1872. The farmers in this section advocated diversified or mixed farming soon after settlement, ~~for they realized the unlimited oppor-~~



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tunities this region offered.

## - Chapter VI -

### MOORHEAD - YESTERDAY and TODAY

#### Its Progressive Highlights

Moorhead, in the early days of its origin, was publicized as the "Key City of the Red River Valley," and later as the "Key City of Minnesota." This fertile community was named September 22, 1871 in New York City at a meeting of the Lake Superior & Puget Sound Land Company directors, in honor of William G. Moorhead. The townsite was incorporated as a village February 25, 1875, and became a city in March, 1881. Henry C. Bruns became first city mayor, 1881-84, and Samuel Partridge served as first City Recorder, 1881-83.

The first building erected on the site was reputed to be an office of the Northwestern Stage Company, <sup>erected</sup> built in 1860 by J. C. Burbank & Co. of St. Paul. The first actual settlers on the site of Moorhead were mainly Andrew Holes, John Erickson, Samuel Comstock, Moorhead's first attorney and an early leader, <sup>and</sup> James H. Sharp, later Probate Judge, men who later became prominent and wealthy. Andrew Holes, as acting agent for the Northern Pacific and <sup>the</sup> Land Company, received prominence as the man who made an overland trip to Alexandria to purchase the land on which the Moorhead townsite was located.

The Northern Pacific rail reached the Red River at Moorhead in 1871, and the first engine arrived December 12, drawing a snow plow to clear heavy drifts. By 1875 Moorhead's development took rapid strides; the population grew to 3,560 by 1882.

Sixth Section  
of the "Souvenir  
Edition" of the  
Fargo (N.D.) Forum,  
Fargo, N.D., Jan. 18,  
1927, (p. 69-75.)  
"Vast array of  
interesting hist.  
articles dealing  
with old days in  
Moorhead-Fargo,  
Red River Valley, etc."  
- comprehensive  
survey of present-  
day activities.  
(1927)

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## Merchants

The firm of Bruns & Finkle occupied a frame building at James & Fourth Sts., (now First Ave. N. & Fourth St.) which later became the Central Hotel, and in which they ran a regular frontier store in a colony of tents. They sold groceries, dry goods, weapons and ammunition, and miscellaneous items. The Knoppen House, at Fourth & Front Sts., (now Fourth St. & Center Ave.) was the first building used only as a hotel. Its lumber, furniture, fixtures, etc., were purchased in Minneapolis, shipped by rail to Morris, Minn., and hauled overland by team to Moorhead.

The first newspaper of the region, the "Red River Star," was founded here in 1871 with W. B. Nichols as editor. The publication later became the "Advocate," then the "Moorhead Argonaut," and finally the "Moorhead News."

Moorhead's postoffice was authorized October 6, 1871, and opened in early November. Mail conveyances developed from dog-teams, ox-carts, wagons, stage lines, river boats, and finally railroads. The first fire department volunteer company was organized November 15, 1872. Ten years later, in October, 1882, a hook, ladder, and hose outfit was organized with Peter Czizek as chief.

## Church Services

The Catholic and Presbyterian followers held the first services. The former denomination was established in Holy Cross Township and moved to Moorhead where they soon built a church. The Presbyterian clergyman, Reverend O. H. Elmer, held services in a Northern Pacific coach. His first service on Moorhead's site was held on a chill October day in 1871 in a dining room of a tent hotel. The entire population <sup>(a small group)</sup> attended from Moorhead, and its twin Fargo across the river.

Clergymen of that early day in this region were not very popular,

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according to C. S. Weaver, an early Dakota resident, who recalls a humorous incident. "Rev. Mr. Elmer," Weaver tells, "boarded at the Headquarters Hotel in Fargo, kept by Jeremiah Chapin. Chapin took every opportunity to discourage preachers and church-goers and, Rev. Elmer, being full of nerve to contend for what was his right, a battle between him and Chapin finally grew so warm that he (Elmer) was bundled from the house."

After the first church was established, other denominations established congregations in Moorhead.

#### Law And Order Disregarded

Law and order in the early history of the community, typical of outflung frontier settlements, was <sup>little observed.</sup> ~~very bad~~. There were frequent incidents of violence, property destruction, ~~gambling~~ duels, and robbery. Gambling and drinking <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ uncontrollable. Many notorious characters came after the arrival of the railroad in 1872. Pistol matches and brawls took place on the main streets.

A witness working in Moorhead relates that he with others slept in a building with the first floor made of logs and a tent covering above. When shootings commenced, they would dive to the floor to escape the wild bullets which ripped through the tent walls.

The first drug store in Moorhead was opened by Dr. John Kurtz and B. F. Mackall who leased a part of the Bruns & Finkle store. This was the first pharmacy on the bank of the Red River. Dr. Kurtz, attending physician to the Northern Pacific surveying party, settled here in 1872. After the panic swept through the region, Bruns & Finkle in 1874 built the Moorhead Manufacturing Co. with the financial aid of others. This was the earliest and most important enterprise <sup>up to that date.</sup> ~~to date~~. Here was manufactured flour and lumber, and later wheat for the entire region was ground.



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Good business conditions and prosperity in the latter 1870's drew many settlers to the locality. The beginning of the 1880's records a memorable period. In that time came the St. Paul, Mpls. & Manitoba Ry. from Barnesville (G.N. System) and the Canadian Pacific into Minnesota. Moorhead's first great "boom" started at this time.

#### Elaborate Building Period

The Jay Cooke House was built on the later site of the Comstock Hotel. Its name was later changed to Hotel Debs, then Columbia Hotel, and <sup>the building</sup> finally was destroyed by fire. This catastrophe was followed by the erection of the famed \$200,000 Grand Pacific Hotel, reputed to have <sup>one of</sup> been the biggest and finest enterprise of its day west of Chicago. It was built by Mr. Bruns and financed and owned by James J. Hill. The block-long structure, popular throughout the west, was magnificently furnished and it was claimed to be the first building in the Northwest to have steam heat. The enterprise lost a great deal of money. Hill offered to sell his ownership to Moorhead for \$15,000, but the offer was rejected and the structure was torn down.

At about this time the Moorhead land owned by the Lake <sup>had all been sold</sup> Sup. & Puget Sound Land ~~Sd.~~ Co. <sup>more business</sup> now belonged to private local owners. Then property valuation increased and ~~buildings~~ and residential buildings sprang up.

#### Growth And Progress . . . . Public Utilities

During this prosperous era the first postoffice building in Moorhead was built by W. H. Davy and Finkle. This structure was equipped with 1,000 letter boxes and genuine plate glass windows. The city's first high school building, a 2-story brick affair, was also erected at a cost of \$12,500. An early telephone connection service was made with the Fargo exchange and several phones were installed.

Moorhead had a completed sewage system and ~~a~~ water works in use at the leading hostelrys in the early 1880's and was contemplating

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the extension of this service to residential and business buildings. The city's water and light plant was installed in 1895. The first electric lights cast its brilliance over the city on January 3, 1883. The organization of a light and fuel company was planned the previous year.

A military company of 54 members was organized in 1882 which became a unit of the Minnesota National Guard, commanded by a Civil War veteran. This organization became known as the "Moorhead City Rifles."

Popular, civic-minded Mr. Bruns organized the Merchants Bank, and the First National Bank was organized November 22, 1881. Since its earliset days, Moorhead had a daily evening paper which gloried in regional competition. The Fargo Forum, Fargo, ~~North Dakota's~~ leading newspaper, had its first edition "run off" November 17, 1891 at the Moorhead Daily News plant "because the press and everything (~~Fargo's~~) was slow in coming, and they thought they better have a paper anyhow." Several issues of the Fargo tabloid were printed in the <sup>News</sup> "news" office before the arrival of their equipment.

Moorhead was the seat of publication of the "Moorhead Church" <sup>religious</sup> ~~religious~~ paper, an Episcopal journal edited by Reverend G. E. Swann, and also a Norwegian weekly published in the early 1880's.

#### The City Grows

The growing city of Moorhead took rapid strides in the "Gay Nineties." Its future in this decade was assured with its sponsorship of modern civic and cultural developments. New businesses sprang up, banks were organized, firms prospered. Professional men sought opportunities here. Educational opportunities increased; new public school buildings were provided, offering facilities to urban and rural children, and state and

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private education was broadened with a greater variety of study courses. A Public Library was created in 1906 with the aid of the Carnegie Foundation.

#### Into The Twentieth Century

During the second decade of the 1900's, water mains were installed and newer buildings erected. A 2-story red brick structure was built in 1919 for city hall offices. This period saw the digging of artesian wells and the installation of a water tower, surface tanks, and pumps, miles of sewer pipe, paving to replace the obsolete wood planks and cedar blocks, and an improved water and light power plant.

Moorhead sponsored a steady program of elaborate public improvements in this period. With the passing of recent years, city parks were created under a city council park committee, well-wooded tracts along the picturesque Red River were provided for the public with facilities for recreational and playground games and sports, picnicking and tourist camping.

Outside interests sought the industrial facilities and marketing opportunities of this locality and have brought deserving prestige to Moorhead and the great Red River Valley.

#### Moorhead - Today

Moorhead, today, is publicized as the "Eastern Metropolis of the Red River Valley," and the "Gateway of Western Minnesota." This seat of Clay County lies in the heart of the county's great potato fields, just opposite Fargo, North Dakota, in what is, perhaps, the most fertile region of North America. Beginning at Dilworth, important division point of the Northern Pacific with its railway shops, Moorhead shares a place <sup>making it</sup> as an important trade and market center, patronized by a growing urban population numbering tens of thousands.



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Directly west of Hawley, the "Potato Capitol of Clay County," Moorhead supports this great industry with potato houses and co-operative agencies, and handles a large part of the annual potato crop which, in the passing years, has averaged millions of bushels which have reached the important world markets. Many Eastern firm buyers make Moorhead their headquarters.

Moorhead's most important single industrial factor is claimed by the Fairmont Creamery Company, a million dollar organization, which located one of its main plants in Moorhead in April, 1924. After several years this plant became one of its most important in its chain of some 17 plants in many States.

The Moorhead plant emphasizes the development of the dairy and produce business in Moorhead and Clay County and shows the rapid adoption of diversified farming in the agricultural Red River Valley. Together with this industry and other important manufacturing establishments, its excellent railroad and transportation facilities (supported by the progressive city of Fargo, (N. Dak.), and its educational opportunities offered by splendid public schools, Moorhead State Teacher's College, Concordia Lutheran College, and the North Dakota Agricultural College at Fargo, Moorhead is proud of its many distinctions and importance.

The City boasts a United States Weather Bureau, A Carnegie Library, "health-giving artesian water," the "finest in the Northwest," a network of state highways, rails, and fine roads, well-paved streets, a large business district, picturesque river scenery, and beautiful residences, parks and playgrounds.

Moorhead's population, according to the 1930 Federal Census, was 7,651, compared to 7,082 in 1926, 6,684 in 1924, and 5,720 in 1920.

The population of Clay County in 1930 was 23,120.

(end Story Of Clay County)

Legislative Manual, 1937.  
Minnesota - Population;  
P. 468-78, incl.  
P. 479 -