



Minnesota Works Progress Administration:  
Writers Project Research Notes.

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Zebulon Pike in telling of a trip up the Mississippi river in 1805 mentions that he spent a night at the house of a trader named Grant on the Mississippi river. This place was nearly or directly opposite the site of the present village of Grand Rapids.

At about the same time, or in ~~18~~ 1804, the Northwest Company built a fur-trading post on Pokegama Lake and this was for several years an important center of trade with the Indians. As far as is known the trader Grant must be considered the first citizen of Grand Rapids.

Loggers came to what is now the site of Grand Rapids about 1850. A town was projected at Pokegama Falls in 1857 and the plat of East and West Pokegama, as the plat was then called, is a matter of record.

In the year 1875 there was probably a little settlement at Grand Rapids, a log house or two and a stopping place. Five years later not much more was present. When Itasca county began its official existence in connection with Aitkin county in 1887, there were probably but two frame buildings in the community, together with a number a log structures. Along the river were the wharves or platforms on which merchandise was unloaded from the boats and close to the river were crude log warehouses.

Ten years later visitors would have found a railroad, a large number of frame and some brick buildings. Also a Central school as it now stands.

John Beckfelt was the first merchant in Grand Rapids, coming in 1883. *no. untrue.*

9

(Cut-line in an advertisement) September 19, 1934)

"The Modern Mill of the Blandin Paper Company in its Setting of Trees and Flowers. This picture shows the Type of Windowless Construction which Insures Complete Air Conditioning." Daily paper production is 145 tons. (Sept. 19, 1934.)

#### 1894

First depot at Grand Rapids burns.  
Begin construction of a water works system.  
First electric lights burn on Thanksgiving eve.  
First village hall completed.  
208 pupils in Grand Rapids schools.

#### 1895

Central school built.  
Itasca County Lumber Company cuts 60 million feet of pine  
State experiment farm established.  
Cornerstone of Court House laid.  
Opulation of Grand Rapids is 1,546, a gain of 1,269 in 5 years.  
Exploration on Diamond mine started.

#### 1896

Wright-Davis logging railroad hauls 120 million feet of pine logs.  
Test pit for ore near Dunning's Camp.  
308 pupils in school.

#### 1897

C.A. Smith predicts pine stands would furnish lumber for 100 years.  
40 men employed at ~~the~~ Arcturus mine.  
Great Northern begins building railroad west from Deer River.

\* This was in Pine County.

1898

Over 250 million feet of logs cut on Upper Mississippi river.  
Benedictine Sisters establish a hospital.

1899

Grand Rapids Power and Boom company given right to build a dam at Grand Rapids.  
Great Northern buys the Wright-Davis logging railroad.  
Wages in ~~pineries~~ pineries \$20 a month.  
Weyerhaeuser, Pillsbury, Akeley, Shevlin, Nelson, Smith, Backus and Bovey  
deny Minnesota pine reserves were seriously depleted and predict long  
operation of saw mills.

1900

Public Library established at Central school.  
Lath and shingle mills started.  
High school established  
Valuation of County \$3,776,000  
300 logging camps and 20,000 men employed in Minnesota.  
Plans completed for paper mill.

1901

Mining exploration work active.  
Work starts on paper mill.  
Two men catch 251 black bass in one day at Wabana.  
James J. Hill acquires large mining land areas in county.

1902

Wages in woods \$36 to \$40 per month  
First paper made at Grand Rapids February 19, 1902.  
One graduate from high school.

1903

Coal discovery at Hill Lake  
370 million feet of logs cut on Upper Mississippi.  
State auditor sells 97 million feet of state pine.  
Shooting party on Bowstring lake kills 1,700 ducks.  
12,000 deer killed in state

1904

432 pupils.

1905

Public library building constructed.  
100 tons of freight hauled daily from Grand Rapids to Bovey.  
Shortage of men in woods.

1906

Koochiching County detached from Itasca county.

1907

~~Value~~ Valuations of county \$10,768,000  
20 drills work near Grand Rapids  
Strike on Iron Range  
Cohasset gets hardwood factory  
First road between Grand Rapids and Deer River built.



GRAND RAPIDS-1907 continued

Lumberjacks get \$40 per month.  
Minnesota ranks 7th in timber production.

1908

Valuation of county \$18,275,000  
Work begins on Fair Grounds north of city.  
Itasca Lumber Company operated 16 camps in Western Itasca county.

1909

Lumber camps ask that workmen be able to speak English.  
Agitation for a Farm School at Experiment Station.  
First horse races at new fairgrounds.  
12 students graduate from high school.

1910

Spang and Hoolihan build mill.  
New concentrating plant at Coleraine in operation.  
16 Grand Rapids saloons closed by Government Indian agents.

1911

Court restrains enforcement of Indian Treaty and saloons reopen.  
Valuation of county \$23,649,000 ranks fourth in assessed valuation in state.  
Itasca Creamery built.  
Population of Grand Rapids 2,230.  
Grand Rapids improvements for year over \$225,000

1912

50 automobiles in county  
3,400,000 tons of ore shipped  
Steel Corporation cancels ore leases in Grand Rapids section.  
2,230 mines in county.  
First carload of cattle shipped  
200 wolves killed in year.

1913

Jones & Loughlin take option on Pokegama iron lands.

1914

~~U.S.~~ U.S. government defines treaty and Indian agents close all saloons in county.  
Sisters of Benedict close hospital at Grand Rapids.  
3 drainage ditches started.  
Labor in woods \$12 to \$16 per month.

1915

250 autos in Grand Rapids.

1916

30 miles of ditches in county (drainage)  
Dispatch-Pioneer Press of St. Paul buy paper mill  
Grand Rapids Creamery opens.

&1917

Butter fat 53 cents per pound  
Village of Holman dissolved

&1918



1918

Itasca ~~County~~ Cooperage Company builds plant.  
Shingle mill ceases operation  
Last log drive down the Mississippi  
Johnson Bros. start shingle mill

1919

Mining employs large number of men.  
30 graduates of High School  
Grand Rapids closes power plant to buy electricity from Minn. Utilities Co.  
Itasca county votes \$2,000,000 highway bonds for paving.  
Veneer mill begins at Grand Rapids.  
Try to change name of Grand Rapids, but fail.---name?  
~~Drill for ore west of Grand Rapids~~

1920

Drill for ore west of Grand Rapids.

1921

County valuation \$28,831,192  
Agricultural School bill passes  
Scenic State Park authorized  
Mining operations curtailed  
Village of Cooley organized

1922

Women jurors first time in ~~county~~

1923

Pike hatchery assured at Cut Foot Sioux

1924

58 high school graduates

1925

Minnesota Arrowhead selected as official name  
Federal court orders Bowstring ditch dammed and filled.

1926

\$100,000 Business at Itasca Creamery  
Itasca potatoes for third time win national honors.

1927

Oliver Mining Company sued because of noise.

1928

Hill City woodenware plant closes---no more timber

1929

Present village hall completed. (\$70,000)  
49 pound northern pike caught at Mississippi bridge.  
Marl deposits attract attention  
Drilling for iron ore in Aitkin county, south of Grand Rapids.  
Girls camp opens at Wabana  
Stop harvest of wild rice by machinery  
Hill City men take over operation of branch railroad.

1930

Itasca county Boys Club wins first place in National Potato Show.  
Itasca second in enrollment in boys and girls club work.

1931

Grand Rapids made headquarters of state forest protection work  
Itasca county farmers get \$75 to \$100 an acre for clover seed.  
Mpls and Rainy River railroad seek permission to abandon lines.  
Government agents begin land survey and classification work started.  
New bridge over Mississippi at Grand Rapids.  
"Up in This Neck of the Woods" - a column depicting the colorful careers  
of lumberjacks, etc, starts in Grand Rapids Herald-Review.

1932

Resort Owners organize  
Village renumbers and renames streets  
Dam built on Leech river at Mud Lake  
200 pupils enroll at Itasca Junior College  
Mpls and Rainy River rlwy tear up abandoned tracks.  
potatoes still outstanding in shows.

1933

Truck line to northern part of county organized  
Conservation commission takes over administration of state lands & timber.  
First county pure seed show held  
30 farmers appear before commissioners for relief.  
Beer licensed---6 baseball leagues organized---CCC camps  
108 high school graduates  
Federal government begins large additions to forest.



## GRAND RAPIDS AND ITASCA COUNTY

SCHOOLS -- 6 pupils in 1887 to 8,655 in 1934 in county

1887 - first teacher Martha Maddy, the late Mrs. Warren Potter, held school in an old log home which had been boarded over.

1888 - Margaret Maddy, Mrs. Potter's sister, came from Aitkin and opened school with 3 white and 3 part Indian pupils. Her students varied in size, the oldest and largest being Pete Drumbeater, man-grown in size, but who wore his long hair in braids.

Large paper mill at Grand Rapids turns spruce into paper.

Large quantities of the ore require a special treatment before being sent to market. It is concentrated by being ~~sent to market~~ passed through an ore washing process. Itasca county boasts of the greatest mill of this kind in America. It is located on the shores of Trout Lake near Coleraine and Bovey. It was constructed at an expense of more than a million dollars and has a capacity of 12,000 tons a day. This ore washing process attracts visitors from all sections of the country.--- Grand Rapids Herald-Review, 1911.



The first task of those who came to Itasca county was to cut the timber. They did a good job of it. After many years of logging operations, this went into decline. Fortunate indeed, as this great natural wealth disappeared, other forms of natural resources appeared. Early citizens scoffed at agricultural possibilities, yet today agriculture in Itasca county provides more wealth for people of the county than logging ever produced.

It was known that iron ore was to be found, but tales of its value was either exaggerated or minimized. In the early '90s came the discovery of great deposits of the Mesaba Range and development of mines in Mountain Iron and Hibbing.

Those skilled in tracing minerals simply followed the range of hills and boulders through Itasca county, past Grand Rapids and across ~~to~~ Pokegama Lake. Today the iron ore production of Itasca county exceeds that of many nations.

As virgin pine disappeared, other timber came into use. The hardwoods were first considered a nuisance. Spruce, once entirely neglected, became raw material for paper

Date of first logging operations in Itasca county not known. Early in the 19th Century logs were cut here and floated down the Big Fork River and taken to England in the form of timbers for the building of English ships. In fact in later years one company cut 15 million feet and shipped to England for this purpose. Evidence of this earlier activity was found in Bustitown when in 1910 a homesteader looked over his land and found an old skidding dray loaded with these square timbers where it had been abandoned in a ravine. The pine logs crumbled to dust when struck with an axe and even the white oak with which the dray was constructed, was rotted so that it had fallen flat in the course of at least a half-century.

Evidence appears that first logs cut on Pokegama and floated in river in 1868. No settlement at that time.

First logs on Prairie River in 1872.

Most active period of logging 1885 to 1905

Throughout the whole north the rusting stacks of sawmills are the only remains of the once important pine lumbering industry.

For example, the year of 1903 saw 369,500,000 feet of cut - saw logs in vicinity of Grand Rapids.

(Grand Rapids Herald-Review-Sept. 19, 1934)

"You see the original lumberjack had to be tough enough to eat Harveyized steel and he was. Pillows and such like effeminacies to him were unknown and he was always, to use his own expression, 'As lousy as a pet'coon.'"

"Sam Simpson, who knew the lumberjack at his best said that he was 'The best man and the dammedest fool who ever worked for wages.' There is no better description. White man he was always and white man has more than one meaning."

The best lumberjack as a rule came from Maine or Canada, and those from the one loved not those from the other."

The writer callisfies the lumberjacks as ~~the best~~ "The Best, those better, good, and indifferent. They came into the country in that order too. Those from Maine and Canada were the best, followed by the excellent workers from the Scandinavian countries, then as lumbering began to fall away good workmen were employed to be followed by those who were indifferent as to pride of workmanship, etc.

# GRAND RAPIDS AND ITASCA COUNTY

The first railroad came in the late '80's to and through La Prairie and stopped there for 2 or 3 years. Duluth & Winnipeg reached Grand Rapids in 1890.

The Western Mesaba differs from the Eastern in that 50 to 60 per cent of ~~iron~~ ore is iron, the rest being waste, mostly sand. That of Eastern Mesaba being much purer.

One of first activities was that of the mine Arcturus at Marble. Timber on this property cut by J.E. Haywood, who acquired it in the early 1880's. Many tried to develop it but without success. Along about 1900 Chas. Purdon saw the mine and believed the sand might be washed out as in Alabama mining. A carload of crude ore brought to Grand Rapids and shipped to Cedartown, Alabama for a test treatment which proved the resulting product very good.

Purdon and Eaton Bros. began development and finally sold to George C. Howe, P.L. Kimberly and Frank Buhl of Pennsylvania. This transaction finally resulted in a law-suit based on misrepresentation, etc.

In 1904 the U.S. Steel took over the Arcturus

Certain properties now about Grand Rapids await mining development. Today 20 plants for washing or treating ores in Itasca county

1909----- 6 mines produced ~~5,7~~ 579,671 tons

1930-----29 (most) mines produced 7,573,889 tons

1933-----19 mines produced 3,429,043 tons.

Greatest production year was in 1923 when 26 mines produced 9,868,478 tons.

Itasca county has 41 iron ore properties which have made shipments. Some few are small or substantially exhausted. A number are undeveloped.

All of the communities on the Western Mesaba Range have characteristics in common. These are public improvements and impressive school buildings. The village of Coleraine was built to order in all of its important aspects, including parks, boulevards and many of the homes. Oliver Mining Company responsible for this.

The mining communities of the Western Mesaba have a distinct advantage in that surrounding all of them are agricultural lands of great potential possibilities. All of the communities, particularly Bovey and Coleraine, enjoy a large trade from nearby agricultural sections.

The village of Grand Rapids is a most substantial and modern community. Its public improvements are extensive (G.R. Herald-Review, 1934) Within the community are to be found over two miles of paving. Has an extensive ~~sewer~~ sewerage system and it owns a substantial amount of property for public and other purposes. Has 12 miles of water mains. Village hall a 2 1/2 story brick structure trimmed with light stone. Completed 1929.

The Pokegama Country Club organized 1924 to construct a golf course at Pokegama Lake. 9 holes overlooking lake, providing a beautiful setting. What part of lake????

~~Grand Rapids population 2,000~~ County has 387 lakes, four of them being in village of Grand Rapids---Deer Lake, Forest Lake, Hale Lake and McKinney lake. Eleven others within 15 miles.

Most range towns have no industries aside from mining. Grand Rapids has a paper mill, shingle mill, lath mill and cooperage works. (1929)



## GRAND RAPIDS AND ITASCA COUNTY

GRAND RAPIDS VILLAGE HALL - Started in July, 1928; Sullivan & Halsted of Duluth, architects. Steel, brick and concrete construction with stone facing and terrazza floors. Cost \$70,000. Has an auditorium within holding 780 persons.

Many vacationists hold Grand Rapids prettiest town in range country. 3 miles southesest of G.R. is Lake Pokegama.

Has excellent library.

North Central State Experiment station one mile from G.R.

Itasca county total area 1,819,676 1/2 acres of which 128,768 1/2 acres is water. (1929 G.R. Herald-Review)



TOPIC: Hotels & Resorts

HOTELS

ALVWOOD, MINN.

Avalon Hotel & Rest.

Co. Road #46

BALL CLUB, MINN.

The Gateway Hotel & Rest.

BIGFORK, MINN.

Tourist Hotel & Cafe

Scenic Hotel & Rest.

Front Street

Main St.

BOVEY, MINN.

Northern Hotel

Bovey Hotel

Whitmas Hotel & Rest.

Main St.

Third Ave.

Main Street

CALUMET, MINN.

Bliss Hotel

National Hotel

Gary Street

COLERAINE, MINN.

Arcana Hotel

Roosevelt Ave.

CRAIGVILLE, MINN.

North Star Hotel

Main Street

DEER RIVER, MINN.

Campbell Hotel & Rest.

Lot. 13 & 14 Blk. 8 of  
Itasca County, (in village  
of Dear River)

Main St.

Miller Hotel & Cafe

EFFIE, MINN.

Effie Hotel

GRAND RAPIDS, MINN.

West Hotel

Blanchard Hotel

Tourist Home Hotel

Christensen Hotel

Delorme Hotel

Park Hotel

Eiler Hotel

Gilbert Hotel

Pine Tree Hotel

Tourist Home Hotel

The Riverside Hotel

Pokegama Hotel

Ratican Hotel & Rest

Redding's Hotel & Cafe

Tourist Rooms Hotel

324 Third St.

215 $\frac{1}{2}$  Pokegama Ave.

603-3rd St. Ave. E.

501 Pokegama Ave.

Hwy. #35

1st Ave. W & 2nd St. W.

124 W. 3rd St.

4th St. W. & 2nd Ave. W.

124 Pokegama Ave.

Pokegama Ave. & 3rd St.

7-2nd St.

111 W. 11th St.

TOPIC: Hotels & Resorts

HOTELS (con't)

KEEWATIN, MINN.

Tourist Home Hotel  
Keewatin Hotel  
Fitger Hotel

Hwy. #35.  
1218 Main St.  
1213 First Street

MACK, MINN.

Ingstad Hotel

MARCELL, MINN.

Cedar Point Hotel

North Star Lake

NASHWAUK, MINN.

Bolf Hotel  
Ollila Hotel  
The Mayfair Hotel & Rest.

Cor. Central & First St.  
Central Avenue  
216-218 Central Ave.

RESORTS

ARAGO, MINN.

Headwaters Inn  
Little Mantrap Resort Hotel  
Rice's Landing Resort  
McMahon's Resort (Cabin Camp)  
Shell's Resort

Lake Itasca  
Little Man Trap Lake  
Hwy. #71, Little Man Trap Lake  
" #4  
Two Inlet Lake

BALL CLUB, MINN.

B Ne-Mah-quart Lodge Resort Hotel

Big Ball Club Lake

BIG FORK, MINN.

Allen's Hotel Resort  
Becker's Log Cabin Camp  
Camp Gregor Resort Hotel  
Rest Haven Resort  
Big Too Much Camp Resort Hotel

Little Turtle Lake  
Big Turtle Lake  
Hatch & Big Turtle Lakes  
Round Lake Hwy. #6  
Big-Too-Much-Lake Hwy #6

BOVEY, MINN.

Bittner Resort  
Cottages - Bordash  
Birch Mound Resort  
Martin's Hotel  
Big Balsam Resort  
Long Lake Lodge  
Summer Haven  
Taylors Landing Resort Hotel

Big Balsam Lake  
" " "  
Lawrence Lake, Co. Rd. E.  
Big Trout Lake  
Big Balsam Lake  
Long Lake  
Owen Lake  
Lake Wabana

BOWSTRING, MINN.

White Birch Inn Resort

Bowstring Lake

COHASSET, MINN.

Shady Nook Resort  
Fisherman's Cove  
Wild Wood Lodge  
Sunset Point  
Pine Cherry Grove Resort Hotel

Bass Lake  
" "  
" "  
" "  
Upper Bass Lake

TOPIC: Hotels & Resorts

RESORTS (con't)

DEER RIVER, MINN.

Cut Foot Soo Lodge  
Bowstring Lodge  
Fort Minnesota for Boys  
Sugar Bush Cottages  
Willow Beach Hotel Resort  
Pines Resort Hotel  
High Banks Resort  
Little Winnie Lodge  
Interlachen Cottages Resort  
Sewell's Camp  
Lakewood Lodge Resort  
Cedar Wild Lodge  
Voigt's Place Resort  
Cut Foot Sioux Inn  
Pine Grove Lodge  
Northland Lodge

Big Winniebigoshish Lake  
Bowstring Lake  
Deer Lake  
Bowstring Lake  
Ball Club Lake  
~~Lake~~ Winniebigoshish Dam  
Big Winnie Lake Co. Rd. D. 1  
Little Winnie Lake  
Big Deer Lake  
On Lake Winnebigoshish  
Big Sand Lake  
Moose Lake  
Between Deer and Moose Lake  
Inger, R.F.D. at Bridge  
Big Sand Lake  
Lake Winniebigoshish

EFFIE, MINN.

Hide-A-Way Inn  
Kutina Lodge Hotel

Deer Lake  
Big Deer Lake

GRAND RAPIDS, MINN.

Gill's Landing  
Crystal Waters Lodge Resort  
Sherwood Forest Camp Resort  
Whispering Pines Resort  
Johnson Lake Resort  
Comfort Cove Cozy Resort  
Moody's Bay  
Log Cabin Camp  
Maple Grove Tourist Camp  
Kamp Kerr  
LaPlant Resort  
The Woodlands  
Wendigo Park  
Martin Resort  
Cabin Center  
Wa-Ga-Tha-Ka Resort  
Otis Lodge  
Pearsons Lodge  
Crystal Springs  
Cabin City Tourist Court  
Itasca Lodge  
Ruff's Place  
Camp Mishawaka Resort  
The American Girls Camp  
Isle View  
Penney's Camp  
Wilderness Camp

Big Splithand Lake  
Johnson Lake  
Deer Lake  
Bass Lake  
Johnson Lake  
Deer Lake  
Splithand Lake  
Bass Lake  
Pokegama Lake  
Bass Lake  
Pokegama Lake  
" "  
" "  
" "  
Hwy. #2 and 169  
Lake Wabana  
Sugar Lake  
Sand Lake  
Pokegama Lake, R.F.D. #1  
Hwy. #169  
Rice Lake  
Pokegama Lake  
" "  
Lake Wabana  
" Pokegama  
Splithand Lake  
Johnson Lake Co. Rd. A Hwy. 38

GRATTON, MINN.

Dora Lake Lodge

Dora Lake



## TOPIC: Hotels &amp; Resorts

RESORTS (con't)MARCELL, MINN.

MacKenzie Island  
Eureka Resort  
Northwood Resort  
Fox Lake  
Caribou Camp  
Arcadia Lodge  
Oakland Cottages  
Watonga Beach  
Indra Lee Hotel  
Pinecrest Resort  
Murbeck's Cabins  
Camp Idlewild  
Big Island Camp  
Whitten Cottage Camp  
Deer Trail Camp

Big Turtle Lake  
No. Star Lake  
" " "  
Fox Lake  
Caribou Lake  
Big Turtle Lake  
Big Ole Lake  
Lake Smith  
Smith Lake  
Co. Rd. A. North Star Lake  
Big Island Lake  
No. Star Lake  
Big Island Lake  
Big Turtle Lake  
North Star Lake

PENGILLY, MINN.

Harrison's Log Cabin Camp  
Edgewater Resort

Swan Lake  
" "

ROSY, MINN.

Rudquist's Resort  
Weisert's Resort

Dixon Lake  
" "

SPRING LAKE, MINN.

Anchor Inn  
Nokom's Cabins

Sand Lake  
" "

SQUAW LAKE, MINN.

Felters Lodge Resort  
Red Arrow Lodge  
Verndale Cabins  
Forest Inn Resort Hotel  
C-o, Buck Horn Lodge Resort

Co. Rd. D. Hwy. # 46  
Round Lake  
" "  
Main St.

Reid 7/16/37

Duluth, Minnesota  
Topic: Itasca County  
How The People Play  
Submitted by: Harry P. Spooner  
July 14, 1937

Hds: 85-8

ITASCA COUNTYHOW THE PEOPLE PLAY

The people of Itasca County devote most of their leisure time to out-of-door recreational activities.

It is only natural that the people living here should take advantage of the natural resources which this popular vacation region offers.

Many of the people have cottages at <sup>some</sup> ~~any~~ one of the 387 sand-bottomed lakes that are excellent for bathing, boating and fishing. There are approximately 150 summer camps and 1500 cabins and cottages here.

Big and small game and game bird hunting are attracting more sportsmen each season to the famous hunting grounds in the county.

There are several good golf courses in the county. The Pokegama Country Club golf course, is one of the finest in northern Minnesota. It is ideally situated, with fairways sloping towards beautiful Pokegama Lake. Summer resorts find golf a drawing card, so many resorts have constructed courses with nine holes or less.

YOUTH MOVEMENTS

An important part of the agricultural development program in the county is the boys' and girls' clubwork, of which the 4-H Club work is most outstanding. Several years ago, it was merely a small group of youngsters in scattered clubs, without local leaders. Now it is a well-organized body of 2,025 members in 40 units, under trained and efficient leadership.

Various religious and educational clubs contribute toward the cultural training of the children.

Almost every community has its Parent-Teacher Association, which meets in friendly conference, to consider matters concerning the welfare of the school children.

#### YOUTH SUMMER CAMPS

Several summer camps for boys and girls are maintained in the county for recreational and special educational purposes.

Among the first camps of this character established in the county was Camp Mishawaka on Pokegama Lake in 1909, and it has continued to increase its enrollment. Fort Minnesota on Deer Lake is also a popular boys' camp.

Two well-known camps for girls are American Girl Camp on Wabana Lake and Sherwood Lodge on Deer Lake.

Many of the boys and girls at these camps are from the eastern and southern sections of the nation.

#### NEW DEAL ACTIVITIES

Among the first Civilian Conservation Corps Camps organized in Minnesota were those set up in the Chippewa National Forest.

There are nine C.C.C. camps in Itasca County, with an average of 200 men per camp. They are improving the forests, trails, increasing facilities for forest fire fighting, and developing the recreational possibilities of the forests.

One C.C.C. camp is located near the Third River Forest at Thirteen Mile Corner, while three other camps are at work in the George Washington Memorial Forest assisting in the forestry work, with other camps in St. Louis County. A C.C.C. camp has been stationed in Scenic State Park since 1933. They have greatly improved the natural conditions of the park by constructing roads, fire breaks, buildings, and beaches.



W.P.A. workers cut, peeled, and fitted the pine logs for the 4-H Club building at Grand Rapids, and improved the 25 acres of ground around the building.

During the last few years several hundred persons have been given employment on various public works programs in the county.

### HISTORIC OR SCENIC SPOTS

The Continental Divide in the northeastern corner of the county, is a height of land along a rounded arc bending southwest toward the northwest corner. This divides the watersheds of the Gulf of Mexico and Hudson's Bay.

One of the largest ore concentrating plants of its kind in the world, is that of the Oliver Iron Mining Co., at Coleraine.

At Calumet is located the completely electrified Hill-Annex Open-pit mine, controlled by the Inter-State Iron Co.

The home of Dr. J. F. Gendron, Poet Laureate of Canada, is located in Grand Rapids.

One of the finest golf courses in Northern Minnesota, is the Pokegama Country Club golf course, along the beautiful Pokegama Lake, at Grand Rapids.

The North Central Agricultural Farm and School, which conducts practical experiments and classes for the improvement of agriculture in the state, is located just east of Grand Rapids on US 169.

The Blandin Paper Mill, at Grand Rapids, is known as the only windowless paper plant in the world. It ~~sits~~ <sup>stands north</sup> on the bank of the Mississippi River, and is surrounded by beautiful park-like grounds.

Chippewa National Forest, with a total area of about 1,500,000 acres, covers the northern half of Itasca County and extends into Koochiching, Beltrami, Cass, and Hubbard Counties, which are adjacent to Itasca County.

There are two state forests: the Third River Forest, in the extreme western

part of the county, and George Washington Memorial Forest, located immediately east of Scenic State Park, in the northeastern part of the county.

All three forests, national and state, have been acquired for the purpose of developing the timber stands, controlling and preventing forest fires, improving recreational possibilities, and conserving game and fish within the borders.

Scenic State Park, seven miles east of Big Fork, was established to preserve the virgin pine and beautiful lakes in this park for the public's enjoyment.

Within the park is located "Hog's Back", a high, long knoll extending out in Sandwich Lake.

Duluth, Minnesota

Topic: Itasca County

How Do People Make A Living

Submitted by: Harry P. Spooner

(add to Mr. Hodge's work  
on Itasca County)

*Added: 252*

ITASCA COUNTY

HOW DO PEOPLE MAKE A LIVING

During the last quarter century the iron mines of Itasca County have employed an average of over 3,300 men.

Many men are employed at the 14 ore concentration plants. In these plants the lower grade ore of this region is washed to remove the sand and leave a product suitable for shipment and transformation into steel and iron.

Lumbering has not been completely discontinued, hundreds of men are employed to cut and handle the stands of hard and soft woods.

Most of the soft wood is used as pulpwood in the manufacture of paper products, at the modern plant of the Blandin Paper Co., at Grand Rapids.

Agriculture has constantly increased in the county, despite the depression and general agricultural uncertainties. The increase has been from 1,446 farms in 1920 to 2,814 farms in 1935.

Dairying has contributed much to the recent progress of agriculture in the county. The fine pasture land with a good growth of wild grasses and clover and streams for watering of grazing cattle, has encouraged the raising of livestock, sheep and poultry.

With the development of tourist trade in the county, several hundred people have gainful employment with over 70 established summer resorts. Many camps operate most of the year to serve the thousands of big game and bird hunters and fishermen who come here for the game seasons.

A regular force is employed by the State and National parks here, and the C.C.C. have absorbed many unemployed young men to assist in the various types of conservation work.



Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Itasca County  
Submitted By: W. J. Hurst

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

Mr. L. A. Rossman, Grand Rapids, Publisher of Grand Rapids Herald-Review, also Mr. Horton, Editor of Grand Rapids Herald-Review, interviewed on Itasca County, by W. J. Hurst, March 25, 1936.

Charles Marr, Grand Rapids, Real Estate Operator, and old settler resident, interviewed on Itasca County, by W. J. Hurst, March 25, 1936.

Section 2  
WJS

- 1 -    Duluth, Minn.  
          Itasca County (Its Name Origin)  
          Submitted By: W. J. Hurst  
          Edited by: W. J. Sullivan  
          Number of Words: 640  
          Date: April 10, 1936;

WHENCE THE NAME "ITASCA"

What is the origin of the word "Itasca?"

A little over a hundred years ago, in 1832, Henry Rowe Schoolcraft discovered the source of the Mississippi. He came up past the falls of Pokegama, through Red Cedar Lake and then through the winding stream to the beautiful lake from which the Mississippi springs.

Naturally he wished a name for his discovery.

He called it Itasca. For many years the name was not applied to the lake by most people familiar with it. It was still called Elk Lake, the name given to it by the Indians who knew it long before the white men came. Finally the name Itasca became common. When it did, the question was asked as to the origin of the word. Historians disagree.

The Rev. William T. Boutwell, (who had accompanied Schoolcraft on the explorations) wrote, many years after the discovery, that he had suggested the name for the lake. He said that Schoolcraft took the Latin words "Veritas Caput," meaning the "true<sup>th</sup> head," and by lopping off the first and last syllables the words when combined formed the word "Itasca." The minister's words were always taken as the true explanation.

But, in 1855, seventeen years before the Boutwell explanation, Henry R. Schoolcraft writing of the explorations, (these writings had been at the time overlooked) tells of the name as follows: "I inquired of Ozawindbi the Indian name of this lake; he replied, 'Omushkos,' which is the Chippewa name for Elk. Having previously got an inkling of the mythological and romantic notions of the origins and mutations of the country which permitted the use of a female name for it, I denominated it Itasca."

That is not all. It seems that Schoolcraft was not only an explorer but also a man of letters. On discovery of the lake he wrote a poem of two stanzas. The last two lines of the first stanza are as follows: "As if, in Indian myths, a truth there could be read. And these were tears, by fair Itasca shed."

And who is Itasca? There is an old Indian legend which tells about her. It seems that Itasca was the daughter of MANABAZHO, the Spirit God of the Chippewas. She was wooed by CHEBIADO, the keeper of the souls of the dead, but would not go with him. On her refusal, the bad one tore her away from her home and family. A great storm came to protect her, but too late. Itasca was killed and buried in some heaps of sand near the lake which now bears her name. The rills that flow from the rocks and sand to make up the lake are Itasca's tears, as she cries for home and friends.

That is a very pretty story and one should like to think that it is the origin of the famous name. How much more interesting to have the name "Itasca" come from the Indian lore of the Chippewas' than from the Latin dictionary.

However, there is still another explanation. In a government report Schoolcraft gave a number of Indian names, which might be used in denominating



part of the public domain, which was then being explored very rapidly and needed names. He there suggested the name "I---Tas---Ca." The "I" to be taken from the Indian word "IA" which means "to be," the "TAS" from the word "TOTISH," meaning "the origin," and "CA" from the Indian "KA," which is a terminal inflection----- thus forming the word "I-TAS-CA." To further complicate the matter he added that this name had been applied to the lake in which the Mississippi rises.

Itasca County gets its name from this lake. In the early times, that lake was found within the limits of the county. Today, as the county has contracted in size, it lies a hundred miles to the west.

The choice remains with the reader.

Whence the Name "Itasca"

Page 4.

Source of Material

Grahnd Rapids Herald-Review, L. A. Rossman, publisher  
Newspaper issue of September 19, 1934.

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Itasca County

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Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Outside Territory (F.C.)  
Itasca County  
Submitted By: Walter Hurst  
Number of Words: 456  
Edited By: W.J. Sullivan  
Date: April 3, 1936

OLDEST RANGER STATION BUILDING

*built in 1904,*  
The original Ranger Station at Cut Foot Sioux (N. Central Region of Forest Service - Headquarters at Milwaukee) in the Chippewa National Forest was vacated twenty years ago but is still in good condition. *"* The original station was built in 1904. The location was picked because it was an open site in the then wilderness area of the Cut Foot Sioux region. *"* The site had been used for unknown years by the Chippewa and Sioux Indians as a camping ground at the head of the portage between Little Cut Foot Sioux Lake and the Bowstring River. This portage crossed the continental divide and connected the waters draining into Hudson Bay *with* and those draining into the Gulf of Mexico. The portage was approximately four miles long and, being an important one, was heavily used. The old portage trail followed closely the present Inger Road. *"* The station was built by Billy McKinnon and Sewell Tibbette who operated Sewell's Camp near Winnebigoshish Dam. (Both are now dead.) The necessary lumber and hardware were taken, with the men, by boat from Cass Lake. The logs were cut from nearby land.

Mr. Edward Marshall, former District supervisor, picked out the location. Mr. Marshall recalls distinctly that, before it was finished, W. B. Greely (who was then District Forester at Missoula, Montana) came to see him on an inspection trip; that they traveled from Cass Lake to Cut Foot Sioux by launch; and that, after arriving at the new station, they laid out their blankets and slept on the floor for the night. W.B. Greely later became Chief



Forester of the United States. Horace Lydick of Cass Lake was the first Ranger to occupy the building. Then followed Ranger Henderson, who, in 1912, built the dwelling now occupied by the incumbent Ranger.

In those days, practically all traveling in the forest was done by boat, the water level for all lakes and streams draining into Lake Winnebigoishish together with Lake Winnebigoishish, <sup>itself,</sup> being fourteen feet higher than at the present time. Mr. Marshall used to tie his launch to the spruce tree on the bank in front of the station, where the present Ranger now has his garden. Ranger George Farley, followed Henderson, and accomplished much for the service. Next came C. B. Stott, followed by Gerald S. Horton; who, with Supervisor Edward Marshall, are the narrators of this historic information; and thanks must be given to Mr. H.E. Wolfe who published them in his paper, "The Deer River News," issue of November 30, 1933, which is preserved in the Duluth Files. The present Ranger is J.E. Coleman.

The Old Station building is a silent monument to the days that are gone. As years pass, its interest will increase and more and more tourists will visit the spot. The attention of the Federal Forest Service and the Minnesota Historical Society has been drawn to this old building; and it is hoped to preserve this interesting place for the pleasures of future generations.

Out of Deer River on Number 46, turn right on all forks.

Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Outside Territory (F.C.)  
Submitted By: Walter Hurst

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

H. E. Wolfe, editor of Deer River News, weekly, interviewed on Itasca County  
by W.J. Hurst, March 23, 1936.

Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Itasca County  
(Communities)  
Submitted By: Walter Hurst  
Number of Words: 456  
Edited By: W.J. Sullivan  
Date: April 15, 1936

DEER RIVER

Deer River, with a population of 1,080, is located in the western part of Itasca County on United States Highway #2, on Minnesota State Highways #6 and #46, and on the Great Northern Railroad.

It is the trading center for a great empire of lakes and woods, cultivated farms and summer homes. Started as a logging town, it has successfully passed through the transition period between logging and developed agriculture.

When, for business reasons, the Itasca Lumber Company decided to discontinue its headquarters at Cohasset, away back in the early history of Itasca County, and to extend its logging railroad north to tap the immense timber holdings of the company, north of what is now, Deer River, the possibilities of that section were investigated. Shops were built, tracks were laid, and actual operations were started. The new town was first called "Itasca City," but this was soon changed to Deer River.

Deer River is the eastern gateway to the Chippewa National Forest; and, because of this fact, has a large interest in the forest and its improvement. It is headquarters for a state forestry station, and is closely connected with all the newer movements for the improvement of the timber resources of Northern Minnesota.



Because it is the gateway to the forest areas, Deer River is the base of supplies for a large number of summer resorts, which have been developed on the shores of the lakes, to the north, west, and east of the village. This trade means much, in the economic life of Deer River; and every effort is made, by the merchants, to maintain the friendliest of relations with the summer guests.

Farms were carved from the stump lands adjacent to Deer River, and the farmers were given every assistance possible by the business men of the village. A creamery was established there at an early date and markets set up for the purchase of farm products. Besides a huge amount of pulp wood passing through Deer River, it also supplies about 8,000 cords of wood annually for the Match Factory at Cloquet. The Armour Packing Co. maintains a box factory here.

The hotels and business establishments of Deer River are modern in aspect and give the impression of a big town ~~aura~~. Its newspaper, the "Deer River News," shows a very thorough concept of modern trends, and the advantages and needs of the local environment.

Its centralized (grade and high) school, besides being of high standing, has the distinction of being one of the very few public schools in the United States that maintains a dormitory, where accommodations for about one hundred boys and girls are available. (See the separate article on Itasca County Schools by Walter Hurst.)

Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Itasca County  
(Communities)  
Submitted By: Walter Hurst  
Edited By: W.J. Sullivan  
Number of Words:  
Date: April 15, 1936

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

George Herried (Merchant), Paul Ograski (Researcher), H.E. Wolfe (Editor), all of Deer River, interviewed by W.J. Hurst, March 23, 1936.

Personal observation.

7/1/36  
Deer River  
J. J. Sullivan

-1- Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Outside Territory  
(Itasca County)  
Submitted By: Walter J. Hurst  
Number of Words: 432  
Edited By: W. J. Sullivan  
Date: April 3, 1936

CUT FOOT SIOUX AND BOWSTRING LAKE DISTRICT

Situated in the western part of Itasca County, this district is one of the most accessible parts of the Chippewa National Forest. United States Highway #2 brings one to the eastern entrance at Deer River, from which place Minnesota State Highway #46 traverses the district in a northwesterly direction; and numerous forest development roads offer attractive drives for the summer visitor. The district is covered by an excellent stand of timber that is the result of intensive fire prevention over a period of years. Wild life of all kinds is found at every turn of the road. The many pine-bordered lakes offer excellent fishing for all varieties of game fish; the ~~nimrod~~<sup>devotee</sup> may amuse himself catching the smaller pan-fish such as the crappie, blue-gills, and ~~pike~~<sup>perch</sup>; or he may match his skill with the fighting black ~~Wall-Eye, Northern Pike, Lake Trout~~<sup>fish</sup> bass; but there remains always the thrill of pitting one's craft and endurance against the savage attack of the tiger Musk<sup>E</sup>allunge, which abound in these waters.

Here is located the famous "Turtle and Snake" Indian Mound (see separate article), and the district is rich in Indian lore. The Continental Divide (passing between Bowstring lake and Cut Foot Sioux lake) is crossed by an old portage, which follows closely the present Inger road. This old Portage is 4 miles long and has been used for hundreds of years by the Indians and fur-traders in traversing from the Hudson Bay <sup>watershed to that of</sup> the Mississippi ~~watershed~~. Numerous Indians are scattered throughout the region, their chief settlements being at Inger and Ball Club.



The State Fish Hatchery is located on Minnesota State Highway #46 and is open to visitors. Over one hundred million  <sup>fry</sup> ~~fish~~ are hatched here annually, and planted in the various lakes of the district, ensuring an abundance of fish for all times.

Along the Inger road, is the Ranger Station for the region, which is interesting in that it has the oldest Station building in the Northwest. (See separate article).

On the lake shores, besides numerous resorts and lodges, are located free public camp grounds, under the supervision of the U. S. Forest Service. Opportunities are offered also for individual "summer home sites" within the National Forest area.

This region comprises one of the nationally known "Duck Passes." (A duck pass is a strip of land between two lakes <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ blinds <sup>from</sup> ~~in~~ which hunters shoot as the ducks fly from one lake to the other.) Ducks of every known variety are found on the many lakes, which have wild rice beds. These rice beds, and numerous islands in the lakes, afford the finest kind of cover for the hunter.

Besides ducks, the region abounds <sup>in</sup> ~~with~~ deer, <sup>beaver,</sup> partridge, prairie-chicken, and pheasant. Various resorts remain open for the hunting season.

Interspersed among all these recreational facilities, are many farms, engaged in agriculture and dairying, which are a source of fresh milk, eggs, and vegetables for the summer visitor.

Duluth, Minn.

Topic: Outside Territory  
(Itasca County)

Submitted By: Walter J. Hurst

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

H. E. Wolfe, editor Deer River News, Paul Ograskie, researcher in Indian lore and Relics, George Herried, merchant of Deer River, interviewed on the Cut Foot Sioux and Bow String Lake District, March 23, 1936, by Walter J. Hurst.

Duluth, Minn.  
 Topic: Itasca County  
 Submitted By: W.J. Hurst  
 Number of Words: 195  
 Edited By: W.J. Sullivan  
 Date: April 7, 1936

COUNTY LIBRARIES

Itasca County, still a semi-frontier stage, has a library system well adapted to its needs, which might well be followed by other regions in the same stage of development.

The Itasca County Library is comprised of a Central Library at Grand Rapids (the County Seat), with branch libraries at the villages of Warba, Deer River, Cohasset, and Big Fork, all of which work in conjunction with sub-stations, located in the 36 farm-bureaus and in the 126 rural schools, scattered throughout the County.

From the sub-stations (in the farm bureaus and rural schools) books may be had only by personal call; but, from the Central and the 4 branch libraries, books may be obtained either by personal call, telephone call, or through the mails. The requested books are then either mailed or sent out by school-bus or by county truck, and, when possible, by a friendly neighbor who might be driving that way.

This system circulates between seventy and a hundred thousand books per year, with Mrs. Mata C. Bennet, of Grand Rapids, as Chief Librarian.

Two other public libraries, independent of this system, are operated in the county, one at Coleraine and one at Marble. These last two libraries circulate only over the Western Mesaba Range District.



Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Itasca County  
Submitted By: W.J. Hurst

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

Mrs. Mata C. Bennet, Chief Librarian, Grand Rapids, Minn., interviewed by W. J. Hurst,  
on Itasca County, March 22, 1936.

2728  
Deer River  
-1- Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Itasca County  
Submitted By: W. J. Hurst  
Number of Words: 160  
Edited By: W. J. Sullivan  
Date: April 8, 1936

### COUNTY SCHOOLS

The educational system of Itasca County is undoubtedly one of high standing. Close to nine thousand pupils attend the 133 educational institutions, consisting of the Itasca County Junior College at Coleraine, 9 senior high schools, 5 junior high schools, 23 consolidated grade schools, 93 rural schools, and 3 grade schools with 2 years high. Also the State University maintains its "North Central Agricultural School Experimental Station" about 2 miles from Grand Rapids, on United States Highway #169.

School District No. 1 of Itasca County is one of the largest school districts in the U. S. A. covering an area of 60 townships. Seventy-seven buses and cars over as many routes, transport pupils, some as far as 30 miles.

All other districts in the county are conducted along similar lines as District No. 1, only on a smaller scale.

The Consolidated Grade & High School, at Deer River, is one of the very few public schools in the United States that maintains a dormitory. Accommodations are for over a hundred boys and girls, with the first floor for boys and the second floor for girls. The institution is well patronized.

Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Itasca County  
Submitted By: W. J. Hurst

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

Miss Jessie Hutchins, County School Superintendent, Grand Rapids, Minn., interviewed by W. J. Hurst on Itasca County, March 18, 1936.



Duluth, Minn.  
 Topic: Outside Territory  
 (Itasca County)  
 Submitted By: Walter J. Hurst  
 Number of Words: 372  
 Edited By: W.J. Sullivan  
 Date: April 6, 1936

"TURTLE AND SNAKE" INDIAN MOUND

*in this region*  
 An unusual point of interest, ~~in a region~~ *2*  
~~rich in Indian Lore,~~ is the "Turtle and Snake" Indian Mound, *2* situated along the  
 shore of Cut Foot Sioux Lake, about one-half mile north of the Village of Cut Foot  
 Sioux, on State Highway No. 46, and in the near vicinity of the Ranger Station of  
 that district, it represents the highest type of symbolism in Indian Lore.

" This Mound is built in the shape of a  
 turtle, about 25 by 30 feet across, with the head pointing north. Around this  
 turtle, is built a snake, of proportionate size, with the head and tail meeting,  
 and pointing south.

It was at first supposed that this was  
 an old burial mound, but archeological excavations have proved otherwise. *★*

From contemporary researchers (Mr. Paul  
 Ograskie, of Deer River, Minn.), *"the"* it is learned that this mound is purely symbolic, *and*  
~~its~~ The interpretation is as follows: The Chippewa Indians and the Sioux Indians  
 were hereditary enemies. The region originally belonged to the Sioux; but was  
 coveted by the Chippewa, for its rich resources. ~~Many minor battles and scrimmages~~  
~~were fought from time to time, until,~~ in 1847, a decisive battle was fought, on the  
 spot where the mound now stands, ending in the complete route of the Chippewas. The  
 Sioux Indians, in jubilation and to commemorate this battle, built the turtle part

*★ This is not true 5*

of the mound, with the head pointing north, to signify that the enemy had been driven to the north.

The defeat suffered by the Chippewa served only to <sup>increase</sup> ~~enhance~~ their <sup>determination</sup> ~~desire~~ to gain this coveted territory. They accordingly, ~~during the following winter and spring, mustered every available warrior at their command and returned in the summer of 1848.~~ <sup>on the ensuing battle</sup> The battle that ensued, ended in the Chippewa surrounding<sup>ed</sup> and massacring<sup>ed</sup> the Sioux to the last man. The Chippewa, in turn, built the snake around the turtle to signify that the Sioux had been entirely surrounded and annihilated. The head of the snake was pointed south as a warning to other Sioux tribes and as an indication of the future path of Chippewa conquest. ★

The morning after this battle, while the Chippewa were still dividing the spoils, some Chippewa squaws, who had gone up the lake shore <sup>a</sup> ~~for some distance,~~ found a <sup>Sioux warrior</sup> ~~Sioux warrior in a semi-conscious condition~~ lying partially submerged in the water of the lake, whose foot was almost completely severed. The squaws dispatched this warrior with alacrity; but the Chippewa, always thereafter, referred to this lake as the Lake of the Cut Foot Sioux, which name it retains to this day. ★★

★ This is mere legend, unsupported, and given in various forms which are contradictory — ~~Sumner~~

★★ Various legends as to this vary widely. — S/

Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Outside Territory  
(Itasca County)  
Submitted By: Walter J. Hurst  
Number of Words: 372  
Edited By: W.J. Sullivan  
Date: April 6, 1936

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

Paul Ograskie, (researcher of Indian Lore and Relics), Deer River, Minn., interviewed by Walter J. Hurst, March 23, 24, 1936.



Duluth, Minnesota  
Topic: County Geography  
Submitted by: W. R. Hodge

*Ado: 1248*

*Rec'd 6/19/37*

ITASCA COUNTY

COUNTY GEOGRAPHY

Strictly Local History, local events, local personages  
and their background.  
Libraries and Culutral organizations, Gifts, etc.  
How do the people make a living.

The earliest history of the communities of Itasca County is the history of the soft wood logging industry. <sup>*harvested*</sup> The first logs ~~were~~ cut on the Prairie River in 1872, and until the pine timber was exhausted, logging continued in regions adjacent to the many rivers of the county. It is not known when the first timber was cut in the county, but the timber resources were known at an early date. It is believed that the first logs from Itasca County were cut on the Bigfork and floated north into Canada. Thence the logs were hauled to eastward-flowing streams for transportation and taken to England for use in the ship-building yards there.

The farmer followed the logger. In the region about Deer River the farmer received fine cooperation from the townspeople who aided in the development of farmlands, literally hewing towns from the surrounding forests and providing a local market for the farmers' products.

Communities, which are purchasing centers for the farm population, sprang into existence with the coming of the farmer, and the already established villages expanded.

Typical of the latter is Bigfork. It was originally the center of a logging region, but after the timber was cut, the village catered to the farming and resort population which replaced the loggers. Bigfork continues to sell supplies to the loggers who still cut and haul some timber by truck.

The village of Marcell was first started on the shore of Turtle Lake, near the present site of McKenzie's Island Resort. When the railroad was built around the lake, the town was moved to its present location. The village was named for Andy Marcell, one of the first conductors on the Minneapolis & Rainy River Railroad, which was removed a few years after it was built into Bigfork and other centers of population in the northern part of the county.

Perhaps the most interesting cities and villages in the county are those on the western end of the Mesabi Iron Range. Compared with the rural communities and villages outside the iron-mining region these iron range towns are rich. They have incorporated so that large bodies of taxable iron ore are included in the village, and the taxes on the ore are the chief source of revenue, often the only, or almost the only, income the village has. The mines pay as high as 99% of the taxes in some villages. These taxes on great and concentrated wealth are sufficient to furnish the communities with elaborate and expensive schools, municipal buildings, and large payrolls.

Before it became a producing property the Arcturus Mine in eastern Itasca County was kicked about considerably. In the early 1880's the property was purchased by J.E. Hayward of St. Cloud for the timber on it. The timber was soon logged off, but in the meantime iron had been discovered in northern Minnesota and this property was held because it was hoped iron ore would be found on it. When Mr. Hayward died, the mine became the property of his four daughters. Ore was found on the property, but it was sandy. Many explored the ore body and took options to buy or lease, and all allowed their options to lapse. Even the owners thought that the sand in the ore made the property worthless. Then Charles Purdon and the Eaton brothers, Guy and Will, became interested in the property and believed the sand might be washed from the ore as was done with some of the iron ores of Alabama. A carload of crude ore was hauled from the property to Grand Rapids by team and shipped to

Cedartown, Ala., for testing at the mill there. An excellent concentrate was made. These three men interested W.H. Donner of the Union Steel Co., but he was unable to lease or buy the property because of a disagreement among the owners. Some eastern men, among them Frank Buhl of Pennsylvania, agreed to purchase the Arcturus property for \$700,000 of which \$50,000 was paid. About this time the United States Steel Corporation came into being and its engineers believed the Arcturus a valuable property. The Oliver-Snyder interests put up a testing plant and spent an additional \$40,000 in further exploration of the ore body and in developing methods of treating the ore. In 1904 it was suddenly announced that the U.S. Steel Corporation had leased the Arcturus property, from which it shipped many tons of iron ore in succeeding years.

Many supposed mineral properties failed to come up to the expectations of their owners, but sometimes, in the matter of mineral land, expectations were much more than realized. W.B. Holman, a shoemaker of Grand Rapids, owned some land near the site of Taconite in western Itasca County. For many years he offered it for sale at \$500 but found no purchaser. Iron ore was found on the property and it quickly changed hands at a large figure, and thereafter was sold several times for successively increasing prices and became the present Holman Mine.

At one time in the 1880's an attempt was made to popularize wild rice outside of northern Minnesota, where for many years it had been gathered and consumed by the native Indians. Wild rice grows plentifully in many lakes and watercourses in Itasca County and is usually served with wild duck and other game. The late Frank L. Vance, a potential Baron Munchausen, who for many years resided at the settlement of Popple, where he ran a store, was a wild rice enthusiast and was probably the first man in northern Minnesota to commercialize it. He harvested and cleaned it, and even made a wild rice



flour. He introduced the grain into hotels in many sections of the country. He invented a harvesting machine, which knocked the rice from its stalks into a flat boat. So active was he in increasing the use of wild rice that Mr. Vance became known as "The Wild Rice King."

LIBRARIES. Itasca County, although still thinly settled, has a library system adapted to its needs. It includes a central library at Grand Rapids, the county seat, with branch libraries at the villages of Warba, Deer River, Cohasset, and Big Fork, all of which are operated in conjunction with substations situated in the Farm Bureaus and in the rural schools scattered over the county. Independent of this system are two other public libraries: one at Coleraine and one at Marble. These circulate books only over the western Mesabi Range district. a

HOW DO PEOPLE MAKE A LIVING. The industry in which the largest number of Itasca County inhabitants are engaged is iron mining. The great Mesabi Iron Range extends into the county from the east and as early as 1912 over 2,000 men were employed in the mines of the county. Additional men worked on the railroads which hauled ore from the mines, and a small army was employed to supply the needs of the men who work in and about the mines. This is true today. a

Next to the mine workers in numbers, are the dairymen and farmers.

There are many workers in the woods. When the large stands of pine and soft woods were depleted, the remnants and regrowth still furnished timber. The abundant hardwood timber in the early days of logging was regarded as more or less of a nuisance, but with the depletion of the pine forests, many uses were found for the neglected hardwood and today many men are engaged in logging it.

Many men are employed by the summer resorts, and some find employment on the federal or state crews engaged in guarding and caring for the forest reserves.

Leid. 6/4/37

Duluth, Minnesota  
Topic: County Geography  
Submitted by: W.R. Hodge  
June 10, 1937  
*Ads. 1020*

ITASCA COUNTYSchools-Agriculture-Dairying-Marketing

The first school in Itasca County, as explained above, was established at Grand Rapids early in the 1890's. <sup>★</sup> In 1909 George B. Aiton who was largely responsible for the Minnesota high school system, advised that Itasca County School Districts Nos. 1 and 6 place their rural schools under the direction of the superintendents of the village schools. This advice was followed and a rapid advance was noted in the progress of rural schools.

Soon after, these outlying schools were associated by the Putnam law with the high schools and special aid was granted for instruction in manual training and home economics. The one-room rural schools became known as "associated schools" and the districts so organized were granted annual state aid of \$200 per school. From that time the isolated rural schools of the county were equally as well supervised as the state-aid graded schools.

With these associated schools, District No. 6, Deer River introduced another unusual feature, the school dormitory. An allowance is made by the district to pay part of the living expenses and the students earn the privilege of the dormitory by doing creditable work in their school studies. To aid them in this there are supervised study periods every evening in the high school building. In the Deer River district there are many children from the Chippewa Indian reservation, and the Federal government reimburses the School District for their instruction. In the iron-mining district in the eastern part of the county the schools approach or equal those of other parts of the iron range

*★ in 1887, in log house, then a school house, 2 stories high, of 4 rooms, finished & used in 1888, - Summer*

in excellence and equipment. At Coleraine the School District has established a Junior College. The educational facilities of the county include nursery schools, kindergartens, one-room rural schools, graded schools, junior high schools, senior high schools, a junior college, and the North Central Experimental Station, a special school affiliated with the state university for the boys interested in farming.

The lands of Itasca County are quite level and free from stone. The purest of water may be obtained in wells at a depth of 12 feet to 25 feet below surface and from many brooks and springs. The iron-mining communities in Itasca County furnish markets for farm products which cannot be supplied locally. The principal farm output is corn, hay and forage, oats, potatoes and dairy and livestock products.

The entire county lies within the area covered by the glaciers. Soils, as they exist in the county today, are nearly as they were left on the retreat of the ice and the subsidence of the floods caused by the melting glaciers. They are marked by a great diversity of character and vary from stiff clay, usually light colored, to sand and gravel. Sand predominates but is usually fine and mixed with silt and clay and underlaid at various depths by the clay. The same agencies which distributed the soils left the surface rolling and sometimes broken, thus providing a natural drainage. The county has a large number of lakes of clear, pure water which rival the most famous lakes of the world in beauty. Large portions of the country were at one time heavily timbered with maple, oak, elm, ash, birch, basswood, poplar, cedar and tamarack. Most of this timber has been cut off, the trees manufactured into lumber and the cleared ground converted into farming land.

The first superintendent of the State Experimental Farm at Grand Rapids, A.J. McGuire, did much to foster agricultural development in Itasca County. The Itasca County Farm Bureau was organized in 1918 with a county agent to take



charge of agricultural development work in the county. The establishment of the North Central School of Agriculture at the Experimental Farm near Grand Rapids gave increased help in the agricultural development of Itasca County. By 1921 a splendid and increasing market had developed for dairy products, and the subsequent increase in the dairy population and in the demands of general farming made necessary clearing and cultivating much new land on which to raise feed and other products. A land-clearing campaign was started. During this campaign, a 5-acre tract was completely cleared of stumps by one large blast. All the 520 stumps on the tract were loaded with dynamite and fired at once with a firing machine, thus removing all the stumps from the tract instantly and enabling it to be plowed and cultivated easily. This tract was near Cohasset. The rate of land clearing during this campaign was increased 5-fold over the 5-year average of the period preceding 1921, reaching about 5,000 acres per year, and more than doubled the amount of cleared land in the county.

Sheep-and poultry-raising has been increasing. A sheep council was organized some years ago to plan the county sheep development program. Sheep have proved profitable and as well adapted as any livestock to this region. Poultry-raising is one of the most profitable lines followed by Itasca County farmers. A county poultry association was organized, and this organization fosters the Annual Poultry Show, which has grown to be one of the largest and finest in the state. The Lawrence Lake and Busti-Effie communities have developed into successful turkey-producing centers, with other parts of the county also producing on a smaller scale.

The county agent and the Farm Bureau have tried to solve completely the marketing problem of the farmers by providing a marketing organization for the most important cash crops (potatoes, clover seed, wool, and livestock) at the best prices, and this effort has been successful. The first two attempts

at cooperative marketing of potatoes were not successful, but the present Potato Growers' Association has sold Itasca County potatoes profitably for several years and made them well-known throughout the country. For a number of years the cooperative marketing of clover, alfalfa and other seed, wool, lambs, cattle and other livestock products has been successfully undertaken and an increasing number of farmers have taken advantage of such facilities each succeeding year. Local organizations, farmers' clubs, Commercial clubs, Fair organizations, Parent-Teacher Associations, and all projects which bring the people of the county together for their mutual benefit and enjoyment, have had their part in encouraging cooperation. The 1,500 girls and boys in the 45 well-organized 4-H Clubs in Itasca County, supervised by local leaders, have played and will continue to play an important part in the agricultural development of Itasca County.

Duluth, Minnesota  
Topic: County Geography  
Submitted by: W.R. Hodge

24ds, 1680

## ITASCA COUNTY

### Growth of Towns

Itasca County is like many others in northern Minnesota in that it was first a logging country; its timber resources were the most readily available of all assets, quickly removable and easily convertible into cash. Its first communities were lumber towns, some never advancing beyond that stage. Many <sup>a</sup> developed other resources and are thriving today. The Mesabi Range enters the county at the northeast corner, and with development have come the busy and prosperous towns, built by the people who operate the mines.

Deer River <sup>i</sup>was a community which changed from a lumbering town to one whose principal interest is farming. When, for business reasons, the large Itasca Lumber Company decided to discontinue its headquarters at Cohasset and extend its logging railroad north to tap the immense timber holdings of the company north of the present site of Deer River, shops were built, tracks laid and logging operations started at this place. The new town was first called Itasca City, but the name later was changed to Deer River. Another thing which has been of importance in the growth of Deer River is that the village is close to the eastern edge of the Chippewa National Forest. The population of Deer River in 1930 was 832.

Grand Rapids also began life as a logging town. It is the Itasca County seat, designated as such when the county was established in 1891. In 1890 when logging operations were being carried on near Pokegama Lake, south of present site of Grand Rapids, Michael McAlpine built the first frame residence



in a growth of Norway Pine. At that time the creek bottom in the village was covered with the tree, Balm of Gilead.

Extending in a southwest direction across Itasca County for a distance of about 30 miles from St. Louis County's western boundary <sup>at Keewatin</sup> is the great Mesabi <sup>a</sup> iron range. Around each iron ore body, which is being mined or has been mined, is a mining location, village, or city. A mining location is a group of houses, usually built by the company operating the mine, for the use of employees of that mine, and seldom incorporated. Mining villages along US #169 extending westward into Itasca County include Cooley, Calumet, Marble, Taconite, Bovey, Coleraine, and Grand Rapids. These villages are prosperous so long as the mines are working and paying wages, but they do not grow because ordinarily production is kept at a fairly even rate and seldom does the number of men needed to work a mine increase very much, once this rate has been established. Most Itasca County mines are not so rich as those of the eastern Mesabi <sup>a</sup> iron range: they usually contain considerable sand which has to be washed out before the ore is ready to ship. Consequently, the village organization has not so much tax money to spend. Nevertheless these western range villages are provided with more than adequate municipal buildings and schools which in any case are elaborate and expensive.

Coleraine is the site of the first concentrator or washing plant built in Itasca County to remove sand from iron ore. The village was built to serve the employees of the Oliver Iron Mining Co., which operates the concentrator, the largest of its kind in the world. The village erected by the mining company was considered a "model village" and was made up of houses of various designs, spread out on the undulating hills above Trout Lake, and carefully landscaped. One of the first buildings was a modern high school. The Itasca Junior College and Coleraine Hospital are located at Coleraine. The village is a trade center

for nearby agricultural regions. In 1930 the population was 1,243.

The drills had hardly brought up ore in the vicinity of Nashwauk, which was then the site of a logging camp, than that village, now the largest purely mining community in Itasca County, began its career. At first it depended on three properties on three separate iron ore bodies: the Hawkins, Crosby, and La Rue mines. Later other properties were developed and Nashwauk became one of the most important mining communities on the entire Mesabi Range. It derives its name from a river and town of the same name in New Brunswick.

Keewatin township, in which lies Keewatin village, was found in 1904 to have large iron ore reserves. These were developed quite slowly in early years but about 1909 operations were speeded up. In the beginning mining concerned itself with the St. Paul, the Bray, and the Mississippi mines, later the Bennett and the Sargent mines were developed and still more recently the Mesabi Chief. Some of these mines are now exhausted. Keewatin in 1930 had a population of 2,134. This is an Ojibway name, meaning "North" or "North wind."

Bovey is another of the pioneer logging communities of Itasca County, which later became a mining town. It was incorporated in 1904 when it had only enough people to qualify it to be a village. Three years later its population was 1,200, and in 1930, 1,248. In the early days there was not a room or home in the Canisteo district (vicinity of Bovey) which was not occupied by those engaged in the development of the surrounding mines. At Bovey are the Canisteo, Danube, and Orwell mines.

Marble has a population of 738. In 1908 this was a heavy forest; a year later a modern village, built by the Oliver Iron Mining Co. for the employees of its Hill Mine, occupied the site. The Oliver no longer holds the lease on the Hill Mine, and other interests now are operating this and other nearby mines: the Hill-Annex and Hill-Trumbull.

Taconite (485 pop. in 1930) was the scene of some of the earliest mining operations on the western Mesabi range. The Holman was the first property mined, and the Brown, the second. The Diamond Mine, now inactive, opened in 1907 and the Arcturus in 1817. Taconite received its name from the iron-bearing rock formation, "taconite." (9)

Bigfork, a settlement on SH # 38 in the northern part of the county, was started when Damas Naveau built a cabin on the Bigfork River and laid claim to a fine tract of pine timber. When this land was opened to homestead entry, he became the first homesteader in Bigfork Valley. When the railroad reached the fertile well-timbered lands adjacent to Bigfork in 1906, it found a well-organized settlement with schools, stores, and other places of business. The rapid influx of population after the coming of the railroad led to the incorporation of the village in 1906. Bigfork lost the railroad a few years ago, but it has continued to be a lively little village. There are still millions of feet of timber to be moved from this vicinity by truck. Good farms surround the village, and many resorts continue to attract tourists during the vacation months.

Effie, on SH 38, north of Bigfork, is one of the few towns in Minnesota named for a woman. <sup>Miss</sup> ~~Mrs.~~ Effie Wenous <sup>WENNAAS</sup> was the community's first post-mistress, and the post-office and town were named in her honor. The town is the trade center of the Effie-Busti region, an agricultural district.

The village of Wirt was founded some years before the railroad was extended to that point. E.O. Walley had a store and post-office here. The villages of Jessie Lake, Spirite Lake, and Bass Lake are all what was, until a few years ago, the western branch of the Minneapolis & Rainy River Railroad. These villages now serve as centers of trade for the farmer, and they attract tourists and hunters.

Squaw Lake, a rural post-office for many years, has developed into a trading



center. The presence of several C.C.C. camps in the neighborhood has contributed largely to recent prosperity at Squaw Lake.

#### COUNTY ORGANIZATION AND CHOICE OF COUNTY SEAT

Grand Rapids, county seat of Itasca County. This was at first a logging town. The village literally was hewn from the forest, the site of the first ~~frame~~ <sup>from</sup> house being cut from the heart of a stand of Norway pine, and today that house stands on the side of a busy state highway. Grand Rapids was designated the county seat when the county was first organized in 1891. This title was briskly contested for some time in the early 189's by La Prairie, which at that time was a lumbering center on the Mississippi River, but in the elections of November, 1892 the matter was definitely settled for all time. Today La Prairie is a "ghost town" with no habitable house within its boundaries; its lots have again become part of a farm field and only the remaining outline of its streets give any indication that once there stood the ambitious city of La Prairie. Grand Rapids was built farther up the Mississippi than was La Prairie. It was at the head of navigation and possessed a greater prestige for that reason, overshadowing La Prairie.

There is nothing unusual in the organization of Itasca County. It has the usual commission form of government. The management of the business affairs of Itasca County is confided to the care of 5 men representing the commissioner districts of the county. This county has an area of over 2,500 miles and an assessed valuation of over \$25,000,000. Prior to 1891 Aitkin County to the south and Itasca County were administered as one, Aitkin-Itasca. This arrangement was authorized by the state legislature in 1887 and the seat of county government was at Aitkin. On Mar. 7, 1891, this arrangement was abandoned, and Itasca County came into existence. Grand Rapids, not then incorporated as a village, became the county seat.

Rec'd. 6/4/37

Duluth, Minnesota  
Topic: County Geography  
Submitted by: W.R. Hodge  
Date: 1960

## ITASCA COUNTY

### Old Trails - Coming of the Railroads

The first trails developed in Minnesota and in Itasca County were the waterways; the streams and chains of lakes over which a canoe might travel. The main highway into Minnesota and one which closely touched Itasca County was the Mississippi River. At first it was the trail of explorers seeking the passage to the western ocean, and searchers for the head waters of the Mississippi; later steamboats on it served the loggers of the great woods and the prospectors for iron ore. Although Grand Rapids was the head of navigation for river steamers, the river farther upstream was navigable for smaller steamboats, launches, canoes, and small crafts.

The steamboat, "Fawn", was one of the earliest to ply the river; another was the "George Houghton", named for its owner who lived in Aitkin and Minneapolis, one of the men who platted the village of Grand Rapids. The "Andy Gibson," owned by Ed Lowell and Lee West of Aitkin and Fred Bonness, a well-known logger of the period, was one of the famous vessels of the upper Mississippi, and was 150 feet long, 25 feet across its widest part and had a capacity of 200 passengers and 150 tons of freight. Under favorable conditions this boat could make the trip from Aitkin to Grand Rapids in 18 to 20 hours, usually 3 round trips each week; but when conditions were adverse, the better part of a week might be consumed in making the round trip. Passengers often would have to help push the boat off shoals. The size of the "Andy Gibson" was a disadvantage when the water was low. It was early in the 20th century

before the steamboats coming up the river with occasional loads of goods and sometimes passengers were forced out of business by the increasing number of railroads.

Boats plied above Pokegama Dam also. A number of people had boats on Pokegama Lake and on the Mississippi: these were used for towing logs and for carrying supplies to the loggers in the Winnibigoshish-Cut Foot Sioux region. Two well-known boats of that period were the "North Star" and the "Little Eagle". John and William Lyon, brothers, were two famous pilots of that time who guided boats both above and below Pokegama dam. *(they were Chippewa)*

About the only roads in use through the woods were logging roads, hardly more than trails, made by the lumber companies and used by them to haul supplies. One such "tote" road existed in the early 1890's between Aitkin and Grand Rapids. Its route, along the high ground beside the Mississippi, was that of the first permanent road built in Itasca County, "the State Road". Today there are about 2,000 miles of permanent road in the county.

The first railroad into Itasca County was constructed in the late 1870's. This was the Duluth & Winnipeg, which was begun with the intention of connecting this road with a logging road of the Wright and Davis lumber interests, who had bought large tracts of timber in this region, and of extending it to Winnipeg. For several years the western terminus of the road was at La Prairie, but in July, 1890, the track was extended to Grand Rapids and during the summer the track was laid westward to Deer River. At this stage of construction the railroad was purchased by the Great Northern railroad, and was extended to Fosston, in Polk County, where it connected with the Great Northern grain-carrying line. It now forms the Duluth-Grand Forks branch of the Great Northern railway system.

The Minneapolis & Rainy River was probably the most important of all the logging railroads. At first it extended north from Cohasset, but in 1899 its



southern terminus was changed to Deer River, so that the line might better serve the vast timber holdings lying to the north. This road was owned by the Itasca Lumber Co., which was controlled by the Joyce interests of Chicago. After over 30 years of activity this railroad was discontinued and permission for its abandonment was granted by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

Another important rail line in Itasca County, the Duluth, Mississippi River & Northern, was built in the late 1890's, and it, too, was financed by the Wright and Davis lumber interests. Its northern terminus was at Hibbing and its southern at Mississippi Landing, now Jacobson, just south of the Itasca County line. In addition to its logging trains, it ran a passenger train known as "The Wooden Shoe".

-1- Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Itasca County  
Submitted By: W. J. Hurst  
Number of Words: 300  
Edited By: W. J. Sullivan  
Date: April 7, 1936

GHOST TOWNS

Ghost towns <sup>fall into three</sup> ~~may be~~ classed <sup>s</sup> as one of three things. Either (1) they are the remains of an exhausted industry; (2) ~~perhaps~~ they are an error of judgement on the part of the builders, as to location, ~~suitable to the environs~~; or (3) they are mile-stones, along the Path of Progress.

The Ghost Town of La Prairie, was one of the first settlements in Itasca County. Located about 2 miles east of Grand Rapids on United States Highway #2, it <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ one of the errors of judgement, on the part of the builders. It owed its existence to the steamboat traffic on the Mississippi River and to the lumbering industry. The mistake was that the steamboats were able to proceed several miles farther up the river before the head of navigation was reached. At the foot of the rapids, where the present village of Grand Rapids now stands, a new community was founded which slowly but surely absorbed the village of La Prairie. Though the last of the buildings was recently moved away, the townsite is still platted, and the outline of the old streets may still be seen.

In the northwest part of Itasca County, are the Ghost Towns of Haupt and Orth. Located on the United States Highway #71. They represent the remains of an exhausted lumber industry. Some of the old lumber camp buildings are still standing.

Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Itasca County  
(Ghost Towns)  
Submitted By: W. J. Hurst

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

Mr. Allen J. Dorn, postmaster, Grand Rapids, Minnesota,  
interviewed by W. J. Hurst, on Itasca County, March 26,  
1936.



## ITASCA COUNTY MOUNDS

"TURTLE MOUND AT TURTLE PORTAGE - According to Mr. Nathan Butler, Captain Mahlon Black described a mound, somewhat elongated, resembling a turtle, situated near the trail leading from the upper water of Cut-Foot Sioux lake to Bow-string lake, probably across sec. 35, T. 147-26. Formerly a continuous water-course for canoes extended across the divide in time of high water near this trail. This is evidently the 'oracular turtle of northern Minnesota,' to which reference is made by Jean Baptiste Perrault in his relation, 1785, viz:

"The other (M. Piquet, in 1785) had wintered at lake Patchatechamban, in Turtle portage, which was so named in the time of their forefathers, on account of the Indians having consulted the turtle as an oracle. For he always kept his head towards the enemy's country, to warn them that they must be on their guard, but it was several years since he had ceased to give any oracular indications.'

"To this the translator has added: 'The Turtle portage referred to in the text is on the line of communication between lake Winnipeck of the Mississippi and Rainy lake; and is to be distinguished from the Turtle portage (of the same region) which connects upper Red Cedar, or Cass, lake with Red lake (travelled by Beltrami in 1823). On referring this passage to Mr. Perrault for the purpose of eliciting more fully the Indian superstition on the subject, he remarked that when the Chippewa began to use the portage they found on the right(sic) of land, after leaving the Mississippi waters, and before reaching those of Rainy lake, a small hillock having the external figure of the turtle. They surrounded the spot by painted poles, on which were hung such offerings as are made to spirits. These offerings were also laid upon the hillock, and the precincts were thus rendered sacred. Around this spot they seated themselves to smoke. The oracle was addressed by the seer of the party; and he uttered the responses, or gave such predictions as suited his purpose.' (Schoolcraft's Indian Tribes, Part III.)

"This mound, shaped like a turtle, was older than the occupancy by the Ojibwa, and according to Mr. Nathan Butler when they had expelled the Sioux

they reversed it by removing the head from one end of the mound and building it on the other end, in order to have it conform to the facts of history as well as to the Ojibwa mythology.

"Of this locality Mr. Brower said (Kathio, p 57): 'Kish-iciz-it-ed Ewan (Cut-Foot Sioux) lake, river and portage, situated between the northeastern extremity of Winnibigoshish lake and Bowstring lake, was an important locality where pre-historic man turned northward down Big Fork river toward Rainy lake, constructing scattered groups of mounds at various places, which have been only partially explored.

"WHITE OAK POINT. - In the Hill Records the following is quoted from 'Owen's Geological report,' p. 327. It applied to the region of White Oak point, which is <sup>a</sup> well-known lumberman's designation for a conspicuous elevation near the Mississippi river situated on the east bank on sec. 24, T. 144-25. This point is frequently referred to in accounts of the upper Mississippi, but has never been exactly defined by reference to the government subdivisions, nor placed on any published maps. The location here given has been kindly furnished by Mr. Nathan Butler.

"The river is exceedingly crooked, and winds through broad savannas overgrown with meadow and reed grasses, and intersected by sloughs in every direction. Oak point is the only place where canoes can land for the distance of many miles, and is distinguished in Chippewa tradition as having marked for a long time the northwestern limit of the Chippewa possessions. We learned from one of our voyageurs that when the grass is burnt off the 'point', the forms of a great number of ancient lodges can be seen, which were so constructed that the floors were sunk below the surface of the ground. We saw two circles, each about 30 feet in diameter, raised a few inches above the general level, and the area inside was apparently excavated to a slight depth. Near them, and at the most projecting point of land, is a mound about 40 feet in diameter at the base, and 5 feet high. It is a circle (i.e., a round tumulus) and on the side next the land is a narrow raised pathway leading to the top.







Having made a careful search in this lot of sherds, I find three pieces which, having the common rough, vertical striation that was probably produced by a loosely wrapped paddle, have also some fragments of shell, which may have become accidentally mixed with this lot. It appears, therefore, that the Winnibigoshish Lake pottery is marked by the want of shell-tempered specimens, while that of Leech Lake is largely characterized by the use of pounded shell.

The result of a detailed examination of 105 sherds from Winnibigoshish Lake gave 99 composed of pounded rock, sand, and clay, and 6 of pounded shell, sand and clay.

(Winchell's Aborigines of Minnesota, p444 -- published 1911)

Duluth, Minn.

May 26, 1937

W.R. Hodge

Reid. 6/24/37

Add: 700

ITASCA COUNTY GEOGRAPHYHow people got their mail

Usually one of the first establishments in a frontier community was a post office. *and saloon & hotel*  
 It generally came after the first store or mill had been established, and before the first church or school. For many years post offices did not exist and the only address that could be put on a letter destined for the upper part of the Mississippi River valley was Fort Snelling. It was not until 1846 that St. Paul and Stillwater became post offices, but northern Minnesota, until the late 1880's, was too new and too thinly settled to have many post offices. *★* A picture published in 1934 in the Grand Rapids "Herald-Review" shows the log store of John Beckfelt in 1887. This store, one of the first in the county, was situated near the river, and housed the first post office in Grand Rapids and Itasca County. *★* For many years it was the only one between Aitkin and the Canadian border. Where post offices did exist, the government entered into contracts with individuals to carry the mail from the junction point with some established mail route, up stream in boats or overland on horseback in summer; or on foot, on snow shoes, or by dog sleds in winter, to the new frontier towns of the prairies or forests. Before the railroad reached Grand Rapids, mail was carried up the Mississippi to the head of navigation by steamboat.

Mail sometimes reached Itasca County by an overland route from Duluth, to which port it had been sent on sailing ships along the Great Lakes.

*1887* Before 1888 the only school in Grand Rapids was held in private homes. Miss Martha Maddy was hired to teach the children of school age in Grand Rapids. In 1888 the first school house in Itasca County was built at Grand Rapids on the site of the present Central School. This building later was moved to Cohasset and was used as a village hall by that community. Miss Margaret Maddy, a sister of Martha, came by steamboat up the Mississippi River from Aitkin to take charge of the new school. She taught 6 pupils: 3 whites and 3 Indians.

The first religious effort made in Itasca County was that of Christianizing the Chippewa. While Schoolcraft and his party were exploring around the source of the

*★ This is not true - Summer*



Mississippi, his companion, the Rev. William Boutwell, detached himself from the party and spent the following 4 years doing missionary work in the Leech Lake district in the present Cass County. In 1838 he went to a mission which had been founded on Lake Pokegama, where Jeremiah Russell was teaching the Indians to raise food, considering that as important as providing them with religious instructions. This mission was threatened by the Sioux in 1847 and was abandoned as too dangerous. After that, missionary work in Itasca County lapsed until a later generation.

The first church services in Itasca County were held in private homes in Grand Rapids, the first Catholic services beginning in the early 1880's. The Protestant Episcopal church has maintained services in the community since the early 1880's and has held services in its own building since 1912. The first building put up especially for purposes of Protestant worship in Grand Rapids was built in 1890 by the Presbyterian Board of Missions. It was built on the corner south of and opposite the Central school.

It is not certain who was the first physician in what is now Itasca County, but it is known that the first white men in the vicinity of Grand Rapids had to travel to Aitkin or even farther for medical attention. Dr. Manson, who started what was probably the first hospital in Grand Rapids in the late 1860's, was a Civil War veteran. A Dr. Howe was practising in Grand Rapids at this time. Dr. Thomas Russell, still practising in 1937, was in Itasca County in 1893. Dr. H. B. Ehle was in La Prairie, adjacent to Grand Rapids at about the time Dr. Russell went to Grand Rapids, and these two men formed a partnership for operating a hospital. (in G. R.)

One of the earliest, if not the first frame residence built in Itasca County was that of the first white resident, Michael MacAlpine, which was built in a grove of Norway pines on the present site of Grand Rapids in 1890 in the center of town. MacAlpine was the first president of this village which was incorporated in 1891.

\* Above Pokegama Lake + mission report  
small Pine County E. A. Sumner