



Minnesota Works Progress Administration:  
Writers Project Research Notes.

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June 30, 1940

Ref: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History

Subject: Interview Martha Cornish, et al.

Your reporter, accompanied by Mr. J. E. Murphy, visited the home of Mrs. Charles Cornish, situated on Boot Lake, thirty six miles north of McGregor in township "51-23."

Martha Cornish, whose Indian name is Aundaig (meaning Crow) was interviewed at the suggestion of Mr. Murphy in the hope of securing confirmation of several stories supposedly told to Mr. Murphy by Aundaig's grandmother Niby-na-gaunce.

Between arguments with Mr. Murphy on the correct way to say Crooked Rail Fence and Raspberry Pie, in Chippewa, in which she displayed a rare sense of humor, and none of the customary reserve of the Indian in contact with a stranger, I secured the following information.

Mrs. Cornish was born in the Sandy Lake region in 1882 to the union of Muckandwaywenanee and Nukway. She is the granddaughter on her mother's side of Ayabedwaywedung, Chief of the Rice Lake band of Chippewas. Ayabedwaywedung's (Returning Echo) English name was "Yankee."

Her father, Muckandwaywenanee, originally came from Leech Lake. In his youth he had attended a "School" that was then established on Sandy Lake. Schooling the Indian children there, evidently proved unsuccessful, for as Aundaig states, "The children broke up the blackboards."

Mrs. Cornish states that her grandmother died when she was only five or six years of age and that she does not remember very much of the things she told her of the "old days." "We were too busy playing."



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At the age of seven Mrs. Cornish was sent away to an Indian school where she acquired a good education. "Schooling an Indian is a mistake."

When she was a little girl her father brought 100 lbs. of flour from Fort Riply to Sandy Lake. This was the first time she remembered of eating white bread. The other Indians of the band crowded around the wigwam to sample the luxury until the supply was nearly exhausted, when her father admonished her mother to announce the flour was all gone.

George A. Smith, (living at present near Deer River) a half-breed grandson of Niby-na-gaunce and first cousin of Mrs. Cornish, was elected Chief of the Sandy Lake band of Chippewa to succeed Misquadace. At the time of Mr. Smith's birth, his mother died and the raising of the child was taken over by his grandmother. For the first thirty days the baby was nursed alternately by his two Aunts, during which time the grandmother, Niby-na-gaunce, who was then a very old woman, drank large quantities of soup and by securing a clay pipe and placing the pipe over the nipple of her breast and sucking on the stem she succeeded in developing milk in her breast of sufficient quantity to take over the nursing of the baby.

Mrs. Cornish gave a somewhat different version of the battle between the Chippewa and invading Sioux, then that given to Prof. Hart by Mrs. Curtis in 1927 (see The Story of Beengwa, by Prof. Hart in Minnesota History Quarterly, Vol. 9, no. 4). This version is of the battle that is supposed to account for the modern name of Battle Island given to an Island in Sandy Lake which the old settlers here call Moosegut Island. Personally your reporter has heard at least a dozen different accounts of battles supposedly

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having been fought on Battle Island and the Point, and no doubt many of these accounts have some basis, in fact, others are probably pure fiction. There is probably no doubt that the region around Battle Island was the scene of many a bloody conflict between the early Indian tribes. A full report of all accounts that seem to have any basis in fact will be made later as the material sifts out.

Mrs. Cornish, in referring to the account of the battle given by Mrs. Curtis stated: "I have heard the same story told many, many times and it is not true." Reluctantly she told me her version of the conflict as told her by her father, Muckandwaywenanee.

When her father was a small boy, "too small to fight," a band of Chippewas' were camped near the point where Indian Point Lodge now stands. One day a member of the band while scouting in the region where the Gateway Store now stands, came upon tracks of Sioux warriors. He returned immediately to warn his people. A war counsel was held and it was decided the Sioux would await the cover of darkness before making their attack, if one was planned, so over the course of the day all of the old men, women and children were transferred onto Battle Island for refuge. As the campfires died out that evening, every Chippewa brave waited the impending attack of the Sioux, with every available firearm and weapon in readiness. The leader gave the order not to fire until every Sioux was within range and had waded out into the water between the mainland and the Island, whereupon the concealed Chippewas opened fire, killing all the invaders except two, who were captured alive. After amputating the ears of the two captives they were

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released and told: "Go back to your people and tell them that we wish to be left alone."

"Battle Island should be called Refuge Island."

Referring to Mrs. Curtis' version of the conflict, she stated that was the Augenosh story and that she had heard the same story told many times and in her opinion the story was told by the Augenoshes' for their own aggrandizement.

"The Augenoshes were the worst tribe of Indians. Only two of them died a natural death.

They were a brave, fierce bunch." (Murphy)

Relating how one of the "Augenosh Tribe" came to an untimely end, she stated that there was a Indian named Mooninee who had recently lost his wife and an Augenosh was boasting, "I was the cause of your wife's death!", whereupon Mooninee siezes his gun and threatens to shoot Augenosh. As this threat Augenosh, in a very arrogant manner, thrusts his face forward and placing his forefinger on his forehead said, "If you're going to shoot me, shoot me right here!" Whereupon Mooninee shot, killing Augenosh.

Inquiring as to how Augenosh had killed Mooninee's wife, Mrs. Cornish said, "By Grand Medicine," explaining that this was a kind of poisoning known to the Indians.

One story her father had told her she remembered very clearly. One evening when her father was still a small boy and the last flicker of the campfires had died away, there suddenly appeared in the distance across the lake a strange light that glowed steady and bright, unlike anything they had



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seen before. This strange light frightened the Indians. "The Indians were afraid of everything they didn't understand." In the morning the light was gone and few of the least fearful ventured across the lake to investigate from whence the strange light had come, whereupon they could discover nothing, no sign of enemies or any trace of a recent fire.

The next evening when the light reappeared at dusk in the same position, the Indians were thoroughly frightened. Some thought it the spirit from out of the lake. One of the band more brave than the rest, volunteered to go and investigate the light. After rubbing "medicine" on his hands, the brave investigator crossed the lake to the north shore to where the banks rise almost vertically to a height of a hundred feet, and there, halfway up the embankment he discovered the source of the light. A piece of stone of clear glass about the size of two fists had become dislodged from the bank and this stone was strongly luminescent and glowed emitting the strange light the Indians viewed from across the lake.

Having found the source of the light the brave Indian dug a hole at the foot of a large tree, placed the stone in it and covered it up. (Here she indicated the depth of the hole, from her fingertips to elbow.) Mrs. Cornish bemoans the fact that the exact location where the stone was buried is lost to here and advances the theory that it might have been Radium.

Mrs. Cornish denied having any knowledge of her father having actively engaged in any battles with the Sioux, whereupon Mr. Murphy stated that "Old Muck" had spent many an hour in his wigwam drinking with him and when Old Muck got to "feeling good" he told him of many experiences of his youth. At

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this point Mrs. Cornish interrupted with the suggestion that her father possibly talked on the assumption--more "stories," more liquor.

One of these "stories" of Old Muck's is in substance as follows:

When Muckandwayanabee was still a young man, a band of Sioux warriors raided the Chippewa camp at Sandy Lake and made off with a number of Chippewa squaw captives, escaping down the Mississippi River in canoes. A band of Chippewa warriors, including Old Muck gave pursuit. The Chippewas attempted to get ahead of the Sioux in their flight down the river by taking an overland trail that then was in use from Fort Riply to Sandy Lake. This maneuver proved successful and the Chippewa warriors lay in wait for the Sioux at a point down the Mississippi, where they engaged the Sioux, the captive squaws assisting by tipping over the Sioux canoes, dumping the Sioux warriors into the water. Those of the Sioux that were killed were then decapitated and their heads were fastened to the end of long poles and in this fashion the Chippewa came marching home with the heads of their Sioux enemies held high above them.

Mr. Murphy says that Old Muck had several of the Sioux skulls in his wigwam and that Old Muck had told him this tale and associated the skulls in his wigwam with the story.

Mr. Murphy married Anna Smith, a granddaughter of Niby-na-gaunce. Mr. Murphy says that when he first met Niby-na-gaunce she was a very old woman then, possibly over a hundred years of age, and that he had many talks with her before she died. She told him that she remembered when she was a little girl of paddling on the Mississippi and coming into Sandy Lake



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in the canoe, and that her first recollection of Sandy Lake was of the large dog teams of the fur traders. Mr. Murphy inquired of her the location of the trading post and she pointed--over there--to the Northeast shore of Sandy Lake, indicating the large bald hill now known as "Judge Addison's" \* place. She told Murphy that at the time of her arrival there were no other trading posts on the lake, and she was positive there was no post at the junction of Sandy and Mississippi Rivers, (the site of William Aitkin's post in the early 1800's) nor was there a post on Brown's Point, where the Northwest Company operated in 1794. Niby-na-gaunce told Mr. Murphy that the traders at this old post at Judge Addison's were referred to by the Indians as Jamok-a-mon (Big Knife). They were given this title by the Indians because they had fought and "chased the Indians" with large knives or swords.

The Fort or Post stood at the foot and on the East side of the large hill and faced the lake. There stood a look-out building on the top of the hill which rises precipitously well over a hundred feet above the surface of the lake and commands a view of almost the entire lake. She stated that later on, this post was moved over on the point, on the North side of Sandy River at the confluence of the Sandy and Mississippi Rivers. (According to Mr. Murphy, the long "Camel Back" or hump that extends in a Northerly direction from the junction of the Sandy and Mississippi Rivers and on the East side of the Mississippi, was always called the "Point.") Mr. Murphy is positive that the "Hudson Bay Co." had a post on "Judge Addison's." He states that in 1881 he found unmistakable evidence of the buildings in the form of rotting post or sills, the site of the post had however grown over with

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large trees. Evidence of the look-out on the top of the hill was still visible.

Your reporter examined the site with Mr. Murphy, and certainly no more ideal site for a Post could be found. At the present time the site of this supposed "Hudson Bay" post there stands a modern two story dwelling, built by "Old Judge Addison." \*\* The caretaker of the property showed your reporter a collection of relics found on the site by the owner, among these was hand-made implement wrought apparently from Steel, and evidently intended to be a Hoe, or possibly an Adz.

\* "Judge Addison" is phonetic and is possibly Edison.

Clifford U. Greer  
Reporter  
Project 8017

Seq. No. 8



Re: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History

Subject: Interview Mr. George Dodge, Age 85

Your reporter visited the home of Mr. Dodge, a widower situated  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles northwest of McGregor on the old Crainfield estate. At the time of my arrival Mr. Dodge was engaged in hoeing his little garden in which I could see he took great pride. Complimenting him on the fine condition of his garden, his rugged physical appearance, etc. so as to get him in a talkative mood, I explained my mission.

"Wal, so your are the young fellow who's they been telling is gona write a book" "Wal I'm glad you came, ya know it gets perty lonesome out here." "Yes, I raise all my own garden stuff; had to sell my cow though, couldn't milk her any more," holding up his hands to display his swollen rheumatic knuckles.

Mr. Dodge was born of parents of mixed nationality in New York state May 16th 1855.

At the age of twenty-five he accompanied his parents in a covered wagon, crossing the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota in thirty days. In the year 1880 at Grand Forks, N. Dak he took a government homestead claim which he farmed for the succeeding ten years. During this time he married and one child was born to this union in 1887. "I went broke, lost over thirty-thousand dollars." For the next few years he roamed about the country, working at any available job, "I'm a farmer, bull puncher, steam engineer, carpenter or anything yu want."

The Northern Pacific Railway Company in the spring of 1893 sent Mr. Dodge to McGregor in the capacity of Section foreman "I was the only white man here outside of the depot agent." The village of McGregor comprised six Italian families. "Frank Speegle" (Frank Spicola) owned and operated the only store which was a small log structure situated on the site of the present postoffice building and his supply of merchandise was limited to a few stable grocerits. There were a few Finnish families, living at this time in the region east and south of McGregor who would make periodic trips over the intervening marshes to replenish their larder. The "Finns" required loaf sugar and as such luxuries were not carried in stock the order was placed with "Speegle" who transmitted it to Duluth.

With few exceptions "Warehauser" had the timber rights on any tract of land with 10,000 feet of commercial logs on it. "There wasn't a road in the country," "I cut the first road from McGregor to Bass Lake" ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of McGregor into T. 48 N., R. 24 ".)

For two weeks before the arrival of the "Hinckley Fire" the smoke was "so dern thick you couldn't see the train coming till it got on top of ya." "I saved the town from burning up." Before the fire arrived, Mr. Dodge instructed the section hands to dig a ditch around the Water Tank, Depot and Cola Dock, then fill all available tubs and containers with water,

this to be used to control their backfire which was set just before the "big fire" approached, this proved successful.

Mr. Dodge states that he purchased the  $W\frac{1}{2}$  of the  $NW\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 31, T.48 N., R. 23 for the sum of three dollars per acre. That portion of this tract that lies north of the Northern Pacific R. R. tracks. He then had platted into lots and blocks and sold same to Hesper J. Newell. This plat is now known as Hesper J. Newell's Addition, within the present corporate limits of the village of McGregor.

Mr. Dodge says he contracted to build the first church and after his part of the building was completed, which was everything except plastering and interior decorating, the church funds were exhausted and in order to raise funds for its completion, a musicale was given. It so happened that the local real estate agent, Mr. Hesper J. Newell had a beautiful daughter who was one of a trio giving a vocal rendition at the musicale, in the audience was Mr. J. B. Olson, the local saloon-keeper, "he was kind of drunk" and at the close of the hymn he walks up to Miss Newell and says "If you will sing that song all by your self, I will plaster the church free of charge." This she did and "J. B. Olson kept his word" and completed the building. (Local saloon-keeper gets plastered and plasters church for a song.)

Furing the "Indian scare" he met Mrs. Lampert running to McGregor "dragging her kids" and screaming "the Indians are coming."

Interview Axel P. Johnson at his farm home at East Lake Minnesota.

Andrew P. Johnson emigrated from Sweden and settled in Spalding Township in 1894, being the first permanent settler in Spalding Township, filed a government homestead claim on a tract of land in Sec. 34. No improved roads existed in the region and the township was penetrated by ox team over the old military trail from Moose Lake westward.

The closest store was "Speegles" (F. Spicola) at McGregor about nine miles to the north but as it was impossible to drive a team over the intervening bogs in the summer months it was necessary to lay in a six months' supply of groceries early in the spring before the frost left the ground.

Sears Roebuck and Co. supplied much of the more staple items, 100 lbs. of "Arbucle" coffee, 50 lbs. of soap, sugar, flour, etc. were frequently shipped by freight to McGregor than hauled by ox team to the homestead site.

The first sewing machine in the township was shipped to Mr. Johnson by freight to McGregor then carried over the marsh to East Lake on his back.

The McGregor Hotel was built by Mr. J. E. Murphy in 1900, Mr. Murphy operated it about three years then sold it to Mr. Andrew P. Johnson in 1903. Mr. Johnson operated the hotel for about one year then rented it to Mr. Andrew Burud, who was the operator at the time it burned to the ground in McGregor's first major fire.

Mr. Axel P. Johnson recalls vividly the pioneer saloon days in McGregor. He states that the primary purpose for the incorporation of the village of McGregor was so that the village could control the saloon license fee. At the time the village was incorporated there were three saloons operating in McGregor and one of the first official acts of the village council was to allow liquor licenses to J. P. Olson and Hudson & Turner. Of the three saloons that operated in McGregor, Mr. Johnson recalls the Hudson & Turner saloon as the "hot spot" of them all. Pistols were carried openly and upon



the least provocation were used. Interspersed throughout the record of the village council are resolutions to remind the village marshal to stop the shooting around the saloons and among the first ordinances passed was the one prohibiting the discharging of fire arms within the village.

One form of recreation indulged in by most of the "Barroom Barons" at the Hudson & Turner saloon was that of attempting to shoot from the hip through the west wall of the saloon from the inside and hit the hitching post standing outside of the building. I understand that the marksman who made the attempt and failed, was "stuck" for the drinks, what he received if successful is not now clear. It is said that the west wall of the saloon was thoroughly perforated by bullet holes before this form of indoor sport was finally brought under control.

(Joe), J. H. Hudson was beyond doubt the most colorful and outstanding character of McGregor's pioneer saloon days. He was a large muscular square shouldered six-foot bartender who tended bar in the J. P. Olson saloon, and later was partner in the ownership of the Hudson & Turner saloon.

Joe Hudson was loved by some, hated by many and cursed by all. He is remembered in McGregor as the straightest shooting and fastest man on the draw that McGregor has ever seen; he could drink at least six lumberjacks under the table at one sitting and usually did. For a number of years he was town marshal and constable and many a law-breaker bit the dust under his deadly fire, one, never to rise again.

Joe Hudson's hands always shook as with the palsy and many of the more romantic minded pioneers attributed this condition to "his conscience bothering him" and not to the enormous quantities of liquor consumed daily.

Joe was also a ladies man and many a happy marriage foundation crumpled under Joe's winning smile. It is said that Joe did not dare chastise a mischievous child on the street for fear he would be striking one of his own children.

It was not until Old Joe opened the Hudson & Turner saloon that he really came into his own. It was then that his prowess with a gun was spread far and wide. In daily exhibitions with his six shooter the populace learned to respect and fear him, many an innocent bystander was "barely missed" in these playful shooting exhibitions in the Hudson & Turner saloon.

Shooting through the wall at the hitching-post outside was the favorite pastime, although picking off the kerosene wall-lamps was not overlooked as a form of diversion.

The tall scotch cap worn by "Jess" Jones, who was a pioneer settler close to McGregor, and who was an almost daily frequenter of the Hudson & Turner saloon was also a favorite target for Joe's bullets, drawn by the magnetic force of "Jess" Jones' greasy cap, Joe Hudson's bullets on several occasions found their mark, thus removing Jess' cap speedily, if not politely, as he would enter the saloon door. Jess always accepted these playful pranks in a good humor until one day he "allowed" this was going a bit to far, on that occasion Jess was leaning back against the wall, sleeping in his chair in the Hudson & Turner saloon, his cap perched upon his head. This was an opportunity not to be passed up by Old Joe so with a lightening like draw of his six shooter he fired, removing Jess' cap but in so doing he also removed a goodly portion of hair and epidermous from Jess' scalp, where heretofore Jess wore his hair in a poppadour, he now sported a neat center part

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Ref: McGregor and Sandy Lake History

This, from Mr. G. W. Price of Hennepin County Good Roads Association:

As per your request I have made a rather quick survey of the Indian situation around Big Sandy Lake. The results are not completely guaranteed due to the fact that imagination must fill in many of the long gaps.

This country is well worth a thorough study because it very apparently was the most important trade center in furs in the western district for a great many years, and certainly controlled the headwaters of the Mississippi. The Indian traffic across this country probably goes back farther than the records. I would assume that it was the country of the early Siouхан tribes. This was probably true prior to the migration of some northern Sioux to form what is now the Assiniboin of Canada.

The old trail headed for the east and the fur markets came up and down the Mississippi and into the channel where the Government Dam now stands, across Sandy Lake to the outlet of Prairie River into Big Horn Bay up the Prairie River, and I would assume up the West (\*) Savannah to Savannah Lake, then a Portage across to Wolf Lake, and again a portage to the East Savannah River, which they followed to its outlet into the St. Louis River near Floodwood, and thence down the St. Louis River to Fond du Lac where there was a control post. \*(Note, see The Old Savanna Portage, by Irving Harlow Hart, in "Minnesota History" magazine, June, 1927, Vol. 8, No. 2, p. 117-139.)

I believe that the first post there must have been the Northwest Company post, which faced the north on the point immediately north of Brown's Bay and west of Bass Lake. I see no evidence of the existence of a Brown's Bay on the maps, but I do find reference to it in the notes. This post was built either early in 1794, or prior to that date. The trader from 1794 to

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1797 was Charles Bousquet. This Northwest Company was an English company and was a forerunner of the Hudson Bay Company. You will note that there is evidence that also in 1794 was built the American Fur Company Post--this was John Jacob Astor's Company--immediately north of Libby at the junction of the Mississippi River and the north outlet to Sandy Lake west of the Government Dam. This was across the Sandy River from Libby apparently on the point at the confluence of the Mississippi and Sandy Rivers.

The British occupied the Northwest Company Post until about 1816. The war of 1812, plus the congressional act of 1862, forced them out, then the American Fur Company took over the Northwest Post and occupied it for some years, later moving it to their own Post north of Libby. Following their occupancy of the old fort, it was occupied by a competitive trader, named Abbott, for some years. Later this spot was taken over by the Chippewas who erected a village on the site. The post at Libby was at one time occupied by a trader named Libby. (\*)

Jacob J. Brower in his "Prehistoric Man at the Headwaters of the Mississippi River," states that this country had a most important post which had been used by the Indians before the advent of the white man. Du Luth used this Savannah portage in the summer of 1679 when he penetrated as far west as the Sandy Lake country. He was probably the first white trader in the district. Allan Morrison states that his brother, William, erected the original Fort on Sandy Lake in 1794. There is some discrepancy in this statement because he is known to have gone into the country in opposition to the Northwest Company and remained there until 1805. His notes mentioned that he found Bosquai (Bosquet) already established at the Lake. Zebulon Pike gives the first detailed description of the Northwest Company Post on Sandy Lake, which he calls Lake De Sable. He had no knowledge of a post in



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that location and in scouting for an outlet at night saw the lights of the post and was surprised at the size of the activities.

About 1820 the Cass expedition passed through Sandy Lake. There they found the American Fur Company established in the old Fort. Henry Schoolcraft visited Sandy Lake in his second expedition sometime between 1820 and 1832. Schoolcraft states that the American Post had then been moved to a point just north of the mouth of the Sandy River where it flows into the Mississippi. Edmund F. Ely, a Congregational Missionary to the Indians in 1833 and 1834, refers to the old Fort, at that time occupied by a man named Abbott. Apparently the Indian village which occupied the old Fort must have been an offshoot of the Chippewa village which had prior to that time occupied Brown's Point. The battle of Sandy Lake, a major fight between the then established Chippewas and the Sioux invaders, took place on Brown's Point. Many graves can be located on the ridge on the west end.

There is a legend of the Chippewas which has about it enough evidence of fact to bear repeating. (\*2) The date is, of course, lost in tradition. A great many years ago, say the Chippewas, at the time when they had pierced the west as far as Lake Superior, a brave warrior and his squaw ascended the St. Louis and East Savannah Rivers seeking new hunting grounds. Night overtook them and ordering his squaw to make camp, the warrior pushed on to look over the land. He came to an opening in the forest from which he observed loons swooping down in their long plunging flight which indicated to him that they were lighting on water. He pushed on and came to the brow of a cliff from which he looked down on a village of the Sioux. There were a great many teepees clustered along an island in the lake, the island being a mile from the shore. He turned back to warn his squaw of the presence of the enemies. They extinguished their fire and began to retrace their steps, but



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the Sioux had seen their smoke and gave chase. They caught the brave and killed him, and the squaw found her way back to her own people after many hardships. The legend says that to avenge the death of this warrior, the Chippewas took the warpath and thus began a long series of conflicts between the Sioux and Chippewas in the district of Sandy Lake.

You might note here that the war between the Sioux and Chippewas began about 1730 and continued until about 1750 when the Chippewas had established their control of this region. You might also note here that a factor in their control was the use of the rifle against the Sioux bow and arrow.

- (\*1) Mr. J. E. (Jim) Murphy, whose timber cruising activities have carried him over every foot of the Sandy Lake region dating back to 1881, states:

Old Joe Libby was the first man to cut commercial timber in the Mississippi-Sandy Lake region. Old Joe Libby drove an ox team from the state of Maine to Minneapolis. There he took a homestead on the ground where the present Minneapolis Fair Grounds stand. Leaving his family on the homestead he ascended the Mississippi to the region of Sandy Lake where he lived with a squaw until old age overtook him when he returned to his family was prior to 1881. This was the year Murphy arrived at Sandy Lake and found the firm of Mark Libby and Rogers established. Mark Libby was the son of Old Joe Libby.

- (\*2) This story was told to me by Mr. J. E. Murphy. The island upon which the Sioux were encamped was not an island as it was connected with the shore by a long semi-circular sand-bar and it was upon this bar that the Sioux were observed by the Chippewa warrior. It was because of the fact the observed teepees were made of Buffalo hides that the brave recognized the enemy.

Clifford U. Greer  
Reporter.

Source: Mr. Matt Randa, pioneer settler, Rice River Township.

Mr. Matt Randa states that he was born of Finnish parents in Finland, on Oct. 25, 1863, that at the age of eighteen years he emigrated to the United States and came to the town of Montreal, Mich. (note, "Montreal" is phonetic spelling, Mr. Randa did not know how the name of the town was spelled; his daughter-in-law, who acted as interpreter, stated that she thought it was spelled the same as Montreal, Canada.

While at Montreal, Mich., Mr. Randa married Miss Josephine Field, a Finnish emigrant.

In the fall of 1893 Mr. Randa with his wife and small baby together with his wife's brother, Mr. John Field, came by railroad to the town of Moose Lake, Minn. in search for a location. At Moose Lake, all of the earthly possessions of both families was loaded aboard an ox-drawn, two-wheeled cart and they pushed westward from Moose Lake over the old "Military Trail," in those days commonly known as "The Lake Road." This "lake road" was the only means open to the pioneers by which they could penetrate westward from Moose Lake into the vast area of virgin hard-wood and pine forest, lying between Moose Lake and Lake Mille Lac; the road itself, had from many years of disuse, grown over with heavy timber which had to be cut out as they proceeded westward, at times, on the higher, hard ground the only means of determining the course of the old trail was by the growth of larger timber on the sides of the trail; where the trail crossed meadowland or lower ground the old trail was clearly discernable by the deeply embedded ruts in the soil.

After many days of tedious progress during which time the single ox-drawn cart was many times mired and the entire load had to be transferred to their backs and carried on to higher ground, they came to Section 12, in township 46 N, an <sup>un-</sup>organized township, which at a later date was organized and named RICE RIVER TOWNSHIP, from the fact that Rice River meandered over the township.

Mr. Randa filed a homestead claim on the W $\frac{1}{2}$  of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 12, Township 46 N, Range 23W, while Mr. John Field filed a similar claim on a tract of land adjoining on the west.

Mr. Randa is positive that he and Mr. Field were the first and only settlers in the neighborhood for many miles around, however, he states that there were some other settlers along the old trail closer to Moose Lake; McGregor was settled and after the first year they used to trade with "Speegles" which was the closest store.

Heavy pine and hard-wood timber covered these homestead claims and at first no thought was given to the value of the hard-wood, the primary thought was to get the timber cut off so as to permit the tiling of the soil, and much of the finest birch and other hardwood was burned in the brush pile in an effort to get fields opened up. A log home was constructed of the finest white pine logs and Mr. Randa's original pioneer home still stands and serves as a dwelling, although enlarged, on his original homestead where he still resides.

Born to the union of Mr. Randa and his first wife were five children, William, John, Jack and Joe and at present they are living in the neighborhood.



Mr. Randa's first wife died in about 1899. On January 5th, 1902 he married his second wife, Miss Susanna Nissila, to this union was born five boys: Walter, Eino, Lauri, Charles and Alfred and two girls: Tyyne (Mrs. Joel Hemmila), Ina (Mrs. Edward Soyring), all living at the present time in the neighborhood.

Mr. Randa is content to set in his rocking chair and let "the boys" operate the farm.

Receives his mail at East Lake, Minnesota, Rt. 1, Box 66.

P. S. Mr. Randa states that to his knowledge no quarry of any kind ever operated in the neighborhood. I did not press Mr. Randa for the story of lumbering in his neighborhood for the reason my interpreter was unsatisfactory, and this information was covered fairly well by Mrs. Haltonen in a previous interview.

Subject: McGregor History  
Source: Anthony Spicola, son of Francisco (Frank) Spicola.

Francisco (Frank) Spicola was born of Sicilian parents in Scily in the year 1851, he married (date unknown) Miss Katalina Ferlita. Two children were born to this union, Anthony (Tony) and a girl, Angeline (Mrs. C. A. Maddy).

Mr. Spicola emigrated to the United States in 1887, worked in different sections of the country at odd jobs for a number of years. In 1891 he reached the site of McGregor station along with Pasquale Memmola, purchased the Henry Lozway store and engaged in the general merchandise business for a number of years.

Mrs. Spicola died in 1923 at McGregor and Mr. Spicola followed her in death in 1925. Services were held at the Catholic Church at McGregor and interment was in the McGregor cemetery.

Mr. "Frank" Spicola always took an active part in civic affairs, was the first village treasurer, which post he held for a number of years, a shrewd business man, a devoted father and a good Catholic. "Speegles" store at McGregor became known far and wide.

Anthony (Tony) Spicola came to McGregor with his parents in 1891 and remembers well the many hardships and privations undergone by the early pioneers, although he was but seven years of age. Among other settlers arriving in McGregor the same year his father came, Tony remembers the following: Raffle DiGregory, Salvador Trifilett, Mike Jordan, "The Jeannett's," and others.

Extensive lumbering operations were being carried on, principally around Sandy River and points north, Potter Casey & Co.; Ed. Douglas (from Tamarack and later operator of the Sandy River Lumber Co.). Jim Murphy was one of the largest operators near Sandy Lake.

"Tony" was one of the first pupils attending McGregor's school, among his classmates he remembers: Susie Christello, Filhamina Jorday, Joe Gregory (DiGregory) and his sister Angeline. He was one of the pupils who walked the railroad tracks to Grayling to take advantage of the three-month class taught there, school was double hard for him as he had to learn the English language and at the same time learn to read and write it, aside from his regular classes he took English lessons from Mrs. Daniel Lozway.

He clearly remembers the Indian "Scare" of 1898 and states that his father and a number of other pioneers barricaded themselves in his father's store and set up all night "pouring lead bullets" in preparation for the impending attack.

Anthony Spicola aside from working in his father's store, was his father's sole bookkeeper and secretary, he also did all of the book work in connection with his father's duties as village treasurer. In the late 90's he remembers of buying hundreds of pounds of butter from the settlers for the sum of 8¢ a pound, in trade, with the exception of a few pounds of the most choice lots of butter, which was sold to the trainmen at a higher price, all of this butter was packed into barrels and shipped to Duluth to be made into renovated butter. The price received at the Duluth market was about 9¢ per pound.



## WILD RICE INDUSTRY

Possibly long before the advent of the white man to this region the Indians were annually harvesting the wild rice crop, or at least a part of it, and there is scarcely a doubt but what it ranked high as a staple item of food for these early tribes during the long cold winters.

Mention of the Indian "Rice Holes" are noted in the writings of the earliest explorers. Wild rice as a valuable commodity in trade, however, was not noted in this region until after 1910.

Big Rice Lake near Kimberly, Rice River, Lake Minnewawa, Sandy River and flowage, Rock Lake in Jevone township and numerous other lakes, small bodies of water and streams, surrounding McGregor are all heavy producers of wild rice. Long before the erection of the Indian village on the "point" at Rice Lake, many Indians annually made their way to Rice Lake to harvest the abundant crop always found there.

Harvesting the crop was done then, as now, entirely by hand methods. A canoe or a long narrow boat is propelled through the rice fields with a long pole, 12 to 18 feet long, on the lower end of which there is secured a crotch having about a 12 inch spread, the Indian standing in the prow of the boat, places the forked pole at the base of a clump of rice and if the bottom is of a mucky nature he gives the pole a half twist around the rice root, then hand over hand he forces the boat forward through the rice while the squaw is seated in the bottom of the skiff a little aft of center. A 18 to 24 inch flail in each hand, as the boat is propelled forward, with one flail she reaches out and bends the rice heads over the boat and with the other hand flails the heads with a stripping motion thus knocking the ripe kernels into the boat, the motion is repeated alternately on one side and then the other as the "Buck" attempts to keep the boat moving steadily forward. An Indian will harvest from 100 to 200 pounds of green rice a day, while a white man, that is two men, one "poler" and one "knocker," will harvest all the way from 200 to 550 pounds of green rice depending on whether it is "virgin" picking or has'nt been "knocked" before. The major difference between the Indian "ricer" and the white "ricer" is in the manner in which the boat is propelled, invariably the Indian stands in the prow of the boat while the white man stands in the rear.

Wild rice is unlike many other grain crops in that only a few kernels ripen at a time and once the kernels ripen they fall off into the water if the slightest wind shakes the stocks.

It usually requires about three weeks for all of the kernels to become ripe and during this time the field can be gone over and over about a dozen times. The rice, as harvested, has long barbs on the husks an inch or more long and as the grains are flailed into the boat this little barb has a tendency to cause the grains to lie in the boat in a vertical position with the barb upright and the appearance of a boat load of rice as it is harvested is similar to a broadloom rug, from your reporter's personal experience I would say that it more closely resembles a scrub flee-bitten dog from the presence of the millions of small water spiders, small reddish hard shelled beetle-like bugs plus a goodly supply of white rice worms that are ever present in the rice as it comes from the lake. The rice worms give th the most veteral "ricer" no end of discomfort as they worm their way under



his clothing and up arms and legs to the common destination on the back of his neck where they are wont to collect in a bunch not unlike a swarm of bees, second in order as a favorite parking place for these worms seems to be in between the cold meat sandwiches in the ricer's dinner bucket.

Before the rice is ready for the market the husks must be removed, this is accomplished in two separate operations vis. parching and threshing.

Parching of the rice is done so as to make the husk brittle and at the same time remove most of the barbs, this operation was performed by the Indians by placing the green rice in an iron kettle (usually borrowed from a white settler and for which loan of the kettle the owner usually received as a gift anywhere from 150 to 200 pounds of rice, the value of that amount of rice at 1927 prices would be in the neighborhood of \$100 or more) under which a hot fire was burning, the rice was stirred continuously to prevent burning, then when parched sufficiently it was placed in the "rice holes" and stomped with bare feet or by other means to remove the husks, when it was fanned in the wind thus separating grain from chaff and the product was considered finished.

With the advent of the white man into the rice business mechanical methods of finishing the rice were introduced, and at the present time hand finishing in this region is not known.

While the machinery introduced into the industry is all hand-made and rather crude in appearance, it is quite efficient and is a long step forward from the original crude methods of the Indians.

Parching is done at present by utilizing a 60 gallon metal oil drum, through the center, from end to end a metal shaft is secured, the ends of this shaft is placed on a set of bearings enabling the drum to be rotated while in a horizontal position, both ends of the drum are closed and a door is cut in the side to enable a charge of rice to be introduced, this assembly rests over a hot fire, the drum is rotated with its charge of rice until sufficiently parched, when its contents are discharged through the side door and another charge introduced.

The threshing of the parched rice is accomplished by another device, constructed usually of a 30 gallon metal drum, having a metal shaft extending through it from end to end similar to the parcher, only in the thresher, the outer drum is held stationary while the inner shaft, to which a series of wooden fingers tipped with pieces of automobile tire fabric are attached, is rotated at a high rate of speed, driving of the thresher is usually accomplished by utilizing an old model "T" Ford car as a power plant, the rear wheel of which has been replaced by a pulley and belted to the thresher shaft. After the charge has been threshed sufficiently the charge is introduced directly into a common fanning mill which completes the finished rice.

Anthony Spicola maintains a rice finishing plant in connection with his general merchandise store located at East Lake, Minnesota, and is considered one of the big rice buyers in this region.

Anthony Spicola commenced purchasing finished wild rice from the Indians in 1912, for choice grades as high as 8¢ per pound was paid in that year.

The price of finished wild rice rose steadily until the peak price of 1927 in which year 59¢ per pound was gladly paid for even the poorer grades.

The price of finished rice after 1927 held steady but never again equaled the 59¢ high of 1927.

After 1933, due to the fact that the rice buyers were purchasing the unfinished product directly from the ricers on the lake shore at prices ranging from 17¢ downward, finished rice had become as scarce as hen's teeth. That year marked the end of hand finished rice.

The McGregor Dennerly Company, Aitkin, Minnesota have for many years been dealing in wild rice and are the largest dealers in this region and at one time it is said they had the market cornered.

In 1934 Anthony Spicola constructed a rice finishing plant at East Lake and commenced buying unfinished wild rice, 15¢ per pound was paid for the unfinished rice (commonly called "green rice") in that year.

In 1939 the Minnesota legislature, as a conservation measure, passed certain laws governing the wild rice harvest these laws were intended to curb racketeering and also serve as a conservation measure.

You may note here that the wholesale invasion of the whites into the wild rice harvest started in about 1936, however, prior to this date there were some whites engaged in the harvest but they may be considered as the exception, a white ricer was always considered as a lowly character. J. E. (Jim) Murphy was an exception and they excused him as "having lived with the Indians for so dam long that he is about half "Injin" anyway.

The major factor for the whites invading the Indian's wild rice harvest was the economic depression plus the ready market for the UNFINISHED product at a good price. An ambitious ricer after a few day's experience could make thirty to forty dollars for a single day's work, receive his money as soon as he got to shore where the rice buyers congregated to buy his lot.

The extent of the industry in this region is not accurately known to your reporter, it probably amounts to many thousands of dollars annually. This information possibly can be obtained from the State Department of Conservation at least as to the years 1939-40 as the law requires all buyers furnish this information at the close of the buying season.

In the year 1939 prices paid for green rice ranged form 12¢ to 8¢.

In 1940, prices ranged from 5¢ to 4¢ for lake rice, while river rice was not accepted if it was detected.

The ratio of white men to Indians engaged in the harvesting of wild rice I would estimate as being about ten to one, in the years of 1939-40.

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McGregor Lakes  
Notes  
July 26, 1940

Ref: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History

Interview George A. Smith, half-breed Indian Chief living at Ball Club Lake, 8 miles west of Deer River, Minnesota.

George A. Smith states that he was born near Sandy Lake in 1868. Father's name, George A. Smith, mother's name Min-ti-mo-ee, Indian. His mother died when he was an infant and he was raised by his grandmother, Nib-ynagaunce (see Seq. report No. 8, sheet 2).

In his youth he remembered a trader, a half-breed Frenchman, named Barzeen, who operated a store on Brown's Point on Sandy Lake, halfway out from the mainland on the Point. This would be approximately at the site of the Northwest Co. trading post.

When H. M. Rice was in McGregor arranging some sort of a treaty with the Indians and the Sandy Lake band had no Chief to represent them in the negotiations, George A. Smith was chosen by vote of the band as Chief of the Sandy Lake band. This, he thinks, was about 1900 or earlier.

According to Smith, the Indian Medicine Men were practicing their art among the Sandy Lake Indians in the early 1880's. One Medicine man he knew used in the place of bone Swallowing Bones, two pieces of shotgun barrels about four inches long, these he used in the same manner as the conventional Swallowing Bone. In Winchell, the Aborigines of Minnesota, under Dances and Medicine, page 611, in describing the use of the Medicine bone, it is stated "This was the last resort of the medicine man." Whey the case was especially severe and not amenable to the ordinary juggler, he resorted to emesis, which he produced by causing the patient to swallow one or more of

McGregor Lakes  
Notes  
July 26, 1940

(Cont'd)

Ref: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History

these bones." To the knowledge of Mr. Smith, this was not the case with the medicine men of his acquaintance. The swallowing of the bone was done only by the medicine man himself, and not by the patient, the sole purpose for the swallowing of the bone was to give the medicine man the power to see through the patient and determine the cause of his sickness. Like an X-ray, explained Mr. Smith.

During the process of swallowing and regurgitating the bones, the Medicine Man would beat himself alternately on the chest and back with a small drum, which was about six inches in diameter and contained a quantity of shot on the inside, the purpose of the shot being to produce a rattling noise as the medicine man danced about during the ritual.

Another practice that was common among the Indians near Sandy Lake in the lumbering period, was that of "Shaking the God House." Shaking the God house was evidently a form or modification of "Jessakawin." For a description of this practice (see "The Aborigines of Minnesota," by N. H. Winchell, page 611. Mr. Smith, et al., have told me the God House had but one purpose, that purpose being solely to ascertain from the Manito whether the sickness would prove fatal to the patient. No payment or presents were demanded by the medicine man for this service. The shaking of the God House proved quite a source of amusement to the white lumbering men in the region, and one day during one of these rituals two lumbermen attempted to crash the gate by disguising themselves as squaws and kneeling beside the God House along with the other squaws. This attempt would have proved successful had not the blanket that one of the lumbermen draped about his person, parted, revealing



McGregor Lakes  
Notes  
July 26, 1940

(Cont'd)

Ref: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History

a pair of masculine knees, whereupon eviction of the two was prompt.

Hole in the Day, Chief of the Leech Lake band of Chippewa, states Mr. Smith, was taken to Washington by the Government, there he was dined and wine and shown how the white man lived, after his return from Washington, the Government sent him a fine buggy or surrey in which Hole in the Day used to ride about in along with his body-guard in a style befitting a Chief. In this same carriage, Hole in the Day was later ambushed and assassinated along with his body-guard. The reason for his assassination was the fact that Hole in the Day was making an effort to have all the breeds removed from the Government pay role. Those responsible for this assassination, according to Mr. Smith and Mrs. Cornish, were two parties named Fairbanks and Beaulieu, who hired the assassins for the job. Mr. Cornish states that the reason for Hole in the Day's murder was not generally known. "They were afraid to let it out."

Clifford U. Greer

*Powitt*

Aitkin County History

Aitkin county was established on May 23, 1857. It was first spelled Aikon, but the spelling was changed by act of legislature in 1872. It was so designated because of the prominence of William A. Aitkin, Scotch trader with the Ojibways or Chippewas at Sandy Lake. Aitkin came to Sandy Lake when a boy in about 1802. He served as trader under John Drew, married an Indian woman of influential family, and soon was a trader on his own account. In 1831 he took charge of the Fond du Lac department of the American Fur Company which had been incorporated by John Jacob Astor in 1806, making his headquarters at Sandy Lake. His post is known to have stood at Libby, the site being a short distance from the dam, south of the Charles Wakefield residence. Aitkin died in the fall of 1851 and his grave is on the bank of the Mississippi river, near the mouth of Swan river, on the north edge of Aitkin county. That this post was disposed to go to the limits in its trade facilities is recorded in the Sibley papers. In 1824 the United States Indian agent at Mackinaw put the post on par with the whiskey dispenser of the British company regarding the sale of liquor to Indians. His permit read:

"At the earnest solicitations of the agent of the American Fur Company, and upon his representation that without a supply of the ardent spirits to be used in his trade upon the extreme northwestern frontier their trade will be completely thrown into the hands of the British, permission is hereby granted to Mr. Wm. A. Aitkin to take on board his barge at this point the quantity of two barrels of whiskey destined for the northwest trade . . ."

The permit was never renewed, and in February 1832, Aitkin wrote to Sibley to complain, stating "our worst neighbors are the Baillie's People, as they are well supplied with High Wines which always bears a predominant sway in the Indn. trade."



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\* \* \* \* \*

Aitkin's post at Sandy Lake was not, however, the initial enterprise of its kind in this county. William Morrison is credited with leaving established a post in 1794, and in 1805 the Northwest Company took over its operation. Professor Irving H. Hart of the Iowa State Teachers College, Cedar Falls, a summer resident annually at Sandy Lake, has made the most extensive research in locating the site, using the description, given by Lieutenant Zebulon Pike as a guide. He found evidence of its ruins the summer of 1926 on Browns Point, part of the original buildings having stood where the cottage of Enoch Jonson stands.

\* \* \* \* \*

In 1820 when the Cass expedition passed through Sandy Lake on its way to the head waters of the Mississippi, this post was visited, and Henry Schoolcraft, the noted historian, who accompanied Cass relates that he found representatives of the American concern established there.

One of the very first schools in Minnesota was established in the autumn, 1832, by Frederick Ayer, a Presbyterian missionary. Mr. and Mrs. Ayer went to Yellow Creek in 1833, and Rev. Boutwell and Edmund F. Ely, Congregationalists continued the Sandy Lake school. Later in the year, took place the romantic marriage of Mr. Boutell and Hester Crooks, the halfblood Ojibwa girl and daughter of Ramsey Crooks, after whom the city of Crookstone is named. Mrs. Boutell is described as a highly intelligent and noble Christian woman. Boutell was interested almost as much in making good farmers and homebuilders out of the Indians as in directing their spiritual welfare and teaching them the three R's. "These good

missionaries were the first 'county agricultural agents' and Brown's Point and other spots in the vicinity of Sandy \_\_\_\_\_ show evidences of having been farmed in those early days. In one of his letters Boutell remarked:

"The Elder Brother, the most influential chief, has a fine garden of corn, potatoes, and small seeds, such as beets, carrots, and onions; he is fast approximating to habits of civilization. He last fall got himself a decent log house built and bought a horse; this spring he paid to Wm. A. Aitkin five otters for a young cow. To encourage him I gave him a young calf, which with his mare and colt will make him a fine little stock. His is an Indian among a thousands for his sincerity, integrity, and inflexible love of truth and equity."

Cedar Lake also can lay claim to having had early distinguished visitors. Zebulon Pike stopped there while on his expedition in 1805. He was accompanied by twenty soldiers from St. Louis. They came up the Mississippi in a keelboat 70 feet long, provisioned for four months. They wintered in what is now Morrison county. From there, they set out December 10 afoot to Sandy Lake, Leach and Cass. On the third day of January, 1806, Pike visited the post of an Englishman named Grant, on what was then called the Lower Red Cedar Lake, now named Cedar Lake.

"When we came in sight of his house," Pike wrote, "I observed the flag of Great Britain flying. I felt indignant and cannot say what my feelings would have excited me to, had he not informed me that it belonged to the Indians. This was not much more agreeable to me."

The trader, Grant, however, extended cordial hospitality to the explorers and guided them to Sandy lake, which the party reached five days later. Pike revisited the Cedar Lake post on his southward trip in February, remaining three days.

\* \* \* \* \*



Rich in lore is the region and Sandy Lake was the scene of a great battle and one of the last between Chippewas and the Sioux. The latter were driven out of this region. The Chippewa, in the main, were friendly to the whites, and comprised one of the tribes which lent themselves most readily to civilizing influences despite their love for primitive life.

Copied from Aitkin Independent Age, October 11, 1929 by  
Alvar Norbeck.

Letter from E. T. Ayer to Oakes and Russel

"Dear Friends

\* \* \* \* \*

The next summer, 1830, he Rev. Frederic Ayer went to Lake Superior with the fur Traders, and spent the winter in the family of Mr. Lyman Warren. Here he taught a few children, and applied himself to the study of the Ojibwa language. The next year he spent at Sandy Lake with the late Mr. Aitkin /sic/ Here also he had a school, said to be the first taught in Minnesota."

Sept. 16, 1842. \* \* \* The missionaries in the country at that time were:

\* \* \* \* \*

Methodist

\* \* \* \* \*

Saml Spates )  
John Johnson) Sandy Lake (Wis.)

\* \* \* \* \*

One man Ki-ash-ke-bos, (the meaning is shaving ppr.) a medicine man, and brother of Kavanaugh's celebrated Martin Luther, of Sandy Lake, and his family wife and three children, professed conversion, were baptized

and received but was one of our most successful apoment /sic/ before I left

\* \* \* \* \*

The water rose in June so as to overflow all the low land. \* \* \*  
It drove us all to higher ground undermining our mission house, leaving it  
nearly a wreck. We all had to take to wigwam life. While we were so  
situated, after the waters began to abate, Bro. Spates came from Sandy  
Lake, and next day Bro. Goodrich came in the fur company's boat from La  
Pointe. \* \* \* I was going to conference by way of St. Peters, and ac-  
companied Bro. Spates to Sandy, where I baptized John Johnson's child  
Bro. Spates not being in orders. We came (Spates and I in a bark canoe I  
had built at Pon du Lac, to Prairie du Chien before we could get a steamer.

\* \* \* \* \*

T. M. Fullerton



1870

From the Census records over Aitkin County, Minnesota - Crow Wing P. O.

(Seed. 1.)

		Age	Sex	Color	Occupation	Birthplace
Brunette	Louis	30	M	$\frac{1}{2}$ B.	Farmer	Minnesota
"	Angeline	30	F	"	keeping house	
"	Joseph	9	M	"		
"	Mary	6	F	"		
"	George	2	M	"		
"	Lizzie	4/12	F	"		
Brunette	Joseph	36	M	"	Farmer	
"	Catherine	31	F	"	keeping house	
"	John	16		"	at home	
"	Joseph	14		"	at home	
"	Peter	12		"	" "	
"	Mary	9		"		
"	Babtiste	7		"		
"	Louis	4/12				
Mitchell	William	40		"	laborer	
"	Cardicon	36		"	keeping house	
"	Mary	13		"	at home	
"	John	9		"	at home	

(Seed. 2. )

AGRICULTURE

Acres of land - Present Cash value

	Improved	Wood land	Other unimproved	Of farm	Of farm implements & machinery	Horses	Milk Cows	Other Cattle	Value of live stock	Indian Corn
Louis Brunette	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	80	77	\$250	\$25	2	1	2	\$230	16 bu
Joseph Brunette	3	80	64	\$250		1				22 "

Social Statistics of Aitkin County for 1870

Real Estate \$20,000

Personal Estate 25,000

Total \$45,000

Value estimated True value unknown



Excerpts from "Diary of Samuel Spates, Methodist Missionary to the  
Chippewa Indians Sept. 21 . . . Oct. 31, 1841:

\* \* \* \* \*

Tuesday Oct. 5 I got off this morning, and am now on what is  
called 'The grand portage.' As I came on today I stoped to see the Mission  
houses, which brother Copway is expected to occupy this year. \* \* \* I then  
walked out into the grave yard and here read the fol /low/ ing on a tome  
stone, 'Sacored to the memory of Alfred Aitkins, who fell a victim to a  
tretchorous assassin, Dec. 6th 1836, aged 20 years 10 months and 26 days.'

\* \* \*

Wednesday 6 After I layed down to sleep last night, It commenced  
raining, and I was glad to take shelter under a bark canoe, and have been  
under it all day, for it has been raining all day. \* \* \* I have but little  
provision with me and if I remain here much longer, they will be gon/e/.  
Yet I must remain until the Indians go who I am with. They seeme to be  
quite happy under their bark eating boild corne, but it is not the happiness  
that religion gives. It is only that of a full boley. \* \* \*

Thursday 7 I am now at the little portage. I came but a short  
distance to-day and have had my patience tried with these Indians. They  
are so very slow, they smoke the pipe about half of their time, then, they  
are so very vilthy! /sic/

\* \* \* My poor body has been suffering today. I have waided through  
and and water most all day, and packed about fourty lbs. on my back, yet my  
soul has been happy \* \* \*

Friday 8 As this is friday, I have been keeping fast. If it  
were not, I shoul /d/ be compeld to abstain for I have not as much as one  
meal with me, therefore I must go to sleep without brakeing my fast. \* \* \*  
the Indians gave me a small peice of bird this evening and I eat it with



out saul /t/ or anything else and it was very good indeed!

Saturday 9 \* \* \* \* \*

I asked an Indian for some meat this morning and he gave me some rine of pourk. I boiled and eat it and never I think eat anythin that tasted so good as pork rine. \* \* \* \* \* This is the first hog meat I have eat for about eight days and have been journeing all the time. I have sixty or seventy miles to go yet, and all the bredd I have is a peice about half as big as my hand.

\* \* \*

Sunday 10 Yesterday after I rote in my diary an Indian gave me a Pesant on which I fared well all day. \* \* \* I have been with the Indians so long and have got my clothes so dirty, that a stranger might take me for an Indian. \* \* \*

Monday 11 \* \* \* I have got to Sandy Lake again. Walked all day without anything to eat and feel as though I can eat almost anything even a gea.dog.

Excerpts from the diary of Rev. Samuel Spates; October 1841:

" \* \* \* \* \*

Wensiday 20 I have been very beuisey puting things to whrites all day, and have hardly took time to read or pray. This is not wright. My hearte is not enought fixed on God and heaven. O my blessed Lord help me to live by the moment. I have writen a long letter to Bro Copway, and Stephen Bounge says he is going to Fon du lac to morrow, so I will send the letter by him.

Thirsday 21 I have been at the same kind of work to day as I was at yesterday, yet I have tryed to pray more and live by faith & have writen one letter to Bro John Stephen is yet with me and is complaining of being sick. I think he wishes to stay, if so, I can not keep him for I



fear, some things stick to his hands, which do not belong to him.

Friday 22 I have had a na/s/ty case this day. Stephen drove his squaw off last night, about midnight, and I knew nothing of it until this morning. So I gave him a good siting down about it, after which he asked me to speak to his wife, as he called her. So I did, and made him and her promise to get married. I also caushened them not to sleep together until they were married, and farther saied, "if you do, you will commit a dultrey."

Now in vewe of this case are we Missionaries clear? we have let this man and woman remain at our house, for some days, and sleep together as man & wife, and yet, they are in trouth no more man & wife, than I and Queen Victory are. \* \* \* "

Satterday 23 \* \* \*

I asked a man today, if he would interpret for me tomorrow to preach to the Indians, and /he/ said he could not, and, yet it is his mothertonge. If he spoke the throuth, is it posable for me ever to preach in their language?

Mongay 25 \* \* \* Let me reccord for my own satisfaction, some of the Indian's superstitions. One man lost a son not long since, and, as the indian costom is they put the corpse upon a scaffold and as the father was successful in killing game he hung eleven ducks up at the coffin for his son! This peop/l/e are in the dark, O dark! dark!! O Lord dispell the cloud and let light shine. Amen.

Tuesday 26 \* \* \* One Indian got very mad with me to day, and I fear, I don rong, for I called him a dog. If a man is called a dog or a woman among the indians they think it is the worst thing could be said of them."



Excerpt from correspondence found among the Samuel Spates papers,  
Manuscript Room, Minnesota Historical Society:

"Sandy Lake July 31, 1854

Rev. Brooks.

On the 24 inst we arrived safely at this place, and I do assure you  
we were glad.

The indians say they are min, wau, dun - glad that we have come \* \*  
\* I have hired an interpreter - have him with us. He seems to be a good  
young man \* \* \* I have promised the interpreter about seventeen dollars per  
month and board him of course.

Our expences were much more from St. Paul to this place than I  
thought they would be.

I transcribe as I put them down on our way up.

Paid teamster to Crow Wing	\$24.00
Our fare to Crow Wing	6.15
Cook Stove at Fort Ripley	10.00
Farage 50 /?/	10.50
Crow Wing to Sandy Lake 4 men 2 canoes	50.00

Besides the above I paid on Steamboat for bringing horse  
from Red Wing to St. Paul 3.00  
Expences from St. Paul to Agency  
and back 2.88  
Paid messenger while at Crow Wing 1.00  
Bro Sinms for 2 days 2.50 sent  
the horse home 3.00 5.50

\* \* \* \* \*

S. Spates."



"Sandy Lake Aug 7th 1854

Dear Bro

I am just returned from Mille Lac. I was 5 days making the trip \* \* \* Plenty of potatoes may be had of the Indians, as well as plenty of wild or Indian Rice. The crop of Rice is very abundant every where this year I hope therefore that the Indians will not be found starving next winter.

We need mission goods very much indeed. I could if I had goods employ many of the Indians to work to good advantage to themselves as well as profitable to the mission. For 5 ardy /sic/ of common calico I can get an Indian to work all day - and if I pay money I have to give them one dollar per day.

Yours Samuel Spates."

Chippewa Agency Dec. 18, '1854

Elder Brooks

Dear Bro

I am here for some provisions \* \* \* and perhaps a cow and a yoke of oxen. Oxen or horse I must have or freeze. \* \* \*

The Indians are all or nearly all here. The payment will come off in about 2 weeks so the agent informs me. The Indians are very poor, almost without any clothing. We shall have no Indians or nearly none at Sand Lake till about the middle of January.

Bro Please send us some garden seed, such as Cabbage, Turnip Tomato, Beans, Peas, Onions, Beets and Sweet corn. \* \* \* We have made a wood house, also an ice house, and now my interpreter is cutting /sic/ timber to make fence. We had to buy 25 bushels Potatoes /sic/ \$1 pr bushel. We miss the good garden that we used have /perhaps referring to when he lived at Sandy Lake at an earlier date/ and consequently it will



it will cost us much more to live then heretofore

S. Spates."

Sandy Lake March 8th 1855

Bro Brooks

From Crow Wing to this place you need not make any portage. \* \* \*

It is 100 miles or perhaps a little more to Lake Superior from this place, 20 miles portage. At this place you will get a smaller canoe then you came here in and with 2 good men you will get to L. S. the third day. Then back to Sandy Lake in 4 or 5 days. \* \* \*

We have done a great deal of work during the winter, and still have a great to do, have about 50 acres of pasture fence to make and a good deal picket, as well as the indians farm to plow \* \* \* S. Spates."

Sandy Lake April 30th 1855

Bro Brooks

The object of this note is to ask some Turnip seeds. The Indians have very few potatoes and I want as many Rutabaga and flat turnips seeds as will sow 8 or 10 acres \* \* \*

Sam'l Spates "

"Sandy Lake June 23d, 1855

Brother Brooks

On bro Faulstrum's return from Fon Du Lac I thought it best to detain him here while I went and looked us out a good location to move to, as we cannot stay here in peace. And I here communicate to you the result of my search. About half-way from here to Crow Wing, at or near Red Cedar Lake I found a place with some advantages, such as plenty of Rushes near the Mississippi. Plenty of grass for pasture and hay, pretty good soil, plenty of wood, and fish and Rice. At Red Cedar Lake some 10 miles distant we can have good land, good fish, water /sic/ power for a mill, Rice, Sugar maple good hay etc. I am not well pleased with eather /sic/ of the above places yet we could make a good farm at eather of the above places. Five or six families wish to move with us. I sometime want to leave altogether, yet if we could



do something to better their temporal and spiritual condition before I leave them I would be very glad. I sometimes feel like doing nothing more for them and express myself especially when I remember their ingratitude. At such times my wife pleads for them and said Let us try another plan before we leave. Let /s/ colonize them or try at least. I shall not give my judgement about what is best to do for and with these Indians. We have spent a great deal of time and money for the Ojibways. Is it best to give up? or shall we try again? I wish to be released from this field if I can yet we will remain if it is judged best. Still we cannot think or feel that it will be best to remain if it is judged best to remain as we have heretofore alone. \* \* \*

I repeat what I said over on the other side [opposite page]. We cannot stay along among these indians \* \* \*

Sam'l Spates

Sandy Lake July 13, 1855

Dear Brother Brooks

\* \* \*

The old Chief who was so bitter when you were here, comes to meeting and also visits and seems /sic/ to be very friendly/sic/. I can not report, however, anything decidedly /sic/ good about the indians, unless it be that on ywsterday, while some men were gamling /sic/ they quarreled and fought, one inflicted a wound in the shoulder of the other, with a knife. The one that struck, was he who was struct while you were with us. I can but look upon it as a good sign. It will I hope hav a tendency to break /sic/ up gamling, /sic/ and cause them to seprate /sic/ They are too much together, too thick to thrive! \* \* \*

S. Spates



Sandy Lake July 13, 1855

Dear Brother Brooks

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The old chief who was so bitter when you were here, comes to meeting and also visits and seems /sic/ to be very frindley /sic/ I can not report, however, anything decidedly /sic/ good about the indians, unless it be that on yesterday, while some men were gamling /sic/ they quarreled and fought, one inflicted a wound in the shoulder of the other, with a knife. The one that struck, was he who was struet while you were with us. I can but look upon it as a good sign. It will I hope have a tendency to break /sic/ up gamling /sic/, and cause them to seprate /sic/. They are too much together, too thick to thrive. \* \* \* S. Spates

Bell Praria /sic/ Oc. 30, 1855

Brother Brooks

You see I date my letter at Belle Praria. We came here on yesterday one week ago. We had trouble with the Indians, such as we never had before and found it impossible to remain longer in safety. The Indians were drunk some days and night without intermission, and while drunk without any cause or provocation on our part, came to the mission, broke the door open twice, threatend to kill me, two men struet me, one or two days after poisoned /sic/ our little boy, yet, thank God there /sic/ diabolic design was not accomplished we still have our precious babe with us.

We came down in a canoe of course and therefore could bring but little with us. Left what we could not bring with the government.



Swan River April 25th 1838

Mr. Boutwell

Sir

My men will start off tomorrow for Sandy Lake to get Potatoes & Rice how much you will ascertain in my Fathers Letter which he has left here for you Things are in a very disadvantageous state at this Place owing chiefly to the conduct of some of the Indians here who attacked a Sioux camp after they had been kindly treated by them and killed 16 of them including 2 men the rest were women & children By so doing they have destroyed the Spring hunts of this place and have put those Indians who were gone out for that purpose in a very precarious situation

I send you a list of the Indian credits which I made here last Fall to Indians belonging to Sandy Lake Please let not my men Remain a day at Sandy Lake as I require them here every moment Please also to send me a chip hat which one of my men will try on his head you will Receive by them 5 volumes of the History of England & the Biography of Napoleon Please also to send me a Horse Saddle

Nothing more at present

Yours most truly

Rev. Wm. T Boutwell

John Aitkin

[added in pencil]  
18 Bushels Potatoes  
4 " Rice  
6 Hoes 2 new & 4 second hand  
1 Saddle  
1 Chip Hat

Copied from the Sibley Papers at the Manuscript Department of the  
Minnesota Historical Society by Alvar Norbeck.



Sandy Lake, Oct. 26th 1836

I can hereby certify in the presence of a Justice of the Peace that in my presence Mr. Wm. A. Aitkins has forbidden his men to take in any kind of Spirituous Liquors, the time he is supposed to have introduced Liquor in the Indian Country & several years previous to this circumstance.

A. Morrison

This is to certify that the Brandy mentioned in Affidavit taken by Edward Cadotte in Mackinac which I had in a Flagon and that was drank by Himself, Myself, Peter Cretas-a, Charles Chabvilly, and Louis Dufault Leignr /?/ I did not get from Mr. Wm A. Aitkins, nor did he know where I got, nor that I had it. This I am ready to testify upon Oath before a Justice of the Peace at any time. Sandy Lake October 17, 1836

In presence of

James P. Scott, A. Morrison

Ambrose Davenport

Sandy Lake January 25, 1817

[Addressed to Falle Avoime]

Mr. Wm Aitkens

Dear Sir:

Will you have the goodness to forward the letter addressed to the commanding officer on the Mississippi. If you can by any means you will oblige me much should my men want any articles for their voyage towards the Mississippi and back again to this place please to advance them. A Guide you will please to procure with all possible dispatch. I am told by the scioux /sic/ that the American troops are stationed at the River St. Croix, however, you have been informed long before this time - whereabouts they may be - You will please send me a note of the expences that you may be at for my men and guides. Men an Gui

The Indian from this has nothing to expect from you - The Bearers are young Brunets /sic/ and A Courteorrielle. Remain Dear Sir Your Humble Servant

Wm Morrison



Sandy Lake February 10, 1832

Dear Sir Sibley

\* \* \* \*

I most now speak of our own affairs in this Country I am afraid our Returns will not be any Better than Last year without we have some Change in the Martin and Rat hunts in the Spring we are annoyed all over the Country this year by the opposition but after the H B Co our worst neighbours are Baillies People as they are well Supplied With H. Wine Which always Bears a predominant Sway in the Indn trade how they can Introduce Liquor into the Country While We are prohibited is a thing I cannot understand and Somehow or other they undersell us and Say they are doing a Good Business if they are We Must pay Much Higher for our Goods than they do and another thing we are Short of Goods of Every Kind our Neighbours Abbotte & Ermantinger /s/ are not doing much Neither as yet - Particularly /sic/ the latter he has not Got half a Pack as yet Abbotte has gathered about 120 Bear Skins and about one Pack of other furs what the Will make between this and Spring Will Depend in a good Measure Wheather We Run Entirely out of Goods or Not I have Seen all our Folks Since the Winter Set in they Were all Well and in no danger of Starvation as there is nothing in this country more worth talking I must close it with wishing you to Remember me to all our Friends - and Believe me your sincere Friend &

Respectful Servt

William A. Aitken



The Geologic Origin of the  
Savanna and Prairie River  
Portages - Irving H. Hart.

McGregor Research Notes  
By: Mary Pruitt  
Date: July 23, 1940.

#### McGREGOR AND SANDY LAKE.

Notice has previously been called to the fact that the adoption of the Savanna Portage as one of the most important links in the chain of communication between the upper Mississippi and the St. Lawrence valleys was due to the physical fact that here the waters of these two great river systems probably approach each other more closely than at any other point. The student of physiography is naturally

1. Irving H. Hart, "The Old Savanna Portage." 8.717. led to seek in the records of this region's geologic past the reason for the close proximity of the headwaters of these two systems. Fortunately in this case there is an answer to his questions - an answer which reveals in striking manner the intimate relation existing between physiography and history and which tells a dramatic story of the results of the clash of natural forces in the days when our world was young.

All who are familiar with the topography of the region west and northwest of Duluth will recall that its most striking feature is the series of rocky hills rising steeply above the waters of Lake Superior the height of eight hundred feet with a slope as great in some places as a thousand feet to the mile. Beyond this to the north and west lies a fairly level-topped plateau. The steep slope or escarpment which bounds the plateau on the southeast probably follows a fault line, but it is remarkably fresh and uneroded for an exposure subjected to the processes of weathering and stream erosion during what is even in geologic reckoning

a very long period of time. This fact also raises a question the answer to which is found in the book of nature as is that to the first one raised above. The following quotation, taken from a publication of the United States Geological Survey, gives the answer to both these questions.

2. Charles R. Van Hise and Charles K. Leith, The Geology of the Lake Superior Region.

"The streams of the Duluth escarpment descend very steeply to Lake Superior; few of them head more than 4 or 5 miles from Lake Superior... The greatest distance being 12 to 14 miles, in contrast with lengths of 30 to 75 miles on the north and northeast shores of Lake Superior. Many of them have as steep an average grade as 150 to 250 feet to the mile... the general average being 80 to 160 feet to the mile. No one of these rather tumultuous streams has cut a significantly deep valley in the face of the escarpment and most of them have only cut short gorges with small rapids and waterfalls.

Quite in contrast with these steep-graded, rapidly falling streams of the escarpment are the leisurely flowing streams of the plateau surface above. The Cloquet, the upper St. Louis, and various other rivers have an average slope of about 8 or 10 feet to the mile. It is well established that a rapidly flowing stream with a steep grade is able to deepen its valley rapidly and to extend its headwater area so that it encroaches upon the area drained by an adjacent leisurely flowing stream. . . capturing and diverting the latter or some portion of its headwaters. Stream captures or piracies, as they are called, of this kind are common. We should expect, then, that in the course of stream development for a great length of time several of the swiftly flowing streams of the escarpment would have extended their headwaters back to the region drained by the leisurely flowing streams of the plateau surface and captured part or all of these



drainage systems. The fact that many of the large streams have not done so is evidence of their youth.

The largest stream in the region, however, seems to have already done just what would be expected... and it is natural that the largest stream should be able to do this first. St. Louis river cutting back at a point near the end of the escarpment where it is rather low, has been able to extend its headwater region northwestward until it has captured the southwestward - flowing. Cloquet and the southwestward-flowing stream that forms the present headwaters of the St. Louis itself. These captured streams had been a part of the leisurely drainage system of the plateau surface, and, it seems certain were within the Mississippi basin.... Indeed, a large valley extending Southwestward from the town of Floodwood, where the St. Louis now turns abruptly to the Southeast, indicates that this is probably the latest elbow of capture at which the piratical St. Louis has been able to divert to the Lake Superior-St. Lawrence drainage system a large headwater tributary of /the/ Mississippi River, as it had previously diverted the Cloquet, another Mississippi headwater."

The Duluth escarpment is relatively fresh and uneroded because in all probability the tremendous cataclysm of nature which so markedly changed the relative levels of these two contiguous areas is comparatively recent and the carrying of the surface of the escarpment by stream flow is a process still comparatively young.

### 3

Reference to the first of the two maps accompanying this article, which represents the present drainage systems 3.13: 405 of the region northwest of the head of Lake Superior, shows the St. Louis River with its right-angled turn from southwest to southeast near Floodwood, with the East Savanna flowing into the main stream at the same point. The remark-

able fact should be noted that the flow of this tributary is directly opposite to that of the stream which it now feeds, a physiographic characteristic extremely uncommon. The second map given herewith offers a graphic explanation of this anomaly. Before the "piratical St. Louis" had cut its way back to this point the present valley of the East Savanna was the channel of a much larger stream flowing in the opposite direction, and forming what was then perhaps the main headwater of the Mississippi. Still earlier the St. Louis had captured and diverted the waters of the present Cloquet River, which at first probably, as did then the White Face River, flowed west and south into the Mississippi. The valley of the Prairie River approaches at its present head another smaller stream now flowing into the St. Louis from the southwest. The direction of flow of this little stream, like that of the East Savanna, has been reversed.

The two old stream valleys of the two Savannas and of the Prairie and the unnamed little stream near its head are the routes of the Savanna and the Prairie River portages. Ages before man had first appeared on earth, nature, "moving in mysterious ways its wonders to perform," had carved out for him these two passage-ways for his later use in trade and transportation. Nothing in this old world of ours ever just happens. Every fact in life, every event in history, every physical feature of the world around us is a result of causes, sometimes revealed but more often hidden in the obscurity of the past. It is gratifying sometimes, as in this case, to be privileged to discover some of these causes.

To the lover of Sandy Lake, this story from the book of the world's past lends to the lure of its beauty and the romance of its history the additional charm of ageless wonder.



McGregor Notes.  
Mary Pruitt  
May, 1941

Letter from E. T. Ayer to Oakes and Russell.

"Dear Friends.

\* \* \*

The next summer, 1830, he /Rev. Frederic Ayer/ went to Lake Superior with the fur Traders, and spent the winter in the family of Mr. Lyman Warren. Here he taught a few children, and applied himself to the study of the Ojibwa language. The next year he spent at Sandy Lake with the late Mr. Aitkin /sic/. Here also he had a school, said to be the first taught in Minnesota."

Sept. 16, 1842. \* \* \* The missionaries in the country at that time were:

\* \* \*

Methodist

\* \* \*

Saml Spates )  
John Johnson ) Sandy Lake (Wis.)

\* \* \*

/This is at Fon du Lac/

One man Ki-ash-ke-boz, (the meaning is shaving ppr.) a medicine man, and brother of Kavanaugh's celebrated Martin Luther, of Sandy Lake, and his family, wife and three children, professed conversion, were baptized and received, but was one of our most successful oponent /sic/ before I left.

\* \* \*

The water rose in June so as to overflow all the low land.

\* \* \* It drove us all to higher ground undermining our mission

McGregor Notes.  
Mary Pruitt.

house, leaving it nearly a wreck. We all had to take to wig  
wam life. While we were so situated, after the waters began  
to abate, Bro. Spates came from Sandy Lake, and next day Bro.  
Goodrich came in the fur company's boat from La Pointe. \* \* \*  
I was going to conference by way of St. Peters, and accompanied  
Br. Spates to Sandy, where I bapized John Johnson's child Bro.  
Spates not being in orders. We came (Spates and I) in a bark  
canoe I had built at Fon du Lac, to Prairie du Chien before we  
could get a steamer.

\* \* \*

T. M. Fullerton.

1870 . From the census records over Aitken County,

Minnesota-Crow Wing P. O. Seed 1

			Age	Sex	Color	Occupation	Birthplace
	(Brunette	Louis	30	M	$\frac{1}{3}$ b	Farmer	Minnesota
1	{	" Angeline	30	F	"	keeping house	
	{	" Joseph	9	M	"		
	{	" Mary	6	F	"		
	{	" George	2	M	"		
	{	" Lizzie	4/12	F	"		
	{	" Joseph	36	M	"	Farmer	
	{	" Catherine	31	F	"	keeping house	
2	{	" John	16		"	at home	
	{	" Joseph	14		"	at home	
	{	" Peter	12		"	at home	
	{	" Mary	9		"		
	{	" Bapliste	7		"		
	{	" Louis	4/12		"		
3	(Mitchell	William	40		"	Laborer	
	{	" Cardicon	36		"	keeping house	
	{	" Mary	13		"	at home	
	{	" John	9		"		



Seed 2 Agricult. Acres of land, Present cash value.

	Impr'd	Wood	Other	Of	Farm Impl.	Horses	Milk	Live	Indian
	Land	Unimp.	Farm	machinery			cows	stock	corn
Louis Brunette	3 $\frac{1}{2}$	80	77	\$250	#25	2	12	\$230	16 bu.
Joseph Brunette	3	80	64	\$250		1			22

Social Statistics of Aitkin county for 1870.

Real Estate       \$20,000  
Personal Estate \$25,000  
Total               \$45,000

Value estimated, True value unknown.

Excerpts from "Diary of Samuel Spates, Methodist Missionary  
to the Chippewa Indians, Sept. 21 - - - Oct. 31, 1841:

\* \* \*

Tuesday /Oct./ 5 I got off this morning, and am now on  
what is called 'The grand portage.' As I came on today I stoped  
to see the Mission houses, which brother Copway is expected to  
occupy this year. \* \* \* I then walked out into the grave yard  
and here read the fol/low/ing on a tome stone, 'Saccred to the  
memory of Alfred Aitkins, who fell a viettom to a tretcherous  
asassin. Dec. 6th 1836, aged 20 years 10 months and 26 days.' \* \* \*

Wednesday 6 After I layed down to sleep last night, It  
commenced raining, and I was glad to take shelter under a bark  
canoe, and have been under it all day, for it has been raining all  
day. \* \* \* I have but little provision with me and if I remain here  
much longer, they will be gon/e/. Yet I must remain until the Indians  
go who I am with. They seame to be quite happy, under their bark  
eating boild corne, but it is not the happiness that religion gives.  
it is only that of a full bely. \* \* \*

Thursday 7 I am now at 'the little portage.' I came but a short distance to day, and have had my patience tried with these Indians. they are so very slow, they smoke the pipe about half of their time, then they are so very vilthy.' /sic/  
\* \* \* My poor body has been suffering to day. I have waided through mud and water most all day, and packed about fourty Lbs. on my back, yet my soul has been happy. \* \* \*

Friday 8 As this is friday, I have been keeping fast. If it were not, I shoul/d/ be compeld to abstain for I have not as much as one meal with me, therefore I must go to sleep without brakeing my fast. \* \* \* the Indians gave me a small piece of bird this evening and I eat it with out saul/t/ or anything else, and it was very good indeed.' \* \* \*

#### Satterday 9

I asked an Indian for some meat this morning and he gave me some rine of pourk. I boiled, and eat it, and never I think, eat anything, that tasted so good as pork rine. \* \* \*

This is the first hog meat I have eat for about eight days, and have been journeing all the time. I have sixty of seventy miles to go yet, and all the bredd I have is a peice about half as big as my hand. \* \* \*

Sunday 10 Yesterday after I rote in my diary an Indian gave me a Pesant on which I fared well all day. \* \* \* I have been with the Indians so long and have got my clothes so dirty, that a stranger might take me for an Indian. \* \* \*

Monday 11 \* \* \* I have got to Sandy Lake again. Walked all day without anything to eat and feel as though I can eat almost anything, even a geed dog.



McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

Excerpts from the diary of Rev. Samuel Spartes; October  
1841:

" \* \* \*

Wednesday 20 I have been very beuisey puting things to whrites all day, and have hardly took time to read or pray. this is not wright. Myhearte is not enought fixed on God and heaven. O my blessed Lord help me to live by the moment. I have writen a long letter to Bro. Copeay, and Stephen Boungo says he is going to Fon du Lac to morrow, so I will send the letter by him.

Thirsday 21 I have been at the same kind of work to day as I was at yesterday, yet I have tryed to pray more and live by faith, & have writen one letter to Bro. John. Stephen is yet with me and is complaining of being sick. I think he wishes to stay, if so, I can not keep him, for I fear some things stick to his hands, which do not belong to him.

Friday 22 I have had a na/s/ty case this day. Stephen drove his Squaw off lat night, about midnight, and I knew nothing of it until this morning. So I gave him a good siting down about it, after which he asked me to speak to his wife, as he called her. So I did, and made him and her promise to get married. I also caushened them not to sleep together until they were married, and farther saied, 'if you do, you will commit a dultrey.'

Now in vewe of this case, Are we Missionaries clear? we have let this man and woman remain at our house, for some days, and sleep together as man & wife, and yet they are in trouth, no more man & wife, than I and Queen Victory are. \* \* \* "

Saturday 23 \* \* \*

I asked a man to-day if he would interpret for me tomorrow to preach to the Indians, and /he/ said he could not, and yet it is his mother tongue. If he spoke the throuth, is it posable for me ever to preach in their language?

Monday 25 \* \* \* Let me reccord for my own satisfaction, some of the Indian's superstitions. One man lost a son, not long since, and, as the indian costom is, they put the corpse upon a scaffold, and as the father was successful in killing game, he hung eleven ducks up at the coffin for his son. 'This peop/l/e are in the dark, O dark! dark!' O Lord, dispell the cloud and let light shine. Amen.

Tuesday 26 \* \* \* One Indian got very mad with me today, and I fear, I don rong, for I called him a dog. If a man is called a dog or a Woman among the indians they think it is the worst thing could be said of them."

Excerpt from correspondence found among the Samuel Spates papers, Manuscript Room, Minnesota Historical Society:

"Sandy Lake July 31, 1854.

Rev. Brooks.

On the 24 inst. we arrived safely at this place, and I do assure you we were glad.

The indians say they are min, wau, dun - glad that we have come.  
\* \* \* I have hired an interpreter, -have him with us. He seems to be a good young man \* \* \* I have promised the interpreter about seventeen



McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

dollars pr month and board him, of course.

Our expences were much more from St. Paul to this place than I thought they would be.

I transcribe as I put them down on our way up.

Paid teamster to Crow Win	\$24.00
Our fare to Crow Wing	6.15
Cook Stove at Fort Ripley 10.00	
Forage 50 /?/	10.50
Crow Wing to Sandy Lake 4 men 2 canoes	50.00
Besides the above I paid on Steamboat for	
bringing horse from Red Wing to St. Paul	3.00
Expences from St. Paul to Agency and back	2 88
Paid messenger while at Crow Wing	1.00
Bro Simms for 2 days \$.50 sent the horse home 3.00	5.50

\* \* \*

S. Spates."

"Sandy Lake Aug 7th 1854

Dear Bro

I am just returned from Mille Lac. I was 5 days making the trip. \* \* \* Plenty of potatoes may be had of the indians, as well as plenty of wild or indian Rice. The crop of Rice is very abundant every where this year I hope therefore that the indians will not be found starving next winter.

We need mission goods very much indeed. I could if I had goods employ many of the indians to work to good advantage to themselves as well as profitable to the mission. For 3 drdy /sic/ of common calico I can get an indian to work all day- and if I pay money I have to give them one dollar pr day.

Yours Samuel Spates."

McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

"Chippewa Agency Dec 18, 1854.

Elder Brooks  
Dear Bro

I am here for some provisions \* \* \* and perhaps a  
cow and a yoke of oxen. Oxen or horse I must have or freeze. \* \* \*

The indians are all or nearly all here. They payment will  
come off in about 2 weeks so the agent informs me. The indians are  
very poor, allmost without any clothing. We shall have no indians  
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Bro Please send us some garden seed, such as Cabbage, Turnip,  
Tomato, Beens, Peas, Onions, Beets and Sweet corne. \* \* \* We  
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the good ggarden that we used have /perhaps refering to when he lived  
at Sandy Lake at an earlier date/ and consequently it will cost us  
much more to live than heretofore. \* \* \*

S. Spates."

"Sandy Lake March 8th 1855

Bro. Brooks.

\* \* \*

From Crow Wing to this place you need not make any portage. \* \* \*  
It is 100 miles or perhaps a little more to Lake Superior from this  
place, 20 miles portage. At this place you will get a smaller canoe  
than you came here in and with 2 good men you will get to L. S. the  
third day. Then back to Sandy Lake in 4 or 5 days. \* \* \*



McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

We have done a great deal of work during the winter, and still have a great to do, have about 50 acres of pasture fence to make and a good deal picket, as well as the indians' farm to plow. \* \* \*

S. Spates."

"Sandy Lake April 30th 1855

Bro. Brooks

The object of this note is to ask for some Turnip seeds. The indians have very few potatoes and I want as many Rutebago and flat turnip seeds as will sow 8 or 10 acres. \* \* \*

Sam'l Spates"

"Sandy Lake June 23'd 1855

Brother Brooks,

On bro Paulstrum's return from Fon Du Lac I thought it best to detain him here while I went and looked us out a good location to move to, as we cannot stay here in peace. And I here communicate to you the result of my search. About half-way from here to Crow Wing, at or near Cedar Lake I found a place with some advantages, such as plenty of Rushes near the Mississippi, Plenty of grass for pasture and hay, pretty good soil, plenty of wood, and fish and Rice. At Red Cedar Lake some 10 miles distant we can have good land, good fish, water water /sic/ power for a mill, Rice, Sugar maple good hay etc. I am not well pleased with eather /sic/ of the above places yet we could make a good farm at eather of the above places. Five or six families wish to move with us. I sometime want to leave altogether, yet if we could

McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

do something to better their temperal and spiritual condition before I leave them I would be very glad. I sometimes feel like doing nothing more for them, and express myself especially when I remember their ingratitude. At such times my wife pleads for them and sais /sic/ Let us try another plan before we leave. Let/'s/ colonize them or try at least. I shall not give my judgement about what is best to do for and with these Indians. We have spent a great deal of time and money for the Ojibways. Is it best to give up? or shall we try again? I wish to be released from this field if I can yet we will remain if it is judged best. Still we cannot think or feel that it will be best to remain if it is judged best to remain as we have heretofore ALONE. \* \* \*

I repeat what I said over on the other side /opposite page/. We can not stay alone among these indians.

\* \* \*

Sam'l Spates

Sandy Lake July 13, 1855

Dear Brother Brooks.

\* \* \*

The old Chief who was so bitter when you were here, comes to meeting and also visits and seams /sic/ to be very frindley/sic/. I can not report, however, anything desidedly /sic/ good about the indians, unless it be that on yesterday while some men were gamlin/sic/ they quarreled, and fought, one inflicted a wound in the shoulder of the other with a knife. The one that struck, was he who was struct while you were with us. I can but look upon it as a good sign. It will I hope have a tendancy to break/sic/ up gambling,/sic/ and cause them to seprate/sic/. They are too much together, too thick to thrive.' \* \* \*

S. Spates



McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

Belle Prarie/sic/Oct. 30th 1855

Brother Brooks.

Your see I date my letter at Belle Praria. We came here on yesterday one week ago. We had trouble with the Indians, such as we never had before and found it impossible to remain longer in safety. The Indians were drunk some days and night without intermission, and while drunk, withou any cause or provocation on our part, came to the mission, broke the door open twice, threatened to kill me, two men struet me, one or two days after poisoned /sic/ our little boy, yet, thank God, there /sic/ diabolic design was not accomplished, we still have our precious babe with us.

We came down in a canoe of course and therefore could bring but little with us. Left what we could not bring with the government.

McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

Swan River, April 25th 1838

Mr. Boutwell

Sir

My men will start off tomorrow for Sandy Lake to get Potatoes & Rice how much you will ascertain in my Fathers Letter which he has left here for you Things are in a very disadvantageous state at this Place owing chiefly to the conduct of some of the Indians here who attacked a Sioux camp after they had been kindly treated by them and killed 16 of them including 2 men the rest were women & children By so doing the have destroyed the Spring hunts of this Place and have put those Indians who were gone out for that purpose in a very precarious situation.

I send you a list of the Indian credits which I made here Last Fall to Indians belonging to Sandy Lake Please Let not my men Remain a day at Sandy Lake as I require them here every moment Please also to send me a chip hat which one of my men will try on his head you will Receive by them 5 volumes of the History of England & the Biography of Napoleon Please also to send me a Horse Saddle

Nothing more at present

Yours most truly

Rev. Wm. T Boutwell

John Aitkin

/added in pencil/  
18 Bushels Potatoes  
4 " Rice  
6 Hoes 2 new & 4 second hand  
1 Saddle  
1 Chip Hat

Copied from the Sibley Papers at the Manuscript Department of the Minnesota Historical Society by Alvar Norbeck.



McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

Sandy Lake Oct 26th 1836

I can hereby certify in the presence of a Justice of the Peace, that in my presence M. Wm. A. Aitkins has forbidden his men to take in any kind of Spirituous Liquors, the time he is supposed to have introduced Liquor in the Indian Country & several years previous to this circumstance.

A. Morrison

This is to certify that the Brandy mentioned In Affidavit taken by Edward Cadotte in Mackinac, which I had in a Flagon and that was drank by Himself, Myself, Peter Cretassa, Charles Chaboilly, and Louis Dufault Leignr/?/ I did not get from Mr. Wm. A. Aitkins, nor did he know where I got, nor that I had it. This I am ready to testify upon Oath before a Justice of the Peace at any time.  
Sandy Lake, Oct. 17, 1836.

Ambrose Davenport

In presence of

James P. Scott, A. Morrison.

McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

/addressed to Folle Avoime/

Sandy Lake January 25, 1817

Mr Wm Aitkens

Dear Sir.

Will you have the goodness to forward the letter addressed to the commanding officer on the Mississippi. If you can by any means you will oblige me much, should my men want any articles for their voyage towards the Mississippi and back again to this place, please to advance them. A guide you will please to procure with all possible dispatch. I am told by the scioux/sic/ that the American troops are stationed at the River St. Croix, however you have been informed long before this time-whereabouts the may be-you will please send me a note of the expences that you may be at for my Men and Guides. The Indian from this has nothing to expect from you-The Bearers are young Brunets/sic/ and a Courtcorrielle. Remain Dear Sir

Your Humble Servant

Wm. Morrison



McGregor Notes  
Mary Pruitt

Sandy Lake February 10th 1832

Dear Sir /Sibley/

\* \* \*

I most now speak of our own affairs in this Country I am afraid our Returns will not be any Better than Last year without we have some change in the Martin and Rat hunts in the Spring We are enoyed all over the Country this year by the opposition but after the H B Co our worst neighbours are Baillies People as they are well Supplied With H Wines Which always Bears a predominant Sway in the Ind" trade how they can Introduce Liquor into the Country While We are prohibited is a thing I Cannot understand and Somehow or other they undersell us and say they are doing a Good Business if they are We must pay Much Higher for our Goods than they do and an other thing we are Short of Goods of Every Kind our Neighbors Abbotte & Ermantinger/?/ are not doing much Neither as yet-Particularly Particularly /sic/ the Latter he has not Got half a Pack as yet Abbotte has gathered about 120 Bear Skins and about one Pack of other furs what the Will Make between this and Spring Will Depend in a good Measure Wheather We Run Entirely out of Goods or Not I have Seen all our Folks Since the Winter Set in they Were all Well and in no danger of starvation as there is nothing in this Country more worth talking I must Close it with wishing you to Remember me to all our Friends

and Believe me your Sincere

Friend & Respectful Servt

William A. Aitken

May 9, 1891

From the Aitkin Age

"SANDY LAKE DAM

At a recent meeting of the Board of Trade the following resolution was unanimously accepted:

'Whereas, we are informed that the government of the United States is about to construct /sic/ a dam across the Sandy River, the outlet of Sandy Lake, in the county of Aitkin, in such a manner as to close Sandy Lake to navigation; and

Whereas, there is now tributary to Sandy Lake hundreds of million feet of pine and other timber which is wholly moved by means of steamboats to the Mississippi River (as much as 40 million per annum); and

Whereas, The closing of said Sandy River to navigation would inflict great and lasting injury upon such lumber interest even to the extent of making the same almost wholly valueless;

Be it hereby resolved, that the Honorary Secretary of War be respectfully requested to cause such a change to be made in the plan of construction of said dam as will permit the free passage of steamboats in and out of said Sandy Lake.' "

Minn. Hist. Society  
December 1940  
A. Norbeck



Aitkin Age  
Dec.29,1883

"Aitkin

### The Northern Pacific

The greatest of the modern civilizers is the railroad. The greatest railroad in the world, which has opened up more formerly inaccessible territory to civilization and commerce, which without it would have remained forever locked in the bosom of the wilderness, is the Northern Pacific.

In 1869, when this now great enterprise was almost mythical and when as yet but a few spadeful of earth had been thrown in its construction, anyone who had faith in its ultimate destiny and who put his money into it was regarded as a lunatic. Later, in 1873, when the father of the enterprise, Jay Cooke, failed, it was looked upon as a dead thing which, in spite of the fact that it had already peopled five hundred miles of splendid country, would never reach the coast.

\* \* \*

This great scheme of connecting lake and ocean, Superior to Pudget Sound, was, as has been stated begun to be put into operation in the summer of 1869. At that time all of Minnesota north of St. Cloud, on the Mississippi, was only traversed by trader or Indians and had not a village of 500 people in all its vast expanse. The great father of waters went there as it does now, 'unvexed to the sea,' but all navigation had ever done above St. Paul towards developing and settling the territory adjacent was very little indeed. The same vast forests existed then as now but the great distance over which supplies had to be transported rendered operations at remote points, now the center of a most flourishing lumber trade, a practical impossibility. The building of the Northern Pacific, however, passing through the heart of some of the finest pine forest of the state, opened up many lumbering regions hitherto inaccessible and built a number of thriving lumber towns of which Aitkin is the largest and most important.

\* \* \* \* \*

### LUMBERING

This great industry forms the basis for an important trade at this point which furnishes the supply for the army of men who actually engage in it, and as before remarked, Aitkin, by virtue of its location as the railroad point highest up on the river, becomes of great commercial importance. \* \* \* When it is reckoned that by far the larger portion of the lumber sawed at Minneapolis is cut above Aitkin and that some fifteen hundred to two thousand men are kept at work the year around [1883], which is in the winter season increased to fully three thousand, cutting, hauling, driving the logs when the ice runs out, haying, and building camps for the winter, who all pass and repass through Aitkin, and whose teams must have grain, and themselves food and clothing, nearly the whole of which is furnished by our merchants, and /sic/ one can begin to comprehend a little of the volume of trade and business transacted annually.

\* \* \* \* \*



Since all attempts to learn the names of some early settlers of the Sandy Lake region which later could be checked through the 1875 census; such as searching through reminiscences (published as well as unpublished) from that area, newspaper accounts pertaining to the celebration of historical data of the county, early homestead and land abandonment claims and several other sources, had failed, I turned to the 1885 Census for Aitkin county. Under the classification "Unorganized District (including T. 47, R. 26, T. 47, R. 25, T. 48, R. 22), I found a list of names who's post office address was that of Kimberly, in some cases, and Tamarack in others. I checked this list against the 1875 census for Aitkin, Cass, and Ramsey counties. In the cases of the two latter, I found no similarities, but in Aitkin I found several and listed the following:

The Aitkin County census for 1905 show no resident in Spalding township by the name Murphy and no Axel P. Johnson in Mc Gregor township, but the fact that an A. P. Johnson is registered in Spalding township and a James E. Murphy in the village of McGregor will seem to indicate a mix-up in the source-material. They and their families follow:

					Nativity	
	Sex	Age	Color	Nativity	Father	Mother
75 Murphy, James E.	M	43	W	New Brunswick	Ireland	Maine
76 Murphy, Anna B.	F	37	"	Minn.	Ohio	Minn
77 Murphy, Lillian B	"	14	"	"	N. B.	"
78 Murphy, Harry	M	13	"	"	"	"
79 Murphy, Minnie	F	9	"	"	"	"
80 Murphy, Stanley	M	4	"	"	"	"
81 Murphy, Frank M.	"	2	"	"	"	"
82 Murphy, Alfred	"	3	W	"	"	"

Spalding township Enumeration District # 16

6 Johnson, A. P.	M	51	"	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden
7 Johnson, Margaret	F	45	"	"	"	"
8 Johnson, Andrew	M	24	"	"	"	"
9 Johnson, John	"	23	"	"	"	"
10 Johnson, Charles	"	20	"	"	"	"
17 Jos W Wakefield	M	29	"	Maine	Maine	Maine
Lewis Wakefield	M	68	"	"	"	"
Jas Wakefield	"	13	$\frac{1}{4}$	Minn	Minn	"

		Age	Sex	Color	Nativity	Father	Mother
17	Frank Wakefield	9	M	$\frac{1}{2}$	Minn	Me.	Me.
	George Wakefield	4	"	"	"	"	"
	Robert Wakefield	1	"	"	"	"	"
	Eliza [Lize in '85] Wakefield	27	F	$\frac{1}{2}$	"	"	"

Of these only the last two names are listed in the 1885 census for Aitkin.

28	Josh [ia/ Tibbets	45	M	"	Me	Me	Me
	Hanna [H.E./ Tibbets	40	F	"	"	"	"
	Guy Tibbetts [not listed 1885]	15	M	"	Col.	"	"
	Almy [L.E./ Tibbets	13	F	"	Minn.	"	"
	Vesta Tibbets [not listed in 1885]	11	"	"	"	"	"
	U. S. Tibbetts	9	M	"	"	"	"
	Laura [L. B./ Tibbets	7	F	"	"	"	"
	Rosetta [R. M./ Tibbets	5	F	"	"	"	"

Brackets indicates variations in 1885's listing.

From 1885 Census:

M. W. Libby	45	M	W	Me.	Me.	Me.
L. Libby	35	F	"	"	"	"
T. Libby	33	M	"	"	"	"
L. Libby	25	F	"	"	"	"

No cash book for the Sandy Lake Lumber Co. is included in the Bonness papers, but a cash book for F. W. Bonness & Co. covering the period 1901 - 1902, shows the following entries on the debit side, in each case balancing the sum total for the credit side:

Page 2	Jan. 1	J. J. Howe	\$4,295.71
" 3	" 12		1,332.31
" 4	" 15		1,368.37
" 5	" 21		1,255.76
" 6	" 26		1,340.43
" 7	" 29		1,238.56
" 8	" [no date]		7,018.49
" 9	Febr. 1	F. R. Boness	6,680.69
	Jan. 19	F. W. Boness	9,828.36
" 10	" 26		9,811.33
" 11	" 31		7,131.43
" 11	Feb. 4	J. J. Howe	1,019.72
" 12	" 7		1,244.62
" 13	" 11		1,264.65
" 14	" 13		1,139.09
" 15	" 16		1,246.38
" 16	" 19		1,121.75
" 17	" 18	F. W. Bonness	8,730.28
" 18	" 21	J. J. Howe	1,027.26



Page 19	Feb. 25	J. J. Howe	4,296.77
" 20	" 27		1,829.49
" 21	Mar. 2		1,664.04
" 22	" 5		1,266.96
" 23	" 7		1,618.79
" 24	" 11		1,878.58
" 25	" 11		1,814.48
" 26	" 12		1,295.31
" 27	" 15		1,485.56
" 28	" 7	F. W. Bonness	20,879.67
" 29	" 15		7,256.70
" 29	" 15	J. J. Howe	811.36
" 30	" 15		1,446.33
" 31	" 18		1,646.07
" 32	" 19		2,068.07
" 33	" 21		2,814.29
" 34	" 25		1,693.64
" 35	" 25		2,381.55
" 36	" 26		1,836.72
" 37	" 27		1,586.13
" 38	" 23	F. W. Bonness	19,516.38
" 38	" 28	J. J. Howe	1,282.65
" 39	" 28	J. J. Howe	3,995.57
" 40	" 30		2,731.37
" 41	Apr. 1		2,520.31
" 42	" 3		2,299.99
" 43	" 6		2,277.55
" 44	" 9		1,836.55
" 45	" 13		1,212.44
" 46	" 16		1,981.71
" 47	" 20		1,747.39
" 48	" 26		2,102.05
" 49	" 29		7,329.37
" 50	" 26	F. W. Bonness	26,339.27
" 51	May 1	J. J. Howe	1,011.86
" 52	" 7		7,044.23
" 53	" 9		2,036.64
" 54	" 13		1,819.72
" 55	" 16		4,193.12
" 56	" 17		1,124.64
" 57	" 18		1,263.68
" 58	" 21		1,507.66
" 59	" 24		2,196.97
" 60	" 27		1,426.98
" 61	June 1		3,380.94
" 62	" 2		1,789.79
" 63	" 8		2,575.65
" 64	May 27	F. W. Bonness	21,641.82
" 65	June 6	F. W. "	2,636.02
" 65	" 11	J. J. Howe	5,259.50
" 66	" 22		5,396.97
" 67	" 24		2,035.48
" 68	" 27		1,601.65
" 69	July 1		1,081.53
" 70	" 9		1,760.17

Page 71	July 13		2,818.50
" 72	" 23		1,846.16
" 73	" 25		1,087.65
" 74	" 22	F. W. Bonness	25,850.16
" 75	Aug. 1	J. J. Howe	2,775.88
" 76	" 6		2,858.65
" 77	" 10		2,856.64
" 78	" 19		1,598.53
" 79	" 26		3,137.49
" 80	" 24	F. W. Bonness	24,294.68
" 81	Sept. 10	J. J. Howe	2,998.71
" 82	" 14		3,398.41
" 83	" 18		2,176.46
" 84	Oct. 3		1,610.58
" 85	" 8		2,642.85
" 86	" 15		1,987.19
" 87	" 24		3,994.11
" 88	" 31		2,550.65
" 89	" 15	F. W. Bonness	32,496.94

The cash book ends with this date and the next following volume starts with November 1, 1902.



In "History of the Upper Mississippi Valley," by O'Neill, 1881, the following statement is found on page 657:

"Outside the villiage Aitkin, there is but little settlement in the county. A few sellers are located at the mouth of Willow river, and a few have homes at Sandy Lake."

The Aitkin Age, September 20, 1900, lists the following representatives from various places to the Republican County Convention that year:

"Sandy Lake: Wm Wakefield, Mark Libby, Wm. Jude.

Kimberly: M. J. Shorwell, J. P. Williams, Gus Williamson.

Sicottes: Frank Clark, F. W. Day, J. B. Clark."

M. H. S., 12-10-40.  
Alvar Norbeck

Residents of Sandy Lake cast a total of 27 votes in the State and County elections in 1890, according to a table of Official Count, published in Aitkin Age, November 15, 1890. They appear to have voted Republican about 4 - 1.

I have been unable to locate the thesis, An Introduction to the History of Lumbering in Minnesota, by Donald Wilson Snell. Index files of the Manuscript room and the Library contain no entry of that title. The Manuscript room has in its possession some unclassified item, which I am now going through in an effort to locate the thesis.

This source, the Lawler fire, and some newspaper news items, regarding Bonness and Douglas, is all there is left on my list now. Would appreciate additional source material.

M. H. S., Dec. 10, 1940  
Alvar Norbeck.

J. T. Odegaard: Brindringer.

The author came to America 1867, and settled at Long Lake in Watonwan county in the autumn of that year.

While Mr. Odegards recollections are most interesting they are confined to the southern part of the state chiefly the region around and about Watonwan county. I failed to find anything that touches upon the Sandy Lake region, or even upon Aitkin County in any respect.

Although this book is published for the most part, in the Norwegian language, it contains a very interesting letter in English in which an old settler remaining here responds to request for information, about the early days, to Mr. Odegaard, who at that time has returned to Norway.

History of McGregor  
Mrs. Pruitt (Norbeck)  
Jan. 7, 1941.

Aitkin Independent Age.  
Sat. July 30, 1922.

'Mamaon.

Another Aitkin county pioneer passed on last week very quietly. She was known only in her locality and comments were few as her spirit returned to her fathers. She was known as 'Mamaon', a Chippewa Indian woman, and mother of Charley Grasshopper of Libby.

She had lived for many years in Aitkin county, near beautiful Sandy Lake. Although bereft of sight for many years, she knew every foot of that country.

She never heard of women's clubs, of the League of women voters, nor held an office. But she knew 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."

Minnesota Historical Society  
December 12, 1940.

Alvar Norbeck.



Aitkin Independent Age, Sat. July 30, 1922 - continued.

Mark Libby

"We slept that night at the mouth of Sandy Lake River, upon the floor of Mr. Libby's historic trading post. 'Libby's' has been known for three generations [1872] as the point of postage for the 'Big Sea Water.'"

From Minnesota History  
Vol. 8, P. 128.

Joe Libby

"The forty [acres of land] deeded to the Chewaynance was just above the old Libby store, northwest of Sandy Lake."

From Minnesota History  
Vol. 9, P. 327.

"Joe Libby was the first lumberman on Sandy Lake, but before he began logging here there was logging farther up the Mississippi."

From Minnesota History  
Vol. 9, P. 329.

"Ed. L. Douglas,

was born in Canada in 1848. He came to United States in 1867, and engaged in the lumber business at Rockford, Wright county. He came to Aitkin in 1876, and has since been engaged in the lumber and hotel business. He is a partner with Knox Brothers in the lumber business.

From Upper Mississippi Valley.

3-  
Aitkin Independent Age, Sat. July 30, 1922 - continued.

F. W. Bonness,

" - - - Mr. Fred W. Bonness of Minneapolis, who has been in the lumber business in Minnesota since 1876 and has been connected with the industry since 1868."

From Minnesota History  
Vol. 6, P. 3n

Died in Mpls. 1924.  
Mpls. - Directory.

"Two Aitkin County Towns Destroyed Last Saturday.

Forest Fires of Wide Extent Wipe Out Bain and Lawler on  
Soo Line and Threaten Many Other Points,  
Village of Aitkin Included.

Loss of Life In County About Twelve.

Adjutant General Rhinow Orders Many Home Guard Units to  
Aitkin to assist Citizens in Fighting Fires Here and in Vicinity.

\* \* \*

To towns, Bain and Lawler in Aitkin county, have been destroyed by the fire, which swept over the northeastern part of Minnesota last Saturday. Although forest fires and bog fires had been burning in the county few people realized the danger to their homes that morning. But a terrific windstorm came up about noon, and at two o'clock Bain was utterly destroyed. Many people who had gone to Palisade for the Red Cross dinner and Liberty day celebration there, rushed home in their cars, - some of them finding no homes to go back to.



4.  
Aitkin Independent Age, Sat. July 30, 1922 - continued.

At Lawler the fire broke out somewhat later in the afternoon. Men had been going out from there into the country to get the farmers who were in danger into town, and many of them lost their own homes in their efforts to save others. Train number 188- 189, which was at Riverton, was ordered at Lawler at five o'clock; it was seven before they could get there, and then the town was gone, but only three lives were lost in the village. There was a greater loss of life in the farm-houses in the vicinity, for there was no place of safety for the refugees. The hotel, the schoolhouse, and ten residences and a store were standing at Lawler. Automba, in Carleton county has been entirely lost, and twenty-two people burned to death. The burning of the bridges between there and Lawler, made it impossible for the train to reach the town and the only shelter that could be found was an open meadow. The station agent, staying by the wire as long as he dared, finally saved himself by jumping into a well.

At Palisade Poston's saw-mill and the adjoining residence was destroyed. The report that the whole village was devastated is false. Tamarack was surrounded by fire, and it crept up to the very edge of the town, but there was no loss.

Refugees from Lawler were brought into Aitkin, and supplies from the Red Cross, as well as food and clothing from Minneapolis were sent to Lawler and Automba.

Lawler is under military law now; camps are being built, homes are being erected anew, and little houses built there are sent to Automba on flat cars. Soo line up to Duluth is back on scheduled time, and telegraph connections are possible; people are going back and beginning over again. Meanwhile Aitkin has taken on a very military aspect, with

54  
Aitkin Independent Age, Sat. July 30, 1922 - continued.

its 250 soldiers, who have been sent up to light the fires in the vicinity.

\* \* \*

In another article on the same page, "Aid Extended to the Fire Sufferers" the paper praises the immediate and spontaneous response, by the people of surrounding areas to the plight of the victims, tells of the organization of Red Cross relief, and reports on the arrival of military aid under General Rhinow, nor forgetting a mention of "the faithful little train 188-189," which carried the welcome supplies to Lawler and Automba."

At a meeting Monday evening a committee was elected to present to the county commissioners a request for a \$10,000 aid for temporary relief, and on Tuesday morning these same authorities had by unanimous vote appropriated that amount. "The losses which have been suffered are not to be regarded as individual," the paper concludes, but as general losses affecting everyone in the county; and the duty of making reparation for what has been lost will likewise be looked upon as a public responsibility."

From Aitkin Independent Age,  
Sat. Oct. 19, 1918.  
Minnesota Historical Society  
Newspaper Room, December 27, 1940  
Alvar Norbeck.



Source: Official Records, except as indicated.

Subject: Township 48 N, Range 23 W, Aitkin County, Minnesota.

Nov. 13, 1870:

Work on the Government survey to establish the Subdivision and Meander lines, commenced by Mr. R. O. Chaney, by contract.

Nov. 22, 1870:

Work on Government survey completed, two unnamed lakes were meandered with in this township and one river. Of the two meandered lakes in this township, that lake lieing in Sections 9 and 10 was the largest, occupying almost all of Section 10 and a portion of Section 9. The other meandered lake within this township occupied about one-third of Section 32 and a portion of Sections 29, 28 and 33.

Sandy River flows across this township from East to West. It enters the township on the East Range Line close to the Sections 23, 22, 28, 29 and 19 crossing the range line on the west on the quarter line of Section 19, dividing the township almost in half.

"This township is mostly covered by water at all seasons of the year, and from indications "seems" when wet seasons occur, subject to innundations from three to four feet."\*

"Timber, Tamarac, Spruce, Alder, Cedar and hay meadow,"\*

\* Note, from original field notes.

The "Northern Pacific Railroad and Telegraph" was already established.

I find no mention of a McGregor in the field notes on this survey, however, you may note here that there is a McGregor shown on the copy of the orginal township plat on file in the Register of Deeds office, court house, Aitkin. This plat is a certified copy of the original, bearing date 1870, and is based on the original survey by R. O. Chaney. The "McGregor" on this plat referred to, appears to be a part of the original printing and does not seem to be a notation added later by pen or otherwise. I would suggest that someone check the original plat for a "McGregor."

Referring to my report of June 10, 1940, I have since making that report, learned that the information about the hunter and trapper named McGregor was received by the Northern Pacific Railway Co. from Mr. J. E. Murphy, of McGregor, Minn. several years ago.

There is considerable variance among the early pioneers here as to the cabin site of this early trapper named McGregor, Mr. Murphy says that he was located on Davis Lake several miles Northwest of the present village of McGregor, while George W. Dodge states that when he first came to McGregor (1893) he viewed the remains of his cabin on Bass Lake, three miles west of McGregor. Among the early pioneers still living, Mr. Murphy is the only one I have interviewed who claims to have seen him.

-- -- 1880:

Northern Pacific Siding and station established.

Supt. Jacobus  
N. P. Ry.

I have received no confirmation that the station thus established carried the name of McGregor, on the contrary Mr. Murphy states that he came through here in the spring of 1881 and there was "nothing here but a handcar house and a handful of Dagoes," the depot, or handcar house as he calls it, had no name. A few Indian Teepees were also in evidence.

Oct. 7, 1895

Township 48 N, Range 23 W, was organized and named McGregor Township, deriving its name from McGregor Station.

#### DRAINAGE HISTORY

McGregor Township as a whole is rather low and flat, dotted here and there with areas of higher ground called "Islands" by many of the pioneers, I presume this expression originated in the early days prior to any drainage project when the township was subject to seasonal inundation and when so inundated these higher timbered areas appeared as Islands in the Sea.

In the summer of 1891, a handful of Italian emigrants, including Pasquale Memmola, W. L. and C. A. Maddy, Frank Spicola and others settled at "McGregor Station," some taking out government homestead claims in Section 30, on the north side of the N. P. tracks, while others purchased tracts to the south of the track in Section 31, from the Railway company. The most practical mode of transportation, in the summer months, was by Row boat, by which means one could travel from one end of the township to the other, even as late as 1902 a row boat was used by the Fulton family at times of the high water to travel from their farm, to the north of McGregor Township, into McGregor, and the N. P. Siding switch used to serve as a moor, from which their boats were secured.

The official records pertaining to earliest dredge ditches in this township, if they do still exist, are buried somewhere in the archives of the County Court House. County ditch No. 14 is the oldest ditch on which I could find the official record.

There are two other ditches in this township which pre-date ditch No. 14, those being County ditch #3 and County ditch #5, of these two I presume ditch #3 is the older from its smaller numerical order, however, you may note here that County ditch #3 was of little importance as effecting McGregor township, it is at present almost obliterated and grown over, and from appearances was not a Dredge ditch.

The first Dredge Ditch of any consequence was undoubtedly County ditch #5. That unnamed lake lying in Sections 32, 29, 28 and 33 was in the early pioneer days, named Jacksie Lake, after an early settler. This lake is still shown on the latest county and township maps,



however, this Jacksie Lake is only a memory and the site of the lake is in no wise different from the surrounding meadowland, the green meadow grass waves in the breeze over the old lake bed as far as the eye can see.

County ditch #5 has its beginning some distance to the Southwest of Jacksie Lake, thence followed in a Northeasterly direction through the center of Jacksie Lake to the North shore of the lake, thence in a North and South direction along the section line between Sections 28 and 29, crossing the N. P. tracks and connecting with Sandy River, thence following the general course of Sandy River westward to the township line.

Mr. George Fulton states that the excavation of County ditch #5 was done in, or about 1905. A large steam dredge was used in the excavation and all of the coal used by the dredge was hauled by ox team from McGregor along the highland East to the ditch site, thence loaded onto a barge and towed by a row boat to the dredge. Mr. George Fulton states that he set all of the ditch bank stakes from a row boat.

COUNTY DITCH # 14

Dec. 3, 1909

Hearing before the Board of County Commissioners on ditch petition.

Mar. 7, 1910

Board of viewers, appointed to report on petition for construction of proposed ditch, estimate benefits of ditch to be \$32,109. "Proposed ditch will be Public Utility and that construction of same is practical for the following reasons: The land is low and wet."

Apr. 12, 1910

Call for bids on construction of proposed ditch.

Main Ditch:

Approximate length,	14 miles
Depth	3 to 15 feet.
Width, bottom	5 "
Width, top	11 to 35 "

Estimated Excavation:

Main Ditch	227,677 cubic yards
Branch # 1	1,327 " "
Branch # 2	1,371 " "
Total	230,375 " "

Estimated cost of construction - \$23,352.59

May 7, 1910

Contract let with Healey Plumbing and Heating Company, a corporation St. Paul, Minn., Consideration 12¢ per cubic yard. Work to commence not later than June 1910 and completed not later than November 1911.

Note

The Healey Plumbing and Heating Company sublet their contract to the Foley and Gleason Company, who did the actual construction.

The actual cost of constructing County Ditch # 14 was in the neighborhood of \$35,000. For some reason unbeknown to me the ditch was not constructed as prayed for in the petition, instead of following the general course of Sandy River as originally planned, the course of the ditch was altered from the center of Section 23, instead of following the river from this point westward, a northwesterly course was taken over the township and terminating in that creek that flows southward out of Lake Minnewawa and now knows as Wood's Creek, which creek flows into Sandy River at a point five or six miles north of the village of McGregor.

County ditch #14 as actually constructed, hugged the west shore line of that "unnamed lake" which occupied the greater portion of Section 10 and the northeast corner of Section 9, which lake, was called Rice Lake by the natives, from the abundance of Wild Rice that used to grow there prior to the drainage project. Wild Ducks would flock there by the thousands and it was a paradise for the duck hunters in the fall of the year.

Around the marshy shore there used to be an extensive cranberry bog and Mr. Joe Gregory says that with the aid of a cranberry rake he picked as many as nine one-hundred pound flour sacks full of berries in a single day.

The construction of County ditch #14 all but drained Rice Lake. This lake, at the present time not much more than a mud hole, is about one-tenth of its former size; the Wild Rice and cranberries are gone, as well as the Ducks and the lake has been appropriately renamed MUD LAKE, which name it still bears to this day.

After the completion of county ditch No. 14, agricultural pursuit on the surrounding meadowland, was still impractical and thousands upon thousands of acres of rich fertile lowland continued to lie dormant.

Realizing the potential farming possibilities in the vast area of open meadowland, awaiting additional drainage to make it ready for the plow, a further effort was made at drainage in about 1923 or thereabouts, at which time Sandy River, extending from Grayling on the East, to "Steamboat Lake" on the West, was further dredged and straightened, to facilitate rapid removal of excess water from the melting of heavy winter snows and torrential rains.



You may note here that a factor in this later drainage program was the persuasive influence of the McGregor village banker, Mr. A. G. Rieter, President of the McGregor State Bank, under whose persuasive influence the program was carried to completion. Verbose Mr. Rieter, painted glowing word pictures of the good things to follow in the wake of the dredge, meadowland, bog and marsh was to blossom forth as an oasis in the desert, instead of Date Palm wilting in the torrid heat, "our oasis" would consist of far reaching fields of sun ripened grains of golden wheat, each well matured sun-ripened head of golden grain, kissing one another in the autumn breeze would produce a golden jingle in the pockets of the populace; Grain Elevators were pictured as cropping up over night like mushrooms on a well watered lawn.

This Pipe Dream of Mr. A. G. Rieter's, and a pipe dream it was, did not materialize out of the dredging of Sandy River as anticipated, and the populace awoke to find that their waving fields of grain was still meadowgrass and with the exception of the drought year of 1934, when thousands of tons of meadow grass was sold in the stack for any price they would ask, continued to produce no more than before. Then too they awoke to the fact that while they had provided adequate Main dredge ditches, they were sadly in need of lateral ditches to carry the water directly into the main ditches, seepage alone, except from that land lying immediately adjacent to the main ditches was too slow to insure the seeding of their crop early in the spring, which early seeding was necessary so as to insure early crop maturity before danger of fall frosts that are wont to occur earlier than was usual on the higher ground.

The story of the drainage of McGregor township is a story of incompleteness, it is a story of a job only half completed.

The potential possibilities of large scale flax and seed potatoes production in this township is great.

The possibility of adequate drainage during times of highwater, and irrigation in the fall or at times of drought, must be considered before sure-fire results in agriculture can be assured.

\*Both of these conditions I believe can be met; that of rapid drainage, by the construction of a system of adequate laterals and the removal of the high dredge-ditch banks and redistributing this material upon the land, thus allowing the surface water to flow directly off into the ditches, instead of by seepage alone as it must do now.

The problem of irrigation I believe could be met by utilizing this same ditch system, by the construction of a series of sluice gates and forcing the water back through them. A possible source of water supply for this purpose would be the utilization of Sandy Lake, providing the mean elevation makes this feasible. As now constructed all of our drainage empties into Sandy River and it in turn into Sandy Lake, this would have to be changed provided we utilized Sandy Lake as a reservoir for irrigation, and our drainage water shunted directly into the Mississippi. Thus a higher head of water could be maintained in Sandy Lake than the mean elevation of the township proposed to be irrigated.

The construction of a water control system such as outlined above would certainly produce the agricultural Utopia pictured by Mr. Rieter.

The fertility of meadowland soil in this township has many times been demonstrated by the abundant crops it can produce under favorable condition of spring planting. The soil is of a peat nature, being about one foot in depth underlaid by a heavier sub-soil. Mr. E. G. Simpson several years ago planted two acres of potatoes close to the ditch-bank of County ditch No. 14 and at digging time the potatoe digger brought to the surface over 800 bushels then, after the digger was through a neighboring farmer who was without a potatoe crop himself, secured permission to plow this field and in so plowing salvaged close to 200 bushels of potatoes that the potatoe digger missed.

Agriculture as carried on within this township consists principally of mixed farming. Dairying is the main source of revenue but turkey raising is making some headway. Mink raising on a large scale is conducted in the village of McGregor by Mr. Earl Smith.

The McGregor Creamery has produced in the past year close to a quarter of a million pounds of Creamery butter, and possibly this much butterfat reached the market at Aitkin, Moose Lake and Duluth through the cream buyers.

Clifford Greer  
Project 8017  
McGregor, Minn.



THE GREAT FOREST FIRE OF OCTOBER 12, 1918

That McGregor village suffered no serious fire losses of life or property during the great forest fire of October 12, 1918, may be considered as an act of God. McGregor village, situated in the heart of a virtual tinder box awaiting only the ignition spark to set off a major conflagration - escaped with only minor incidences.

For many weeks preceding this holocaust not a drop of rain fell on the surrounding meadows - autumn had set in and the entire countryside was as dry as tinder, the leaves had fallen, the uncut grasses dead and dry, and the peat bogs were bone dry and in a combustible state.

This devastating event occurred at a time when the United States was actively engaged in the European struggle to "save democracy." In search of an explanation to account for the origin of the enumerable fires that everywhere sprang forth that day, apparently from out of the thin air itself, the suggestion of pro-German sabotage found fertile soil in the minds of a populace already keyed to a war-time psychosis.

That McGregor did not suffer more serious damage at that time is due in a large degree to the following facts:

Preceding the big fire by as much as four weeks, there were three separate fire sources near McGregor, all three of which had prior to October 12, 1918 spread over the surrounding country side and burned most of the combustible surface material. To combat these sporadic outbursts, on a number of occasions, the Home Guards were called out from Aitkin to assist the McGregor citizens in controlling these fires.

Just prior to the big fire of October 12, it will be noted that almost the entire countryside surrounding the village had previously been burned off, to the north, east and south. McGregor during the big fire was vulnerable only from the west, as far as surface fires were concerned. That strip of land lying between the Northern Pacific Railway and the state road (commonly known as "The Black Diamond Trail," now designated as U. S. 210), a strip of bog land less than one-half mile wide, was the only area as yet remaining unburned by the preceding fires. This strip of tinder-dry bog, during the big blow was the major source of danger to McGregor, except that from flying sparks whipped from the previously burned peat deposits.

Had this strip of bog become ignited during the big blow it is doubtful whether enough resistance could have been mustered to prevent a major conflagration in the village.

This strip of unburned land extended from McGregor westward ten miles to Kimberly. During the afternoon of Oct. 12, 1918 a bog fire in the region north of Kimberly was whipped into flames which ignited the western end of this strip of land.

Charles Turner, a pioneer settler living on the north side of the Northern Pacific Railway in Sec. 32 of Jevne township, and directly in the path of the onrushing flames from Kimberly, perceived the danger to his farm home early that afternoon and promptly mustered a fire-fighting crew. Assisted by buckets of water, wet sacks, axes, shovels, etc. This fire-fighting group after twelve hours of continuous effort finally succeeded in setting and controlling a backfire between the farm home and the onrushing flames in the west. This strategy proved successful and stopped the Kimberly fire from spreading eastward to McGregor.

The flames of the onrushing fire were whipped by a gale of such terrific force that at times it was difficult for the fire-fighters to even stand erect against the force of the wind. The atmosphere was so heavy with smoke that it was necessary at all times to wear a wet cloth around the nose and mouth in order to breath at all, and under these conditions the tears would stream down cheeks in an endless flood.

During one particularly hard gust of wind, I observed a flaming tree top being carried completely across Turner Lake, a distance of about one-fourth mile. (I was a member of the fire-fighting crew).

The three fire sources near McGregor were as follows:

1. The high peat banks formed by the dredging of County Ditch No. 14, in the vicinity of Mud Lake, in Sec. 9 and 10, McGregor twp. have, ever since the digging of this big ditch, been a potential fire hazard to the surrounding country. The ditch bank in that vicinity had on numerous occasions preceding the 1918 fire been the source of surface fires. It has been known for the peat in that vicinity to become ignited and smolder throughout the winter and wet spring season and burst forth the following autumn into a surface fire; this was the case in the fall of 1918.

Several weeks preceding the big fire of Oct. 12 the Mud Lake fire had spread over the entire region north of the Northern Pacific tracks, East as far as Grayling and west as far as what is now known as State Highway No. 65 and to the very edge of the village of McGregor.

2. All of that triangular portion of Sec. 25, Jevne twp., bounded by State Highway No. 65, the Soo Line and the township east and west road between sections 24 and 25, became ignited and the entire area burned over in September. The fire in this section was presumed to have been set from a spark from a Soo Line locomotive. No serious damage was done by this fire, it was kept under control with assistance of the Home Guard and was confined to that particular section with the exception of numerous outbreaks into section 30 of McGregor township which were promptly extinguished by the vigilant guard of the citizens.

The peat deposits in this area continued to smolder, however, and were a potential source of danger to McGregor from enumerable flying sparks during the big wind.



Bordering McGregor on the south and within that triangular portion of ground bounded by the Soo Line on the north, County Dredge Ditch No. 5 on the southeast, and what is now designated State Highway No. 65 on the west, lying partly in Section 31, McGregor township and partly in Section 6, Spaulding township, a peat fire on the ditch bank was discovered in the summer of 1918 by Rev. Harry Paynter.

The discovery of this peat fire was reported to Soo Line section foreman, Mr. Joe Gregory, who upon investigation of the fire found that it was within Spaulding township and being considerable distance from the railway, presumed it not to be of railroad origin, he therefore notified the Spaulding town board of the location of the fire.

On Sept. 24 & 25, fanned by a strong northeast wind, the smoldering peat on the ditch bank spread into a surface fire which burned over the entire area described above.

Three days later the smoldering remains of this same fire, fanned by a strong southeast wind, jumped over the Soo Line railroad near McGregor and continued to burn and threatened the entire town of McGregor. Assisted by Company D of the Home Guards several days of strenuous fighting finally brought the flames under control without loss of life and only minor property damage.

By October 5, 1918, almost all of the area surrounding the village of McGregor for a considerable distance had been burned over its surface by the sporadic outbursts of the three original fire sources above enumerated.

It is the consensus of opinion of the residents of McGregor who were living in the region in 1918, that the source of the fire that swept through and devastated Lawler, six miles to the Southeast of McGregor, had its origin in the smoldering peat fires near McGregor.

This was the condition of McGregor and surrounding territory on Oct. 12, 1918 when at about noon of that day a terrific windstorm swept over the country from the northwest - the devastation that followed is a matter of history.

Following the great forest fire of Oct. 12, 1918, alleged responsibility for the fires in this region was charged to be due to the negligence on the part of the United States Government in the operation of the railroads (which were under conscription at the time). Over the course of the next few years three lawsuits were instituted in Federal court. The first trial involved the fire claimants versus the Soo Line Railway Company. The second and third trials, held at Duluth Minnesota, were the claimants versus the Soo Line, Pine Tree Lumber Company (Warehauser) and the Northern Pacific Railway Co. In the second and third trial an attempt was made to fix the responsibility for the Mud Lake fire on the Pine Tree Lumber Co., charging that in the burning of the pine tree slashings on Sec. 9 the defendant permitted the fire to spread to the ditch bank of county ditch No. 14. The court action cleared Warehauser of responsibility for the Mud Lake Fire.

The papers pertaining to the fire claim of the estate of Carl (Karl) Koivunen and wife, fire victims who lost their lives when they sought refuge in an underground concrete root cellar on their farm home located two miles north of Lawler, Minnesota, and were suffocated, disclose the following information:

April 7, 1923, a judgement for the amount of the claim was handed down in District Court, 15th Judicial district, Aitkin County.

April 17, 1923, 40 % or \$1,840 of the claim was paid.

Private Act No. 326, 74th Congress, approved August 27, 1935, authorized payment of balance due claimants on account of fire originating from the operation of the railroads by the United States Government in the state of Minnesota on or about October 12, 1918.

June 24, 1936 - Notice of above settlement claim.

Note

It was ruled by the Attorney General that congress in passing the act authorized payment of only insurable losses that were covered by or could have been covered by a Fire Insurance Policy. Inasmuch as the loss of life is not covered by a Fire Insurance, even though loss of life occurs in a building covered by fire insurance, no payment is made under the fire insurance policy for the loss of such life. With this interpretation of the Act no payments for loss of life have ever been paid the claimants.



Re: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History

From files of the Aitkin Independent Age.

February 14th, 1920

School bonds to the value of \$25,000 for the purpose of building and equipping a school house, will be sold upon sealed bids in the village of McGregor February 27. A majority of voters of Independent Consolidated School District No. 12 voted to issue the bonds at a special election held Feb. 6. 77 voted in favor of the measure and 55 against.

February 14, 1920

Holding that impartial judgement is impossible here the Soo Line railroad for alleged responsibility for the forest fires that devastated Northern Minnesota in Oct. 1918, Judge W. S. McClenahan has granted a change of venue from the Aitkin courts to those of Hennepin County. The suits, which may total hundreds of thousands of dollars, will be tried in Minneapolis

February 21, 1920

BATTLE OVER BOND ISSUE AT MCGREGOR

Injunction to prevent sale of bonds for new school obtained from Judge

Alleging that the school board of Independent Consolidated School District No. 12, have acted without authority in changing the site of the school house and in preparing to issue \$25,000 worth of bonds for the building and equipping of a new schoolhouse at McGregor. A. C. Maddy, Burt Wurzeberger and L. A. Zimmerman have obtained an injunction against the school board.

The new site, allege the plaintiffs, is low, undrainable and too close to a barn which would have to be removed at considerable expense.

April 3rd, 1920

\$345,000 FOR AITKIN COUNTY HIGHWAYS!

State Highway #3 (note correct designation is #2) is the Duluth and Fargo road crossing this county from East to West and connecting with Carlton and Brainerd. Plans are out for 22 miles of work on this road from the Carlton County line to Turner Lake in Jevene township, being the worst part of this highway across a flat country - Let it be known that Aitkin County is a Road building county. (Note, Turner Lake in Jevene township is four miles west of McGregor).

May 22, 1920

INDIAN WAR DANCE AT SANDY LAKE REVIVAL OF SENTIMENTS OF THE PAST

Aitkin County history turned back 50 years for a brief space of time last week when the Indian village at Libby was again the scene of the War Dance. Gay young braves, beautiful maidens and happy children, all care free and indulging in the sports they love, near the peaceful shores of Sandy Lake.

December 4, 1920

Another summer resort colony has been secured for this county through the sale of over 200 acres of land by Marcus Nelson to a Minneapolis concern, who will plat part of it at once. The principle colony will be located at Bellehorn Bay at Sandy Lake

February 5, 1921

The McGregor school board has let the contract for their new school house to Alex Nelson of Perham. The foundation has been built for some time and work on the new built for some time and work on the new building will proceed without delay. The price of the present part of the building will be \$37,900.

March 12, 1921

Fire cases go to Federal Officers - Moose Lake forest fires of 1918 involve about 9,000 separate fire losses.

July 9, 1921

Marcus Nelson - reports having closed the sale of property at Sandy Lake Highlands at the mouth of Sandy River to George Deusner of Terre Haute, Indiana. The purpose is to build a summer resort hotel and Mr. Deusner will put up a 20 room building to begin with. Nebraska and Iowa summer colonies have been located in the county for years and this will mark beginning of the Indiana colony of summer recreation people.

October 8, 1921

McGREGOR SCHOOL DEDICATED OCT. 1st

Dedication of the new school building at McGregor took place Oct. 1st with appropriate exercises. A program was given on which appeared Mr. McConnel State Commissioner of Education and Mr. Selke, rural school inspector.



Re: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History  
Subject: Indian Uprising of 1898

The following account of the "Indian Scare" was given your reporter by not one, but many of the old settlers with little variation. This incident is very indelibly stamped on the memory of all the old Italian settlers who relate it over and over.

Mrs. P. Mennola fixes the time as Oct. 1st 1898 by the age of her son who was "just six months old."

In the fall of 1898 the settlers of McGregor and vicinity were feeling pretty jittery over the possibility of the Indian trouble at Walker spreading to the Sandy Lake Tribe of Indians, rumors the Sandy Lake Indians were preparing for the war path were spreading thick and fast.

About this time the Indians at Mille Lacs Lake were having a big dance and a large number of the Sandy Lake Tribe were enroute to Mille Lacs via the old portage trail which lead from Sandy Lake to Mille Lacs via Sandy River, Davis, Round, Rock and Portage Lake.

"The Indians did not travel like the Whites, when they traveled they took their time and feasted as they went along."

One group of Indians had shot a deer along the trail near Portage Lake close to the home of Henry Lampert, an early Homesteader, and were preparing a feast. Mr. Lampert having previously gone to the harvest fields in N. Dak. leaving his wife and two small children home alone to manage the homestead.

Mrs. Lampert having heard the shot followed by a series of blood-curdling Ki Yaas and noise thought she would investigate the commotion, she looked out of the window upon a scene that made her blood curdle. There, were the Indian warriors all decked out in feathers their cheeks painted a vivid hue all dancing about Ki Yaa'ing, this was their war dance in preparation for the coming massacre.

Snatching her two infants into her arms, leaving all else behind she dashed for the railroad track a quarter mile to the north, and flagged a freight train that was coming down the track, the engineer knowing the passenger train was but a few minutes behind, signaled with his thumb without stopping, this she interpreted to mean the Indians were surely on the war-path and the engineer failed to stop for fear the Indians would commandeer his train. Clasping a child under each arm she fled in the direction of the disappearing caboose, half running, now and then stumbling over the ties, falling and bruising her flesh she made her way four miles to the depot at McGregor, exhausted, battered and bruised she poured out her story of the war-dance to an excited populace.

The depot agent immediately telephoned the government dam tender at Sandy Lake for confirmation, receiving no answer - the line was down do to a storm the night before - he at once wired the information to Duluth that the Indians were on the war path and had possibly massacred the dam keeper and cut the wires.

Authority was wired back to evacuate the settlers on the first train. This means of escape was gladly taken advantage of by many of the Italian settlers.

"Before the train approached McGregor the conductor passed through the train warning the passengers to pull down the shades and lie flat on their stomachs in the isle."

Mr. J. W. (Jim) Murphy's version of the Indian dances follow:

"You know the Ingins had a trail from Sandy Lake to Mille Lacs" (takes out his large dirty county map and traces the general course of the trail) "The Ingins were having a big dance at Mille Lacs and when they had these dances all the Sandy Lake Ingins attended." "They'd be there a week or longer." When the Indians had a dance at Sandy Lake the Mille Lacs returned the complement explained Murphy.

The Indians always dressed for these occasions by painting their cheeks and some of them wore colored feathers.

"I've went to a hundred of these D-m dances, I've heard em High Yeah till I got d - m sick and tired of it."

"They had several kinds of dances but most of them were called medicine dances; at these medicine dances the big chiefs would get up and make a speech, telling of their big deeds - how many white men they had killed, etc. Then another group would get up and talk on medicine."

"Before these dances they beat the big drum eight days and nights, never stopped, that was to call the great Manito their God."

It was on the occasion of one of these dances being staged at Mille Lacs Lake that Mrs. Lampert saw the Sandy Lake Indians staging their war dance.

"These lumber-jacks used to scare these G - d d - m Italians to death - telling them the Indians were coming."

The account of one story coming into McGregor at about the same time Mrs. Lampert arrived and which helped to give credence to her story follows verbatim (By J. E. Murphy).

"The fall that happened it was hunting time, there was no law on deer whatsoever." "There were two hunters camped on the banks of Prairie River about three miles from the mouth."

There was a man came along, a sort of foolish fellow, one you could tell almost anything and he'd believe it, he was coming to McGregor when he happened to come to where these two hunters were tented in the morning, this guy asked where did you come from? As a joke they said Leach Lake - which was a dam lie. They had just killed a deer and their hands were covered with blood. They were two d - m jokers! They told this man



they were getting away from the Leach Lake Indians. He asked: What are you doing with all that blood on your shirt sleeves? They told him some of the Leach Lake Indians had come down to Sandy Lake and now the Sandy Lake Indians were on the war path too. The dammedest lie ever told, something like these Paul Bunyon stories! This blood on their hands they told this geek - we just killed two Indians and throwed em in that brook - the sons of b-----! We're going to Tamarack as fast as we kin.

"This guy came to McGregor and told the story of the Sandy Lake Indians being on the war path."

Source: Files of the Aitkin Independent Age

#### FIRE IN MEADOWLAND SPREADS

July 27, 1918

"\* \* \* the fire is typical of many fires reported from different directions, due either from sparks from engines or to spontaneous combustion in the bogs."

COMPANY D ORDERED TO MCGREGOR BY ADJUTANT GENERAL TO ASSIST CITIZENS

Sept. 28, 1918

An order was received here at about noon yesterday from the Adjutant General's Office, for Company D of the Home Guards to go to McGregor to assist citizens of that village to fight a bog fire which was threatening the entire town. The motor corps was at once called out and the members of the guard conveyed to McGregor in compliance with the order. Additional members of the guard went to McGregor on the afternoon passenger train on the Northern Pacific.

#### MCGREGOR FIRES UNDER CONTROL

Oct. 5, 1918

LOCAL FIRES HAVE THEIR SOURCE IN THE PEAT BOGS - FANNED INTO FIRE BY

HIGH WINDS

Unless the wind turns, the town of McGregor is no longer in danger of being destroyed by the fires which have been sweeping over the hay fields in that vicinity, according to reports of the fire fighters there. The fires, which have their source were fanned into flames by recent high winds sweeping over more than 1,000 acres of hay land in the neighboring country. Two residences in Grayling (4 miles east of McGregor) have burned to the ground before aid could reach them. The tracks of the Soo Line were eaten away by fire, preventing trains from coming through.

#### MCGREGOR FIRE UNDER CONTROL, CONT.

On Friday noon the home guards were called out, and remained at work until Saturday night. Capt. Frank Erickson put the fire fighters in charge of Marcus Nelson of Tamarack who immediately called his employees into action. Five hay bailers were obtained to pitch the hay in danger onto "ricks" which carried it out of the fire zone. A tractor brought to the road near section 30 dug a trench of fresh plowed ground between the town of McGregor and the fire. A wind blowing from the South aggravated the fire anew on Tuesday and the guardsmen were again called out warned to be prepared to remain two days.

Although no lives have been lost, many of the fire fighters have been severely burned. C. J. Kirsch of McGregor who has been beating back the flames since Thursday, came suddenly upon a patch of burning hay from which



the flames were sweeping directly towards the town from a point very near it. Having no implements at hand at the moment and realizing that a few minutes delay would give the fire headway into the town, Mr. Kirsch threw himself upon the patch of flames and rolled through the fire, over the ground, until he had extinguished it. He sustained no severe burns except those to an eye in which the fire ate away the lining and reach the ball.

#### TWO AITKIN COUNTY TOWNS DESTROYED LAST SATURDAY

Forest fires of wide extent wipe out Bain and Lawler on Soo Line.

Threaten many other points, village of Aitkin included

LOSS OF LIFE IN COUNTY ABOUT TWELVE

ADJUTANT GENERAL RHINOW ORDERS MANY HOME GUARD UNITS TO AITKIN TO

ASSIST CITIZENS IN FIGHTING FIRES HERE AND IN VICINITY

GUARDS UNDER COMMAND OF MAJ. CHASE

Oct. 19, 1918

Two towns, Bain and Lawler in Aitkin County, have been destroyed by fire, which swept over the Northeastern part of Minnesota last Saturday, although forest fires and bog fires have been burning in the county, few people realized the danger to their homes that morning. But a terrific windstorm came up about noon, and at two o'clock Bain was utterly destroyed. Many people who had gone to Palisade for the Red Cross dinner and Liberty Day celebration here, rushed home in their cars - some of them finding no homes to go back to.

At Lawler the fire broke out somewhat later in the afternoon. Men had been going out from there into the country to get farmers who were in danger into town, and many of them lost their own homes in their efforts to save others. Train No. 188-189, which was at Riverton, was ordered to Lawler at five o'clock; it was seven before they could get there, and then the town was gone; but only three lives were lost in the village. There was a greater loss of lives in the farm homes in the vicinity for there were no place of safety for the refugees. The Hotel, the schoolhouse and ten residences and a store were standing at Lawler. Automba in Carlton County has been entirely lost and twenty-two people burned to death. The burning of the bridges between there and Lawler made it impossible for the train to reach the town and the only shelter that could be found was an open meadow. The station agent, staying by the wires as long as he dared, finally saved himself by jumping into a well. Tamarack was surrounded by fire, and it crept up to the very edge of town but there was no loss.

Refugees from Lawler were brought into Aitkin late Saturday night and cared for here until they could go back. Supplies from the Red Cross were sent us, and Monday a car of food and clothing from Minneapolis was

received here and taken on the special train to Lawler and Automba. Lawler is under military law now; camps are being built, homes are being erected anew, and little houses being built there and sent to Automba on flat cars. The Soo line up to Duluth is running on schedule again; telegraph connections are possible; people are going back and beginning over again. Meanwhile Aitkin has taken on a very military aspect, with its 250 soldiers, who have been sent up to fight the fires in the vicinity. Every means of preventing further disasters has been taken.

#### CLOTHES BURNED BUT MAN CRAWLS TO SAFETY

Oct. 19, 1918

Crawling on hands and knees a distance of four miles along the railroad track, his clothing burned off his back, his body burned and seared by flames and his mind almost crazed by the sight of death of both parents in the flames, Robert Kratari, of Automba, succeeded at last in reaching Lawler and safety. When the fire came upon them Kratari and his mother wrapped themselves in blankets and crouching close to the ground, started up the railroad track toward Lawler. John Kratari, the father, was too weak to follow them, and when he cried out at the approach of the fire, the mother straightened up, and in a moment, she, too, was enveloped by the flames. Robert Kratari crept on. When he was found at Lawler he was ill, bewildered, incoherent.

#### COUNTY IS UNDER MARTIAL RULE

Oct. 19, 1918

In what years ago was the "parlor" of the old Willard Hotels now located headquarters of the Military Machine which has undertaken to fight the fire menace in Aitkin County and adjoining communities. The campaign against the fire demon is being directed from there. Home Guard units from Minneapolis, Anoka, Osseo, Foley, St. Cloud and other points have been ordered here by Adjutant General Rhinow after consultation with Governor Burnquist, and by Wednesday evening headquarters was running smoothly and efficiently.

#### MOOSE LAKE, MINN. OCT. 17

Fires are raging anew in Aitkin, Salona, Lawler, McGrath, McGregor, Isle and other towns within a 60 mile radius of Moose Lake. Fanned by a wind of high velocity the flames are roaring through pine forests and settlements previously untouched and indications are scores more may lose their lives and their belongings. Home Guards, led by state forestry officials, are battling desperately the rush of fire.

Fire fighters were driven back a few miles from Lawler by a solid sheet of flame four miles wide, and fire 12 miles in width was steadily advancing on McGrath, White Pine and Solona, 25 miles west of here.



Adjutant General Rhinow and 100 men in Autos of the Motor Corps have gone to Lawler. Two Hundred additional guards arrived here in a special train, and one hundred of them are to be sent to the Lawler region as soon as motors are available. In one of the first autos to leave for Lawler was Governor Burnquist.

RED CROSS & COUNTY UNITE IN EFFORTS TO GIVE TEMPORARY & PERMANENT RELIEF

OCT. 19, 1918

Many of the refugees went back to Lawler on Sunday and Monday. On Wednesday the town was put under Martial Rule and is rapidly being rebuilt.

(At a Citizens Meeting, held at the court house, Oct. 16th), Mr. C. H. Warner, urged that a strong organization be effected at once to cooperate with the Red Cross and ask the County Commissioners to appropriate \$10,000. for temporary relief. Mr. Warner requested another committee be appointed to inquire into the extent of the loss, list of sufferers and aid required. That a third committee, with the chairman of the Aitkin chapter of the Red Cross as a member, be appointed to administer permanent relief.

~~That a third committee~~  
Suggestions adopted by the meeting and on Tuesday morning, by unanimous vote of the county commissioners the funds of \$10,000 was appropriated.

Oct. 26, 1918

Acting upon the authority conferred upon them by the citizens meeting held at the court house on the 16th inst. the committee appointed to make a survey of the fire loss in Aitkin county composed of (five leading citizens ).

Beginning in the town of Salo in which the town of Lawler is located, outside of the village they found 22 settlers who had lost practically all they possessed.

Re: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History

#### MCGREGOR COMMUNICATIONS

McGregor receives excellent postal service. Served by six incoming and five outgoing mail trains daily. The McGregor postoffice serves the inland postoffices of Libby on the north and East Lake to the South, with daily Lock Pouch service. One rural route, with tri-weekly service, and three Star Routes supply daily free delivery service to an area of over 200 square miles.

McGregor is served by Western Union and Postal Telegraph.

McGregor has modern dial telephone service, servicing the Sandy Lake resort area without extra toll. Connections with Bell to all parts of the world.

#### TRANSPORTATION

McGregor has a close connection with the rest of the country through its transportation facilities. The Northern Pacific Lines pass through McGregor on its daily run from Duluth to Fargo, N. Dak. and points West. The Soo Line passes through McGregor on its daily run from Duluth to Thief River Falls via Moose Lake. Other passenger traffic is serviced by Northland Greyhound Bus Lines, two incoming and two outgoing busses daily. Freight service is adequately provided by the Northern Pacific and Soo Railway lines. Door to door truck service is provided daily by Schmidt Transportation Co. O. L. Johnson provides daily truck service to Duluth and semi-weekly service to the Twin Cities.



Re: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History  
Subject: McGregor Public Utilities  
Authority: Myron R. Allen, Commercial Manager

GENERAL MINNESOTA UTILITIES COMPANY commenced business in 1930, purchasing small isolated and local plants in McGregor and Tamarack, Remer, Cromwell, Kettle River, and Blackduck, joining these towns and thereby giving them service from one transmission high line. Many of these localities were receiving only part time service so, by interconnecting, 24 hour service was rendered.

At the present time the company serves the greater part of Aitkin County and part of Carlton County. Remer, located in Cass County, is also furnished service by the company and an emergency power plant of 225 HP capacity is located there to boost whenever the load warrants.

The towns served by the McGregor power plant are: Remer, Hill City, Swatara, Shovel Lake, Bain, Palisade, McGregor, Tamarack, Wright, Cromwell, Kettle River, Automba, Lawler, East Lake and McGrath. Besides these communities, service is furnished to over 400 farms lying adjacent to these towns and also numerous summer resorts around Sandy Lake and the west side of Lake Minnewawa.

The Blackduck Division comprises the following towns:

Blackduck, Northome, Mizpah, Tenstrike, Hines, Funkley. These localities are supplied by the power house located at Blackduck.

Power is manufactured by Fairbanks Morse Diesel engines. The capacity of the McGregor plant is 700 HP; the Remer plant 225 HP; the Blackduck plant 400 HP, making a total system capacity of approximately 1,325 HP.

Division offices are located at Hill City, Blackduck and McGregor. Main office located at Pine City, Minnesota.

To: Mr. Macy  
From: Clifford Greer  
Source: A. M. Hayes, Judge of Probate,  
Mrs. Frank Ferlita, typesetter for A. H. Carlisle

#### MCGREGOR NEWS PAPER HISTORY

In the summer of 1920, Mr. E. B. Lindsley established a print shop in McGregor village. Publication of a weekly newspaper known as the "PILOT" continued for a period of one year with Mr. E. B. Lindsley as editor and publisher.

Mr. A. M. Hayes succeeded Mr. Lindsley as publisher of the "PILOT" until the spring of 1922 when the "PILOT" was purchased by Mr. M. H. Galer. Mr. Galer continued publication of the "PILOT" until the fall of 1923 when financial reverses forced him to discontinue publication of the "PILOT" at McGregor.

McGregor was without a newspaper from the fall of 1923 until September 1925.

In September 1925, Mr. A. H. Carlisle established a print shop in the McGregor village hall. Publication of a weekly newspaper known as the "PILOT REVIEW" continued under the editorship of Mr. Carlisle until Dec. 8, 1930, on which date Mr. Carlisle died suddenly after a short illness.

In January 1921 Mr. V. J. (Red) Stefflre purchased from the Carlisle estate the complete plant and after moving the equipment to a new location on Maddy Street resumed publication of the "PILOT REVIEW."

The PILOT REVIEW suspended publication in the summer of 1934. McGregor has been without a newspaper or printing establishment since that date.

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SOURCE: Minutes of the Village Council

Dec. 7, 1920

Motion carried to grant 20 year franchise to the Pioneer Co-operative Telephone Company.

Dec. 6, 1922

Motion carried to call a special election on Dec. 20, 1922 to vote on the proposition: Shall the village issue bonds in the amount of \$1800 to purchase and erect a municipal light plant.

Dec. 20, 1922

Special election held to vote on the municipal light plant. Result of election: 40 ballots cast - 30 against the proposition and 10 in favor.

July 5, 1927\*

Motion carried to have blue prints of the village made and have State road #5 (Maddy street) as Central avenue and have avenues run north and south and streets east and west.

NOTE \*

A perusal of the Minute book of the McGregor village council, up to and including July 25, 1929, sheds no further light on the outcome of this motion, however, I have been told by many of the citizens of McGregor including Mr. O. L. Johnson, Byron Maddy, E. O. Bachlor et al, that pursuant to this motion the village, at considerable expense, hired the County Surveyor to resurvey and make a plat of the village, changing the streets and avenues as above. The outcome of this effort being that the Register of Deeds refused to record this new plat because of the fact that it conflicted with the Metes and Bounds discription of many of the deeds already on file.

Outside of the three orignal plats, Dominico Cusciotto, H. J. Newell, and Rodenburg's, most, of all, of the land discription has been by Metes and Bounds (many of the old timers here use the expression " Leaps and Bounds").

After completion of the new plat of the village, pandemonium reigned East of Maddy street, where heretofore residents were living in comparative security on their "own" lot they awoke to find that by this new plat their "own" lot belonged to their neighbor, or in some cases, the house was on one lot, the out-house on another and possibly the garage half way in the street. Many of those adversely affected charged the county surveyor who made the new plat, was "blind in one eye and couldn't see out of the other," "he should have retired 40 years ago," etc.

Only a very few of the residents interviewed admitted the possibility that ther error between the new survey and the old might have had its beginning in the orignal "Clothesline Survey" of Mr. C. A. Maddy.

Mr. Geo. W. Dodge, a pioneer resident, states that he platted the first plat in McGregor in the late '90s (H. J. Newell Add.), Jacob Leighty was next

to the east, platting a piece on the west line of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 31. The platting of real estate had lucrative possibilities, so it seemed to Mr. C. A. Maddy, who was an enterprising pioneer land owner, thus was developed a new technique in surveying, known at the "Clothline Survey."

\* The employment of a surveyor with a transit and attendant paraphernalia was a costly proceeding for such a simple thing as measuring out a piece of land, and then too, the lots wouldn't bring any more money, thus pondered Mr. Maddy, until he hit on the idea of doing the platting himself. As long as he had a point of beginning, and wasn't that old post out there in the bog a government quarter post - what of it if some said it was only the post from which an early pioneer tethered his cow, everyone knows the corner is right there. Thus with the aid of a clothline that sufficed for a surveyor's chain, streets were laid out and McGregor grew and grew in the late '90s.

"Note - The above is your reporter's version of the "clothesline" survey and while the details are not absolutely guaranteed it is the impression I got from interviewing some of the pioneers, including Mr. Byron Maddy, son of C. A. Maddy, deceased.

June 5, 1928

Motion carried to have the County engineer survey the sidewalks, starting at the N. P. Depot thence south on West side of Maddy street to Soo Depot. Thence on East side of Maddy Street from the White Eagle Oil station to Peterson's southwest corner.

Nov. 13, 1928

Motion carried to accept Franchise as drawn up by and between Isador Iverson and the village of McGregor to supply light and power to the village. Also to accept agreement to furnish street lights.

(Known as The McGregor Power and Light Company)



The following article I have condensed from the files of the Aitkin Age.  
Dated Dec. 29, 1883.

#### RAILROADS COME TO AITKIN IN 1870

The greatest of modern civilizers is the railroad. The greatest railroad in the world, which has opened up more formerly inaccessible territory to civilization and commerce, which without it would have remained forever locked in the bosom of the wilderness, is the Northern Pacific.

In 1869 when this now great enterprise was as yet almost mythical and when as yet but a few spadeful of earth had been thrown in its construction any one who had faith in its ultimate destiny and put money into it was regarded almost as a lunatic. Later, in 1873, when the father of the enterprise, Jay Cook, failed it was looked upon as a dead thing which, in spite of the fact that it had already peopled five hundred miles of splendid country, would never reach the coast.

This great scheme of connecting lake and ocean, from Superior to Puget Sound was, as has been stated, begun to be put in operation in the summer of 1869. At that time all of Minnesota north of St. Cloud, on the Mississippi, was only traversed by traders or Indians and had not a village of 500 people in all its vast expanse. The great father of waters went then, as it does now "unvexed to the sea," but all navigation had ever done above St. Paul towards developing and settling the territory adjacent was very little indeed. The building of the Northern Pacific, however, passing as it did right through the heart of the finest pine forests of the state, opened up many lumbering regions hitherto inaccessible and built a number of thriving lumbering towns.

#### A TIMBERED WILDERNESS

It is a region, in the main, unfit for agricultural purposes, and yet rich in its wealth of timber and invaluable as the reservoir from which the great river receives and must continue to find its great water supply. It is in the main impassible and impenetrable for teams during the summer months, and can only be made accessible during that season at a great expense by the construction of artificial roads. Into the heart of this vast region the great river penetrates, and for a distance of one hundred and sixty miles above Aitkin there is a navigable stage of water during the summer, and a line of steamers has been in operation ever since the completion of the railroad to this point.

The first link of the great railway from the head of the lakes reached Aitkin in December 1870. The Northern Pacific was originally built from the Great Lakes west and not from St. Paul.

#### CITY OF AITKIN MAKES SECOND TRIP (May 1883)

The Steamer City of Aitkin, made its second trip in good time, leaving Aitkin Tuesday noon, May 8th. It made the round trip to Grand Rapids and return in just four days, arriving at our landing on Saturday noon, the 12th.

THIRTY MILE LOG JAM  
(JUNE 9th, 1883)

The steamer, City of Aitkin, left our landing on Tuesday, June 5th, 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 surcimstances as a move in the right direction. Her return is a matter that no fellow can foretell.

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NEW BOAT ARRIVES  
(July 21, 1883)

The steamer Lottie Lee, owned by Brainerd parties, came up from that place Wednesday evening and will carry freight from Aitkin to Grand Rapids.

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LOW WATER STEAMBOATING  
(Aug. 25, 1883)

The Steamer Fawn under command of Capt. Fred Bonnas, left Aitkin on 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.

GOING TO THE WOODS  
(Dec. 8th, 1883)

There has been a regular carravan of teams the past week, setting out for the wood above here and the hotels have been literally crowded to suffocation. Tuesday and Wednesday were the big days and a stranger would naturally 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 were a hardy, healthy looking set and will create havoc with the forests this winter as well as at the mess. The Age here lists by name twelve seperate outfits as sending "parties above."

FLEET OF RIVER BOATS  
(December 29, 1883)

At present there is engaged in the river trade the two Steamers, City of Aitkin and Fawn, owned and run by Capt. Geo. Houghton, and which most of the season are occupied in the trade between Aitkin and Grand Rapids, at the foot of Pokegama Falls, and all intermediate points.

In addition to these two boats Mr. E. B. Lowell, in conjunction with a Minneapolis party, has begun the construction of a first class freight and passenger boat which he will have ready for the spring trade. This boat will be equal in every respect to the finest packet on the lower river. It will be 130 feet long and 32 foot beam, will be provided with two engines with each a twelve inch cylinder and a six foot stroke, which will give it all the power necessary for the most difficult and swiftest water. It will be a stern wheeler, will draw ten inches of water and will have a capacity of 175 tons of freight.



It will be surmounted with a cabin 80 feet in length with a row of state rooms on each side and will be fitted up in first-class style throughout.

The addition of this boat to our fleet will enable everyone who does business at any point above here, within striking distance of the river, to receive freight or to arrive or depart almost daily by as comfortable and speedy a means of transit as could be desired, and will stimulate the settlement of the rich valley of the Mississippi already spoken of.

NOTE

This boat was christened the Andy Gibson, in honor I've been told, of the carpenter who built it.

FROM THE FILES OF THE AITKIN AGE

Despoilers of the Pine  
(Mar. 8, 1884)

The Minneapolis Journal says that indications warrant an estimate of 240,000,000. feet from the Mississippi lumber cut this season. This will be a large increase over the cut of last year.

Steamer Andy Gibson Sets Record  
(July 4, 1885)

And now it is the Andy Gibson that comes to the front with the quickest round trip ever made between Aitkin and Grand Rapids.

Leaving her dock on Tuesday June 30, at 11 a. m., the Andy Gibson made the round trip between Aitkin and Grand Rapids in thirty-seven hours, reaching Aitkin on her return at 1:00 a. m., on July 2nd. This beats all previous records by a number of hours.

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BIG LOG HAULING  
(Mar. 23, 1889)

Rodger Bros. are still hauling, and will continue as long as there is any snow. They have banked 8,000,000 fully as many as they expected to get when they commenced.

BANKED THIRTEEN MILLION

Miller and Kennedy broke camp on Wednesday, March 13, - They have banked thirteen million, and are quite well satisfied with their short winter's work.

45 CARS OF EQUIPMENT FOR LOGGING CAMPS  
(Dec. 2nd 1889)

There has been a little stir among the lumbermen this week; since Nov. 28th, 28 cars of stock and seventeen cars of hay and feed have been received here, Miller and McKinney brought in 70 head of horses.

Re: Your letter dated Sept. 16, 1940, in which you request certain specific information.

1. Are beaver still to be found in the McGregor Lake region?

My information, received from many of the early lumbermen, is that beaver in the McGregor Lake region were extinct or non-existent during the lumbering period, however, evidence of their previous existence was apparent along the lakes and streams in the form of old beaver dams and poplar cuttings.

None of the pioneers interviewed had seen a beaver in this region until recent years. At the present time beaver are to be found in most of the lakes and streams in this region and seem to be multiplying rapidly. Large colonies are to be found in Prairie River and its tributaries, Rice River, Rock Lake and numerous other lakes and streams. It is not uncommon to see them working in the ditches along the side roads. Your reporter sat in his car on the township road leading north from highway U. S. No. 210 between sections 28 & 29 in McGregor township and watched them busily at work making a dam across the ditch. Authorities on the subject usually credit this industrious little worker as being shy, and working only at night, that being the case, the beaver in this region must be adapting themselves to the march of civilization, for they show little concern in the approach of an automobile, but continue on their work until the motorist attempts to get out of his car in order to get a closer view, when with a loud resounding slap of their broad flat tail they dive beneath the water, not to return until the intruder is gone.

In the past few years some damage has resulted by the beaver dams raising the water level and flooding some areas of farm and timber land, in which case when the complaint reaches the State Dept. of Conservation, the local game warden is given the authority to dynamite the dams, if after successive blastings the beaver still persist in rebuilding them, they are trapped and removed. This was the case several years ago in Turner Lake (located four miles west of McGregor on Highway U. S. No. 210).

Beaver have for many years been protected by state law. Last year (spring) open season with certain restrictions was declared; full information on this can be secured from the State Dept. of Conservation, Division of Game and Fish.

You may note here that the return of the beaver to this region has been in the past ten (10) years.

2. Page 5, Paragraph 6, of research report of Sept. 9, 1940.

The spelling of the words "Jale", "Sell," "To gather," and "A cross" are taken from the original record. That portion of the paragraph in quotes as to phraseology and spelling is taken from the record verbatim.

As to the full correct name of the County Surveyor "Ohare," I will secure that information from the court house records at the first opportunity.

3. Ref: "CREX GRASSLANDS"

Source: Mr. Elmer T. Strom, foreman for the Crex Carpet Company, from 1918 to time of liquidation.



In the spring, of the year 1900, the American Grass Twine Company, with headquarters in New York City, New York, commenced building upon, and developing a four thousand and forty (4040), acre tract of meadowland, situated two miles west of the present village of McGregor and extending south from the Northern Pacific tracks in Jevene (48-24) township to Rice river in Davidson (47 N - 23 W) township.

Many buildings were constructed on the south side of the Northern Pacific tracks in Sec. 34, Town 48N, Range 24 W, among these being a foreman's dwelling, a large barn, cook and bunk house, blacksmith shop and a large warehouse paralleling the N. P. siding.

Production of wire grass commenced in the summer of 1900.

Peak production was reached in the year 1910 in which year close to three thousand (3000) tons of wire grass was harvested, baled and shipped to St. Paul, Minn.

No finished grass products were produced at this camp.

During peak production employment was furnished to over 200 men. Employment roles were filled as far as possible from within the county. Average paid wages were \$2 per day. Average employment for the entire season over 100 men.

The harvesting of wire grass continued by hand methods until the development of the "Mechanical Turning Device." Previous to the development of this labour saving device, the grass was cut entirely by mowers drawn by a team of horses wearing "Bog Shoes," after being cut for a day the grass was turned over by hand to facilitate drying, then when cured, the grass was "gleaned" into bundles and tied with a handfull of wire grass or as in later years "Grass Twine."

The invention of the turning device was the biggest factor in the reduction of man power in the harvesting of wire grass. One man operating a tractor drawn grain binder equipped with this device, supplimented 75 men and eight teams of horses.

This device was made to attach to a common grain binder from which the grain tying mechanism was removed; one of these binders so equipped could cut the grass, then orient it 90 degrees (hence the name "turning device") and lay it back on the stubble in a row with the butts of the grass all even, where it remained until cured, then it was "gleaned" and tied into bundles by hand.

Then the automatic gleaner was developed, this was a device that straddled the row of cured wire grass and picked it up and automatically tied it into bundles, this device practically eliminated hand gleaning.

In 1914 the AMERICAN GRASS TWINE COMPANY recapitalized for \$5,000,000, incorporated under the laws of Delaware and changed their firm name to the CREX CARPET COMPANY.

After the peak year of 1910, production held steady for a number of years until 1925.

The Japanese became interested in the production of grass rugs and in the year of 1925 they sent a delegation to the U. S. to study our production methods, this resulted in strong Japanese competition commencing in 1926.

In the face of this new foreign competition plus the high land taxes (\$1.00) per acre, the production of wire grass products steadily declined until 1936 when only a few tons of grass was produced.

In order to reduce its large holdings the Crex Carpet Company, in about 1937 went into voluntary bankruptcy, at which status it still stands. Since that time most of the original buildings have been razed and sold.



Ref: Letter dated Oct. 29, 1940 and Nov. 20, 1940.  
Subject: McGregor History.

The information requested in your letter dated Oct. 29, 1940, in the order asked:

1. See research report of Nov. 13, 1940. The day I interviewed Mr. Randa I also called on Mr. John Field and as the day was drawing to a close and Mr. Field had not as yet returned from a trip into the woods, I left with the lady of the house a biographical questionnaire with instructions to mail same to me. Thus far I have not received it; as soon as the roads in that region are again passable I will pick up the additional information.

2. Was there a marble quarry at McGregor around 1870? In conducting my interviews with the pioneers and other history sources I have always tried to be on the alert to detect just such information as this. If a quarry ever existed in this region I have been unable to discover any clue as to its existence.

I would infer from the fact that you asked this specific question that you must have some clue to the existence of this supposed quarry. The oldest pioneers here all discredit the theory of a quarry ever existing here.

Unless you have information to the contrary, I would think that the geology of this region would almost preclude the possibility of a marble quarry, having existed here. As I remember my mineralogy, marble deposits have their origin in calcareous fossil beds, thus forming limestone, this limestone under pressure and heat undergoes a metamorphic change producing crystalized calcium carbonate or as commonly known MARBLE. I know of no limestone deposits near McGregor.

3. For an account of the Sandy River Lumber Co. see research report dated Nov. 22, 1940.

The period of lumbering around Sandy Lake, Sandy River and McGregor covers a period of sixty-six (66) years, commencing with the Libbys in 1850, reached a peak in the 1890's, and declined to 1916 with the Pine Tree Lumber Company completing their operations in that year in section 9-10, McGregor township.

The gathering of definite facts on this phase of our history has been a constant headache to your reporter. Rarely indeed does an interview ever disclose a general picture of any one phase of our history, their accounts are usually filled with inaccuracies and exaggerations even within their own limited sphere of activity, so most of these accounts to be of any historical value, must be analyzed and further confirmed before a fairly accurate picture can be drawn from them. The volumes of notes I have in my file on this subject will be submitted "as is" this week for your approval, however, I had hoped to see you personally before submitting same.

Reference: Inter-office Memorandum dated Nov. 20, 1940

1. The site that was finally selected for the McGregor schoolhouse was the same site that was described in the injunction suit as "low, undrainable and too close to a barn."

Mr. Oscar L. Johnson was at that time a member of the school board and he states: This was a temporary injunction, after a period of time the case was heard in court, was taken under advisement by the judge and finally thrown out of court, when the building continued as originally planned. Commenting on the reason for the injunction he states; "in every community there are certain elements who are supposed to advancement and McGregor is no exception."

3. For some reason Marcus Nelson did not go through with the proposed twenty room structure at Sandy Lake highlands.

4. The Hesper J. Newell plat within the corporate limits of the village of McGregor is the only tract ever to be platted on the north side of the Northern Pacific Railway within the village, it was the first tract to be platted in McGregor. The construction of the Soo Line in about 1909 cut diagonally across this plat, that portion of this tract lying on the south side of the Soo Line has never been improved. The streets have long been laid out in that portion of this tract that lies in the north angle formed by the two railroads. No street markers were ever erected at the street intersections, and while the names of the streets are known, it is not commonly known which street is which. In interviewing Mr. J. T. Bailey who lives on the corner of Newell Ave. and State Hy. 65, I enquired of him the name of the street in front of his house, he thought it was Newell Ave. while his wife was positive it was Hesper Ave.

8. With reference to the wild rice harvest the information I wished to convey was the fact that there is approximately ten white men to every Indian engaged in the harvest. The Indians here strongly resent this invasion into what they consider there exclusive property.

Questions No. 2, 5, 6, 7 and 9 will be handled as the various authorities are consulted.

The extent of the bulk petroleum products business here, organization of the McGregor State Bank, the McGregor hospital, our present consolidated school system, the McGregor public library, etc. are points I would like to discuss with you personally at your next visit to McGregor. If you will advise me as to the time you expect to arrive I will arrange my itinerary so as to be in the office.

On Saturday preceeding the big blizzard, I was in the region of the Government Dam at Libby trying to contact Mr. Chas. Wakefield, a relative of the Libbys and Wakefields. While there I uncovered a valuable source of information in the form of the daily record kept by the Dam Tender at the Libby Dam, besides meteorologic information there has been a daily record kept of all logs, ties, etc. sluiced through the dam from Sandy Lake into the Mississippi as well as a record of all boats locked through, these records go back to the first government dam which was built in about 1891, these records are contained in about a dozen legers now in possession of Mr. Henry Dart, the present dam tender.



Mr. Dart states that these records are the property of the War Department and before he could disclose their contents permission would have to be obtained in the form of a letter from his superiors, THE DISTRICT ENGINEER, P. O. Box 206, St. Paul, Minnesota.

As practically all of the timber cut in the region of Sandy Lake, and the many streams feeding into it, was boomed across the lake and fed into the Mississippi, these should disclose valuable information as to total cut peak production years, etc.

I believe it would be worth the effort to try and obtain the necessary permission to delve into these records.

Clifford Greer.

### VANDERWATER SAWMILL

The first saw-mill erected at McGregor was built during the season of 1902, by M. A. J. Vanderwater. It operated during the period from 1902-1913 and was the largest saw-mill ever to operate in McGregor. The mill had a capacity of 30,000 feet per day, was driven by a large steam engine. Operated in connection with the saw-mill was a planing mill, also a shingle and lath mill which consumed all of the valuable part of the slabs, converting them into merchantable material. The total number of men employed at this mill is at present unknown. The saw-mill and yard was located on the west side of the Murphy hotel and a number of acres of land was required to accommodate the skidways.

Mr. A. J. Vanderwater originally came to McGregor in the early summer of 1902 accompanied by his brother-in-law, Mr. J. T. Bailey, in search for a saw-mill site. The kind of site he was interested in was one that was conveniently situated near a stream of water with a view to harnessing the water power to operate the mill. Robert N. Newell, the McGregor real estate agent, told Mr. Vanderwater that he had just such a tract of land located on the southeast side of Rat Lake, T. 49, R. 24 W. After viewing the tract of land at Rat Lake and receiving Mr. Newell's verbal assurance that the water level in Rat Lake Creek, which flowed through the property, would not fall below its present level (actually the creek was at the time at flood stage) the deal was consummated for cash. Before Mr. Vanderwater came to realize that his power producing stream was failing, and actually dried up during the dry season, he had already constructed a number of buildings on the proposed mill site. Realizing that he had been duped into buying the tract he abandoned his plan of utilizing water power to power his mill and erected the mill in the village of McGregor.

The buildings that were erected at Rat Lake were moved the following winter to McGregor, one of these 16' x 24' serves, with an addition, as the residence of J. T. Bailey, another of these buildings is now a portion of Mrs. P. Memmola's residence.

Mr. J. T. Bailey has held numerous elective offices in the village including Justice of Peace, Village Clerk and Councilman.

He states that he was the one delegated to erect McGregor's first street lighting system, this lighting system comprised three kerosene street lamps, each lamp burned about one gallon of kerosene a night, one lamp was placed in front of each of the following business establishments: J. W. Clark's store, Frank Spicola's store and the Hudson & Turner saloon.

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Subject: The tract of land granted to Indian Chief Misquodace in Section 30, T. 51 N, R. 22.

The court records in Aitkin disclose the fact that all of the above section of land has been taken over by the State of Minnesota for non-payment of taxes. The last owner of record is shown as K. C. Medgarden.

Mr. Victor E. Erickson of the Aitkin County Abstract Company very kindly, and with a great deal of trouble to himself, uncovered the record



which shows that Indian Chief Misquodace sold his tract of land for "\$1.00 and other valuable considerations," deeding same to C. W. McDonald, Dec. 24, 1885.

" From the woods, Major Camo, surveyor general of logs and lumber for this district, yesterday returned from a two weeks' visit to the lumber camps of the Upper Mississippi river. He reports that the lumbermen of that region have thus far had a first-rate winter, there being an abundance of snow for logging purposes, About 50,000,000 feet have already been cut, and it is his opinion that the entire harvest on the upper waters of the Mississippi will reach from 150,000,000 to 170,000,000 feet of logs.

Stillwater Gazette.

Oct. 20, 1875.

" The much-talked-of canal surveying party set out yesterday for the second and final exploration of the waters and country between the Mississippi and Lake Superior, as well as those between the St. Croix and the lake, the former route will be the object of this trip, the latter having been gone over. For this purpose the explorers first got to Duluth, whence their supplies will be transported to the St. Louis river, through the upper waters of which Sandy Lake will be attained, and thence the Mississippi. About one month will be consumed in the task



Steamer North Star

About a year ago, Anson Northrup, then its owner (North Star) owner determined to force the boat over the Sauk Rapids and Little Falls, with a view to the navigation between Little Falls and Pokegama Falls, three or four hundred miles beyond. A simple narrative of this adventure in 1858, will best illustrate the character of Northrup. As he approached Sauk Rapids, lines ahead were adjusted, the boat being made steady by the wheel and guy lines, and then with capstan and the utmost of steam, the vessel was dragged through the rapids. To pass under bridges at Watab and Little Falls, the hog posts were taken out, ( hog posts were at the rear of the deck and extended some distance into the air, ) and the boat loaded down with stone.

At Little Falls, the obstruction of the channel was over come by eight horses on one line and fifty men on another,... While engineers were aghast at the proposition to ascend these Rapids, Northrup coolly ( sic ) staked his vessel on the chance...

The ' North Star ' at length rode in safety upon the far Mississippi ...the enthusiastic crowd breaking more than one bottle, probably, in a new christening of the craft as the ' Anson Northrup.' ' Pokegama Falls was next nosed... Sandy Lake skirted...

Steamboat Trip

The Anson Northrup alias North Star, has just returned to Crow Wing, from a trip to Pokegama Falls. There were about sixty persons in all on board, and they were eleven days in making the trip. They ran up into Sandy Lake which empties into the Mississippi through an outlet some two miles long, explored it thoroughly... running up one of its inlets... Medicine River about six miles. The party visited Pokegama Falls but could not get the boat nearer than about two miles.

Pioneer Democrat Weekly

July 1, 1858.

St. Paul Pub. Lib.

Steamboat trip to Pokegama Falls.

The public attention has not been sufficiently directed to the important bearing which the recent trip of the steamboat 'North Star' from Little Falls to Pokegama Falls, must have upon the future development of the upper Mississippi Country.

By this trip the practicability of the navigation by steamboat of the Upper Mississippi to within tow miles of Pokegama Falls, and for a distance of two hundred and fifty miles above Crow Wing, was thoroughly tested and abundantly demonstrated. The trip itself abounded in interesting incidents, There were some fifty or sixty passengers. The trip was accomplished in eleven days, of which one was spent in exploring Sandy Lake. This beautiful lake, the site of an important mission, is connected with the Mississippi by an outlet of two miles in length....



## The Upper Mississippi

We had the pleasure of interviewing Captain Houghton on the street yesterday, whom our readers must all know, as commander of the Mollie Kohler and other steamers, in days gone by. Captain Houghton has built a steamer on the Upper Mississippi, which he now runs from Little Falls to a point at or near Lake Pokegama. Our readers, by taking their state maps, will see that this commands a very long stretch of river, of fully 3000 miles navigation, which Captain Houghton has now made subservient to the uses of commerce and travel. His steamer is light draught and only 24 feet wide, but carries a large load, and on her last trip up had 100 passengers and 50 tons of freight. The building of the Northern Pacific Railroad has made quite a travel into the Upper Mississippi region. A considerable amount of supplies are being taken up both for the road and lumbermen. The road will cross the Mississippi at a point about 14 miles above Crow Wing. Here two towns have been laid out, Ogden and Ogemauga ( or Queen City ) on opposite banks of the river.

The country between the Mississippi and the junction is not highly favorable for railroad building. Some of it is quite wet and soft, but generally level, hence there are few expensive cuts. The work is being pushed forward rapidly.

A few days ago, Captain Houghton pushed the steamer from the Mississippi into Sandy Lake through its outlet, crossed Sandy Lake, and ran some distance up Sandy River, during high water. This is a stream generally only about twenty feet wide, and it was quite a champion feat of navigation to push a boat so far up. The Indians were astounded, and told Captain Houghton the ' Great Spirit '

must have helped him. He actually reached a point where he could hear the locomotive whistle at the junction, and the junction people heard his bear whistle. Soon those solitudes will echo regularly to the steam whistle; now it is a desolate wilderness. Captain Houghton says the scenery along the Mississippi is generally very fine, and some day it may become a much traveled route."

\* Brainerd.

ON OBSERVING BEING A. THE PLACE.

THEY WERE THEN TAKEN OUT. OTHERS WERE OBSERVED (A. GREEN CIRC.)

ALONG THE RIVER. THE FIRST OF A BARGE BOAT IS LIT ON CROSS CREEK. THE

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Anson Northrup was on Red River.

" There were 7-8 thousand people in the settlements and they used Nelson's River via Hudson's bay to England. The goods imported by the H.B. Company to the Red River amounted to 4 or 5 hundred thousand dollars annually. Yearly returns in furs. \$ 1,880,000 from this district. St. Paul route already used. That the H.B. Company has already determined to ship overland and of necessity. Previous fall 60 packages of goods of this company from New York were forwarded by Red River carts from St. Paul, so satisfactory as to induce the adoption of this route. A group of Hudson's Bay English gentlemen wrote they were prepared to forward supplies to Red River via St. Paul. 120 tons of goods in three shipments and 30 tons sugar and tobacco, etc from New York. We propose to employ about 100 ox carts of our own to transfer from St. Paul.

( The effect of the railroads with reference to the land boom- Effect was magical. Most people want pine lands but these being well taken many are content with other lands. )

Lake Superior military road. 2/19/63

From Chisago County to Superior.

From: Clifford U. Greer  
To: Mr. Macy  
Source: Mrs. Mary Lozway, 12 No. 26th Av. W.  
Duluth, Minnesota

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McGregor Hist.  
12-26-40

Henry Lozway, a frenchman born in New York State, came to McGregor Station in either 1889 or 1890. McGregor at this date comprised of one small depot situated on the south side of the Northern Pacific Railroad, one frame building situated a short distance to the west of the depot and used as a section house; no other buildings existed; McGregor was but a siding on the Northern Pacific.

Henry Lozway shipped in a quantity of lumber by freight and built a frame store building close to the depot, he operated this small store until Mr. Frank Spicola arrived in 1891 and bought out his interest. (Note, Mrs. Pasquale Memmola states that she is positive that Frank Spicola did not buy this "Indian trading Store" altho he may have purchased the small stock of goods owned by Henry Lozway). After selling out his "Indian Trading Store" Henry Lozway went west and did not return to McGregor until after his brother Daniel E. Lozway secured a homestead claim and settled in McGregor in 1893.

Henry Lozway died March 24, 1905 and was buried in the McGregor cemetery.

Daniel E. Lozway born March 10, 1860, married Miss Mary Hart, daughter of pioneer settlers of Nebraska City, Nebraska.

Daniel E. Lozway moved his wife and family to McGregor in the summer of 1893 obtained a homestead, built a small store, secured the postmaster-ship and operated in competition with Frank Spicola for a few years, died Feb. 23, 1903, buried in Aitkin, Minn.

Mrs. Mary Lozway, widow of Daniel E. Lozway, at the present time is residing with her son Frank, in Duluth Minnesota.



From: Clifford U. Greer  
To : Mr. Macy

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BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS OPERATING IN MCGREGOR AT TIME OF INC. (1903)

1. MADDY HOTEL, a large two story structure (frame) built by Mr. C. A. Maddy in the late 1890s, situated in section 31 on the approximate site of the present White Eagle Service Station on the corner of Maddy Street, setting parallel with and facing the Nor. Pac. Railway tracks. Destroyed by fire in recent years.
2. MCGREGOR HOTEL, also known as the "Murphy Hotel," a two story frame structure built by Mr. J. E. (Jim) Murphy shortly after the construction of the Maddy Hotel, situated on "Railroad Avenue" (Railroad Avenue is a name coined by your reporter to describe that thoroughfare which lies adjacent to and parrallels the Nor. Pac. right of way on the south side of the R. R. tracks) approximately two and one-half blocks west of Maddy Street, it faced the railroad as did all these early buildings. A saloon was operated here in connection with the hotel. Prior to 1903 Mr. Murphy sold the hotel to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ Johnson after a period of time Mr. Johnson leased the business to Mr. Andrew Burud who was the operator at the time (1905) the building was destroyed by fire along with J. W. Clark's store and postoffice and the village Blacksmith Shop. The village records show a liquor license was issued for a period of one year, 6/3/04 to 6/2/05 inc to "(Chas.) Bjorklund & (Andrew) Burud" at the McGregor Hotel.
3. Olson & Alstead Saloon, a one story frame structure situated on "Railroad Avenue" one block East of Maddy Street. Built in the 1890s by "Tom Campinello" the first saloon keeper in McGregor. J. P. Olson succeeded and was operating same in 1903.
4. Hudson & Turner Saloon, a one story frame structure situated in "Lot 1 Block 4 Dominico Cusciotto Division," on the corner of Main Street the N. P. R. R. Built by Dominico Cusciotto, operated by M. T. Turner &

From: Clifford U. Greer  
To: Mr. Macy

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McGregor Hist.  
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J. H. (Joe) Hudson. In 1906 "Patk Hayes" was issued a liquor license at this location under the name of "The Palace Saloon." See saloon history to follow.

5. Frank Spicola's General Store, a two story frame structure situated on "Railroad Avenue" between Maddy and Main Street, this is one of the three early buildings that has escaped destructions by the many fires in McGregor, at present it serves as the U. S. Postoffice. Built by Frank Spicola when he found it necessary to enlarge his business quarters.

6. J. W. Clark's General Store & Postoffice, a one story frame structure situated on the corner of "Railroad Ave." and Main St.

7. "Robert N. Newell's Land Office, a small frame structure crowned by three (3) individual gable roofs, the building was situated on "Railroad Ave." close to the west side of the Murphy Hotel; built by Robert N. Newell who was an enterprising and unscrupulous realstate agent. The building had all the appearance of an artistic Backhouse, and this fact was taken advantage of by some of the towns practical jokers one summer evening. Next morning when Mr. Newell came down to open the office a vacant lot greeted him where the evening before his office stood. A brief search resulted in the discovery of the missing building standing majestically in the rear of the J. P. Olson Saloon, a Sears Roebuck catalog and a sack of corn cobs adorning the door.

8. Methodist Church, built prior to 1900 by Mr. George Dodge, situated on "Railroad Ave." east of the Olson Saloon where it stood until 1930 when it was moved to its present location on First Street.

9. Schoolhouses number one, two and three; schoolhouse number one was a small log building built by Pasquale Memmola in 1891 for a dwelling on his homestead, it served as the first schoolhouse in McGregor and school was taught there three months of the year, during 1893-94.



Schoolhouse number two (the present village hall) a frame structure built about 1894-95, situated on Maddy Street, served as a schoolhouse until January 1904.

School house number three was built in 1903 and classes were started in January 1904, when schoolhouse number two was abandoned. It stood a little to the south of schoolhouse number two, a two story structure of frame construction, it served until the dedication of our present modern High School on Oct. 1, 1921. Destroyed by fire together with the McGregor Hospital in recent years.

\* (Note) Correction on research report of June 13, 1940, George Dodge interview paragraph four page two where I state "the local realstate agent Mr. Hesper J. Newell, and a beautiful daughter" The realstate agent was Mr. Robert N. Newell, he had several daughters one of them was named Hesper J., and another "Mable." You will note that the avenues in the Hesper J. Newell addition of McGregor were named in honor of members of his family.

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History - McGregor Lakes  
Notes

Nov. 22, 1940

To: Mr. Macy

From: Clifford U. Greer

Subj: Sandy River Lumber Co. Inc.

Source: Mrs. Edward L. Douglas; Files of the Aitkin Age, dated December 29, 1883; History of the Upper Mississippi Valley by Rev. Edward D. Neill (1881); J. E. Murphy, Mrs. P. Memmola et al.

Edward L. Douglas was born in Canada in 1850. He came to the United States in 1867 and engaged in the lumber business at Rockford, Minnesota. He came to Aitkin in 1876 and engaged in the lumber and hotel business. In 1878 he returned to Rockford and married Miss Ellen Sook; he returned to Aitkin with his bride and their honeymoon was spent on the Steamboat "Pokeguma" in a trip up the Mississippi to Pokeguma Falls.

In the summer of 1881, Mr. Douglas in company with Daniel J. Knox and G. W. Knox formed "The Aitkin Lumber Company." The Aitkin Age in an article dated December 29, 1883, states:

"The first sawmill erected at Aitkin was built during the season of 1881, by a number of gentlemen known as "The Aitkin Lumber Company," now succeeded by D. J. Knox, Esq." "It has been operated during the season of 1882 and 1883 and has made a record second to none anywhere." \*\*\*\*\* "The mill cuts fifty thousand feet per day with perfect ease, and has scarcely seen an idle moment in all the past season." \*\*\*\*\* "The mill, planing mill, boom and yard furnish employment for about seventy men."

Mrs. E. L. Douglas, who at the present time is living at Tamarack, Minnesota, is eighty years of age, a semi-invalid and lives in a large modern home. Mrs. Douglas' knowledge as to the date of organization, extent of the business of the Sand River Lumber Company and other details is very



(cont'd)

History - McGregor Lakes  
Notes  
Nov. 22, 1940

Sandy River Lumber Co.

limited. She states that her husband came to Tamarack in the spring of 1899, that previous to that date he had extensively engaged in the lumbering business in the region of the Sandy River extending from McGregor to Tamarack and points north. That at the time he came to Tamarack in 1899 he had a large number of logs at Tamarack, that he erected a saw-mill there and moved his headquarters to Tamarack to carry on his lumbering operations from that point.

Shortly thereafter the Sandy River Lumber Company was incorporated. This company was a partnership between Edward L. Douglas and Fredrick Bonness. Mr. Douglas held controlling interest and transacted all the business of the company, Mr. Bonness she thought was the financial backing of the enterprise.

Prior to his coming to Tamarack Mr. Douglas had bought thousands of acres of timber land on both sides of the Sandy River.

The Sandy River Lumber Company built and operated, during the life of the company, a large General Merchandise Store at Tamarack.

J. E. Murphy states that Ed. Douglas cut and drove down the Sandy River, millions of feet of "christly big pine logs" in the 1890's, and so as to raise the water in the river to enable these large logs to be "drove" an artificial dam was built across Sandy River at the head of Steam-Boat Bay in Jevne township.

Mrs. P. Memmola says that she thinks that "Head" Douglas cut the big pine trees from there homestead before they came to McGregor.

The "Aitkin Republican" under date of July 22, 1915, states: "Mr. Douglas was formerly a logging contractor and has cut and removed the timber

(cont'd)

History - McGregor Lakes  
Notes  
Nov. 22, 1940

Sandy River Lumber Co.

from three townships adjoining Tamarack."

The Capital Stock record book of the company disclosed the following information:

Sandy River Lumber Company, incorporated under the laws of Minnesota with a capital stock of \$25,000.00.

Sept. 21, 1907, issued to E. L. Douglas, 125 shares Capital stock par value \$100.00 per share.

Sept. 21, 1907, issued to F. W. Bonness, 124 shares (ditto).

Sept. 24, 1907, 123 shares of the stock previously issued to F. W. Bonness was transferred to (Skifington) St. T. Bonness and only one share of stock was retained by F. W. Bonness on the books of the company. (Mrs. Douglas states that she understood that Fred Bonness had some "judgement hanging over him" and that was the reason the stock ownership was juggled on the books.

The Sandy River Lumber Company discontinued operation in 1917 or 1918.

The "Cash Book" of the company covering the period from 1900 to 1902 discloses the information that \$1000.00 in cash was paid to F. W. Bonness every seven to ten days during that period.

Edward L. Douglas died in 1922, leaving behind his wife and son Arthur Edward.

June 21, 1902, Edward L. Douglas was appointed postmaster at Tamarack which office he held for fifteen years.

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Ref: McGregor and Sandy Lk. Region Hist.  
Subject: Origin of the town of McGregor

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Upon inquiry Mr. G. H. Jacobus, Division Superintendent of the Northern Pacific Railway Company, states

"The siding at McGregor was constructed in 1880 and station established at that time. Our information indicates that the location was named after a hunter and trapper by the name of McGregor who came from New York several years before our line was built. In those days, when he had occasion to go to St. Paul, he traveled by canoe via the Sandy and Mississippi Rivers."

"It is possible also that the station might have been named in honor of Major McGregor who was with General Rosser on an expedition to the Missouri River in 1870 in connection with the extension of our line. This later information was secured from Engineering Department field notes."

Clifford U. Greer  
Reporter  
Project #8017

Subject: Establishment of Post Offices McGregor and Libby

Authority: J. M. Donaldson, Acting First Assistant Postmaster General,

letter under date of June 29, 1940, Washington, D. C.

"You are advised the McGregor office was established on March 12, 1890, with Lester L. Giles as postmaster. The office was discontinued March 15, 1893, and reestablished December 29, 1894."

"The Libby office was established July 29, 1891, with William L. Wakefield as postmaster. The papers pertaining to the establishment of these offices have long since been destroyed. Therefore, the department is unable to furnish any information regarding the names of the persons who were responsible for the establishment of the offices, or the reason for the selection of the names McGregor or Libby."

Lester L. Giles was also Depot agent at McGregor in 1891 according to Mrs. P. Memmola one of the early pioneer settlers who settled in McGregor in August 1891.

(More)

Subject: Establishment of Post Offices McGregor and Libby  
Authority: J. M. Donaldson, Acting First Assistant Postmaster General,  
letter under date of June 29, 1940, Washington, D. C.

The original postoffice building at Libby, though remodled and enlarged, still stands and is used at present as a dwelling. William L. (Bill) Wakefield operated a store in connection with the postoffice.

Ref: McGregor and Sandy Lake Region History  
Subject: Incorporation of the village of McGregor  
Authority: Abstract of Title on NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of NW $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 31, Town 48 N 23.  
Aitkin County Abstract Company.

July 8 1903, Petition To Incorporate all od Sec's 30 - 31 Town 48 Range 23. "Includes 3 parcels of land platted into lots and blocks as follows: Cussistoo's Add; Hesper J. Newell's Add. and Rodenbuges Add. Filed Aug. 27th 1903"

July 13th 1903 Resolution adopted. "Election to be held at Schoolhouse in District 12 on Aug. 22, 1903 for purpose of voting on the proposal if incorporating the billages of McGregor."

"Persuant to resolution of Board of County Commissioners of Aitkin County Minnesota. Election was held for the purpose of voting on the incorporation of the village of McGregor on Aug. 22, 1903. Results 27 votes cast; 21 for incorporating and 4 against and 2 ballots blank."

"Cussistoo's Add." is misspelled and should be Dominico Cusciotto.

"Rodenbuges Add." possibly referes to Rodenberg addition

Clifford U. Greer  
Reporter  
Project #8017



## SOURCE

Numerous interviews of pioneer settlers, lumberman, files of the "Aitkin Age," "Aitkin Independent Age," "Aitkin Republican," etc.

## LUMBERING PERIOD

The following account of Lumbering in the region of Sandy Lake, its tributary streams and McGregor township, is in no way intended to be one of absolute completeness and that some inaccuracy has not crept in is more than I dare hope. No attempt has been made to present this material in story form or add color to the account.

Local tradition has it that Joseph "Old Joe" Libby was the first man to cut logs in the region of Sandy Lake and the Swan River. It is said that "Old Joe" drove a team of oxen all the way from the state of Maine to the city of Minneapolis; that he was raised in the Maine lumber camps and after coming to Minneapolis the stories told by the returning traders of the extensive virgin pine forests up the mighty "Father of Waters" was more than he could resist. Leaving his wife and family on the homestead at Minneapolis, he ascended the Mississippi to the mouth of Swan River just north of Sandy Lake. There he established a camp and commenced cutting the cream of the white pine, at first, selecting only the largest trees that overhung the river banks, banked them on the waters edge, and the next spring drove them down the Mississippi to Minneapolis. How many years he was thus engaged is not known, however, it is said that he stayed in this region until he became old, when he returned to his family and sent his two sons Marcus and Eugene to this region to carry on.

Other early lumbermen in the region include William L. Wakefield (first postmaster at Libby) and his brother Joseph "Big Joe," who arrived at Sandy Lake in 1856 and were engaged in trading and lumbering for many years.

Joseph "Little Joe" Wakefield, who was a cousin of the above Wakefields, was also an early lumberman here. "Little Joe" is the "Joseph Wakefield" mentioned by Prof. Hart in his "Story of Beengwa."

All of the above Libbys and Wakefields married Indian squaws and the many descendants of these, some still living, were engaged in lumbering throughout the region until the close of the period. Of these second generation Wakefields, "Ed," a son of William L., is remembered by the pioneer settlers here as a "big logger," he was a neat dresser and frequently wore many large diamonds.

Outside of these earliest lumberman, lumbering did not commence on a commercial scale in this region until after the construction of the Northern Pacific railroad to Aitkin, which event occurred in December 1870.

The vast area of virgin pine and hardwood forests in the Sandy Lake region was in the main impassable and impenetrable for teams during the summer months and the Mississippi afforded the only practical means of gaining access to the region.

Following the completion of the Northern Pacific Railroad to Aitkin, steamboats soon arrived serving as the supply link for the establishment of lumber camps up the Mississippi and its tributaries, thus making it possible for a wholesale invasion of the big pine forests. Probably the first steamboat to operate on the Mississippi north of Aitkin between Aitkin and Grand Rapids, was the steamboat "Po-keg-u-ma," built in 1873 it did a regular freight and passenger business running between Aitkin and Pokegema Falls. Destroyed by fire in the fall of 1878 it was replaced the next season by the "City of Aitkin," commonly known to the early lumbermen as the "Old Houghton," presumably after its owner Capt. George Houghton. Many of the pioneer lumbermen interviewed state that they have "rode" every steamboat that ever operated on the Mississippi River between Aitkin and Grand Rapids and "there never was" a "City of Aitkin," however, they all remember the "Old Houghton" which was destroyed by fire and replaced by the "Houghton."

One of the first lumber camps north of Aitkin on the Mississippi was constructed in 1873 by Nathaniel Tibbetts, pioneer founder of the village of Aitkin, near the mouth of the Willow River.

Following the arrival of the steamboats, dozens of lumbermen arrived establishing there camps up the Mississippi and its tributaries, to enumerate only a part of these would be very difficult. The Libbys were already established near the mouth of Swan River, "Billy" and "Sam" Rodgers arrived, associated themselves with the Libbys to form the firm of Libby & Rodgers. The Rodger end of the firm confined themselves principally to the Tie, Post and Telegraph Pole business. In the spring of 1881 the firm banked and drove down the Mississippi in a single drive over 500,000 ties.

Supplementing the summer steamboat service were tote roads. One of these tote roads and a very important one, started at Aitkin followed the general course of the Mississippi Northward over the swamps and lowland, terminating at Grand Rapids. This tote road was only serviceable during the winter months, and after the river froze over they were the only connecting link with the outside world. Thousands upon thousands of tons of feed and supplies were hauled over this road to the camps "above." In the winter of 1881 close to one hundred teams of horses in a single caravan were seen to be making their way northward over this road labouring under their heavy load of supplies. At first oxen were used exclusively, but by 1880 horses had replaced the more slow moving oxen for toteing. Oxen continued to be used in the camps for skidding, etc. for a number years. By about 1900 oxen were entirely replaced by horses.

The Aitkin Age under date of Dec. 8, 1883, states in part: "there has been a regular caravan of teams the past week setting out for the woods above here," "a stranger would naturally have thought that a hostile army had made this a point of rendezvous and were about to rally forth to conquer the world."

Providing summer pasture for the hundreds of head of oxen in the woods above Sandy Lake was a problem. This was solved during the summer months by driving them down the river from points as far north as Grand Rapids, to Sandy Lake, where they were branded and turned loose for the summer to graze around the peaceful shores of Sandy Lake. "Jim" Murphy states that as early as 1881 he seen over 500 oxen summering at Sandy Lake.

The exact year that lumbering got under way on Sandy Lake is not exactly known, however it is conceded here that "Hank" Brown and "Wess" Day were among the first operators on Sandy Lake and that "Old Wess Day"



cut the cream of a vast tract of white pine trees around Lake Minnewawa including the peninsula where the present dance pavillion is located; in the same year "Hank" Brown was cutting on the banks of Prairie River. This was probably as early as 1873-74.

All the available data on the subject seems to indicate that Edward L. Douglas was one of the first operators on the Sandy River, however, prior to 1882 no timber was driven on Sandy River from a point farther up stream than the south end of Davis Lake in Jevne township. In 1881 extensive operations were being carried on by "Billy" Rodgers around Davis Lake, logs were hauled by oxteam in that year from points inland east and west of Davis Lake, to the waters edge when they were driven in the spring down Sandy River into Sandy Lake, boomed across Sandy Lake by means of a Headworks and placed in the Mississippi. Ed Douglas cut most of the large pine on both banks of the Sandy River extending from Davis Lake up stream through McGregor township to the very source of Sandy River near Tamarack and subsequently drove down Sandy River.

There is an old legend, now all but forgotten, among the pioneer settlers of McGregor that was supposed to account for the serpentine meandering of Sandy River across McGregor township, which was in substance as follows:

Many years before the first settler came to McGregor, Ed Douglas possessed an exceedingly large team of oxen, wishing to break this team of oxen so as to use them for hauling his logs to Sandy River which at that time extended no farther east than the west range line of McGregor township, he hitched them to a large plow near his logging camp at Tamarack and before he finally got them under control they had meandered from Tamarack westward through McGregor township pulling the plow behind them to the very edge of Sandy River, this furrow turned by Ed Douglas' oxen became Sandy River and ever after that he drove his logs from Tamarack down this furrow, which widened and became known as Sandy River.

The vast area drained by the Prairie River and its tributaries, including the West Savanna and Tamarack Rivers, contributed largely 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's Bay (now, Belle Horn Bay) there, to be boomed together and towed across the lake to the Mississippi by means of a Headworks, in some instances steamboats were engaged in towing the booms across the lake, a Headworks could handle from four to five million feet in a single boom and the steamboat considerably less.

Before any logs could be driven down any of these streams they had to be bark marked by chopping figures or letters through the bark of the log, this figure was a sort of a copyrighted trademark furnished by the Surveyor General and no other operator could use other than the mark assigned to him. After the logs were banked on the stream the deputy Surveyor General visited the site, scaled the timber and furnished the owner a form showing the total scale, where cut, etc. The buyers of the timber as well as the owner accepted the scale of the deputy surveyor and this led in some instances to graft between the scaler and the buyer.

During the peak of the lumbering period, with a few exceptions all major drives on the Mississippi was done by a "Boom Company," these boom companys were contract drivers who contracted to drive the purchases of the buyers down the Mississippi to their destination; when a lumberman delivered his logs into the Mississippi and turned them over to the boom company his responsibility ended there.

By 1888 the "Northern Boom Company," a Warehauser controlled company had monopolized the driving on the Mississippi and they continued to hold this position until the end of the lumbering period.

Prices paid for pine logs delivered into the Mississippi ranged from \$7.50 to \$15 per thousand board feet.

Peak production for any one operator in the region was attained by the Fred Bonness & J. J. Howe Company in the early 90's when they cut and banked 30,000,000 feet of pine in the region of the Tamarack River, their operations in that year extended from the mouth to the source of the Tamarack River, an artificial dam was built across the river close to the railroad bridge near Wright to facilitate the driving of these enormous amount of logs. No other operator ever equalled this cut. Towing of these logs across the lake was done entirely by the steamboat "Andy Gibson." Two Headworks were used to form the booms and tow them out of Bill Horn's Bay and into Sandy Lake where the Andy Gibson hooked on and towed them across.

J. E. "Jim" Murphy is conceded to have been the largest individual operator in the region covering the period from 1888 to 1912. His operations over this period of time extended all around the shores of Sandy Lake, from the mouth to the source of the Prairie, West Savanna and Tamarack Rivers. His lumbering operations also covered the territory traversed by the "Old Savanna Portage" which was relocated by Prof. Hart in 1927. This historic route of trade and travel was commonly known to the lumbermen of the region as the "Old Hudson Bay Trail," and the course of the trail was still plainly visible to Mr. Murphy when he first penetrated the region. Note Prof. Hart in his account of the relocation of this portage trail gives Mr. Murphy credit for having accurately located this trail on the map.

For a period of five years Mr. Murphy maintained a camp on Prairie River, two miles from the mouth close to the mouth of the West Savanna River. This camp was known in the region as "Farm Camp" from the fact that potatoes were raised there during the summer months. The steamboat "Walter Taylor" was chartered annually to make special trips with a load of supplies to this camp.

The largest camp operated by Murphy was located on the Prairie River in section 27, T. 50 N., R. 22 W., it was operated for seven years.

As high as five seperate camps were operated in a single year, each camp employing from thirty to fourty men each.

On the spring drives about 150 men were employed, the payroll on these drives was in the neighborhood of \$400 per day.



Contracting to drive and boom other operators logs on the Prairie River was done for many years; average price paid for this service was \$2.50 per thousand board feet. Peak production for any one year was 6,000,000 feet.

"Two or three years before" the erection of the first Government Dam at Libby, torrential rains in the upper Mississippi caused the Mississippi River to flow backwards and pour into Sandy Lake carrying with it millions upon millions of feet of logs from the upper Mississippi, these logs were so great in number that they practically covered the entire surface of Sandy Lake and the Mississippi was reached. In an effort to get these logs back into the Mississippi three steamboats were engaged in towing on Sandy Lake most of the summer. This was the first year that steamboats were used on Sandy Lake for towing logs, these boats were: The "Andy Gibson," owned at that time by "Potter" of the firm of Potter Casey Co., piloted by Indian pilot John Lyons; The steamer "Fawn," operated by Capt. C. C. Sutton; the steamer "Old Houghton" (City of Aitkin), owned and operated by Capt. George Houghton.

The steamer "Lee" was the last steamboat to operate on Sandy Lake. Owned and operated for a number of years by Marcus Nelson, it was used for the towing of logs and ties on Prairie River, it made its last trip on Sandy Lake in the summer of 1919. Marcus Nelson was for many years engaged in the lumbering business in this region, and was a factor in the Tamarack Lumber Company.

"Warehauser" did not operate in this region until the year 1902-03, in that year they operated a camp close to McGregor in Jevne township, section 24 near Sandy River. It operated but the one season, the logs were all drayed to McGregor where the Northern Pacific built a special spur to facilitate the loading of these logs on to flat cars, which was done by means of a "Jammer."

"Warehauser" conducted its largest operations in this region in 1911-12. In that year they carried on extensive operations around Lake Minnewawa and up and down the Savanna and Tamarack Rivers. In all, seven separate camps were operated by Warehauser in that year, under the foremanship of "Jimmy Long." "Headquarters Camp" was located north of Tamarack, two miles north of Horseshoe Lake in T. 49 N., R. 23 W.

It is said that each of these camps employed close to one hundred men. Employment roles were filled through the Duluth Employment Offices.

All the logs cut around Lake Minnewawa were drayed to the shores of Sandy Lake and banked. The timber cut at points up the rivers were drayed to the river banks and drove in the spring. All of the timber cut by Warehauser in that season was boomed across Sandy Lake and into the Mississippi; two Headworks were employed in this booming operation.

Jim Murphy states that this "Warehauser outfit" was known as "The Northland Lumber Company," and that the foreman "Jimmy Long" told him that there were total cut for the season was 6,000,000. feet.

In 1913-14 the Pine Tree Lumber Company (Warehauser) constructed a large camp on the west shore of Rock Lake, Sec. 21, T. 48 No., R. 24 W. They operated but the one season and cut practically all of the white and Norway pine remaining in that township. These logs were all hauled by large horse-drawn sleds over artificially iced roads to Ude station on the Northern

Pacific (now known as "Lansford"), four miles west of McGregor. A special spur line was constructed on the north side of the siding several hundred feet east of the present Lansford station. Loading of the logs was done by means of a "Jammer."

The season 1916-17 (note, this date is controversial, some say 1915-16, no authentic check of the date has been made) the Warehauser Company operated there last camp in this region and this date may be considered the close of the lumbering period here, altho some small operators and numerous settlers continued logging for some years after this date, in fact various wood products are still being produced annually.

*Warehauser*

In the season above mentioned the Warehauser Co. operated a camp in McGregor township in Section 9. Operations in that year were confined to Sections 9 and 17

All these logs were hauled by large horse-drawn sleds to the Northern Pacific Railroad. On the north side of the tracks at a point about two miles east of the billage of McGregor a special spur side track was constructed to facilitate the loading of the logs onto flat-cars.

In the early spring of 1918 the Warehauser Company employed several men, including Mr. C. A. Maddy, to burn the pine slashings remaining from the cutting of this timber. Joint responsibility for the great forest fire of October 12, 1918 was alleged by the plaintiffs in a law suit lasting for many weeks in the federal courts at Duluth, Minnesota, to be due in part to negligence on the part of Warehauser in burning these slashings in Section 9. It was alleged that Warehauser permitted this slashing fire to ignite the peat in the high ditch back of county ditch 14 where the fire continued to smolder until fall, when it was fanned into flames by the terrific wind-storm of October 12, 1918 and spread over the countryside.

In this suit it was shown that the fire on the ditch bank had its origin many months before Warehauser burned section 9 and the suit against Warehauser was dismissed.

This fire became known as the Mud Lake Fire.

(1) "Davis Lake" is but a wide place in Sandy River and lies wholly within Sections 10 and 15 in Jevne township.

(2) "Headworks." The operating principle of a headworks did not originate in this region, the idea was brought here by the early lumbermen who came from Canada and the state of Maine. Without a headworks lumbering on Sandy Lake would have been greatly impeded as practically all of the towing on the lake was done with this device.

The construction of a complete headworks cost about \$300 with its attendant "Boom."

A Headworks was a large raft constructed of large hewed timbers all pinned and spiked together to form a raft about forty by sixty feet. In the center of this raft there was constructed a Capstan to which there was attached a long removable sweep. A barn was built on one end of the raft or Headworks.



In operation the Headworks was secured to the boom of logs by means of a large size chain, the team of horses was hitched to the end of the sweep on the Capstan, a double half-hitch was taken around the drum of the Capstan with a one-inch rope which was about 1000 feet long or more to one end of which there was secured an iron anchor weighing about 150 pounds, the end of the rope with the anchor was placed in a row boat and carried ahead 1,000 feet or the full length of the rope when the anchor was dropped to the bottom of the lake, as the horses turned the capstan one man kept the free end of the rope taught on the drum while two men were engaged in coiling the rope in a pile on the Headworks as it was reeled in. The Headworks was thus pulled forward together with the boom of four or five million feet of logs until the headworks came directly over the anchor when the anchor came to the surface of its own accord and the reeling out of the rope and anchor was again repeated.

Under favorable wind conditions the Headworks could make the trip from the mouth of Prairie River in "Bill Horn's Bay" across Sandy Lake to the present Libby Dam Site in about fourteen hours.

The Boom towed by the Headworks was usually made of eighty spruce logs chained end to end, this Boom encircled the logs to be towed as both ends of the Boom was secured to the Headworks. Spruce logs were chosen for the boom because they "floated light." Each of these boom logs was about thirty feet long, not less than twelve inches in diameter on the small end, through the log from side to side about one foot from each end a three-inch diameter hole was bored. These boom logs were fastened together to form an endless chain by using a number of sections of heavy chain each section being about four feet in length with a toggle on each end, these chains served to fasten the boom logs together end to end by placing the toggle through the hole in the log and driving a plug in the hole to prevent the chain from coming out.

(3) This legend was first told to me by Mr. Joseph DiGregory (only living decendent of Raffle DiGregory, pioneer settler at McGregor) He states that the lumbermen who were operating here when he first came to McGregor (1891) used to tell this tale but he cannot remember from whom he first heard it.

(4) "Banking timber." As practically all of the timber cut in this region was floated down some stream of water, the practice here was to haul the timber to the closest stream that would float the logs and on the banks of the stream they were piled parallel with the stream in large piles to await the spring driving season when they were roled into the water with little effort. When referring to the amount of logs cut and delivered at the waters edge, the term "Banked" was common.

(5) "Jamner." A jammer was a device similar in operation to a common crane. These jammers were mounted on a railroad car, were steam operated and were used to lift the logs onto the cars by placing a loop around each end of the log when the Steam Jammer reeled in the cable lifting the log into place on the car.

\* \* \* \* \*

May 9, 1891

From the Aitkin Age

"SANDY LAKE DAM

At a recent meeting of the Board of Trade the following resolution was unanimously accepted:

'Whereas, we are informed that the government of the United States is about to construct /sic/ a dam across the Sandy River, the outlet of Sandy Lake, in the county of Aitkin, in such a manner as to close Sandy Lake to navigation; and

Whereas, there is now tributary to Sandy Lake hundreds of million feet of pine and other timber which is wholly moved by means of steamboats to the Mississippi River (as much as 40 million per annum); and

Whereas, The closing of said Sandy River to navigation would inflict great and lasting injury upon such lumber interest even to the extent of making the same almost wholly valueless;

Be it hereby resolved, that the Honorary Secretary of War be respectfully requested to cause such a change to be made in the plan of construction of said dam as will permit the free passage of steamboats in and out of said Sandy Lake.' "

Minn. Hist. Society  
December 1940  
A. Norbeck



Aitkin Age  
Dec.29,1883

"Aitkin

### The Northern Pacific

The greatest of the modern civilizers is the railroad. The greatest railroad in the world, which has opened up more formerly inaccessible territory to civilization and commerce, which without it would have remained forever locked in the bosom of the wilderness, is the Northern Pacific.

In 1869, when this now great enterprise was almost mythical and when as yet but a few spadeful of earth had been thrown in its construction, anyone who had faith in its ultimate destiny and who put his money into it was regarded as a lunatic. Later, in 1873, when the father of the enterprise, Jay Cooke, failed, it was looked upon as a dead thing which, in spite of the fact that it had already peopled five hundred miles of splendid country, would never reach the coast.

\* \* \*

This great scheme of connecting lake and ocean, Superior to Pudget Sound, was, as has been stated begun to be put into operation in the summer of 1869. At that time all of Minnesota north of St. Cloud, on the Mississippi, was only traversed by trader or Indians and had not a village of 500 people in all its vast expanse. The great father of waters went there as it does now, 'unvexed to the sea,' but all navigation had ever done above St. Paul towards developing and settling the territory adjacent was very little indeed. The same vast forests existed then as now but the great distance over which supplies had to be transported rendered operations at remote points, now the center of a most flourishing lumber trade, a practical impossibility. The building of the Northern Pacific, however, passing through the heart of some of the finest pine forest of the state, opened up many lumbering regions hitherto inaccessible and built a number of thriving lumber towns of which Aitkin is the largest and most important.

\* \* \* \* \*

Since all attempts to learn the names of some early settlers of the Sandy Lake region which later could be checked through the 1875 census; such as searching through reminiscences (published as well as unpublished) from that area, newspaper accounts pertaining to the celebration of historical data of the county, early homestead and land abandonment claims and several other sources, had failed, I turned to the 1885 Census for Aitkin county. Under the classification "Unorganized District (including T. 47, R. 26, T. 47, R. 25, T. 48, R. 22), I found a list of names who's post office address was that of Kimberly, in some cases, and Tamarack in others. I checked this list against the 1875 census for Aitkin, Cass, and Ramsey counties. In the cases of the two latter, I found no similarities, but in Aitkin I found several and listed the following:

The Aitkin County census for 1905 show no resident in Spalding township by the name Murphy and no Axel P. Johnson in Mc Gregor township, but the fact that an A. P. Johnson is registered in Spalding township and a James E. Murphy in the village of McGregor will seem to indicate a mix-up in the source-material. They and their families follow:

					Nativity	
	Sex	Age	Color	Nativity	Father	Mother
75 Murphy, James E.	M	43	W	New Brunswick	Ireland	Maine
76 Murphy, Anna B.	F	37	"	Minn.	Ohio	Minn
77 Murphy, Lillian B	"	14	"	"	N. B.	"
78 Murphy, Harry	M	13	"	"	"	"
79 Murphy, Minnie	F	9	"	"	"	"
80 Murphy, Stanley	M	4	"	"	"	"
81 Murphy, Frank M.	"	2	"	"	"	"
82 Murphy, Alfred	"	3	W	"	"	"

Spalding township Enumeration District # 16

6 Johnson, A. P.	M	51	"	Sweden	Sweden	Sweden
7 Johnson, Margaret	F	45	"	"	"	"
8 Johnson, Andrew	M	24	"	"	"	"
9 Johnson, John	"	23	"	"	"	"
10 Johnson, Charles	"	20	"	"	"	"
17 Jos W Wakefiedl	M	29	"	Maine	Maine	Maine
Lewis Wakefield	M	68	"	"	"	"
Jas Wakefield	"	13	$\frac{1}{4}$	Minn	Minn	"



		Age	Sex	Color	Nativity	Father	Mother
17	Frank Wakefield	9	M	$\frac{1}{4}$	Minn	Me.	Me.
	George Wakefield	4	"	"	"	"	"
	Robert Wakefield	1	"	"	"	"	"
	Eliza [Lize in '85] Wakefield	27	F	$\frac{1}{2}$	"	"	"

Of these only the last two names are listed in the 1885 census for Aitkin.

28	Josh [ia/ Tibbets	45	M	W	Me	Me	Me
	Hanna [H.E./ Tibbets	40	F	"	"	"	"
	Guy Tibbetts [not listed 1885]	15	M	"	Col.	"	"
	Almy [L.E./ Tibbets	13	F	"	Minn.	"	"
	Vesta Tibbets [not listed in 1885]	11	"	"	"	"	"
	U. S. Tibbetts	9	M	"	"	"	"
	Laura [L. B./ Tibbets	7	F	"	"	"	"
	Rosetta [R. M./ Tibbets	5	F	"	"	"	"

Brackets indicates variations in 1885's listing.

From 1885 Census:

M. W. Libby	45	M	W	Me.	Me.	Me.
L. Libby	35	F	"	"	"	"
T. Libby	33	M	"	"	"	"
L. Libby	25	F	"	"	"	"

No cash book for the Sandy Lake Lumber Co. is included in the Bonness papers, but a cash book for F. W. Bonness & Co. covering the period 1901 - 1902, shows the following entries on the debit side, in each case balancing the sum total for the credit side:

Page 2	Jan. 1	J. J. Howe	\$4,295.71
" 3	" 12		1,332.31
" 4	" 15		1,368.37
" 5	" 21		1,255.76
" 6	" 26		1,340.43
" 7	" 29		1,238.56
" 8	" [no date]		7,018.49
" 9	Febr. 1	F. R. Boness	8,680.69
	Jan. 19	F. W. Boness	9,828.36
" 10	" 26		9,811.33
" 11	" 31		7,131.43
" 11	Feb. 4	J. J. Howe	1,019.42
" 12	" 7		1,244.62
" 13	" 11		1,264.65
" 14	" 13		1,139.09
" 15	" 16		1,246.38
" 16	" 19		1,121.75
" 17	" 18	F. W. Bonness	8,730.28
" 18	" 21	J. J. Howe	1,027.26

Page 19	Feb. 25	J. J. Howe	4,296.77
" 20	" 27		1,829.49
" 21	Mar. 2		1,664.04
" 22	" 5		1,266.96
" 23	" 7		1,618.79
" 24	" 11		1,878.58
" 25	" 11		1,814.48
" 26	" 12		1,295.31
" 27	" 15		1,485.56
" 28	" 7	F. W. Bonness	<u>20,879.67</u>
" 29	" 15		7,256.70
" 29	" 15	J. J. Howe	811.36
" 30	" 15		1,446.33
" 31	" 18		1,646.07
" 32	" 19		2,068.07
" 33	" 21		2,814.29
" 34	" 25		1,693.64
" 35	" 25		2,381.55
" 36	" 26		1,836.72
" 37	" 27		1,586.13
" 38	" 23	F. W. Bonness	<u>19,516.38</u>
" 38	" 28	J. J. Howe	1,282.65
" 39	" 28	j. J. Howe	3,995.57
" 40	" 30		2,731.37
" 41	Apr 1		2,520.31
" 42	" 3		2,299.99
" 43	" 6		2,277.55
" 44	" 9		1,836.55
" 45	" 13		1,212.44
" 46	" 16		1,981.71
" 47	" 20		1,747.39
" 48	" 26		2,102.05
" 49	" 29		7,329.37
" 50	" 26	F. W. Bonness	26,339.27
" 51	May 1	J. J. Howe	1,011.86
" 52	" 7		7,044.23
" 53	" 9		2,036.64
" 54	" 13		1,819.72
" 55	" 16		4,193.12
" 56	" 17		1,124.64
" 57	" 18		1,263.68
" 58	" 21		1,507.66
" 59	" 24		2,196.97
" 60	" 27		1,426.98
" 61	June 1		3,380.94
" 62	" 2		1,789.79
" 63	" 8		2,575.65
" 64	May 27	F. W. Bonness	<u>21,641.82</u>
" 65	June 6	F. W. "	2,636.02
" 65	" 11	J. J. Howe	5,259.50
" 66	" 22		5,396.97
" 67	" 24		2,035.48
" 68	" 27		1,601.65
" 69	July 1		1,081.53
" 70	" 9		1,760.17



Page 71	July 13		2,818.50
" 72	" 23		1,846.16
" 73	" 25		1,087.65
" 74	" 22	F. W. Bonness	25,850.16
" 75	Aug. 1	J. J. Howe	2,775.88
" 76	" 6		2,858.65
" 77	" 10		2,856.64
" 78	" 19		1,598.53
" 79	" 26		3,137.49
" 80	" 24	F. W. Bonness	24,294.68
" 81	Sept. 10	J. J. Howe	2,998.71
" 82	" 14		3,398.41
" 83	" 18		2,176.46
" 84	Oct. 3		1,610.58
" 85	" 8		2,642.85
" 86	" 15		1,987.19
" 87	" 24		3,994.11
" 88	" 31		2,550.65
" 89	" 15	F. W. Bonness	32,496.94

The cash book ends with this date and the next following volume starts with November 1, 1902.

In "History of the Upper Mississippi Valley," by O'Neill, 1881, the following statement is found on page 657:

"Outside the villiage Aitkin, there is but little settlement in the county. A few sellers are located at the mouth of Willow river, and a few have homes at Sandy Lake."

The Aitkin Age, September 20, 1900, lists the following representatives from various places to the Republican County Convention that year:

"Sandy Lake: Wm Wakefield, Mark Libby, Wm. Jude.

Kimberly: M. J. Shorwell, J. P. Williams, Gus Williamson.

Sicottes: Frank Clark, F. W. Day, J. B. Clark."

M. H. S., 12-10-40.  
Alvar Norbeck

Residents of Sandy Lake cast a total of 27 votes in the State and County elections in 1890, according to a table of Official Count, published in Aitkin Age, November 15, 1890. They appear to have voted Republican about 4 - 1.

I have been unable to locate the thesis, An Introduction to the History of Lumbering in Minnesota, by Donald Wilson Snell. Index files of the Manuscript room and the Library contain no entry of that title. The Manuscript room has in its possession some unclassified item, which I am now going through in an effort to locate the thesis.

This source, the Lawler fire, and some newspaper news items, regarding Bonness and Douglas, is all there is left on my list now. Would appreciate additional source material.

M. H. S., Dec. 10, 1940  
Alvar Norbeck.

J. T. Odegaard: Erindringer.

The author came to America 1867, and settled at Long Lake in Watonwan county in the autumn of that year.

While Mr. Odegards recollections are most interesting they are confined to the southern part of the state chiefly the region around and about Watonwan county. I failed to find anything that touches upon the Sandy Lake region, or even upon Aitkin County in any respect.

Although this book is published for the most part, in the Norwegian language, it contains a very interesting letter in English in which an old settler remaining here responds to request for information, about the early days, to Mr. Odegaard, who at that time has returned to Norway.