Minnesota Works Progress Administration: Writers Project Research Notes.

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Version 3
August 20, 2018

THE MCGREGOR LAKES REGION

Vacation land of the north, a land of jewel-like lakes, of game and fish, of pine and fur, the land of wigwasigamig, the birch bark camp, and of Paul Bunyan—this is the country of the McGregor lakes. A region, too, of wide bogs and blueberry marshes, broken by hay and sedge-covered meadows, criss-crossed by sluggish streams. A region of youthful vigor which had not lost the signs and spirit of its romantic past.

World history often turns on the conquests and defeats of warriors, the policies of heads of state, the operations of captains of industry. But history is not always made by persons. Sometimes it is defined by geography, and the physical peculiarity of a place frequently pre-determines its subsequent history. The McGregor lakes section offers an almost perfect example of this process. Thousands of years before it had human inhabitants, nature, maker of geography, had set the stage and outlined much of the story of those who were later destined to live here.

The location of this region was unique in several ways. It centers around what was a necessary point of passage for all the early peoples who had, perforce, to travel by water across what is now northern Minnesota. Here was the watershed or height of land between vast areas of commerce, the place where the waters draining to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin and those of the Mississippi system most closely approach each other. It was natural that for countless centuries it should be the passageway for water-travelers; since they carried their boats and belongings on their backs between rivers, distance from water to water was very important to them, and they sought always the shortest route.

Here, too were lakes. Since pre-history, these bright, cool depths had furnished subsistence for primitive people. Fish were theirs for the taking, and on the shores were birch, spruce, pine and tamarack, the materials for constructing their huts. Other lakes were here also, the dark, shallow ones that in the fall were fields of wild rice, the folle avoine of the French traders. These, as much as any other feature, influenced the savages to settle here.

Another factor in the history of the McGregor country was the fur-bearing animals that supplied food and clothing for the aborigines and excited the merchants of Europe. Now the forest tracts provide safe refuge for deer, which, driven by the pioneer's plow from their native habitat in the southern part of the state, have migrated and multiplied in the cut-over land of the north. In these woods, the black bear still gathers his meal of berries or fish and eyes the sheep pastures. The unhappy porcupine still complains. About the shores of muddy lakes, thousands of muskrats each year build their own model of the wigwam. Along the watercourses, mink and weasels take sharp-eyed strolls. Radisson's orignac, the shy and clumsy moose, is now rarely seen, but brush wolves are plentiful and make life an uneasy adventure for the frolicking snowshoe rabbit and smaller creatures of the woodlands.

It was a natural dwelling place and has been peopled since before the coming of the Indians. As its advantages brought primitive man at an early date, so, too, it was among the first spots reached by while explorers of the northwest. Even before Father Hennepin found the Falls of St. Anthony, a white man was traversing the Savanna Portage. Sandy Lake was spoken of as a place of importance, along with La Pointe and Saulte St. Marie, while St. Paul and Minneapolis were still unimagined towns of the future.

Several decades have passed since this region became a summer tourist haven. Scores of resorts now enliven the shores of its lakes. There are hotels, cabins and all types of camp accommodations for vacationists. Beaches and playgrounds, boats with guides to the fishing grounds, all facilities that contribute to the comfort and pleasure of the summer visitor are provided.

In the autumn, ducks and wild game draw crowds of hunters. There are pleasant farms where considerable dairying is carried on. Excellent roads wind over the hills and through the meadows. In the winter, quantities of timber are shipped off the fringes left from the great logging days. Between this present picture of the region and the past, many things have happened.

Much of the story has never been told. In the files of libraries lie the fading letters of the early missionaries to the Indians, correspondence between the old Northwest Fur Company and its farflung trading posts, the ledgers and account books of loggers, and scraps of meaningful paper, resurrected and labeled. Numberless articles have been carefully preserved: buckskin suits and broken pots, copper knives and sacred rattles, paddles and axe-heads. These are the tokens of man's life and activity in this country. Piecemeal the record may be assembled, warp from here, woof from there, woven together illuminated by imagination and to tell a story. A tale of Indians, adventurers and explorers, gay voyageurs, and coureurs de bois, treaty makers, timber cruisers and determined settlers.

The preface to the story of the region was written in its geologic youth, when the swift St. Louis river diverted the waters of the Cloquet from

the Mississippi into Lake Superior. So was formed the Savanna Portage, that stretch of ground where the two great river basins all but join each other.

The Indians knew the portage and guided over it the first fur traders and explorers and, in their wake, the first missionaries. This trail, now sunk in the ooze of more than a century, overgrown with tamarack, spruce and swamp alder, was a main artery of travel for two hundred years. But the steamboat and the railroad sealed the doom of the portage, and it had almost disappeared when it was recently uncovered.

The Savanna Portage was the way "to reach the west and ultimately the Pacific by the most approved route." Over it, for generations, came supplies and gewgaws for the redmen, and down it, in payment, came furs and more furs. Thousands and thousands of rich pelts, bundled in "pieces" of seventy-five to a hundred pounds, slung in a portage collar upon the back of a voyageur or Indian, passed over the Savanna. It saw the rise and fall of a huge industry.

Deep in the swampland, down under the black muck, a searcher may still find a few tamarack logs placed there by the "Old Nor'west." Along the trail's boggy course, there may yet remain the skeletons of wrecked canoes. Somewhere along the soggy passageway, a traveler even now can hear the splash of the beaver, the muffled drum of a ruffed grouse, and in imagination an eerie echo, "Leve! Leve!" - the voyageur's cry.

It was just four centuries ago that the Spaniard De Sota first looked upon the Mississippi. From that time onward, efforts were made by white men to reach the upper river. But it was almost one hundred and fifty years before that happened, and it was not the Spanish seeking a route to the "Western Sea,"

but the French, who finally reached it. The French came from a different direction and for another reason. The beaver had been discovered. The finding of that strange little animal deeply affected the history of the world, for the subsequent development of the fur trade was fundamental in the settlement of Canada and the west.

No sooner had the French learned that Spain had reached a new world, than their ships were on the high seas bound for the same place. They began trade at once with the Indians whom they encountered along the seashore. Presently they ventured into the interior and found more natives along the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, ancestors of the Chippewa, who roamed over a wide territory and used the beaver for clothing and food. "They were no other clothes than a moose skin or a beaver robe, which consists of five or six skins sewed together." The French gave them guns, ironware, hatchets and clothing to encourage them to hunt the beaver.

The Iroquois Indians, who were the bitter foes of the Chippewa and waged continual war against them, finally drove them westward. The Frenchmen's purses also felt the pinch, as the Iroquois closed one after another of the waterways and furs dwindled. So when the Chippewa huntsmen were forced farther inland for safety and furs, the French traders followed them.

Before this time, around the quiet reaches of the upper Mississippi, the Sioux Indians had made their homes. They had forced out or assimilated an earlier people who dwelt in huts and left evidence of their occupation in hundreds of scattered mounds. The westward fleeing Chippewa encroached at length on the hunting grounds of the Sioux, and a bloody contest began that was to last for

generations. The Chippewa, armed with French guns, were successful in driving their enemy out, and they themselves settled down about Sandy Lake and near its surrounding waters.

The fur trade, steadily developed by the French, presently attracted the British. The Hudson's Bay Company was organized to engage in the trade. Wars between England and France spread to the new world; and defeated in Europe, France ceded to England Canada and eastern Louisiana, which included the upper Mississippi region. For a time, territory shifted from French, to Spanish, to British rule, and finally to American ownership. The French retired from the trade in the area, and the British entrenched themselves in their fur trading posts.

Under the British, fur trading in this section reached its peak. The Northwest Fur Company built a fort on Brown's Point in 1794 which became the hub of the enormous fur trade on the upper Mississippi and flurished until 1812. By Jay's treaty of 1794, the British had agreed to give up all posts that were held on American soil, and this did result in the removal of their important Grand Portage Post to Fort William. But there was no change at Sandy Lake. British flags and medals continued to win Indian friendship, and the boundary was an uncertain thing, generally disregarded.

Although the Northwest Company was powerful, it did not have an unchallenged monopoly of the trade. Rivals sprang up from time to time, but it was generally able to oust them or buy them out. In 1805, the Americans began to show some interest in this rich industry and sent Zebulon Pike, an army officer, up the Mississippi from St. Louis to investigate. In 1809, the newly organized American Fur Company sent its traders into the region. The American and the Northwest both continued to trade, forming at times a united organization.

But during the War of 1812, with both sides trying to win the support of the northwest Indians, the fur trade fell to one-fourth of its former volume. The war brought about the collapse of the British fur regime.

The American Fur Company succeeded as the dominant organization in the northwest. At first it continued the trading post which had been built on Brown's Point, but sometime between 1820 and 1832, the first and second visits of Henry Schoolcraft, the post was moved to a point near the outlet of the lake into Sandy River. It became the center of the fur trade for all the upper Mississippi. Agents assembled here to get supplies; Indian hunters were dispatched to the forests; explorers and surveyors and public men visited the Sandy Lake post and were entertained by the staff in charge.

William Aitkin, who had come to Minnesota years before as a boy, was put in command of the American Fur Company's Fond du Lac department, with headquarters as Sandy Lake, soon after it was taken over from the old Northwest. An influential man, Aitkin was equally at ease in the company of scientist, politician or savage chief, the friend of governors and of red trappers, a polished gentleman with two Indian wives. He led the life of a feudal lord at Sandy Lake during the successful reign of the American Fur Company, and for over twenty years his word was practically the law of the land.

Many men of interest or influence lived for a time at Sandy Lake, or passed through the area. Among the personalities whose lives touched this region were two representatives of the first Negro family in Minnesota. The Bongas were the descendants of a West Indies slave and a Chippewa woman. In size and strength they were veritable giants, and it was George Bonga who traced down the slayer of one of Aitkin's sons and delivered him to the authorities. The trial of the murderer was the first criminal court trial

under the territorial law of Wisconsin.

More than a century ago, the first missionary came to Sandy Lake. He was Frederick Ayer, who believed that education must supplement the gospel in helping the heathen to salvation. The first school, outside of Fort Snelling, in what is now the state of Minnesota was organized by him at Sandy Lake. Many heroic missionaries followed Ayer's footsteps here. Often they were the redman's only friend, protecting him against certain grasping elements among the whites, and they supplied him with food and medical care as well as the Christian testament. Their story of hope and misgivings, of high-hearted labor and hopeless surrender to circumstances, lives in the scattered pages of writing left by them.

A day eventually came when the beaver, upon whose silky pelt all the great structure of the fur trading industry had been built, began to grow scarce. The seemingly endless supply of fur failed under the presistent, reckless destruction of the fur-bearing animals. The diminished trade was not profitable. The posts fell vacant, and for a time Sandy Lake was left again to the Chippewa. But not for long.

About the time the missionary period came to a close, a previously neglected resource suddenly became valuable. In the eastern states, the forests were thinning out, while in towns all through the Mississippi valley newcomers waited impatiently for the lumber with which to build their houses. At the same time, magnificent pine forests, untouched by the axe, blanketed all northeastern Minnesota. Such a situation, in that dynamic day, could have but one outcome. Timber cruisers and loggers by the thousands came trooping in, and a new industry took over the region. Of this period, Jim Hill wrote: "Even as late as 1855, when I first came here, it was thought that Minnesota was fit for little

else then lumbering."

Nowhere in Minnesota were there richer pine forests than about the upper reaches of the Mississippi. Lumbering was begun here by Joe Libby, and from the time he came with his ox-team, plodding through the roadless wilderness, there was no cessation of the chunking axe and the ringing saw for over a half century. In their haste to secure the best of the timberlands, little enough discretion was used by the lumbermen. Many were merely speculators, bent on acquiring land in one way or another to resell to someone else and realize a profit, then move on.

Still, the lumbering period was one of solid progress as well as sweaty heroics and mighty feats of daring with bobsled and pickpole. To ride a log and direct a drive down the Mississippi required courage and skill. Tales of Paul Bunyan were retold and embellished and invented, while out of the region rolled millions upon millions of feet of matchless virgin pine. Sawmills and dams were built. Little settlements began to cluster around them. Then came a few pioneer farmers whose eyes were set hopefully on the soil.

Government agents and sometimes politicians negotiated a succession of land treaties with the Indians. Bit by bit and acre by acre, the treaties took the Indian's land away from him. In its place he was given cash, timberland, and reservations. The aims of justice were not seldom defeated in the consummation of these treaties; as the Indian's authority diminished, his consent to a treaty was often a foregone conclusion. Resentments smouldered, and in 1898 there was a last effort at resistance. The country about braced itself for what looked like certain massacre, but the Sandy Lake Chippewa took no part in the abortive uprising.

It was in 1870 that the decisive break with the past was made in the northwoods. In that year, the Northern Pacific railroad came through. Before, travel had been almost entirely by boat. Only an occasional ox-team labored up the Mississippi tote-road, and there were no other roads. Now, however, settlements sprang up here and there. In 1891, the most important, McGregor, was settled by Italian immigrant homesteaders and a few Frenchmen. Shortly after, others moved in, among them former lumbermen who had logged for many years in the region.

The steamboats and the railroad arrived almost simultaneously. After the first trip of the Pokegama, steamboats began regular runs as far as the foot of the Thundering Rapids, now the site of the village of Grand Rapids. These boats were mostly stern-wheelers carrying freight and passengers. Sometimes as many as a hundred people and fifty tons of freight were packed on a steamboat for the trip up the river. The best known of the steamers was the Andy Gibson, which made a record run in 1885 from Aitkin to Grand Rapids and back in thirty-seven hours. Steamboats were for years the only means by which the upper river could be reached. They towed log rafts, carried picnic parties on excursions, took the pioneer farmer to his claim, hauled supplies for the loggers, and even, in one instance at least, provided a honeymoon trip for a pair of newlyweds.

Road building started soon after the coming of the railroad. In many places, roads and ditches were built side by side. Settlers gradually filled the region surrounding McGregor, several villages were built, some farms developed. Settlers from the Scandinavial countries and from Finland, attracted by liberal homestead laws, moved in. The frontier was pushed farther

back when new country was opened up by the laying of the Soo Line railroad. Several towns appeared along its route, and lumber camps were established and wood products shipped out.

The years following made swifter changes. Good roads were built in almost all the McGregor area. Telegraph service, telephones, electric lights and bus transportation brought the modern world to the section. The lush meadows give rise to the short-lived "wiregrass" industry. Farming with diversified crops such as clover, potatoes, alfalfa and flax has proved profitable. In general, though, the section has responded grudgingly to the demands of the farmer, and the elaborate ditch building program to drain the lands for cultivation has not met with success. Much of the region is still essentially a forest and game refuge area, although, where the soils are adapted for it, there are fine farms and dairying is profitable. In some instances, wet and unadaptable farm lands have been returned to the state or federal government to be used for tree and game preserves. A number of such conservation projects are established in the region.

Some remnants exist here of most of the former resources. There are still colonies of beaver, especially more numerous in recent years. Trapping is still profitable when carried on locally as a sideline for the farmer and is under the direction of the Department of Conservation. Lumbering furnishes a living for many.

But much of the activity of the region is now connected with recreation. Part of the famous Arrowhead country, the section is within one of the most famous resort areas in America. As a vacation ground, a favorite region for hunters and fishermen and summer visitors, it will continue to grow and develop. The long story of the McGregor lakes region written by nature is not completed, only a new chapter has been begun.

OVER THE RIM OF TIME

The McGregor lakes country may, perhaps, be thought of as relatively new. But this recently settled country, like the rest of Minnesota, has had a long past. At least five hundred million years of it.[1] Within the state are the oldest formations in the world, the prehistoric granites, and the youngest, the glacial deposits.[2]

These first lands were built up in a period of tremendous volcanic activity. Mountain ranges rose, were destroyed and rose again. Warm seas covered the land. But millions of years ago, these seas disappeared, leaving plains to dry in the sun. Thus land was formed, much like the present, with hills and valleys but without lakes.[3]

Next, from the north, the west and the east, great ice sheets moved in and covered the face of the land. Four times the glaciers, hundreds of miles in extent, pushed and ground down over this region.[4] Across the surface of the landscape were strewn boulders, soils and countless tons of other debris. Between each of these invasions of ice, thousands of years passed during which the glaciers receded and vegetation returned.[5]

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1. Louis H. Powell, Around a Geologic Clock in Minnesota. Minnesota History Magazine, Vol. 15, June 1934, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, p. 141.
2. Powell, Geologic Clock, 15: 142; Charles Richard Van Hise and Kenneth Leith, The Geology of the Lake Superior Region, United States Geological Survey, Government Printing Office, 1911, p. 27.
3. Powell, Geologic Clock, pp.143-146.
4. Daniel E. Willard, The Story of the North Star State, Webb Publishing Company, St. Paul, second edition, p. 55.
5. Williard, North Star State, 147; Powell, Geologic Clock, 147.

One of these, the Labrador glacier, advancing through the Lake Superior basin, reached as far as the present towns of McGregor and McGrath.[6] It brought a pinkish drift without limestone and spread it over the area. From the west, the Keewatin glacier brought grey drift that overlaps the pink between McGregor and Lawler.[7] Millions of acres of ice filled the Rainy river valley, and this great mass rolled over the continental divide past the present Grand Rapids and as far as Aitkin.[8] As the ice melted, ridges and hills of glacier-borne drift made dams for the melting ice water.

Gradually a great lake collected, Lake Aitkin, which was twenty-five miles wide and extended for about fifty miles from the mouth of the Swan river to the north edge of Crow Wing county.[9] All of the McGregor lakes region, except for a few islands, was under the waters of this huge lake for a thousand years. Then the last of the glaciers melted away, and the Mississippi river, carrying tons of ice water, began to cut into the drift-formed bank of Lake Aitkin. Finally an outlet near the present town of Brainerd was worn through, and the waters of Lake Aitkin flowed into the river and were carried down to the Gulf of Mexico.[10]

The landscape of this region was scarred and altered by the glaciers with hills and valleys and streams but most of all with lakes. Once lakeless, it has today more than two hundred lakes of which Sandy Lake is the largest. All are creations of the glacial age.[11] Peat bogs or swamp lands now cover

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6. Williard, North Star State, 57
7. Williard, North Star State, 57
8. Williard, North Star State, 156
9. Williard, North Star State, 190
10. Powell, Geologic Clock, 147; Williard, North Star State, 191
11. Powell, Geologic Clock, 191

the mud bottom of vanished Lake Aitkin. Certain of these swamp lands have the ground water level so near the surface that trees cannot take root in them. Thousands of acres are covered with rank grass and sedges. The "Crex" grasslands near McGregor and Lansford are such treeless swamps.[12] The old lake bottom from Hill City to Palisade and McGregor contains many extensive swamps.[13]

There were islands in Lake Aitkin, and Palisade stand on one of the smallest of them.[14] The ancient gravelly beaches of Lake Aitkin, rising above the surrounding lowlands, have also determined the sites of several towns. Around McGregor, a glacial outwash plain, submerged and worked over by the waves of a shallow bay, formed sand bars that remained as sandy islands[15] in the peat bog which succeeded the lake. The town of McGregor is located on such a gravelly bar. Lansford is on a island's beach. The Northern Pacific Railroad runs from island to island between the two towns.[16]

The altitude of McGregor on its lake-washed sand plain is 1,254 feet.[17] This sand plain reaches as far as Grayling, where the beach ridge is very broad and high.[18] To the north, the shore line of the old lake is now submerged in swamp and bog and is difficult to find. A bay of Lake Aitkin extended to the town of East Lake which stands on the ancient beach.[4] The glaciers left in[19]

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12. Williard, North Star State, 90
13. Williard, North Star State, 96
14. Williard, North Star State, 192
15. Williard, North Star State, 193
16. Williard, North Star State, 193
17. Williard, North Star State, 347
18. Williard, North Star State, 192
19. Williard, North Star State, 368

this region many hills of drift called moraines. West of Lawler is a moraine two miles wide.[20]

Besides modifying the surface of the land with hills and lakes, the glaciers had a profound effect upon the soils. Climatic variations through the ages brought changes, too. As the ice advanced, trees and other plant life retreated before it; as the glaciers melted, the vegetation again crept northward. Because of this, many hardwood trees have been found far south of their usual latitude, and the pines migrating northward are mixed with the hardwoods. The advance and retreat of the glaciers have also determined the bird, fish and animal life.[21]

There is one natural feature of the McGregor lakes region that is significant above all others for the part it played in the early history of the section.[22] This is the Savanna Portage, a stretch of hill and swamp connecting the drainage basins of the Mississippi and the Great Lakes. The removal of the weight of the great glaciers caused a change in the surface "level," a warping, tilting and folding in the region; a central height of land arose. Where the ice lingered longest in the lowlands to the east, the land tended to dip eastward. West of the central height was the Mississippi. From the divide then, the St. Louis river flowed eastward to the Great Lakes, while Sandy Lake drained west and south to the Mississippi.

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20. Williard, North Star State, 230, 244, 368.
21. Powell, Geologic Clock, 142.
22. Lawrence Martin, The Pleistocene, in "The Geology of the Lake Superior Region," U. S. Geological Survey, Charles Van Hise and Kennth Leith, editors, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1911, pp. 427,448,449.

Erosion continued after the glacial peroid, changing and shortening the distance between the two drainage systems. The swiftly flowing St. Louis extended its headwaters westward. In time, it encountered the slow moving Cloquet river and the East Savanna river. These two streams, it is considered probable, were once part of the Mississippi system.[23] The pirate St. Louis captured them, together with a little stream at the head of the Prairie river, and turned them all eastward to flow into the Great Lakes. The reversal of these streams lessened the portage distance between the St. Louis river and Sandy Lake. So here, when the world was young, thousands of years before man appeared, a natural passageway was established for later trade and transportation between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi.[24]

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23. Charles Richard Van Hise and Kenneth Leith, The Geology of the Lake Superior Region, U. S. Geological Survey, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1911, p. 113.
24. Professor Irving H. Hart, The Geologic Origin of the Savanna and the Prairie River Portages, Minnesota History, The Minnesota Historical Society, December 1932, p. 403.

ANCIENT ENEMIES

History does not name the first inhabitants of the Sandy Lake region, although much has been learned of their lives and customs from the mounds which they left. There are thousands of these strange earthworks scattered about the state, but who built them or what their purpose was is still obscure.

Many mounds exist in the McGregor lakes country. Brower, the geologist, mapped and described a group of one hundred and eighty-six at Lake Bromley, now Mandy Lake, near Kimberly;[1] they were along the bluffs overlooking the swamp through which the Rice river flows. On the south side of the small stream uniting Dam Lake and Long Lake, three curious parallel ridges were discovered; in 1907, excavation in one of them disclosed a very ancient skull. Many relics of prehistoric times as well as pottery, knife blades, hatchets and other items of later origin have been found along the northeast shore of Dam Lake.[2]

Near the Mississippi, on the Sandy river, where a number of dome-like mounds were examined, arrow heads, lance points and copper ornaments have been unearthed. Some sharp pointed poniards with shallow grooves for handles were among the articles found. When the government dam was

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1. Newton H. Winchell, ed., The Aborigines of Minnesota, The Pioneer Company, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1911, pp. 345-346.
2. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 348.

built across the Sandy river, a copper spear head nine inches long and other artifacts were brought up from the river bottom mud.[3]

Crescents of native copper have also been uncovered, probably like the savages' ornaments described by Radisson: "Their ears are pierced in five places—the holes so big that your little finger might pass through. They have yallow waire that they make with copper, made like a starr or a half moone, and there hang it."[4]

The mound builders vanished. Large Sioux villages were about Sandy Lake when white men first penetrated the region. Tradition seems to indicate that they migrated there from other sections before 1600,[5] and that no other tribe had seriously disputed their claim to that hunter's paradise.

The Sioux were fierce warriors, feared and respected by their enemies. As early as 1642, the French had heard of them. Some thirty years later, Marquette observed that "there are certain people called Nadouessi, dreaded by their neighbors, and although they only use the bow and arrow they use it with so much dexterity that in a moment they fill the air. In the Parthian mode, they turn their head in flight and discharge their arrows so rapidly that they are no less to be feared in their retreat than in their attack... They dwell on the shores of, and about the great river Messipi, and number no less than fifteen populous towns."[6]

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3. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 349
4. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 499
5. William Watts Folwell, A History of Minnesota. Minnesota Historical Society, 1924, 1:51.
6. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 522.

The Chippewa,[7] also called the Ojibwa, came later. The ancestors of the Chippewa dwelt about the St. Lawrence, where they were the first to engage in the fur trade with the French. Scarcity of fur and disastrous wars with the Iroquois forced them to seek a new home farther inland. As the Chippewa retreated westward, the French followed them and in the interests of the fur trade contrived temporary truces between them and the Sioux upon whom they were encroaching. During such a lull in hostilities, the Chippewa gained a foothold at La Pointe.[8] This was about 1692.

From La Pointe, Chippewa warriors made excursions into the interior. The first assault upon the Sandy Lake Sioux, occurred around the middle of the eighteenth century and came about, according to Chippewa legend, through an innocent journey of a Chippewa and his squaw. Hunting for game westward from the region of Fond du Lac, they camped one night in the vicinity of Sandy Lake. While the woman prepared to cook their meal, the brave went some distance beyond. From a hill, through an opening in the trees, he noticed two looms with their wings set to alight and knew that meant they were over water. He ventured a little way onward, came out upon a hilltop and there below him saw Sandy Lake. Clustered the length of a semi-circular sandbar connecting the mainland with a long peninsula were the buffalo-hide teepees of the Sioux.

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7. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 523. Jacob V. Brower, (Memoirs of Explorations in the Basin of the Mississippi) Kathio, St. Paul, 1901. Frederick Webb Hodge, ed., Handbook of American Indians, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin No. 30, Part 2, p. 577.
8. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:80. William Warren, A History of the Ojibway, Minnesota Historical Collections, 5:157. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 522.

Back to his squaw the brave rushed and, extinguishing the campfire, the couple fled. But they were too late. The smoke had betrayed their presence, and their enemies were already in pursuit. The Sioux overtook and killed the brave, but the squaw escaped to tell her story to relatives at Lake Superior. The Chippewa lost no time in taking revenge upon the Sandy Lake village.[9]

Another and deadlier attack came later.[10] There was among the Chippewa at an early date a chief, Bi-aus-wah, who was encamped at one time near La Pointe. One day, while the chief and his warriors were hunting, a party of Fox Indians, just then friendly to the Sioux, fell upon the camp and massacred all except an old man and a small boy, Bi-aus-wah's son.

Bi-aus-wah, returning and finding all his people dead, at once set out for the country of the Foxes. He arrived at their encampment in time to witness from a place of concealment the torture and death of the old man. Knowing it would be futile to try to rescue the boy from the same fate, the father stepped proudly into the midst of the Fox warriors and addressed them: "My little son, whom you are about to burn with fire, has seen but a few winters. His tender feet have never trodden the war-path. He has never injured you. But the hairs on my head are white with many winters, and over the graves of my relatives I have hung many scalps which I have taken from the heads of the Foxes, my death is worth something

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9. Professor Irving Hart, The Old Savanna Portage. Minnesota History Magazine 8:118-120. James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.
10. Warren, Ojibway, Collections 5:177.

to you. Let me, therefore, take the place of my child, that he may return to his people." The Foxes accepted the challenge.

The son, released, spread the tale among the Chippewa, who in retaliation destroyed six Fox villages. The memory of his father's death made the son, Bi-aus-wah II, a vengeful warrior. When he was old enough, he established his village at Fond du Lac and called on all the Chippewa from about the shores of the western Great Lakes to aid him in an attack on the Sandy Lake Sioux.

Feather-adorned, striped and painted for war, the long single file of warriors began the march. So great was their number, it was said, that a man standing on a hill could not see from one end of the column to the other. The Sioux defended themselves ably, but after repeated assaults, the Chippewa, equipped with firearms, drove them out and took possession of Sandy Lake about 1746. First they settled on the islands, later on the mainland opposite the mouth of the West Savanna river.

Then the Chippewa[11] began a drive that resulted in the conquest of Crow Wing, Gull Lake and other villages of the upper Mississippi. The Sioux made a last stand at Leech Lake and sent out three war parties against the Chippewa, one to regain their old home at Sandy Lake and two to Rainy Lake.[12] All three failed. Many years of fierce battling followed.

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11. Warren, Ojibway, Collections, 5:222-232, 263. Winchell, Aborigines, pp. 533-534. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:82.

12. Winchell, Aborigines, pp. 538-539; Henry R. Schoolcraft, Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Conditions, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States, Philadelphia, 1851-1857, 142-152. Edward Duffield Neill, History of the Ojibway, Minnesota Historical Collections, 5:395-450. Warren, Ojibway, Collections 5:76-193, 222-246, 344-348. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:81-82.

The Chippewa had obtained a tenacious foothold, though every step of their advance was challenged and their gains dearly won. At the close of the Revolutionary War, there was not a single Sioux village east of the Mississippi above the Falls of St. Anthony.

Of these bloody encounters, the most important in its result was the battle of the Crow Wing, which took place soon after the English had become masters of New France, in 1763.[13] By their defeat on the Crow Wing the Sioux were driven forever from their lands east of the Mississippi. The Sioux, by that time also in possession of guns and settled on the Rum river, laid careful plans for a mass attack on the Chippewa. They summoned all their fellow tribesmen from the Falls of St. Anthony and the bands west of the Mississippi. Four or five hundred assembled and the war dances began. This was to be no simple foray for a few scalps.

Not Hannibal nor Napoleon, it has been said, conceived a bolder piece of strategy than did the unknown commander of the Sioux. A flying corps was to move rapidly past the Chippewas' front, turn the right flank and carry the central stronghold by surprise. Proceeding by a circuitous route over a series of portage known to them for generations, they arrived at Cass Lake and turned down the Mississippi to take Sandy Lake.

Unexpectedly, at Pokegama Falls, the Sioux came upon two Chippewa. The latter took off in their light canoes in a downriver flight to warn the village. Paddling with might and main and portaging across the river's ox-bow loops to gain time, the Chippewa raced with their news. The Sioux were close behind. One of the pursued dropped a valued possession, a small

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13. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 537.

mirror, and despite the swarming advance of the Sioux, he turned back to find it. At the portage from Sandy Lake to the Mississippi, he met the full force of his enemies. He turned and fled again, but this time he was cut down in sight of the village. Had the Sioux not tarried in the advance to capture a group of thirty Chippewa girls picking blueberries not far from the village, the surprise of Sandy Lake would have been complete.

As it happened, sixty of the Chippewa braves were absent from the village on a war party. The rest, having drunk too deeply of the white man's firewater, were lying in a stupified sleep. Those of the Chippewa who were able bravely defended their village; the inebriates, too, as soon as possible after they had been drenched with cold water by the women, hastened to take part. The battle raged for some time, and at last the Sioux, with their captive girls, were forced to retreat down the river.

The war party of the sixty Chippewa, meanwhile, returning homeward, saw signs at the mouth of the Crow Wing river that told them their foes had been there, and, rightly suspecting that the Sioux had gone on to Sandy Lake and probably killed their wives and children, prepared to wait for them to come downstream. On a high bluff at the mouth of the Crow Wing, they hid themselves, and soon the breeze carried to their ears the sound of the Sioux descending the river, singing songs of triumph and beating drums.

Five times outnumbered, the Chippewa warriors waited until the unsuspecting Sioux, with Chippewa scalps dangling from poles in their

canoes, were abreast of them. Then they fired with deadly effect. The Sioux rallied and returned the fire, and the battle raged. The captive women, when they saw their menfolk, capsized the Sioux canoes and swam ashore. The enemies, gunpowder finally failing them, fought each other with knives and stones. At last the Sioux were vanquished and retreated. This victory proved to be such a decisive one for the Chippewa that the Sioux moved permanently from the northern lake region.[14]

From time to time, an enemy deadlier than the Sioux attacked the Sandy Lake villages. One such attack occurred in 1782.[15] In an expedition against the Hidatsa Indians southwest of the Missouri river, the Chippewa warriors brought back smallpox. North, south, east and west, the scourge spread over the country. Death stalked among the wigwams, and in all the villages only seven homes were left. It took many years for the camps to become populated again.

The peace pipe was smoked occasionally during the years of the Sioux-Chippewa struggle and often in the winter, if game was scarce, the Chippewa of Sandy Lake would join their Leech Lake neighbors and hunt to the south and west. The Sioux could also be found at these winter hunting grounds, and a truce would prevail.

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14. Warren, Ojibway, Collections, 5:222-232. For a map of the battle ground and vicinity, see Jacob V. Brower, Minnesota, in Memoirs of Explorations in the Basin of the Mississippi, St. Paul, 1903, p. 40 Diagram in Winchell, Aborigines, p. 546. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:81-84. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 538.

15. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:86. Warren, Ojibway, Collections, 5:344. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 65. Warren states that the Ojibway lost in one epidemic of smallpox, probably in 1782, 1500 or 2000 of their number. Collections, 5: 260-262.

The Sandy Lake Chippewa engaged in one of their most devastating battles, however, while on such an expedition of peace. They had been at the winter hunting grounds, generally considered neutral territory, and the Pillagers from Leech Lake had been with them. On the way home, they separated from the Pillagers at Cross Lake and camped for the night. At daybreak certain of the Chippewa noticed wolves out on the ice of Cross Lake. Suddenly to their dismay, they preceived that they were not wolves but Sioux warriors in wolves' skins. They raced back to spread the alarm. But though the Sandy Lake braves fought with desperation, of their entire band of about two hundred only a few escaped. One of these, a grandson of Bi-aus-wah II, was taken captive and lived for many years with the Sioux.[16]

The Sioux-Chippewa warfare continued for generations with intermittent intensity. Many Sandy Lake chiefs won renown in these encounters. The second Bi-aus-wah, already mentioned, was loved by all his people and let them in their first major battles with the Sioux. He has been called the "first Ojibway Pioneer to the county of the Upper Mississippi."[17] Big Martin, Bi-aus-wah's war chief, was an important figure in many battles and was slain at the second battle of Elk River in 1773.[18] Little Soldier was known as a courageous and successful warrior of Sandy Lake.[19] He is remembered for his encounter with the Sioux at Fort Snelling, where he had gone with Flat Mouth and where, despite a promise of protection by Colonel Snelling,

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16. Warren, Ojibway, Collections, 5:345-347. This was about the year 1800. See Winchell, Aborigines, 584.
17. Warren, Ojibway, 5:349.
18. Warren, Ojibway, 5:241. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 539.
19. William J. Snelling, (probably), Early Days at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin Historical Collections, 5:137-141.

several Chippewa were killed by the Sioux. Little Soldier demanded and received the right to punish the offenders.

No Chippewa was more famous than Kau-te-wau-be-ta, known also as Catawabeta, Broche Dent and Bas Casse. His achievements were those of peace rather than war. Catawabeta, in speaking of his aversion of violence, related an incident that occurred when the English took Mackinac during the French and Indian War, about 1760. The French asked him, a boy, to take up the war-club, but he refused; the English thanked him and asked him to take up the tomahawk for them, and he refused; the Americans thanked him but did not ask him to take up the war-club.[20] Catawabeta was mentioned in Perrault's account of his journey to Lac des Sables (Sandy Lake) in 1784. Pike awarded him a medal and a flag in 1805, and he once told Schoolcraft that a French flag had been given to his ancestors. He came to be known in the early 1800's as the partriarch of the Sandy Lake region and esteemed as the "venerable chief." A signer of the treaty of Prairie du Chien, Catawabeta built himself a house at Sandy Lake and cultivated a garden. Of him Warren wrote: "He is an Indian among a thousand for his sincerity, integrity and inflexible love of truth and equity."[21]

A description of one Sandy Lake brave, Wasmoeshaka, has been preserved. In 1826, at Prairie du Chien, where seven hundred Indians were present, this man alone was remarked, not for his oratory, but for his

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20. Warren, Ojibway, 5:477. Jean Baptiste Perrault, Adventures of A Merchant Voyageur, edited and with introduction and notes by John Sharpless Fox, Ph. D., Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, 37: 526.

21. Winchell, Aborigines, 714. Perrault, Adventures, 37;526. Warren, Ojibway, 5:349-50.

remarkable appearance. It was noted by a fascinated observer that he was "dressed like King Saul." His headdress was a crown of glossy drake's feathers and the bills and feathers of the woodpecker. The same exotic materials were in his wrist ornaments, and his neck was encircled with horsehair, dyed vermillion.[22]

Many oral legends are preserved by the Sandy Lake Chippewa. One has been recalled by a granddaughter of Au-aw-be-dway-we-dung, Returning Echo, once the principal chief of the Rice Lake band, who signed the treaty of 1863. This granddaughter, Mrs. Martha Cornish, now lives at Boot Lake. Her Indian name is Aundaig, Crow, and her father was Muckandwaywenanee. Aundaig's version of a battle between the Chippewa and Sioux is said to explain the modern name of Battle Island in Sandy Lake.[23]

The battle took place when Muckandwaywenanee was a small boy and the Chippewa band was camped near the present location of Indian Point Lodge. A brave, scouting one day near where the Gateway store now stands, came upon evidence of the enemy. He hurried to warn his band and a war council was held. It was agreed that the Sioux would probably wait for darkness before making an attack.

The day was spent in transferring the old men and the women and children to Battle Island for safety. With every available firearm in readiness, the Chippewa warriors concealed themselves, waiting for nightfall and the expected assault. Having been cautioned by their

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22. Winchell, Aborigines, p. 731. McKenny and Hall, The Indian Tribes of North America, 1933 edition, pp. 258-259.
23. Mrs. Martha Cornish, Boot Lake, Minnesota, Interview.

leaders, the Chippewa did not open fire until the Sioux had waded out into the water between the mainland and the island and were well within range. They killed all of the invaders except two, whose ears they cut off and who were then released with the admonition to "return to your people and tell them that we wish to be left alone." Aundaig suggests that Battle Island might well be called Refuge Island.[24] There are several other accounts of this battle varying somewhat in details.[25]

Sandy Lake Indians took part in the battle of Kaposia, in 1842, within the limits of St. Paul. Beengwa, an Indian woman of the Augenosh clan, whose father led this excursion against the Sioux, related the story in 1927. The war party left Brown's Point on Sandy Lake, and it was agreed that the returning warriors as they approached home should fire two shots if none of them had fallen in battle. Anxious days passed. Then one day, the women and children heard the two shots ring out, and they raced through the woods to meet the braves. Beengwa's sister won the race and received the prize, the first scalp taken in the battle.[26]

The Augenosh of Sandy Lake were reported to be extraordinarily[27] brave and fierce, and it has been said, perhaps with more feeling than reason, that only two of them died a natural death. Once, it is told, a Brave named Mooninee lost his wife and an Augenosh boasted that he had

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24. Mrs. Martha Cornish, Boot Lake, Minnesota; James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota. Interviews.
25. Professor Irving Hart, The Story of Beengwa, Minnesota History Magazine, 9:325. 1932.
26. Hart, Beengwa, 9:325-327.
27. Mrs. Martha Cornish, Boot Lake, Minnesota; James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota. Interview.

caused her death by "grand medicine." Mooninee seized his gun and threatened the Augenosh, whereupon the boaster in an arrogant challenge thrust his face foreward and placing a finger on his forehead said, "If you are going to shoot me, shoot me right here." Mooninee took him at his word.

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Aundaig recalls a peculiar occurrence told to her by her father, Muckandwaywenanee. It happened when Michandwaywenanee was young and living at Sandy Lake. One evening, after the last flicker of the campfires had died away, there suddenly appeared in the distance beyond the lake a strange light that glowed steady and bright unlike anything the Indians had ever seen before. The Indians, says Aundaig, were afraid of anything they didn't understand, and so there were frightened by this unusual light. In the morning it was gone. A few of the least fearful ventured to go across the lake and investigate. They discovered nothing— no sign of enemies, nor of recent fire.

The next evening at dusk, the light shone again in the same position. It was a spirit come up out of the lake, thought the Indians, now throughly terrified. A brave at last volunteered to find out, if he could, the meaning of it. First he rubbed his hands with "medicine" to ward off evil, then crossed the lake to the precipitous hundred-foot bank of the north shore. There, halfway up the embankment, he discovered the source of the light. A piece of stone-like, clear glass, the size of double fists, lay against the bank. It was brilliantly luminiferous, glowing in the dark with a strong light plainly to be seen from the opposite shore of the lake. The stout-hearted warrior had found what he sought. He dug a deep hole at the foot of a certain tree, placed the

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28. Mrs. Martha Cornish, Boot Lake, Minnesota. Interview.

the mysterious stone in it, and covered it up. Its baleful light troubled the Indians no more. Aundaig regrets that the exact location of the buried stone has been lost.

The Sandy Lake Indian villages were composed of wigwams resembling inverted baskets covered with birchbark or rushes laid over poles, each with a hole at the top for the smoke to escape. Hunting and snaring small game or fishing with spear and net were the chief occupations of the Chippewa. They were expert in the use of the canoe.

The long, cold winters were often hard, but when the spring crow was heard the Indian knew that the lean days were past for awhile. The first event of the year, one which appealed particularly to the women, was sugar making. Sometimes in their eagerness to reach the maple groves, the bands left their winter camp too soon, and starved and froze until the sap ran in the trees. While the women were gathering and boiling sap, the men traveled sometimes a hundred miles away to trap for furs. Sugar season over, the families were off to other places, where the summer might be spent picking berries, peeling birchbark, or pulling bullrushes for mats, and, if anything had been planted, hoeing in the gardens. They often traveled long distances in a season but always came back to their semi-permanent villages at Sandy Lake.[29]

Equality of property was part of the Indian tradition. Save for a few personal belongings, possessions were shared with the deserving and

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29. Winchell, Aborigines, pp. 581-615; Hon. James Duane Doty, Northern Wisconsin in 1820, Wisconsin Historical Collections, 7:197-200.

idler alike. From this communal practice probably arose the later custom of begging which so vexed the missionaries. To the Indian who was in need it was not so much begging as the observance of immemorial social usage.[30]

All of the Chippewa living in the vicinity of Sandy Lake were called Ke-che-se-be-win-in-wugs, Men or the Great River.[31] Their numbers fluctuated according to their fortunes in war or the prevalence of disease and hunger.[32] Lieutenant Pike, making the first official survey of the upper Mississippi for the United States government in 1805-1806, gave the number of Catawabeta's band forty-five warriors, seventy-nine women and two hundred and twenty-four children, a total of three hundred and forty-eight. This census, however, was taken not long after the calamity at Cross Lake and also when small pox had recently depleted the population.[33]

The Chippewa believed in a great spirit that pervaded all nature. An organization known as the midewiwin or "grand medicine" performed the rites of their beliefs and exerted magic powers. There was a good spirit, Kegie Manitou, to whom they seldom prayed since, as they said, he never harmed them anyway, and an evil spirit Miche Manitou, who had to be constantly propitiated with offerings.[34]

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30. Warren, Ojibway, 5:131. Winchell, Aborigines, pp. 593-594.
31. Winchell, Aborigines, 646; Warren Ojibway, Collections, 5:38
32. Warren, Ojibway, Collections, 5:459; McKenny & Hall, The Indian Tribes of North America. (1933 edition), 319; Winchell Aborigines, 583, See map p. 583.
33. Warren, Ojibway, Collections, 5:459; Pike, Expedition, 1:546.
34. Winchell, Aborigines, 607-609; Grace L. Nute, McLeod's Diary, October 9, 1836. Minnesota History Magazine, 4:376.

Chippewa burial was sometimes upon scaffolds.[35] More frequently, the body was wrapped in birchbark and placed in the ground, if possible on a high bluff. A small house, a few inches high, was built over the grave and inside were placed some of the belongings of the departed; a hole was left through which food and tobacco might be deposited to comfort the spirit on the "road of souls." Such an ancient cemetary is located about a quarter of a mile beyond the old post of the American Fur Company at Sandy Lake. In the early 1800's, William Boutwell, a missionary to the Indians, described this burying ground as being marked by posts striped with vermillion. Some of the graves were guarded by low pickets and others were covered with a cedar roof on low encircling logs.[36]

Near the junction of the Sandy river with the Mississippi and along the shores of Sandy Lake there are scattered families of Chippewa Indians. Here by these shining waters, where, after the Sioux were dislodged, they first settled and there the white man first found them, descendants of those first Chippewa invaders still live.

The death in 1922 of an Indian woman of Libby was something of a symbol of the passing of the early Indians. Mamaon, Charley Grasshopper's mother, had lived most of her life about Sandy Lake and, although blind, she knew every foot of the country thereabout. "Comments were few", it was said, "as her spirit returned to her fathers. She had never heard of women's

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35. Reverand Joseph Gilfillan, The Ojibway of Minnesota, 9:55 (1901) Winchell, Aborigines, 613-615; Frances Densmore, Chippewa Customs, Bulletin 45,(1929)

36. Minnesota Historical Collections, 12: 124.

clubs, of the League of women voters, nor held an office. But she knew how to
how to weave blankets, bead moccasins, to fashion baskets and to hush little children to sleep. She was a woman, a pioneer, and an American, and she lived her life according to the light she had, and in death she was laid to rest with the ceremonies of her people."[37]

37. Aitkin Age, 1922, Saturday, July 30.

TWELVE POSES WEST

"How vain our hopes, how futile our aspirations.
What is the life of man? 'Tis but the shadow of an existence, yet in that shadow of a shade how much is comprised.
How few there are who can look back to the bright days of their youth - the sunshine of life- and feel that their dreams of renown and splendor or the more virtuous desire of domestic happiness approach realization. All life is ideal, and our very existence is but a dream." 1.

- Written by Martin McLeod, at Sandy Lake, November 11, 1836.

The disastrous wars between the Iroquois and the tribes to the west had, by the middle 1600's, forced the French to seek new regions for trade. On the heels of the receding barter in furs, the Frenchmen reached the west shore of Lake Superior as early as 1679.[2] The Indians at Sandy Lake gradually became aware of white invasion, for the region about the headwaters of the Mississippi, rich in furs, was known to the French traders. From the Great Lakes, they pressed westward, largely by way of the several portage routes between the St. Louis River and Sandy Lake, generally taken together and called the Savanna Portage, or the Savanne.[3]

The savage had probably traveled this portageway for centuries, and it was known and used by traders at a very early date. It is declared

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1. From McLeod's Diary, Minnesota History Magazine, 4:421-438; Diary of Martin McLeod, in the Minnesota Historical Society Museum, (Manuscripts), St. Paul, Minnesota.
2. William Watts Folwell, A History of Minnesota, 1:23 (Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, 1924); Edward Duffield Neill, History of Minnesota; From the Earliest French Explorers to the Present Time, 813-817, Fourth Edition, Minneapolis, 1885); Newton H. Winchell, The Aborigines of Minnesota, (The Pioneer Company, 1911,) 582.
3. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:23; Warren Upham, Minnesota in Three Centuries, 1:249; The Mississippi River and Its Source: A Narrative and Critical History of the Discovery of the River and its Headwaters, Accompanied by the Results of Detailed Hydrographic and Topographic Surveys, 1893 (Minnesota Historical Collections) 7:89.

by many that Du Lhut passed over it.[4] A map of North America, published by Bellin in 1755,[5] shows a portage which may well be the Savanne. It is mentioned again, about 1777, in an English military memorandum.[6] Perrault, who crossed it in 1784,[7] gave the first authentic description. The portage trail is indicated on a manuscript map of the northwest, dated about 1814, by John Dutton of London.

Necessity compelled the use of this portage, for there were only two common routes into this region- the Mississippi river route from the south and the St. Louis-Lake Superior route from Detroit. The latter was considered the better, except for the Savanna Portage which was "a sad piece of work."[8] As the shortest "carrying" distance between the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi, the Savanne was for some two hundred years the main avenue of travel between these points for Indians, explorers and fur traders.

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4. Edward Duffield Neill, History of the Minnesota Valley, including the Explorers and Pioneers of Minnesota. (North Star Publishing Company, Minneapolis, 1882,) p. 15-17; Also Neill's Macalester Contributions, 103; Dictionary of American Biography, 5:500 Newton H. Winchell, Aborigines, 524; Jacob V. Brower, Prehistoric Man at the Headwaters of the Mississippi River, Minnesota History Collections, 8:238; Rueben G. Thwaites, The Story of Chequamegon Bay, Wisconsin History Collections, 13:407.
5. Professor Irving H. Hart, The Old Savanna Portage, Minnesota History Magazine, 8:121 (1927).
6. Jean Baptiste Perrault, Narrative of the Travels and Adventures of a Merchant Voyageur in the Savage Territories of Northern America Leaving Montreal the 28th of May 1783 (to 1820), Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society Collections, 37:508, Discovered in 1905 at the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D. C. and edited by John Sharpless Fox.
7. Hart, Savanna Portage, 8:121 (The Minnesota Historical Society has a photostatic copy of this map).
8. David Thompson, Expeditions to Western America, 1784-1812, (Champlain Society Publications, No 12, Toronto, 1916.

Though the word Savanna means a treeless plain much of the portage is in a tamarack swamp.[9] It was, said Lieutenant James Allen, six miles long and was passed in twelve poses. This French term referred to the act of depositing or putting down. During the fur trade, an enormous quantity of furs were "packed," or carried, over the portage. Goods were wrapped in bundles weighing seventy-five to one hundred pounds each and were called "pieces." Depending upon the number of pieces to be transported, a carrier made successive trips to a point, usually a half mile forward, put down his load and returned for more.[10]

Travelers have given various estimates of the distance across the portage.[11] William Johnson noted ten poses. Martin McLeod said the distance was eight miles.[12] The fact was that the route varied with the season of the year, with the wet or dry condition of the ground, and with the amount of goods to be carried. In general, however, the distance as considered to be about as Allen found it. The main route of the twelve poses[13] led from the East Savanna river, in what is now section two, of

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9. Hart, Savanna Portage, 8:123-124; William Johnston, Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections 37:172; Extract from Lieutenant Allen's Journal in Explorers and Pioneers, "History of the Upper Mississippi Valley" by Reverand Edward D. Neill, 184-185, (Published by Minnesota History Company, Minneapolis, 1881). Lieutenant James Allen.
10. Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections 37:172; Paul Beaulieu, Sketch of the Fur Trade, Among the Henry M. Rice Papers in the Minnesota Historical Museum, (Manuscripts).
11. Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections 37:172; Paul Beaulieu, Sketch of the Fur Trade, Among the Henry M. Rice Papers in the Minnesota Historical Museum, (Manuscripts).
12. William Johnston, Letters on the Fur Trade in 1833, in Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections 37:170-172; Diary of Martin McLeod, 4:351 Minnesota History Collections. Grace L. Nute, McLeod's Dairy, 10:127-140.
13. Hart, The Old Savanna Portage, 8:123.

of Balsam Township, westward to the West Savanna river in section seven.

There must have been considerable travel over this route in the days before the revolution, for Grand Portage, at the mouth of the Pigeon River, was then at the height of its importance.[14] Jonathan Carver visited there to obtain goods, and in the trading season as many as twelve hundred trappers, coureurs de bois, voyageurs and interpreters gathered there at one time.[15] Furs collected by the hunters about Sandy Lake were probably carried "down" to Grand Portage.

The Frenchman, Jean Baptiste Perrault, who, between 1784 and 1797, made frequent trips between Sandy Lake and Lake Superior, left what seems to be the first record of travel over these portage routes to the Mississippi.[16] He prepared maps of two routes between the St. Louis River and Sandy Lake, the "Portage de la Prairie" and the "Portage de la Savanne." On one of his maps, the oldest detailed map of this region, a "zero apostrophe" (0') indicates the site of a log cabin he built in 1785 near the lake out of which the Prairie river flows.[17] The streams and surrounding country appear to have been known and named before the coming of Perrault, and the trails well marked.

Perrault hired out in August 1784 to a trader, Alexander Kay,[18] who came from Montreal with two canoes intending to go up the River

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14. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:57-58.
15. Glanville Smith, Minnesota, Mother of Lakes and Rivers, 263 National Geographic Magazine, (Mar. 1935), Sir Alexander Mackinzie, Grand Portage Minnesota History Magazine, 12:375.
16. Perrault, Adventures, Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, 37:508-509.
17. Hart, Savanna Portage, 8:121-123.
18. Perrault, Adventures, Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, 37:508-519.

St. Louis and over the Savanna Portage by way of Sandy Lake to Pine River (on the Mississippi near the present Wolford in Crow Wing County). A third member of the party, Harris, had been sent ahead to buy wild rice and to meet Kay at Fond du Lac. After a stormy voyage, Kay and Perrault arrived at Fond du Lac, where, struggling to land their two canoes were wrecked by the pounding waves and their goods strewn along the beach.

It was the second day of a freezing November. Various persons tried to persuade Kay, because he was so ill prepared, to abandon the intended trip into the interior, but Kay, says Perrault, made reckless with liquor, scorned the warnings. The Frenchman inspected the supplies and found that there was but one bag of flour, one keg of butter and one of sugar for Kay's own use, although there were "14 men, his savagesse, himself and me, being 17 persons in all and nothing to eat." Nevertheless, they embarked on the St. Louis river and presently encountered Harris with three other men and an Indian, Big Martin. Harris had not bought the wild rice he had been sent for and had nothing in his canoe except a part of a barrel of salt meat.

Perrault, recognizing the danger of continuing the journey, tried to dissuade Kay. "I advised him to return to Fond du Lac and to go up to the Indians on the first opening of navigation. But this gentleman would take advice from no one." Indeed, Kay enforced his will with a menacing pistol. He ruled that Harris, Big Martin and himself with seven others should go on ahead to hunt, leaving Perrault behind with the baggage to await their return with provisions for him and the men left with him.

Six inches of snow fell before an Indian reached Perrault with a portion of moose and a letter from Kay. Instead of joining Perrault, Kay wrote that it was his intention to proceed to Pine river and directed Perrault to take the goods they had brought for trading as far as the Savanna Portage and to pass the winter there if possible. On the way, Perrault and his party were to leave fifteen "pieces assorted for trade" at the Portage Aux Couteaux on the St. Louis River, where Kay would be waiting.

It took Perrault eleven days through the ice and snow of the St. Louis river to reach the Savanne. Kay failed to wait for them, and, being without supplies, Perrault records, we lived on the seed pods of the wild rose, and the sap of trees." For several days, they subsisted on fish; then the ice thickened and they were driven to dig the "roots of the flag," in the mire of the snow-blanketed swamp, to boil for food. But when "this resource failed us," wrote Perrault, "we were compelled to quit the place. It seemed that all the birds flew before us. Each one took his turn at hunting but if he saw anything he missed it."

Secreting the goods with the two small canoes at the entrance of the portage, Perrault "made a lodge with an oilcloth" and planned to try to comply with Kay's orders to spend the winter on the Savanna Portage. But game grew scarce, and they were forced to press on foot toward Pine river.

Sandy Lake was reached at last with some of the men scarcely able to walk. They found there three bare poles of a lodge, and part of a dried moose skin which they roasted and ate. They then followed down the Mississippi as far as the "Muddy River," the site of the present village of Aitkin. The river, still unfrozen though it was near Christmas, offered only one means of crossing. Wrote Perrault: "The men who were with me forded it fully dressed but I disrobed and swam in order to keep my clothing Dry."

While building a fire to dry themselves, the party was cheered by the sound of a shot. It was la grosse martre, an Indian hunter from Kay's camp who guided them there by a shorter route. Kay, giving them barely time to rest, dispatched them on January 4 to the Prairie River Portage to built a log house. This they completed by February 9. But supplies from Kay were slow in coming, and, unlucky in their hunting, they again narrowly escaped starvation.

Winter lifted at last and Perrault left his Prairie river cabin in April to bring down the goods left the previous fall with the two canoes at the entrance of the Savanne. Kay came up from Pine river and they all met at Sandy Lake, bartering with the Indians until May 2. Kay finished the season off by providing liquor all around. In the revelry that followed in the wigwams, Kay quarreled fiercely with a savage and was atabbed. Ka-te-wau-be-ta, the Sandy Lake chief, skilled in medicine, attended him. Said the chief: "The blow has given me much pain. If I had been present, perhaps it would not have happened. All the consoles me is that I...am here to do all in my power to relieve

you." Kay was placed on a litter and the chief and his wife started by way of the Savanna Portage to carry the wounded man to Mackinac. But, complained the chief, the injured trader would not heed his advice, and although Kay lived to reach his destination he died the following year.

Mackinac had been the center of the fur trade for many years,[19] and from there the traders spread fanwise over the west and north. From that post came the next trader to Sandy Lake, Jean Baptiste Cadotte,[20] a mixed-blood, descendant of that Mons Cadeau who had entered the Great Lakes country in the train of the French envoy, Sieur de St. Lusson, in 1671. Cadotte's journey was by "the old or Prairie portage route." At Sandy Lake, part of the expedition went up the Mississippi to Red Lake; Cadotte proceeded down the Mississippi to the Crow Wing river, across to the Red river and by way of Rainy Lake and Pigeon river back to Mackinac.[21] It was the exploration of Cadotte that determined the British Northwest Company to get possession of the trade in the region.

Until 1763 Canada had been claimed by France,[22] but worsted in her wars with Great Britian, she was forced by the treaty of Paris to relinquish all Canada and its dependencies, or as it was later expressed, "everything which he (Louis XV) possesses, or ought to possess, on the[23]

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19. Folwell, Minnesota, 1; 69; William W. Warren, A History of the Ojibway, Minnesota Historical Collections, 5:278-279.
20. Reverand Alfred Brunson, A Western Pioneer, in Warren's Ojibway, 5:10-11.
21. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:68; Warren, Ojibway, 5:279-82.
22. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:51
23. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:75.

left side of the river Mississippi..."But France had already secretly conveyed all her lands west of the Mississippi to Spain.

The region about the upper Mississippi including Sandy Lake had by this maneuver passed from French ownership, and was now half Spanish and half British, with the Mississippi the dividing line. After the Revolutionary War, all the lands east of the Mississippi came into possession of the United States. In the meantime, the territory west of the dividing line of the river had reverted to France, and the region was now, at the end of the Revolution, half French and half American, and it so remained until the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, when the United States bought the lands west of the Mississippi.[24]

While titles were thus being shuffled over the distant conference tables, the only inhabitants of the region, except for a comparative handful of traders, were the savages, and they, secure in the conviction that the Great Spirit had given them the land, were doubtless unconscious of any changes in ownership. The British traders were equally unconcerned. In 1793, after the journey of Cadotte, Canadian authorities[25] sent out an explorer and surveyor to map and chart the country. This man was David Thompson, whose exhaustive plats and field notes played an important role in the United States Canadian border controversy.

The treaty of Ghent, in 1814, provided that the boundary should

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24. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:74.
25. Thompson's account of his journey to this region may be found in his Expeditions in Western America, 1784-1812, 245-286, (Champlain Society Publications, No 12, Toronto, 1916).

run from Isle Royale[26] to a certain "Long Lake to Lake of the Woods" and thence due west to the Mississippi. Thompson suspected that the Mississippi was nowhere west of Lake of the Woods, and he interpreted "Long Lake" to be the bay of the St. Louis River. Coming down from Canada by the Red river route, Thompson made his way eastward, discovered Turtle Lake and pronounced it the source of the Mississippi.

British officials[27] planned to keep Thompson's findings secret until maps could be prepared. However, the information leaked out, and the United States persuaded London that in the wilderness of the northwest the exact location of the headwaters could not be found. Discussions went on until 1842, when the Webster-Ashburton treaty settled the boundary.

May of 1793 found Thompson on the Mississippi river near Sandy Lake. Although that was more than twenty years before the establishment of Fort Snelling, and all the northwest region was still a vast wilderness, the explorer sensed something of the future destiny of this river.[28] Comparing it with the historic Nile, he wrote of the Mississippi valley: "Its Anglo-Saxon population will far exceed the Egyptains in all the arts of civilized life...although these are the predictions of a solitary traveler unknown to the world, they will surely be verified."

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26. Canadian Historical Review, 4:122-124 Toronto, 1923); Minnesota History, 18:232; Minnesota History 1:523;
27. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:497-302.
28. Champlain Society Publications, 12:278-280, Toronto, 1916. See also Canadian Men of Action Series, "David Thompson, The Explorer. Charles Norris Cochrane. 84.

Thompson returned to Canada by way of Sandy Lake and the "Savannah Brook" and the St. Louis river. He made a minute study of the countryside as he went along. Crossing the portage, he recorded that his party"often sunk to our waists" in the mire.

Before 1800, American influence had not been felt in the Sandy Lake region, nor anywhere alde along the upper Mississippi. The French regime had faded by then and the Lilies of France were scarcely a memory. The boundary between Canada and the United States in the northwest was a nebulous line. And the powerful Northwest Company kept the British in control of the entire country northwestward from Prairie du Chien. Over the posts and forts, the flag of the British continued to wave until 1816.[29]

On July 30, 1805, Lieutenant Zebulon Pike was commissioned by the United States government to make a journey of exploration from the town of St. Louis to the upper Mississippi country, and to obtain a grant of land from the Sioux for a military post. Having secured the site covering the future location of Fort Snelling, and carrying along the peace pipe of the great Sioux chief, Wabasha, with which he hoped to influence the Chippewa to a truce with their enemies, Pike, with a party of twenty men, pushed on up the river.[30]

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29. Folwell, Minnesota, 1: 132; Grace L. Nute, ed, and introduction, Five Fur Traders in the Northwest.

30. Zebulon M. Pike, Expedition to the Headwaters of the Mississippi River, Vol. 1. (Coues edition, Francis P. Harper, 1895) Also Pike's Explorations in Minnesota, Minnesota History Collection. 1:368-416.

Overtaken by a heavy snowfall near the present location of Little Falls, they delayed their journey to construct a fort as a base for supplies. The long keel boat with which they had begun the journey at St. Louis had been exchanged at Prairie du Chien for two bateaux, and these were now replaced by two dugouts. One, loaded with supplies and ammunition was launched on the river and promptly sank. Since the season was growing late, Pike decided to delay until the river froze and to build a wooden sled for the carriage of his supplies. But the river was slow to freeze and he started by "land and water" with a hand sled and one dugout towed by three men.

Slow, toilsome and interrupted by many mishaps, the journey continued. Intense cold compelled Pike to built bonfires every three miles. Still fingers and toes were frozen. The sled broke through the ice and ammunition and baggage were lost. The lieutenant's tent caught fire one night and he lost "leggins, mockinsons, socks etc... no trivial misfortune." Three feet of snow covered the ground. Pike and Corporal Bradley determined to hurry on in advance of the men and after a time reached a post of the Northwest Fur Company on Lower Red Cedar Lake (Cedar Lake). The post was under the command of an Englishman named Grant. The American officer slept there that night with the flag of the British Empire floating over his head, an irritation to Pike and a source of some slight embarrassment to Grant.

Pike and the corporal arrived at Sandy Lake on January 8, 1806. But Grant had preceeded them to the Northwest's post on Brown's Point and again received the American officer with "utmost hospitality."

Five days later, the remainder of the detachment straggled in and were fed and treated with fille, the cant term for a dram of spirits.

Within the post, life contrived to be comfortable. The agent and his assistant had grown a crop of poratoes the previous summer and wild game and fish were available for their table, though the main article of diet was "wild oats." These "oats" -wild rice- bought from the Indians, Pike found, cost a dollar and a half a bushel. Flour was fifty cents a pound, salt, a dollar, pork, eighty cents, and tea, four dollars and a half a pound. On January 17, they were served roasted beaver, dressed like pig, and found it excellent.

The lieutenant and his men stayed twelve days at the Sandy Lake post. Some of the time was spent in constructing sleds with which to continue the journey. Though Pike found the Chippewa, known to him also as the Ojibwas, still largely loyal to the British traders of the northwest Company, he was interested in their attitude toward the Americans. While out on the frozen lake with Grant, they met an Indian and, informed by the trader that Pike was an American officer, the Indian showed the liveliest curiosity. Pike noted that "the savages hold the American in greater veneration than any other white people. They say of us, when alluding to warlike achievements, that we are neither Frenchmen nor Englishmen but white Indians."

Pike has left a summary of the number and condition of the Indians at Sandy Lake for that year, 1805.[31] The record showed:

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31. Pike, Expeditions, 1:346-347, Coues edition.

"Primitive language . . . . . Algonquin.
45 warriors. 224 children. 79 women. 345 is the probable number of souls.
24 roving bands.
Chippewa or leapers. . .all bands. About 11,177.
Altogether firearms, 2,049.
Called native name. . . .Ouchispawah, by the French, sauteurs.
Traffic with the Northwest Company. Trade in beaver, muskrat, otter, marten, black and silver fox, etc.
Best position for a trading post. Sandy Lake.
Nations with whom at war. Roc (ently) Sioux, but now at peace.
At war with Sauks, Foxes and Iowas.
At peace and in alliance with the Fols Avoins and all the nations of Canada.
Name of the chiefs or principal men.

Indian	French	English	of his band
Catawabata	De Breche	Broken Teeth	First Chief"

A young Indian who had been engaged to guide the party to Lake Sang Sue, (Leech Lake) now arrived from the woods. Pike, as before, pushed on ahead of his men, accompanied only the young Indian and a soldier, Boley. Pike's notes of this journey are brief but vivid. January 23: "Forgot my thermometer, having hung it on a tree; sent Boley back five miles for it." January 25: "Boley lost the Sioux pipestem which I carried along for the purpose of making peace with the Ojibways; I sent him back for it; he did not return until 11 o'clock at night." January 26: "The Indian and myself marched on so fast that we left Boley on the route eight miles from the lodge. . ."

Pike's speed was rewarded by arrival at Leech Lake on the evening of February 1. His legs and ankles were badly swollen but the "good dish of coffee, Biscuit, butter, and cheese for supper" cheered him.

While at Leech Lake, he wrote a letter to the director of the Fond du Lac department of the Northwest Company, Hugh McGillis, informing him in firm but polite terms that British goods must pay duty at

Mackinac, that no British flags should on any pretense be hoisted on trading posts, that political dealings with the Indians must cease, that the Northwest Company must follow American Law. At the Leech Lake post, Pike lined up his men on February 10, 1806 and had the "English yacht" shot down from the flag staff.

Still lame, Pike set out for Upper Red Cedar Lake (Cass Lake), which he believed to be the upper source of the Mississippi. In three days, he was back from the thirty mile journey. He had "accomplished his voyage" and reached the "main source of the Mississippi. Pike was nearly correct in this belief. He now held a council with the Chippewa of the vicinity. They were, he told them, to surrender their English medals and flags, pay their debts to the traders and give up liquor. The traders, he conceded, might sell the liquor they had on hand, so that the Indians might "forget it by degrees." There was to be peace with the Sioux.

The assembled Chippewa smoked Wabasha's pipe and turned in their flags and medals. The next day, Pike made an occasion of parading his eleven men, putting them through the manual of arms, and ordering them to blaze away with blank cartridges- a display intended to convey to the assembled savages the power and dignity of the Great White Father in Washington. On April 20, 1806, Pike arrived in St. Louis, having been absent eight months and twenty-two days.

For half a century after Pike, attempts were made by many men to find the "infant Mississippi." A number of accounts have been left describing these expeditions. Most of them came by way of the Savanna

Portage, and few of them failed to mention this part of the journey. The swarms of voracious mosquitoes, the mire, the cold, muddy water, the difficult footing, impressed this passage-way indelibly upon the memory of the traveler.

William Johnson, the grandson of Waubejeeg, White Fisher, a celebrated Chippewa chief, writing of the Savanne in 1833,[32] stated that nothing had been done to improve it since the beginning of the 1800's. The Northwest Company had, at the turn of the century, built a platform the length of the bog, but in time this had rotted away and later single logs were laid end to end for most of the course. On each side of the logs, mud was waist-deep, and it requited all the traveler's skill to maintain his balance upon them, encumbered as he usually was with pack or canoe upon his back.

Part of the portage was once an old peat bog, very good for travel, voyageurs maintained. But successive fires burned away the peat, lowering the ground two or three feet and leaving it subject to flooding by the East Savanne river. Swamp ooze and muddy water soon took the place of the springy peat. In years of moderate rainfall, the first two or three poses had enough water to float a laded canoe dragged by a voyageur; in wet weather or early spring, the traveler often had to wade deep in water and mire and cumbersome pieces of baggage were sometimes lost entirely in the morass. At one time, a

32. Hart, Savanna Portage, 126; Winchell, Aborigines, 614; Schoolcraft, Expedition, 139; Warren, Ojibway, 5:248.

canal seems to have been cut for a mile or more along the worst section,[33] but it undoubtedly soon filled with mud.

To the wilderness trails of the upper Mississippi a man of affairs turned his attention some fourteen years after Pike's journey.[34] Lewis Cass, governor of Michigan territory, which at that time extended from Detroit to the Mississippi, resolved to explore this part of his domain. He wished, he stated, a better acquaintence with the Indian tribes and to detach them further from British influence. The party, composed of ten Indians, seven soldiers, ten voyaguers, and Cass, started from Detroit in May 1820.

Arriving at the long portage on the St. Louis river, Cass exchanged his large boats for the four smaller ones in which the journey was to continue for four more days. On the 13th of July, Governor Cass detailed sixteen of his men, including Henry R. Schoolcraft of later fame, James Doty, eight soldiers and two Chippewa guides, to go overland to Sandy Lake. This was to lighten the canoe for the main expedition, which continued up the St. Louis river to the East Savanna and on across the portage.

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33. Hart. Savanna Portage, 8:127; Warren, Ojibways, 5:25-164.
34. Wisconsin Historical Collections, 13:212; Hart, Savanna Portage, 8:123; Folwell, Minnesota, 1:104; Henry Schoolcraft, The American Indians; their History, Conditions and Prospects. (Rochester, N. Y. 1851) 295-298.

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Lieutenant James Allen and Dr. Alexander Wolcott, a surgeon, were in the canoes with Cass, and each has left a description of the Savanne. It was on this journey that Allen estimated the distance across the portage as twelve poses. "The first three (nearest the East Savanna)...are shockingly bad. It is a bad of mire, but the difficulty of passing it is greatly increased by fallen trees, limbs, and sharp knots of pitch pine..." The Cass party reached Sandy Lake on July 15, having spent ten days on the trip from the post of the American Fur Company at the mouth of the St. Louis river.

The overland party, meanwhile, was finding the hardships of their journey equally trying. Wrote Schoolcraft: "We now found ourselves, at every step, advancing into a wild and rugged region. Everything around us wore the aspect of remoteness. Dark forest, swampy grounds, rocky precipices, and the distant roaring of the river, as it leaped from rock to rock, would have sufficiently impressed the mind with the presence of the wilderness without heavy rains, miry paths, and the train of wild and picturesque Indians, who constituted a part of our carriers."

The men camped one night in a swamp and their Indian guides, somewhat apart from them, erected a pole the next morning and from it suspended a strip of birchbark. Puzzled by this sight, Schoolcraft

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35. Schoolcraft, American Indians, 297; Expedition to Itasca, 230-235; Summary Narrative of an Exploratory Expedition to the Sources of the Mississippi River in 1829 (Lippincott, Crambo & Company, Philadelphia, 1855) 111-117. Winchell, Aborigines, 607, Wisconsin Historical Collections 15:165-209.

investigated. He found the pole to be a sapling, eight or ten feet, high, and the piece of bark that dangled from it inscribed with figures drawn by the guides. At Schoolcraft's request, one of the guides interpreted them for him. The drawings said Chamees, Pouncing Hawk, represented the exploring party's journey on the previous day, with separate representations of the eight soldiers, the officers, and the Indian guides. The eight soldiers were distinguished by eight rifles standing upright beside them; a small campfire near them showed that they had a separate mess. The Indians were hatless, following the conventional Indian picture-writing distinction between redman and white, and were together at one corner of the picture, also with a separate campfire. The six officers stood in a row, the first with a sword to indicate his rank, the secretary, Doty, with a book, the geologist with a hammer; a separate campfire was likewise shown for them. In the upper left hand corner was a small hawk, at the bottom a tortoise and a prairie hen- the products of the day's hunt. There were three gashes in the pole to indicate the distance from water to water of this part of the journey, that is, from the Portage Aux Couteaux on the St. Louis river to the open shores of Sandy Lake.

The Schoolcraft group at last reached Bezhiki Seebi, Buffalo Creek, a tributary of Sandy Lake, and encamped in high spirits, feeling like those "who have long labored at an object, a pleasure in some measure proportioned to the exertions made." The official secretary, Doty, wrote: "The whole of this day laid over windfalls and through cranberry and tamarack swamps. It is impossible to describe the fatigue of this day's march, and I believe there are even few savages who would for any consideration encounter them."

The following day, they reached the shore of the lake, and, having been told that a shot fired would be heard at the fur company's post across the lake, they accordingly fired. Presently two young clerks, Ashman and Fairbanks, came paddling across the lake in answer and remarked to the explorers that the Indian women, having heard the shots, believed that they also heard war whoops and had driven their cattle off to safety.

At Sandy Lake, Schoolcraft was received with all possible hospitality, and, for the first time since leaving Detroit, slept in a house. The trip overland had taken seven days and could have been made, Schoolcraft estimated, in half the time by canoes.

The next day, Cass joined them and held a council with the Chippewa, whose speeches, though delivered with a brave show of eloquence, "were pitiful appeals for knives, blankets, guns and powder, lead and cloth, kettles and tomahawks, tobacco and whiskey." The Indians agreed that when the expedition returned from the trip to the headwaters of the Mississippi, that they would send a delegation to the Sioux. The party then left for Upper Red Cedar Lake, renamed on this journey Cassina, to make further explorations. Schoolcraft noted in his journal that this lake might be considered the true source of the Mississippi, but he also indicated two inlets, one flowing from a lake forty miles distant, the other from one which lay six days' journey west-northwest by canoe. He seems to have felt certain that the real source was at the end of one of these inlets, but out of deference to Governor Cass noted Cass Lake as the source in his journal. He even mentions that one of the inlets,

River la Biche, was called Mississippi by voyageurs.[36] The party spent two hours on July 21 at the supposed true source and returned to Sandy Lake after an absence of one week. The expedition then embarked for the Falls of St. Anthony, reaching there on the morning of the 13th of August, 1820.

Schoolcraft made a second journey into this wilderness in 1832, for he was not satisfied that Cass had reached the ultimate source of the river.[37] On this trip, he had with him a missionary, William T. Boutwell, later to spend a number of years among the Mississippi bands of Chippewa. Also accompanying them was Ozawindib, Curly Head, an Indian whose guidance doubtless made final success possible.

This time, ten days were spent in coming up the St. Louis river and crossing to Sandy Lake, Schoolcraft and the missionary tented together, and the party was on the portage on Sunday, July 1, 1832. Rain was falling in torrents and everyone kept to his tent. The Reverend Boutwell found it impossible to conduct a Sunday service. But the irrepressible Indians were not daunted by the ceaseless rain and the mosquitoes. Hymns, camp-songs, dance tunes and the reverberating of the pounding drums filled the swamp with furious noise. "It has been such a Sabbath as I have never witnessed," wrote the missionary.

Boutwell found the portage "in spots...difficult to find bottom - a perfect quagmire. Our men look like renegades, covered with mud from head to foot...the mosketoes come in hordes and threatened to carry away a man alive, or devour him 'ere he could get away...

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36. Folwell, Minnesota, 101-106.
37. Schoolcraft, Expedition. Schoolcraft Summary Narrative Boutwell's Journal in the handwriting of J. Fletcher Williams, (Minnesota Historical Society museum). Minnesota Historical Collections 1:124, Minnesota History 3:321.

some lost one leg of their pantaloons, other both. Their shirts and mocassins are all of a piece full of rents and muck. Mangled feet, and bruised backs and legs, were brought forward this evening to the doctor... his tent door is thronged with the lame and the halt. Everyone carries some mark of the Savanna Portage."

At Sandy Lake on this journey, Schoolcraft estimated the Indian population at three hundred and forty-five. He found the width of the Mississippi at the outlet of Sandy Lake to be three hundred and thirty-one feet. The party reached Lake La Biche at last and named it Lake Itasca. For fifty years, this was accepted as the true source, until in 1875 the small streams running into Itasca were mapped and surveyed. Jacob V. Brower, in 1888-1891 on authorization from the Minnesota Historical Society, made a thorough exploration of the region of the Itasca basin, when the waters supplying Lake Itasca were found to be the "infant Mississippi" and the question of the true source was finally put to rest.[38]

Over the Savanna Portage, "Dickson's Army" passed in 1836. Probably no more colorful or incredible band ever toiled across the Savanne. Five young lieutenants and seven soldiers, led by the "Phantom Emperor," General James Dickson, they had come from the east by way of Detroit and the Great Lakes. Marching westward, the general's purpose was to reach Pembina and to recruit an army of half-breeds in the Red river valley. His goal was a certain Mexican city, thought to be Santa

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38. Schoolcraft, Summary Narra tive, 118, Schoolcraft, Narrative Journal of Travels to the Source of the Mississippi River in the year 1820 221-233 (Albany, 1821); Folwell, Minnesota 1:128-129. Hart, Savanna Portage, 221.

Fe, and his aim-the founding of an empire in California. He inspired his men and officers- some of them the sons of the best known factors in Canada- with tales of the rich loot to be taken, and planned, after killing all who resisted him, to set up an Indian government.

Martin McLeod, prominent among later pioneer settlers and one of Minnesota's first legislators, accompanied Dickson. The party found the portage "so damnable that we had to wade up to our hips for nearly three miles and carry our trunks, etc., to boot." The month was November. It was while they were resting at Sandy Lake after this expedition over the portage that McLeod wrote the lines quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Perhaps the adventurers were already beginning to sense their coming failure in the western wilderness. The trader, Aitkin, who entertained the band and their sauve commander at Sandy Lake, related afterwards that the "army" faltered between that point and Pembina and were scattered, and that Dickson wandered away among the Indians.[39]

In 1854, four young Englishmen, world travelers, made one of the last recorded journeys over the portage. With two half-breed voyageurs, Cadotte and Le Feve, they turned off the St. Louis river on August 1, into the Savanne and found the channel choked with uprooted trees, driftwood, weeds and frequently the wreckage of canoes. Beaver had felled trees across the stream. Rocks and snags quickly

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39. James Dickson; A Dilibuster in Minnesota in 1836, Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 10:127-140. See notes and documents p 173-181. Grace L. Nute, McLeod's Diary 4:384-438.

set their canoe to leaking. At times, they could not see three yards in front of them and not a vestige of path was visible to the unpracticed eye. But they were assured that they were on the great northwest trail and could reach the Red river and ultimately the shores of the Pacific by the most approved route.

The travelers later wrote that "lofty trees met overhead- shade- just such jungle as would have been considered good tiger-cover in India; and yet here not even the chirp of a bird broke the stillness, which is one of the most striking peculiarities of American forests, and one which often exercised a painfully depressing influence upon the spirits."

At one place, they passed a sacred rock upon which each passing Indian left an offering of tobacco. At another time, deep in sedges, wild rice and floating islands, they came suddenly face to face with a naked Indian. His head and face were daubed with ashes, and he told them that he was mourning the murder of a relative at Fond du Lac and was on his way to avenge it. He exchanged a partridge and a pigeon for some powder.

The party was often so deep in the mire, where a false step would have buried them, that they were obliged to balance themselves on poles. Poison ivy, wet blankets and mosquitoes added to their trials. But they were, after all, tourists on a holiday. And to the tourist, hard going in picturesque places is part of the fun.

Their half-breed voyageurs were astounded that the youthful Britishers, instead of allowing themselves to be conveyed along like gentlemen, never ceased paddling. They marvelled to see that the Englishmen did nothing byt sing, and laugh, and bathe, and make huge bonfires of fallen trees, and insist on shooting impossible rapids, and otherwise conduct themselves in a "way totally opposed to the habit of sober-minded Yankee traders." Under the tuition of Voyageur Le Feve, they became adept in giving the Indian war whoop, a shrill yell, wising in key, and "rendered more unearthly by clapping the hand rapidly upon the open mouth." The jaunty tourists whooped at intervals, aware of the piquant possibility of their being answered by a bona fide savage.

When the canoe glided finally into Sandy Lake, the "wooded banks echoed back" the party's"lusty French choruses...wound up with a British cheer." Having taught their voyageurs to paddle in time, a technique strange to the Indian country, they approached the Indian village with eight paddles flashing in unison and drew in opposite an amazed missionary, probably Spates, standing close to the water, surrounded by his congregation. This worthy man told the Englishmen that there were about two hundred and fifty inhabitants at Sandy Lane and that all the young men were away at the time on the warpath.

The voyageurs had looked forward from the beginning to staying at Sandy Lake and had spoken appreciatively of the pleasures of the place, of the abundance of provisions and of "les belles sauvagesses," who were celebrated for their beauty above the women of any other Chippewa

village. The young men inspected the encampments and then removed to a nearby island where they had been advised by the missionary to spend the night and where they were immediately followed by the entire Indian population. After a brief visit the next day and carrying letters from the preacher to be mailed in St. Paul, the travelers continued their journey downstream by way of the Mississippi.[40]

A trip was made over the portage in 1861 by Robert E. Jefferson[41] who is said to have built the first frame house in Duluth, and who took his wife and baby girl with him on this overland route to St. Anthony from his home. The Savanne, however, had been supplanted by a military road. Mrs. Jefferson is said to have been the only white woman to make the 372 mile trip. In 1878, Newton H. Winchell, author and collaborator of many works[42] on the history and geology of the state of Minnesota, with a party of surveyors traveled over the portage. The canoe they used is preserved in the University Museum.

In the later part of the 19th century,[43] the Savanne Portage route became known as the "le Duc route." But as roads were constructed, the ancient passageway fell into disuse and in time its importance was lost to all but tradition and its exact location became unknown.

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40. Lawrence Oliphant, Minnesota and the Far West, (First published in Blackwood's Magazine) Published by William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh 1855. 8 vo. 306 pp & 8. 17 plates

41. Minnesota Historical Collections, 9:258.

42. Winchell, Aborigines, 589, St. Paul Daily Press - Oct. 3, 1872. Minneapolis Tribune - Oct. 4, 1882.

43. Hart, Savanne Portage, 8:129-130.

In 1926, Professor Irving H. Hart, and annual summer resident of Sand Lake, and William P. Ingersoll, who has lived in the vicinity for years, decided to make an effort to relocate the trail. They supplemented their information on local history from interviews with old pioneers. On their first attempt, they found themselves following an old lumbering trail. A settler near Shumway Lake, informed them there was an old trail running north of his place that was said to be the old "Hudson Bay trail." This, they found to be about where James E. Murphy and others had told them that they would find it, and they discovered to be in reality the "Old Savanna Portage" trail.[44]

The trail, as they uncovered it, was mostly a narrow path, one or two yards wide, in many places obliterated by brush. The old blazes on the trees were barely discernible. At the western end, the trail followed comparatively dry ground and gradually descended into a tamarack swamp as bad as it had been a hundred years before. The old tamarack logs were found buried beneath the muck and mire, laid lengthwise of the trail.[45] During the summer of 1940, the trail was further explored, cruised and finally marked by a troop of Boy Scouts.

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44. Hart, Savanna Portage, 130-136.
45. Aitkin Age, August 1940, Interviews with Sandy Lake residents, 1940.

ONE GUN-TWO SKINS

Some seven years before Du Lhut made his journey[1] into the country of the Sandy Lake Sioux in 1679, there was chartered in London the "Honorable Company of Merchants Adventures trading into Hudson's Bay." A Hudson's Bay company had been established by the French in 1608 but a permanent charter was not granted until the later date. The trade thus established at the head of the lakes and aggressively held by the French drew upon all the surrounding country for furs. Far-flung trading posts flew the lilies of France for almost a century.

The monopoly of the "Honorable Company" was challenged repeatedly. After Canada fell to the British and the French flag was furled, a group of English traders established the Northwest Fur Company in 1783. Under the guidance of the Northwest Company, British control lasted for almost fifty years and barter in the fur trade reached its highest development. Until 1816, the British colors snapped in the breeze—defiantly, though, for almost half that time, since much of the region had belonged to the United States since the formation of the company.

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1. Charles M. Gates, Five Fur Traders in the Northwest, edited and with introduction by Grace L. Nute. Published for the Colonial Dames of America, University of Minnesota Press, 1933.
Warren Upham, Minnesota in Three Centuries, 1:325. The Pageant of America, 139.
Minnesota History Magazine, 7:314; also 12:91-92. The Columbia Encyclopedia, 856. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:25-72. Professor Frederick J. Turner, P. D., The Rise and Fall of New France, Minnesota Historical Collections, 15:583.

The life of the natives was scarcely disturbed under the French trading system. The French and Indians lived, most of the time, on the friendliest terms. Because the French were not strongly concerned with settlement, French posts left the ownership of the land to the natives and French occupation made scant impression upon the country. The British, on the contrary, treated the Indian less like a brother. Grants of the Indian lands were made by the Crown without recompense or consultation with the natives. The American policy, developing later and profiting somewhat by the English errors, empowered the federal government to deal directly by treaty with the Indian nations or tribes.[2]

The first enduring post on Sandy Lake, aside from a small cabin built by Perrault at Prairie Lake in 1784, was that established by the Northwest Company on Brown's Point in 1794.[3] There are several conflicting local traditions as to the locations of trading posts about Sandy Lake. Niby-na-gaunce, grandmother of George A. Smith, chief of the Sandy Lake band after the death of Misquadace, recalled a post there presumably about 1790.

According to Niby-na-gaunce,[4] born in the latter part of the 18th century, her first recollection of Sandy Lake was of the fur traders

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2. Cyrus Thomas, U. S. Bureau of Ethnology, in Minnesota and Its People, by J. A. A. Burnquist, 1:127, (The S. J. Clarke Pub. Company, Chicago.)
3. William Watts Folwell, A History of Minnesota, 1:68, (Pub. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, 1921.)
4. Mrs. Martha Cornish, Boot Lake, Minnesota, Interview, Tales Told to her by her Grandmother; Also recalled by James E. Murphy for Conversations which he had had with Niby-na-gaunce.

and their impressive dog teams. As a very young girl, she was once in a canoe which was paddled into Sandy Lake. A trading post then stood on the northeast shore of the lake, she maintained, on the hill now known as "Judge Edson's." There were at that time, she declared, no other trading posts on the lake, neither on the Sandy river or the Mississippi nor on Brown's Point. The post stood, she recalled, at the foot and on the east side of the commanding hill and faced the lake. At the top of the hill was a lookout building. It has been suggested by some that this may have been a post of the Hudson's Bay Company. In any case, remains from the fur trading era have been found here, and in 1881 rotting sills and posts were still to be seen where Niby-na-gaunce remembered the buildings to have been. Although trees had overgrown the spot, traces of the lookout on the hill were still evident. The Indian women believed that this post was later moved to the 'point,' the camel's-back hump extending in a northerly direction from the junction of the Sandy river and the Mississippi. A modern home built by Judge Edson, who preserved the relics found there, now stands upon the site.

The Northwest Company's post at Brown's Point, the most prominent of their trading centers, held its preeminence from 1793 until 1816.[5] Because of its arrangement and strength, it was known as "the fort."

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5. Professor Irving H. Hart, The Old Northwest Company Post on Sandy Lake, 12:91-138, Minnesota History Magazine. Also notes on p. 136. (Coues edition 1895)

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Lieutenant Zebulon Pike has left one of the best descriptions of this "fort," which was commercially and politically important years before his visit there in 1806. Pike's memorable journey up the Mississippi from St. Louis was the first expedition into that region by an accredited representative of the United States. The whole northern fur country, in everything except legal ownership, was still completely British, dominated by British traders and flying over its trading houses the colors of the Empire.

Before reaching Sandy Lake, Pike had met the unfluential Trader, James Dickson, whose post was near the present St. Cloud, and had been furnished with a letter for Grant, a young man of Dickson's trading house, on Lac de Sable (Sandy Lake). Pike, after leaving the Mississippi, went on in advance of his men and seems to have missed the old portage trail that led from the river to the lake. Of his arrival, Pike wrote: "We traversed about two leagues of a wilderness...and at length struck the shore of Lake de Sable over a branch of which our course lay. The snow having covered the trail made by the Frenchmen who had passed before with the rackets, I was fearful of losing ourselves on the lake... Thinking that we could observe the bank of the other shore, we kept a straight course, sometime after discovered lights, and on our arrival were not a little surprised to find a large stockade. The gate being open, we entered and proceeded to the quarters of Mr. Grant."

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6. Lieutenant Zebulon Pike, Expedition to the Headwaters of the Mississippi River 1:130-281. Pike's Explorations in Minnesota, 1:308-416 Minnesota Historical Collections.

The "fort,"* Pike found, was situated on the south side of the lake, near the west end. On a map which he prepared, he marked the site and noted that it was 1½ miles south of where the lake emptied into Sandy river. He observed that the "fort" consisted of "a stockade 100 feet square, with bastions [blockhouses] at the southeast and northwest angles, pierced for small arms. The pickets are squared on the outside, round within, about 1 foot in diameter, and thirteen feet above ground. There are three gates; the principal one fronts the lake on the N., and is 10 x 9 ft.; and the one on the W. 6 x 4 ft.; and the one on the E. 6 x 5 ft. As you enter the main gate you have on the left a building one story, 20 ft. square, the residence of the superintendent. Opposite this house on the left on the east gate, is a house 25 x 15 ft. the quarters of the men. On entering the W. gate you find the storehouse on the right, 30 x 20 ft., which contain rooms for clerks, a workshop, and provision store.

"On the W. and N. W. is a picketed inclosure of about four acres, in which last year [1805] they raised 400 bushels of Irish potatoes, cultivating no other vegetables. In this inclosure is a very ingeniously constructed vault to contain potatoes, and which likewise has secret apartments to conceal liquors, dry goods, etc."

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* There is much contradictory information regarding the exact location of the Northwest post. Monk locates it on the south side of the lake, and Coue writes that it stood on the west shore of the lake next to the Mississippi. Reverend Edmund Ely, at the request of Louis Hill, surveyor, drew a map marking a sppt about halfway up the point north of Fisherman's Bay as the location. Hill corrected this error and noted the post by marking Brown's Point "Suppositious site of fort." This was later confirmed by the excavations carried out on the spot by Professor Irving H. Hart and William Ingersoll.
See letter Hill to Ely, May 21, 1860., asking Ely to trace a map and antedating it to 1859.

At times,[7] other vegetables were grown at the fort, for the next year George Monk, a clerk at Leech Lake, in writing of this garden, said that it also produced some beans and peas. Monk mentioned, too, the horses and pigs of the Northwest Company.

The establishment of this first Northwest post,[8] in 1794, on Sandy Lake has been credited by some to William Morrison. But Morrison himself states that he went into the country in opposition to the "Old Northwest" and that he found "Bousqui at Sandy Lake." Charles Bousquet was the Northwest trader in charge at Sandy Lake from 1794 until at least 1797, and he was there when David Thompson, the surveyor and astronomer, visited the place.

Very little is known of Charles Bousquet.[9] Thompson indicated that Bouspuet's trading house was on the Sandy river about a half mile from the Mississippi, and he may have been trading independently by 1798, the year of Thompson's visit. Something of his disposition and resourcefulness may be learned, however, from an account written by Thompson.

One May night that Thompson spent at Sandy Lake was clear and fine, and he got out his apparatus to take observations from the stars.

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7. Jacob V. Brower, Prehistoric Man at the Headwaters of the Mississippi, Minnesota Historical Collections, 8:238.
8. William Watts Folwell, History of Minnesota, 1:114, Minnesota Historical Collections, 8:214, 219, 216.
9. David Thompson, in the Champlain Society Publications, vol. 12, p. 280-282.

The curious Indians watched Thompson closely as he bent over his solar instruments. All the warriors of the tribe were away at the time on a buffalo hunt on the plains west of the Mississippi, and as this territory was claimed by the Sioux the women were anxiously awaiting the hunting party's return. The morning after they had watched Thompson at his astronomical studies, they sent a bent old man to inquire about their warriors. Would they be loaded with meat? And when would they return? Thompson asked "Monsieur Boiske" to explain that he knew nothing of their braves, that he had seen through his instruments nothing but the moon and stars.

Bousquet, however, did not let slip this opportunity to score a point on a subject about which he felt strongly. Liquor, Bousquet believed, was a curse to the Indians, making the warriors indolent and quarrelsome. So he gave the old man his own version of Thompson's words. The men were safe; they would be at Sandy Lake the next day, each with a load of meat. But the meat was poor, there was no fat on it, and they must not get drunk again until the buffaloes were fat, late in the summer. Moreover, whoever bit off another man's nose in a quarrel would be killed by the Sioux in the first battle. To all this the old man grunted, "While we can get fire-water, we will drink." Still, he relayed the message to the women who, since they shared Bousquet's views, were pleased.

The British trade continued uninterrupted by Pike's ultimatums[10] and the formation of the American Fur Company by John Jacob Astor in

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10. Warren Upham, Minnesota in Three Centuries, 1:325, The Pageant of America, 2:139, Professor Irving H. Hart, The Old Northwest Company at Sandy Lake 7:311-325, Minnesota History Magazine.

1808. But eventually, after the War of 1812 and the treaty of 1816 following the war, the Northwest Company sold all of its posts and outfits south of the Canadian border to the American Fur Company. The Sandy Lake post passed to American ownership.

With the Northwest Company in grudging retreat, the American Fur Company gradually acquired a monopoly of the trade. But while the conflict for control still raged between these two, a third contestant had appeared, the Earl of Selkirk, of the Hudson's Bay Company. Selkirk entered through a loophole left in the United States government restriction on trade by foreigners, which stipulated only that traders must not carry on trade in their own account.

Under this provision, thirty or forty Hudson's Bay men came into the country as traders in 1818. There were charges and counter charges, fair tactics and foul were used to win trade. Competition between the monopolies and the independent traders became a duel to the death. Business languished, until Lord Selkirk's death and the enforced American restrictions finally brought peace and a new lease on life for the fur trade.

With the establishment of the Northwest Company on Sandy Lake, a change had come over the region. The colorful bustle of the fur trading establishment succeeded the native and occasional trader on the shore of Kah-me-tah-wang-a-gu-ma, Lake of Sandy Waters. There was constant activity about the post. Indians came and went ceaselessly. A hunter was usually employed to supply the table with game; firewood needed to be cut and hauled; when the post possessed horses, hay had to be cut in the summer and brought to the post in winter. The Indian women about

the fort were dispatched to the woods to gather gum and watab, the wood fibres used in making canoes.

When the ice had disappeared from the lakes and streams, the trappers, both Indian and white, assembled at Sandy Lake with such furs as the winter's catch had brought them. Packs of furs were taken in exchange for trade-goods, for credit or, in rare instances, for cash, from the "free traders" who frequented Sandy Lake in very early days.

Up from Pond du Lac to the junction of the St. Louis with the East Savanna came the flotillas of rivermen, traders and clerks. Here they would divide, one group--with an "Au revoir, portez bien" -- going on up the St. Louis toward Lake Vermillion, the other turning toward Sandy Lake.

Goods loaded into the small canoes were paddled up the river as far as paddles could be used, and then the canoes were dragged. In later days, fleets of canoes were kept at either end of the portage and only the goods were packed over.

Through Sandy Lake, finally, would come the canoes with the

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11. Clement H. Beaulieu, Sketch of the Fur Trade, manuscript, p. 1-5, 12, Minnesota Historical Society museum, among the Rice Papers.
12. Paul Beaulieu, a description of the fur trade, p. 10-12, in the Rice Papers.
13. Professor Irving H. Hart, The Old Savanne Portage, 8:119-121 Minnesota History Magazine, Grace L. Nute, The Diary of Martin McLeod, Beaulieu, fur trade.

'pieces' to be used in the trade. Loaded with ammunition, tobacco, blankets, tomahawks, cloth and "foofaraw" for the Indians, the canoes would move up the lake, the chants of the voyageurs echoing through the primitive timberlands. The goods were piled up at Sandy Lake for the surrounding posts.[14] Here the wintering supplies were sorted, packed and the cargoes for the canoe brigades prepared. Three outfits were sent down the Mississippi — to Mille Lacs, Gull Lake and Red Cedar Lake. Up the Mississippi went outfits for Red Lake, Leech Lake and Ottertail, and for Winnipeg, Cass Lake and Pokegama Falls.

For two centuries, the fur trade was the greatest industry of the continent. The Indian was profoundly affected by it. His first contact with civilization, for good or bad, was through the traders, and he was not to escape from this influence for many generations. A new mode of life was created. But the change in the Indian's existence was no more far-reaching than the effect upon the Canadians. A type of men was produced among them, new and different from any other, and peculiar to the trade. These were the voyageurs, and the coureurs de bois.

After the British had subdued the French, the observant and adroit Northwest Company retained many of the chief French traders, the coureurs de bois.[15] The voyageurs,[16] equally essential to the fur trade, were also kept on in British and, later, in American employ.

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14. Minnesota History Magazine, 4,380.
15. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:53.
16. Ramsey Crooks, Letters of Ramsey Crooks to John Jacob Astor, 1817, in the Minnesota Historical Society museum, manuscripts.

They were generally French Canadians of little or no education, but possessing the peculiar traits, equability of temperament and knowledge of woodcraft and of Indian habits, without which their rigorous calling could not be successful pursued. Ramsey Crooks, an official of the American Fur Company, spoke of this in a letter to John Jacob Astor in 1817.

"Their places cannot be supplied by Americans, who for the most part are too independent to submit to a proper control and who can gain anywhere a subsistence such superior to a man of the interior; and although the body of a Yankee can resist as much hardship as any man, 'tis only in the Canadian we find that temper of mind to render him docile, patient and persevering; in short, they are a people harmless in themselves, whose habits of submission fit them peculiarly for our buriness."

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One French commentator deplored the influence of the fur trader. "This, "he wrote," is the moral and physical ruin of the youth of lower Canada. It greatly injures agriculture. Besides its lure of profits. . . it has become a matter of respectivility to have been what they call 'voyageurs.' The girls will not marry those who court them until the latter have made a trip to the pays d'en haut (interior)."

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Perrault, who left the first record of wintering at Sandy Lake,

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17. Comte De Colbert Maulevrier, 'Voyage dans l' interieur des Etats-Unis et au Canada. (The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1935.

18. Jean Baptiste Perrault, Narrative of the Travels and Adventures of a Merchant Voyageur, Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections, 37:510-574. (Manuscript discovered at the Smithsinian Institute, among the Schoolcraft papers by John Sharpless Fox, in 1905.)

wrote at length of the men engaged in the fur trade: "The life and manners of the troubadour...were at the opening of the 17th century transferred to North America...No wonder a peasantry, and adventurous burgeois who led them, should as if the murmuring cataracts were but one great orchestra of nature, give vent to their gayety in chants... to which the rapid strokes of heir paddles kept time.

"To add to the excitements of the American wilderness, the Cahadians were guided on their adventurous trips by one of the most picturesque races of mankind--the painted and plumed Indians, who, like themselves were eminently bent on the enjoyment of the present scene with little thought for the future: and it cannot be deemed surprising that the American wilderness, in its freedom from restraints, has so many charms for the three classes who supplied the perpetual elements to the fur-trade: namely, the voyageur, the trader, and the ambitious money-making bourgeois, who sought in the fibre of the beaver a treasure more reliable than that which had eluded the grasp of Dr Soto."

These Canadians surpassed the Indian in speed and endurance. Paddling, packing freight over the portages, soaked to the skin with mud, snow or rain, bedded beneath a tree for the night's brief rest, all were part and parcel of the voyageurs' daily lot and were met cheerfully.[19] Said one: "I could carry, paddle, walk, and sing with any man I saw. I have been 24 years a canoe man, and 41 in service; no portage was ever too long for me. Fifty songs could I sing. I have saved the lives of ten voyageurs- have had twelve wives and six running dogs.

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19. Grace L. Nute, The Voyageur.

I have spent all my money in pleasure. Were I young again, I should spend my life the same way over. There is no life as happy as a voyageur's life."

A wanderer by nature, thoroughly at home in the wilderness, living and hunting with the Indians and often bound to them by ties of blood, the voyageur was a link without which the trading establishments could scarcely have operated.

Mackinac, Three Rivers and Montreal were usually the headquarters for the trading expeditions sent to the interior.[20] Peter Pond, an early trader, has left an account of the start of such an expedition.

"There was a number of Canoes fiting for Mislemacamac. I agreed with Isac Tod a Sgr to take my Goods in his cannoe on fraight and imbarkt with him and James McGill Esq. in one of his Canoes and Seat from Lasheen [Lachine] for Mackinac By way of the Grand River.

As you pass the End of the Island of Montreal to Go to a Small Lake cald the Lake of the [Two] Mountinas there stands a Small Roman Church aganst a Small Raped. This Church is Deacated to St. Ann who protects all Voigers. Heare is a small Box with a Hole in top for ye Reseption of a Little Money for the Hole father or to say a small Mass for those who Put a small Sum in the Box. Scars a voiger but stops hear and Puts in his mite and By that meanes they Suppose thay are protected."

For the trip up the Great Lakes, mackinaw boats were used.[21] Huge logs hollowed out, twenty to fifty feet long, the mackinaw boats were capable of carrying from two to eight tons of freight. At Fond du Lac, these boats were exchanged for birchbark canoes, twenty-four to thirty feet long and five feet wide at the center, with a capacity of two thousand five hundred pounds.

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20. Charles M. Gates, Peter Pond, in the Diary of Peter Pond "Five Fur Traders in the Northwest" introduction by Grace L. Nute.

21. Clement H. Beaulieu, Sketch of the Fur Trade, manuscript, among the Rice Papers, in the Minnesota Historical Society Museum, Nute, Voyageur.

In the canoes the boatmen made their way upstream, pausing every two hours or so to rest and smoke. At portages, they "packed" the cargo, including provisions in "pieces" of about seventy-five pounds each. The pack straps had a head piece, three inches wide at the center, fiting over the forehead to assist in packing the burden. If possible, a load was carried at a half-trot to the _pose_; walking back for the next load was supposed to give the packer all the rest he needed.

At certain places, called "packing points," fur packs were collected, opened, sorted and repacked in 'pieces' of the correct weight for one man to carry over the portages. A packing point is said to have been located on the western bank of the Prairie river, a short distance above the place where it empties into Bell Horn Bay.[22]

Goods stored at Fond du Lac[23] for the Sandy Lake trade were often forwarded in winter by dog team. The dogs, mostly fed on fish, were of medium size and miscellaneous breeds. If the snow crust was hard, a dog could pull two hundred pounds, often covering sixty miles in a day.

The diet of the _voyageurs_ and packers was corn hulled with lye.[24]

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22. Professor Irving H. Hart, The Early History of Sandy Lake, published in the McGregor-Pilot Review, 1932, June-October.
23. Lawrence L. Burpee, Grand Portage, 12:374, Minnesota History Magazine, December 1931. Gates, Five Fur Traders.
24. Gates, Fur Traders, Paul Beaulieu, p. 4-8 in the Rice Papers at the Minnesota Historical Society museum, manuscripts; also the letters of Paul Beaulieu, The Organization of the British Fur Trade, Mississippi Valley Historical Review - 3:172 (September 1918)

with tallow for seasoning. One quart of corn and one ounce of tallow was the usual daily ration. From the beginning of their journey, over the Great Lakes in the mackinaw boats, up the tributary rivers by canoe, over the portages on foot, this was their food each day. Boatmen, new to the river, were given pork until they became used to the scantier diet; those who customarily went no farther than Lake Superior posts were also given pork and were known consequently as mangeurs du lard, pork eaters. Those who were old at the business and spent their winters at the inland forts and posts were called hivernants, winterers.

At the interior posts such as Sandy Lake, the daily ration[25] was a pound of flour and a half pound of pork, but the diet of the men was limited only by the skill of the post hunter. The measuring cup was discarded, and the voyageur feasted on venison, game, fish, bear, and wild rice. Sometimes as the winter drew on and game grew scarce, wild rice became the only food, and the measuring cup reappeared. Through all the diaries of the traders, the letters and documents of explorers and records of all kinds left by the white men in the wilderness, the problem of food is always present and almost always of pressing moment.

The voyageur's clothing was as singular as his food. A description left by a missionary tells that "my man dressed himself in the habit of a voyageur, that is, a short shirt, a red woolen cap,

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25. Paul Beaulieu, in the Rice Papers, p. 12 Nute, Voyageur 35-73

a pair of deer skin leggins which reach from the ancles a little above the knees, and are held up by a string secured to a belt about the waist, the agien ['breech cloth'] of the Indians, and a pair of deer skin moccasins without stockings on the feet. The thighs are left bare. This is the dress of the voyageur in summer and winter." To this might be added "a blue capote, the inevitable pipe, a gaudy sash, and a gay beaded bag or pouch hung from the sash — and you have the voyageur as he appeared speeding over the lakes, advancing cautiously up narrow creeks, toiling over portages, cracking his whip over the heads of his dogs, laughing down rapids, fiddling in log forts and singing whereever he was."

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With the passing of winter, the voyageur for a time came into

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26. Nute, Voyageur, Glanville Smith, Minnesota, Mother of Lakes and Rivers, National Geographic Magazine, 263, March 1925.

his own. Down he went to Mackinac, Grand Portage or later to Fort William, there to scatter his winter's wage with prodigal hand. The paddle, the packstrap and the measuring cup were forgotten, and he ate and drank and gambled until the trading season came around again.

The "clerks" of the fur trade were next above the voyageurs in authority, though not necessairly in schooling. Some clerks kept their accounts by means of drawings or pictures, and only they could tell what the figures meant. Others were men of education and often of good family. Sometimes the clerks were sons of younger brothers of the bourgeois, the term applied to the head traders or factors. Traders and clerks occasionally bought their goods outright from the fur company, others were partners and sometimes were paid a salary. Their hardships were often as great as those of the voyageurs. In the long winters, there was little companionship except that of the Indians. Yet the life was a busy one, and possessed a lure beyond the explanation of ordinary men.

During his stay at Sandy Lake in 1806, Pike observed of the traders: "I can only account for the gentlemen of the Northwest Company contenting themselves in this wilderness often, fifteen and...twenty years, by the attachment they contract for the Indian women. It appears to me that the wealth of Nations would not induce me to remain secluded from the society of civilized mankind, surrounded by a savage and unproductive wilderness, or being blessed with the cultivated and feeling mind of a civilized fair one."

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27. Lieutenant Zebulon Pike, Expedition to the Headwaters of the Mississippi, Vol. 1; 188 Minnesota Historical Collections, Pike's Explorations, 1: 368-416.

James Doty,[28] secretary, with the Cass expedition, felt much the same way. "I very much doubt whether the desire to accumulate wealth could ever so strongly predominate in me as to induce me to forsake the comforts and elegencies of civilized life, for a residence in this dreary wilderness, where men suffer their passions to get at large so totally unrestrained, that they fall far below the savages with whom they associate."

After the American Fur Company[29] bought the "fort," William Morrison was retained as trader at Sandy Lake. Life continued there at the same high tempo. It is related that in 1818 the Indians threatened to massacre all the whites. It was but a short time since the British had relinquished the post to the United States and the Indians still resented the Americans. Then when measles ('bad medicine,' the Indians thought, brought by the Americans) had broken out among the natives and was taking a great toll of lives, Morrison had to cast about quickly for a way to prevent a catastrophe. He found it in the circumstance that he himself had two Indian wives and that one of his own children died in the epidemic. Surely, he argued, he would not bring in the Americans if they carried 'bad medicine' which might kill his own child. This logic seemed to appease the Indians.

Several Americans had come into the[30] fur country with the Selkirk traders in 1818, among them William Farnsworth and John Fairbanks. It took them two months to come up from Mackinac to Sandy Lake. Fairbanks and Samuel Ashman was still in command at the time of the visit of Cass in 1820. Fairbanks was well known in the fur trade for his genial temper

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28. Wisconsin Historical Collections 13:211. Papers of James Duane Doty.
29. Minnesota History Magazine, 12:91, Aitkin [illegible], November 11, 1930.
30. Recollections of John Fairbanks, p. 2-3, manuscript, Minnesota Historical Society, Among the Rice Papers. (Written by J. A. Gilfallan from an interview with Fairbanks.)

and integrity. He was said to be kind to those under him, a good trader and expert hunter. His son George Fairbanks was also a prominent figure in the trade.

Sometime between the first and second expeditions of Schoolcraft, 1820 and 1832, the American Fur Company moved its post from Brown's Point to a location just north of the Sandy Lake outlet into Sandy river.[31] In time a rival trader named Abbott occupied the old post. The buildings were still in use in 1833. Eventually, however, they were deserted and sometime after the abandonment of the "fort" it seems to have been burned. The cellars gradually filled with soil and the Indians re-occupied the site, established an Indian village and in the old clearing cultivated the "Indian gardens," the name by which the area was known to the early settlers. In time, the Indians, too, moved away, and the deserted site became the "abandoned waste," noted by Jacob Brower in 1894.

In 1823, Major Stephen H. Long set out to explore the Red River valley and the northern frontier. He was accompanied by an Italian gentleman, newly arrived in this country, Giacomo C. Beltrami. Near Pembina in the Red River country, Beltrami left the party and began exploring on his own account. His travels led him southward, and his Chippewa guides in fear of the Sioux left him. For several days, he was alone, working his way toward Red Lake where "white bears abounded." Inexperienced in the management of a canoe, Beltrami at times waded in the river dragging the canoe containing his effects after him by means of a thong. A shower

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31. Professor Irving H. Hart, The Old Northwest Company Post on Sandy Lake, 7:311-325, Minnesota History Magazine.

of rain drenched the goods and he dried them and then hoisted over them his red umbrella. "It was singular enough to see them conveyed thus in the stately style and manner of China, while I was myself condemned to travel in that of a glley slave." This effort with the umbrella was worthwhile, for, meeting some traveling Indians, who "could form no idea what that great red skin could be," he was able to catch their interests and hire a guide.

With his new guide, the worn traveler camped for the night and during the late hours, hearing a sound in the camp, fired his gun. At the sound of the shot, the guide, thinking instantly of the Sioux, vanished and calls and pleading failed to win him back. Beltrami was again alone in the wilderness. However, when morning came, he fired two shots, a recognized signal of friendship, and the Indian returned from his hiding place. The two men then set out to discover what the beast was that the Italian had shot at the night before in the darkness. At some distance they discovered a dead wold; but the Indian, contrary to the Italian's expectations, did not skin the beast or even touch it. Instead he addressed the dead animal. "He expressed to it the sincerity of his regret for what had happened, and informed it that he was not the person who had destroyed it." The wold happened to be the family totem of the Indian's particular clan.

After many misadventures, the Italian reached the vicinity of the headwaters of the Mississippi. Here he discovered and named Lake Julia

and having delivered a letter to a certain bois-brule of Red Lake, who was directed to accompany him, he continued on toward Leech Lake. His supplies had mostly lost or given away to the Indians but Beltrami never lost sight of the significance, nor the romance of his journey and recorded faithfully the perils that beset him in my labours in these, my translantic promenades." And the "labours" were many and ungentle. A fierce windstorm strewed the trees about him - it was doubtless an earthquake, noted Beltrami. With little food and torn clothing he straggled on with his guide "at a brisk pace, and my air and carriage were not contemptible for a man who was hitched and hooked on every side in thorns and briars...Even Delille, who converts everything into rose and jessamine, would have changed his tone in my situation. Not a word of complaint, however, did I utter."

The Italian learned that the Indians' directions were not always to be relied upon. "The Indians themselves have confessed to me that, when they go down to the traders' settlements, they amuse themselves with gulling their credulity by a number of fables, which afterwards become the oracles of geographers and bookmakers."

On September 20, 1823, Beltrami came into Sandy Lake from the upper Mississippi and observed that "this lake has a handsome basin." He found "the trading establishment /American Fur Company/ is near the spot where Sandy river falls into the Mississippi." Though fur trading had not yet started for the year, the explorer found a Canadian on guard who offered him shelter and food.

The Canadian himself was low on supplies, having nothing but wild rice and potatoes and "who to console me under my privations, game me a list of those which had himself experienced." Beltrami learned at Sandy Lake that the directions of the post were even then on their way westward and were expected to arrive in a few days. He noted that they were coming through the Savanna Portage and that "through this channel are conveyed all those articles which constitute the staple of commerce with the Indians of this region." But the Italian could not wait for the arrival of the traders and with his guide, on the 21st of September, he left "the Canadian and the Sandy river."

About 1826,[32] William Morrison who had been in charge of the Sandy Lake post, retired and returned to Canada, and the trade of the American Fur Company passed under the supervision of William Aitkin. There were four principal traders in the fur country at that time, each having jurisdiction over a portion of the territory. The Fond du Lac department, Aitkin's was the largest.

When Aitkin,[33] together with a trader, Roussain, took charge, each

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32. Paul Beaulieu, in the Rice Papers; Clement Beaulieu, Sketch of the Fur Trade, p. 4, manuscript, Rice Papers.

33. Letters of Henry M. Rice concerning William Aitkin, Rice Papers.

was to receive one-sixth of the profits. Aitkin bought out Roussain in 1830, assuming complete supervision of the department and receiving one-third of the profits. He made Sandy Lake his headquarters and the chief post of the department. Under his management were subordinate agents or clerks, and each post usually employed in addition a blacksmith, baker, mason, and sometimes one or more cooks.

William Aitkin[34] was the head of the Fond du Lac Department during all the most profitable years of the Sandy Lake post under the American Fur Company. He alloted the goods for each post within his jurisdiction and he devised means of combating opposition traders for the Indian's furs. The Indians were better paid when the American Fur Company had some competition, for without rival traders they had to accept what they could get. Usually the Indian received credit for such goods as he might require during the winter's hunt and, when his furs were brought in at the end of the season, the cost of his winter goods was deducted. Ordinarily the trader knew about what to expect in the way of furs from his hunters and trappers. Their abilities being known, the credits were limited accordingly, generally anywhere from five dollars to two hundred dollars.

The American Fur Company had tried to crush opposition by paying good prices regardless of cost and in the beginning, by supplying the Indians with liquor.[35] Up beyond the border, Aitkin had argued, the British had no scruples about spirits and unless he could do likewise the fur company would lost its business. In 1824, his plea had borne fruit; he

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34. Paul Beaulieu, manuscript, in the Rice Papers, p. 12. Minnesota History Magazine. 3:177. Michigan Historical Collections 37:193.
35. Michigan Historical Collections, 37:156. Aitkin Age, October 11, 1929.

was granted permission by the Agent to take on two barrels of whiskey at Mackinac for the Indian trade. But the permit was not renewed.

In the early days of the fur trade,[36] a "skin" was the unit of value. The American Fur Company issued notes, "beaver money," redeemable by the bearer in American Fur Company supplies.

A gun was worth about two skins; leggins with ribbons and beads, two skins; tobacco in long twists, six feet for two skins or three plugs for one skin; a pint of powder, one skin; an axe or tomahawk, one skin; a mesh of beads, one skin. Certain small items were regarded and reserved as presents—a flint, needles, awls, vermillion paint and rings.

The following is a memorandum of a Sandy Lake outfit written on the back of a fragment of dialogue between the Reverend Ely, a missionary at Aitkin's trading post in 1832,[37] and an Ojibwa.

"18½ prs. Blkt. 2½ pts. [Points, refers to the quality of the blanket.]
4 " " 2 "
4 " " 1½ "
3 ps. Grey List Cloth
1 " Cotton Plaid ...
1 " Russia Sheeting ...
4 Dozn scalping knives.
3 Bags Corn
2 " Flour
3 " Shot
2 Kegs powder
1000 gun flints
5 Dozn clay pipes
1 Bags corn)
1 " Flour) Provisions for men"
130 lb. Pork)

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36. Grace L. Nute, Beaver Money, Minnesota History Magazine, 9:287.
37. The Edmund Franklin Ely Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, manuscripts.

A prime beaver was worth two skins; one otter, two skins; bear, two skins; ten muskrats, one skin; and one skin was the value of three martens, three mink, two prime bucks, three racoons, two lynx, two fishers. Besides pelts, traders also accepted wild rice and maple sugar at the rate of ten pounds of sugar, one skin, and a sack of rice, two skins.[38]

The details of Aitkin's early life are somewhat obscure. He was born in Scotland about 1785 and came into the upper Mississippi region with a trader named Drew in the early 1800's.[39] He was a man of some education and many attainments. He seems to have been equally at home in the most civilized surroundings or in the wilderness wigwam. He was the first trader to encourage the missionaries, and it was at his suggestion that Reverend Frederick Ayer established a school at Sandy Lake for the children of Aitkin's clerks and voyageurs, the first school in Minnesota outside of Fort Snelling.[40]

In letters dating back to 1815, members of Aitkin's family[41] spell the name "Aitken," although when the county was named Roger Aitkin, to whom the officials wrote, stated that both his father and he had always spelled it "Aitkin."

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38. Paul Beaulieu, in the Rice Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Manuscripts.
39. Warren Upham, Minnesota Biographies, 17:6, 5:483, Minnesota Historical Collections, W. H. C. Folsom, Fifty Years in the Northwest, 114,241 Warren Upham, Minnesota in Three Centuries, 1:390, 455,513,546. Memoranda on William Aitkin in the Minnesota Historical Society museum, manuscripts, also letters of Henry M. Rice, H. H. Sibley, Ramsey Crooks, Paul and Clement Beaulieu and others.
40. Folsom Fifty Years, Folwell, Minnesota, 1:174.
41. Sibley Papers, pertaining to Aitkin, Minnesota Historical Society, Manuscripts. Aitkin Age October 11, 1929.

William Aitkin was an opposition trader at Leech Lake as early as 1818.[42] He was still a citizen of Canada and, until he could become naturalized, secured his goods from Charles Ermatinger, an independent American trader and outfitter. Aitkin seems to have prospered, and after he became associated with the American Fur Company his post at Sandy Lake had "all the comforts and many of the luxuries of life."

Back in the security of quiet Canadian villages, William Aitkin's family gave anxious thought to the wild and remote circumstances of his calling. In a letter in 1820 his mother hoped her "Dear William" was well. David Aitkin, at Nova Scotia, including with his letter notes from his sister Violet and other members of the family, wrote to William: "We all think that the business which you follow must be very hurtful to your constitution. If it were possible for you to get any settled situation, it would be much better than that wandering life which you lead."[43] But the wandering life held him as it held others. He was destined never to quit it.

Before Aitkin was stationed at Sandy Lake, he had married Bay-ji-quod-o-qua, Striped Cloud. They had seven children and Aitkin cared for them with a marked solicitude. In July 1821, three of the children were at school at Mackinac, and Aitkin, writing from Sandy Lake, requested Henry H. Sibley, a future Minnesota Governor, then at the fur headquarters, to keep a watchful eye on them.

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42. Letters of Charles H. Oakes, August 1872. Clement H. Beaulieu Sketch of the Fur Trade Manuscript - p. 1 - 3.

43. From the Sibley Papers, letters and other material pertaining to Aitkin, Minnesota Historical Society, manuscripts.

Alfred, one of Aitkin's sons, was destined for fame of a tragic sort. Stationed by his father at the Cass Lake post, he became involved in a dispute with two Indians. One of them murdered him. The crime precipitated a notable manhunt, for the murderer fled with his people immediately. William Aitkin, receiving the news, gathered twenty-two half-breeds about him and set out for Cass Lake. Boutwell, missionary at Leech Lake, joined the party "with his musket on his shoulders as a man and as a Christian, for he knew it was a rightrous cause." The murderer was taken once, escaped from five armed men, and was captured at last by George Bonga, giant Negro-Indian mixed blood. The criminal was brought to Fort Snelling in chains and then carried to Prairie du Chien for trial. This is credited with being the first criminal case tried under the territorial laws of Wisconsin. The trial was conducted with few formalities. Liquor was plentiful; some said that the prisoner was the only sober person in the courtroom. It was finally decided that the prisoner, not being a full-blood white man, was outside the court's jurisdiction, and he was acquitted.[44]

John Aitkin died at Crow Wing.[45] Roger Aitkin, the "Little Roger" often mentioned in the diary of the missionary Ely, spent most his life at Mahnomon. James P. Scott married Nancy Aitkin; the brothers Warren married two others of Aitkin's daughters; and a fourth daughter

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44. Wisconsin Historical Collections. 20:340, 5:271. Minnesota History Magazine, 4:387-388; Aitkin Age, October 11, 1929; William Warren, History of the Ojibway 5:483-385, Neill's Macalester Contributions 2:37: Folsom, Fifty Years p. 483.

45. Letters of Charles H. Oakes, Aug. 1872. manuscripts, Minnesota Historical Society. Warren, Ojibway, 5:9-11, Winchell Aborigines, 709.

married a trader named Moores. William Warren, Matilda's husband, was the son of Lyman Warren of Mayflower descent; his mother was a descendent of Cadotte. Warren became a valued author of Indian history.

When the fur trade began to decline, the old traffic was diverted from the Great Lakes country and moved south to Mendota. In 1834, the Astor interests in the American Fur Company were sold to a group who reorganized the trade and retained a few of the old traders, including William Aikin. But his star was on the wane. In 1838, he was discharged for mismanagement. Still, Aitkin continued to trade independently for some time and had a post below Watab. In 1843, in conversation on a Mississippi steamboat, Aitkin said that although hd had been through the Great Lakes thirty times and to New York as often, he was now for the first time trading with St. Louis.[46]

Aitkin plowed and planted the first field in Benton County in the spring of 1847.[47] In the year of 1848, a party of men engaged in cutting a road to the Winnebago Agency crossed the Swan river near where it empties into the Mississippi in Benton County. Here they found that William Aitkin had "made a claim" and was building a hotel and store on the east bank of the Swan river. The census of 1850 lists among the "free inhabitants of the Sauk Rapids district, Territory of Minnesota" William Aitkin, aged 58, farmer, born in Scotland, occupation, merchant; and his children:

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46. Folsom, Fifty Years, 483-485; Also noted in the Kemper Papers Letters of Cakes on William Aitkin.

47. Memoranda on William Aitkin, (manuscripts, Minnesota Historical Society. Winchell, Aborigines, 724, Folsom, Fifty Years, 469, Minnesota History Magazine, 7:109 ○ Aitkin Age, Oct. 11, 1929. McKenna, 485.

"Roger, aged 23 years,
Selim " 11 "
Robert " 8 "
Julia "
Mamima " 6 "
Childe " 4 "
Isabella " 2 "
Edgar " 3/12 " "

The name of the mother of these younger children is not given, but it may have been Pa-zhik-wut-o-qua, who was mentioned as Aitkin's wife in 1849 when Governor Ramsey stopped overnight at the Aitkin home.

Various estimates of Aitkin's character have been left by those who knew him or were associated with him in trade. William Johnston, an opposition trader who may have had an excuse for bias, wrote: "He is a man of no principle, his conduct has been such as to cause Indain traders to bluch." Again, after Aitkin had made a speech to the Indians of Leech Lake, Johnston said, "From what they told me of his speech he must have considered himself a little superior to the President himself." Others who were acquainted with Aitkin, esteemed him for his urbanity and unbounded hospitality.[48]

Henry M. Rice, an outstanding man of early Minnesota public life, was but one of the noted figures who knew Aitkin well. Rice gave Aitkin unstinted praise, stating that he had shared the same camp fire with Aitkin for many months. "When the scenes of his wild adventures and hardships shall be crowded with teeming towns and villages, his name will be fondly cherished and all will regret that nothing but a meagre outline of his adventures has been preserved."

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48. Michigan Historical Collections, 37:199-200.

In 1847,[49] Aitkin, who had always played an important part in the negotiation of Indian treaties, went with Rice to help assemble the Lake Superior and Mississippi Chippewa at Fond du Lac to negotiate a treaty. They camped near Aitkin's old post on Sandy Lake. "I shall remember how sad and desolate he looked." wrote Rice," as he gazed upon the ruins of his once happy home, where he was in reality monarch of all he surveyed...his word, when in prosperity, was the law of the land...but what a change. His fortune gone, his once proud spirit broken..."

William Aitkin died in 1851, but the story of his passing is somewhat confused.[50] It is known, however, that his two Indian wives were present at his funeral and that Striped Cloud, the first wife, determinedly secured the coveted place as chief mourner. Aitkin was buried on the east bank of the Mississippi near the mouth of the Swan river. Although sources differ, it seems reasonable that the location of his grave was near the Swan river in Morrison county.

The fur trade was dwindling by the time of Aitkin's death. Within a few years it was but a memory.[51] A permanent marker, just off state highway 65, commemorates the spot on Brown's Point where the "Old Northwest" held sway; another near Libby marks Aitkin's post of the American Fur Company.

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50. Folsom, Fifty Years, p. 469.

51. Official Minnesota State Highway Department, Map of Minnesota 1939. Other material on William Aitkin may be found in Wisconsin Historical Collections, 20:340. Minnesota Historical Collections 14:6. The Ayer, Boutwell, Ely Papers in the Minnesota Historical Society. Letter of Sherman Hall, July 18, 1872. Letters from Allen Morrison to H. M. Rice, Among the Rice Papers. Recollections of John H. Fairbanks, written by J. A. Gilfillan. Letters of H. M. Rice. Aitkin Age, 10/11/29

OF THE VINE AND THE FRUIT.

Long before white settlers invaded the Indian lands, missionaries had preceded them in many parts of the state. If the white trader was first in any locality, the preacher or the priest was not far behind. As the trading post rose in the interior wilderness, the mission station was likely soon to stand beside it.

The efforts of the missionaries were directed toward two goals- to covert the Indian and to civilize him. There seems to have been some difference of opinion as to which of these aims should be attempted first.[1] The desire of the Jesuit, wrote Parkman,[2] was "to accompany one of these roving bands, partly in the hope that, in some hour of distress, he might touch their hearts..." This was in line with the argument that the aborigine must first be Christianized by the gospel, then civilized by the school. Eliot, "The apostle of New England," and many others held that the Indian must be civilized first in order to be Christianized.

Of missionary activity among the savages, few records in Minnesota are more revealing than those of Sandy Lake. Here was established the first mission school in Minnesota, the first school of any sort outside of Fort Snelling, and it was organized by the first resident missionary in the state.

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1. Governor Lucas of Iowa, in Newton H. Winchell, The Aborigines of Minnesota, 638, (published by the Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, The Pioneer Company, 1911.)
2. Francis Parkman, The Jesuits in North America ,1:22.

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Frederick Ayer, a Presbyterian clergyman, had a mission station at Mackinac as early as 1829. The trader at La Pointe, Lyman Warren, one of whose sons later married a daughter of William Aitkin, persuaded Ayer to open a mission there in 1831. Although in all the vast reaches about Lake Superior there were no other missions, Christianity was not new to La Pointe. More than a century and a half before, the Jesuits had abandoned a mission there.

Ayer wintered at La Pointe in 1831, then went on a tour of the Sandy Lake region. The American Fur Company was flourishing at Sandy Lake and its post there, the most important station in the interior, was the scene of great activity. William Aitkin was in charge of the whole Fond du Lac department, with Sandy Lake as his headquarters.

Aitkin urged young Ayer to remain at Sandy Lake and open a school for the children of his voyageurs and clerks. Ayer organized a school and remained during the winter to teach. What time he had left from that duty he spent in studying the Chippewa language. While at La Pointe he had begun the preparation of a spelling book in Chippewa and during that winter at Sandy Lake he completed it. This laborious task finished, he undertook another, equally formidable. With an Indian guide furnished by Aitkin and eighty dollars in his pocket, Ayer set out on foot in the spring of 1833, to go by way of Mackinac to Utica, New York, to get his

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3. Data on the life and work of Frederick Ayer is found among other sources in: "Minnesota Historical Collections, 6:429, 1:59, 14:25, 5:9. Wisconsin History Collections (Madison 12:442-444; Minnesota History 8:273, 14:143, William Watts Folwell, History of Minnesota, 1:174,178. Aitkin Age, October 11, 1929.

book printed.

Now the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions,[4] jointly controlled by the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, began to show interest in the distant Indian tribes about the Great Lakes. Ayer placed himself under the Board's direction, and Reverend William Boutwell, who had been at Sandy Lake with Schoolcraft in 1832, was sent to take Ayer's place there. Ayer was dispatched to Yellow Lake, where he remained for about two years. At Mackinac he had married a teacher, Elizabeth Taylor, and in 1836 their station was removed to Pokegama Lake, near the present Pine City.

The Chippewa Indian worshipped,[5] in general, material objects and the natural forces which his senses could perceive. Everything in nature had its spirit, and these deities were believed to protect only such persons as had done something to merit the favor. The Chippewa held that there was one Great Spirit, or Manito, and many subordinate spirits with both good and evil powers, whom they could placate with offerings and meritorious deeds . Upon this formalized supernaturalism, the early missionaries sought to impose the Christian faith. The abstract ethical principles which they attempted to introduce into the Indian's life were difficult for him to comprehend. Too, the or dinary white man's example did not appreciably recommend his religion.

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4. Stephen R. Riggs, Protestant Missions in the Northwest, 6:119 Minnesota Historical Collections, Folwell, History of Minnesota, 1:174-175, William W. Warren, History of the Ojibway, 5:368, Minnesota Historical Collections.
5. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:170, Newton H. Winchell, Aborigines of Minnesota, 506-508, 611 (St. Paul, 1911).

Despite the recognized obstacles, the American Board meant to bring the light of Christian doctrine to the heathen Indain. There were several contemporaries of Ayer, among them Edmund Ely of Massachusetts, whom the Board now directed to locate at Sandy Lake with the Reverend Boutwell. Ely set out from Albany in 1833 to make the long journey by boat over the Great Lakes. Entries in the young missionary's diary tell of his trip by "Express Canoe" and of the kindly trader at Saulte Ste. Marie who gave him money to redeem his flute, of necessity left behind in Albany. The canoe left Saulte Ste. Marie on July 24- "a strong Breeze came from the west...we started at 12 Oclk haveing on board our Batteaux 22 souls of us...all, but 3 or 4, Halfbreeds, and in addition 8 dogs and pups-- & 3 Cats and Kittens --making in all 33 men and animals."[6]

Eventually, Ely arrived at Sandy Lake and took charge of Ayer's school, while Boutwell moved on to Leech Lake.[7] Boutwell, one of those who believed that civilization must march hand in hand with salvation, found his charges-to-be at Leech Lake and settled down to his labors.

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6. Ely, (Edmund F.) Papers 1833-1904, 2 boxes, Copies of correspondence. Copies of diaries with gaps. Grace L. Nute, The Edmund Franklin Ely Papers, 6:343-354, Minnesota History Magazine. Warren, Ojibway, 5:356, Minnesota Historical Collections.

7. Boutwell, (William P.) Papers, 1832-1881, 1 box, Also a copy of a diary kept on Schoolcraft's Expedition in 1882 and throughout Boutwell's residence as a missionary to the Chippewas at Leech Lake. 2 autobiographical articles. Letter from Ramsey Crooks, father-in-law, Minnesota Historical Collections, 13:320; Edward D. Neill, Memoir of William T. Boutwell, Macalester College Contributions, 2 series, no. 1. p. 4. Neill, Minnesota History, 424. Merle Potter, One Hundred and One Best Stories of Minnesota.

The chief of the band lived in a log house, the gift of traders, and Boutwell visited him. "As we entered, the old chief, bare-legged and bare-foot, sat with much dignity upon a cassette, painted black. His warriors were all feathered, painted and equipped for service- many wore the insignia of courage, a strip of pole-cat skin round the head and heels, the bushy tail of the animal so attached to the latter as to drag on the ground. The Crown of the head was ornamented with standing feathers indicating the number of enemies the individual had killed, on one of which I counted no less than twelve." In his writings, the missionary noted his first efforts to convert the Indians among whom he labored. "Read a hymn and portions of scripture to a few Indians who accompany us, to which they all listened attentively. I also presented a little tract to one of them, from which I read. He thanked me, and soon after to make me some return, came with some Pakusigon, the leaves of a running vine, which they dry and smoke."

Boutwell later made a trip to Yellow Lake, where he married Hester Crooks, mixed-blood daughter of Ramsey Crooks, an official of the American Fur Company. The wedding trip to Leech Lake was by canoe and over the Savanna Portage. "Dear Hester, like a true heart," waded after her husband "through mud and water half-leg deep and carried a few kitchen utensils."

Ely, left at Sandy Lake and "happily disappointed" in the place, took up his work with zeal. Like most of the Protestant missionaries, he felt obliged to implant in the savage a "book religion."[9] Faith expressed in symbols and ritual was no part of Ely's creed, and since the redman

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9. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:171

had no written language years were spent in preparing one through which the Gospel might be presented to him. In the meantime, while the missionary struggled with the language, the trader, the government agent, the soldier and the politican, all were leading their mark on the savage. Too often, the missionary seems to have dwelt in an unreal world of hope, while the savage contended with a worlf of very real desire and privation.[10]

Ely, humble and anxious, found almost insurmountable obstacles in his path. But he could sing. And in song he hit on a universal language. The Indian loved to sing, and by this method most of Ely's teaching was done. The missionary's diary describes the activity of the fur post and his struggles with his pupils. He mentions the Indians' preparations for a hunt, and, perhaps with a touch of wishful thinking, since he never ceased to preach the strict observance of the Lord's Sunday, he reports waiting for Aitkin's return by canoe- but "Mr. A. detained it...whether on account of the Sabbath I know not..." The shortage of food in the Indian camps troubled him and he was bothered with an "affection" in his throat. Perhaps it was from singing. "Had I continued a little longer, I doubtless would have received a fatal injury. God knows what is best for me to do...I was not fit, in spirit, for the work."[11]

Ely was tireless, nevertheless, and at times he was encouraged by good attendance at his services. But the work of Christianizing the

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10. From the Diary of Edmund Ely. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:170. Winchell, Aborigines, 506-508, 611
11. Letter of October 27, 1833, Ely Papers.

natives went forward slowly. The missionary felt keenly his responsibility as the only person within one hundred and fifty miles who pretended to be influenced by the sentiments of the gospel. "Today have enjoyed something of the peacefulness of the Sabbath, in my meditations. There is a lack of humility, stinted views of the Character of Sin...which does not lead me upon my face, with tears, before God. I want tenderness of Conscience. Sin but little distresses me...Assembled the children this morning, but was poorly enabled to go through with the common round of Excercises. Had previously read to the 'Brusia' The Crucifixion of our Savior...in which he assisted me much in accent."[12] Brusia was the Sandy Lake cheif.

Not all of Ely's time was spent with his pupils. He took long walks about the country and mentions visiting Abbott and Scott, opposition traders at the old Northwest post on Brown's Point, in the company of William Aitkin and the latter's son, "little Roger." Ely asked Aitkin whether Abbott's children should be refused permission to attend the mission school. Aitkin answered, "The interests of the American Fur Company requires me to say yes." However, the winter of 1833 brought considerable visiting between the posts, and Aitkin entertained the opposition traders at Christmas. The next spring, it was decided to move the mission and school to Fond du Lac.

All three of these men maintained by the American Board, Ely, Ayer and Boutwell, strove earnestly for the conversion of the Indian. Their hopes rose and fell, they were harrassed by lack of funds, by the constant inflow of fire-water and by the wandering habits of the Indian himself. Hardship

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12. Ely Diary entry of October 17, 1933.

was their lot and it was cheerfully endured. In a letter dated November 30, 1835, Ely wrote of having received word from Boutwell. With his wife and infant, a few weeks old, Boutwell had just returned to Leech Lake by the usual canoe route, arriving October 9. Ely noted in His diary: "The little one was preserved in health through cold rains, snows and winds. The child once fell into the Mississippi and was drenched. The Lord wonderfully provided for Br. B. His man took in 10 or 12 days 3500 tulibees [whitefish]."[13]

By 1841, all three of the missionaries were at Pokegame. War broke out again between the Chippewa and the Sioux, and more than half of the Indians removed to remote places, some to Fond du Lac, some to La Pointe. Ely followed them to the latter place, but Boutwell stayed on at Pokegama. Small groups of Indians returned from time to time, rousing new hope in the missionaries, but as a whole the bands never returned. In 1847, the Pokegama station was abandoned.

Hunger and disease had also taken their toll. By 1838, too, the government had decided not to grant funds to any sectarian school.[14] It was remaked that the "praying Indians" could see small results from the mission stations among them and watched with some apprehension the construction of buildings on their lands. "For", they asked, "where will our children play?" Moreover, the government agents appeared to feel that the book-educated Indian was less responsive to government supervision than his pagan brother.

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13. Minnesota Historical Collections, 1:63, Minnesota History. Magazine, 16:28; Folwell, Minnesota, 1:81.
14. Winchell, Aborigines, 640.

Ayer established himself at Belle Prairie after a time, Ely stayed on at La Pointe, and Boutwell remained to preach to the settlers in Wisconsin. The American Board stopped sending out missionaries to the northwest.

Other mission organizations,[15] including the Presbyterian, Congregational and Protestant Episcopal, opened stations in the fur country. After 1839, the Metho^dists established missions at various points, organizing one at Sandy Lake. This school was maintained for many years. It became increasingly apparent to some that little could be done to civilize the Indians unless they were required to remain in a settled location.

In 1842,[16] the mission Indians from Pokegama came up to the rice lakes about Sandy Lake and professing fear of the Sioux, refused to go back. The general migration of the Indians under treaty terms also contributed to restlessness among the tribes. When the government superintendent in 1842 asked for blacksmiths, farmers and carpenters for Fond du Lac, Sandy Lake and Crow Wing, it was urged that the Indians be confined to reservations unless they kept their children in school.

The Sandy Lake Methodist station was a manual labor school. In

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15. Folwell, Minnesota, 1:181-182, Winchell, Aboriginas, 641, Minnesota Historical Collections, 6:147-148.
16. Winchell, Aborigines, 640-641, Diary and Letters of Samuel Spates, Minnesota Historical Collections, 1:63, Minnesota History Magazine, 16:28, 6:147-148.

1842, there were fifty-two scholars. The Reverend Samuel Spates took charge of the school in 1846, and classes were held regularly throughout the year "whenever the children could be got in." The station was placed in charge of other preachers from time to time, but Spates was there during most of the period until about 1855.

The diary and letters of Spates, though rather pathetic in tone, are brightened here and there by touches of rueful humor. They tell the story of his struggles to convert the reluctant Chippewa, and of the privations he shared with his charges. On one occasion, he made a trip from Sandy Lake to La Pointe, where he had been urged to preach. He felt that he could not: "My cloathes are not fitt... My coat has neather lineing nor pockets, and the elbows are both patched," But he added: "The Missionary will not take this excuse, and I much fear, God will not either. So I will try to Preach, in the strength of my master."[17]

By 1849,[18] the Sandy Lake school had forty-nine pupils with an average attendance of twenty-five; the Sabbath school counted forty; and there were seven registered members of the church. Preachers came at intervals from other places. Jacob Falstrom, first Scandinavian to settle in Minnesota, visited there and may have preached occasionally. Another preacher stationed at Sandy Lake for a time was John Enmegahbowh, Ottawa Indian convert. After 1853, the point was on the regular itinerary of

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17. Diary and letters of Samuel Spates.
18. Winchell, Aborigines, 640-641.

Father Pierz, Catholic missionary at Crow Wing, who may have been the "Mr. Unknown, Catholic Priest" mentioned in the 1850 census. Father Pierz left a vivid account of his frist trip to the Sandy Lake Indians, for he had forgotten to take along his mosquito netting and his gloves. In 1867, at the age of eighty-two, he made one of his last trips to visit them. The hundred mile journey was made by horse and sled in the midst of winter and four nights were spent in the open. In 1873, Father Pierz returned to Europe where he died.[19]

After the lumbering period began, preachers made the rounds from camp to camp with packsacks on their backs. The lumberjacks usually treated them well. Best known of the traveling preachers in this region was probably Joseph Gilfillan. It was said that he walked great distances and sometimes would preach in four camps on a single Sunday. In 1881, he made a trip to Elk Lake and held service there. This has been called the first religion service to be conducted at the source of the Mississippi. Only two persons composed the congregation, a Massachusetts professor and an Indian guide, Southern Ground. As the missions declined, some of the preachers remained to minister to the white settlers.[20]

In general, it may be concluded that the vine of the early Indain missions was planted on stony soil and the harvest was scant. There was much the Chippewa could not understand. He could understand the trader who came for profit, the soldier for war, and the Indian agent. But he was

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19. Minnesota Historical Collections, 10:122-125.
Father Francis Pierz, by Sister Grace McDonald, June 7, 1936.
Winchell, Aborigines, 640-641.

20. Folwell, Minnesota History, 1:170-173, Winchell, Aborigines, p.640.

puzzled by the missionary and consequently suspicious. The Great Spirit who was represented by several doctrines troubled him also. If the Christians themselves could not agree, he reasoned, how could he hope to be sure? By 1862, missions to the Chippewa of the fur country had all but ceased.[21]

21. Folwell, Minnesota History, 1:170-173, Minnesota Historical Collections, 8:266, Winchell, Aborigines, 636-644.

"TIMBER! TIMBER! "

Lumber was inestimably important in the development and settlement of the McGregor and Sandy Lake region. In the area of today's summer playground, the lumberjack was once supreme.

About one half of what is now Aitkin county was originally[1] covered by forest. The close rank of these giants were, it seemed, limitless. The pineries stretched from the northern borders of Isanti and Chisago counties to the Canadian border -- a timbered empire that drew the attention of the cruisers for the lumber companies.[2] The axe and the saw of the lumbermen began their attack on the outer fringes before 1860. Although they never relaxed their efforts and the assault continued for over half a century, the great woods were not completely vanquished for many years thereafter.

To the trading post of Henry M. Rice of St. Paul at the mouth of the Crow Wing river, lumbermen went about 1850 in search of pine on the upper Mississippi. Rice knew the region and promised to help, stating that he could buy pine from Hole-in-the-Bay, who was "a young man of twenty years and poor" and "a few presents would satisfy him."

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1. Agnes M. Larson, The Golden Age of Lumbering in Minnesota, in Minnesota Alumi Weekly, April 15, 1933. Aitkin Age, November 11, 1929.
2. Daniel Stanchfield, First Logging Near the Crow Wing River, Minnesota Historical Collections, 9:350, William Watts Folwell, History of Minnesota, 1:356-379.

The price agreed upon was fifty cents a tree. A whole lumbering outfit was moved from the St. Croix to the Crow Wing.

From this beginning,[3] logging spread throughout the whole northern timber region. The search for timber at first followed the streams and little attention was paid to forests far removed from water. Since no railroad had penetrated the country, logs were cut where they could be most conveniently floated out in the spring. Logging on a large scale in the vicinity of McGregor did not begin[4] until about 1880. Then for some thirty years, lumbering was the great industry of the wooded regions. It reached its peak shortly after the turn of the century.

Almost twenty years before the coming of the railroad to[5] McGregor, the first logger arrived. This was Joe Libby, who moved from Maine to St. Paul with his wife and family in 1851. Soon after, he was on his way north with an ox-team bound for the timber above Rice 's post on the Crow Wing. His plodding journey was through St. Anthony, Fort Ripley and Crow Wing, then into the roadless wilderness "above." Libby, the first lumberman to cut and haul logs on

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3. Larson, Golden Age, April 15, 1933.
4. Art Supplement of the Aitkin Age, Aitkin, Minnesota, June 1889. Stanchfield, First Logging, 9:350; William Watts Folwell, History of Minnesota, 1:356-379.
5. Minnesota History, 9:329; Aitkin Republican, Aitkin, Minnesota, July 18, 1929, and January 1, 1929.

the upper river north of Crow Wing, acquired an Indian woman and lived for the rest of his active life in the logging country.[6] A traveler named Chambers noted in 1872 that he had "spent the night at Mr. Libby's historic trading post "on Sandy Lake. Marcus and Eugene, two of Libby's sons, followed him into the Sandy Lake country, married Indian women and also spent the remainder of their lives in logging about the upper river. When Joe Libby was an old man, he returned to his family in St. Paul and died there.

Shortly after the Libby came the Wakefield brothers[7]: Willaim, who later was the first postmaster at Libby, and Joseph, "Big Joe." The year was 1856 and logging operations were just beginning. A cousin of the Wakefields,[8] "Little Joe," joined them and all three married Chippewa women; many of their descendants, some of whom are still living, operated logging camps during the entire period of the industry's early growth. Of these second generation Wakefields, Ed,, a son of William, is remembered well by pioneer settlers as a "big logger." He was considered a "neat dresser" and frequently wore many large diamonds.

Hank Brown and Wes Day were also among the original lumber-

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6. Professor Irving H. Hart, The Old Savanna Portage, 8:117, Minnesota History Magazine.
7. Reminiscenses of early loggers and settlers in the Sandy Lake region. Reverend Edward D. Neill, History of Upper Mississippi, p. 658.
8. This man is the Joseph Wakefield mentioned in "The Story of Beongwa," by Professor Irving H. Hart, in Minnesota History.

men on Sandy Lake. Day is credited with having cut the best timber from a vast tract of white pine about Lake Minnewawa, including that on the peninsula where the dance pavilion is now located. This was probably during the winter of 1873-1874.[9] Billy and Sam Rodgers arrived about the same time as Brown and Day and associated themselves with the Libbys in the firm of Libby and Rodgers.

As logging got under way in the Sandy Lake region, it moved out along the tributary streams of the Mississippi. In the main, the pine forest in the section was impenetrable during the summer months by horse team. A tote road slowly evolved along the west side of the Mississippi. When it was first used is unknown, but in time it became the most important road in all the country, starting near the present town of Aitkin and winding its tortuous course as far as Grand Rapids. Since the tote road was far too wet for general use except in winter, boats remained the usual means of reaching the upper region. During the summer of 1880, however, mail was carried over this road by Sam Hodgeon, who made one round trip each week between Aitkin and Grand Rapids. Over this road, too, thousands of tons of feed and supplies were hauled to the lumber camps "above."

Lumbering operations followed much the same pattern in all the various camps established along the upper Mississippi.[10] The logging

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9. James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.
10. Northwest Magazine, Vol. 21:1-19.

site was usually selected during the summer and preparations begun then for the winter cutting. Log buildings were put up, morticed by axe and chinked with moss and mud. Certain ones were set aside as bunkhouses. Ventilation was hit-and-miss, although a few bunkhouses had a ventilation shaft in the roof. Doubledeck bunks were built along the walls, the foot of each toward the large boxstove in the middle of the room. Over the stove, lines were strung for the nightly drying of socks and mittens. Heavy blankets covered the bunks, and the lumberjack snored in his underwear in the pungent odor of steaming wool.

The "king bee,"[11] the cook, presided over the cook shack. His helper, the "cookee," routed the lumberjacks from their sleep in the raw dawn of the morning. Washing up over the tin pans was sketchy, and in a few minutes the men were at breakfast, seated on axe-hewn benches that flanked an oilcloth-covered table. Flapjacks and syrup disappeared quickly by the light of kerosene lamps. The same lamps lighted the evening meal, for the lumberjacks spent a long day in the woods. Sometimes lunch was carried to them in the timber by the "cookee."

Among the miscellaneous records of a lumbering concern that operated for years about the upper Mississippi is a list of supplies sent in December 1900 by the Sandy River Lumber Company to a camp near Tamarack.[12]

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11. Donald E. Van Doughnet, Pioneer Industry in Minnesota. Minnesota Alumni Weekly, May 21, 1932.

12. Bonness, (Frederick W.) Papers, 1873-1919. 10 boxes and 42 vols. Business papers of the Aitkin Investment Company and Bonness of the Sandy River Lumber Company, & the Pokegama Lumber Company. The papers are mainly accounts, bills, receipts, time checks and some correspondence.

"1	case of 6 gal vermong Maple Syrup	452
1	box 50 Grand Pa's Wondr	205
1	doz Steamboat cards	90
1	Sk Lily Coffee	550
10	# Chickory	85
1	box soda crackers	144
1	" Ginger Snaps	304
1	" Asst Cookies	104
1	pail R. B. Mix Candy	195
1	box Bakers Chocolate	360
1	doz Sisal Clo Lines	90
1	" Carters Little Liver Pills	175
1	" M Linement	175
1	" A Plasters	120
1	" C Plasters	35
1	mse Rolled Oates	400
1	" Vitos	375
25	# Sago	113
25	# Tapioca	113
1	Sk Rice	475
25	# Pearl Barley	175
1	case 5# Jelly	35

We are out of Picos cure for consumption"

13

The lumberjacks worked in groups and tools were given out each morning by the camp foreman. The choppers cut deep gashes in the trees at the height decided upon, while the sawyers, coming behind, felled the trees with cross-cut saws. It was one man's duty to pass all day long among the sawyers and choppers and file or sharpen their tools.

Evenings and holidays were whiled away with poker, cribbage or checkers. Usually someone in each camp could play the fiddle or accordian. Visits to nearby Indian village sometimes provided diversion.

14

A certain Indian ritual known as "Shaking the God House" was irresistable

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13. Northwest Magazine, Vol. 21: 1-19.
14. Newton H. Winchell, The Aborigines of Minnesota, p. 611.

to the lumberjacks. On one occasion two of them disguised themselves as squaws and joined the suppliants who were kneeling beside the God house to hear the will of the Manito as revealed in the utterances of the medicine man. But the blanket with which one had draped himself in the line of kneeling squaws suddenly parted, and revealing his white man's knees, and the eviction of the two imposters was prompt and forceful.[15]

Then there were the tales of the mythical Paul Bunyan to be swapped, stories of fabulous feats which were often altered to fit the local scene and which grew with the telling.[16] Paul logged off North Dakota and left it flat as a floor. He called his men to dinner by blowing through a hollow tree; if he held it horizontally, it blew down acres of timber around the camp, and if he held it too low the blast "tore an unsightly hole in the ground." It took eight swampers full time with wheelbarrows to keep Paul's pipe filled with tobacco.

In fact, maintains old Jim Murphy, in the face of scholarly dissent, the Paul Bunyan of widespread lumberjack fame originated right here on the Willow river, two or possibly three years after Murphy settled in the region. Murphy came to Minnesota directly from New Brunswick, Canada and had associated with lumbermen since childhood.

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15. George A. Smith, son of Min-ti-mo-ee, and grandson of Nibnagaunce, Half-breed Indian chief of Ball Club Lake 8 miles west of Deer River, interview.

16. Esther Shephard, Paul Bunyan, James Stevens, Paul Bunyan, also an article on lumbering in the Minneapolis Journal, December 6, 1925 by J. F. Smart.

However, he "or nobody else" heard of Paul Bunyan, he declares, until after 1880, in the Minnesota woods. When Paul Bunyan is mentioned, Murphy explodes: "Why, hells bells! I knew Paul Bunyan. All this stuff they tell about Paul Bunyan is lies. Paul never done all them things — they're just a bunch of lies." The truth, as Murphy sees it, is that "there was a lumberjack who was cookin' in one of the big logging camps north of Aitkin, I think it was for Tidd and Phales. This man's name was Paul. His last name wasn't Bunyan, but it sounded similiar, kind of a French name." This Paul acquired a small tract of land near the Willow river and commenced logging for himself. He had only a "dinky outfit" and only two others besides himself to run the camp. His equipment was a lone ox. Paul did the cooking and skidding, while the two partners did the cutting.

It was not long before Paul's microscopic logging operations became the target of jesting among the lumberjacks in the surrounding camps, where huge lumbering operations were the rule. When a gang of new men arrived in camp and the work for the day was over and the lumberjacks all gathered in the bunkhouse, one old timer might remark to another in a voice keyed to be overheard by the new men, "I'm not going to work another season for this scrap of an outfit (which might be one of the largest in the region), I'm going over and work for a real outfit — Paul Bunyan." At this point, a newcomer would usually ask who Paul Bunyan was, or how large his camp was, and the reply was limited only by the scope of the informant's imagination. In any case, it was always an enormous outfit. When the victim asked the expected question,

how such a number of men were fed and housed and employed, the lumberjacks' joy was complete. The size of Paul's camp, his bunkhouse, his pancakes and his logging operations grew and grew; and when the imagination of one storyteller gave out, another was ready. The tales of Paul's gigantic activities even reached the Duluth employment offices. It came to be that when a logger went to the offices looking for men, the location of his activities was noted as so many miles in a certain direction from Paul Bunyan's and workers were sent out with such directions.[17]

Mr. Daniel Kane, a merchant of Aitkin, who reached this region in 1886 from Ireland, states that he became acquainted with Paul Bunyan very soon after he arrived. Paul was a Frenchman, Kane says, and he is very sure that the Paul whom he knew is the same Paul referred to in the various accounts of great logging feats. Mr. Kane who engaged in lumbering in Michigan before he came here, had never previously heard of Paul Bunyan. Another man, who was a pioneer at Aitkin and specialized in "drive shoes" for lumberjacks, is Albert Zeeze. He recalls often hearing the lumberjacks remark, "I'm going up for Paul Bunyan." Zeeze has known Murphy for sixty years and says that he believes Murphy's account of Paul Bunyan is true.[18]

Sunday at the logging camp was wash day and the time of the[19]

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17. James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.
18. Daniel Kane, Aitkin, Minnesota, Albert Zeeze, Aitkin, Minnesota, interviews.
19. Northwest Magazine, Vol. 21, p. 1-19, Donald Wilson Snell, An Introduction to the History of Lumbering in Minnesota, p. 49, Library University of Minnesota.

weekly shave. Sometimes on Sunday, a "sky pilot" held services.[20] A favorite in the Sandy Lake region was Reverend Joseph Gilfillan, best known of the traveling preachers. Under his watchful eye, many a lumberjack signed the temperance pledge card. There was generally little drinking in the camps; it was forbidden as tending to quarreling and gambling. So the lumberjack saved his winter's pay for a grand spree when he got to town in the spring.

As logging penetrated farther from the riverbanks,[21] the timber was cut and piled to be hauled later by horses or oxen to the river and the skidways. The logging roads were cleared in the fall before the snows came and were often iced by applications of water to keep them in good condition.

A surveyor general assigned to each logger a certain mark, comparable to the western cattle brand, which was cut into each log. These were called bark marks, and the logs piled along the riverbanks were each bark-marked and left to await the spring breakup of the ice. At that time, a "scaler" furnished the owner with the scale, the estimate of the number of board feet in the logger's cutting. Both the buyer and the seller customarily accepted the scale of the surveyor general or his deputy, though graft was not infrequently suspected between the scaler and the buyer.

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20. M. T. Gemmer, A Hero of Minnesota, p. 14.
21. Bonness Papers, Snell, Introduction to Lumbering, Northwest Magazine, Vol. 21.

The bark marks were also used on time checks. A lumberjack might be given as pay an order on the company. This was sometimes no more than a scrap of paper torn from any handy source, directing the company clerk to pay the lumberjack a certain sum and signed with the bark mark of the logs which the company was engaged in cutting. There were at one time more than sixteen hundred bark marks in use in the logging camps on the upper Mississippi.[22]

The spring break-up was the signal for tremendous activity on the river. The "drivers" assembled at the rollways. The "breaker" pried loose the logs from the great pyrimided pile of the winter's cut with his peavy, a long-handled, hook-nosed tool. Out into the stream descended the avalanche of timber, and the breaker, leaping back and forth upon the madly bobbing mass, had to keep his precarious footing and direct the timber with his peavy. Log driving was a hazardous business to be done only by men skilled in the work.

Clothed in short trousers, his feet encased in spiked boots, the driver rode the floating timber, running here and there across the logs to keep them headed downstream.[23] Sometimes logs were "rafted" in "booms" hundreds of feet long. A boom was usually made of eighty spruce logs chained end to end, and this string of logs encircled the logs to be towed across a lake or on a river. Spruce was chosen

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22. Time checks and accounts in the Bonness Papers. Snell, Introduction to Lumbering, p. 49.
23. Recollections of numerous pioneer loggers in the McGregor region. Files of the Aitkin Republican and the Aitkin Age.

for the boom logs because spruce "floated light." Each of the boom logs was about thirty feet long and not less than twleve inches in diameter at the small end. Following the boom downstream came the "wanigan," the supply and cook shack, mounted on a raft.

For a few years, at the beginning of the logging period on the St. Croix, the central figure of the river drives was the raft pilot "with his French calf boots and black cassimere trousers, red flannel shirt and black silk necktie, tipped off with a wide-brimmed black or white hat." By the time lumbering reached the northwoods, though, he had all but disappeared.[24]

After the laying of the Northern Pacific railroad in 1870,[25] the new town of Aitkin served as a depot for supplies hauled over the tote road to the deep timber above. About the same time, steamboats began regular trips up the Mississippi, forming a link between the railroad and the lumber camps up river. Railroads did not replace the steamboat in this section as they did in many other; instead, they increased the use of the river.

The first steamboat to go above Little Falls was the North Star.[26] In the summer of 1858, Anson Northup, who owned the boat, decided

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24. Donald B. Van Doughnet, Pioneer Industry in Minnesota, Minnesota Alumni Weekly, May 21, 1932.
25. Aitkin Age, October 11, 1929.
26. Sauk Rapids Frontiersman, June 24, 1858, Sauk Rapids, Minnesota.

to run into the water above Little Falls, where a steamer had never been before. The North Star was brought to the foot of the rapids, and, attended by great excitement among the local settlers, Northrup risked wrecking his craft in a struggle over the rapids. Eight horses on one river bank were fastened to the boat, fifty men on the opposite shore laid hold to the ropes, and with full steam ahead the boat was driven, dragged and pulled over the falls, riding safely at last in the still waters on the other side. The enthusiastic crowd, thrilled with this feat of such importance to the people "above," broke open more than one bottle in rechristening the boat the Anson Northrup.

Sixty persons came aboard and the boat continued on up the river to within two miles of Pokegama Falls. This excursion party, the first ever to travel the upper river by steamer, ran into Sandy Lake, thoroughly explored "this beautiful lake, site of an important mission," and then ascended one of the inlets, "Medicine River," for about six miles.

27

From 1870 on, river and railroad traffic in logs and lumber increased enormously. In July 1870, the steamer Pokegama made a trial trip up the river from Little Falls. This journey was acclaimed with even greater enthusiasm than the trip of the Anson Northup twelve years before, perhaps because there were now more people to be impressed. They turned out en masse along the route to see the Pokegama pass. At Fort Ripley, the commander fired a salute of five rounds from a six-pounder; then taking along a rowboat, he embarked with some of his

officers and rode as far as Crow Wing, where a ball was given in honor of the event. Captain George Houghton was in command.

The Pokegama scheduled regular runs on the river.[28] In October 1870, Houghton pushed her into Sandy Lake and, aided by high water, on up the Sandy River to a point where the whistle of the railroad locomotive could be heard and where the people at the railroad junction could hear the answering whistle of the steamboat. Business was brisk. On her trip just prior to the Sandy River jaunt, the Pokegama carried one hundred passengers and fifty tons of freight. Captain Houghton observed that the scenery along the route was very fine and thought that some day it might become much traveled.

For years, steamboats were a necessary and important part of lumbering operations on the upper Mississippi.[29] The Pokegama did a regular freight and passenger business between Crow Wing and Pokegama Falls until she was destroyed by fire in 1878. She was replaced by the City of Aitkin, commonly known as Old Houghton. Difficulties verging on peril often attended the steamboat trips during the lumbering period. On June 8, 1883, the Aitkin Age noted: "The City of Aitkin left our landing on Tuesday, June 5, at one p. m., but it will have, it is feared, a very tedious trip as there are some thirty miles of log jams reported between this point and Grand Rapids. A large number of passengers, however, who have been waiting for a number of days, hailed her departure even under these circumstances

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28. St. Paul Daily Pioneer, St. Paul, Minnesota, October 8, 1870.
29. Aitkin Age, Aitkin, Minnesota, January 8, 1916, and October 11, 1929. Local stories and interviews with pioneers.

as a move in the right direction. Her return is a matter no fellow can foretell." And again: "The steamer, Fawn, under command of Captain Fred Bonnas, left Aitkin Wednesday morning for Grand Rapids with thirty tons of freight and a good passenger load. Fred says that if the boat holds together he will make the trip if he has to dig his own channel."

30

In 1884, Edwin B. Lowell built a first class passenger boat with a cabin eighty feet length and a capacity of one hundred and seventy-five tons. It was christened the Andy Gibson and, in July 1885, made a record run of thirty-seven hours between Aitkin and Grand Rapids.

31

A few years before the first government dam was built at Libby in 1891, heavy rains in the upper Mississippi region caused the river to back into Sandy Lake, carrying on its flood waters millions of feet of logs from the rivers and lakes above until practically the entire surface of the lake was covered with timber. After the flood subsided, three steamers were engaged to tow the logs back into the main channel of the Mississippi. The Old Houghton, piloted by George Houghton, the Fawn, run by C. C. Sutton, and the Andy Gibson, owned at this time by the Potter-Casey Company of Aitkin and piloted by an Indian, John Lyons, spent the whole summer removing them.

32

When lumbering declined and good roads became more common, steamboats passed from general use, although the Oriole was on the river in 1910. The steamber Lee was the last to be in use on Sandy Lake. Marcus Nelson, a lumberman, towed logs and ties with it on the Prairie

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30. Aitkin Age, Aitkin, Minnesota, October 11, 1929.
31. Aitkin Age, Aitkin, Minnesota, May 9, 1891.
32. Mrs. T. B. Morris, Sandy Lake, Minnesota, interview.

river and Sandy Lake until 1919, when it made its last trip.

On the shore at Park Ridge resort, a few hundred feet north of Brown's Point on the west side of Sandy Lake, the hull of the steamer Oriole is beached. Built in 1908 by C. D. Viebahn and V. W. punteney, the Oriole was sold to the United States Government and used as a dredge boat near the dam at Sandy Lake outlet. G. W. Mattoon bought it some time later. One Sunday morning, the dam tender, Neil McKay, opened the locks and the old boat was towed to its present location, beached and renamed the Ark.

Meanwhile,[33] much had been happening in the lumbering industry. After the railroad had opened the region to traffic in 1870, lumbermen began a wholesale invasion of the great pine woods. Loggers by the score struck out into the forests. Fortunes were rapidly made and often as quickly lost. Many of the first loggers, though men of little education or capital, acquired great wealth. But in the end, control of the industry became concentrated in the hands of a few. By 1910, six owners, it was said, had possession of fifty-four percent of the white and Norway pine in Minnesota.

Some of the first loggers remained after the day of big cutting and big money were over and settled down near the scene of their former activity.[34] One of these is eighty-year-old James E. Murphy. Old Jim, born in Newbridge, New Brunswick, March 8, 1861, came to Minneapolis in March 1881 and hired out to the firm of Libby and Rodgers. Murphy went

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33. Snell, Introduction of Lumbering, p. 61-90.
34. James E. Murphy and other pioneers. McGregor, Minnesota, interview.

north and walked the old tote road from Aitkin to his destination on the Swan river.

Murphy is conceded to have cut ~~the most~~ more timber ~~of~~ than any other individual logger in the region of Sandy Lake during the period from 1888 and 1912. On the Prairie, the West Savanne and the Tamarack rivers, his operations extended from one end to the other and the whole length of the old Savanne Portage, commonly known to the lumbermen as the "Old Hudson Bay Trail."

Oxen were largely used at first in all the logging camps. Providing summer pasture for hundreds of head of oxen was a problem. When the winter's logging was over, the oxen were driven down to Sandy Lake, where they were branded and turned loose for the summer. In the summer of Murphy's arrival, there were more than five hundred oxen pasturing about the shores of the lake.

At one time, Murphy maintained five separate camps a year, employing thirty to forty men each. For five years, one of these camps, called the Paym camp because potatoes were raised there, was located on the Prairie river two miles from the mouth of the West Savanna. The steamer Walter Taylor was chartered annually to make special trips there with supplies. An average of one hundred and fifty men were employed on the spring drives with a daily payroll of $400.00. Murphy says: "In the summer of 1881, we drove 500,000 ties down the Mississippi in a single drive."

For nearly twenty-five years, Murphy logged about Sandy Lake

and up and down the Savanna river. The peak of his production for any one year was six million board feet. Banks of logs such as this were usually towed across the lake in a boom of four or five million feet.

To move these heavy booms,[35] an arrangement called a "headworks" was used. This was a raft of hewed timbers, forty or forty-two feet wide and about sixty feet long, secured to the boom of logs. In the center of the headworks was built a capstan of wood, with a long sweep to which a team of horses was hitched. Using a thousand to fifteen hundred feet of rope, with one end fixed in a half hitch to the capstan and a one-hundred-and-fifty-pound anchor attached to the other end, headworks and boom were warped across the lake. A rowboat went ahead, hauled the anchor the full length of the rope, and dropped it overboard. Then the horses circled round and round with the sweep, winding up the rope until the anchor came to the surface when the boom got directly over it. This was repeated until they reached the other shore. If the wind was favorable, the trip from the outlet of Prairie River to the north end of Sandy Lake could be made in fourteen hours. Of the use of the headworks a logger here said:[36] "On the ten thousand lakes of Minnesota one will look a long time before catching eight of the old familiar headworks with capstan and sweeps, the warp leading taut to the anchor ahead and the boom of logs behind spread out brown over the waters."

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35. James B. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota and other loggers, interview.
36. J. F. Smart, Article on lumbering, Minneapolis Journal, December 6, 1925.

Sixty years of Murphy's life have been spent in this region. During this time, he learned to speak the Chippewa language fluently and the Chippewa always conversed with him in their native tongue. Old Jim says that he doesn't remember his squaws but that he has been married twice to white women. Children? Asked the question once as a matter of court record, he pondered a moment before replying, "Well, I've got seventeen on the main line and as to the spurs and sidelines I wouldn't know." He lives alone now, on the outskirts of McGregor, in a little one-room house, tar-paper covered, with his vivid memories and his corn cob pipe for company.[37]

Prior to 1882, no timber was driven on the Sandy river from farther upstream then the south end of Davis Lake in Jevne township, where Billy Rodgers logged the previous year. Sawmills, however, had been built on a few streams. Small dams from four to twelve feet high were also constructed in many streams to insure water for the drives. There were two in the Sandy river, one in the Tamarack river, one in the Prairie river, and one in the West Savanna.[38]

More than a dozen logging outfits were operating above Aitkin by 1883. On December 8 of that year, the Aitkin Age reported that the town was swarming with lumberjacks. "A stranger would have thought that a hostile army had made this a point of rendezvous and were about to rally forth to conquer the world. The men are a healthy, hardy looking

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37. Data on the life and logging operations of J. E. Murphy from many pioneers and loggers of McGregor and Aitkin, Minnesota and from Murphy.
38. Newton H. Winchell, The Geology of Minnesota, 4:51.

set and will create havoc with the forests this winter." On March 3, 1884, the Minneapolis Journal wrote: "Indications warrant an estimate of two hundred and forty million feet from the Mississippi lumber this season." Five years later, Rodgers Brothers, cutting near Sandy Lake, had "banked" eight million feet of logs; and in one day during the same winter, twenty-eight cars of stock and seventeen cars of hay and feed were received at Aitkin, destined for the camps up the river.[39]

The firm of Bonness and Howe, which was one of the largest to engage in logging and which operated camps about Sandy Lake and McGregor for many years, reached the all-time production peak for any one firm in the region. They cut in one winter about three million feet of logs from one section of land. In the early 90's, they cut and banked in a single season thirty million feet of pine from the vicinity of the Tamarack river. They logged from the mouth of the source and built a dam across the river near the present town of Wright to aid in driving down this enormous cutting of logs.[40]

It is said that Bonness and Howe also held the record for the largest load of logs to be hauled in the region.[41] From a camp north of Sandy Lake, the great load was sledded over an iced road. It was said to contain 15,440 feet of timber, and four horses moved it upon the glazed roadbed a distance of six miles. The load stood eighteen feet high. Swaying and careening through the treetops, the load slid around curves and had to be kept moving; for if it stopped, the sled would instantly

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39. Aitkin Age, March 3, 1884 and March 23, December 2, 1889.
40. Files of the Aitkin Republican and the Aitkin Age, James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota.
41. J. F. Smart, articles on lumbering in Minneapolis Journal, December 6, 1935.

have "set" and could not have been started again. Friction of the steel-shod sled runners melted the ice in the roadway. This load of logs was a point of pride to the lumberjacks and was long remembered by them.

For two decades, there was no lessening of these seemingly endless board feet of timber coming out of the north woods. The area drained by the Prairie, the West Savanna and the Tamarack rivers contributed greatly to the total cut of the region. Pine, pulp, posts and ties were driven down these rivers to the outlet of Prairie River into Bill Horn Bay. There the logs were boomed and towed across the lake by a headworks, or later, by steamboat, although the headworks could tow by far the greater number at one time.[42]

The last boom of logs to be moved across Sandy Lake is well remembered by Mrs. T. B. Morris of Libby.[43] The logs were owned by H. L. Benedict of Sandy Lake in 1919 or 1920. It was a summer evening and a favorable east wind was blowing across the lake, Benedict pressed into service all the motor launches that he could command. They waited until evening so that the waters might be more quiet. In the house on a hill overlooking the lake, Mrs. Morris placed in the window a kerosene lamp and arranged mirrors in such a way as to direct the light out over the water, then anxiously hoping that the wind would not change and cast the logs upon the shore, she waited for morning. All night long the motors roared at their task, and the first light of day saw the last boom of logs safely across Sandy Lake.

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42. James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota, Mrs. E. L. Douglas, Tamarack, Minnesota and others, interviews, files of the Bonness Papers.
43. Mrs. T. B. Morris, Sandy Lake, Minnesota, interview.

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During the peak of lumbering, driving on the Mississippi was usually done by a boom company, which contracted with the buyer to drive the logs to their destination. Once the logger turned over his logs to the company, his responsibility for them ended. The boom company did not buy logs from the lumberman but acted only as common carriers. The different buyers in the region contracted to purchase the lumberman's logs at a certain price. "In the early days," prices ranged from six to ten dollars per thousand feet; a little later on, from seven dollars and fifty cents to fifteen dollars were received for logs. These prices were for logs delivered at the Mississippi river, where they were turned over to the boom company which had been hired by the buyer of the logs to drive them to their destination. The Hennepin Paper Company was for many years a large buyer of logs and pulp in this region. For many years, Jim Murphy contracted for other loggers to drive logs from the banks of the Prairie, the Tamarack and the West Savanna rivers to the Mississippi, where the boom company then took charge of the timber. Two dollars and fifty cents a thousand feet was paid for driving and booming across Sandy Lake. After 1888 and until the end of the lumbering period, the Northern Boom Company controlled and monopolized the driving on the upper Mississippi.

45

A huge lumbering concern grew out of the association of Edward L. Douglas with Frederick Bonness. Douglas, born in Canada in 1850

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44. James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota, Mrs. E. L. Douglas, Tamarack, Minnesota and others, interviews.

45. Aitkin Age, Mrs. E. L. Douglas, Tamarack, Minnesota and others, interviews.

came to the United States in 1867, locating at Rockford, Minnesota, and the year 1875 found him at Aitkin in the lumber business. Two years later he married Ellen Sook of Rockford, With his bride he returned to Aitkin and they spent their honeymoon on a trip up the river to Pokegama Falls on the steamboat Pokegama.

46

In 1881, in partnership with Daniel J. and George W. Knox, Douglas formed the Aitkin Lumber Company and built the first sawmill in Aitkin, From here, he extended his lumbering activities to Sandy Lake and then to McGregor and Tamarack. At Tamarack he built a sawmill and, after 1899, located there and carried on his business from that point. About 1883, Douglas and Frederick Bonness formed a partnership. On December 1, 1900, they organized the Sandy River Lumber Company, one of the largest concerns ever to operate in the region. In the next few years, thousands of acres of timber on both sides of the Sandy river were purchased by the company, which also owned and operated a general store at Tamarack. During this period, the company cut and removed the timber from three townships adjoining Tamarack. Old Jim Murphy, remembering Ed. Douglas, remarks that he "cut and drove down the Sandy river millions of feet of christly big pine logs." The Sandy River Lumber continued in business until 1918.

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Edward Douglas was appointed postmaster at Tamarack in 1902 and held this position for fifteen years. He died in 1922, leaving

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46. Aitkin Age, October 11, 1929, Mrs. E. L. Douglas, Tamarack, Minnesota.
47. Aitkin Republican, July 22, 1915, James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota, Reverend Edward D. Neill, History of the Upper Mississippi Valley, Vol. 6, p. 3n, cash books, ledgers and accounts in the Bonness Papers.
48. Mrs. E. L. Douglas, Tamarack, Minnesota, interview. Aitkin Age, 1922.

his wife, now eighty years of age and a resident of Tamarack, and one son, Arthur. Frederick Bonness died in Minneapolis, in 1924.[49]

Douglas's logging fame has given rise to a local tall tale, a Bunyanesque legend to account for the serpentine course taken by the Sandy river across McGregor township. Many years before the first white settler had come to McGregor, so the story goes, Ed was logging some distance east of there. He owned a team of exceedingly large oxen, and in order to haul logs on the Sandy river, he set about breaking the animals. The river at that time extended no farther east than the west range line of what is now McGregor township. Out in the woods in his logging camp near the present Tamarack, Ed hitched his oxen to an enormous plow. Off they went, and before he finally got them under control, they had gone from Tamarack westward all the way through McGregor township, pulling the plow behind them. They were not subdued until they came to the very edge of Sandy River. The furrow thus turned by the unruly oxen filled with water and became a stream, and forever after Ed drove his logs down the furrow which gradually widened and become the aimlessly wandering Sandy River.[50]

The first sawmill at McGregor was built in 1902 by A. J. Vanderwater.[51] Vanderwater, with his brother-in-law, J. T. Bailey, had come to McGregor

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49. Minneapolis Directory, 1924.
50. Joe DiGregory, McGregor, Minnesota, related this legend which he states was commonly known about the region in the lumbering period.
51. J. T. Bailey, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.

in the summer in search of a mill site on some stream where he could utilize the waterpower. A McGregor real estate agent, had, he said, just the place, on the southeast side of Rat Lake, and assured Vanderwater that the water level (then at flood stage) of Rat Lake creek, which flowed through the property, would not fall below that level.

The deal was closed for cash, and Vanderwater started construction of a mill. But his power-producing stream began to fail and late in the season completely dried up. Finding himself duped, Vanderwater abandoned the plan to use waterpower and built his mill at McGregor. Several of the buildings from Rat Lake were moved to McGregor and were used as parts of the present houses of J. T. Bailey and Mrs. Pasquale Memmola.

The Weyerhauser interests[52] did no logging in the McGregor - Sandy Lake country until after 1902, although George Dodge states that when he came to the region in 1893 Weyerhauser owned the timber rights, with few exceptions, on any tract of land with ten thousand feet of commercial logs on it. In the year of 1902, the company operated a camp in Jevne Township near the Sandy river. The logs were hauled to the Northern Pacific, which had built a spur to reach them, and were loaded on to the cars with a "jammer," a hoisting con-

52. Data on the Weyerhauser activities from interview with many loggers, pioneers and from the files of the Aitkin Age and Aitkin Republican, and from George Dodge.

trivance similiar to a common crane, mounted on a railroad car and run by steam.

in 1911-1912, Weyerhauser's Northland Lumber Company conducted its most extensive logging operating in this area. Seven camps of about one hundred men each were maintained that year on Lake Minnewawa, the Tamarack river and the Savanna river. Another Weyerhauser company, the Pine Tree Lumber Company, had a large camp on the banks of Rock Lake in 1913-1914, and cut all the white pine remaining in the township. Over iced roads, the logs were hauled to Ude (now Landsford) station, where a siding had been built several hundred feet east of the station. The Weyerhauser interests operated their last camp in the McGregor Lakes region between 1915-1917.

This brought the lumbering period to a close in this section. Numerous small concerns still carry on the cutting of timber for pulp, cabin logs and other wood ~~materials~~ products.

RIGHT-OF-WAY FOR HOMESTEADERS

"Land without population is a wilderness and population without land is a mob."[1] These were the words of James J. Hill, the empire builder, in the days of the railroad boom-towns.

Settlers had begun to go into the northern part of the state in the wake of the loggers before 1860. But to the north of St. Cloud, on the Mississippi[2], there were still in 1870 hundreds of miles of country which, except for a few traders and the Indians, had never been seen by man. In the McGregor Lakes region, people and the wilderness were awaiting the miracle-worker, the railroad.

The Northern Pacific railroad was to be the particular magician to modify and transform the whole section. It was to cut straight through the heart of the finest pine forests of Minnesota and turn inaccessible areas into thriving towns and farms. Land hungry and poverty stricken people from many sections of the country and even from Sicily were to answer the call of the railroad and find work and a livelihood in the country opened up by the line. The first settlers of McGregor, as of many other interior towns, were persons who had followed the railroad.

For the first year of its history, after it had been chartered and received a federal grand of land, the railroad struggled to secure financial backing. The bankers, Jay Cooke and Company, came to its aid and actual laying of the track began in 1870.[3] Once started, construction

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1. Herold Fern Peterson, Railroads and the Settlement of Minnesota, Thesis, University of Minnesota.
2. The Aitkin Age, Aitkin Minnesota, 1883, December 29.
3. The Aitkin Age, 1883, December 29, and other sources.

of the road went forward speedily; at times three miles of track were laid in a day.[4] Coming westward from the head of the lakes, the road was built through Aitkin county in the same year. A very thin trail of small villages and towns were left along its route as it progressed. By the end of the following year, its rails had crossed the entire state. Then came the failure of Jay Cooke, and for four years railroad construction was in the doldrums.[5] In 1875, the road went into receivership and was reorganized.[6] But the line, as constructed, changed the manner and tempo of future settlement. Northern Minnesota was no longer wholly dependent on river transportation.

The territorial legislature of 1849 established nine counties in the northern part of the state, and the present country of Aitkin was included within the borders of four of them,[7] Itasca, Mahkahta, Benton and Ramsey.[8] In 1857, Aitkin county, smaller in area than at present, was established, but remained unorganized and merely a name until after the railroad passed through. The first election of county officers took place on July 30, 1872. Later, additions of land were made to the county from parts of Cass and Itasca counties, until, in 1880, its present boundaries were fixed.

The Northern Pacific constructed a handcar house at the future site of McGregor in 1870. On November 22 of the same year, a survey of

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4. Warren Upham, Minnesota Geographic Names, Minnesota Historical Collections, 17:14, Harold Peterson, Railrodds.
5. William Watts Folwell, Minnesota History, 1:332-358, Peterson, Railroads.
6. Folwell, Minnesota, 350-378, Peterson Railroads.
7. Upham, Geographic Names, 17:14; Aitkin Age, 1929, October 11.
8. R. O. Chaney, Field Notes, 1870, Office of Register of Deeds, Aitkin, Minnesota.

of the section known as McGregor township was made by R. O. Chaney. The survey noted that "this township is mostly covered by water at all seasons of the year and from indications seems, when wet season occur, subject to inundation from three to four feet"; some portions of the area remained above water in wet seasons as well as dry and were called "islands"; there was some timber, tamarack, spruce, and cedar, and some hay meadow.

About this time, an old hunter and trapper named McGregor lived on the shore of Davis Lake. Most early settlers agree that the town was named after him. In the opinion of G. H. Jacobus, Division Superintendent of the Northern Pacific railroad, there is some reason for believing that the name may be that of one of the officers who was with General Rossiter's 1870 expedition to the Missouri in connection with the extension of the railroad line.[9]

In 1880,[10] the Northern Pacific constructed a siding and built a station at McGregor.[11] Along the ten-year-old track, wood yards for refueling had been established at Kimberly and a place which later became Cromwell. Through the underbrush and timber that overhung the track, the old wood-burning locomotive, puffing out smoke, weaved and careened along its course, dislodging in its passage hordes of mosquitoes. It looked, says old Jim Murphy, "for all the world like a drunken Injun on a toot." Sometime before 1890, the Northern Pacific abandoned wood-burning locomotives and built a coal dock and water tank at McGregor

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9. G. H. Jacobus, Division Superintendent of the Northern Pacific Railroad, letter, 1940.
10. Official County Records, Aitkin, Minnesota.
11. James E. Murphy, interview, McGregor, Minnesota.

near the site of the present dock. The first dock was a hand operated affair; coal was elevated on an endless belt to the tender of the engine by a hand crank.[12]

"Old Jim," James E. Murphy, the present oldest living resident of McGregor, who had been working in a logging camp on the Swan river, went down the Mississippi in 1881 by dugout canoe to Brainerd, from there shipping the canoe by railroad to a point east of what is now McGregor, where the railroad crossed the Sandy river. This spot, then known as Sandy River Crossing, later came to be called Grayling. Here Murphy recovered his canoe, embarked on the Sandy river and began a journey toward Sandy Lake.

After paddling a few miles along the Sandy river, Murphy came upon the future site of McGregor. There he found a scattering of Indain wigwams and along the railroad track the handcar house and "a handful" of Italians. Murphy went on to Davis Lake and there saw the trapper, McGregor, at his cabin. Farther on, Murphy came out into Sandy Lake. The water level was considerably lower than it is now, and the banks of the lake were generally steep and high. Heavy timber overhung the water along the shoreline. For miles a canoe could be paddled under an arching roof of green foliage—the most beautiful place, Murphy believes, that he had ever seen. When the government dam was built at the outlet to the Mississippi, it caused the high banks of the lake to become eroded and and reduced many of them to their present sandy level. Bill Horn at the time was still living on the shore of the present Bill Horn Bay.

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12. C. H. Jacobus, letter, Mrs. P. Memmola, interview and others.

"A wicked old devil, and the Injuns were scared to death of him," says Murphy.

In 1889,[13] Lester E. Giles, a young man of Scotch-Irish parentage, born in Woodstock, Illinois and employed as a telegrapher by the railroad, was sent from Brainerd to act as depot agent at McGregor. Shortly before leaving Brainerd, Giles had married Carrie Bisiar. When the couple reached McGregor, they found "a wilderness full of Indians." There were no settlers, but lumbermen and timber cruisers "on skis" swarmed in the forests.

Mrs. Giles remembers no white persons at McGregor station other than John Fuller, the railroad section boss, and an old trapper, "an Englishman," who was very poor and lived in a "plank" shanty across the tracks opposite the depot. Mrs. Giles recalls his name as "Tom Newsom." A year or so after coming to McGregor, Giles rented Tom's shanty and, after remodeling it, coverted it into the first store in McGregor. A stock of goods was shipped in from Aitkin, and Mrs. Giles, in addition to caring for her baby, managed the store, Tom was permitted to sleep in the building, helping her about the store during the day. Most of the business was confined to barter with the Indians, and Mrs. Giles learned to speak their language. Cash was seldom seen; the Indians exchanged fish, cranberries and other products of the country for groceries.

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13. Mrs. Carrie E. Giles, 1108 East Norwood street, Brainerd, Minnesota, interview.

Tom left McGregor,[14] and in the summer of 1891 was living on the west side of Bass Lake. He became known to the settlers as "Trapper Tom" or "Uncle Tom." Pioneers do not recall Tom's surname exactly nor do they remember where he came from or when, but they do remember that he was familiar with Longfellow's poetry and "could recite many verses at will." After a time, as Tom felt that there were too many settlers coming into the country, he stated that he was going north toward Swan River where game was more plentiful. He left the region of McGregor, never to be seen there again.

A postoffice was established at McGregor on March 12, 1890,[15] and Giles "worked hard"[16] to be appointed postmaster; he was appointed and "took care of the mail sack"[17] in addition to his other work until June when he was transferred elsewhere by the railroad. In the fall of the same year he returned to McGregor and October 28, 1890 he was re-appointed postmaster. On March 15, 1893 the postoffice at McGregor was discontinued but it was re-established December 29, 1894. On July 29, 1891, a postoffice had been established at Libby and William L. Wakefield appointed postmaster.*

Henry Lozway, a Frenchman born in New York state, arrived at McGregor station in 1889 or 1890. There he found the siding, the "Indian Trading Store," the small building used as a section house, and the "handful" of Italians observed by Murphy on his first journey through.

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14. Ole T. Jevne, Aitkin, Minnesota, Fleming Route, interview.
15. J. M. Donaldson, Acting First Assistant Postmaster General, Washington, D. C. Letter, June 29, 1940, Mrs. Carrie Giles, interview.
16. Mrs. P. Memmola, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.
17. Donaldson, Letter.

* When the McGregor postoffice was re-established, December 29, 1894, Daniel Lozway was made postmaster; appointees following him were: John W. Thompson, May 5, 1897, Josiah W. Clark, March 12, 1901, Esther P. Maddy, November 28, 1914, Myrtle Whittet, April 9, 1919, Esther P. Maddy, October 28, 1919, Archie M. Hayes, May 3, 1922, Byron B. Maddy (acting) appointed May 29, 1935. Ambrose O'Connell, First Assistant Postmaster General, Letter, May 28, 1941.

These Italians were laborers employed by the railroad and probably none of them became permanent settlers at McGregor. Lozway shipped in lumber and put up a frame building close to the depot, on the south side of the tracks on the railroad right-of-way. In this building he operated a store until about August 1891, when he closed out and left McGregor.[18]

Daniel Lozway,[19] a brother of Henry, came to McGregor sometime before Henry left and for a time was in partnership with him in the store. Then Daniel obtained a homestead. In the summer of 1893, he moved his family to McGregor, built a small store and later became postmaster. Henry and his family also returned to McGregor in 1893. Daniel Lozway died February 23, 1903, and was buried at Aitkin. His widow, Mrs. Mary Lozway (Mary Hart of Nebraska City, Nebraska) and their son, Frank, live at Duluth. Henry Lozway's wife was Mary Wallace; he died on March 24, 1905 and was buried in McGregor cemetary.

Late in the summer of 1891, three Italians, Benjamin Jeanetta, Frank Spicola and Pasquale Memmola, pioneers of the sizeable group of Italians in the early community, arrived at McGregor.

Benny Jeanetta bought the "Indian Trading Store" of Lester Giles, using it only as a dwelling, however, and not continuing the business. Frank Spicola took over the store vacated by Henry Lozway. Pasquale Memmola filed on a homestead claim of one hundred and sixty acres. In November he erected a log cabin, the first real pioneer home in McGregor.

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18. Mrs. Mary Lozway, 12 No. 26 Ave. W. Duluth, and son, Frank interviews.
19. Mrs. P. Memmola, and others, interviews, Tony Spicola, East Lake.

At the French church in Duluth in 1892, he was married to Pasqualina Christello, who had emigrated from Italy a few years before, and immediately after their marriage, the Memmolas moved into the log cabin that had been prepared by Pasquale. The following winter the potato peelings were carefully saved, and in the spring, in the hoed spaces between stumps of trees the peelings were planted; over two hundred bushels of potatoes were raised.

Frank (Francisco) Spicola[20] was born in Sicily in 1851, married Kataline Ferlita, and worked at odd jobs for a number of years before coming to McGregor. There were two children, Anthony and Angeline. Spicola's daughter states that she was brought to McGregor by her father in November 1891. He purchased the Lozway store, she says, and paid the railroad company three dollars a month for the rent of the ground. Though the Spicola family occupied the Lozway store, they did not carry on the business. The next summer, with the help of Memmola, Spicola built a small log store into which he moved his family; this building was in use as a store until 1895. During that year, he bought land south of the track adjacent to the present postoffice, for $205.93, and built a second store and dwelling. The present postoffice building, also built by Spicola, became his third store.

Frank Spicola took an active part in the affairs of the growing community. He was the first village treasurer, in which position the bookkeeping was done for him by his son. His business prospered and "Speegle's" store became widely known. Mrs. Spicola died in 1923

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20. Mrs. C. A. Maddy, McGregor, Minnesota, Tony Spicola, East Lake, Minnesota, Mrs. P. Memmola, McGregor, Minnesota, interviews.

and Frank Spicola in 1925; both are buried at McGregor.

Soon after Spicola moved from his first small log store near the Memmolas' cabin, Pasquale Memmola organized a school district and the abandoned Spicola store was used as a schoolhouse during 1893-94. After 1894, the school term was three months at McGregor and three months held at Grayling. The mother of Bill Ross, then depot agent, served as teacher for McGregor, while classes at Grayling were taught by Susie Johnson in the home of Sam Borg. Some students took advantage of the opportunity for six-months' schooling by walking the railroad track between the towns.

Tony (Anthony) Spicola, who was seven years old when his parents first moved to McGregor, was among the first pupils to attend the McGregor school and one of those who walked the track to Grayling to attend the three-months' school term there. Among Tony's classmates were Susie Christello, Philomena Jordon, Joe Di Gregorio, and Tony's sister, Angeline. He learned to read and write English, and worked in his father's store. In the late 90's, Tony remembers, hundreds of pounds of butter were purchased from the settlers at eight cents a pound. A few choice pounds were sold to the trainmen for nine cents, and the remainder was packed in barrels and shipped to Duluth to be made into renovated butter. The market price at Duluth was nine cents. Tony Spicola now has a store at East Lake.[21]

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21. Tony Spicola, East Lake, Minnesota, interview.

[22] Four years after moving to McGregor, Angeline Spicola married C. A. Maddy, a timber cruiser employed by the railroad. When Angeline Spicola first came, settlers were few in McGregor. She recalls the depot agent and his wife, the section boss and wife and his (or her) two sisters and a man named Curtis whose wife was the Indian woman, Beengwa. Mr. Curtis lived with Beengwa in a small house on the south side of the depot. The house was built of poles lined with birch-bark on the inside and covered with tar paper on the outside. There was but one room about sixteen feet square with a small square window in each end. Curtis in later years was employed to maintain the telephone line which connected the government dam at Libby with McGregor. The Indian scare of 1898 also impressed Mrs. Maddy, though her husband assured her that, after the possemen had arrived on the scene, the Indians "were more scared than we were."

[23] In the spring of 1898, the Northern Pacific sent George Dodge to McGregor as section foreman. Dodge was born in New York state and at the age of twenty-five came west with his parents in a covered wagon. In 1880, he had taken a government homestead at Grand Forks, North Dakota, where he farmed for ten years. Then he "went broke and lost over thirty thousand dollars" and began to roam up and down the country. "I'm a farmer," he says,"bull puncher, steam engineer, carpenter or anything you want."

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22. Mrs. A. C. Maddy, McGregor, Minnesota, James E. Murphy, interview.
23. George Dodge, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.

By the time Dodge reached McGregor, a few Finnish settlers had come to the region and settled to the south and east of McGregor. The Finns, he recalls, when they made their periodic trips into town for food supplies, often called for luxuries like loaf sugar and "Speegle" would transmit such orders to Duluth.

Wild game was then abundant everywhere and wild ducks could be shot from the depot platform.[24] Only a few Indian trails radiated out of McGregor. In the winter months, the tote roads were used; there were no roads at all for summer travel. The few families who had taken up homesteads about ten miles south of McGregor were forced to walk over the intervening bogs, sometimes wading through water to their hips, to reach the town. Dodge cut the first road from McGregor to Bass Lake, a distance of three miles.

When the Hinckley fire was raging in 1894, Dodge saved McGregor from burning. For two weeks before the conflagration reached the town, the smoke was so thick the train could not be seen coming down the track. Dodge instructed the section hands to dig a ditch around the water tank, depot and coal pile, and to fill all available containers with water for use in controlling the back-fire which they were to set just before the big fire reached them. This maneuver proved successful. Dodge purchased the west half of the northwest one-fourth of section thirty-one for three dollars an acre; the part lying nor th of the railroad, platted into lots and sold to Hesper J. Newell, later became Newell's Addition. George

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24. Mrs. P. Memmola, McGregor, Minnesota, interview. George Dodge, McGregor, interview.

Dodge, now eighty-five years old, lives three and a half miles northwest of McGregor on the old Crainfield estate.

Ole T. Jevne,[25] who settled with his father in Jevne township, six miles west of McGregor, in the summer of 1891, believes that there were no more than five or six settlers in all the surrounding region at that time. With the building of the railroad, however, the movement of land seekers into the area was under way. Pamphlets, tracts, and folders advertised the railroad lands and homesteads. Information bureaus and lecturers helped to spread the information, and claims were filed on the free lands.

A few Finns,[26] attracted to the homestead lands near Rice River, formed the nucleus of a settlement there. One of the first to arrive was Jacob Haltonen, who was born in Finland in 1867 and came to the United States in 1880. He married Ida S. Anderson, also an immigrant from Finland, at Newbury, Michigan, in 1889. They first settled in Hibbing, Minnesota, then came to Moose Lake. From there Haltonen set out on the "Lake Road," the old military road extending from Mille Lacs to Superior. His destination was section twenty-eight, township forty-six, north, range twenty-three west. He reached there on March 5, 1895, filed a homestead claim on an eight-acre tract, and began construction of a log house. On this journey from Moose Lake, Haltonen drove a team of horses to a point called "Dixon's," where he was forced to leave the

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25. Ole T. Jevne, Aitkin, Minnesota, Fleming Route, interview.
26. Jacob and Ida Haltonen, McGregor, Minnesota, (In the course of years a number of metal and stone Indian relics have been found by the Haltonens, near their home and these have been presented to the Minnesota Historical Society.)

team and continue with a single ox and cart. No settler had ever gone as far west as section twenty-eight, and for much of the way second-growth timber had to be cut from the trail as he went along in order to get his cart through. Haltonen completed his house in April , and his wife arrived shortly after, traveling over the same route as her husband.

At the time the Haltonens settled there, the township had no name, and Rice River, suggested by Jacob Haltonen, was adopted. None of the pine in the neighborhood had as yet been cut for commercial purposes. On Big Rice Lake, a number of Indians were living. The Haltonens traded at Moose Lake the first year, then a road was cut to McGregor and they began to trade at "Speegle's." During most of the summer, the road was impassable for teams and butter was carried on the backs of the settlers over the bogs and swamps to be traded for groceries.

The first pine was cut near Rice River in 1896 and was sold to the Potter-Casey Company of Aitkin. The logs were hauled to Rice River, where a hundred or more Indians were employed to drive the logs down the river. Four dollars and ninety cents per thousand feet was paid for the very best white pine delivered at the skidways. On the north quarter of section twenty-one, Conn O'Brien of Brainerd built a camp that was run by Hardy, a former sheriff of Cass county. This camp remained for a number of years and with the Aitkin company bought most of the pine cut by the settlers. In later years, several portable sawmills were operated here.

A year before Haltonen came,[27] Andrew P. Johnson had settled in what is now Spalding township. His claim, in section thirty-four, had also to be reached by ox-team over the military road from Moose Lake. Usually a six-months' supply of groceries was laid in before the frost left the ground in the spring and the road became too mirey to support a team. Such an order of supplies, as Johnson remembers, included one hundred pounds of Arbuckle coffee, fifty pounds of sugar, soap, flour and other staples—shipped by freight to McGregor and hauled out by oxen to the homesteads. The first sewing machine in the township Johnson carried on his back over the bogs from McGregor to East Lake.

Among other early settlers at Rice River were Matt Randa[28] and John Field. Randa was born in Finland in 1863 and came to the United States at the age of 18. He married Josephine Field, a Finnish immigrant, and with his wife's brother, John, came by railroad to Moose Lake. The belongings of both families were loaded into a two-wheeled ox-cart, and the party made the trip over the seldom used "Lake Road." After many days of tedious travel, during which the ox-cart was repeatedly mired down and the entire load had to be transferred to the men's backs and carried to higher ground, they came to their future home homesteads. The location was in section twelve in an unorganized township, forty-six north, later a part of Rice River township. Randa and Field filed homestead claims adjoining each other.

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27. Andrew P. Johnson, East Lake, Minnesota, interview.
28. Matt Randa, East Lake, Minnesota, interview.

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No other settlers were near. Heavy growths of pine and hardwood covered the claims, but no thought was given at first to the timber as a source of income. The main object was to clear the land as rapidly as possible. Randa built a house of white pine that is still standing. Mrs. Randa died in 1899 and Randa married Susanna Nissila in 1902. There were twelve children in Matt Randa's family, all of whom still live in the neighborhood.

Sam Borg settled in 1895 on the south side of the Northern Pacific track, four miles east of McGregor, at the old Sandy River Crossing. Several other families located in the neighborhood about the same time, among whom was Oscar Sundberg from Grayling, Michigan. Deciding that they should have a postoffice of their own, this group planned to call it Sandy River but were persuaded by Sundberg that Grayling was a more desirable name. The Grayling postoffice was authorized and John L. Borg, a brother of Sam, was made postmaster. This postoffice was discontinued in 1919.

Sam Borg engaged in lumbering and ran a general store at Grayling. Loggers and lumberjacks here left the train to continue on up the Sandy river, logs and lumber were loaded at the siding, and Borg did a good business. Jim Murphy logged at Grayling and Marcus Nelson, a "big logger" of a later period, was just beginning activities thereabouts in the late 1890's. The Nicholas Chisolm Lumber Company had many camps near the village until about 1913.

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29. Sam Borg, Lawler, Minnesota, interview.

The first school at Grayling, held in Sam Borg's home, was later organized as school district number thirty-six and a new log schoolhouse built. When lumbering ceased, Grayling again became a flag-stop. Borg's store was moved to Lawler, a newer town on the Soo railroad.

By 1900,[30] the settlers in the McGregor region were taking part in various affairs in the county. The Aitkin Age of September 20, 1900, lists the following as delegates to the Republican county convention:

> "Sandy Lake: William Wakefield, Mark Libby, William Jude.
> Kimberly: M. J. Shorwell, J. P. Williams, Gus Williamson.
> Sicottes: (Tamarack): Frank Clark, F. W. Day, J. B. Clark."

In the late 1890's McGregor was surveyed.[31] George Dodge had platted Newell's Addition and Jacob Leighty the next portion of village real estate. Then C. A. Maddy conceived the "clothesline survey." To employ a surveyor with transit and other apparatus just to measure a piece of land seemed a costly proceeding. Besides, there was a certain post out in the bog near town granted by some people to be a government quarter-post. Possibly it was only a stake for tethering some settler's cow. In any case, it still served as a point of departure, a clothesline served as surveyor's chain, and thus streets and roads were laid out.

Maddy's survey had repercussions[32] that began on July 5, 1927, when a motion was made to have blueprints of the village drawn up and to lay out the avenues north and south and the streets east and west. A surveyor was retained and a re-survey and a new plat of the village made.

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30. Aitkin Age, 1900, September 20.
31. George Dodge, McGregor, Minnesota, and others, interview.
32. Byron Maddy, Mrs. C. A. Maddy, O. L. Johnson, E. O. Bachellow and others, McGregor, Minnesota.

Much of the property had been described by metes and bounds in the first survey, and when the new plat was completed pandemonium broke loose. Garages were cut off from lots, property believed to be owned by one was found to belong to someone else. In certain quarters, Maddy was held better qualified to survey a town even with a clothesline than county surveyors who "were only politicans" and knew nothing whatever about "finding a corner post." The outcome of all the confusion and expense was that the county register of deeds refused to record this new plat since it conflicted with the metes and bounds descriptions of so many of the pieces of property already on file.

The village of McGregor[33] was organized in 1903, the petitioners certifying that there were residing within the described territory one hundred and eighty people. The village council began looking for a site for a village hall and passed an ordinance prohibiting the discharging of firearms with the village. An election of village officers was held. Two justices of the peace and two constables were elected. Both James E. Murphy and George Dodge were elected to the Board of Health. The next year the village purchased a fire engine with one fourteen-foot ladder and thirty-six feet of extension. It was also agreed to "appoint J. W. Clark and A. J. Wanderwater a committee to oversee the construction of a jale and engine room. To build sells 6 x 7 feet square and 8 feet high to be made of 2 x 4 scantling laid flat and spiked to gather with 20 pen spikes and one ventilator in top of each sell 12 x 12 with iron bars across, one grate 4 x 4 feet in front of sells."

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33. Minutes of the village council for the year 1903-1914. Published official records of the county.

Meanwhile, building was keeping pace with the growing population and the development of local government.[34] "Speegle's" store, his third, by the early 1900s had expanded into the two story structure that later became the present postoffice. A Methodist church was built by George Dodge in 1901 on the street facing the railroad, where it stood until it was moved to its present location in 1930. About 1895, a schoolhouse, the present village hall, replaced the log building used during 1893-1894; in 1903, a two-story frame school was put up to take its place. James E. Murphy built the McGregor Hotel (Murphy Hotel), two and a half blocks west of Maddy street, shortly before 1903; the business was leased by Andrew Burud, who was the proprietor at the time fire destroyed the building in 1905. The same fire destroyed J. W. Clark's general store in which the postoffice had been housed. In 1903, C. A. Maddy built a large two story frame hotel about where the White EagleService station on Maddy street now stands, but it was also burned down in recent years.

By the turn of the century, McGregor had become a wide-open, rough-and-ready lumbering town. The American Grass Twine Company was employing at times as many as two hundred men, and the logging camps situated all over the country kept money in easy circulation. Besides the saloon maintained in connection with the McGregor Hotel, there was a one story frame structure, one block east of Maddy Street, built in 1898 by Tom Campinello, the first saloonkeeper in McGregor. This later became the Olson and Alstead saloon. On Block 4, Cusciotto's Division,

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34. Interviews with pioneers, The Aitkin Age, 1900, June 29, The Aitkin Republican, 1900 August. Official records of the county. Mrs. P. Memmola, George Dodge, McGregor, Minnesota, interview, Official Records, Aitkin Age, 1901, September 3.

was the Hudson and Turner saloon, run by Joe Hudson and M. T. Turner until 1906, when it became the Palace saloon. Shootings were common and bar-room brawls the order of the day. Liquor licenses in 1901 were $500.00, in 1910, $1000.00 and in 1913, $2500.00.

It has been said that a primary reason for the incorporation of the village was to give ~~the~~ control of ~~the~~ saloon license fees to the town. There were three saloons at the time of incorporation. One of the first official acts of the village council was the granting of two liquor licenses.

By all odds,[35] the outstanding bartender of this period was Joe Hudson. Hudson with his wife, Laura Clark, came to McGregor from Dubuque, Iowa, about 1900. At first they settled on a homestead, now known as the "old Adams' place," several miles north of McGregor, but in 1901, Hudson became bartender for J. P. Olson. Joe was square-shouldered, large and muscular, six feet tall and a "ladies' man." He became Olson's partner in the Hudson and Turner saloon, and their place became the hot spot of the village.

Pistols were commonly worn — for use, not ornamentation. In 1904, an ordinance was passed providing that "all of the front doors of the saloons be closed on Sunday and the Marshall be instructed to keep things quiet around the saloons also around the village." For years, the records of the town council are interspersed with such official instructions to the police.

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35. Axel P. Johnson, East Lake, Minnesota, James E. Murphy, Frank Clark, J. W. Clark, all of McGregor, Minnesota, and others.

There was one diversion especially favored by many of the customers of the Hudson and Turner bar. This was to shoot from the hip through the inside west wall of the saloon and attempt to hit the hitching post standing outside the building. The penalty for failure to hit the mark was to buy drinks all around. The reward for success has not been recorded. But the well perforated west wall of the saloon is witness that it must have been worth the effort.

It was not until Joe Hudson entered the Hudson and Turner as a partner that he really found full scope for his talents. His handiness with a six-shooter spread over the country. Daily exhibitions of his skill inspired the populace with fear and respect. Many an innocent bystander was "barely missed" in these playful demonstrations at the Hudson and Turner. Joe is recalled as the "straightest shooting and fastest man on the draw that McGregor has ever seen." All this despite the fact that his hands shook as with palsy — a condition attributed to his "conscience bothering him" by the romantic minded, who perhaps failed to consider his consumption daily of enormous quantities of liquor. Joe could, and usually did, drink six lumberjacks under the table at a sitting.

When shooting at the hitching post palled as a pastime, picking off the kerosene wall lamps was not despised. Then there was the tall scotch cap worn by Jess Jones, a pioneer who lived close to McGregor and was a faithful visitor at the Hudson and Turner. Jess's tall cap made an irresistible target for Joe. Just as Jess would enter the door, Joe would politely lift the cap from his head with a well-placed bullet.

It was a cosy custom among friends, and Jess always accepted these frolicsome displays in good humor. But one day, by chance, he entered the saloon unnoticed. He had been there for some time, his cap still upon his head, and had fallen peacefully asleep in a chair tipped back against the wall. Suddenly Joe saw Jess, saw the cap, saw a duty undone, and drew his gun with lightening speed and fired. The shot removed the cap, all right. It also cut a neat center part in Jess's pompadour, and a furrow in his scalp. This was going too far, allowed Jess, and he did not forgive Joe. Joe Hudson is remembered as having been "loved by some, hated by many, and cursed by all."

The saloonkeepers did not spend all of their time on the firing line.[36] Civic progress also interested them. When the first church was built in McGregor, funds were exhausted before the plastering and interior decorating were completed. It was decided that a musicale might be a nice way to raise funds to finish the church. Among the musicians on the program — one of a vocal trio — was a beautiful daughter of Robert N. Newell, the land agent. In the audience was saloonkeeper Olson, former partner of Joe Hudson. At the close of the hymn, Olson, deeply moved, slightly drunk, arose and accosted Miss Newell. "If you will sing that song all by yourself," he declared, "I will plaster the church free of charge." The girl complied and Olson kept his word, solving at one stroke a knotty financial problem and giving rise to the observation: "Local saloonkeeper gets plastered and plasters church for a song."

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36. George Dodge, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.

Maturity brought decorum to the village. Good roads were constructed throughout the region and settlers developed their farms. Modern convenience took the place of primitive makeshifts. But as the region was emerging into a prosperous community, it was visited in 1918, as was all the surrounding country, by a devastating forest fire.

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For many weeks in the fall of that year, there had been no rain, and the whole countryside was dry as tinder. There had been three separate fires near McGregor earlier in the season which had burned over much of the section. Charles Turner, near Kimberly, early in the day on October 12, 1918, saw the flames of a great conflagration sweeping toward his farm. He mustered a fighting crew, who set back-fires which stopped the Kimberly fire from advancing toward McGregor.

However, the high peat banks of county ditch 14 had been burning and smouldering since the previous year, and this fire crept to the very edge of the town. Another fire, alleged to have been set to the west of the Soo line, by a spark from a locomotive, also spread, but a group of Home Guardsmen kept this under control. Still a third fire came on from section thirty-one, McGregor township, and section six, Spalding township, Company "D" of the Home Guards fought this fire for several days before bringing it under control. There was no loss of life and only minor property damage in McGregor. But the surrounding conntryside was not so fortunate. One thousand acres of hay land were burned, two residences

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37. Files of the Aitkin Age, 1918, October, the Aitkin Republican, 1918, October. Reminiscinces of many residents of McGregor.

in Grayling destroyed, and trains stopped on the Soo line by the destruction of the tracks. The towns of Bain and Lawler were almost completely wiped out. In the village of Lawler, three lives were lost; in Automba, twenty-two people burned to death. Dozens of farm homes were burned and many farm families perished. Some saved themselves by fleeing into root cellars or down into wells.

The county was placed under martial law, and two hundred and fifty soldiers were stationed at Aitkin, to assist in caring for the homeless and the injured with the help of the Red Cross. Many lawsuits were filed in federal court charging the government with negligence in operation of the railroads, under conscription at that time. Other suits were filed against the Soo line, the Pine Tree Lumber Company, and the Northern Pacific railroad. The Pine Tree Lumber Company was charged with carelessness in burning slashings, causing the fire on the bank of ditch 14. The court action cleared the lumber company of responsibility. Litigation dragged on for years.* The towns were soon rebuilt, but the land and the timber still bear the scars of this holocaust.[38]

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* In the litigation following the fires it was finally ruled by the Attorney General that Congress, in passing Private Act No. 336, 74th Congress, August 27, 1936, authorizing payment for damages done by the railroads, authorized payment only of insurable losses that were covered or could have been covered by fire insurance. Loss of life does not come under this classification and under this interpretation no claims for loss of life have been paid.

38. Interview with residents of McGregor, Minnesota.

McGregor is now a modern town with all conveniences. Good roads have brought the beauties of the surrounding countryside to the attention of vacationists who have built cabins and cottages on the many lakes. Trails were made over the hills and through the woods, and the hunting and fishing in the region have become favorably known far and wide. There are now in the area some seventy-five separate resorts open during the summer months for tourists and summer visitors. The largest centers of resort activity are Sandy Lake and Lake Minnewawa; about their shores there are estimated to be about three thousand privately owned cabins, and there are many more on the other lakes in the vicinity. An average of ten thousand persons visit the region annually, and in a single season at McGregor cars from every state in the union are seen.[39]

In 1928, the McGregor Hospital was founded,[40] with Dr. Granger and Dr. C. B. Strauch in charge. A dental office was also maintained in the same building. This was the only hospital in Aitkin county. On September 16, 1932, the hospital and the theatre which adjoined it were destroyed by fire.[41] The hospital was not re-established.

Independent Consolidated School District No. 12 serves the educational needs of the pupils of McGregor and vicinity within a sixty-mile area. The building is of brick with a gymnasium and modern science room. It was dedicated October 1, 1921, with an enrollment of less than one hundred. At the present three hundred and eight-five pupils are in

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39. Wiley Smith, guide, McGregor, Minnesota, Isador Iverson, McGregor Minnesota, and others, interviews.
40. A. M. Hayes, Mrs. Frank Ferlita, McGregor, Minnesota, interviews.
41. Isador Iverson, Mrs. Rugna Boekenoogen, McGregor, Minnesota, interviews The Aitkin Age, September 16, 1932.

attendance.[42] An addition is being built at this time.

The McGregor State Bank was organized July 29, 1915, and on October 13, 1934 was moved to Howard Lake.[43] There are three bulk petroleum plants in the village of McGregor with surface tank storage capacity of 133,000 gallons. During the past year, 1940, 550,000 gallons of light oils and 10,000 gallons of lubricating oils were distributed.[44]

The cultivated fields about McGregor produce alfalfa, corn, potatoes and clover. Hay is a principal crop. The McGregor Creamery produced in the past year over 300,000 pounds of butter, and the total output of butterfat from the region is probably three times this amount. Quantities of cream are shipped to outside centers.[45]

The wild rice harvest the past season taotaled about seventy-five tons of finished rice, valued at some 37,000.00. Fur farming yielded 1200 Alaskan black mink pelts, bringing an average price of $12.00 each; about 300 silver fox pelts were marketed. Several thousand turkeys were raised, and this is becoming a major industry. Flax is produced in some quantities here.

Lumbering is carried on by five sawmills in the region,[46] two of which have special finishing machines. The largest of these is located on Brown's Point, Sandy Lake, owned by Harold Benedict, and produces cabin logs and lumber. Wood products timber is cut each year by about twenty-five

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42. Victor A. Heed, Superintendent, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.
43. H. W. Reiter, Cashier, Howard Lake, Minnesota, letter, 1940, Feb. 4.
44. Alfred Jacobson, Isador Iverson, Maynard Raveill, McGregor, Minnesota.
45. Interviews with many residents of McGregor, Minnesota.
46. Interviews with McGregor residents.

operators in the region. Wood pulp, toothpick and match timber, and other wood products are marketed.

There are three churches in McGregor, Methodist, Catholic, and Lutheran. There are several organizations, including boy and girl scouts, and a community band. There is a library with a collection of about 1200 volumes, open to the public two days a week.[47]

McGregor has a modern electric power and light plant serving the eastern half of the county and some four hundred farms. Modern dial telephone service connects Sandy Lake and the resort area without extra toll, and there are six incoming and five outgoing mails each day. Western Union and Postal Telegraph have facilities here.

Two railroads and the Greyhound Bus Company furnish transportation. Door to door truck service is provided, and there is truck service daily to Duluth and semi-weekly to the Twin Cities.

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47. McGregor Library Association.

THE REDSKINS ARE COMING

By the end of the 1890's, out of the tangled wilderness and the wold days of logging, community life was beginning to emerge about McGregor. But before it turned to more prosaic ways, there was to be one last reminder of the region's primitive past, one last flare-up of frontier terror. When deer-hunting time comes in the north woods, the tale is told and retold.

It was the fall of 1898, and reports of Indian unrest were flying far and fast. On October 12, St. Paul papers printed the dreaded information that an anticipated Indian uprising was already in progress at McGregor. Eugene C. Blanchard of the Northern Pacific at Barker wired to St. Paul that a woman living near the village of McGregor had been driven from her home by two dozen painted Indians and that her husband and her father were believed massacred.[1]

Only a week had passed since the battle of Bear Island at Leech Lake,[2] in which a number of Indians and six soldiers had been killed. Special guards had been sent to reassure the nervous settlers around Bemidji and Cass Lake.[3] From Fort Sheridan, Illinois, infantrymen had been placed at the disposal of General Bacon to control the disturbance.

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1. The St. Paul Pioneer Press, October 12, 1898, Aitkin Republican, December 19, 1940, Mrs. P. Memmola and many other residents of McGregor and Aitkin. The story of the "INdian Scare" is well remembered by many of the pioneers about McGregor and is related by them with little variation.
2. Minnesota Historical Collections, 3:273-288.
3. Minnesota Historical Collections, Aitkin Republican, December 19, 1940, 3:273-288.

Now,[4] it seemed, a full-scale massacre of settlers was about to begin. The St. Paul office of the railroad at once offered to get men to the scene of danger. From the village of McGregor word was flashed to Aitkin that "old man McGregor" had been killed.

In and near McGregor for some time there had been great uneasiness. Accounts of the trouble at Leech Lake had drifted down to the settlers, and apprehension was felt that the Sandy Lake band would join their fellows. A smouldering feeling of panic among the settlers was as tinder awaiting a match. The match came from Mrs. Henry Lampert, a homesteader's wife.

Out near Portage Lake, Henry Lampert had a claim and a cabin. Ready cash was hard to come by, and, as was the custom of many settlers in the fall, Lampert had set out for the harvest fields of Dakota, leaving his wife and two small children on the farm.

On a certain day in October, while Mrs. Lampert, who shared the general anxiety regarding the Indians, was going about the duties of her farm cabin, she suddenly heard blood-chilling cries. Then came the sound of a shot. Then more hair-raising whoops. From her cabin window she looked out on a sight that all but froze her. Indian warriors decked in savage paint were stamping, one behind the other, in a circling dance.

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4. Reminiscenses: Mrs. P. Memmola, George Dodge, James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota, and others.

Without pausing, Mrs. Lampert snatched up her two children in her arms, dashed for the railroad a quarter of a mile to the north, and flagged a freight train coming down the track. The engineer, with no thought of Indians and knowing that a passenger train was close behind him, merely thumbed toward the back to indicate that she should wait for the passenger. But his thumb meant no such thing to the horror-stricken woman. It meant that the Indians were coming and that, should the engineer stop, the redskins would board the train. The caboose disappeared up the track, and Mrs. Lampert fled after it. Half running, stumbling over ties, bruised and exhausted, she covered the four miles into McGregor and poured out her story to an already overwraught populace.

The station agent promptly telephoned to the dam keeper at Sandy Lake to find out what the conditions were at the Indian village there. No answer. The wires were down because of a recent storm. But he did not know that. The thought flashed into his mind that the Indians had cut the telephone wires and that the dam keeper was already dead. The agent wired his suspicions to Duluth. Authority was wired back to evacuate all of the people on the first train. This welcome invitation was hurriedly and gladly accepted by many of the Italian settlers.

Before the passenger train reached McGregor, the conductor passed through the train ordering the people to pull down the window shades and to lie flat in the aisle as they passed through the town.

Such settlers as elected to remain in McGregor after the refugee train pulled out barricaded themselves in "Speegle's" store and all night long poured lead bullets for the impending attack.[5]

By this time, the countryside was thoroughly aroused. Credibility had been added to Mrs. Lampert's story from another quarter. A man walking toward McGregor from far out in the woods brought word of meeting on the Prairie river two blood-stained Indian hunters who told of an encounter with Sand Lake Indians. The latter, the hunters said, had gone on the war path with those of Leech Lake. Terror in the village increased.

The village of Aitkin, hearing of the murder of "old man McGregor" and the report in the St. Paul papers of the death of two men, hastily organized a volunteer company. One citizen was dispatched to ride through the night like a modern Paul Revere to warn the Swedish settlers of the oncoming assault and to urge them to bring their families into town. The night train from the east brought in a new posse of men from the town of Carlton to help protect Aitkin in the uprising.

A poem written later by B. W. Gwathmey for a local paper described how the news traveled.[6]

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5. Interview, Tony Spicola, East Lake, Minnesota.
6. The Aitkin Republican, December 19, 1940, reprinted from original of 1898. James E. Murphy, and others, McGregor, Minnesota.

"Swiftly now the messages climb
Over the wires of the N. P. Line,
Wilder yet into St. Paul rolled,
News of the demons uncontrolled,
Turning the blood of Bear Island cold,
Each yelling demon painted red
"Old Man McGregor" reported dead."

When daylight came, the volunteers from Aitkin and the Carlton posse sought out the spot where "McGregor" was reported to have fallen. Here they found the Indians. Questioned, the warriors revealed that they had indeed been at Portage Lake near the Lampert home. Yes, they were whooping and they had been painted. They were, the Indians explained, on their way by the old Portage Trail to Mille Lacs to take part in an Indian dance. Along the way they had killed a deer, and they were celebrating this hunt when Mrs. Lampert saw them. The Indians went on with laughter to describe how, when they saw Mrs. Lampert's freight, they thought it might be fun to frighten her some more. So they fired their guns into the air once or twice. It was all a good joke on the white people, they thought.[7]

As for "old man McGregor," he was, as was later admitted, no more than a figment of someone's imagination. His untimely demise, as well as that of the victims reported in the St. Paul papers, proved to be no more than the slaughter of a lone buck deer.[8]

"Old Jim" Murphy well remembers this scare.[9] He recalls that "the Injuns had a trail from Sandy Lake to Mille Lacs goin' down to by

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7. The Aitkin Age, November 11, 1929, and reminiscenses of pioneers.
8. The Aitkin Republican, December 19, 1940.
9. James E. Murphy, McGregor, Minnesota.

Sandy river and through Davis, Round and Portage Lakes. All the tribes used to have big dances, and the Injuns at Mille Lacs were havin' one then. When they had these dances, the Sandy Lake band would go there, and then when the Sandy Lake Injuns had one, the Mille Lacs tribe would go up.

"For these big dances, they always dressed by paintin' their cheeks and wearin colored feathers. Before the dance begun, they would beat the big drum eight days and nights. Never stopped. That was to call the great Manito, their God.

"Mostly they called these medicine dances. Here the big chief would get up and make a speech tellin' of his big deeds, tellin' how many white men he had killed. Then another would get up and begin. They would keep up these pow-wows for a week at a time.

"I've went to a hundred of these dances. I've heard 'em 'ki-yi' tell I got damn sick and tired of it. The time they scared Mrs. Lampert, they was only goin' on their way to a medicine dance and a-huntin' and a-feastin' as they went along."

Murphy remembers, too, how the lone wayfarer had met the two hunters far out in the woods and how his story had corroborated that of the homesteader's wife.

"There was two hunters," relates Murphy, "who was camped on the banks of Prairie River about three miles from its mouth. There was this man came along, sort of a foolish feller. You could tell him most anythin' and he'd believe it. Well, he was a-goin' on foot to McGregor through

the woods and happened to come to where those two hunters was tented that mornin'.

"This looney feller asked, 'Where did you come from?' and as a joke, they said Leech Lake. Which was a lie. They had just killed a deer and their hands was all covered with blood. He said, 'What you doin' with all that blood on your shirt sleeves?' They told him some of the Leech Lake Injuns had come down to Sandy Lake, and now the Sandy Lake band was on the warpath, too. The blood on their hands — they told this feller, 'We just killed two Injuns and throwed'em in that crick. We're a-goin' to Tamarack as fast as we kin'. The damndest lie ever told — somethin' like these Paul Bunyan yarns. This feller come to McGregor and told how the Sandy Lake Injuns was on the warpath. Two jokers, them hunters."

WHERE THE BLACKBIRDS SING [redacted]

The principal obstacle to the settlement and development of the area south of McGregor in earlier times was the low, flat, wet condition of the land. Swamps, muskeg and water covered a portion of the region, and it was subject to seasonal innundation. Often in summer, rowboats could go over miles of the grounds and the islands of prehistoric Lake Aitkin occasionally became islands again. As late as 1902, a family living near McGregor used a rowboat in time of high water to reach the village and moored their craft to the Northern Pacific switch.[1]

It seemed to the settlers that drainage was the solution. So an extensive system of ditches was undertaken.[2] The result of such drainage, however, was not always successful. Except in a few instances, the meadowlands when drained were still unproductive, often deficient in phosphorous or lime and subject to frosts. Also after the water had been to some extent drained off from the peat, the sun-dried meadowlands became a fire hazard of the first magnitude.

The drained areas sometimes suffered profound changes. There was, for instance, a lake in section ten which once yielded a great amount

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1. Records of drainage ditches, court house, Aitkin, Minnesota. Various articles on the subject of drainage in the region, from files of the Aitkin Age, Aitkin Republican. Interviews with pioneers of McGregor.
2. Oscar Jesness, Utilization of Cut-Over Lands.

of wild rice. Wild ducks flocked there by the thousands in the fall, and about its marshy shores was an extensive cranberry bog from which a pioneer gathered with the aid of a cranberry rake in a single day nine one-hundred-pound sacks full of berries. This lake was called Rice Lake. Drainage ditches broke down the muskeg reservoirs that kept the lake water at a fairly even level. Now the rice, the ducks and the cranberries are gone and even the name of the lake itself for it is today descriptively known as Mud Lake.[3]

About two[4] miles southwest of McGregor, the meadowlands produced for a long time a crop little thought of by the first settlers. In the spring of 1900, the American Grass Twine Company of New York discovered a natural resource here which they could use, a field of waving wiregrass miles in extent. Four thousand and forty acres were purchased and operations began.

A large warehouse, foreman's dwelling, cook house, blacksmith shop and other needed building were constructed. The grass was harvested by hand, and at times of peak production two hundred men were employed with an average wage of two dollars per day. The grass was cut by mowers drawn by a team of horses wearing "bog shoes." For a day or so, it was allowed to dry and then, when cured, was carefully gathered into bundles,

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3. Joe Gregory, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.
4. Elner Strom, foreman, Crex Carpet Company, 1918-1937, McGregor, Minnesota, interview.

tied with a handful of grass or in later years with grass twine. The invention of a mechanical turning device proved the greatest single factor in the reduction of hand labor. Seventy-five men and eight teams of horses were replaced by one man driving a tractor-drawn grain binder with the grain-tying mechanism removed. This device cut the grass, turned it and laid it back on the stubble with the butts all even to sun-dry. Then it was hand-tied. An automatic gleaner eventually eliminated hand-tying.

In 1914, the company re-capitalized for five million dollars as the Crex Carpet Company. By 1919, the meadows yielded nearly three thousand tons of grass which was baled and shipped away to be woven into rugs, and production held to about that figure until 1925. Then came a sudden competitive pressure that was to undermine the industry and lead to its almost complete abandonment. This pressure came not from any expected source, but from faraway Asia. In that year, the Japanese became interested in the production of grass rugs and sent over a delegation to study the methods used in the United States. The next year, strong competition from the little brown men was felt, and with production costs rising a steady decline in the industry began. By 1936, only a few tons of grass were harvested. The turning device and the "bog shoes" were alike unneeded; the Crex Company went into voluntary bankruptcy. Most of the buildings were razed and sold. The long, deep grass of the meadows again awaits an economic solution to be of use to the community.

To the south of the Crex grasslands, there is another extensive

tract too low for profitable cultivation.[5] This is the area about Big Rice Lake and the lands drained by Rice River. Here in ancient days were villages of the Sioux and perhaps of the mound builders, and Indians have always lived there until the present time. There were reasons why they choose this location, for Big Rice Lake contained acres of the finest wild rice and was a veritable paradise for the wild waterfowl.

However, conditions changed. As it has been put: "The Indian took the individual scalp but the white man took the scalp of the whole continent."[6] And as the region lost its scalp - the forests, the game and the other natural resources - thought was given to saving certain sections, unadepted to other uses, for the preservation of wild life and forests.

More than 11,000[7] ~~11,484~~ acres of land about Big Rice Lake have been secured by the federal government as represented by the Biological Survey of the Interior Department. Further acreage is to be acquired until the tract contains about 16,000 acres. Of this approximately 3000 acres are water. The purpose of the program is to provide a feeding and resting ground for waterfowl and a refuge for birds and wild game.

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5. Jacob V. Brower, Memoirs of Exploration in the Basin of the Mississippi, 4:13, Minnesota Historical Collections.
6. Ding Darling, in The Conservationist, May 1937.
7. Data on the Sanctuary for Waterfowl and the work of the CCC camp: Francis C. Gillette, Bureau of Biological Survey, 500 National Building, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Edward C. Knopp, Refuge Manager, East Lake, Minnesota, also the officers of Company 2705, CCC, East Lake, Minnesota.

There are several species of game birds within the tract, the most numerous of which are the rough grouse and the Chinese pheasant. There are also a number of most of the animals common to the region - muskrat, mink, beaver, raccoon, bobcat, black bear, coyote and deer. About 100,000 waterfowl are estimated to find feeding and resting grounds here during the year. Abundant grain is provided by the rice growing in the large, shallow lake, and wild celery is plentiful. In winter, gravel is placed in convenient places for game birds and cover of the lean-to variety of brush or boughs is provided. On the former farms about the lake some sharecropping is permitted, the farmer taking a portion and leaving a portion for the game. The game refuge, known as the Rice Lake National Wild Life Refuge, welcomes visitors.

A road has been built from highway 65, at East Lake, to the headquarters of the camp, about one and three-fourths miles west. It follows the abandoned Soo Line track bed, where in places the rails are still visible. The main camp is located on Indian Point near the ancient village site from which all the Indians who lived there until recently have been evacuated. An office, garage, dwellings for refuge manager and patrol man, and an observation tower have been constructed.

What camp? (17) or next P. probably below here

The principal work of the men employed here is to stabilize the present water level; to this end a dyke one and a half miles long has been built across the Rice river valley and a water-control gate placed in the river. 5,000 eastern red cedar trees and 2,000 grape vines have been set out to provide food for upland game birds. Fire lines and trails are being

built. A fence of four-strand wire some thirty miles long is to be placed about the area to discourage trespassing and prevent the incursion of domestic cattle.

In connection with the construction of the game refuge, a CCC camp has been established on the north side of Rice Lake about one mile from the refuge headquarters. The camp's twenty acres of ground furnish accommodation for 200 enrollees. The work program of the CCC camp is coordinated with that of the game refuge. CCC labor is used in the construction of buildings, dykes, trail-making and other projects of the Biological Survey.

To the Biological Survey has also been given supervision of the harvesting of wild rice on Big Rice Lake. The great rice beds of Big Rice Lake are one of the reasons for the location of the refuge. The gathering of wild rice is an important industry in Aitkin county. The finest wild rice in America is grown in Minnesota in the region from Mille Lacs to the Canadian border. For the season just past (1940), the harvesting was confined to thirty boats, and about 25 tons of rice were harvested and 2,500 pounds gathered for seed.

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The first white men to penetrate the region were impressed by the Indians' waterrgrown grain, in early days the main subsistence of

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8. Information on ricing is found in Newton H. Winchell, Aborigines of Minnesota, 590-595, Jacob V. Brower, Prehistoric Man at the Headwaters of the Mississippi, Aitkin Republican, January 9, 1941. Information on white methods from George and Vern Bailey, J. A. and Carl Lingle, F. Grey, Chauncy and B. Barrott, Dwight V., and George Creer, all of McGregor and all of whom engaged in gathering rice in the year 1940. Anthony Spicola, East Lake, Minnesota, rice buyer, and others.

most bands of Indians there. The whites did not participate in the actual harvesting, however, until recent years. Throughout all the period of white settlement, the Indian was the sole gleaner. With the participation of the white men in the ricing, mechanical methods of finishing the rice have been introduced, and in general hand finishing methods are being supplanted by the mechanical parching and packing. To prevent abuse of the privilege of gathering rice, a state law has been passed appointing a wild rice commissioner whose duty it is to set the date for the opening of the ricing season. A license is required to gather rice and for the state as a whole 2,390 licenses were issued for the year 1940. The first mechanical threshing and finishing in this area was done by Charles Wakefield and H. L. Benedict. Now there are several such plants where green rice purchased from the Indians or whites is processed.

Wild rice is grown in a number of the north-central lakes but probably at no place is to more important than at Big Rice Lake. Although much has entered in to change the pattern of the Indian method of ricing, it still retains, of all his activities, the closest relation of his ancient history. It is the oldest industry in all the northwest region with the possible exception of trapping, and even in its modern, modified aspect may be found vestiges of the Indian's traditional communal life.

When the summer has waned and the fall winds begin to blow, the rice is ripening. When the soft maple trees flame suddenly torch-red in the green of the forests, it is <u>monomini gisiss</u>, Moon of the Gathering of Wild Rice. Then for a brief time the Chippewa comes into his own

again. Nature, peculiarly the mother of Indians, speaks to him. For a few weeks in this northern region, the past comes alive in the present, and in the harvesting of this native crop the ancient way of the Indian has proved to be the best.

The method has varied little since it was first observed by white men. Of the harvesting Charles Flandrau wrote: "In 1857 I visited the source of the Mississippi with the then Indian agent for the Chippewas and traveled hundreds of miles in the upper river. We passed through endless fields of wild rice, and witnessed its harvest by the Chippewas, which was a most interesting and picturesque scene. They tie it in sheaves with a straw before it is ripe enough to gather to prevent the wind from shaking out the grains, and when it has matured, they thresh it with sticks into their canoes. We estimated there about 1000 families of the Chippewas, and that they gathered about twenty-five bushels for each family, and we saw that in so doing they did not make any impression whatever on the crop, leaving thousands of acres of the rice to the geese and ducks. Our calculations then were that more rice grew in Minnesota each year, without cultivation, than was produced in South Carolina as one of the principal products of that state."

Though the Chippewa had not learned to cultivate it, they had learned to care for the crop which nature so lavishly provided. They were prudent conservationists by tradition as well as necessity. One of their legends relates to their care of the wild rice.

The tribes had always been pursued by the spectre of hunger, especially in the long, cold winters when game was scarce. So, it is said, on one occasion their medicine man had a revelation from the Great Spirit, who told him that the lakes and streams were filled with food. It was explained just how this food was to be prepared to eat, and the oracle warned that no one should go near the plant until it should be pronounced ripe. The Manito's fury would fall upon the unlucky redman who ventured to touch the plant before He had spoken through the medicine man and declared it ready.

Thus, before and after each wild rice harvest, the Indians joined in a solemn ritual. Tobacco was strewn upon the waters so that the Great Spirit might smoke in peace and the Indians harvest the crop without offending the deity. The rite of placating the Great Spirit is still observed. Strings of willow, wee goob, are cut and the tobacco for the God tied to them. Paddling among the ripening rice, the Indians tie the wee goob to the sheaves of grain. This will calm the lakes, quiet the thunder and permit the grain to ripen without harm.

Like so many Indian rites, this elaborate ceremony had a sound basis in necessity, for the exact time to start the harvest must be chosen with care since a storm or a brisk wind can ruin the crop in a few hours. Whatever the origin of the harvest may have been, its garnering has continued by methods little altered since before the dawn of history.

Even in the present-day setting, the native rice harvesting holds some of the charm of long ago. A week or so before the crop is likely to be ready, one or two Indians inspect the field and look over the camp site. The grain field is the lake, shallow and muddy. In the spring the rice shoots first appeared on the mud bottom of the lake and grew rapidly to the surface. For a while the rice seems to lie flat on top of the water, but by midsummer no water is visible and all the lake is shimmering green. In August the heads begin to form and the grain ripens in two or three weeks. The advance scouts make their report to the tribe.

Some urgency from the remote past seems to impel the Chippewa to make this annual fall pilgrimage. Nothing is allowed to interfere with it. Neither engagement in business elsewhere nor years of schooling can break completely the lure of the bark covered wigwam on the banks of miry lakes. They seek out the same spot where from time immemorial they have camped. What matter if it is now part of a cow pasture? A certain number of pounds of rice in lieu of rent and the grounds are theirs again.

A few at first, they arrive at the camp grounds. Then in increasing numbers they gather from their homes, from the lakeshores and towns and reservations. But no longer do they come on the calico pony. They come in cars and the remnants of cars, driving lickety-split in any direction and over any place that a horse could travel — over ruts, roots and debris, and deep into the woods, whereever the space between the trees will admit their passage, and luck seems to go with them.

On the sedge and alder-grown shore of the lake, they find their ancient camp site. Winter snow has covered it for many months, and it has been a stamping ground for cattle through the long summer days. For a year the wigwams have stood deserted, structures of bent-over poles tied together with thongs and looking not unlike upturned bushel baskets. From the poles flutter strips of birch bark and shreds of tarred paper.

Now the wigwams hum with a great activity. Camp fires begin to wink in the evening dusk. Smoke rises from a dozen places among the trees. In quilts suspended between two poles, papooses swing contentedly. Boys and girls race and shout. Dogs bark. Young braves slip into the timber to secure bits of desired birch bark, and over the smouldering camp fire a college-bred young lady may languidly stir the stew.

Until his death a few years ago, Chief Wadena was present for the harvest. In keeping with his rank, he was often among the last to arrive. Very calm, very fat, with a row of chicken feathers stuck in his band, he would make a chieftain's progress to his hut. It was on the highest and driest spot in the dark, wet woods. Some days before, his wife had arrived, wowen anew the bark bed and covered the bare poles of the wigwam with bark and paper.

In the center of the encampement, today as in former days, the medicine lodge usually stands, larger and more pretentious then the rest of the wigwams. At one end the medicine man seats himself and the steady roll of the tom-tom begins, seldom to cease during the whole harvest. But the drum no longer beats out the councils of war or peace. It marks, instead,

it seems, the course of the never-ending card games played by the light of the camp fire.

After the huts have all been covered, pits are dug by those who intend to stamp out their own parched grain instead of selling the rice green. The rice holes are usually about the width and depth of a large bucket. Two poles around three feet high are erected at one side of the pit and a pole is tied across the top of them for a handlebar. In earlier days the holes were lined with bark, but the Indians now find bark so hard to get that other linings have been substituted. Push poles for the boats are also made ready. At last the word is given, and the harvest is under way.

The women do much of the actual work of gathering the rice. This is a delicate business to be done with care. A certain amount must fall into the boat; a certain amount - but not too much - must be allowed to fall back into the lake for reseeding. A canoe or narrow boat is propelled through the tall, thick rice beds by means of a long pole on the end of which is a crotch about a foot in width. Generally the man stands forward in the boat, pushing the forked pole down into the muck of the root of the rice plant and giving the pole a half twist to secure a slight foothold for propelling the boat. Hand over hand on the push pole, he then drives the boat forward.

As a boat creeps ahead, the squaw, seated in the bottom near the

center with a stick about two feet long in each hand, reaches out with one stick and draws the sheaf of rice over the side and with the other flails off the heads in a stripping motion. The grain from first one side and then the other is gathered as the man keeps the boat in alow and steady motion. Only a few kernels of rice on a stalk ripen at one time, thus the field may be gone over again and again until most of the grain is garnered. The rice hulls as they fall into the boat, have long barbs and, falling upright, give a boatload of rice something of the appearance of a coco mat.

The green rice is carried to the camp, sometimes in birch bark baskets called mokoks. If it is to be sold green, it is sacked for the rice buyer. But before it is ready for market, it must be parched and threshed. The whites do the parching in a drum, which rests over a fire and rotates on a shaft. A door in the side of the drum permits the rice to be placed in it and removed when parched. Then it is threshed. The thresher used by the whites is a machine somewhat like the parcher. The thresher used by the whites is a machine somewhat like the parcher, but in this case the drum is stationary with a series of rubber-tipped fingers inside attached to the shaft. This is driven at high speed, often with a pulley and belt arrangement on the real wheel of an old automobile, causing the wooden fingers to beat off the parched hulls. A common fanning mill completes the process.

But parching and threshing are still done often enough by the Indian method. After the grain has been spread to dry for sometime and is considered ready, it is placed in a metal tub or other container

and set over a hot fire. The rice is stirred continually with a paddle or pole to prevent burning until it is brittle enough to be threshed. The thresher, usually a young man, wearing a pair of new moccasins but sometimes barefooted, partly fills one of the rice holes with the parched rice and jumps into it. He grasps the cross-bar at the top of the two poles fixed beside the pit and begins a sort of dance in the mahnomen. The rhythmic stamping continues for a half hour or so, then the grain is winnowed and returned to the pit, and the dance begins again. This stamping and winnowing is repeated until the grain is pronounced ready to store in mokoks, or to sack. The first rice of the season ready for eating is properly esteemed and is shared by all in celebration. When the harvest has been completed, the families, one by one, pile their belongins together and clatter away toward home. Some may linger for several days or a week to finish parching or threshing, but at last all are gone. The bare skeletons of the wigwams are again left to await the coming of another harvest.

The opportunity to sell rice green probably first attracted the white ricer, for a short season's work brought good returns. By 1940, there were but one-third as many Indians as whites engaged in ricing. The ingenious but charmless harvesting carried on by the whites has not completely destroyed the Indian's method, however. At Big Rice Lake, whites were excluded in the 1940 season except for the parching and threshing part of the process. No means have yet been devised that will gather the rice, preserve its tender shoots and allow for reseeding at the same time like the ancient flail and canoe of the Chippewa.