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LILLIAN FULLER

SEPTEMBER 15, 1938

The final copy with bibliography turned in today completes

THE STORY OF MAHNOMEN COUNTY.

Mrs. Verness:

It is my opinion that the stories which you have should be  
filed in the order in which they are grouped in the Table of Contents in-  
stead of the way they were turned in originally to you.

Lillian Fuller.

NOTE:

This page is to be added to material on DRIVING A WOODEN CART written July 28, 1938.

Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomon County  
September 15, 1938

Furs played a large part in early commerce and income. The carts brought down buffalo robes and other furs, buffalo tongue and pemmican, a meat food, from the Red River valley, returning with teas, tobacco, alcohol and hardware.

Norman W. Kittson, a Minnesota pioneer who established a trading post at Pembina in 1843, originated the Red River cart method of carrying on the fur trade between Pembina and St. Paul. In 1844 only six carts were needed to carry on the trade which amounted to \$1400; in 1851, 102 carts were required to transport the furs and by 1857 there were 500 carts engaged in the fur trade. The business reached its peak in 1863, mounting to \$250,000, and then declined as a result of the Sioux outbreak of 1862, the establishment of steam traffic on the Red River and the efficiency of the freight lines.<sup>7</sup>

Over the unsettled prairies of Mahnomon County traveled the quaint train of squeaking carts drawn by the sleepy oxen. And often among the gaily clad Red River drivers trod a stranger who dared not follow the trail alone.

7. Baker, General James H. The History of Transportation in Minnesota in Minnesota Historical Society Collections. V. 1X. PP 20 & 21.

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THE STORY OF MAHNOMEN COUNTY.

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WHY WHITE SETTLERS CAME TO MAHNOMEN COUNTY.

Mahnomen County is located on the edge of the rich Red River valley valley, with timber, pasture and agricultural lands desirable for white settlement.

The "Soo" railroad passed northward through Mahnomen County in 1904. This company employed an immigration agent whose main duty was to advertise the advantages of living in sections of Minnesota traversed by the "Soo" line. New settlers meant an increase in the receipts of the company, for every farmer who settled in a community added \$100 annually to the railroad's income.<sup>1</sup> The editor of The Mahnomen Pioneer aptly commented that "unqualified success has attended the efforts of the 'Soo' line towards attracting settlers up here",<sup>2</sup> for 55 carloads of immigrants' belongings were unloaded at Mahnomen in 1913, more cars than were unloaded at any other point on the "Soo", according to the records in the general freight office of the railroad company.<sup>3</sup>

The Mahnomen Land Co. was also active in advertising the advantages of living in Mahnomen County. Land sales boomed in the spring of 1914 so extensively that one Tuesday in March "a new filing cabinet was unloaded by the Mahnomen Land Company....fire proof and a beautiful and useful piece of office furniture".<sup>4</sup>

1. The Mahnomen Pioneer for May 7, 1915.
2. The Mahnomen Pioneer for May 15, 1914.
3. The Mahnomen Pioneer for March 13, 1914.
4. The Mahnomen Pioneer for March 27, 1914.

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Mahnomen County citizens were active boosters of their county. In The Mahnomen Pioneer of July 1, 1921, appeared a poem by one of the citizens of Mahnomen advertising "Mahnomen, the Land of Plenty". The poem contained six stanzas similar to the one below:

"Rich and broad thy fertile prairies;  
Beautiful thy woods and streams;  
Lakes of crystal filled with fish  
Call to mind some pleasant dreams.  
Game of all kinds lures the hunter,  
Chickens, geese and ducks and deer.  
We will boost for old Mahnomen, 5  
We are glad that we came here."

The State Board of Immigration has been active in inviting immigrants to settle in Minnesota. In 1925 they issued a pamphlet entitled "Northwestern Minnesota", designed to advertise the advantages of ten counties in <sup>the</sup> northwestern corner of Minnesota, including Mahnomen. 6

The average price of land in Mahnomen County in 1927 was \$50 an acre. After a trip to our county in that year, a Minnesota editor described in his local paper "thousands of acres of virgin soil" in Mahnomen County, awaiting "the transforming touch of the human hand" and commented on the large areas of vacant land which could accommodate hundreds of settlers. 7

5. McGrath, W.J. "Mahnomen, the Land of Plenty", a poem in the "Mahnomen Pioneer" for July 1, 1921.

6. The Mahnomen Pioneer for February 13, 1925.

7. Bjornson, Gunnar B. Reprint in The Mahnomen Pioneer for May 13, 1927, of an article in The Minnesota Mascot.

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The United States Bureau of Census for 1930 records 6153 people living in Mahnomen County. 1612 of these were Indians. Of the white population, 913 were of Scandinavian descent; 608 of German descent; and 427 of Czech descent. These thrifty people, comprising <sup>than</sup> ~~more~~  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the white population of Mahnomen county, have made definite contributions toward our agricultural, educational and social progress.



Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
July 21, 1938

WHERE WE LIVE.

We live in the northwestern part of the state of Minnesota. Polk is our neighboring county on the north; Clearwater County borders us on the east; and Becker adjoins us on the south. We are separated from the state of North Dakota on the west by Norman County, of which we were once a part.

Forty miles west of us flows the Red River whose valley is the richest agricultural region in the world.

Our county is the only county in the State laid out as a square on the map of Minnesota. But it is not a perfect square, for although it consists of sixteen townships, it is 24 miles in length from north to south and  $24\frac{1}{4}$  miles from east to west, making a total square mileage area of 582 square miles.

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Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
July 21, 1938

EARLY INDIANS IN THE RED RIVER VALLEY

Only a few hundred years ago our prairies were the domain of the buffalo, our forests the home of the deer, and our streams and lakes the abode of the fish and beaver. Bounteous marshes of wild rice bordered the lakes where ducks and wild game reveled undisturbed by the presence of man, for not even the red man was there.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the Crees were the first red men to set foot on the land which is now Mahnomen County. They were a tribe of Indians with language, manners and customs resembling the Chippewas, but, unlike the Chippewas, they did not remain long in one place. They made their living by hunting and traded their beaver skins, furs and buffalo robes to the Hudson Bay Company for knives, guns and trinkets.<sup>2</sup>

By 1820 the Crees left Minnesota, moving northward to Canada.<sup>3</sup>

Then came the Chippewa Indians, who drove the Sioux out of the Red River valley region southward. Another name for Chippewa was Ojibway, which means "roast till puckered up". We usually think of meat when we hear the word "roast", but it is generally believed that the name "Ojibway" originated from the fact that the Chippewas "roasted" their enemies, the Sioux, until they "puckered up".<sup>4</sup>

1. Holcombe and Others. Compendium of History and Biography of Polk County, Minnesota. P. 17.

2. Ibid. PP. 19 & 20.

3. Ibid. P. 20

4. Neill, E.D. History of the Ojibways and Their Connection with Fur Traders. In Minnesota Historical Society Collections. V. 5.P. 503.

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The contests between the two tribes were spirited. At length, in the early 1800's, they smoked the pipe of peace, but the Sioux were treacherous, planning to be peaceful only for a while and then, later, when they found the Ojibways off their guard, to surprise them.

And, apparently, the Chippewas weren't sincere, either, for about one hundred fifty of them attacked the Sioux near Shakopee in 1858.<sup>5</sup>

Just before the Sioux Outbreak of 1862, in which the Sioux Indians killed a large number of white settlers along the Minnesota River in the southern part of the State, Eta-zha-zha, or Gleaming Face, led some Sioux warriors northward against the Chippewas.<sup>6</sup> Little was accomplished in this last skirmish between the Chippewa and the Sioux. The Sioux were removed from Minnesota after the Outbreak of 1862<sup>7</sup> and the Chippewas remained in possession of the Red River valley.

\*\*\*\*\*

5. Warren, William W. History of the Ojibways . In Minnesota Historical Society Collections. V. 5. P.36

6. Holcombe and others. Compendium of History and Biography of Polk County, Minnesota. P. 27.

7. Williamson, John. P. Letter to His Mother, May 13, 1863. In Minnesota History Bulletin. V.II. P. 422.

## MAHNOMEN COUNTY

Mahnomen County lies entirely within the White Earth Indian Reservation, of which it forms a sizable portion. Though adjacent to the Red River Valley, it scarcely approaches in productivity the fertile lands of that region. This may be due in part to the fact that Mahnomen, which passed under State governmental control as recently as 1906, is still relatively wild and unsettled. Much of the county, however, is classed as submarginal. According to the 1935 census, only 55.4 percent of the land is in farms, and the population density is only 10.8 per square mile. Most of the cultivated land is in the western portion.

Under the White Earth Treaty, the first group of Indians occupied the reservation on June 14, 1868. After the Clapp Amendment of 1907, which gave Indians of mixed blood the right to sell their lands, white settlers began to purchase farms in the county and today own about 95 percent of the area. Scorning agricultural pursuits, the Indians prefer the excellent hunting, fishing, and trapping on the reservation. They make sugar from the numerous maple trees, and harvest the wildrice, which thrives in the swamps, <sup>and which grows in the county its name</sup> and which the Chippewa call "Mahnomen." <sup>being the Chippewa word for wildrice,</sup>

Millions of feet of Mahnomen County pine went into the building of Minnesota's lumber empire of a bygone day; the cut-over district still furnishes large quantities of timber for building purposes, fuel, pulpwood, and railroad ties.

Today Mahnomen is distinctly a dairy county, with dairy farms producing nearly half the farm income for 1934.

### OPPORTUNITIES

In spite of certain disadvantages, Mahnomen's agricultural future is not unfavorable. The extensive stump land in the northeast part of the county could readily be converted into sheep country or used for grazing cattle, thus following the trend toward diversification and at the same time affording the



farmer a livelihood while clearing his land for the sowing of crops.

A discouraging factor is the 250-mile haul to the Twin Cities. High transportation costs have undoubtedly retarded the development of this rural community.

#### PHYSICAL SETTING

Situated in the central-northwest part of the State; Mahnomen is bounded on the west by Norman County, on the east by Clearwater, on the north by Polk, and on the south by Becker. To the west it borders on the Red River Valley; its lower portion is in the northern fringe of Minnesota's ~~Park~~ Region, with its countless lakes. Its primitive areas are natural habitats for deer and wild fowl.

Topography The topography of Mahnomen County is gently rolling, with a slope westward toward the Red River. Occasionally the smooth surface is broken by ravines and springs. While the ~~g~~eneral flatness of the land has in many cases necessitated the construction of large ditches, it has also made possible the use of much labor-saving machinery. Fields can be laid out straight and worked to best advantage. There are few hills, hence railroad and highway construction is relatively simple. Water run-off is slight, and soil leaching is kept to a minimum.

The western part of the county, where most of the cultivation occurs, is largely prairie, varied by a few gravelly knolls and small lakes.

Drainage The Wild Rice River and numerous minor streams provide excellent natural drainage, flowing down the general westward slope and emptying into the Red River. Much work and capital, however, have been put into the construction of drainage ditches.

Below are figures on artificial drainage for the farms reporting:

	1930	1920
Farms reporting drainage	<u>19</u>	<u>92</u>
Farm land provided with drainage	1,408 acres	4,711 acres
All farms	681	
Approximate land area in acres	366,080 acres	
Number of miles of ditches	62.5	
Land drained by ditches only	50,331 acres	



Soil The clay subsoil is topped by a rich, black loam. The western half of the county and a few miles of the eastern portion are almost entirely a clayey till plain. The remainder is largely morainic, the northeastern part being a clayey moraine and the southeastern sandy and gravelly. A line of glacial drainage with sandy soil runs along the eastern border of the northern half, ~~of the county~~, then trends southwestward past Twin Lakes into Becker County.

Percentage of Classes of Land in Mahnomen County.		Percentage
	Square Miles	of County
Sandy moraine, with sandy to gravelly loam soil	70	12.2
Clayey moraine, with pebbly clay loam soil	146	25.5
Out-wash gravel and sandy glacial drainage deposits	25	4.5
Clayey till plain, with pebbly clay loam soil	309	54.0
Lakes and swamp land	22	3.8
Totals	572	100.00

Climate and Rainfall The climate in this region is well-suited to the growing of small grains, grasses, and potatoes. The average rainfall over an 11-year period is 20.22 inches, which is about 4 inches less than the State average. Farmers in this section complain little as far as moisture is concerned, severe droughts being uncommon. Frost-free days average about 110, with slight variations. The annual temperature norm is 38.4° Fahrenheit. The atmosphere is drier throughout the year than in sections of the State to the south and east, and while extreme temperatures are common, the changes are not so noticeable as in sections with greater atmospheric humidity. Winds are often of high velocity and shift frequently. Losses due to hailstorms are reported each year, but it is probably safe to say that ~~as a rule~~ this district does not suffer severely from such losses more than once in 20 or 25 years.

Figures for average monthly rainfall over a period of 11 years as compiled by the weather bureau at Mahnomen are given below:

MONTHS:	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
TOWN: Mahnomen (alt.1,213) Precip- itation in inch- es.	.31	.30	.74	1.51	2.79	2.86	3.44	2.95	2.40	1.56	.85	.51

Annual Norm 20.22 inches

## SETTLEMENT AND RACIAL ORIGINS

Mahnomen's settlement is interwoven in the historical background of Norman County, of which it was originally a part. This entire section was settled by French, Norwegian, and German agrarian immigrants. Ohio, Iowa, and Illinois furnished many homesteaders in 1879.

Wholly rural, Mahnomen's population of 6,153 in 1930 was classified as two-thirds farm and one-third non-farm. About one-third of the present population is classified as Indian. The White Earth Indian Reservation had an Indian population of 8,000 in 1930. Of the white population, the Norwegians predominate, with the Germans coming a close second.

## COUNTY ORGANIZATION AND SUBDIVISIONS

The county of Mahnomen was created December 27, 1906 from the eastern part of Norman County. This late beginning accounts in part for its present state of underdevelopment. The Clapp Amendment, which conferred on the Indian the privileges of citizenship, including the right to sell the land allocated to him by the government, proved to be a doubtful boon. The Indian sold his land for money and shortly had neither. All of these Indians are citizens, and they take an active part in the business of the county, city, and rural governments. The Indians and the whites mix in all the social functions, schools, and in the churches.

The county is divided into 16 townships and 3 incorporated villages:

<u>Subdivision</u>	<u>Pop.</u>	<u>Subdivision</u>	<u>Pop.</u>
Beaulieu Township	307	Little Elbow Township	91
Bejou "	226	Mahnomen Village	989
Bejou Village	99	Marsh Creek Township	193
Chief Township	336	Oakland "	237
Clover "	164	Pembina "	549
Gregory "	165	Popple Grove "	264
Heier "	301	Rosedale "	348
Island "	370	Twin Lakes "	405
La Garde "	334	Waubun Village	337
Lake Grove "	438	Total	6,153

Mahnomen, the county seat, has a population of 989. It is 260 miles



northwest of the Twin Cities and is served by the Soo Line R. R. Two points of interest here are the Chippewa Indian settlement and the famous Schermerhorn Farms of over 30,000 acres. The village has cooperative associations for marketing livestock, poultry, and dairy products. An independent bus line provides transportation facilities to Detroit Lakes and Erskine.

The village of Waubun, with a population of 337, is the second largest community in the county. Though relatively unimportant as a market center, Waubun has a cooperative-shipping association for the marketing of livestock and creamery products.

#### TAXES

From 1931 to 1935 the total valuation for tax purposes decreased 32 percent from \$2,572,205 to \$1,745,166. As a result, where the mill rate of 87.61 produced a total tax levy of \$266,113 in 1931, the higher 1935 rate of 90.31 mills produced only \$158,688.

Indebtedness Based on the 1930 population figure of 6,153, the per capita debt in 1935 was \$62.74. The total debt of the county and its subdivisions was \$386,037.92 and was divided as follows:

Total county indebtedness	-----\$115,711.18
Total township "	-----126,337.09
Total city & village "	-----46,715.00
Total school district "	-----97,274.65
Total	-----\$386,037.92

The ratio of total debt to the 1935 valuation was 22.12 percent, about 7 percent higher than the State average. Only 12 of the 87 counties in the State have a higher ratio of debt to valuation.

Delinquency Taxes levied in the county in 1934 by all State, county, and local government units (including special assessments) reached \$186,345, but on January 1, 1936, \$65,687 was still uncollected. This delinquency rate, 35.27 percent, is nearly twice as high as the State average of 18.83 percent. Total accumulated delinquency on January 1, 1936, amounted to \$583,786 or 3.1 times greater than the total levy for 1934.

#### MARKETS AND TRADE CENTERS

What little grain is shipped from the county is sent by rail to the mills

in Minneapolis. The Twin Cities are also the market for Mahnomen livestock and livestock products. Nearby trade centers include Detroit Lakes, 36 miles south on US 59, and Crookston, 26 miles north on US 59 and 31 miles east on US 2. Crookston, situated at the intersection of US 2 and US 75, on the international route from Winnipeg to Galveston, has over 37 wholesale and 300 retail units. It is the center of the sugar beet and potato industry in this section, has a national and a State bank, and is a shipping point for grain and cattle.

The twin cities of Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead, Minnesota, constitute the largest trade center within a 75-mile radius. Fargo, focal point of four national highways and distributing center for farm machinery, has 50 wholesale units; 4 national, 2 State, and 1 savings bank; and 3 trust companies.

#### COOPERATIVES (and canneries)

Mahnomen cooperatives, while few, furnish ample means of marketing the local farmer's products. The Indians have formed special cooperative associations. The leading organizations are located in Lengby, Fosston, and Mahnomen. Among these is a Handicraft and Wild Rice Association. This organization has been in existence for only a year, but plans are being made for its expansion in the near future.

The following is a list of cooperative marketing enterprises:

Farmers Society of Equity	Mahnomen
Mahnomen Co-op. Creamery Assn.	Mahnomen
Livestock-Shipping Assn.	Mahnomen
Farmer's Co-op. Elevator Assn.	Bejou
Waubun Creamery Assn.	Waubun
Livestock-Shipping Assn.	Waubun

#### TRANSPORTATION

The Soo Line slices straight across the western part of the county, from south to north, connecting the towns of Waubun, Mahnomen, and Bejou. The Great Northern dips into Island Lake Township in the northeast corner.

There are one national and two State highways: US 59 follows the Soo Line route; State 113 runs east from Waubun to the eastern part of the county;



and State 31, crossing from east to west, divides the county in half, intersecting with US 59 at Mahnomen. Many well-graveled county roads feed the main highways, making transportation to market relatively convenient.

An independent bus line operates from Mahnomen to Detroit Lakes in Becker County and Erskine in Polk County, making connections with the Northland-Greyhound Lines.

#### SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

The Indians are entitled to free Government medical service at the hospital at White Earth, in Becker County. In addition, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the State Board of Health supply field nurses, eye specialists, and dentists. A tuberculosis sanatorium for Indians has been established at Onigum.

Churches Of the nine churches reported, there are: at Caloway, one Congregational; at Waubun, one Congregational and one Catholic; at Mahnomen, one Congregational, one Catholic, and one Lutheran; at Bejou, one Catholic and one Congregational; and Beaulieu, one Catholic.

Schools There are 26 school districts in this county, which is less than 2 school districts per township. The average State aid per pupil is about \$30.00, and the State also pays 75 percent of transportation costs in the two consolidated school districts. At Mahnomen and Waubun are located two class "B" 4-year high schools. Of the 23 ungraded elementary schools, 15 have an enrollment of less than 15 pupils. The total enrollment, elementary and secondary, is about 1,892 pupils.

Adjacent to the village of White Earth (Becker County) is St. Benedict's Mission, one of the finest schools in the Indian service.

#### FAIR

The Mahnomen County ~~Annual~~ Fair, sponsored by the Mahnomen County Agricultural Society, is held at Mahnomen, during the first week in July.

#### FARM INCOME

Farm income for this county, according to the 1930 census, was \$1,013,329 and was proportioned in the following manner: Crops, 15.50 percent; livestock, 24.15 percent; livestock products sold, 38.31 percent; forest products sold, 1.11

percent; products used by the operator's <sup>ie,</sup> family, 20.93 percent.

A statistically average farm based on the 1935 agricultural census would present the following picture:

Average size of farm -----	241 acres
Average value of farm (land and buildings) -----	\$4,299.00
Average value per acre -----	17.84

#### Acreage in crops:

Wheat-----	11.2acre
Oats -----	22.6 "
Barley -----	16.3 "
Rye -----	1.4 "
Mixed grain -----	1.5 "
Flax -----	4.4 "
Corn -----	8.7 "
Potatoes -----	2.6 "
All sorghums and hay cut for forage -----	64.3 "
Alfalfa -----	4.5 "

#### Livestock:

Horses -----	4
Cattle -----	17 (10 of which would be milk cows)
Sheep -----	14
Swine -----	3



## AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS

Population -----	6,153
Approximate land area -----	366,080 acres
Approximate water area -----	3 percent
Population density, per square mile, 1930 -----	10.8 persons

County Seat - Mahnomen

FARM DEVELOPMENT

Number of farms, 1935 -----	841
Land in farms, 1935 -----55.4 percent-----	202,657 acres
Average size of farms -----	241.0 acres

FARM VALUES

Average value per acre, 1935 -----	\$17.84
Average value per acre, 1930 -----	22.95
Average value per farm, 1935 -----	4,299.00
Average value per farm, 1930 -----	5,564.00

THE TAX PICTURE

Total taxable value, 1935 -----	\$1,745,166
Total general tax levy, 1935 -----	158,688
Average tax rate, 1935 -----	90.31 mills
Total debt of county and subdivisions -----	386,037.92
Per capita debt -----	62.74
County bonds -----	115,711.18
Total debt was 22.12 percent of the tax value.	
Accumulated delinquency -----	583,786

TENANCY AND FARM MORTGAGE

Farm mortgage debt, 1930 (farms operated by owners) ----- \$497,849.00  
Of the farms operated by owners, 69.4 percent were mortgaged in 1930.  
Tenants occupied 35.1 percent of the farms in 1935.

FARM INCOME - 1930 CENSUS - 1929 CROPS

Average farm income -----\$1,458.63

## Sources of income:

Crops -----	\$157,088	15.50 percent
Livestock sold -----	244,751	24.15
Livestock products sold -----	388,191	38.31
Forest products sold -----	11,152	1.11
Farm products used by family -----	212,147	20.93
Total	\$1,013,329	100.00 percent

LIVESTOCK HOLDINGS - 1935

Cows - 546 farms reported 1,980 animals over 1 year and under 2 years old.  
 803 farms reported 8,282 animals over 2 years old.

Cattle and Cows of all ages - 804 farms reported 14,345 animals.

Swine - 601 farms reported 2,405 animals in 1935, which is a decrease of 1,864 animals as reported by 456 farms in 1930.

Sheep - 248 farms reported 11,749 animals in 1935, which is an increase of 7,388 over the 122 farms reporting in 1930.

Horses - 765 farms reported 3,710 animals, an increase of 430 over the number reported in 1930.

THE 1934 CROP (U. S. CENSUS)

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Farms</u>	<u>Bushels</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Tons</u>
Wheat	503	118,337	9,494	
Oats	611	494,906	19,070	
Barley	461	169,221	8,947	
All sorghum and hay cut for forage			54,111	33,096
Alfalfa	290		3,822	3,107
Rye	60	14,279	1,182	
Mixed grain	65	30,724	1,306	
Flaxseed	222	22,954	3,760	
Corn harvest for grain	22	2,810	216	
Potatoes	655	119,223	2,220	

NOTE: In taking into consideration the crop figures for 1934 it is well to keep in mind that 1934 was the year of severe drought in the Northwest.

A.S.

L.V.



Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
July 21, 1938

WHY OUR COUNTY IS CALLED MAHNOMEN.

When the "Soo" railway was built northward through the White Earth Reservation in 1904, a council of Indians at the White Earth Agency petitioned the railway officials to adopt an Indian name for every village on the reservation.<sup>1</sup> This request was granted and the name of the post office, Wild Rice, was changed to Mahnomen, which means "wild rice" in Ojibway.<sup>2</sup> This village was named from the Wild Rice River just south of it, and the same name, Mahnomen, was later given to the county.<sup>3</sup> The river was called "ga manomini-ganjikani-zibi" in Ojibway, meaning "the river where the wild rice stalk or plant is growing".<sup>4</sup>

The wild rice plant grows from seed each year. The grains, which vary in length from one half inch to nearly an inch, are enclosed in husks at the top of the stem. In August Indian women usually bind the green rice stalks in bunches with twine made from basswood bark. This process protects the crop from the winds and waterfowl.<sup>5</sup>

Indians from Mahnomen County gather wild rice on Rice Lake in Clearwater County east of us. In September when the rice is dark slate in color it is ripe for harvest. Then the Indians all move to the lake and pairs of squaws busily ply the canoes through the water, one of them guiding the canoe while the other scutches off the

1. Olson, Mildred L. In The Wigwam. (Edited by the Senior Class, Mahnomen High School). V. 1. 1927. P. 51.

2. Upham, Warren. Minnesota Geographic Names. P. 323.

3. Ibid.

4. Gilfillan, Joseph A. Minnesota Geographical Names Derived from the Chippewa Language. P. 464.

5. Winchell, N. H. Aborigines of Minnesota. PP. 592-593.

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July 21, 1938

grain from the stalks into the canoe. The switching of the paddle is accompanied by the merry shouts of the children while the men often lie idly on the shore.

After the gathering of the rice comes "the parching, the threshing to separate the grain from the husk, then the winnowing and putting in sacks of their own making, to be kept in use for the coming year."<sup>6</sup>

But the harvest is not always a success. The Mahnomen Pioneer for October 2, 1931 printed an account of a bumper wild rice crop that was ruined by a windstorm.

" In anticipation of a bountiful harvest of wild rice", the story began," the Chippewa Indians pitched their tents around the shores of Lower Rice Lake in Clearwater County. Many gathered there early and eagerly awaited the word that would announce the wild rice was ripe to harvest.

" On September 8th, pickers launched their boats and harvest was on in full blast. It is estimated that 250 boats were engaged in the rice harvest on the lake and this represented over 1500 Indians taking part.

" Operations were progressing in fine shape and the prospects of each one getting a big supply of rice seemed assured, but to their dismay a violent wind storm arose on Friday, September 11

6.  
Gilfillan, Joseph. A. The Ojibway. PP. 200-201.

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and the Indians stood aghast watching the wind tossed waves of the body of well ripened wild rice threshed out by the swirling wind and precipitated on the surface of the lake. Over one half of their valuable crop of wild rice was lost and this means to them that each one got only one third of the wild rice required for use of each family for the winter."<sup>7</sup>

The state and federal governments have cooperated in improving the living conditions for the Indians <sup>at</sup> ~~##~~ the rice camps. They have built roads to the camps, erected toilets, and provided an adequate supply of water by means of several artesian wells.

" One of these wells on the west side of the lake fills a 4-inch casing as it leaves the ground and after being reduced to a 2-inch pipe it throws the water several feet. It is ice cold, seems soft, and will serve with the other wells to keep the level of the lake up so that the Indians can gather the <sup>ir</sup> rice.

" Channels have been dug from deep water to the landing places so ~~that~~ the ricers will have less trouble getting their rice into the parching places." (The Mahnomen Pioneer. September 31, 1934).

Wild rice is a valuable food among the Chippewa Indians. After the wild rice has all been gathered, a feast is prepared in celebration of the bounteous harvest.<sup>8</sup>

7. The Mahnomen Pioneer. October 2, 1931.

8. U.S. Bureau of Census. Report on Minnesota (Condition of the Indians). P. 346.



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White men have invented machines to harvest and thresh wild rice, but, in 1929, the Minnesota State Legislature made a law giving the Indians the exclusive right to collect wild rice. This law also forbids hunting on Rice Lake until after the wild rice has been harvested.<sup>9</sup>

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9. The Mahnomen Pioneer. September 20, 1929.

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THE CHIPPEWA INDIANS SELL THEIR LANDS.

When the early white men came to Minnesota they found the Indians living here contentedly.

The first Indians in Minnesota were the Chippewas, Sacs and Foxes, Sioux and Winnebagos. We have read how a wandering tribe, the Crees, hunted in the Red River valley but withdrew to Canada before 1820. The Chippewas, of Algonkian stock, alone remained in Minnesota. The Sioux and Winnebagos were moved to Dakota and then to Nebraska, and the Sacs and Foxes were taken to Iowa and later to what is now Oklahoma.<sup>1</sup>

Representatives from these Minnesota and other northwestern tribes met with a commission from the United States government at Prairie du Chien in 1825 to establish boundary lines between the tribes, and among the terms of this treaty was a provision fixing the boundary line between the two most hostile Indian tribes in Minnesota, the Chippewa and the Sioux.<sup>2</sup>

But the Chippewas are no longer owners of the land which was theirs by right of possession when the white men came. They sold it to the United States government through treaties signed by their chiefs or head men.

A treaty is a written agreement, league or contract between two or more nations, signed by the proper commissioners or dele-

1. U.S. Bureau of Census. Minnesota. (Condition of the Indians). 1890. P. 337.

2. Neill, E. D. History of the Ojibways and their Connection with the Fur Traders. Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll. V.5. P. 469.

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gates and ratified by the supreme power of each nation. The Government first tried this treaty method of dealing with the Indians, but the Indians were seldom satisfied because they were not accustomed to the representative form of government and they did not believe that their delegates should have authority to act for the tribe or nation. Then, too, lack of a common standard of values was frequently a cause of friction in the dealings between the white men and red men. The white man often proved to be dishonest and the Indian did not trust him.

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Perhaps the earliest treaty between the Chippewas and the United States was made with a tribe of them living at Sault Ste. Marie by Governor Lewis Cass of Michigan in 1820. In this treaty the Chippewa Indians ceded sixteen square miles of land to the United States government, but Sassaba, their chief, who walked around Sault Ste. Marie dressed in a large gray wolf skin with the tail hanging down, was hostile to the United States and refused to sign.

5

This was the beginning in a series of about a dozen treaties in which the Chippewas sold their lands to the government of the United States. In 1837, 1200 Ojibways came to a council at Fort Snelling and relinquished a large part of their territory to the Government. In 1842

3. American Universities Unabridged Dictionary. 1916. P. 1781.

4. Roberts, Stephen H. "Native Policy" in Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. V. 2. P. 262.

5. Neill, E. D. History of the Ojibways etc. In Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll. V. 5. P. 463.



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the Ojibways of Lake Superior and the Mississippi made<sup>e</sup> a treaty selling more land, and in 1847 the Government bought additional territory west of the Mississippi river from the Indians. Mahnomen County was included in a tract purchased from the Chippewas in 1855.

In 1863 the Mississippi, Pillager and Lake Winnibigoshish Chippewas relinquished the land around Gull Lake, and the Red Lake and Pembina bands ceded a large part of northwestern Minnesota which had<sup>6</sup> become a state in 1858.

On May 7, 1864, the United States government made a treaty with the Ojibways of the Mississippi to arrange for reservations for<sup>7</sup> the different bands.

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Neill, E. D. History of the Ojibways and their Connection with the  
Fur Traders. Minn. Hist. Soc. Coll. V. 5. PP. 485-494-505.  
7. Ibid. P. 506.

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THE WHITE EARTH RESERVATION.

Treaties were not a satisfactory means of dealing with the Indians, so after 1871 the United States government substituted the reservation system for this policy.

When the Chippewa Indians sold all their territory, they were assigned land for homes by the government. These lands were known as reservations. The Indians did not own the land individually but were assigned to it as part of the tribe under the control of the Indian bureau. <sup>1</sup>

By 1851 most of the Chippewa bands were west of the Mississippi. They ranged at will over Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. By 1877 they were located on thirteen <sup>2</sup> reservations supervised by five agencies.

Mahnomen County lies entirely within what was once the White Earth reservation. A small strip of land in Clearwater County at our East and part of Becker County south of us comprise the remainder of the land set apart by the United States government as a home for the Indians known as the White Earth reservation. The original White Earth reservation <sup>3</sup> embraced 709,666.5 acres of timber and agricultural lands.

The White Earth reservation was a promising home for the Chippewa Indians. The eastern two-thirds were covered with timber with an occasional interlude of prairie. Oak, poplar, maple, ash, and elm trees

1. Roberts, Stephen H. Article on "Native Policy" From Encyclopedia of Social Sciences Volume II Page 265
2. United States Bureau of Census. Minnesota (Condition of Indians) 1890. Page 337
3. Hook, A.L. (Land Field Agent of the Indian Service, Mpls.). Final Project Plan for 1937 Page 1

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grew in abundance as well as ironwood, basswood, and birch. Tamarack and spruce grew in the swamps and white pine was found in two or three townships in the northeast corner of the reservation.

Nature offered to the Chippewas who were brought to the White Earth reservation the choicest plums, cherries, cranberries, and blueberries. Vegetables, as the common ground nut or "wild potato" and the prairie turnip, supplemented the precious wild rice as food.

The western one-third of the reservation is rolling prairie or agricultural land. The government tried to make farmers out of the Indians on the reservation. The first cattle for the White Earth reservation were purchased with two thousand dollars sent by the Quakers in Philadelphia.<sup>4</sup> But the Indians lacked seed, supplies, and teams and nearly one-half of the prairie lands broken for them were not cultivated.

The reservation system made it difficult for them to earn a living. They had been accustomed to roaming stream and forest as they hunted freely to help earn a livelihood. Now the resources of Nature were no longer at their command for the government had bought their land to open it for settlement for the Whites. Beyond the reservation they could no longer wander, yet they managed to help secure their living by digging and selling Seneca snake root and by their sales of maple sugar, wild rice, furs, deer, and moose meat.<sup>5</sup>

4. Whipple, Henry B. Civilization and Christianization of the Ojibways in Minnesota from Minnesota Historical Collections Volume IX 1898. P.142
5. United States Bureau of Census. Minnesota (Condition of the Indians) 1890 Page 339-340



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Because there was little chance for Indian families to be self supporting without owning their own land, the Dawes Act was passed in 1887 providing that at the end of a twenty-five year trust-period the Indian would have full control of the land with which he had been entrusted. Then he was to receive citizenship, but this requirement for citizenship was automatically dropped when Congress, in 1924, passed an act declaring that all Indians born in the United States are citizens of the United States.<sup>6</sup>

The agency for the Chippewa Indians from <sup>the</sup> Leech Lake, Mille Lac, Red Lake, White Earth and Winnibigoshish reservations was at the village of White Earth south of us in Becker County.<sup>7</sup> Here the first Chippewa Indians who were brought to the new White Earth reservation settled in 1868. They erected their wigwams two miles north of the present village of White Earth at a place known as the "Old Trading Post".

At White Earth was the Government agency, the boarding school for Indian children, and the blacksmith and carpenter shop for the Indians to have their wagons repaired, plowshares sharpened and their horses and oxen shod. Freight was hauled by team and there was stage service from this point to Detroit.<sup>8</sup>

Recently forty new homes have been erected at White Earth. The population is composed almost entirely of people of Indian blood.

6. Robert, Stephen. H. Article on "Native Policy". From Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. Volume 11. Page 266.

8. The Mahnomen Pioneer. August 20, 1937.

7. United States Bureau of Census. Minnesota (Condition of the Indians). 1890. Page 337.

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Each year in June a celebration is held in White Earth in commemoration of the arrival of the Indian settlers from Gull Lake on June 14, 1868.

The Mahnomen Pioneer for June 3, 1938 gave an announcement of the seventieth<sup>annual</sup> celebration:

" The Seventieth Anniversary celebration and council fire of the Ojibways will be held at White Earth on June 12, 13 and 14th.....

" All three days will be packed with activity including parades, athletic events, Indian Dances, Peace Pipe Smoking, speaking and a big dance featuring Wee Willie and his Orchestra each evening at the Government Dining Hall."<sup>9</sup>

The White Earth Indian reservation is no more. The agency was moved to Cass Lake from White Earth village in 1921.<sup>10</sup>

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9. The Mahnomen Pioneer. June 3, 1938.

10. Hearing before Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives. January 27, 1923. Washington. (Government Prntg Office).  
Page 8.

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TWO MISSIONARIES.

The first white people in any wild region are usually explorers, and they are followed, in turn, by exploiters, soldiers, missionaries and settlers.

The unselfish work of the missionaries benefited the Indians, as well as the white settlers, socially and educationally. Missionaries were so successful in educating the Indians that in 1819 the United States government turned over \$10,000 voted by Congress for Indian education to the missionaries and they received the Congressional appropriations for many years afterward until the year 1870, when the Government itself assumed responsibility for <sup>1</sup>Indian education.

White Earth Reservation Indians and white settlers were uplifted <sup>work of two</sup> by the/devout missionaries, Father Aloysius (Hermanutz) and Reverend Joseph Alexander Gilfillan, an Episcopalian preacher.

Father Aloysius came to the White Earth Reservation in 1878. His missionary activity extended as far north as Red Lake; he established St. Benedict's Mission and Academy for Indian girls at White Earth and erected the Catholic Church at Mahnomen. He was Vicar General of the Crookston diocese when he died in 1929 after fifty <sup>2</sup>years of devoted Christian service.

1. Roberts, Stephen H. Article on "Native Policy" from Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. V.II. P. 265.

2. The Mahnomen Pioneer. November 5, 1928, September 6, 1929, and August 20, 1937.



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While he was working in his uncle's bank at Faribault, the other missionary, Joseph Alexander Gilfillan, became acquainted with the Episcopalian bishop, Henry B. Whipple. Bishop Whipple interested him in educating himself in the Episcopalian ministry and in 1873 he came to the White Earth Reservation as <sup>3</sup> a missionary. In 1877 he married Harriet Woodbridge who had been a school teacher on the reservation. After twenty-five years of service, ill health forced him to leave his missionary work in 1898, at which time he moved to Washington D. C. where <sup>4</sup> he died in 1913.

There were no paved roads for missionaries to hasten over in automobiles when they had appointments to meet. Instead they went on foot, on snow-shoe, on horseback or by canoe, traversing the trails later in buckboard or sleigh. Houses were sixty, and often seventy, miles apart.

It was necessary for them to wear extremely warm clothing, for the winters were cold. Reverend Gilfillan had for clothing a complete suit of buffalo fur, that left no gap from the Hudson Bay hood to the furcovered feet. Many a night he had to sleep in the snow, with his blanketed horses standing beside him. Nothing else could be done when night or a blizzard overtook him.

" The canoe trips were pleasant while one was on the lakes, but,

3. Aldrich, Vernice M. Biographical Sketch of Joseph A. Gilfillan, Indian Missionary. From North Dakota Historical Quarterly. V.l. No.4 July, 1927. P. 41.

4. The Story of Harriet Woodbridge Gilfillan. Told by her children. 1931. PP. 8, 12 and 13.

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oh, the landings with the waiting swarms of mosquitos before<sup>e</sup> the helpful smudge could be built against them. Human endurance was taxed to the limit.<sup>5</sup>"

And patience was taxed to the limit, too, when the Indian women who were content with their worship of the Great Spirit and other spirits impatiently rattled their cooking utensils until the missionary's story of Christ could no longer be heard.

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LIFE IN AN INDIAN HOME.

Joseph Alexander Gilfillan had confidence in the red men among whom he labored.

" I have always considered person and property much safer among them than among the whites <sup>1</sup> anywhere", Mr. Gilfillan said.

He has left ~~a~~ written record of the Ojibways and nowhere can be found truer pictures of Chippewa life than in his writings. The following extracts from his book, "The Ojibway", give a realistic description of Chippewa life on the White Earth Reservation during "the period <sup>2</sup> of the early advance of civilization in the Great Northwest".

"The hunter was a man above middle size, and carried himself with the beautiful poise, and had the light elastic tread of the Indian. His ample chest was thrown forward, his head back; one arm bare to the shoulder, except where a broad, thin silver band on the upper arm encircled it, steadied his gun; the other was hidden beneath the folds of the blanket, which it kept in place around his body. His small and well-shaped feet were encased in deerhide moccasins that fitted like a glove, and on the upper part, over the high instep, were worked some beautiful figures in bead-work, the character and design of which showed to the experienced eye that he was an Ojibway. Evidently there was some female friend or relative to whom he was dear, and the tale of whose affection the neat-fitting and carefully worked moccasin told. To the tops were sewed pieces of deerskin which

1. Hearing of the Chippewa Indians of Minnesota before the Committee on Indian Affairs. House of Representatives, Thursday Feb. 2, 1899. page 6
2. Gilfillan, Joseph A. The Ojibway. 1904. From the title page.



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were wound round his legs and bound with deer-hide thongs, also sewed to the top of his moccasins, and which were wrapped several times around his limbs, thus holding the deerskin tops firmly in place.

"When he moved aside the blanket in walking, it was seen that he also had on white cotton leggings, reaching above the knee, and which were held in place by thongs fastened to the belt around his waist. His thighs were bare, as was his body, except for the breechcloth; and over all was the invaluable blanket, his covering by day and his complete protection in the wildest winter storms by night."

"His road lay through a scattered Indian settlement of several hundred inhabitants, the Gull Lake Indian village. There was no attempt at anything like a street; the wigwams were built here and there and everywhere in picturesque confusion. As he went along he saw an endless number of columns of light high up in the sky, each resting on a black base a considerable distance from the earth. These were the columns of light from the open tops of the wigwams streaming far upwards.

"It was the evening hour; the labor of the day was over, the families were all assembled sitting in circles around the fire which was kept blazing high with the wood liberally thrown upon it from the pile deposited at the outside of each door. As our hunter passed wigwam after wigwam he everywhere heard the sounds of laughter and of mirth issuing from each. The whole village seemed to have given itself up to joy. Sometimes as he passed the blanket door was thrown aside,

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and looking in there was the happy group, all bathed in light and warmth, reclining on mats around the central fire. Jests and laughter flew around, and every face was radiant. There was the father sitting behind the fire, opposite the opening for a door, in the seat of honor, if the ground can be called a seat, holding up on its little, trembling uncertain legs, his baby just beginning to walk. There was the mother preparing the evening meal; there was the steaming pot suspended from the crotch of a sapling over the fire, whence a delicious savor of cooking meat diffused itself. There were the little brothers and sisters of all sizes and ages disposed along the sides of the wigwam, their white teeth shining and their sides shaking with laughter at the mishaps of the little naked, staggering baby in its efforts to navigate over the outstretched legs which encircled the fire. Such were the happy scenes again and again repeated in every wigwam, which the hunter noticed with observant eye as he passed.

"The glowing columns of light from the top of each wigwam lit up also the rude framework in front of nearly everyone, on which were hung countless strips of venison, of moose meat and the flesh of other animals suspended there to dry. It was evident there was plenty in the village; abundance of food, and of the best. Everywhere there was innocent revelry and the happy enjoyment of families. Throughout the whole length of the village which he traversed there was no trace of care or sorrow. Old and young alike were happy."

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"And now at last Ozawa-animiki (Yellow Thunder), for such was the hunter's name, reached his own home, and lifting aside the skin kept spread out by two small sticks which covered the opening in the birch bark which served for a door, he stepped in. It was an ordinary wigwam, about sixteen feet across and twelve feet to the top, made of poles coming together at the top, but spread out at the bottom, where they were thrust into the ground some distance. Around these poles on the outside there were loosely laid on large strips of birch bark, sometimes leaving considerable chinks between. These were laid on diagonally and extended from the ground nearly to the top. The top was open for the escape of the smoke. There were no beds, tables nor chairs, but all around the sides of the wigwam mats made by the good woman of the house from the rushes which grew in the lake. On these mats the family reclined by day and slept by night. Round the sides of the wigwam were neatly stowed the scant bed coverings of the inmates, their few pots and kettles when not in use, their birch-bark dishes and plates, and their few other earthly possessions. The fire was guarded by four green sticks about as large as a man's arm, laid about it in a square and about two feet from it, and it was a matter of etiquette that no one should put his feet beyond those sticks, no matter how cold his feet might be."

....."The hunter flung down his bag of ducks, bestowed his gun and paddle in the sides of the wigwam, thrusting them between the birch



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bark and the poles, where they were firmly held, and then took his accustomed seat on the mat opposite the door. He felt tired and the rest was good. Soon his wife placed on the clean mat beside him a birch bark dish of delicious steaming duck, another birch bark dish of cooked wild rice, and a bark cup of hot duck broth.....At last he put the empty dishes away from him with a gesture of satisfaction, and getting out the mixture of the dried inner bark of the red willow mixed with a little tobacco, which he was accustomed to smoke, and his long-stemmed wooden pipe, preceeded further to make himself comfortable."

The hunter's wife "was a comely Indian woman of about forty<sup>t</sup>, about the same age as himself. She was dressed in a short garment made of well-tanned deerskin, which covered her body, but left her arms, and legs from the knees, bare. The materials for civilized costume were not very plenty at that remote place in those days, and she conformed to the general custom. Her feet were encased in the usual moccasins. Her abundant black hair was parted in the middle, oiled with some kind of grease, and<sup>3</sup> plaited in two braids, hung down her back almost to her waist."

Later, the Chippewa Indians built lodges of wood. The lodge resembled the frame of a house and, before they had nails, the Indians tied the timbers in place by basswood bark or tama-

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rack root. A lodge was usually about sixteen feet square and from four to six feet high with either a gable or hip roof. A hole was left in the roof to serve as a chimney and, in 1890, half of the Indians on the reservation had stoves with pipes<sup>4</sup> through the roof to allow the smoke to escape.

If a death occurred in a wigwam or lodge, the family abandoned it.

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4. U.S. Bureau of Census. Report on Minnesota (Condition of Indians). 1890. P. 343.

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AN EARLY EXPLORER.

There were many Frenchmen among the early explorers of what is now northern Minnesota, but neither Groseilliers, Radisson, Du Luth or Father Hennepin, the Belgian priest, ever saw the Red River valley. The stories which they wrote about their explorations contain no account of northwestern Minnesota.

The only early explorer who left a written record<sup>1</sup> of being in what is now Mahnomen County was Joseph La France, born at Missilimakinac about the year 1708 of French and Ojibway parentage. His mother's death occurred when he was about five years of age, and soon afterward his father took him to Quebec to learn French.

When Joseph was a lad of fourteen, his father died, and, left alone, he became interested in fur trading, the business of his father. During the years 1740-1742 he hunted with the Indians in Manitoba and<sup>2</sup> northern Minnesota.

Arthur Dobbs, an English author, described a canoe trip which La France took in 1741 on the Wild Rice River, which runs through our county, to Rice Lake, east of us, in Clearwater County. He called the lake Lake Du Siens, perhaps from the Sioux Indian word "psin"<sup>3</sup> which means "wild rice".

1. Dobbs, An account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay in the Northwest Part of America. London. 1744. P. 29.

2. Upham, Warren. Minnesota in Three Centuries. V. 1. P. 299.

3. Minnesota Historical Society Collections. V.17. P.321.



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" The Lake Du Siens is but small," wrote Dobbs, recording La France's description, "being not above 3 Leagues in Circuit; but all around its banks in the shallow Water and Marshes, grows a kind<sup>of</sup> wild Oat, of the Nature of Rice; the outward Husk is black, but the Grain within is white and clear like Rice; this the Indians beat off into their Canoes and use it for Food.

" All the Country adjoining this River is also full of<sup>4</sup> Beavers....."

Not all historians agree that Joseph La France came as far south as the region which is now Mahnomen County, but the <sup>c</sup>description of the lake, as well as the river flowing out of it, is well suited to Rice Lake and the Wild Rice River.

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4. Dobbs, Arthur. An Account of the Countries adjoining to Hudson's Bay in the Northwest Part of America. P. 36.

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#### ABOUT A STONE

No doubt you have heard of the Kensington Rune Stone. " If genuine, it is one of the real wonders of the world, both in its construction and in its revelations".<sup>1</sup>

This stone was found by a farmer living near Kensington, in Douglas County, southeast of us, while he was clearing some land of timber. When a poplar tree was dug up, the stone was found <sup>under</sup> ~~neath~~ it covered with about six inches of soil. It is <sup>y</sup>thirtysix inches in its greatest length and weighs about 230 pounds.<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing very remarkable about a farmer finding a stone in <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ field, but this stone has an inscription cut in it in runic letters. Runes were letters of the alphabet used by the ancient Scandinavians, Germans and Anglo-Saxons. The Scandinavian runic alphabet consisted of about sixteen letters.<sup>3</sup>

Translated, the inscription on the Kensington Rune Stone reads as follows:

" Eight Goths (Swedes) and twenty-two Norwegians upon a journey of discovery from Vinland westward. We had a camp by two skerries one

1. Castle, Henry A. Minnesota Its Story and Biography. V.1. P. 5.
2. Minnesota Historical Society Collections. V.15. P. 225.
3. The American Universities New Unabridged Dictionary. 1916. P. 1454.

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day's journey north from this stone. We were out fishing one day. When we returned home we found ten men red with blood and dead. A V M ( Ave, Virgo Maria) save us from evil.

" (We) have ten men by the sea to look after our vessel fourteen ( or forty-one?) days' journey from this island. Year 1362. "<sup>4</sup>

Vinland was a settlement made by the Goths or Swedes somewhere (it is not known definitely where) on the eastern coast of North America. If these Swedes actually traversed Minnesota into Douglas County, they must have come down the Red River from Canada as far as Grand Forks, where they may have left their boats because of low water and marched southeastwardly through the region that is now Polk, Norman, or Mahnomen, Becker and Otter Tail counties into Douglas County where the stone was found.<sup>5</sup>

If it can ever be proved that the stone was carved by the Goths in 1362, then, no doubt, this small party of Swedes were the first white men who set foot on Mahnomen County.

The Kensington Rune Stone is in the keeping of the Alexandria<sup>6</sup> Chamber of Commerce, Alexandria, Minnesota.

4. Minnesota Historical Society Collections. V. 15. P.227.

5. Holcombe and others. Compendium of History and Biography of Polk County. P. 29.

6. The Saint Paul Pioneer Press. July 17, 1938.



Newspaper Gleanings (Cont.)

The Mahnomen Pioneer---2/2/17

Bejou has a new \$17,500 school house.

The Minneapolis Tribune---4/11/17

MIXED BLOOD INDIAN HELD NO U.S. WARD

LANDS TO DEVELOP AT ONCE PREDICTION

Right to sell land upheld under Clapp Law by U. S. Supreme Court. Thousands of Acres affected by Decree. Finding allows owners to mortgage lands for improvements.

" The Supreme Court of the United States today ruled that the government had lost its guardianship over mixed blood Indians when the Clapp amendment was enacted."

Clapp Amendment of 1906 provided that adult mixed bloods could sell their lands. In other words it gave them title to their lands in fee simple. The government brought suit against L. S. Waller, a purchaser of land from a mixed blood. R. J. Powell was Waller's attorney. Judge Page Morris decided in favor of the defendant.

" Its sweeping effect will be to deprive the government of the power to bring future actions as the guardian over mixed bloods."

700,000 acres of land have been lying idle because of litigation over title. Some 4500 possible cases of 160 acres each.

Jurisdiction over such cases now in Minnesota courts.

Owners have not been able to get loans on their land because of clouded titles.

5 14

M.P. 4/20/17

Mahnomen County Automobile Club was organized on April 13th with 41 charter members.

4/27/17

Cato Sells, Indian commissioner, announced that the policy of guardianship for competent Indians has been discontinued.

" Patents in fee shall be issued to all adult Indians of one-half or more Indian blood who may, after careful investigation, be found competent, provided that where deemed advisable patents in fee shall be withheld for not to exceed forty acres as a home."

" It means that the competent Indian will no longer be treated as half ward and half citizen. It means the ultimate absorption of the Indian race into the body politic of the nation."

5/25/17

Mahnomen County bankers organize to sell government bonds.

6/8/17

Precincts for draft in World War.

✓ Bejou	✓ Mahnomen
✓ Beaulieu	✓ Pembina
✓ Chief	✓ Marsh Creek
✓ Gregory	✓ Popple Grove
✓ Heier	✓ Rosedale
✓ Island Lake	✓ Snyder Lake
✓ Legarde	✓ Twin Lakes
✓ Lake Grove	✓ Waubun

8/10/17

Gus Beaulieu, formerly of White Earth, is dead.

" He has been one of the prominent mixed-bloods of the reservation for many years, and a man of a great deal of force..... He has been a relentless fighter and his strong convictions and determinations have often brought him into conflict with the agency officials. For many years he has published the White Earth Tomahawk, which has at times been severe in its criticisms of the government dealings with the Indians."

9/28/17

"

Several years ago there was very little to see on the White Earth Indian Reservation except the Indian, his wigwam, and the uncultivated wild prairies. But then the railroad came through, villages sprang up and there the white man settled. The Indians of mixed blood were given the right to sell their land. The white man bought it and cultivated it, and now you will find the white man's home both in the villages and on the prairies."

Farm bureau with county agent created in 1919.

9/15/19

May-zhuck-ke-ge-shig died at old folks' home in Beaulieu at nearly 100.

10/24/19

Bill introduced in House by Harold Knutson "to wind up the affairs of the

4x



Lillian Fuller

Notes on Mahnomen County

June 23, 1938

Chippewa Indians of Minnesota."

Provides for commission to make complete census of Minnesota Chippewas; establish the status of each person; allot land to those to whom it has not been allotted. To apportion portion of tribal funds to amount of \$300 per Indian. Guarantee complete freedom to all self-supporting and tax paying Indians of the state.

White Earth Indian dormitory at White Earth to be new home for the aged.

11/21/19

Today Indian payment day at courthouse in Mahnomen.

5/14/20

Fifteen years ago in Mahnomen

15 years ago village of Mahnomen organized.

" " " May 12th, the first issue of "Mahnomen Plaintalk "

Department stores, general merchandise, meat market, pool hall, 2 dray lines, 2 banks.

First village caucus held in Mahnomen that week.

5/21/20

15 years ago in Mahnomen

Election of officers for ensuing year. Largest vote for any candidate, 63 for justice.

5/28/20

" It is reported that the Pembina Indians will repeat their 'squaw dance'

1/2

Lillian Fuller

Notes on Mahnomen County

June 23, 1938

at ' Pesh-y-gy-shek's wigwam, southeast of town on Monday next.

The festivities will be opened in the forenoon and during the day a steer will be slaughtered and served Indian style to all who desire to participate. The dance, weather permitting, will be out-of-doors so that all who desire may see the performance. Chief Weese will have charge of the ceremonies."

5/28/17

Farmer's National Bank, third bank, opened in Mahnomen.

6/4/20

15 years ago today

"

Agent Michelet commenced the payment last Monday of the annuities due the Mississippi and Lake Superior bands of Indians under some old treaties. It is understood that each person will receive \$8.40. "

Mahnomen to have day train on Monday, June 5th.

6/11/20

15 years ago today

First type set for this paper June 10, 1905. Before that time the paper was printed in St. Paul.

First bank statement of First State Bank of Mahnomen. Total deposits \$6,109.80

7/2/20

15 years ago today

Monday night about 55 school children came in from Pipestone on a train

Lillian Fuller

Notes on Mahnomen County

June 23, 1938

from the east.

7/30/20

15 years ago today.

(July 7, 1905)

" A meeting of the Commercial Club was held at Holden's Hall Wednesday evening. A goodly number was in attendance and some important business transacted. Alex holden was delegated to meet with the county commissioners in the interest of our school. A committee on roads was appointed to co-operate with Agent Michelet in securing bridges and improving the roads generally. Another committee was appointed to try and secure telephone connections with Faith and other points."

July 14/20

15 years ago today

A. L. Fredenburg of Waubun was in town Monday. He has opened a first class blacksmith shop and is ready for business. Mr. F---is full of enthusiasm for his town and believes that it will be a better town than Mahnomen.

7/28/20

15 years ago today

Man in Mahnomen to open fifth hotel.

Board of trustees of Congregational Church organized.

21



Lillian Fuller

Notes on Mahnomen County

June 23, 1938

7/28/20

15 years ago today

First school meeting held that week. 79 votes cast.

9/3/20

Fair buildings commenced.

9/17/20

INDIAN ROLL IS FINALLY COMPLETE

THE LAST DOUBT AS TO RESERVATION TITLES IS REMOVED FOR ALL TIME.

An application has been made to the federal court for a final approval of the blood status roll. Roll on file in several places on the reservation.

" This is probably the final act in the long drawn out controversy over White Earth land titles." Clapp should have provided in his act for a blood status roll.

" History of the so-called investigation for the past ten years a travesty. But it is history now and with the final adoption of the roll the curtain is rung down."

No doubt it is true in the case of these Indian titles as of all titles that the litigated title is the best.

About 274 boys from Mahnomen County served in the World War.

Eleven of these were killed.

212

Lillian Fuller

Notes on Mahnomen County

June 23, 1938

11/19/20

FINAL ACTION ON INDIAN ROLL

JUDGE MORRIS APPROVES WORK OF ENROLLMENT COMMISSION AS SUBMITTED.

Robert C. Bell, government Indian representative, and R. J. Powell, attorney for the defendants,, finally came to agreement.

Nearly 6000 mixed blood Indians.

300 full bloods involved in suits. 160 living.

Ends 11 years of controversy growing out of Clapp Act.

During this time Mahnomen had been visited by government employees, members of Congress, special inspectors from the Department of Justice, members of the Indian Rights Association, and reporters from the Twin City papers.

11/26/20

Bejou petitioned County Board to have electio<sup>n</sup>/to vote on incorporation of Bejou as a village.

V. Dryden resigned as County Agent of the Farm Bureau.

12/3/20 Mahnomen Flour Milling Co. organized.

24

COUNTY  
DEBT  
&  
TAXES

The following tax figures are taken from Moody's Manual  
of Investments: 1936:

Tax Collections (county and subdivisions)

	<u>1933 levy</u>	<u>1932 levy</u>	<u>1931 levy</u>	<u>1930 levy</u>
	<u>Uncollected</u>	<u>Uncollected</u>	<u>Uncollected</u>	<u>Uncollected</u>
	<u>Jan.1,1935</u>	<u>Jan.1, 1934</u>	<u>Jan.1,1933</u>	<u>Jan.1,1932</u>
Am't	\$78,1175	\$ 120,534	\$139,806	\$109,681
% of levy	37.52	54.09	55.84	41.29

Assessed Value:

Real property (for 1935) \$1,589,282  
All property " " 1,717,411

Tax rat per \$1,000

1. County..... \$31.30
2. Total average.. 96.31
3. Monies & credit 108,528

Bonded debt, Dec.31, 1934..... \$160,000

Highway reimbursement (assumed by state).... \$43,713  
Sinking fund..... 13,784

Net debt of Mahanomen county and subdivisions, Dec.31, 1934:

	<u>Net debt.</u>	<u>Per capita</u>	<u>% debt to</u>
		<u>debt.</u>	<u>ass't val.</u>
County(highway bond included)	\$146,216	\$23.76	8.51%
School districts	107,417	17.46	6.25
Cities, towns & villages	<u>175,913</u>	<u>28.59</u>	<u>10.24</u>
Totals	429,546	69.81	25.00

The county auditor reported on Oct.20, 1933 that \$6,000 principal and \$2,000 interest of assessment obligations were in default.

*The total assessed value including buildings of the county was on Jan 1, 1930 \$ 3,788,897*



Some tax figures from the Nineth Annual Report of Interest Bearing

Debts of the State of Minnesota and its Municipalities on December 31, 1935,;

Total indebtedness of Mahnomen county and its subdivisions.....	\$386,037.92
Taxable value.....	1,745,166.00
The percent of total indebtedness to taxable values.....	22.12%
With apopulation in 1930 of 6,153 the per-capita debt was.....	\$62.74

Of the total outstanding indebtedness \$115,711.18 represented the total county debt while the remainder of the total represented debt of the villages, townships, and school districts.

For purposes of comparison, the taxable values of two tax years with their respective tax rate are given:

<u>year</u>	<u>taxable value</u>	<u>rate</u>
1931	\$2,572,205	87.61 mills
1935	1,745,166	90.31 "

The tax rate for county purposes in 1933 in Mahnomen county was 30.3 mills ; a normal tax rate for counties is from 7 to 12 mills. From the mill-rate for county purposes it is evident that this county has quite a distressed farm situation although Mahnomen is by no means one of the worst distressed counties. Of the 87 counties in Minnesota, Mahnomen ranked 57th with Mc Leod county ranking first with the low county tax-rate of 6.64 mills.

The Accumulated Delinquency: On January 1, 1934 the per cent which cumulative delinquency to the aggregate 1932 levy for 1933 purposes was 229.4% which when properly interpreted means that the delinquency amounts to more than two years of taxes.

SCHOOLS (Waiting for material from Matson on location of schools.)

## HOTELS

In Mahnomen village there are two hotels. The Hotel Mahnomen with 42 rooms and rates from \$2.50 a day and up; and Bonn's Hotel with 18 rooms with rates from \$1.00 a day and up.

Waubun village with a population of 337 (240 miles N.W. of the Twin Cities) has the Waubun Cafe which furnishes hotel accommodations. There are 10 rooms and the rate is \$1.25 per day.

## IV. COUNTY FAIR

The Mahnomen County Annual Fair is held at Mahnomen on July 2, 3, and 4. It is sponsored under the Mahnomen County Agricultural Society, Mr. E.A. Rumreich of Mahnomen is the secretary.

## V. MARKETS

Mahnomen and Waubun furnish the two largest primary markets in Mahnomen county. However, these markets do not have the buying power that such neighboring communities ~~do such~~ as Fargo and Moorehead, Fergus Fall, Detroit Lakes and Bemidgi, all of which are in a radius of 40 miles with the exception of Fergus Falls which is about 70 miles from the county seat at Mahnomen. Altho there is a small cattle market at Fargo, N.D., what livestock is shipped is sent to South St. Paul a distance of 250 miles.

In 1929 the estimated number of male buyers 15 years old and over in the county was 2,928 and the number of females was 2,264.

The following is the list of marketing centers in the

TRADE CENTERS

county:

Auto and truck dealers.....	2
Auto accessories, garage & tire shops.....	4
Builder's materials and lumber yards.....	2
Clothing and men's furnishings.....	1
Confectionary and soft drinks.....	3
Drug stores (independent).....	1
Dry goods.....	1
House furnishings.....	1
Filling stations.....	1
General stores.....	9
Grocery stores.....	6
Hardware stores.....	5
Jewelery stores.....	1
Meat markets.....	3
Plumbing and heating.....	1
Resturants.....	7

TOTAL number of establishments..... 48

Mahnomen, the county seat, has a population of 989. It is 260 miles N.W. of the Twin Cities and is served by the Soo Line R.R. Two things of interest here are the Chippewa Indian settlement and the famous Schermerhorn Farms of over 30,000 acres. There are buse lines out of here to Detroit Lakes and Erskine. About 50% of the business that Mahnomen merchants do is with farmers.

Waubun with a population of 337 is the second largest community in the county. By its size one can readily see that its value as a market is relatively unimportant.

CO-OPS

Mahnomen has the following co-op shipping associations: livestock, poultry, and creamery products. In Waubun there are only co-op shipping associations for livestock and creamery products.



## VIII. CENSUS REPORTS

Population statistics:POP.  
DENSITY

Mahnomen county is one of the smallest and least densely populated counties in the state. The density per square mile in 1930 was 10.8 persons. It was the same in 1920 and the census of 1910 showed it to be 5.7 persons per square mile. Apparently there is plenty of room for the land to support population growth.

NATIONAL  
ORIGINS

Total population.....	6,153
British.....	863
German.....	608
Swedish.....	173
Norwegian.....	682
Danish.....	58
Indian.....	1,735
Slav.....	494
Finnish.....	9

The total population of the county is classified as rural; 2/3 being rural farm and 1/3 rural non-farm. There are 1,634 males 21 years old or over and 1,326 females of the same status. The native white population is 3,998.

Estimates for 1929 shows;

Number of families.....	1,687
Number of dwellings.....	1,668
Passanger cars and trucks....	970

Farm statistics:

Number of farms in the county.

<u>1935</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1925</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1910</u>
841	681	770	590	248

Percentage of county in farms.

1910.....	11.5
1920.....	36.5
1924.....	40.3
1935.....	55.4

True and full value of land per acre.

1930.....	\$18.60
1932.....	13.80
1934.....	12.88
1935	17.84 (ave)

Farms by type 1930 : Number : Average acres

All types *	: 681	: 242
General	: 240	: 232
Crop specialty	: 17	: 189
Dairy	: 274	: 232
Cash-grain	: 30	: 226
Animal specialty:	20	: 324
Poultry	6	200
Self sufficing	26	92

\* Mahnomen ranks  
3rd in having the  
smallest number  
of farms per  
county in the state.

(The number of farms January 1, 1935 ..... 841)

Farm operators by tenure, and acreage.

		Number	Acreage
Full owner	1935	239	29,775
	1930	242	34,447
Part owner	1935	300	87,399
	1930	209	59,811
Managers	1935	6	18,845
	1930	2	19,688
Tenants	1935	296	66,638
	1930	228	51,128

Average size of farms 1935 241.0 acres

1930 242.4 "

All lands in farms. 1935 202,657 acres

1930 165,074 "

Condition and use of the Land.

Land unfit to raise crops 1930.....	1,650 acres -
Land unfit to raise any crop prior to drainage...	12,150 "
Decrease since drainage.....	86.4%
Land fit to raise a normal crop.....	29,601 acres
Improved land 1930.....	19,550 "
1920.....	16,031 "
Unimproved land 1930.....	30,781 "

Farm Land 1930

All land in farms.....	165,074 acres	202,657
Crop land.....	87,496 "	108,828
Woodland.....	36,871 "	
Approximate land area.....	366,080 "	
Land in enterprize 1930.....	50,331 "	
1920.....	36,724 "	
Increase 1920-1930.....	37.1%	

12.

	Farms reporting		Acres	
	1934	1929	1934	1929
Crop land harvested	831	672	108,828	78,788
Crop failure	123	165	2,415	3,549
Crop land, idle or fallow	118	179	2,877	5,159
Plowable pasture	359		12,847	

Acreage for the chief crops

	1934	1912
Corn for grain	2,810 acres	
Corn for other purposes	7,130 "	110 acres
Winter wheat	106 "	
Spring "	9,388 "	4,512 "
Oats	19,070 "	3,865 "
Barley	8,947 "	1,916 "
Rye	1,192 "	95 "
Flax	3,760 "	2,450 "
Potatoes		1,161 "

Livestock

Horses and colts of all ages January 1, 1935.....	3,710
Mules , " " " " " " " " .....	71
Cattle and calves" " " " " " " " .....	14,345
Sheep and lambs " " " " " " " " .....	11,749
Swine " " " " " " " " .....	2,405 ✓

Farm and Crop Data: Census 1910.

Percentage of land area in farms.....	11.5
Percentage of farm land improved.....	57.4
Average acres per farm.....	169.3
Average improved acres per farm.....	97.3
Total value of farm property.....	\$1,234,111.00
Cereals produced in 1909.....	\$94,707.00
Other grains and seeds.....	\$13,248.00
Hay and forage.....	\$23,793.00
Vegetables.....	\$8,884.00
Fruits and nuts.....	\$9.00
All other crops.....	\$4,994.00
Total crop production in 1909.....	\$ 145,635.00



Below is given the condition of Mahnomen County Herds as revealed by the tubercular test conducted by the State Livestock Sanitary Board as of August 13, 1933:

Summary of Complete Test

Total number of herds tested.....	889
" " " infected herds.....	6
" " " herds disclosing suspects only.....	15
Percentage of infected herds in county.....	.674%
Total number of negative cattle in infected herds...	494
" " " cattle tested.....	15143
" " " reactors.....	17
" " " suspects.....	19
" " " pure breed cattle tested.....	108
" " " grade cattle tested.....	15035
" " " pure bred reactors.....	0
" " " grade reactors.....	17
" " " head under feeder quarantine.....	6
Percentage of infection in the county.....	.112%
Total number of accredited Veterinarians employed in the test.....	4
Total number of State and Federal Veterinarians employed in the test.....	5

## IX. PRESENT MORTGAGE SITUATION

The report on the farm mortgage situation from farms operated by owners in 1930 showed that 69.4% of these farms in Mahnomen county are mortgaged. These mortgages represent an aggregate mortgage debt of \$497,849. These mortgages are held by the Rural Credits Department, Federal Land Bank, and various other lending agencies.

It might be appropriate to insert here the fact that the State Lands unsold in this county on June 30, 1934 was 8,569.2 acres.

X. RELATION OF MAHNOMEN COUNTY  
TO SURROUNDING COUNTIES.

Mahnomen county is situated in the northwestern part of the state and is bounded on the west by Norman county, on the east by Clearwater, on the north by Polk , and on the south by Becker county. Mahnomen borders on the famous Red River Valley once referred to as "the bread basket of the world".

This county represents a unique situation among the counties in this section in that it <sup>only</sup> recently (1906) came under state jurisdiction. The fact that it is not as progressive as its neighbors is directly related to the fact that even now a good deal of the land is still owned by Indians although it is rapidly being bought up by white farmers. Progress in scientific farming methods consequently have lagged behind but because of the fertility of the soil and the ideal topography, Mahnomen county has a good future as a leading agricultural county. It has, however, the highest tax rate and perhaps the greatest amount of tax delinquency of any of the counties in this section.

Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
July 28, 1938

### DRIVING A WOODEN CART.

Before the days of roads there were two well known trails passing through what is now Mahnomen County. One was the old Pembina Trail, which led in a southeasterly direction through Mahnomen County. The other, the Red Lake Trail, traversed the southeastern corner of our county, joining the Pembina Trail at the White Earth Agency, south of us in Becker County.<sup>1</sup>

Over the Pembina Trail squeaked the Red River carts laden with furs. The first Red River carts were made without metal of rawhide and wood. The wooden wheels were about five feet in diameter and three inches thick, and, being ungreased, their squawk was heard<sup>2</sup> for a considerable distance.

"One of my earliest recollections", wrote a Minnesota pioneer, "is the Red River carts that used to go squawking by....They were called the Red River Band. They were one of the loudest bands ever brought together, as their music, that of wood rubbing against wood, could be heard three miles."<sup>3</sup>

The cart was drawn by a single ox or an Indian "shagganappi" pony with a harness of tanned ox or buffalo hide. It held a load of five hundred pounds and journeyed about fifty miles a day when drawn

1. Map of Old Trails and Roads compiled by Mr. George Ralph and Mrs. James T. Morris, in Old Rail Fence Corners. P. 1.
2. Holcombe and others. Compendium of History and Biography of Polk County. P. 46.
3. Daughters of the American Revolution. Old Rail Fence Corners. PP. 68-69.



Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
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by a pony but an ox could travel scarcely half that far. " It seemed<sup>4</sup>  
as if the rough coated oxen just wandered along the trail."

Even buffaloes were trained to draw the carts. An early St. Anthony (Minneapolis) resident wrote about them.

" I remember seeing tame buffalo hitched to the Red River carts", he said. "They seemed to have much the same disposition as oxen, when they were tame. The oxen on the Red River carts were much smaller than those of today and dark colored. The most carts I remember having seen passing along at one time, was about one hundred. These<sup>5</sup>  
carts were not infrequently drawn by cows."

Another St. Anthony resident recorded her impression of the carts and drivers:

"I remember seeing and hearing the Red River carts as they passed through St. Anthony. The cart was almost square with posts standing up along the sides to hold the furs which were piled high above the cart and roped down in place. There was one swarthy man to five or six ox drawn carts. He was dressed in a coonskin cap or broad brimmed hat with buckskin trousers and jumper. He had a knit bright colored sash about his waist and his hat had a bright colored<sup>6</sup>  
band."

The Red River carts cost two pounds in Canada and ten dollars in the United States. A brigade was made up of ten/<sup>such</sup> carts. Several brigades, known as a train of Red River carts, were in charge of one spirited leader who directed all the drivers.

4. Daughters of the American Revolution. Old Rail Fence Corners. P. 18.
5. Ibid. P.34
6. Ibid. P. 102.

Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
July 28, 1938

Over the unsettled prairies of Mahnomen County traveled  
the quaint train of squeaking carts drawn by the sleepy oxen.  
And often among the gaily clad swarthy Red River drivers trod  
a stranger who dared not follow the trail alone.

\*\*\*\*\*

Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
August 30, 1938

LIFE IN A WHITE HOME ON THE WHITE EARTH RESERVATION.

The pages of the Mahnomen Pioneer contain interesting accounts of pioneer life on the White Earth Reservation but none is as complete as the story of their home life told in a booklet by the children of Harriet Woodbridge Gilfillan and Joseph Alexander Gilfillan, her missionary husband.

Mr. Gilfillan's missionary field covered a circuit of 225 miles.<sup>1</sup> As a result, he was away from home most of the time and his wife was left alone to care for her children while she fulfilled the duties of a missionary's wife. The family was seldom alone at any time, for when Mr. Gilfillan was at home he had the habit of bringing one or any number of Indians in the house for meals.

"For New Year's Day the preparations were gigantic."<sup>2</sup> On that day all the Indians on the White Earth Reservation were asked to dinner and most of them came. For dessert hundreds of mince pies were baked and a wash boiler full of hot coffee was made to warm up the guests.

This generosity was possible only because the missionary's uncle in Faribault left him some money at his death. Mrs. Gilfillan called her home "The Itinerant Poor Farm", for the old and deserted Indians came to her for tea, sugar, pork and flour.<sup>3</sup>

1. Hearing of the Chippewa Indians of Minnesota before the Committee on Indian Affairs, House of Representatives. Feb. 2, 1899. P. 5.
2. The Story of Harriet Woodbridge Gilfillan told by her children. 1931. P. 10.
3. Gesner, A. T. Joseph Alexander Gilfillan. 1920. P. 10.



Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomon County  
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Putting in a supply of food has been a problem for all pioneers. All groceries and food at White Earth had to be stored away before Thanksgiving Day, for after the cold weather set in neither freight nor express could be hauled from the nearest railroad station twenty-two miles away. If flour, sugar or any grocery were gone, there was no renewal of supply until spring. Roasts were sawed off from frozen beef hanging in the woodshed.

Another pioneer problem was that of water. A barrel of melting ice stood in the kitchen all winter long, for the only drinking water available was obtained from melted ice and snow. The water for laundry was drawn from a cistern underneath the house, but drying the clothes in the wintertime was not easy.

Harriet Gilfillan did not ever become adjusted to pioneer life on the reservation. She organized a gymnasium class and also a fellowship club for white people on the reservation, among whom were the Indian agent, the Government doctor and his wife and the school teacher. They met for purposes of study and culture as well as for social enjoyment and spent musical evenings together when each one took part in the program.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Gilfillan had unusual appreciation of the Ojibway language and when he was at home an old Indian man came every day to teach him Chippewa from eight o'clock in the morning until twelve. The teacher told him myths, legends and gossip, acting out the meaning at the same

4. The Story of Harriet Woodbridge Gilfillan told by her children. 1931. PP 9, 10 and 12.

Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomon County  
August 30, 1938

time that he told the story. With the additional aid of an Ojibway prayer book which a missionary in Canada had translated some years<sup>5</sup> before, Gilfillan mastered the Chippewa tongue.

While he was learning the language, the rector trained ten young Indian men as missionary deacons who aided in Christianizing<sup>6</sup> the Ojibways.

Like most pioneer homes, the rectory was "a place where any one who was sick or hungry, or in need of a lodging, could find what he wanted".<sup>7</sup>

And the needs on the White Earth Indian Reservation were many!

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5. Gesner, A. T. Joseph Alexander Gilfillan. 1920. P. 10.
6. Aldrich, Vernice M. Biographical Sketch of Joseph A. Gilfillan, Indian Missionary. From North Dakota Historical Quarterly. July, 1927. P. 42.
7. Story of Harriet Woodbridge Gilfillan told by her children. P. 9.

Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
August 30, 1938

THE WHITE EARTH INDIANS SELL THEIR TIMBER AND LAND.

By the treaty of 1867 thirty-six townships embracing all of Mahnomen County and part of the counties of Becker and Clearwater were set apart for the Mississippi Chippewas as the White Earth Indian Reservation. The reservation was named from White Earth Lake located about five miles northeast of White Earth village in Becker County. By "white earth" is meant the white clay found in places on the shore of the lake. The Chippewas called the lake "Ga-wababiguni-<sup>1</sup>kag sagaigun", or The-Place-of-White-Clay Lake.

Later the Pillager and Lake Superior bands, as well as the Red Lake and Pembina Indians, were given the right to settle and occupy lands on the White Earth Reservation.

Among the natural resources for the use of the Indians on the reservation were quantities of hardwood for fuel and about 500,000,000 board feet of valuable pine. Lumber concerns, aware of the opportunity to make ~~large~~<sup>profits</sup> from the sale of the timber on the wooded lands, induced the Indians to cede the four northeast townships of the reservation back to the Government to be sold, presumably, for the benefit of the Indians. The four townships were sold at public auction at Crookston, Minnesota, on November 27th, 1900, to the highest bidders, who later proved to be the "dummy agents" of the Nichols-Chisholm, Park Rapids and Wild Rice Lumber Companies, and these big lumber concerns finally secured<sup>2</sup> most of the lumber on the remaining townships of the reservation.

1. Upham, Warren. Minnesota Geographic Names. 1920. P. 31.
2. Report in the Investigation of the White Earth Reservation situated in the state of Minnesota with transcript of testimony taken and exhibits offered from July 25, 1911 to March 28, 1912. V.1. PP V & VI.



Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
August 30, 1938

In 1902 an act was passed by Congress enabling the lumber companies to buy the timber without purchasing the land, but the pine lands were not allotted by the Government to the Indians until 1905. Then the lands with the best pine were fraudulently allotted to the mixed-blood Indians who could be most easily influenced to sell the pine for a low price. Agents hired by the lumber companies, many of them Indians, purchased the pine from the allottees for much less<sup>3</sup> than it was actually worth.

The Clapp Amendment of June 21, 1906, made it possible for the mixed-blood Indians to sell their lands. This was an opportunity for white land speculators without a conscience to purchase the land at their own terms with the result that only five per cent of the sales<sup>4</sup> were of benefit to the Indian allottees.

Within a month after the Clapp amendment went into effect, the Minneapolis Journal for July 16, 1906, described the condition of the Indians on the reservation.

"With the minds of the White Earth Indians muddled by liquor and their eyes dazzled by money, of which they know little", stated the Journal, "the White Earth mixed-bloods are in a fair way to lose all the Government allotments recently given to them. The land is fast passing into the hands of scheming land-grabbers and if the present campaign of the sharks is maintained the White Earth Indian Reservation will soon be a thing of the past."<sup>5</sup>

Unfortunately for the Chippewas, the Journal's prophecy came true, for the White Earth Indian Reservation is "a thing of the past".

<sup>3</sup> & 4. Report etc. PP. VII & XV. \*\*\*\*\*

5. Editorial by Ray G. Marshall in The Minneapolis Journal for July 16, 1906.

Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
August 30, 1938

THE GOVERNMENT INVESTIGATIONS.

Complaints of the Indians and people interested in their welfare brought about a Government investigation, by a committee, of the land deals on the White Earth Reservation.

Sessions began in the circuit court room of the Federal Building in Minneapolis on January 23, 1912. Since it was difficult for the Indians to travel so far, the hearings from February 5th to 21st were held in the courthouse at Detroit, now Detroit Lakes.

While the members of the commission were at Detroit, they traveled over the White Earth Reservation in sleighs for three days, examining the agency buildings, schools and homes. The committee reported that the Indians' "spirit seemed entirely broken, their hope entirely gone. Their demeanor eloquently voiced the belief that they had no rights left except the right to suffer in silence.....These White Earth Indians, the remnant of the once powerful Chippewa Nation,<sup>1</sup>...are now despoiled of their heritage".

The Clapp Amendment of 1906 provided that mixed-blood Indians might sell their land, but it did not define a "mixed-blood Indian" nor did it provide for any roll to be prepared giving the blood status of each Indian. At first the Government assumed that an Indian was a mixed-blood only if he had less than half Indian blood, and, in an endeavor to protect the Indians, filed 1200 suits against

1. Report in the Investigation of the White Earth Reservation etc.  
PP. XLX & XX.

Lillian Fuller  
Mahnomen County  
August 30, 1938

the purchasers of land from the Chippewas with more than half Indian blood.

" Four years ago", stated the Mahnomen Pioneer of June 12, 1914, " the government turned loose....special assistants and special agents on the reservation and ever since that time they have been at work here."

But in 1914 the United States Supreme Court decided that a "mixed-blood" is one who is not a "full-blood"; in other words any Indian on the reservation with a drop of white blood in him had a right to sell his land under the Clapp Amendment of 1906. As a result of this decision about ~~two~~ thirds of the suits entered by the Government against the lumber companies and others were annulled. Then the Government devoted its efforts to the cancelation of deeds given by minors and full-blood Indians.

In April, 1917, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the United States Government lost its guardianship over mixed-blood Indians when the Clapp Amendment of 1906 went into effect. In May, 1911, the courthouse records of Mahnomen County showed 65 % of the land in the county to be owned by the whites but, until 1917, the title to much of the land was uncertain.

2. The Mahnomen Pioneer for January 29, 1915.
3. The Minneapolis Tribune for April 4, 1917.
4. Letter written by A. L. Thompson of Mahnomen, Minnesota, dated August 5, 1911, to Department of the Interior. Found in Report in the Investigation of the White Earth Reservation etc. V. 11. PP. 2756-2757.



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The announcement that the Indian blood roll was finally complete appeared in the Mahnomen Pioneer for September 17, 1920. This meant that the last doubt as to land titles had been removed for all time. Many thousand acres of land had been idle because white purchasers, doubtful of their title, did not dare to cultivate the land.

Thirty-four per cent of the land in Mahnomen County remained in the hands of the original allottees. Sixty-six per cent of the land was sold or encumbered and suit was brought by the Govern-<sup>5</sup>ment on 41,680 acres, or eleven per cent, of the land sold.

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THE WHITE EARTH INDIANS IN 1938.

The White Earth Reservation rolls list approximately 8000 Chippewa Indians. About 900 of them live at White Earth; 700, at Nayahwaush; 350, at Beaulieu; 700, at Pine Point and Ponsford; 400, in the Rice Lake district; and 900, in Mahnomen and vicinity. These are<sup>1</sup> the centers of the Indian population on the reservation.

About 386 families, or 2100 individuals, live in the Mahnomen and Twin Lake districts. Almost all of these families are squatters living on land which they do not own. About ten families live on small farms and raise some livestock. Several others had titles to land which they lost to the State of Minnesota on December 24, 1936, because on that date the time limit had expired for them to pay delinquent taxes. Most of the Indians are not doing extensive farming. They are<sup>2</sup> cared for by county relief, W.P.A., road and other Government projects.

There has been so little employment for the Indians and their families since the logging and timber industries ceased that the United States Government has bought 27,500 acres of land at a cost of over \$200,000 in the eastern part of Mahnomen County for the purpose of rehabilitating the Indians. Most of the land was bought in 1935; the remaining 3698 acres were purchased in 1937. The commissioners of Twin Lake<sup>s</sup> township dissolved the township of Twin Lakes in April, 1937, be-<sup>3</sup> cause the United States Government owned more than 50 % of the land.

1. Map in the files of A. L. Hook, Land Field Agent of the Indian Service. Old Postoffice Building, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
2. A.L. Hook. Final Project Plan for 1937. PP. 1 & 2.
3. The Mahnomen Pioneer for April 9, 1937.

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This land in Mahnomen County was bought to provide a site for building homes for landless Indians, to furnish them land for gardening, and to establish an area in which, through Indian control, an economical system of land might be obtained for the Chippewas.

Reforestation by means of Indian labor is a big part of the plan which includes the construction of an Indian Emergency Conservation Camp for unemployed Chippewa young men.

" Mark L. Burns, Superintendent of the Cass Lake Indian Agency, has drawn up definite plans for a sheep production enterprise. It will be conducted on the cooperative plan and will be under the direct care and management of Indian employees selected by the White Earth Indian Tribe under the provisions of the Indian Reorganization Act. All open grazing land within the purchase area is to be used in grazing sheep belonging to the Indian cooperative organization. A large number of Indians will be provided with homes and small garden tracts on suitable locations within the purchase area. Immediate steps will be taken to conserve the water in the lakes and marsh sections within the purchase area and the development of wild rice, from which the Indians may realize a considerable cash income, will be promoted.

" On the land purchased are approximately ten well improved farms on which sets of permanent farm buildings have been established. These are to be used for winter feeding units and



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other tracts with improvements are to be used as subsistence  
homesites for homeless Indian bands."<sup>4</sup>

The Mahnomen Pioneer for July 22, 1938, announced a Harvest Festival to be held by the Twin Lake Indians at Naytah-waush on August 26th and 27th. The program included canoe races, Indian games, tent pitching, wild rice parching and hulling, log rolling, broad ax hewing, pulp peeling and other wood crafts and water sports, in addition to exhibits by the Indian Home Makers' club.

" The Chippewas are capable of working together in harmony and since we are now banded together with a common principle in mind," counseled Frank Broker, President of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe on June 25, 1938, " let us stay banded and look to the future with greater hopes. The future has much in store for us and if we stand together as a unified body it is possible that we can gain much for ourselves and our posterity".<sup>5</sup>

The outlook of the White Earth Chippewa is brighter than it has been, but 300,000 acres, rather than 27,500 , are necessary for farming, reforestation and grazing purposes to put the White Earth Indians on a self-supporting basis.<sup>6</sup>

4. Hook, A. L. Final Project Plan for 1937. P 10.

5. The Mahnomen Pioneer. July 1, 1938.

6. Hook, A. L. Final Project Plan for 1937. P. 2.

Mahnomen County.

Indians..... treaties... reservations....

Mahnomen County was included in a tract purchased from the Chippewa in 1855. (Neill, E.D. History of the Ojibways, e tc. .... in Minn. Hist. Soc. Col. v. 5. p. 463. )

On May 7, 1864 the United States government made a treaty with the Ojibways of the Mississippi to arrange for reservations for the different bands.

~~pp111435111424115051~~ Ibid. p. 506.

When the Chippewa Indians sold all their territory, they were assigned land for homes by the government. These lands were known as reservations. The Indians did not own the land individually but were assigned to it as part of the tribe under the control of the Indian bureau. (Stephen H. Roberts, Article on "Native Policy" from Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. Vol. 11. P. 265.)

Mahnomen county lies entirely within what was once the White Earth Reservation. A small strip of land in Clearwater County at the east and part of Becker County to the south comprise the remainder of the land set apart by the United States government as a home for the Indians known as the White Earth Reservation. The original White Earth Reservation embraced 709,666.5 acres of timber and agricultural lands.

(United States Bureau of Census. Minnesota (Conditions of the Indians) 1890.p.337)

The White Earth Reservation was a promising home for the Chippewa Indians. The eastern two-thirds were covered with timber with an occasional interlude of prairie. Oak, poplar, maple, ash and elm trees grew in abundance as well as ironwood, basswood, and birch. Tamarack and spruce grew in the swamps and white pine was found in two or three townships in the northwest corner of the reservation.

Nature offered to the Chippewa who were brought to the White Earth reservation the choicest plums, cherries, cranberries, and blueberries. Vegetables, as the common ground nut or "wild potato" and the prairie turnip, supplemented the precious wild rice as food.

The western one-third of the reservation is rolling prairie or agricultural land. The government tried to make farmers out of the Indians on the reservations. The first cattle for the White Earth Reservation were purchased with two thousand dollars sent by the Quakers in Philadelphia. ( Whipple, Henry B. Civilization and Christianity of the Ojibways in Minnesota from Minnesota Historical Collections Vol. LX 1898 p 142 )

Mahnomen County.

### Trails.

Two well known trails once led through what is now Mahnomen County. One is the old Pembina Trail, which led in a southeasterly direction through Mahnomen County.

The other is the Red Lake Trail, ~~transverses~~ which traverses the southeastern corner of the county, joining the Pembina Trail at the White Earth Agency ,

south of there in Becker County.

(Map of Old Trails and Roads compiled by Mr. George Ralph and Mrs. James

T. Morris, in Old Rail Fence Corners. p. 1. )



Mahnomen County.

An early explorer in the county.

The only early explorer who left a written record of being in what is now Mahnomen County was Joseph La France, born at Missilimakinac about the year 1708 of French and Ojibway parentage. His mother's death occurred when he was about five years of age, and soon afterwards his father took him to Quebec to learn French. (Dobbs. An Account of the Countries Adjoining to Hudson's Bay in the Northwest Part of America. London 1744. p. 29. )

When Joseph was a lad of fourteen, his father died, and left alone, he became interested in fur trading, the business of his father. During the years 1740- 1742 he hunted with the Indians in Manitoba and northern Minnesota. ( Upham, Warren. Minnesota in Three Centuries. v. 1. p. 299. )

Arthur Dobbs, an English author, described a canoe trip which La France took in 1741 on the Wild Rice River, which runs through Mahnomen County, to Rice Lake, east of it, in Clearwater County. He called the lake Lake Du Siens, perhaps from the Sioux Indian word "psin" which means "wild rice." (Minn Hist. Soc Coll. v. 17. p. 321. )

However, not all historians believe that the explorer came as far south as the region which is now Mahnomen Co.

## Mahnomen County

How Mahnomen got its name....

and wild rice.

Various references.

When the "Soo" railway was built northward through the White Earth Reservation in 1904, a council of Indians at the White Earth Agency petitioned the railway officials to adopt an Indian name for every village on the reservation....

( Mildred L. Olsen , In the Wigwag , Edited by the Senior Class, Mahnomen High School. V. 1. 1927. p. 51 )

This request was granted and the name of the post office, Wild Rice, was changed to Mahnomen, which means "wild rice" in Ojibway. (Upham, p. 323.)

This village was named from the Wild Rice River just south of it, and the same name, Mahnomen, was later given to the county. (Ibid.) The river was called "ga manominiganjikan -zibi " in Ojibway, meaning "the river where the wild rice stalk or plant is growing." (Joseph A. Gilfillan, Minnesota Geographical Names Derived from the Chippewa Language. p. 464.

Wild rice is a valuable food among the Chippewa Indians. After the wild rice has all been gathered, a feast is prepared in celebration of the bounteous feast.

(U.S. Bureau of Census. Report on Minnesota. (Conditions of the Indians.)p. 346.

White men have invented machines to harvest and thresh wild rice, but in 1929, the Minnesota State Legislature made a law giving the Indians the exclusive right to collect wild rice. This law also forbids hunting on Rice Lake until after the wild rice has been harvested. (The Mahnomen Pioneer, Sept. 20, 1929. )

Mahnomen County.

Location is the northwestern part of the State of Minnesota. Polk is the neighboring county on the north; Clearwater County borders ~~it~~ on the east; and Becker adjoins it on the south. It is separated from the ~~sgate~~ of North Dakota on the west by Norman County, of which ~~it~~ was once a part.

The Red River, whose valley is the richest agricultural region in the world, is ~~forth~~ miles west of it.

It is the only county in the state laid out as a square ~~an~~ the map of Minnesota. But it is not a perfect square, for although it consists of sixteen townships, it is 24 miles in length from north to south and  $24\frac{1}{2}$  miles ~~f~~rom east to west., making a total osquare mileage area of 582 square miles.



Map in the files of A.L. Hook, land Field Agent of the Indian Service. Old Postoffice Building, Mpls., Minn.

also Hook: Final Project Plan for 1937.

The White Earth Reservation rolls lists approximately 8,000 Chippewa Indians. About 900 of them live at White Earth, 700 at Naytahwaush, 350 at Beaulica, 700 at Pine Point, and Ponsford, 400 in the Rice Lake district, and 900 in Mahnomen and vicinity. These are the centers of the Indian population on the reservation.

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A.L. Hook. Final Project Plan for 1937. PP 1 and 2.

About 386 families, or 2100 individuals live in the Mahnomen and Twin Lake districts. Almost all of these families are squatters living on land which they do not own. About ten families live on small farms and raise some livestock. Several others had titles to land which they lost to the State of Minnesota on December 24, 1936, because on that date the time limit had expired for them to pay delinquent taxes. Most of the Indians are not doing extensive farming. They are cared for by county relief, WPA road and other Government projects.

pp. 2.

The outlook of the White Earth Chippewa is brighter than it has been, but 200,000 acres, rather than 27,500 are necessary for farming, reforestation, and grazing purposes to put the White Earth Indians on a self-supporting basis.

Mahnomen County.

The Mahnomen Pioneer for April 9, 1937.

There has been so little employment for the Indians and their families since the logging and timber industries ceased that the United States Government has bought 27,500 acres of land at a cost of over \$200,000 in the eastern part of Mahnomen County for the purpose of rehabilitating the Indians. Most of the land was bought in 1935; the remaining 3688 acres were purchased in 1937. The commissioners of Twin Lakes Twp. dissolved the township of Twin Lakes in April, 1937, because the United States Government owned more than 50% of the land.

This land was bought to provide a site for building homes for landless Indians, to furnish them land for gardening, and to establish an area in which, through Indian control, an economical system of land might be obtained for the Chippewas.

Mahnomen County.

Letter wirtten by A.L.Thompson of Mahnonman County, dated Aug. 5, 1911, to the Department of Interior. Found in Report in the Investigation of the White Earth Res. V.11. pp. 2756 -2757.

In May, 1911, the courthouse record of Mahnomen county showed 65% of the land in the county to be owned by the whites, but, until 1917, the title to much of the land was uncertain.

~~pp. 1619.~~

The annoucement that the Indian blood roll was finally complete appeared in the Mahnomen Pioneer , September 17, 1920. This meant that the last doubt as to land titles had been removed for all time. Many thousand acres of land had been idle because white purchasers, doubtful of their title, did not dare to cultivate the land.

79 14/9 Thirty-four per cent of the land in Mahnomen County remained in the hands of the original allottees. Sixty-six per cent of the land was sold or encumbered and suit was brought by the Government on 41,680 acres, or eleven per cent of the land sold.



Mahnomen County, Minnesota.

The Minneapolis Tribune, ~~Minneapolis~~, April 4, 1917.

In April, 1917, the United States Government loses its guardianship over mixed-blood Indians when the Clapp Amendment of 1906 went into effect.

Mahnomen County.....

Mahnomen Pioneer, January 29, 1915,

Four years ago, the government turned loose..... special assistants and special agentson the reservation and ever since that time they have been at work here.

But in 1914, the U. S. Supreme Court decided that a mixed-blood is one who is not a Fulll-blood, in other words, any Indian on the reservation with a drop of white blood in him had a right to sell his land under the Clapp Amendmanet of 1906. As a result of this decision about two thirds of the suits entered by the Government against the lumber companies were annulled. Then the Government devoted its efforts to the cancellation of deeds given by minors and full-blood Indians.

Report in the Investigation of the "hite Earth Reservation. etc. pp. XLX and XX.

Complaints of the Indians and people interested in their welfare brought about a Government investigation, by a committee, of the land deals on the White Earth Reservation.

Sessions began in the circuit court room of the Federal Building in Minneapolis on January 23, 1912. Since it was difficult for Indians to travel so far, the hearings from February 5th to 21st were held in the courtroom at Detroit, now Detroit Lakes.

While the members of the commission were at Detroit, they traveled over the White Earth Reservation in sleighs for these days, examining the agency buildings, schools and homes. The committee reported that the Indians' "spirit seemed entirely broken, their hope entirely gone. Their demeanor eloquently voiced the belief that they had no rights left except the right to suffer in silence --- these White Earth Indians, the remnant of the once powerful Chippewa Nation... are now despoiled of their heritage.



Mahnomen County, Minnesota.

Mpls. Journal. July 16, 1906. Editorial by Ray G. Marshall.

"With the minds of the  $\frac{3}{4}$  White Earth Indians muddled by liquor and their eyes dazzled with money, of which they know little, the White Earth mixed-bloods are in a fair way to lose all the Government allotments recently given to them. The land is fast passing into the hands of scheming land-grabbers and if the present campaigning of the sharks is maintained the White Earth Indian Reservation will soon be a thing of the past. "

Unfortunately for the Chippewas, the Journal's prophecy came true, for the White Earth Indian reservation is a thing of the past.

To be checked in ref. "Report into the Investigation of the White Earth Reservation. " ~~Amishamishom~~ Situated in the state of Minnesota with transcript of testimony taken and exhibits offered from July 25, 1911 to March 28, 1912.

V. 1. pp. V. and VI.

"Among the natural resources for the use of the Indians on the reservation were quantities of hardwood for fuel and about 500,000,000 board feet of valuable pine. Lumber concerns, aware of the opportunity to make large profits from the sale of the timber on the wooded lands, induced the Indians to cede the four northeast townships of the reservation back to the Government to be sold, presumably, for the benefit of the Indians. The four townships were sold at public auction at Crookston, Minnesota, on November 27th, 1900, to the highest bidders, who later proved to be the dummy agents of the Nichols - Chisholm, Park Rapids and Wild Rice Lumber Companies, and these big lumber concerns finally secured most of the lumber on the remaining townships of the reservation,

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pp. VII. and XV.

"In 1902 an act was passed by Congress enabling the lumber companies to buy the timber without purchasing the land, but the pine lands were not allotted by the Government to the Indians until 1905. Then the lands with the best pine were fraudulently allotted to the mixed-blood Indians who could be most easily influenced to sell the pine for a low price. Agents hired by the lumber companies, many of them Indians, purchased the pine from the allottees for much less than it was actually worth.

"The Clapp Amendment of June 21, 1906, made it possible for the mixed-blood Ind. to sell their lands. This was an opportunity for the white land speculators without a conscience to purchase the land at their own terms with the result that only 5 % of the sales were of benefit to the Indian allottees. Within a month after the Clapp amendment went into effect, Mpls. Journal for July 16, 1906, describes the condition of the Indians on the reservation.



TOPIC: Hotels & Resorts

HOTELS

MAHNOMEN, MINN.

Bonn Hotel  
Johnson Hotel  
Wold Hotel

R.R. St.

WAUBUN, MINN.

Kathern's Hotel

Main St.

RESORTS

BEAULIEU, STAR HT. MINN.

Roy Lake Lodge

Roy Lake

WAUBUN, MINN.

Bowman's Lodge  
Olson's Resort  
Waw-We-Yay-Comic Lodge  
Lake View Inn Resort

White Earth Lake

Big Elbow Lake  
White Earth Lake



"White Earth Indians," mas, in Writer's Files. Madison, William. 1936.)

pp. 19.

(Rev. F.D. Porter. continued....

Later he was at Twin Lakes with 300 Indians, and moved his congregation to Duane, 8 miles north of Beaulieu in 1901. During 1916 they moved again to Pine Bend, 15 miles north of Twin Lakes, where most of them reside at present.

mmj

<p>Sandhill</p> <p>Beloo. Bijou Sect. 26.</p>	<p>Gregory.</p>	<p>HEIER.</p>	<p>St. river</p> <p>Island Lake</p>
<p>Marsh Creek.</p>	<p>Chief</p> <p>Wild River.</p>	<p>Beaulieu</p> <p>Sect. 33. Duane.</p>	<p>Bowch. L.</p> <p>Clover</p>
<p>Mahoney Sect. 2.</p> <p>Pembina.</p>	<p>Gardner L. Sandy L.</p> <p>Rosedale.</p> <p>Fish L.</p>	<p>La garde.</p>	<p>Twin Lakes</p> <p>Twin Lakes.</p>
<p>Popple Grove</p> <p>Wauch. S. 24</p>	<p>Lake Grove.</p>	<p>★</p> <p>Oakland</p>	<p>Traytah waush Sect. 1. 46</p> <p>Oakland</p> <p>Smider</p> <p>Little Elbow</p> <p>Tulaby.</p> <p>(Oakland is a double top)</p>

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February 3, 1928 Waubun Forum burns.  
December 13, 1929 Schermerhorn Farms.  
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THE ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS - July 17, 1938 - Kensington Rune Stone in possession of Chairman of Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, Alexandria, Minn.

1

BEJOU, 154.3 m. (1,226 alt.; 100 pop.) is the Chippewa equivalent for "Hello".

MAHNOMEN, 162.4 m. (1,213 alt.; 986 pop.), seat of Mahnomen County, is the Chippewa term for wildrice. There are Indian settlements in the vicinity. The Schermerhorn farms of more than 30,000 acres are located here, and the village has cooperative associations for marketing livestock, poultry, and dairy products.

At OGEMA, 177.9 m. (1,266 alt.; 250 pop.), is the junction with a gravel road.

Left on this road is White Earth, 6.1 m., the agency for the White Earth Indian Reservation.

According to the terms of the White Earth Treaty, the first group of 150 Indians was moved from Crow Wing to the reservation on June 14, 1868, accompanied by Major J. B. Basset. The present population of the reservation is about 8,000 and its area is 1,200 square miles.

At one time this land provided millions of feet of pine, and today the cut-over district furnishes large quantities of cordwood for building purposes, fuel, pulpwood, and railroad ties. The Indians make sugar from the numerous maple trees and collect wildrice which thrives in dozens of swamps. There is excellent fishing, hunting and trapping on the reservation. There are deposits of clay which could be used in the manufacture of bricks or pottery, but the Indians have taken very little advantage of this resource. These Chippewas are as a rule not interested in agriculture, but they are excellent woodsmen.

All of the reservation Indians came originally from



2

various parts of northern Minnesota and from three principle tribes; the Mississippi band from Crow Wing and Gull Lake; the Pembina band from the upper Red River Valley; and the Otter Tail Pillagers from Otter Tail Lake. All three groups are of the Algonquian stock. The number of full-blooded Indians has decreased alarmingly, and intermixture threatens Ojibwa civilization, its distinctive language, its social cultures, and its interesting traditions with extinction.

A well-equipped Hospital at the White Earth agency serves the Indians as efficiently as possible, but even now many of them are skeptical of the white man's medicine. This is particularly true of the older Chippewas, many of whom refuse to reveal intimate problems to a stranger.

The native Chippewa shelter is a birch-bark wigwam, so constructed that the framework of poles and covering forms a dome-shaped top. The tepee, or pointed top construction, used by other tribes is rarely seen on this reservation.

Even the birchbark wigwams have now only a seasonal usage, for they are employed mostly in summer during the wildrice harvesting. When the weather turns cold, the majority of Indians move to small log cabins or tarpapered board shacks.

The handiwork of these Chippewas is of the highest quality. Their products of tanned buckskin are soft and pliable with a chamois-like texture, the rich and dark brown color is obtained by a smoking process. The odor of Chippewa leather products, a pungent and, to most people, agreeable odor is a distinctive feature of the beaded moccasins, the much sought buckskin jackets and many other articles made by these Indians.

Probably the finest finished articles made by the



3

Chippewas are their birch-bark canoes. These beautiful examples of highly specialized craftsmanship are remarkably seaworthy and serve as an ideal shelter at night. Their lightness is an important feature for long portage journeys.

St. Benedict's Mission, adjacent to the village of White Earth, is one of the finest schools in the Indian Service. It was established in 1868 by Archbishop John Ireland who was at that time a young army chaplain. The mission was first composed of log buildings constructed by Indians and the priest to serve as schools and churches. At the same time, the site of the present Calvary Cemetery, where Chief White Cloud is buried, was marked. In 1881 two brick-veneered structures, the present church and rectory, were erected on the wooded shore of Mission Lake. Supplementing the day school, an orphanage for thirty pupils was opened in connection with the mission. In 1892 the school was further enlarged by a grant from the United States Government. This provided for the one hundred children. For each of these students the Government pays \$100 out of the Indian Tribal Educational Funds each year. Preference orphans, those from broken homes, or those who are not conveniently near a day school. St. Benedict's has a farm of 150 acres, a garden, and an orchard which produce most of the required food.

The Chippewas hold annual festivals in White Earth village on the 14th of June in commemoration of the arrival of their first band of 150 at the reservation, 74 years ago. The program is of unusual interest to visitors, for it includes public councils, or pow-pows, with formal tribal costumes, speeches, songs, and several types of native dances. There is also a sham battle between the Chippewas and Sioux, canoe, foot, and

4/  
pony races, during which the Indians display their remarkable athletic ability, and many games, of which lacrosse is perhaps the most interesting.

This fine Indian mission represents the first religious and educational efforts in the surrounding region and has served the spiritual and school needs of the Chippewas since the date of its foundation.

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February 5, 1921. The New Waubun School.

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### OUR TOWNSHIPS.

After the village of Mahnomen was incorporated in 1905,<sup>1</sup> business men of Mahnomen and farmers of the surrounding community met to plan for the organization of a new county out of the sixteen eastern townships of Norman County. They signed a petition asking the Norman County voters to grant the division and after a favorable vote<sup>2</sup> Mahnomen County was created on December 27th, 1906.

Commissioners appointed by the governor of Minnesota held their first meeting January 2, 1907. Part of the work of<sup>the</sup> county commissioners was to help organize our townships. Theoretically, Mahnomen County is made up of sixteen townships arranged in four tiers of four townships each. It is well to recall that a township is a tract of land six miles square, composed of thirty-six sections each one mile square. However, Mahnomen County is not a perfect square, for it is 24<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> and one-fourth miles in length from east to west.

The Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide for 1936 arranges our townships from west to east as follows:

Top tier of townships; Bejou, Gregory, Heier and Island Lake.

2nd tier of townships: Marsh Creek, Chief, Beaulieu and Clover.

3rd tier of townships: Pembina, Rosedale, Lagarde & Twin Lakes.

4th tier of townships: Popple Grove, Lake Grove and Oakland,

a double township in the southeast<sup>ern</sup> corner of the county.<sup>3</sup>

1. The Mahnomen Pioneer of May 14, 1920.
2. Upham, Warren. Minnesota Geographic Names. P. 321.
3. Rand McNally Commercial Atlas and Marketing Guide. 1936. P. 213.



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4

All the villages in our county have Indian names. We may learn something about the history and geography of Mahnomen County through a study of the origin of the names of the townships, for many of them bear the names of early settlers and more than half of them are named from the physical characteristics of the township.

BEAULIEU township contains Beaulieu village and both the village and township were named in honor of Henry and John Beaulieu, Civil War veterans, who settled in Mahnomen County. John Beaulieu was the village postmaster for several years. The Beaulieu family are descendants of Bazille Beaulieu, a Frenchman, and his Ojibway wife.

5

Beaulieu township has three lakes and the Wild Rice river flows through the southern part of the township from east to west.

6

307 people lived in Beaulieu village in 1930.

BEJOU, the name of a township and railway village in Mahnomen County is a changed spelling and pronunciation of the French words, "Bon jour", meaning "good day". This was an expression used by fur traders and voyageurs and the word "bejou" is a Chipewewa greeting similar to our "How do you do?"

4. Senior Class Mahnomen High School. The Wigwam. V.1. 1927. From article on the "Beginnings of Mahnomen", by Mildred L. Olson. P. 51.

5. Upham, Warren. Minnesota Geographic Names. PP. 322-324.

6. Hixson, W. N. & Co. Plat book of the state of Minnesota. 1916. Map of Mahnomen County.

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Aspinwall, Vanoss and Warren, all of which are named in honor  
5  
of settlers in the township.

The Wild Rice river traverses the southern part of the  
6  
township.

CLOVER township is the most eastern of the second tier  
of townships in Mahnomen County.

The Wild Rice river flows through the northwestern part  
of it and it contains three lakes, including Lone Lake and Wash-  
6  
ington Lake which is just north of the Wild Rice river.

GREGORY township commemorates Joseph Gregory, one of  
the first farmers in the township.

The township has five lakes, among them Lake Beaulieu,  
named in honor of Alexander H. Beaulieu who farmed there until  
1916, and Church Lake, commemorating another farmer, Charles  
5&6  
Church.

HEIER township is named in honor of Frank Heier who taught  
a Chippewa school there and later became superintendent of the  
5  
Government school at Pine Point in Becker County.

6  
There are four small lakes in Heier township.

ISLAND LAKE township is named from Island Lake, a lake  
within its boundaries containing a large island. There are other

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lakes in the township, among them Sugar Bush lake, named from the maple trees adjoining it. The Wild Rice river penetrates<sup>5&6</sup> the southeastern part of Island Lake township.

This township forms the northeastern corner of our county.

LAGARDE township received its name from Moses Lagarde, a Civil War veteran, who was given a farm allotment in the town-<sup>5&6</sup>ship. It has Lake Erie and other small lakes.

LAKE GROVE township is so called from the groves border-<sup>5</sup>ing its small lakes but most of the land is a rolling prairie.

The White Earth river flows through the northeastern part<sup>6</sup> of the township.

MARSH CREEK township was named from Marsh Creek which<sup>5</sup> flows through it.

OAKLAND, the double township in the southeastern corner of Mahnomen County contains a large number of lakes, among them<sup>h</sup> Scneider, Little Elbow, Bass and part of Tulaby which crosses<sup>h</sup> its southern border. Scneider Lake is so called for Frank Scneider,<sup>h</sup> a German farmer living beside it. Little Elbow lake receives its name from its long bent form like an arm and Bass and Tulaby lakes are named for fish.

PEMBINA township is named for the cranberry bush, called by the Chippewas "nepin ninan", or "summer berry". The French



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traders converted the name " nepin ninan" into "Pembina", which is also the name of a river, village and county in North Dakota.

Mahnomen, the county seat of our county, is located in the northeastern part of the township, just north of the Wild Rice river which flows westward across the township, and from which the county has been named Mahnomen, meaning "wild rice".

5  
village  
Mahnomen/had a population of 989 in 1930.

POPPLE GROVE township is so called from its groves of small poplar trees.

The township forms the southwestern corner of Mahnomen County.

Waubun village is in Popple Grove township. Its name is derived from the Chippewa word "waban" which means "the east", "the morning" or "the twilight of dawn".

5  
Waubun had 337 people in 1930.

ROSEDALE township is named from the wild roses which grow abundantly there.

The three largest lakes in Rosedale township are Sandy, Fish and Gardner, the latter being named in honor of Charles Gardner, a farmer.

5  
6  
The White Earth river flows through Rosedale township.

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TWIN LAKES township was named for two of its lakes, one on each side of a narrow strip of land. This township was dissolved by the commissioners in April, 1937, because the Government owned over half of the land.<sup>7</sup>

Part  
Part of Simon Lake is in the northeast corner of what was Twin Lakes township. This lake, which crosses the eastern border of Mahnomon County, was named in honor of Simon Roy who owned a cattle farm.<sup>5</sup>

Naytahwaush, a settlement on upper Twin Lake with a population of only nineteen in 1930, has become a center of social activity for the Chippewas living in the surrounding district.

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7. The Mahnomon Pioneer for April 9, 1937.

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Bejou township is in the extreme northwestern corner of our county. It has a lake, Tamarack Lake, in section 29, which is partly skirted by tamarack woods, and the Sand Hill River flows through the extreme northwestern <sup>6</sup> part of the township.

The Mahnomen Pioneer for November 26, 1920, noted that Bejou voters had petitioned the Mahnomen County Board to call an election for voting on the incorporation of Bejou as a village.

Bejou village had a population of 99 in 1930.

CHIEF township is named for May-sha-ke-ge-shig, a distinguished chief of the Chippewas who came to the White Earth Reservation in 1868 and was a farmer there until old age forced him to give up farming. <sup>5</sup>

The Mahnomen Pioneer for March 13, 1914, printed the following:

"The venerable Indian chief, May-zhuc-ke-ge-shig, and his wife are reported to be gradually failing at their home in Beau-lieu, and it is probable that they will not live a great while. The chief is nearly 90 years old and his wife is about as old."

But May-sha-ke-ge-shig lived more than four years after the above news was published, for his death "at nearly 100" was not recorded in the Mahnomen Pioneer until September 15, 1919.

Chief Lake in Chief township is also named for "the venerable Indian chief" and the township contains three other lakes,



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### PROGRESS!

Although Mahnomen County is young compared with most of the southern counties in the state of Minnesota, it has progressed agriculturally, educationally and socially.

Our population is essentially rural and agriculture is carried on extensively. The main crops are barley, oats, wheat, rye, corn and potatoes.

In 1914 Superintendent Selveg of the Crookston School of Agriculture announced prizes won at the Crookston Farm Crops Shows by Mahnomen County exhibitors as follows:

First, second and third prizes for the best 10 ears of corn; first, second and third prizes for the best 10 pound sample of wheat; first prize for the best 10 pound sample of oats;<sup>and</sup>  
<sup>1</sup>  
first prize for the best 10 pound sample of flax .

The two years following, Mahnomen County won the silver cup for the largest number of exhibits at the Annual Farm Crop Show<sup>2</sup> sponsored by the Minnesota Red River Valley Development Association.

But crops are not always dependable. 3549 acres of crop<sup>3</sup> were a failure in Mahnomen County in 1930, so, with more than 40,000 acres of pasture land available, Mahnomen County farmers have entered actively into dairying. There were about 5000 milk cows in the county in 1930. The Mahnomen Creamery alone had 276

1. The Mahnomen Pioneer for March 13, 1914.
2. The Mahnomen Pioneer for February 26, 1915 and February 18, 1916.
3. U.S. Department of Commerce. 15th Census of U.S. 1930. Number of Farms, Farm acreages etc. Statistics on Mahnomen County.

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patrons who brought in 1,249,920 pounds of cream and sold \$144,335.98<sup>4</sup> of butter during the year ending in February, 1938, while in 1930 only 348 farms over the entire county were reported as milk producing<sup>5</sup> in 1930.

In 1930 there were over 10,000 cattle, more than 4000 pigs<sup>6</sup> and nearly 3500 sheep in Mahnomen County.

Many of the farm products were sold cooperatively. Cooperative sales amounted to \$485,640 in 1930.<sup>7</sup>

An interesting experiment in large scale farming was begun by James B. Schermerhorn of Minneapolis when he began to buy land in Mahnomen County in 1917. He had farmed previously near Mason City, Iowa, and in western North Dakota. At the time of his death in December, 1929, Mr. Schermerhorn owned 24,000 acres in our county, having cleared 10,000 acres, raising alfalfa, corn ensilage and barley.<sup>8</sup> The Indians cleared some of the land for one dollar an acre.

There were five principal farms: "The Ranch", "St. Pierre", "Oak Crest", "Waubun Hills" and "The Terminal", each with a complete set of farm buildings set on a beautiful landscape.

"All the farms have been operating", stated Mr. A. J. Robinson, Superintendent of the Schermerhorn Farms, Inc., on Sept-

4. The Mahnomen Pioneer for February 18, 1938.

5. U. S. Department of Commerce. 15th Census of U.S. 1930. Expenditures. Statistics for Mahnomen County.

#.7. U. S. Department of Commerce. 15th Census of U.S. 1930. Co-operative Marketing. Statistics for Mahnomen County.

#.6. U. S. Department of Commerce. 15th Census of U.S. 1930. Farms, Acreage, Values of Selected Livestock etc. Statistics for Mahnomen County.

8. The Mahnomen Pioneer. December 13, 1929.

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ember 5, 1938, "since Mr. Schermerhorn's death, although we have reduced to some extent our total acreage, having sold off to the Government and private parties a portion of our undeveloped holdings. We are still raising excellent registered Hereford and Angus cattle and also running nearly 4000 ewes."

Mahnomen County parents have established churches to aid in the spiritual training of their children and schools for their education.

Mahnomen's \$32,000 schoolhouse was dedicated Friday afternoon and evening of May First, 1914. The first High School class of four members was graduated in June, 1915. Bejou built a new \$17, 500 schoolhouse in the winter of 1917<sup>9</sup>, and one built at Waubun in 1921 was declared to be "the most modern school house of any town in northern Minnesota".<sup>10</sup>

A library was started at Mahnomen County from voluntary book contributions in the spring of 1923.<sup>11</sup>

The newspaper is a source of education for both old and young. William M. Wigham founded The Mahnomen Plaintalk, the first newspaper in 1905. Harry P. Phillips bought it in 1910 and changed the name to the Mahnomen Pioneer. After 25 years of faithful re-

9. The Mahnomen Pioneer. February 2, 1917.
10. The Mahnomen Pioneer. February 5, 1921.
11. The Mahnomen Pioneer. April 6, 1923.



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cording of Mahnomen County events, Mr. Phillips sold the paper  
12  
to D. L. Carver of Lidgerwood, North Dakota.

The Waubun Forum was destroyed by fire in 1928. This  
paper had been published for twenty years and the Mahnomen Pi-  
13  
oneer purchased the subscription list.

Our county is alert socially as well as culturally. We  
have study clubs, P. T. A. organizations, church societies,  
lodges, Boy and Girl Scout troops and 4-H Club workers who car-  
ried their 4-H  
on/bread, canning, clothing, thrift, cake, poultry, baby  
beef, corn, potato, fruit, garden, home beautification, colt,  
forestry, junior leadership, meal planning, room furnishing,  
farm accounts, dairy, calf, pig, sheep, conservation, safety,  
14  
handicraft and health projects during the summer of 1938.

A delightful treat for children of the county who hap-  
pen to be in Mahnomen, the county seat, on the afternoon before  
Christmas is insured by the municipal Christmas tree. The first  
tree was provided for Christmas, 1915, and was described in The  
Mahnomen Pioneer,

" Mahnomen's first municipal tree occupied the center of

12. The Mahnomen Pioneer for October 25, 1935.
13. The Mahnomen Pioneer for February 3, 1928.
14. The Mahnomen Pioneer for July 8, 1938.

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the stage last Thursday evening. At eight o'clock the fire whistle sounded and the youngsters commenced to assemble. Soon a large white team bearing Santa Claus drove up and candies and nuts were distributed to the youngsters. Santa Claus made quite a talk to the little ones. The next day those who had not been able to get to the tree were remembered not only with candy and nuts but those who needed it received something more substantial. It is to be hoped that the municipal Christmas tree idea may become a permanent one in Mahnomen."

15

" Land of beauty, land of plenty,  
Where the sunshine makes long days.  
Where we are content and happy  
For which we offer thanks and praise.  
Soil is best this side of heaven  
Underlaid with wealth untold,  
We will boost for old Mahnomen  
Whether young or whether old.

" Up and down the long straight furrows  
Stones or bumps we never strike.  
O' tis fun to farm where we are  
We can raise just what we like.  
Here crops ripen in the sunshine  
Alfalfa, corn and spuds and rye;  
We will always boost Mahnomen, 16  
Here to live and here to die."

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15. The Mahnomen Pioneer for December 31, 1915.

16. McGrath, W. J. From the poem "Mahnomen, the Land of Plenty",  
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