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## ST. LOUIS COUNTY HISTORY

### 1. PRE-SETTLEMENT.

Indians: In making an overview of St. Louis county and its early history, we must keep in mind the fact that at the time of which we are speaking, there really was no St. Louis county. Although it is now the largest county in the State of Minnesota, St. Louis in those early days was merely a part of the vast wilderness that was the unconquered Northwest -- a wilderness of prairie, Pine forests, silver streams, and sky blue lakes. It was a region inhabited by savage, nomadic Indian tribes and the less savage animals of the forests.

From time immemorial, the fierce and warlike Sioux Nation, with headquarters in the vicinity of Lake Mill Lacs, ranged this vast Northwest territory which extended westward from the Superior Lake region to the Rockies and south into Iowa. Their presence in St. Louis county is proven by the numerous copper implements which have been found around Lake Vermilion. Before the white man came and before the Great Northwest was laid out in states and divided into counties, this, then, was the hunting grounds of the Sioux, known also as the Dakota. The name Sioux is the terminal part of Nadouesioux, a term of hatred, meaning snakes, enemies, which was applied to this people by other Indian tribes.

The Sioux tribes disliked this alien name, and called themselves, collectively, Dakotas, meaning allies or confederates.

Further to the east lived the Chippewa tribes who time and time again had tried unsuccessfully to push into the Sioux hunting grounds. The Chippewa themselves were being gradually forced westward and out of their own hunting grounds by the advancing whites. In comparison with their own depleted area, the Chippewa fully realized the economic wealth of their Sioux neighbors. Theirs were the rich wild-rice fields, the bountiful forests of game, and the regions great mineral wealth. Then, too, there was the important Savanna Portage. This portage trail between the two streams that drained Lake Savanna and Lake Wolf marks the spot where the waters of the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence systems approach each other more closely than anywhere else in Minnesota. As a result, the Savanna Portage route was one of the most important avenues of communication between the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Great Lakes Region.

Due to their more eastern geographical position, the Chippewa very early became familiar with the use of the white man's firearms. Equipped with the more superior weapons which they had learned to use, the Chippewa won more victories in their skirmishes with the Sioux. The exact date is not known, but about 1750 these two nations fought a decisive battle somewhere in the vicinity of Lake Mill Lacs and the Sioux were routed from their territory. Retreating southward and westward, they left their old hunting grounds in the hands of the victorious Chippewa. Since that historical battle, however, the Chippewa have lost title to these rich lands thru numerous treaties with the white man and have been concentrated on reservations.

Early Explorers: In the march of time and world events, never is the line of demarkation between history and pre-history drawn sharply. There is always a period of transition - a period of uncertainty - about which we can never be positive. So, as you and I try to reconstruct the past of St.Louis county, we find the first authentic record begins with the coming of sieur DuLuth in 1679 and any mention of events prior to that time are cloaked in the haze of uncertainty.

The famous Kensington Rune Stone, found in Douglas county in 1898, seems to prove that a group of sea-faring Norsemen reached what is now Minnesota in the year 1362. However, until the stone is accepted as genuine, it may be said that until the second decade of the seventeenth century, the region of Lake Superior was unknown to white men. And here we find historians divided on the claim that Etienne Brule found or heard of the lake about 1617 or thereabouts.

The exploration and settlement of the area around the Head of the Lakes can be attributed directly to the French explorers and missionaries who were constantly pushing westward. Some historians believe that Radisson and Groseillier were the first white men to reach the present site of Duluth and from there penetrated into the interior. However, the journal of Radisson has been proven to have so many discrepancies that the question of their explorations at the Head of the Lakes is still in great dispute among historians. We do know that in 1665, Father Claude Allouez, a Jesuit, established a mission at LaPointe, near the present site of Ashland, Wisconsin, and came in contact with the Indians of the region.

The first trustworthy record of the area that was eventually to become St.Louis county began early in 1679 with the arrival of



Daniel Greysolon, sieur duLuth. Born in Saint-Germaine-En-Laye, France, he emigrated to Montreal and in September, 1678, having invested his money in a trading outfit, he set out for the Great Lakes region with four helpers. After wintering at Sault Ste. Marie at the outlet of Lake Superior, DuLuth's party continued westward on the lake soon after the ice was out in the following spring. Some historians think that after traveling part of the way by canoe, he landed on the south shore of the lake and made the rest of his trip on foot. However, most historians believe that he kept on by water until he reached Minnesota Point at what is now Duluth, portaged across the Point at the "Little Portage" where the Duluth Ship Canal was later dug, continued across Duluth Bay, and entered the St. Louis River. Near its mouth, he found a band of Chippewa. Continuing up the river, he made a portage to the Savanna Portage and reached the Sioux headquarters near Lake Mill Lacs. There he made a proclamation taking possession of the region in the name of his master, the King of France. Apparently he performed similar ceremonies at several other places. One of them may have been on the present site of Duluth.

In the fall of the same year (1679), he held a big conference with the Indians near the mouth of the St. Louis River. This location which became known as Fond du Lac is "the Head of the Lake" and the term itself means the "farther end of the lake". Whether the conference was on the present Wisconsin or Minnesota sides of the mouth of the river is not known. Many years afterward, only the Minnesota side was called Fond du Lac. This site is now included in the city limits of Duluth.

This conference which was held at Fond du Lac was attended

by the Sioux, the Chippewa and other tribes. They promised friendship and obedience to the French and agreed to keep peace between themselves. The peace agreement was soon broken for it was not long before the Chippewa and the Sioux renewed their old feud.

Duluth's work among the Indians was so gratifying that he spent the winter with these tribes in northern Minnesota. In the following spring of 1680, he decided to push further west by way of the Minnesota River. On his trip down the Minnesota River, DuLuth and his party visited St. Anthony Falls at Minneapolis which Father Hennepin had discovered several months earlier. On this trip he rescued Father Hennepin and two soldiers who were held captives by the Sioux. This incident caused Duluth to alter his plans of further exploration. After severely reprimanding the Sioux for their ill treatment of Father Hennepin and so soon after they had agreed to befriend all Frenchmen, DuLuth accompanied Father Hennepin back to Montreal. This return trip took them by way of the Wisconsin and Fox rivers and Lake Michigan, Huron, Ontario, and Erie, and the St. Lawrence River.

PRE-SETTLEMENT IN ST. LOUIS  
COUNTY.

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From time immemorial, the fierce and warlike Sioux Nation, with headquarters in the vicinity of Mille Lacs, <sup>ranged</sup> ~~inhabited~~ this vast Northwest territory which extended westward from the Superior Lake region to the Rockies and south into Iowa. <sup>Their presence in St. L. county is proven by numerous copper implements</sup> Before the white man came; before there were any state or county boundaries; yes, even before the Industrial Revolution that caused such turmoil in Europe - - this, then, was the hunting grounds of the Sioux, known also as the Dakotas. The name Sioux is the terminal part of Nadouesioux, a term of hatred, meaning snakes, enemies, which was applied to this people by other Indian tribes. The Sioux tribes disliked this alien name, and called themselves, collectively, Dakotas, meaning allies or confederates.

Further to the east lived the Chippewa tribes who time and time again had tried unsuccessfully to push into the Sioux hunting grounds, there own gradually becoming depleted. The Chippewa, in turning their eyes westward, knew full well what economic advantages would be theirs by a conquest of the Sioux neighbors. There were the rich wild-rice fields, the bountiful forests of game, and the great mineral wealth of the region. Then, too, there was the important Savanna Portage.

which have been found around Vermillion Lake.



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*Reid 9/3/37*  
*St. Louis County*  
Duluth, Minnesota  
September 2, 1937  
Clayton A. Videen  
*465 words*CITIES-VILLAGES--LOCAL EVENTS, ETC.

Mountain Iron, with a population of 1,349, on US 169, 5 miles west of Virginia, and served by the D. M. & I. R. and Great Northern Railroads, received its name from the huge iron ore deposits nearby. The village developed after the Merritts discovered the first iron ore on the Mesabi at this point, and the first ore from the Mesabi Range was shipped from here in 1892. The D. M. & N. RR. also was built in this year. The first school was opened in the fall of 1892, and it and the church were destroyed the following year by a fire which threatened the rest of the town.

Proctor Knott, more commonly known as Proctor, a village with a population of 2,521, 8 miles west of Duluth, was named after J. Proctor Knott, a former governor of Kentucky and member of Congress, who delivered a satirical speech ridiculing Duluth in Congress, in an unsuccessful attempt to have a certain railroad bill passed. Duluth gained popularity overnight from this speech and the village of Proctor, which owes its existence to the D. M. & I. R. railroad shops and classification yards (the latter being the largest in the world), was named after the Kentuckian as a token of gratitude.

Tower, with a population of 801, is located 30 miles northeast of Virginia at the junction of State Highways 35 and 1. Incorporated as a village on Nov. 11, 1884, Tower was the first town in St. Louis County north of Duluth; it was made a city in 1888. Located on the shores of scenic Lake Vermilion, the present mining town was once a popular camping ground for the Indians. The famous Vermilion Trail, used by explorers, gold seekers, and iron ore prospectors, ran from Fond du Lac and Duluth to Lake Vermilion.

Though Tower owes its existence to the Soudan mine, not far away, it was the scene of a gold rush immediately after the Civil War. No gold was found, but this early trek to the region led to the developing of the iron ore deposits. The city was named after Charlemagne Tower, eastern capitalist who was interested financially in the iron ore mines in this region.

In 1882 there were only a few homesteads in Tower; a sawmill was erected there in 1883. With the coming of the D. & I. R. Railroad, and mining developments, the town grew rapidly. The Soudan mine, the deepest underground iron mine in the State, is still producing. Thomas Owens, engineer of the "Old 3-spot", the first locomotive to be used on the newly built railroad, recounts the first shipment of iron ore from Tower. The train consisted of ten cars with a capacity of 20 tons each, and the first shipment was made from Tower to Two Harbors on July 30, 1884.

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ST. LOUIS COUNTY

Largest of Minnesota counties, St. Louis combines the vast iron ore industry of the Mesabi and Vermillion ranges, a lucrative tourist trade, and a thriving agriculture confined to a small portion of its area. *Although there are 7,919 farms, most of them small,* Slightly less than a fourth of the population of 200,000 is classified as rural.

Although only 14.6 percent of the 4,161,920 acres is used for farming, dairy, poultry, potato, and *truck farms have* ~~truck-farming~~ industry has developed to supply such nearby markets as Duluth and the mining towns. It is not unusual for farmers conveniently located to supplement their income by part time employment in these towns. Dairying produces more than half the agricultural income. In 1930 farmers marketed more than a million gallons of milk, 55,694 gallons of cream, 785,638 pounds of fat, over 900,000 dozen eggs, and 110,094 chickens, and raised nearly 20 thousand turkeys, ducks and geese. Of the poultry, the Land O'Lakes Association, with headquarters in Duluth, handles the major share, while much of the butter is handled by the Floodwood Cooperative, which manufactured half a million pounds in 1934.

These are substantial gains over previous figures; in a thirty-year period milk output doubled and cream increased 50 times, while the sale of butterfat more than tripled in the single decade from 1920-1930.

The predominance of pure-bred Holsteins and Guernseys, plus the abundant hay crop which cuts the cattle feed cost by 75 percent, were the main factors in the growth of diversified farming in St. Louis County. Many of the richest dairy and poultry farms are clustered about Floodwood.

Little grain is raised for market, most of it being used for feed. On the county's principal grain farms, in the southern portion, oats is the chief crop, followed by barley and rye. Hay, alfalfa, and sweet clover are <sup>grown</sup> extensively for feed.



Add Opportunities.

There are large areas of improved and unimproved farm and pasture land available near such towns as Chisholm, Eveleth, and Mountain Iron. In the vicinity of Mountain Iron improved land may be purchased for about \$50 an ~~acre~~ acre and unimproved land for about \$16. Near Eveleth improved land sells for as high as \$100 an acre.



The recent trend toward diversification has not diminished the production of the first crops grown in the county, potatoes, root crops, hay, and a small amount of grain. Cultivation of spinach, lettuce, cauliflower, and celery has also proved profitable. The Latham raspberry, ripening in August, finds a ready market in Chicago, and both raspberries and strawberries are widely cultivated. In addition, wild raspberries, gooseberries, currants, and blueberries are abundant.

The general practice is to raise potatoes on clover sod, although some are planted following corn or rutabagas. The Green Mountain potato is the standard late variety for this part of the State, Irish cobbler the standard early type. Irish Cobbler and Triumph are adapted to peat soils, King to light sandy soils, and Russett Burbank to mineral soils.

#### OPPORTUNITIES

A growing county, St. Louis contains unused land suitable for dairying and truck farming, particularly in the southern sector and in the proximity of urban markets. A close study of topography, markets, and transportation facilities is recommended to prospective purchasers.

#### PHYSICAL SETTING

St. Louis County, larger than the State of Rhode Island, covers an area of 6,503 square miles, extending from the west end of Lake Superior northward to Rainy Lake on the Canadian border, a distance of 130 miles. On the east is Lake County; on the west Koochiching, Itasca, and Aitkin; and on the south, Carlton County, Lake Superior, and Douglas County, Wisconsin. It is estimated that 365 square miles are covered by water. The county includes the western portion of the Superior National Forest, and several points of departure into the maze of lakes and streams that comprise the national forest and the Canadian Quetico Reserve, which, with surrounding areas, constitute the finest canoe country on the North American continent.

Topography Nearly all of St. Louis County is table land, standing 1,200 to 1,500 feet above sea level, and 600 to 900 above Lake Superior. The Mesabi Iron Range and nearby rock ridges rise in places 1,800 feet above the sea. The majority of the lakes are long, narrow, and winding, covering less than one square mile; a few, however, range from 11 to 70 square miles.

Following the Canadian border and extending over about one-third of the county is an area studded with rocky outcrops and strewn with large boulders. This land, with its scanty soil covering, has little or no agricultural value and yields better returns from its forests than it would from farming. A small amount of reclaimable land is adapted to pasturage and the growing of enough hay for home use.

Drainage The St. Louis is the largest river, and Vermilion the greatest lake. The northern lakes drain into the Rainy River watercourse, which in turn is part of the Hudson Bay drainage system. The northern lakes are fed by numerous streams. Besides the St. Louis, there are the Embarras, the Floodwood, the Pike, the West, the East Two, and the Sturgeon <sup>Rivers</sup>, among many others. The larger lakes include Kabetogama, Pelican, and Trout.

Swamp lands are estimated by the State drainage engineer to cover 1,862 square miles, of which 372 are open swamp with little or no forest growth. Much of the territory classed as swamp land will drain naturally, with little artificial ditching, when cleared of brush. In 1930, 783.5 miles of ditches, representing an outlay of \$1,353,781, were completed. This extended ditch system drained 252,657 acres at a cost of \$5.36 an acre, opened up 61,041 acres of woodland for cutting and cultivation, and made 97,789 acres available for settlement.

Soil Lacustral soils, adjacent to Lake Superior, consist of heavy reddish-gray clay with heavy red sub-soil through which water moves slowly. Stone is generally absent and when found, it is only in small amounts. The area is

broken by deep gullies, the land along the sides being eroded. The soil, however, if properly improved, is moderately productive.

In the southwestern portion of the county the area is one of extensive peat bogs. The soils of this area are naturally water-logged and even after drainage, this land is unproductive until properly fertilized. It is usually well supplied with lime, but needs applications of phosphorus and potassium-bearing fertilizers. Dairy farmers often find it economically feasible to reclaim small peat areas included in or adjacent to developed mineral soils inasmuch as this land, when drained sufficiently to keep the water table from three to four feet below the surface, can be converted into highly productive pastures and meadows.

East and north of the Floodwood district, the surface is swampy and interspersed <sup>by</sup> with peat bogs, with very stony loam on the higher land. The peat bogs occupy a good portion of this section, <sup>and</sup> the boulders are ~~so~~ large and ~~so~~ numerous <sup>enough to</sup> ~~they~~ prevent the use of tillage implements.

The most extensive soil in the county is stony loam. This is the dominant type in the great morainic system of the Superior lobe, which runs southwest across the southern part of the county, though included among these morainic ridges are nearly level areas of heavy clay with comparatively few stones. In the St. Louis basin, south of the Mesabi Iron Range, there are several classes of soil, the southern slope and west of Chisholm bearing a relatively heavy coating of stony loam, while between the Mesabi Range and Vermillion Lake, in the drainage area of Sturgeon and Little Rivers, there is a heavy drift, which was brought in by three ice flows, ~~the Superior ice lobe, from the lake northwest to the Cloquet River; the Kewatin, from the northwest to the Mesabi; and the Patrician district in the northern part of the county.~~



rather long, cold winters and short, pleasant summers. The temperature is most changeable during fall and spring. The county has an annual precipitation of 28.31 inches with an average fall of 18 inches during the growing season. Heavy downpours and high winds seldom occur during the crop season. The territory adjacent to Lake Superior averages 65 degrees in summer; winter temperatures hover around 9 degrees above zero, with approximately forty-five days of zero or below. On the Range, this average runs a point or two lower in winter and correspondingly higher during the crop season.

## CLIMATIC RECORD (66 years)

MONTHS	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Annual
Duluth (Alt. 1128) Precipitation in inches	7.9	11.5	23.7	37.0	47.3	57.2	63.9	62.6	55.1	44.1	30.0	15.9	38.0
Temperature (Fahrenheit)	0.97°	1.85°	1.54°	2.06°	3.25°	3.91°	3.76°	3.18°	3.31°	2.31°	1.45°	1.15°	27.94°

## EARLY SETTLEMENT AND RACIAL ORIGINS

Fur and fish attracted the first white settlers to St. Louis County. Later the lumber industry made its beginning, grew to gigantic proportions, and quickly declined, to be followed by mining and other industries. The mines attracted cheap labor from across the Atlantic, at first from northern Europe, and then, when the Finns had turned largely to agriculture, from central and southern Europe.

In 1930 about 148,000 of the residents were native whites and 55,000 were foreign born. From 1920 to 1930 the latter group decreased by 15,000; most of them live in the mining areas. Of the native whites, 50,000 were of native parentage, 72,000 of foreign, and 25,000 of mixed.

## COUNTY ORGANIZATION AND SUBDIVISIONS

Established by legislative acts of March 3, 1855 and March 1, 1856.



St. Louis County ranks first in the State in size and in number of townships, cities, and villages. Duluth is the county seat. The cities are industrial rather than agricultural.

<u>TOWNS</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>TOWNS</u>	<u>POPULATION</u>
Aurora	1,463	Gilbert	2,722
Biwabik	1,383	Hibbing	15,666
Buhl	1,308	McKinley	304
Chisholm	8,308	Meadowlands	121
Iron Junction	128	Mesaba	15
Cook	272	Mountain Iron	1,349
Duluth	101,463	Leonidas	499
Ely	6,156	Proctor	2,521
Eveleth	7,484	Tower	801
Floodwood	343	Virginia	11,963
Franklin	625	Winton	341
Fraser	108		

#### TAXES

The total taxable value in 1931 was \$313,845,770, but had decreased to \$277,228,115 in 1935. The tax rate in 1931 was 71.23 bringing in a levy of \$22,577,332. To equalize the deduction in taxable value, the tax rate was increased to 82.67 mills in 1935, making the levy \$23,114,859.

Indebtedness The total indebtedness of St. Louis County on December 31, 1935, amounted to \$29,053,201.33 or 10.48 percent of the taxable values. This debt was charged to the subdivisions thus: County, \$4,127,652.15; townships \$1,185,656.26; cities and villages, \$14,438,997.90, and school districts, \$9,300,895.02. The per capita debt was \$142.00, the third highest in the State.

Delinquency ~~The~~ <sup>uncollected</sup> cumulative taxes amounted to \$17,371,852 on January 1, 1936. Of this amount \$5,272,348 or 22.70 percent remained from the 1934 levy of \$23,221,301.

#### MARKETS AND TRADE CENTERS

In addition to the many accessible markets within the county, outside parts can easily be reached by water from Duluth. The later city it-  
self absorbs a good portion of the poultry, eggs, and vegetables, and the surplus is shipped to Superior, Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Chicago.

Situated at the head of Lake Superior, Duluth is the county seat and third largest city in the State. Second largest port in the Nation, it has the largest inland harbor in the World. It manufactures all types of food, clothing, ~~and~~ metal, wood, cereal, and fish products. It is especially noted as a center for the shipping and manufacturing of wool, butter, eggs, flour, cereals, byproducts of milk, and all varieties of animal and fowl feeds. At present it has nine creameries, and three more are being constructed. These are augmented by eight pasteurization and eight ice cream plants. Transportation facilities include one bus line, fifty-two steamship lines, and eight railroads. Paved highways radiate in all directions. The parochial, public, and private schools are ~~abroad~~ <sup>adequate</sup> of all educational advances, and the 115 churches represent <sup>practically</sup> all denominations.

Such mining towns as Chisholm, Hibbing, Eveleth, and Mountain Iron are ready markets for truck-farms and dairy products and are centers for intensive agricultural activities. Chisholm has an independent creamery which also manufactures cheese; Hibbing has a creamery, 2 pasteurization plants, 3 ice cream plants, and one canning factory. Virginia, also the focal point of a large farming district, has a 2 independent and 2 cooperative creameries, 3 pasteurization and 3 ice cream plants. Tower and Ely, two of the principal "jumping-off" places ~~enter~~ <sup>lake-straddled</sup> into the Superior <sup>wilderness to the north</sup> National Forest, are other sizeable markets centers, particularly during the tourist season.

#### COOPERATIVES (and canneries)

There are from ten to fifteen cooperative associations throughout the county, among which are: Land O'Lakes, which operates throughout the whole northern portion of the State; the Floodwood Cooperative, organized in 1931; Arrowhead Creameries; and the Virginia Cooperative Association.

These organizations distribute dairy products, while poultry and truck-farm products are nearly always handled by the individual farmer. Buyers come from Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and other points and buy a farmer's whole output. What is not absorbed in this fashion is brought to Duluth and the Range towns and sold to local markets.

#### TRANSPORTATION

Highways penetrate all parts of the county, except the wilderness area to the north. US 53, which runs from Duluth to the northwest corner, is paved from Duluth to Eveleth; the remainder is bituminous treated. US 169 is a paved, east-west highway running through Hibbing and Eveleth. US 2, and east-west road which crosses the lower part of the county, is bituminous treated. The <sup>600</sup> ~~six hundred~~ miles of State trunk highways include 2 stretches of pavement. State 1, and east-west route, is bituminous treated between Ely and Tower.

Eight ~~different~~ railway lines branch out from Duluth, the most important being the Chicago North Western, the Soo Line, the Great Northern, The D.M. & N., and the Northern Pacific.

Excellent passenger bus service is provided by the Northland Transportation Company. Duluth also has several large trucking companies which regularly carry freight. Its 38 steamship lines offer ample facilities for water shipments.

#### SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

Medical service is ~~in the more sparsely populated districts.~~ <sup>large</sup> There are adequate hospital facilities at Duluth, and International Falls, and a tubercular sanitarium near Duluth. The County Poor Commission supervises poor relief, and a Duluth hospital cares for county patients. Other social agencies include homes for aged, and transient homes.

The Jackson Rehabilitation Project, north of Duluth, is a government <sup>agricultural</sup> project consisting of 94 homes and 350 people. "resettlers."



Churches

There are ample church facilities throughout the county. Largest religious group is the Catholic with 46 churches. <sup>The</sup> Lutheran ranks second with 24, and others are Presbyterian, 13; Swedish Baptist, 11; Jewish, 8; Episcopal, 6; Congregational, 6; Baptist, 6; and miscellaneous, 4.

Schools

Because of <sup>additional</sup> ~~conditional~~ <sup>accruing</sup> benefits from taxes on the mining industry, <sup>the</sup> larger part of the school system <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ unorganized. Some of the finest school properties in the country have been built in the iron range communities with these tax revenues. There are <sup>junior</sup> colleges at Ely, Eveleth, Hibbing, Duluth, and Virginia, and accredited six-year high schools at Clover Valley, Brookston, Albern, Toivola, Cotton, Forbes, Cherry, Alange, Cook, and Embarrase. Duluth has a State Teachers College, a Work peoples College, University of Minnesota extension courses, and 3 private business schools.

## FAIR

On the <sup>superb</sup> county fair site at Hibbing, the St. Louis County Agricultural Society stages its annual exhibit. Community fairs are held at the northeast experimental farm.

## FARM INCOME

In general the farm income is small, and is supplemented near the larger urban centers by employment in mining or other industry, and in other sections by the tourist trade. Little livestock is sold on the hoof, most of the beef cattle being raised for the farmers own use; sheep herds are not ~~an~~ important market item, Wool is distributed by a Wool Pool in Duluth.

In 1935 St. Louis County farm products were valued at \$5,192,640. out of this amount dairying returned more than 50 percent. Products used by the operator's family amount to 25.5 percent; livestock to 9.7 percent; and crops to 9.5 percent, forest products, which brought in 5.7 percent, constitute a newer and increasing source of income.



## CENSUS REPORTS

A statistically average farm in this county in 1935 would be <sup>the</sup> fifth <sup>county average</sup> smallest in the State, comprising only 76.9 acres. Its value per acre would be \$29.59, and the total value would be \$2,275.

Every farm would have about six cattle, every other farm a team of horses, and on every sixth farm there would be two hogs. One farm in twelve would have a flock of 13 or 14 sheep. The productive acreage would naturally be very small. About sixteen acres of hay would be cut; there would be a little more than one acre each of potatoes and oats, and an occasional crop of wheat, rye, barley, corn, and flax. Of the 76.9 acres, 37 acres would be in pasture, 13 acres in woodland, about 20 acres in crops and the rest would be used for farm buildings and gardens.

ST. LOUIS COUNTYAgricultural Statistics

Population, 1930 (County)-----204,596  
 Area-----6503 sq. mi.-----4,161,920 acres  
 Water Area-----365 sq. mi. or 5.6% of the land area.

Farm Development

Number of farms, 1935-----7,919  
 Land in farms, 14.6% of the total land area or-----609,052 acres  
 Average size of farms-----76.9 acres

Farm Values

Average value per acre, 1935-----\$29.59  
 Average value per acre, 1930-----\$46.05  
 Average value per farm, 1935-----\$2,275  
 Average value per farm, 1930-----\$4,198

The Tax Picture

Total Taxable Value, 1935-----\$277,228,115  
 Total General Tax Levy-----\$4,693,492  
 The Average Tax Rate in 1935 was 32.38 mills.

Total Debt of County and Subdivisions-----\$4,127,652  
 Per Capita Debt-----\$20.17  
 County Bonds-----\$4,379,652  
 The Total Debt was 1.48% of the tax value.

Tenancy and Mortgage Debt

Farm Mortgage Debt, 1930 (Farms operated by owners)-----\$2,025,910  
 Of farms operated by owners 33% were mortgaged in 1930.  
 Tenants occupied 8.1% of the farms in 1930.

FARM INCOME (1930 Census)

Average Farm Income-----\$1,063

## Sources of Income

Crops-----	9.5%
Livestock-----	9.7%
Dairying-----	) 50.6%
Other Livestock Products-----	
Forest Products-----	5.7%
Products Used by Operator's Family-----	24.5%

Livestock Holdings-1935

Dairy cows---(not available)

Cattle and calves of all ages----6,299 farms reported 46,842 animals, an increase of 23.6% over 1930.

Swine--1,185 farms reported 2,639 animals, a decrease of 36.9% from 1930.

Sheep----634 farms reported 8,514 animals, an increase of 4.4% over 1930.

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Wheat----524 farms reported 16,698 bushels from 1,008 acres.  
 Oats---2,192 farms reported 412,456 bushels from 11,713 acres.  
 Barley---745 farms reported 54,102 bushels from 2,026 acres.  
 Rye-----188 farms reported 5,148 bushels from 338 acres.  
 All sorghums and hay cut for forage---110,037 tons from 125,723 acres.  
 Sweet hay and hay cut for silage---74 farms reported 555 tons from 212 acres.  
 Alfalfa---297 farms reported 1,747 tons from 1,525 acres.  
 Mixed grain---153 farms reported 32,139 bushels from 853 acres.  
 Flax Seed---53 farms reported 4,975 bushels from 479 acres.  
 Corn harvested for grain---16 farms reported 535 bushels from 23 acres.  
 Potatoes---7,307 farms reported 651,348 bushels from 8,014 acres.



*Notes*

HISTORY  
OF  
SAINT LOUIS COUNTY

It is altogether probable that the world will never learn anything about the ancient dwellers of the region of which St. Louis County is a part. During 1934 or 1935 an archaeological discovery was made near Aurora. Until it was found to be false this evidence gave definite proof of the existence of man, in that neighborhood, previous to the last advance of the glaciers.

The famous Kensington Rune Stone, found in Douglas County in 1898, seems to prove that Swedish and Norwegian explorers were the first to reach Minnesota as early as 1362. Since these men were primarily sea men, it is possible to believe that having reached the southern part of Minnesota, they were aware of the existence of such a large body of water as Lake Superior. Professor Fossum, however, believes that they reached southern Minnesota by way of Lake Winnipeg and the Red River.<sup>1</sup> Until this stone is generally accepted as genuine, it may be said that until the second decade of the seventeenth century the lake was known only to roving indians.

A map drawn by Champlain and published in lake 1632 includes the outline of a ~~map~~ some people believe to be Lake Superior and others Lake Michigan. It is known that he never visited the former lake before the publication of the map. It is claimed that Etienne Brule found or heard of the lake some fifteen years before Champlain.

The exploration and settlement of the area around the Head of the Lakes can be attributed directly to the French explorers and missionaries. As early as 1639 Nicolet, an employee of Champlain was in the vicinity of Sault Ste. Marie, and in 1641 Jaques and  
1. Duluth and St. Louis County, Walter VanBrunt, p.4.

Raymbault, Jesuit missionaries reached the same place.

The first white men to enter and navigate Lake Superior were Groseilliers and Radisson. Proof is found in the written records of Radisson and in the "Jesuit Relations" and "Journal of the Jesuits". These establish the dates of the voyages at 1656 and 1660. Their trips took them as far west as Chequamegon Bay (Ashland, Wisconsin) where they are believed to have established headquarters.

Perhaps the most important event in the history of the area that became St. Louis County was the arrival, in 1697, of Daniel de Gresolon, Sieur Duluth. Born in Saint-Germaine-en-Laye, France, he emigrated to Montreal and in September, 1678, having invested his money in a trading outfit, set out for the territory of the Sioux and Assiniboine. Wintering near the Sault, he finally continued his journey, eventually landing on the base of what is now Minnesota Point. Crossing at the "Little Portgage", (site of the Duluth Ship Canal) he canoed across the Duluth Bay, and portgaged up the St. Louis River until he <sup>to</sup> reached the Sioux Village at Fond du Lac.

One of the major reasons for his visit to the area was to overcome the hostilities between the Sioux and Ojibways and to show them the benefits they would derive by trading with the French. Accordingly, a great council was called and on September 15, 1679 it was held at Fond du Lac.

The results of the council were gratifying, and he spent that winter among the various tribes continuing his work in uniting the tribes in bonds of friendship.

In the spring of 1680 he again set out on a westward <sup>journey</sup>, this time reaching the Mississippi. To him, therefore, went the honor of being the first white man ever to reach the river from Lake Superior. It was on this trip that he rescued Father Louis Hennepin from

the Indians who held him captive.

The era between the period of exploration and permanent settlement involved fur-trading and missionary activities.

The center of these activities was Fond du Lac. This small settlement was at the head of the St. Louis River, <sup>on what is now known as Connor's Point</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>The river</sup> for many years had been an important waterway to the Indians.

In a paper read before the Old Settlers Association in 1915 William McEwen asserted "there is little doubt that the site of Fond du Lac was selected for the first permanent trading post in this locality, though some writers have attempted to prove that it was at the entrance to the <sup>N</sup>omadjí River, within the present city of Superior".<sup>2</sup>

The existence and location of the post has long been a debatable question. According to Ellworth Carlstedt "the idea that the Hudson Bay Company had a post at Fond du Lac seems to have developed solely from legend and tradition. Had there been a post at the Head of the Lakes undoubtedly it would have been shown on one or more of the many maps of the region that were produced in the eighteenth century".<sup>3</sup>

A second argument against the existence of a post is the fact that Perrault, who visited the settlement many time between 1784 and 1799 does not once mention a post. Finally, the fact that the region about Fond du Lac was the battleground for the Chippewa and Sioux would not have allowed a permanent trading post there.

During the entire period of French supremacy the Fond du Lac area bordered the fur-trading region. From the statement of the "Mackinac Register" of 1733 referring to the baptism of Marie Josephe, daughter of Jean Baptiste Tellier, who had spent the winter of 1752-1753 at Fond du Lac, it is inferred that at least there were wintering houses there as early as 1752. These were substantiated by

Jean Perrault who saw them in 1784.

2. *Sault and St. Louis County, Van Brunt, p. 39.*

3. *A History of the Fond du Lac Trading Posts, Carlstedt, p. 9.*



In 1789 Perrault formed a partnership with Alexis Reaume. Together they made an argeement with Sayer, Cadotte, Cazelai, Joseph Reaume and Laviolette whereby the different parts of the region around Fond du Lac were divided for trading purposes. With but average returns the party was dissolved in 1790.

During the summer of 1793 Perrault was employed by John Sayer of the Northwest Company to winter at Fond du Lac and to erect a post. He arrived with his party on August 16, and there erected the first permanent establishment at the Head of the Lakes and in what later was to become St. Louis County. The post was named Fort Saint Louis and was held by the Northwest Company until it withdrew after the War of 1812.

It may seem that the writer has paid undue attention to Fond du Lac and the establishment of the post there. It must be remembered, however, that Fond du Lac was the center of the activities which finally led to the complete exploitation and settlement of all of Northern Minnesota.

In 1809 John Jacob Astor organized the American Fur Company. In 1811 a combination of Astor's Company and the Northwest Company was organized to take over control of all territory south of the established Canadian-American boundary line. The new organization, called the Southwest Company, fell heir to the Fond du Lac post soon after the beginning of the war of 1812.

In 1816 Congress passed a law forbidding foreigners from trading with the Indians residing on American soil. As a result of the advantages thus obtained Astor bought out his associates and took complete charge of the trading activities. William Morrison was placed in charge of the Fond du Lac Department. Instead of making use of the old established fort, a new structure was erected at Fond du Lac. (The latter place refers to that <sup>western</sup> suburb of the City of Duluth and not to the settlement of Fond du Lac as the area at the Head of the Lakes was known).

Lest the reader think that the region back of Lake Superior remained a wilderness during these years, it may be well to explain that this was not the case. Working in direct opposition to the established trading companies were numerous independent traders. At times the volume of business done by these men was so great as to make the affairs of the organized companies look dismal. The explanation for this is that the independent traders, who recognized no master, dealt mainly in liquors, the most popular of all trade articles. For many years it was against the policy of the large companies to trade in this article. In fact some of its work was in confiscating this article.

The first sermon ever to be preached in St. Louis County was delivered on the third Sunday of June 1832 by Reverend W.H. Boutwell, a member of the William Aitkin party. In 1834 he was a participant in the first Christian marriage <sup>in the territory</sup> when he married Hester Crooks of Mackinaw.

Meanwhile a Rev. Edmund F. Ely was doing missionary work among the Indians of northern Minnesota. Dividing his time between Sandy Lake and Fond du Lac, he finally erected a permanent station at the latter place. In the summer of 1835 he established there the first school house at the Head of the Lakes. Here he and his wife labored until May, 1939. <sup>?</sup>

By 1842 the American Fur Company was forced to give up its post due to a lack of business. Thus the fur trade as an organized business ceased to exist, but for a decade or more was carried on by independent traders.

It must be understood that from the very first the entire region was Indian territory and therefore not open to white settlers. A series of treaties culminated <sup>in</sup> in the signing of a treaty at La Pointe in 1854 opened all of northeastern Minnesota to settlement.

Van Brunt states that "it is possible that the first rush of settlers to the head of Lake Superior was not for the purpose of establishing a townsite on the waterfront, but with a desire to stake a claim in the new copper district. For a decade previous \*\*\*\* certain mining operations had been carried on by the one privileged company\*\*\* the American Fur Company."<sup>4</sup> For a long time rumors had been heard from the Indians of the existence of vast quantities of copper along the North Shore. Subsequent explorations found copper, but in such small quantities as to make any mining scheme unprofitable. Superior, Wisconsin served as the base for all explorations and for a long time many believed that in time it would become the metropolis of the Head of the Lakes. The exploitation of the copper mines along the south shore resulted in the appearance of steam vessels and the almost complete disuse of the canoe and batteau.

It was during the winter and spring of 1854-1855 that the migration from Superior to the Minnesota side of Lake Superior began. During the next two years many townsites were platted and registered at the land office at Buchanan.

One of the major events of 1855 was the first election of county officers. From 1849 when the Territory of Minnesota was formed to 1855 the present area of St. Louis County was a part of the Itasca County division. The part that became St. Louis County lay dormant, at least as far as white settlers activities were concerned. The legislation by which the county was finally established is very complex, but <sup>has been</sup> most aptly reviewed by Hon. J. R. Carey in his "History of St. Louis County".

" In 1855 the territorial legislature passed an act defining the boundaries of certain counties. Section 24 of

4. Duluth and St. Louis County, Van Brunt, p. 66.



that act provides that 'so much of the county of Itasca as may be included in the following boundaries, viz: Commencing at the mouth of Knife River and the north shore of Lake Superior, thence directly north to the boundary line between the United States and the British possessions; thence in a westerly course along said boundary line to Vermilion River; thence down said river to Vermillion Lake; thence through the center of said lake to the southeast shore at the mouth of the principal inlet; thence in a direct line to Dead Fish Lake; thence through the center of said lake and down the center of the channel of the St.Louis River to its mouth; thence along the north shore of Lake Superior to the place of beginning, be and the same is hereby erected into a separate county, which shall be known by the name of Doty'. This Doty County then constituted a part of the present St.Louis County.

By Section 24 of the same act the county of Superior was outlined. Section 24: 'That portion of the Territory of Minnesota \*\*\*\*\* of a line commencing at the mouth of the Knife River on the north shore of Lake Superior and running due north until it intersects the boundary line between the United States and the British possessions be and the same is hereby erected into a separate county, and shall be known by the name Superior'.

Then, by a subsequent act, passed at the same session, on March 3, 1855, the names of these two counties were changed. 'Section 2: The counties named in the act approved February 26, 1855, entitled 'An act Defining the Boundaries of Certain Counties, as the Counties of Superior and Doty', shall hereafter be known by the following names: the County of Superior shall be known as the County of St.Louis, and the County of Doty shall be known as the County of Newton'.<sup>5</sup>

5. History of St.Louis County, Hon.J.R.Carey, pp.16,17.  
Also in Duluth and St.Louis County, VanBrunt, p.100.

On April 7, just one month and four days after the name of the county was finally established, the governor of the new territory named the first officers of the county. They were as follows: R.H.Barrett, Register of Deeds; Z.J.Brown, Sheriff and Tax Collector; Henry Robinson, Henry S.Burk and one other County Commissioners; and William Whitesides, Constable.

The first election ever to be held in the new county was conducted that fall in the home of Orrin Rice located on Rice's Point ( now Garfield Avenue in the City of Duluth).

Now that the county was established and named, it was necessary that it be organized. Regarding this Carey <sup>wrote</sup> ~~1884/85~~: "By the act passed March 1, 1856, the first boundary of Lake County was defined, and by Section 2 of said act, St.Louis County was organized and its boundaries defined, viz: 'Section 2. That so much of the County of Itasca as is embraced in the following boundaries be, and the same is hereby created into a separate county which shall be known as the County of St.Louis.' By the said act, the governor was authorized to appoint county officers; and the county commissioners, when appointed, were authorized to locate the county seat". <sup>6</sup>

After the organization was settled the governor named the following officials for the county: J.B.Culver, Clerk of District Court; J.B.Ellis, Sheriff; R.H.Barrett, Register of Deeds; J.E.Brown, Auditor; and C.E.Martin, Vose Palmer and Z.J.Brown, County Commissioners.

The county board therefore had the authority to select a county seat. Since there was no other community than the small townsites clustered near the foot of the Lake, it was only natural that one of these would become the seat of justice. It is not definitely known whether Duluth was chosen. ( At this time Duluth was nothing more than a few houses erected on the plat that had that name . It was a matter of some time before

the scattered townsites were united to form the present city).

As to the real location of the county seat Carey is again quoted: "From the year 1855 to 1862, the fact of any location of the county seat\*\*\*was a desperate question. There was no law locating it, nor any existing record that it had ever been located by the Board of County Commissioners, that body having been empowered to do so by law. It was contended by the Duluth people that it was located on Nettleton's claim, on the main shore at the base of Minnesota Point, by the Board of County Commissioners, but no record of such a fact was ever found. If any such action was ever taken it may have been by the Board of County Commissioners of Superior County, of whose acts, if ever they held a meeting, no record was preserved."

"In the year 1859, the people living at Rice's Point and above believed that if they could get an expression by vote of the people of the county, upon the question of the location of the county seat, they could, by a majority vote for its location secure it, and thus defeat the claims of Duluth and Portland. \*\*\*\*\*on ~~September~~ the 1st of October a petition was presented to the county board\*\*\*\*asking that the question be submitted to a vote, and that its location be at Port Byron, on the southeast quarter of section 33, in township 50 north, range 14 west, being near the center of the county, and situate between the bays of Superior and St.Louis".<sup>7</sup>

At the subsequent meeting the petition was defeated, and this is the only record of an attempt to locate the county seat. After 1862 it was generally conceded that Duluth was the county seat.<sup>8</sup>

During the early period of settlement there was little immigration to St.Louis County, and this can be traced directly to the lack of even decent transportation facilities. The main highways consisted of the lake and the many streams that lead from it. What few trails there were, were in such a condition as to make winter travel a

7. Ibid, p.104

8. History of Minnesota, Christianson, p.219.



hazardous undertaking, and during the summer they were so covered with vegetation as to be almost obliterated. Numerous accounts of trips taken along the trails and waterways have been written, but are too lengthy to be recounted here.

After years of agitation an act of Congress, passed on July 18, 1850, directed the construction of a highway from Point Douglas at the mouth of the St. Croix River to Fond du Lac on the St. Louis. The St. Paul promoters of Superior concluded that the terminus would be more of value to that city than to Fond du Lac, therefore a force of men were set to work cutting a road from Superior to Chase's Camp on the St. Croix, a distance of about sixty miles. For years this road was known as the "Military Road".

During the winter of 1855-1856 a survey was begun for the routing of the St. Croix and Mississippi. Here again St. Louis County would gain little benefit, for the line was to start at Superior. During that year two other important events in the history of the county occurred. The first was the establishment of the first post office in the county at Oneota with Rev. E. F. Ely as its postmaster. The second event involved the organization of the county's first public school at Oneota.

The year 1856 was also a great year in the platting of townsites. Among those platted were Milford, Portland, Endion, Middleton, Montezuma, Bellville, Buchanan, and Fond du Lac. So great was the spirit of speculation that one of the floating islands in St. Louis Bay was platted and named Fremont Island. With the construction of the Duluth Ship Canal it floated away and with it the hopes of those who had invested their money.

In 1857 Sidney Luce arrived in Duluth. He was induced to construct a warehouse to store supplies to be used in the construction of the contemplated St. Croix and Mississippi River road. The importance of this warehouse lay in the fact that twelve years it served as the St. Louis County Court House. In it were the Duluth Post

Office, United States Land Office, and County Auditor's and County Treasurer's offices. Here also were held the meetings of the board of county commissioners, township meetings, and meetings of the school district.

The effects of the panic of 1857 were so great that even the Head of the Lakes felt the shock and that year lost nearly three-fourths of its population. In Duluth all stores were closed and what <sup>little</sup> ~~small~~ trading there was, was done in Superior.

The Board of County Commissioners had little business to transact, but at a meeting held on April 5, 1858 the county was divided into four townships: Duluth, Martin, Carp River and Carlton. On January 19 six school districts were organized for the county. A report also shows that the first county roads were constructed at this time. One extended from Oneota to Buchanan and the other from Fond du Lac to Oneota.

Meanwhile, what of the interior of Saint Louis County? Activities in that area centered on Lake Vermillion. Especially was it important as the center of the fur trade. In the early 1800's the region had a large Indian population. Being on the main route used by the very earliest of the traders it was probably crossed by some of the early missionaries and explorers and probably was especially attractive to the Coureurs Des Bois. A resident of Duluth had occasion to transact business there and wrote: "\*\*\*\*\*It was a frightful journey,--there was no road, not even a trail. As a bird would fly the distance was about 90 miles, but owing to the circuitous route I had to take, it was about 150 miles. The entire trip was through forest and swamp and it was impossible to use a horse".<sup>9</sup> Little wonder there was little activity in the interior.

In 1865 an event occurred that had far reaching effects on the future history of the county and upon the eventual development and settlement of the long idle region. In 1855 Professor Henry H. Eames of Pennsylvania visited a friend in Duluth. A short

while later he was made state geologist. In 1865 he was at Vermilion Lake

*9. Gold Rush to the Vermillion & Rainy Lake Districts of Minnesota & Ontario in 1865 & 1894, p. 4.*

and reported finding traces of gold. John G. Rakowsky, a pioneer Duluthian, describes what then took place: "When the was was over\*\*\*\*\*I resolved to come back to Duluth and resume my old business(trading). Just about that time the state geologist had published a report on the Iron Range country ( not refered by this name until later) showing that there were extensive gold deposits there, and this report had gone over the entire country. A regular stampede set in for this ~~new bonanza field~~ section, and thousands of men were on their way to this new bonanza field. Companies were organized with hundreds of thousands of dollars capital, claims were being staked out, and fortunes were being invested in machinery which was ~~to~~ being shipped in to work the new field. \*\*\*\*\*It was impossible to transport the machinery and supplies\*\*\*\*\*without a road, and it was imperative this be constructed. It was constructed. About 1500 Union veterans had come up here and they went to work and cut a road through the forest to the country.<sup>'10</sup>

The new road was not all that it should have been, for during the summer it was, in most places, a peaty marsh, and the only season it could be used in safety was during the winter when everything was frozen over. Construction of a better road was advocated, and in 1868 Congress authorized the construction of a state highway to the gold field. George R. Stuntz, one of its most ardent advocates was given charge of the construction, and it was in readiness the next year.

Despite the fact that much capital was invested, companies organized, and settlements started, the rumor of gold proved to be unfounded. The veing, thought to be gold, proved to contain nothing more than pyrite, marcasite and pyrrhotite. By 1867 the rush had run its course and the country practically deserted.

The gold panic was not disastrous in all effects, For it brought about the eventual development of the great iron ore mines. The presence of iron ore had been an established fact even as early as 1850, when J.G. Norwood, a scientist, discovered ore at



Gunflint Lake. Little attention was given to his announcement of the discovery. It was not until Prof. Eames published his report that people found interest in the region. He returned from his exploration trip with a nail keg full of ore samples, and his own opinion was that it was of a superior quality and practically inexhaustible.

George R. Stuntz also found evidence of the iron ore, but to him it was not a surprise, for he was already aware of its presence. His own statement relates that the first white man ever to learn of the existence of the ore was N.A. Posey, a blacksmith. He was employed by the government to teach the Indians his trade, and while doing so some Indians brought him samples of the ore (1863). Posey was so impressed that he took them to Fond du Lac to show them to Stuntz.<sup>11</sup>

Stuntz did not consider the find seriously, but while following the gold rush he looked into the matter and removed samples from what became the Lee and Breitung mines.

The history of the Vermilion Range really had its beginnings in the arrival of Professor Albert H. Chester of Rutgers College. In 1875 he was sent to the area by a group of eastern capitalists who had become interested in the reports of iron ore. Chester's purpose was to make a complete investigation of the Vermilion Range.

During the summer Chester and a party of Duluthians investigated the range particularly all of town 59-14 and 60-13. The samples obtained were shipped to Rutgers College for analysis. Part of the ore was condemned, but others were believed to merit further examination.

In 1879 Chester returned to the Vermilion Range and conducted another exploration trip. Chester, by the way, was in the employment of Charlemagne Tower of Pottsville, Pennsylvania. As a result of the second investigation Mr. Tower made up his mind to invest heavily in the Vermilion ore fields. In 1880 he bought 840 acres in township 62-15. Land then sold at \$4 an acre or \$500 for a quarter section.

Having control of some much potential wealth in the form of mineral land, Tower and his associates saw the necessity of getting a railroad into the area. By working tirelessly they obtained a grant of 600,000 acres of land from the state legislature. It is not clear whether the group did get the land.

In 1874 the Ontonagon Syndicate had organized the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad Company. This syndicate never got any further than ~~organizing~~ incorporating the company, and by 1882 Tower, George Stone and their associates had control of the company. By 1882 a survey was underway under the direction of Stone and in the fall a contract was let for the construction. On July 31, 1884 the railway was completed to Soudan, and two years later it reached Tower.

Most of the early work was done in the name of George Stone and Company, but in December 1882 the Minnesota Iron Mining Company was formed with Tower, Stone, Lee, Stuntz, and Breitung as the parties involved. That same year an independent group formed the Mesabi Iron Company to operate mines on the Mesabi Range.

The development of the mines and railroad was certain to bring people to the region, and it was not long before large communities had sprung up around the mines. The townsites of Tower and Soudan were surveyed by Stuntz in 1882 and 1883.

During the first year of operation the railroad transported 62,124 tons of ore from the Vermilion mines to Two Harbors, and in 1892 the first ore from the Mesabi Range reached that city.

Some of the mines which were located on the Vermilion Range were the Consolidated Vermilion, Mine, McComber, Mine Pioneer, Chandler, Savoy, Zenith, Sibley, Chippewa and Section 30 mines. Many are being operated at the present time.

The history of the Mesabi Range is crammed with incidents of adventure and drama. The most outstanding group of exploiters of that region were the Merritt brothers. As timber cruisers they ranged all over northern Minnesota and became familiar with the territory. In 1887 Cassius Merritt was engaged in surveying a railroad line from Duluth to Winnipeg. On his return home he brought with him a chunk of iron ore picked in township 58 north, range 18 west, section 5. Activities made it impossible to follow up the find, but in 1889 they explored the whole range and when the state opened the area, Leonidas made filings on nearly two hundred locations.

Under their direction a party was sent into the area and on Nov. 16, 1890 it struck ore just north of the present Mountain Iron Mine. During this period other men including Captain Griffith, John Mallman, and Frank Hibbing, in whose honor a city was named, conducted exploration on the Mesabi.

In order to carry on their mining work, the Mettitts, on July 11, 1890, organized the Mountain Iron Company. The capital was \$2,000,000, in shares of \$100 denomination, par value. The work at the Mountain Iron mine being well in hand, the next year the brothers took an option on the Biwabik property.

With all this property on hand, it became vital to find some means of transporting the ore to the docks. It may be remembered that the D & I Ry was twenty-five miles to the east. It was finally decided by the Merritts to build a track to Stony Brook, a junction of the Duluth and Winnipeg Railroad, then under construction. To facilitate the construction of the branch line, the Duluth, Missabe and Northern Railroad was incorporated. The two Merritt properties raised \$200,000 each and promises received from Duluthians to aid in the finance. The line from the Mountain Iron Mine reached Stony Brook in 1892 and connections made to get the ore to the docks at Superior. At this time Duluth had none.



Finally, in 1892, the Merritt companies decided to back the brothers in the construction of a railroad to Duluth and there construct docks. This was the undoing. At this time the Duluthians who had promised financial aid backed out, for they felt that a period of hard times would soon come. Grant and Chase, the builders of the Duluth and Winnipeg Ry refused to support them, because the money necessary to build the docks and railroad could not be obtained.

While the brothers were in difficulties, the operators of the American Steam Barge Company saw the possibilities in the ore traffic and began to look for contracts. This led them to the Merritts. The final outcome was that Wetmore (representative of the Barge company) was to raise \$2,000,000 with which to complete the Hibbing extension, build the Duluth line and docks. A holding company was formed to include all the Merritt enterprises.

Wetmore found it difficult to sell the \$2,000,000 in bonds and meanwhile the Merritts were getting deeper in debt since contracts had been let for the building of the railroad and docks. In spite of all the attempts made, the final outcome was that the brothers were forced to go to John D. Rockefeller and by 1894 he had control of all their holdings.

DULUTH MINN.

TOPIC: Early Settlement F.C. 230

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SUBMITTED BY: Delia Swanson.

EARLY PIONEERS.

The Chippewa Treaty of September 30, 1854, made between the Chippewa Indians and the United States government was approved by the U.S. Senate January 10, 1855 and proclaimed by the President January 29, 1855. This treaty which opened up the Northern part of Minnesota attracted many people to this <sup>a</sup>rea; many coming before the treaties final acceptance to look over possibilities for mineral claims. D. S. Cash, uncle of W. W. Spalding, for whom the Spalding Hotel was named, negotiated the terms of the treaty.

Among those who came before the territory was opened up to join George R. Stuntz, was August Zachau, representative of Col. Robertson, (Mr. Stuntz and Mr. Zachau planted the first vegetables grown at the Head of the Lakes from seeds which Mr. Stuntz brought here on sled from St. Croix Falls.); Robert McLean who was the first mail carrier along the North Shore and was appointed in 1856; Samuel McQuade, sheriff of St. Louis County in 1877; Vose Palmer, one of the three county commissioners appointed by the Governor for the newly organized county of St. Louis in 1856; J. R. Carey who served as judge on the benches of our courts for years (he came in 1855); the Merritts and the Wielands arrived in 1856 and each played an important part in the industrial development of the new territory.

Mr. L. H. Merritt and eldest son Napoleon came from Ohio on the side-wheeler "North Star" on July 3, 1855, on her first

trip through the locks at the Sault Ste Marie and squatted upon land in Oneota.

They were joined by Mrs. Merritt and her five youngest sons the next year.

Alfred Merritt, who was then only nine years old, later described his first impression of the primeval forest here as follows: "We passed through the Old Superior Entry into Superior Bay, about 2 o'clock p.m. on the 28th day of October 1856. I wish that you could have seen how beautiful the Head of the Lakes looked at that time. It was practically in a state of nature. The Indians were there, with their wigwams scattered up and down Minnesota and Wisconsin Points, with the smoke curling from the tops of the wigwams, and their canoes skimming along the waters of the bay, or hauled upon the shore. Fish and game were in abundance. Tall pines and hardwood trees were growing on the hillsides, and down to the water's edge, and with the leaves of the hardwood trees turned, as they were in the fall, what a beautiful sight it was."

The four brothers Leonidas, Alfred, Cassius and Napoleon spent their early childhood outdoors studying the woods. Leonidas became the white godson of Old Loon Foot, and was adopted into the tribe of the Necondis, heard from the lips of Old Loon Foot the quasi-geological story of Nanibojou, the Great Hare, who in very ancient days when the waters came and covered the whole face of the country had built a great raft and kept all the birds and beasts alive upon it. It is fitting here that mention be made of the poem written by Leonidas Merritt October 20th, 1894 after he had lost all his wealth, "Necondis" Battle Song. This poem follows the style of Longfellow's "Hiawatha." The art of finding ones way in the woods, which the brothers learned from the Indians served them in later years when they were searching the dense forests of the Ranges for white pine and mineral deposits.

Leonidas and Alfred laid the keel of the first ship built at the Head of the Lakes, 67 feet over all and 69 tons gross; they named her "Chaska." She was wrecked on the rocks in a storm and they sawed wood



with a crosscut saw to pay off the indebtedness of \$1500, resulting from this disaster. This display of honesty played an important part in later years when they were seeking credit to finance their mining activities. They never forgot their father's prophecy: "The iron mines up under the Mesabi will be worth all the gold in California." Year after year they voyaged the Mesabi Heights from end to end, but they were not rewarded for their efforts until the late 80's.

Lewis Merritt, the father, had moved to Missouri to get away from the severe winters here, and died there several years later. His wife, Hepzibeth, came back to Duluth to live with her sons; Jerome, the eldest, was the first school teacher here; Lucien, a Methodist preacher, carried on his father's uncompromising nonconformity.

Cassius Merritt, while employed as head explorer for a crew of surveyors, picked up a piece of ore, which proved to be excellent hematite<sup>a</sup> merchantable ore, in Section 31, T 58, N. Range 18 West of the 4th Meridian in Minnesota, in the year 1887. From this date on explorations began in earnest. Test pits were dug and control of properties obtained. By 1892 the eyes of steel magnates were focused on the Merritts.

Pit no. 15 showed a 67.9 per cent iron, 1.8 percent in silica. Mesabi Mountain was the richest of all Merritt mines. Mountain Iron holds the unique position of having shipped the first ore from the Mesabi Range, Oct. 17, 1892.

In 1892 the Merritt brothers turned down an offer of \$8,000,000 made by the Minnesota Iron Co, for their holdings. The panic of 1893 caused labor difficulties in connection with the development of the docks which were necessary to connect the range with shipping facilities. Money matters were becoming more difficult and the capitalists in the east were not forwarding the money to meet the labor costs here, as promised. The linking of the railway with the docks ultimately effected the Merritts ruin and the profits from their

enterprises were reaped by others. "The Merritts were stalwart in wild places; could lay the surveyor's chain blindfolded almost, but they were lost in the civilization of Wall Street; and when they located themselves, they knew they were almost as poor as when they started pioneer work in Oneota. The millions of tons of rich ore discovered by them in the wilderness had been deeded to a stranger thousands of miles away, almost over night. Cassius Merritt, who first found the outcrop of ~~tacconite and banded ore~~ at Mountain Iron, in 1887, died poor in the spring of '94."

Leonidas Merritt went to New York and finally secured the aid of Rockefeller, who took first mortgage bonds as security for his investments, and the Merritts accepted stock. The panic made it impossible to liquidate their holdings at any sacrifice, and the title to the Mesabi Range was deeded to eastern steel interests.

Leonidas and Alfred died in 1926. Glen Merritt, son of Alfred, is the present postmaster of Duluth.

Early Settlement F.C.230  
Page 5.

Sources of Material:

"Battle Song of the Necondis" by Leonidas Merritt. Available at  
Historical Society St.Louis County.

Personal files in Historical Society St.Louis County. Files on  
Mesabi Range and Duluth Missabe & Northern R.R.



Duluth, Minn.  
Early Shipping  
 Clayton A. Videen  
 October 1, 1937

*Local Guide*

*(Sample)*

*Reid 10/1/37*

MARINE DISASTERS ON LAKE SUPERIOR

1847 — The schooner Merchant, commanded by Capt. Robert More, was lost on Lake Superior in June, 1847. <sup>with</sup> A crew of seven and an equal number of passengers, went down with the ship. The exact way in which the ship met disaster is unknown, but a tremendous gale was blowing at the time and it is thought that the ship foundered.

1851 — The Manhattan was sunk in Lake Superior when it collided with the Monticello.

1853 — The steamer Independence, said to be the first steamboat on <sup>the</sup> Lake Superior, was wrecked near the Soo when her boilers exploded Nov. 22, 1853. "She left the dock at the head of the portage about midnight with a heavy load of winter supplies for Ontonogan and La Pointe, and a number of passengers. She had not proceeded over a mile before her boiler burst, literally tearing three-fourths of the boat to atoms, killing four persons--- the engineer, one passenger, and two firemen---and badly injuring the second engineer and several passengers. The boat, with the exception of 25 feet of her bow, was blown to atoms. Her engine and boiler, with the exception of a small piece of the latter, was beyond discovery in a search that was made within 100 feet of the wreck, and a large portion of the 2,700-barrel bulk cargo was scattered in every direction, altogether making the escape of the <sup>4 of the crew were killed,</sup> 30 passengers <sup>saved.</sup> miraculous."<sup>1</sup>

1856 — <sup>during a storm</sup> "The propeller Superior was lost near Grand Island, Lake Superior, Oct. 29, <sup>35 were lost, 11 saved.</sup> 1856, during a violent storm. Her rudder was carried away and the boat fell into the trough of the sea. She commenced making, the fires were put out and she struck the rocks, soon after going to pieces. Thirty-five

<sup>1</sup>"History of the Great Lakes, Vol. 1, pp. 695-96, J.H. Beers Co., Chicago, 1899.

lives, including 11 passengers, were lost, and 16, including 5 passengers, were saved. Captain Hiram Jones was among the lost. The Superior was considered one of the best boats in the trade, and had lived through many a storm. She left Chicago Oct. 25, loaded principally with supplies for miners."<sup>2</sup>

- 1857           The City of Superior, a vessel of 700 tons, was wrecked in Nov., 1857, at Eagle Harbor, Lake Superior, after having spent only three months in the service. The government schooner Lamplighter was totally wrecked in the same year when she was driven on the rocks at Isle Royale.
- 1858           The propeller Indiana was sunk near Whitefish Point, Lake Superior; *the* Lady Elgin was wrecked, on Lake Superior.
- 1859           The propeller Manhattan was wrecked near Grand Sauble, Lake Superior.
- 1860           The steamer Arctic was totally wrecked on Hurn Island, Lake Superior. The steamer Gazelle was lost near Eagle Harbor, Lake Superior.
- 1863           "*The passenger* steamer Sunbeam was lost in a hurricane on Lake Superior, Aug. 28, 1863 with all on board *men lost* except John Frazer, the wheelsman. She was a passengers steamer, plying between Superior and Portage Lake."<sup>3</sup> Leaving Superior on Aug. 26, the ship ran into a stiff northern wind near Ontonogan. A few hours later the wind shifted to the northeast and reached the proportions of a gale. She *rode* ~~read~~ the gale successfully until the morning but an attempt to put her into Copper Harbor, 24 miles away, was without avail. The wind struck her quarter with tremendous force. "When they put her about she fell into the trough of the sea and rolled terribly. Her engines were useless, as was the jib. An attempt was made to right her into the wind, but she was beyond control; the pilot house was laying flat on the water, the waves beating against her. She was pounded to pieces and sank in a short time. The wheelsman left his wheel, disobeying the captain's orders, when he saw

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 677.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p. 695.



that it was impossible to right the vessel. He got into a lifeboat, but got out to let a woman in instead, the other lifeboat being filled to capacity."<sup>4</sup> He lashed himself to a fragment of the deck. The ship soon sank, the bow going down first. In sight of Frazer, the two lifeboats capsized and dumped their human cargo into the seething water. After spending 42 hours in the water the wheelsman was washed ashore. He was the sole survivor of the 30 or so aboard the ship. Built at Manitowoc in 1861, the Sunbeam was a ship of 500 tons burden. "She had five watertight compartments, was elegantly furnished, and was a favorite with the lake-traveling public."<sup>5</sup>

- 1864 The steamer Cleveland was wrecked at Two Hearts River, Lake Superior.
- 1870 The steamer Ontonogan was sunk near the Saulte Ste. Marie, Lake Superior in 1870; the schooner Dreadnaught was wrecked at Grand Island, while the Bermuda and the Africa both went down in Lake Superior in this year.
- 1871 The schooner Plover, leaving Duluth on Oct. 7 with 18,000 bushels of wheat was wrecked at Whitefish Point, <sup>on Oct. 7,</sup> Lake Superior.
- 1873 During a terrific storm in October, 1873, the schooner Gilbert Mollison was sunk <sup>in Oct.</sup> near the South Manitou (Lake Superior) with all hands on board. The Vienna foundered in the same month.
- 1874 The steamer Latta Bernard foundered on Lake Superior.
- 1875 "The propeller Comet was struck by the Canadian steamer <sup>and sank</sup> Manitoba near Whitefish Point, Lake Superior, Aug. 26, <sup>half of the crew of 20 were lost,</sup> The collision happened about 8:40 o'clock in the evening. The Manitoba struck the Comet about 15 feet from the stern on the port side and the shattered vessel sank within three minutes."<sup>6</sup> During the excitement several of the crew of the Manitoba jumped to the deck of the Comet, but fortunately they returned quickly to their own vessel. Out of the Comet's crew of twenty, half were lost. During the same year the Algerian was wrecked at Split Rock, with the loss of several lives. Built in Montreal in 1855, she had a net tonnage of 456 tons.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 696.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 696.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 730.



1876

"The steamer St. Clair burned to the water's edge while off Fourteen Mile Point, between Ontonogan and Portage Lake Ship Canal (south shore), about 2 o'clock Sunday morning, July 9.<sup>on</sup> She had a crew of 15 and 16 passengers <sup>26 were lost</sup> were aboard. Of this total 26 were lost."<sup>7</sup> Starting from the hold, the flames spread so rapidly that the engineers were driven from the engine room before they had time to attach the hose. With the exception of a large yawl, all of the boats were burned. Of course, there was a rush for the remaining boat, which was capsized and righted six times before it finally got under way, containing only four members of the crew. The seats were torn out and used for paddles, and the little party cruised about near the burning vessel. Two were picked up in the water, but one was dead; the other was Capt. Robert Phineas. Though the fire broke out only five miles from shore, and most of the passengers donned life preservers, they soon died in the extremely cold water. The St. Clair was built as a barge in 1866, and was converted into a steamer in 1875. She met her fate while on a trip down from Duluth.

1877

<sup>steamer</sup> The Magellan, a steamer, foundered in Lake Superior with all hands on board. The exact cause of her fate is unknown, but it is conjectured that she was rammed by another ship.

1879

The tug, Satellite, <sup>or</sup> sunk off Whitefish Point, Lake Superior.

1881

The City of Winnipeg was burned at Duluth.

1882

<sup>the steamer</sup> Two lives were lost when the steamer Grace ran ashore on Whitefish Point, <sup>2 lives lost</sup>

1883

<sup>manila</sup> The foundering of the Manistee in the middle of Lake Superior, Nov. 16, <sup>with the loss of all on board (20).</sup> was the most serious disaster of that shipping season. She ran into a heavy gale, failed to weather it, and wreckage was found strewn all over the shore several miles from Ontonogan. All hands aboard, which included a crew of 16 and 4 passengers, twenty in all, lost their lives in the disaster. Other craft to go down in Lake Superior in 1883 were: <sup>the</sup> Mary Jarecki, <sup>ss</sup> wrecked at Point Au Sable; <sup>the</sup> steamer Spartan, <sup>abandoned</sup> at Caribou Island; <sup>Canadian schooner</sup> the Cedelia, a Canadian

schooner of 298 tons, <sup>The</sup> was wrecked on Lake Superior, ~~and~~ schooner Wabash, carrying a cargo of coal, was wrecked at the Picture Rocks.

1884

<sup>by</sup> Steam barge J.M. Osborne was ~~sunk in~~ <sup>and</sup> a collision with the Alberta <sup>and sank</sup> near Owen Sound; with three lives lost; the boilers of the <sup>tug</sup> Pacific, a tug, exploded at Ashland, killing the engineer; <sup>the barge</sup> the W.R. Taylor, a barge, was sunk at Huron Bay, Lake Superior; the captain and one man were drowned when the schooner Golden Rule capsized <sup>captain and one man were drowned, propeller</sup> in Lake Superior, and the Scotia, a propeller, was wrecked at Keeweenaw Point.

1885

<sup>The</sup> Leaving Owen Sound on Nov. 5, the Algoma, owned by the Canadian Pacific Railroad Company, was caught in a fierce gale <sup>on Nov. 5; 38 were drowned, 8 saved</sup> on Lake Superior. She struck on Isle Royale on the seventh. Only eight of the passengers and crew, more dead than alive, were picked up by the sister ship, Ashtabula. Not only were 38 drowned, but the steamer, valued at \$250,000, was a total loss. <sup>The</sup> Prussia, a Canadian vessel, was burned and sunk in Lake Superior, but all of her crew <sup>was</sup> were saved, reaching Bayfield, Wis., safely. The steamer City of Rome was damaged by fire in Duluth; <sup>The tug</sup> the Thomas Quayle, a tug, was burned at Ontonogan.

1886

<sup>tug</sup> The Lizzie Sutton, a tug, was burned, on Lake Superior, and another tug, <sup>tug</sup> the A. Booth, was sunk. <sup>barge</sup> The Eureka, a barge, foundered. <sup>The</sup> the steamer A. Neff was wrecked at Edward Island, Lake Superior.

1887

Overtaken by a howling gale on Lake Superior Oct. 7, 1887, <sup>The</sup> the schooner Niagara foundered <sup>on Oct. 7.</sup> in seven fathoms of water. With 1,400 tons of ore aboard, she left Ashland in tow of the steamer Australasia. On rounding Keeweenaw Point, the wind stiffened and increased until it reached the proportions of a gale. The towline snapped about ten miles above Whitefish Point, and, the schooner having no canvas to bring her to, immediately fell into the trough of the sea. She heeled over dangerously, and when she righted herself jerkily, her spars snapped and crashed into the sea. <sup>steamer</sup> The City of Ashland, a steamer, was burned near Ashland; <sup>was wrecked</sup> the 307-ton schooner Alice Craig; <sup>steamer</sup> the Laketon, a steamer of 147 tons, was wrecked, and <sup>tug</sup> the Pendell, a tug, <sup>was sunk</sup> went down on Lake Superior.



1888

The schooner Willie Keller collided with another ship and sank; the steamer City of Montreal was wrecked at Michipicotan Island in October of this year.

1889

The Chas. J. Sheffield was sunk in a collision at Whitefish Point; the steamer C. Hurlbut burned at Superior, and the steamer Tourist burned at Ashland.

SOURCES OF MATERIAL:

The Manitowoc News-Herald (newspaper) Dec. 29, 1931.

Duluth Herald (newspaper) Feb. 19, 1932 and April 10, 1933.

"History of the Great Lakes" two vols., J.H. Beers Co., Chicago, 1899. Vol. I, pp. 654, 669, 677, 683, 695-96, 701, 724, 727, 730, 731, 734, 739-42, 745-46, 750-52.



Duluth, Minn.  
Arrowhead Anecdotes  
Ludwig Bodenstab  
September 30, 1937

*Local Guide*

*Leit. 10/2/37*

A PIONEER WOMAN SPEAKS UP

Mrs. William S. Woodbridge, well-known for her leading role in social affairs of the city, reminisces

"While the experiences of the early days could be considered a hardship for the men it was ten times more annoying to women. The hardships of housekeeping, for instance and home making, keeping the home tidy and comfortable, not to say attractive, were much greater than any hardships the men were called upon to endure.

"The first year or two, there was no mirror at the head of the lakes. Those who were fortunate enough to have a new tin boiler, or new tin dishes could get along very well. One of the early settlers has told me that he had frequently seen the women combing and arranging their hair by their reflection in the wash boiler or dish pan. Ribbons, perfumes and fancy articles were wholly unknown.

"An old settler who came with his family told me 'Our whole outfit comprised a feather bed and a lunch basket in which were a knife, fork and two small china dishes. I also bought a single mattress and a pair of blankets in Cleveland on my way to Duluth. We built our bedsteads out of green tamarack poles peeled, using the bark for ropes to hold it together and made a table of two boards which were found floating in the Bay. Bed clothing consisted of Indian blankets and moccasins answered for shoes, while curtains, carpets and upholstered furniture were unknown.'"

William S. Woodbridge and his bride, the former Miss Frances A. Poole, from Auburndale, Mass., came to Duluth in 1870, where Mr. W. entered the paper and stationary business. He was affiliated with the Duluth Paper and Stationary Co. (still in existence under the name Duluth Paper and Specialties Co.) since August 1, 1870, and became president of the firm in 1896.

In 1878 Woodbridge started The Lake Superior News, a weekly paper, which was published in Duluth until 1886, when it became The Daily News, and later the Duluth News-Tribune.

SOURCES OF MATERIAL:

Old Rail Fence Corners, published 1914 at Austin, Minn., compiled by The Book Committee of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Page 320.

The Book of Minnesotans, Vol. I., p. 565; edited by Albert Nelson Marquins; published 1907 by A.N. Marquis & Company, Chicago.

Recd. 10/15/37

Typed by A.E.J.

Duluth, Minnesota  
October 13, 1937  
Harry P. Spooner*Oneota Biography*HENRY WAKEMAN WHEELER

Henry W. Wheeler was born in Oneida County, New York on March 19, 1821. He was the youngest son of John Wheeler of Blackrock, Conn., a shipbuilder by trade and a patriot by practice for he had carried a musket in the Home Guard of Connecticut during the last year of the Revolutionary War, at the early age of 16. John Wheeler, after working in his father's shipyard for a time, moved to Oneida County and established a farm home, where Henry W. Wheeler was born.

In 1841 the entire family moved west to Grass Lake, Michigan, and there started another pioneer farm home. At that time Henry W., who was 20 years of age, decided to start for Chicago, with a pack on his back. From there he walked across the Illinois to Galena, where the lead mines had just been opened, and secured work as a lead miner.

At Galena he met Sarah Caroline Brewster, whom he married at New Diggins, Wisconsin, on Nov. 25, 1847. Miss Brewster was a direct descendant of Elder Williams Brewster of Mayflower fame.

From New Diggins, Wis., they moved to Neenah, Wis., and then in 1854 traveled by stage to the Mississippi River and then by boat to St. Paul, where he secured work as an engineer on a steamboat that plied between St. Anthony Falls (now Minneapolis) and Sauk Rapids. Later he became an engineer in a lumber mill.

At the request of E. F. Ely, he traveled from St. Paul to the Head of the Lakes (nearly all the way on foot) in April, 1855, to become interested in the townsite of Oneota and the pine timber adjacent.

Henry W. Wheeler, arrived at the Head of the Lakes, in 1854; 18 months before Lewis H. Merritt. He built a log house in Oneota. Mrs. Wheeler and her 3 children went down the Mississippi from St. Paul, thence across Wisconsin by stage, up Lake Michigan to the Sault and then by boat to Madeline Island near Ashland, thence to



Typed by A.E.J.

Superior in an open sail boat, arriving in Nov., 1855.

He built a log house in Oneota and later, by taking the logs from the walls of the old log cabin and sawing them into lumber, built a frame house on the same location. This frame house still stands at 4510 Michigan Street, and is one of the few remaining land marks of the early Oneota days.

Henry W. Wheeler, pioneer lumberman, had to be a general tradesman when he built the first sawmill at the Head of the Lakes, on the Minnesota side of the St. Louis River at Oneota (45th Ave. W. and Bayfront) in 1856. Later he also ran the sawmill at Howards Pocket on Connor's Point.

Mr. Wheeler named the town Oneota after the Iroquois Indian name Oneniot, meaning projecting stone, and also after his birthplace, Oneida, N. Y.

For years he was assessor of the town of Oneota. He was one of its supervisors, a school director, and later treasurer of the village of West Duluth.

He helped to organize the Republican Party in St. Paul in 1855 or '56.

He tried and won the first jury case in St. Louis County.

He surveyed the townsite and was one of its incorporators. The Wheelers were neighbors and friends to the Merritt Family.

In 1869, under a charter, he brought the tug Amethyst here, the first at the Head of the Lakes. This tug was wrecked near Beaver Bay at Christmas sometime in the early '80's. He took his two sons and a neighbor there the following spring, hewed out ribs, put in planks, repaired the broken steam pipes and brought the tug in under her own steam power.

Henry W. owned half interest in the dredge that dug the ship canal, and had the contract for hauling rock used in constructing the breakwater.

He owned lots on Minnesota Point and tried to promote a shipyard here.

Henry W. was a charter member of the Second Presbyterian Church and was one of its elders for years. He assisted in the organization of the Westminster Presbyterian Church at West Duluth.

He was a director of the Manufacturers' bank of West Duluth and director and

Typed by A.E.J.

treasurer of the Duluth Imperial Mill located on Rice's Point. He was one of the early presidents of the Old Settlers Association.

During the hard times of 1893, he became involved as indorser on the bonds of the Manufacturers' bank in favor of St. Louis County and was forced to sell his timber lands and downtown property at a sacrifice to pay his debts.

For more than 50 years Henry W. Wheeler carried on at Oneota. He and his wife raised nine of their 10 children.

Martyn, Steamboat Captain on Great Lakes, born May 13, 1849, married Mary C. Ely, niece of Edmund F. Ely, May 1870; had five children.

Elizabeth Wheeler Merritt, born Aug. 27, 1851, died July 28, 1902, married Leonidas Merritt in 1872; had four children.

Etta Wheeler Merritt, born April 3, 1834, married John. E. Merritt (son of Rev. Lucien T. Merritt) in 1887; had four children.

Julia A. Wheeler, born Sept. 2, 1856, unmarried, probably the first white child born within the present boundaries of the City of Duluth.

John James Wheeler, explorer and engineer, born July 19, 1858, married Ellen Brown; had one child.

Susie May Wheeler, born May 2, 1861, died Nov. 11, 1864.

Harry Wheeler, steam shovel engineer, born March 2, 1863, died August 2, 1913, married Jennie Clinch; had 2 children.

Duane Wheeler, civil engineer, born July 15, 1866, married Althea Richardson, daughter of Ira J. Richardson, former Duluth alderman; had 3 children.

Carrie L. Wheeler, born Aug. 26, 1868, died March 1, 1900.

Bert N. Wheeler, realtor, formerly County Superintendent of Schools, was born Aug. 31, 1870; married May Whitmore of Montivideo, Sept. 12, 1905, had 2 children.

The last years of Henry W. Wheeler's life were spent at 3407 W. 3d St. in the house he planned and built. He split mill wood for exercise and pleasure. He died on his

Typed by A.E.J.

birthday, March 19, 1906, when he was 85 years of age.

The Wheeler Field (athletic), in West Duluth, is named after him.



Duluth, Minn.

Topic: Early Settlements (F.C.) 230

Submitted By: Delia Swanson

Number of Words:

### EARLY PIONEERS

Christian Wieland, surveyor and civil engineer, came to the Head of the Lakes in 1853, and laid out the trail from Beaver Bay to Lake Vermilion. His 4 brothers, Henry, Ernest, Albert, and August sold their tannery business at Perrysburg, Ohio, and moved their families to Beaver Bay in 1856. From 1860 to 1883 they cut lumber at their mill in Beaver Bay and delivered it at Lake ports in their sailing vessel.

In 1878 Ernest Wieland severed his connections with the lumber industry and opened a tannery on the S.E. corner of Lake Ave., and Morse St., Duluth. The panic of 1893 and the unfair discrimination in railroad rates forced this firm out of business. This was the only attempt to establish a tannery at the Head of the Lakes.

Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Early Settlement (F.C.) 230  
Submitted By: Delia Swanson  
Number of Words:  
Date:

SOURCES OF MATERIAL

506 E. 1st St., Duluth, Minn.

Personal interview with Otto E. Wieland,

Duluth, Minn.  
 Topic: Ethnology (F.C.) 270  
 Submitted By: Gertrude Anderson  
 Edited By: W. J. Sullivan  
 Assisted By: Walter C. Beam  
 Number of Words: 480  
 Date: May 7, 1936

MRS. LAURA STACKLIE

Mrs. Laura Stacklie was born in Namsos, Norway, thirty miles north of Trondhjem. In 1888, she came alone to Thompson, Minnesota, where her father had preceded her. She reached New York via the Inman Steamship Line and came by rail to Chicago, then to Saint Paul, and from thence directly to Thompson. She recalls that many names were written on the walls of the Saint Paul railroad station, inscribed there by immigrants giving their origin and destination.

Thompson at that time was a lumbering town. Mrs. Stacklie remembers that she saw huge piles of logs and sawn lumber. At the station, she was met by a young man, Mr. Stacklie, who later became her second husband. Her father had delegated him to meet her, since he was busily occupied far out in the woods.

She stayed in Thompson but a short time and later came to Duluth. For awhile she was employed as a maid in the home of Captain Hector, who was a Norwegian. (Captain Hector's wife was of the Shistad family, who were also Norwegian. Mr. Shistad, the father of Mrs. Hector, mysteriously disappeared while he and a Mr. Zimmerman, another Norwegian, were out fishing on the lake. Mr. Zimmerman maintained that he fell asleep and, upon awakening, learned that Mr. Shistad was gone. No other explanation was ever given.)

Mrs. Stacklie recalls that Scandinavian girls were in demand as maids because of their dependability. She maintains that



the majority of Norwegians were enabled to come to this country only because of the willingness of the steamship agents to advance the immigrant's tickets, the monies for which were paid later when the immigrants had found employment in the United States. So dependable and honest were they that no difficulties arose in the collection of this money, though evasions must have been easy enough because of the unsettled conditions in the country.

She tells an interesting story of her experience in New York city. After the immigrants got off the boat, they were met by a Swede who invited them to his place of business. In the light of later experience, Mrs. Stacklie knows that this was a saloon. They were asked to order a meal. Most of the immigrants, however, did not do so; for they carried their own food, of which "knäckebröd" was the principal item. Although the majority were in no way indebted to their host, upon their leaving, he demanded that each one pay him fifty cents. Most of the immigrants were so frightened that they unhesitatingly paid. Being at that time unacquainted with American money, Mrs. Stacklie relates that to this day she does not recall how much she paid. One Swede, however, flatly refused to pay; and he and his host resorted to a fist-fight. This resulted in someone's breaking open a door, which furnished the immigrants' means of exit. Outside stood a vehicle which got them to the waiting train just in time. Evidently, this was an arrangement between the saloon-keeper and the conveyor, of whatever nature, to fleece the "greenhorns."

Mrs. Stacklie states that, in the early days, the Norwegians entertained one another in their Duluth homes. They also had an organization called "Idun." (See article on same by Gertrude Anderson.)

Later, Mrs. Stacklie's mother and grandmother joined the father and daughter here.

Duluth, Minn.

Topic: Ethnology (F.C.) 270

Submitted By: Gertrude Anderson

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

Mrs. Laura Stacklie, 617 $\frac{1}{2}$  East Eighth Street, interviewed on Ethnology by Mrs. Gertrude Anderson, May 4, 1936.

7228  
-1- Duluth, Minn.  
Topic: Duluth-Superior Harbor  
Number of Words: 557  
Submitted By: Capt. E. J. Ditzel  
Edited By: W. J. Sullivan  
Date: April 22, 1936

MARINE PERSONALITIES

Capt. A. B. Wolvin

Captain A. B. Wolvin, *sealer, shipbuilder.* Born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1857, ~~spent his early life on the boats of which his father, Captain B. S. Wolvin, was master, thus bringing him in contact with the Great Lakes shipping.~~ In 1879, he was Captain of the steamer Anna Smith, *Sailed the ton Lake Superior in 1879. joined ship building firm in Duluth, 1888.* sailing to Duluth. In 1888, he stopped sailing, located in Duluth, formed a partnership with the late Captain F. N. LaSalle, and engaged in the vessel business. Then, in 1901, when the United States Steel Corporation was formed, Captain Wolvin was made vice-president and general manager of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company, which took over a combined fleet of 116 steamers and barges, including several boats of the Wolvin Line. Captain Wolvin was the first manager of this company and was instrumental in bringing the general offices to Duluth. This position he held for four years. In 1903, he bought the old West Duluth Blast Furnace, together with 140 acres of ground, and named it the Zenith Furnace Company.

Captain Wolvin remained the head of the company until 1912. From 1898 to 1912, Captain Wolvin was also president of the Superior Ship-building Company, succeeding the late Captain Alexander McDougall.

Captain Wolvin began his career as cabin boy on the steamer City of Rome, on the Great Lakes; and, at 22 years of age,



he was master of that vessel. He was destined to become one of the most distinguished figures of the lakes' maritime community, and one of the most valuable to the coarse cargo division of the lakes' transportation industry. Captain Wolvin was a pioneer in greatly increasing the size of lake cargo ships, and of radically improving the type of construction.

Prior to 1895, the maximum size of lake ships engaged in the coarse cargo trade was about 300 feet. During the following decade, Captain Wolvin advanced the size of such vessels to 560 feet. The size of modern lake carriers was subsequently standardized at 600 feet.

Captain Wolvin first pioneered the rapid advance in the size of lake ships, and then introduced a new type of construction. He conceived the plan of eliminating stanchions and introducing girders and arches to support the deck and sides. This plan left the entire hold free for the use of cargo and the operation of unloading equipment, and was first introduced in the steamer Augustus B. Wolvin in 1904. Her size is 560 feet length, 56 beam, and 32 feet of depth. There are 33 hatches, spaced with 12-foot centers.

When Captain Wolvin quit the lakes as a vessel master, he became a vessel broker in Duluth; and, later, agent of the Western Transit Company.

In 1901, he became vice-president and general manager of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company, vessel division of the United States Steel Corporation. A few years later he organized (and was president of) the Zenith Furnace Company, now one of the principal units of the Interlake Iron Corporation.

Captain Wolvin became a dominant factor in a line of ships plying the Gulf of Mexico from Texas ports to South American - a fruit line.

He was conspicuous in the Butte and Superior Mining Company, with mines at Butte, Montana, which was a successful enterprise.

He designed (and supervised) the construction of the Wolvin Building in Duluth, now owned by the United States Steel Corporation.

Duluth, Minn.

Topic: Duluth-Superior Harbor (F.C.)

Submitted By: Capt. E. J. Ditzel

Marine Personalities

SOURCE OF MATERIAL

Files of St. Louis County Historical Society.

Personal Friendship.



Recd. 10/15/37

Typed by A.E.J.

Duluth, Minnesota  
October 11, 1937  
Arrowhead Anecdotes  
Ludwig Bodenshtab

THE FIGHT FOR PURE WATER

("THE BEST DRINKING WATER IN THE WORLD.")

Duluthians are conscious of the fact that their drinking water is of an exceptional quality and, being temporarily deprived of it, they crave for nothing else quite as much as for a glass of "good old Lake Superior water".

The interesting story of how the citizens of Duluth previously had to suffer from contaminated water, and how they succeeded in obtaining control of the water supply, is related by H. H. Phelps in his "Personal Recollections".

"When I came to Duluth the water for domestic purposes and fire protection was furnished by a private corporation known as the Duluth Gas and Water Company. ... The manager of the company was William Craig.

"The intake pipe where the company pumped its water from the lake and the pumping station, were at Fourteenth Avenue East. The territory back of this location was then rapidly filling up with houses and inhabitants, sewers were being constructed and sewage of the city was being drained into the lake at numerous points near the source of this water supply. The water at and near the pumping station was consequently contaminated and great opposition to the gas and water company had arisen because of its refusal to move its supply station further down the lakeshore, where pure water could be secured. Every request of this kind made by the citizens was met by the gas and water company with refusal, and feeling against the company became bitter in the extreme.

"Threats were made by the citizens that the city itself would put in a water plant and secure pure water. This threat was met by a statement to the effect that the city had no power to build a water plant, that the gas and water company had secured an exclusive franchise to supply Duluth with water, and that neither the city nor anybody else could engage in the water business in that municipality other than the gas and water company itself.

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"As time went on the feeling between the citizens and the ... company grew in intensity, and the opposition to the company was increased by the fact that on several occasions epidemics of typhoid fever broke out in different parts of the city, all traceable to impure water. In the early nineties a siege of typhoid fever swept over the city and entered almost every household. Hardly a family escaped and at times the numbers sick with the disease was appalling.

"S. D. Allen was the city attorney" and "had for a long time been a consistent fighter for the people against the gas and water company. ... His name appears frequently in the Supreme Court reports in those days in some fight against the Duluth Gas and Water Company, and he generally won.

"When the claim was made that the city of Duluth could not build a water plant itself, that nobody but the Duluth Gas and Water Company could supply water to the city, Allen determined to find out. He brought an action to test the question and the Supreme Court held that the gas and water company had no exclusive franchise, and that the city could build its own plant. The case in which the question was decided was: Long vs. City of Duluth, 49 Minnesota 280.

"The chief leader in that fight against the gas and water company was Henry Truelson, who afterwards became Mayor of the city. Truelson took off his coat and went into the fight for the people. Public meetings were held and it was decided to call an election to vote upon the proposition of raising funds to build a water plant. The people voted a bond issue, funds were raised, and the city acquired a tract of land on the water front, some ten miles down the lake shore from the business center of the city. A pumping station was put in and a pipe line run out into deep water, so that a supply of water could be furnished, taken at a depth of some fifty feet below the surface of the lake, and at a point so far removed from the contamination of the city that pure water would be assured for years to come. From this pumping station a line of steel water mains was laid to a point on the hillside about Thirty-second Avenue East, where a reservoir was constructed, intended to hold a supply of water sufficient to meet the needs of the city for several days at a time.



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"When the gas and water company was convinced that the city and its citizens meant business, and that its water mains and supply pipes would be paralleled, and its patrons supplied with pure water instead of sewage, it knew that its time had come and that this movement sounded the death knell of its activities in Duluth. Accordingly a movement was made on the part of its officers to induce the city to purchase its plant, and with that object in view, it made a proposition to the city council to sell its holdings for something over two million dollars. Citizens, who had looked into the matter, knew that this was simply an attempt to put onto the city an old and worthless plant at three times its value and opposition was immediately aroused. The gas and water company, however, was strong enough to get the council to call an election to vote upon the proposition. A campaign of opposition was made by leading citizens and issue was joined with those who for personal, political and financial reasons supported the proposition of the gas and water company.

"The newspapers were full of articles upon this controversy. A large amount of money was used by the gas and water company, and newspapers generally supported its side of the fight. A proposition was made that the subject be discussed in a public debate and I was approached with a request that I take part as one of the disputants against the purchase of the plant. I consented with the understanding that the newspapers in publishing the account of the debate, publish exactly what was said by each disputant and nothing else regarding the proceedings.

"There were chosen to take part in this debate S. D. Allen, S. T. Harrison and myself as opposing the proposition of purchase, and as favoring the purchase T. J. Davis, Colonel E. C. Gridley, and Colonel A. A. Harris were chosen.

"The debate took place in the old Temple Opera House, which was afterwards burned down. The papers the next morning were true to their promise, and published verbatim accounts only of the debate. The proposition went to a vote of the people and was overwhelmingly defeated. As time went on and the city continued its work of constructing a water plant, the gas and water company became more and more anxious to sell to the city its plant, and with that object in view, it submitted to the city council another



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proposition, reducing the price that it was purposed the city should pay several hundred thousand dollars. An election was called upon this second proposition and it too was rejected.

"After both sides had become weary of the long and continued fight the citizens made to the gas and water company a proposition to purchase both the gas and water plants of that corporation for a million, one hundred thousand dollars. The proposition was accepted and on being submitted to a vote of the people at an election, called for the purpose, was ratified by an overwhelming majority.

"Thus the city became possessed of a water and a gas plant. One of the problems that confronted the authorities at the outset was as to how these plants should be managed and operated. It was finally decided to create a board to be composed of five business men, who should serve without pay, the members to be appointed by the Mayor, and the board to be known as the Board of Water and Light Commissioners.

"Into the hands of this board was given the entire management of the gas and water plants of the city. The first board appointed employed L. N. Case of Detroit, Michigan, as manager, and for some twelve years thereafter Mr. Case was the managing head of the department. He had had charge of the Detroit water works for years and was thoroughly familiar with the water works business. From the time that Mr. Case took charge of the Duluth plant, he together with the board, set out to build and plan for the future.

"Mr. Case was never really appreciated by the rank and file of the people. He was a most valuable man for the community in the position assigned him. It was under his management that the water and light departments of the city were built up from crude possibilities to successful business enterprises, furnishing the inhabitants of Duluth with pure water and excellent gas at a low cost and at the same time by their earnings giving the city a financial strength that was pointed to with pride.

"But Mr. Case had been a Major in the army during the war of the Rebellion. He was a strict disciplinarian and wanted every thing done in a business and orderly way. This did not suit the patrons of the department who were loose in their habits. More or less friction was occasioned and the rank and file became somewhat dissatisfied with

Typed by A.E.J.

the manager of the water and light plants. The consequence was that the man who had done so much to give Duluth cheap and pure water and gas and make municipal ownership in the town a success, finally retired and left the city with hardly a public mention of his departure. He went to California to spend his declining years on a fruit ranch but lived only a short time thereafter.

"When Mr. Case announced to the board that he was going to retire as manager, he was asked as to who he would suggest for his successor, 'Oh', said he, 'it doesn't make much difference, the plants are now in shape, so that they will run themselves if they are let alone.'"

SOURCE

H. H. Phelps, "Personal Recollections of Forty-Five Years at and around the Bar in Minnesota"; published by the author in 1928, at Glendale, California.



Prominent Arrowheads.

1.

Surveyor, affluents, trader, R.R. builder.

Duluth, Minn.

George R. Stuntz

Submitted By: Harry O. Spooner

October 1, 1937

Local Guide

Reid. 10/2/37

George Riley Stuntz was born on Dec. 11, 1820, in Albion, Erie County, Pennsylvania.

He was the 5th of 9 children. His father was the Rev. George Stuntz.

George R. went to common school as much as he could, until 18 years of age; then he attended Grand River Institute, Grand River, Ohio, where he completed a 2-year course in geology, mathematics, and engineering.

He went to St. Louis, Missouri, in 1842, where he taught a term of school and then engaged himself as "axeman" in a surveying crew working in Iowa in 1843. Later that year he went to Grand County, Wisconsin, where he acted as Deputy Treasurer of the county. From 1845 to 1848 he was engaged in surveying 10 townships along the St. Croix River. In 1850 he was elected Sheriff of Grant County; and in 1851 did some surveying in central Wisconsin along the north side of the Fox River.

First came to the

In June, 1852, he came to the Head of the Lakes. At that time there was nothing in either Duluth or Superior. George was a tall, young man, who visioned a great future settlement here. He received an important commission from Geo. B. Sargent, then the U.S. Government surveyor general of the district embracing Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, to run and mark the land lines of certain townships at the Head of the Lakes. He was directed to run and mark the land line of Northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. From the first rapids in the St. Louis River <sup>above</sup> the Indian village, according to Nicollet's map, thence due south to the main branch of the St. Croix River. At Fond du Lac he stored his goods in the warehouse, and sought out the Indian chief to inquire as to the location of the first rapids in the St. Louis River. The chief informed him they were opposite the trading post and warehouse. The river was high and Stuntz could see no rapids, so he paddled his canoe upstream until the rushing current made further progress impossible, here he decided were the 1st rapids. The "high water" of the river gave Wisconsin an extra ribbon of dense pine forest about 42 miles long and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile wide. He set his first post on a high bluff a quarter mile south of this point. The boundary line was surveyed between October 20 and November 18, 1852, and he left to make his governmental report to Mr. Sargent, in Davenport, Iowa.

in 1852. He was responsible for opening road to Vermilion Range. At that time there was nothing in either Duluth or Superior. Jay Cooke in R.R. possibly died in Duluth 1862



In the spring of 1853 he completed subdividing the ranges and townships near Superior. During the same year he built a residence at the south end of Minnesota Point, under a treaty license before the territory was sold to the government. Later he built a dock and warehouse near his home.

At that time there were only missionaries or license traders in the tract, as it belonged to the original Indian territory.

He attended the treaty council at the time the Indians sold this part of the country to the government. There were 5,000 Indians present with their chiefs and it was the biggest assemblage of Indians ever held at the Head of the Lakes. The treaty became law in January, 1855.

During 1853 the U.S. government built a brick lighthouse near Stuntz's trading post. R.H. Barrett, a clerk employed at the Stuntz post, was the first lighthouse keeper here. (Two-thirds of this lighthouse remains near the Superior Entry. This tower has served as a point of departure for all the government land surveys in this region.) Late in the fall of 1853, he bought 3 yoke of oxen and 2 cows at St. Croix Falls. He had to cut a path thirty miles through the dense forest to get his cart and cattle through to Iron River. When he reached Superior, he found a small settlement of log cabins. The settlers were eager to get to the U.S. land office, at Hudson, Wisconsin.

They decided to cut a road through the forest from Old Superior to the nearest camp on the St. Croix River. Stuntz volunteered his services and furnished 2 barrels of flour, provisions, a pony, and a dog team to carry the provisions for 17 men.

The road was completed in 20 days, when the snow was 2 feet deep. When the cut was completed, he built a mill on the Iron River and employed a man to manage it, while he went to his trading post on Minnesota Point.

About this time (1854), he carried some vegetable seed from Taylor Falls; Stuntz and Mr. Zachau planted this seed on the banks of the Nemadji River; the first vegetables planted here. It marked the beginning of the agricultural development of this region.

In 1855-56 he carried on a forwarding and commission business under the name of G. R. Stuntz and Co. At the time Stuntz's dock on Minnesota Point was the only landing place for passengers and freight from steamboat and sailing vessels destined for Superior, Wisconsin.

Stuntz held large tracts of land in Douglas and Bayfield Counties, so he went to Madison to witness the proceedings of a special session of the Wisconsin Legislature,

It proposed to dispose of land grants to aid in building a railroad between St. Croix and Superior. The governor, who was also president of the St. Croix and Superior Railroad, was interested in that project. But the Milwaukee and La Crosse Railroad Co. became possessor of the entire land grant. So the St. Croix and Superior Railroad, was unable to build a line between Superior and St. Croix.

Then Stuntz and some other Head of the Lakes settlers began to consider the chances for a connection with St. Paul. The first move necessary was to obtain a land grant to aid in the construction of a railroad from Lake Superior to St. Paul.

Commodore H. Saxton and Thomas Clarke were the principals in getting necessary legislation and, as engineers, Clarke examined and surveyed the route, while Saxton acting as commissary spent between 2 and 3 years in getting the charter for the Lake Superior and Mississippi River Railroad. The road was commenced in 1867. Although the railroad started to build at St. Paul, in violation of its charter, the growth of Duluth started with the early construction.

On an exploration trip to the Vermilion Lake region in 1863, Stuntz discovered iron ore deposits.

Again in 1865 he went up to the Vermilion range with a party of gold prospectors to search for gold. They failed to find gold, but Stuntz found many indications of iron ore and quartz. He was also the first white man to explore the Mesabi Range for minerals.

~~It proposed to dispose of land grants to aid in building a railroad between St.~~

~~Croix and Superior.~~

Stuntz came to live permanently in Duluth in 1869 and took a keen interest in the settlement.

Stuntz went to New York City in Jan. 1869, and interviewed Gen. Geo. B. Sargent, formerly Surveyor-General, under whom he had served as a surveyor.

He called Sargent's attention to the wealth of the country tributary to Duluth; the mineral resources, the as yet undeveloped timber tracts, the grain-producing qualities of the land for 1,000 miles to the west, the unlimited fish supply in Lake Superior and the 10,000 interior lakes, and the many land grant opportunities.



After investigating these matters for several weeks, General Sargent said to Stuntz,

"If I had interests up there, I would be inclined to go up to Duluth and give it a start for a few years."

To which Stuntz replied, "I will make you interested. I will sell you 40 lots in upper and lower Duluth for \$1,000."

Sargent accepted and Stuntz made out a deed.

Later that year, Stuntz had occasion to visit Washington, D.C. on business with the land office. Here he met Gen. Sargent, who accompanied him as far as Philadelphia and here he met Montgomery, an agent who had just returned from Duluth where he examined the slate formation on the St. Louis River above Thomson.

Montgomery informed Stuntz that a man in the city wanted to meet Stuntz. So as they walked over to Jay Cooke's bank, Montgomery informed him that Cooke had been solicited to raise funds to complete the Lake Superior and Mississippi River Railroad, or in other words to float bonds to liquidate the indebtedness and raise money to complete the railroad.

After being introduced, Cooke said to Stuntz, "I understand that you are a surveyor and acquainted with the country between Duluth and St. Paul. I am told that the road has a grant of 10 sections to the mile from the government and I want to know what is the present and prospective value of this grant?"

In reply Stuntz told Cooke, "I have been over the route for several years and the country was well watered with durable spring water, streams and numerous lakes----"; and he continued with an enlightening geological description of the land, which was favorably impressive.

A few weeks later Cooke negotiated the bonds, and Sargent agreed to go to Duluth. He arrived here in May, 1869, and brought funds furnished by E.W. Clarke & Co., bankers in Philadelphia, and by Jay Cooke & Co., to build the Clarke House, Bay View House, and the Episcopal Church.

On May 15, 1869, Stuntz laid off the lot in a dense cedar and fir forest, where the Clarke House was to be built. In some places the snow was 2 feet deep.

Gen. Warren of the U.S. Engineers Dep't. offered Stuntz a local position on June



1, 1869. As captain, Stuntz was allowed to expend \$10,000 in opening and building or improving the road which he had surveyed the year previous under an appropriation he obtained from the State after six weeks of work. From July 1 to Dec. 10, 1869, he supervised 15 to 18 men, 2 ox teams and wagons. They completed the road sufficiently, to haul supplies that summer, a distance of 84 miles. The road made the Vermilion Lake Country accessible by team in winter and summer and years afterward greatly assisted in the development of the great iron mines of that region.

During 1870 and later, Stuntz was engaged in railway and land surveying.

He married an English woman, Mary J. Pugsley in Sept., 1872.

In 1870 Jay Cooke tried to float \$30,000,000 of Northern Pacific Railroad bonds. He succeeded so far as to raise money enough to secure the building of the railroad by personally securing the payment of the interest in gold. This the railroad company could not do and it led to Cooke's failure in 1873 and the great financial crisis all over the United States.

The crash of 1873 gave Duluth a fearful setback, especially in real estate, after 3 years of business activity.

In 1880 Charlemagne Tower of Philadelphia and Mr. Munson of Utica, N.Y., contributed to a fund to explore the deposits of iron ore near Vermilion Lake. Stuntz and his business partner, N. Youngblood, had the contract for hauling the supplies to Vermilion Lake in March, 1880, and several tons of goods, consisting of provisions, groceries and tool supplies for 3 to 4 months for 20 men.

The exploring party went into the field in July and continued there until September under the direction of Professor Chester of Hamilton College. Mr. Munson died during the winter of 1880-81, and Tower continued the exploration in 1881; starting in May and working until October, with a reduced crew of 8 to 10 men.

In 1881, under Stuntz's direction 3 veins of ore were discovered. He reported to warrant the construction of a railroad the amount of ore as being more than sufficient for 100 miles long from Vermilion Lake to Two Harbors. Explorations and work were pushed vigorously to survey and build this road to the mines.

On Dec. 2, 1884, before the Minnesota Academy of Natural Sciences, Stuntz read a paper "Evidences of Early Man in Northeastern Minnesota."

He was elected president of the Old Settlers' Association at the first meeting which was held at the Nicolett Hotel in Superior, Wisconsin on June 9, 1886.

He held the office of St. Louis County surveyor for several terms.

The honor of being the first settler at the Head of the Lakes must presumably go to Stuntz, as he came here in 1852 and settled on Minnesota Point in 1853. He came to live permanently in Duluth in 1869 and resided here until his death.

George R. Stuntz died at the Red Cross Hospital, in West Duluth, Minnesota, Oct. 23, 1902, at the age of 82 years. Many became wealthy by the important discoveries and valuable information voluntarily supplied by him; yet he died a poor man and was buried in an unmarked grave. George Riley Stuntz was buried in Oneota Cemetery in the western part of the City of Duluth. His grave, Grave A 191, Block 3 L, is unmarked and caused considerable agitation and inquiry concerning the correct location of the burial place. Here, or Litchfield, where his eldest brother's son, George Erastus Stuntz, was buried.

G.R. Stuntz has probably surveyed more government land than any other man of his time, as he was engaged in that business for more than fifty active years.

His surveys have covered principally the previously unknown parts of northeastern Minnesota and Wisconsin.

As an explorer Stuntz will always stand out prominently among the pioneers of this region, for it was he who was responsible for the opening of the original trail to Vermilion Range.

Stuntz is usually credited as the first man to discover Iron Ore on the Vermilion. Several years before his death he made the statement that N.A. Posey, the son of a fur trader, was the first white man who knew that iron existed on the Vermilion Range.

Throughout his life Stuntz was a man of integrity and honesty. As a fearless pioneer he performed his duties unselfishly and modestly.

Stuntz Township and Stuntz Bay on Vermilion Lake were named for him.

The Hibbing First Settlers Association, the people of Hibbing, and the town of Stuntz, erected a monument to the man who surveyed and explored this area and played such



an important part in its earliest pioneer life. One massive piece of grayish black granite, seven feet high and four feet square, weighing over 11 tons, was donated by the Arrowhead Granite Co. and taken from the Cook Quarry. The stone shaft was erected at the intersection of the Duluth, Keewatin and First Avenue road. Stuntz Memorial Monument was dedicated on May 30, 1935, Memorial Day Services. A large crowd ~~were~~<sup>was</sup> present to honor Stuntz, and important personages delivered fitting addresses.

MONUMENT INSCRIPTION OF GEORGE R. STUNTZ

Born Penn., 1820; died Duluth, 1902.

1st permanent settler. In 1852 resided and traded on Minnesota Point. Government surveyor. Discovered iron ore before 1870 on Vermilion. Discovery of Missabe range followed in 1890.

Built Vermilion Trail. Died poor, having led many to riches. Forest ranger, ferryman, canoeist, guide, interpreter, observer, essayist, discoverer.

This township, which includes Hibbing, was named for him.



Leit. 10/8/37

Typed by A.E.J.

Duluth, Minnesota  
Early Shipping  
Clayton A. Videen  
October 6, 1937

MARINE DISASTERS ON LAKE SUPERIOR (ADD)

- 1892 One of the worst tragedies of the Great Lakes in 1892 was the wreck of the Western Reserve, a steel ship of 2,392 tons, bound for Two Harbors. She was caught in a fierce gale about 60 miles above Whitefish Point and went down; 6 passengers and a crew of 25 were drowned. The only survivor was H. W. Stewart, the wheelsman. She was commanded by Capt. Edward Meyer. Temporary shelter was sought behind Whitefish Point, but thinking his ship able to proceed through the heavy weather, the skipper ordered her under way. She broke in two about 9:00 o'clock in the evening and began to fill rapidly. Two yawls, one wooden and the other metallic, went down, loaded with passengers and crew. The metallic yawl did not go down immediately, but weathered the storm until seven in the morning. About 12 miles from life saving station #2, she capsized and all aboard, with the exception of Stewart, were drowned. The wheelsman was a good swimmer and finally reached shore. The disaster occurred on Aug. 30th. On Sept. 17, the steambarge Vienna sank in 60 fathoms of water after a collision off Whitefish Point; all hands were saved.
- 1895 The steamer Missoula foundered off Caribou Island after having broken her shaft in a heavy southwest gale; the crew was safe in reaching land with the life boats, but the country was quite uninhabited and it was several days before they came upon a settlement.
- 1898 The steamer Servia, downbound from Duluth with a cargo of corn, caught fire and burned about 30 miles west of Whitefish Point. The crew fought the fire for nine hours, but all the efforts to save the ship failed, so they abandoned her.
- 1901 The steamer Hudson left Houghton, Mich., on Sept. 16th with 22,500 bushels of wheat and 69,000 bushels of flax. She was built in 1888 and owned by the

Western Transit Company. S She was built of steel, was 288 feet long, had a 41-foot beam, and was 23 feet deep. She was commanded by Capt. A. J. McDonald. When the steamer Nicol passed her on Monday morning, the Hudson's decks were awash and her <sup>M</sup>pups were working to capacity. The skipper of the Nicol was busy keeping his own ship on her course, and he thought another vessel, the steamer Gilchrist, had rescued the Hudson's crew. But no one rescued the distressed sailors, and the ship foundered with 24 hands aboard. The body of the wheelsman later was recovered. The ship was valued at \$200,000.

On the night of Sept. 20th, the steam barge Fedora was burned to the water's edge when a lamp exploded in the engine room. The fire spread before there was time to man the pumps, and as the ship was going full speed ahead with no possibility of going down into the engine room, she had to be beached before the life boats could be launched. The crew reached Bayfield safely. The barge left Duluth light, bound for Ashland to take on iron ore. The Fedora was a wooden boat, built at West Bay City, Mich., in 1899; she was 282 feet long, had a 41-foot beam and was 20 feet deep. She was commanded by Capt. F. A. Frick.

The steamer Drake, with the schooner Michigan in tow, were both lost off Vermillion Point, Lake Superior, early in October, in a 55-mile gale accompanied by rain and snow. When the situation became serious, the crew on the schooner sought refuge aboard the Drake. However, the Drake lost her smokestack while she was effecting the rescue, and her decks and cabin were staved in. The Schooner Michigan was abandoned. The steamer Drake was leaking badly and was flying distress signals when sighted by the steamer Northern Wave, which rescued part of the crew, while other members of the crew were rescued by the Crescent City. The Drake was 201 feet long, and a vessel of 1,102 tons; the schooner Michigan had a gross tonnage of 1056 and was 213 feet long.

1902 On June 7, the whaleback Thomas Wilson was rammed by the steamer George C. Hadley, 7/8 of a mile from the end of the Duluth Ship Canal piers, with a loss of nine men aboard the unfortunate whaleback. The Wilson was downbound with a



cargo of iron ore, while the Hadley was coming in with a load of coal. Both ships were sailing a normal course, the Hadley being north of the Wilson. Orders had been received to put the Hadley in at a Superior coal dock, and a tug was dispatched to relay this information. Upon receiving the orders, the captain of the Hadley sounded his warning whistle and ordered his wheelsman to turn the vessel hard aport, that is, to the left and south. The maneuvers were executed so quickly that the Wilson could neither turn, speed up, nor slow down. She was rammed hard amidships, and it was only a matter of a few short minutes before the luckless whaleback, a great hole in her side, plunged bow forward into 70 feet of water, carrying nine members of the crew to their death. Eleven leaped into the water and escaped, being picked up by the tug which had delivered the fateful orders to the Hadley. The Hadley herself was badly injured, a gaping hole let in water. She was sinking rapidly as she made full speed ahead for port. The ten minutes or so she had spent stationary after crashing the Wilson was too long. She was sinking too rapidly to be brought through the Duluth Ship Canal, so she was beached just south of the piers. The Wilson, built in Superior in 1892, with a burden of 1,713 gross tons, was 308 feet long, and had a beam of 38 feet. The steamer Hadley was built in Bay City in 1888, had a burden of 2,073 gross tons, was 288 feet long, and had a 40-foot beam. A few days later the steamer Fitch carried away the spar of the sunken vessel. The spar, which was the only marker visible to show where the Wilson went down, stuck out ten feet above the water. The occurrence of this mishap is a remarkable coincidence, as it took place in exactly the same manner as the sinking of the Wilson, which had occurred a few days before. The Fitch was sailing the same course as the Hadley; she received the same orders from the same tug. She ported her helm, just as the Hadley had done, passed over the spot where the Wilson lay, and snapped the mast of the sunken whaleback. Though an equal number of men lost their lives in this disaster as the Mataafa catastrophe, the latter has received more publicity because it probably



was more dramatic.

The tug Record, owned by the Union Towing and Wrecking Co., was rammed and sunk early on the morning of Nov. 7th by the steamer Bransford at an ore dock in Allouez. The tug was lying at the north end of the pier when the steamer came up. It was rammed hard just abaft the pilot house. The crew was rescued, and the only casualty sustained was that of a fireman, who was scalded when a steam pipe burst; he later died of his injury. This was the third time in 14 years the Record had figured in major mishaps. Once it was sunk in the canal and two men were drowned; another time it sank near the Peavey elevator and 1 man lost his life.

The steamer Robert Wallace went down in 300 feet of water on Nov. 18th near Two Harbors when the stern pipe broke and water poured into the hold. The crew immediately took to the life boats and rowed to the schooner Ashland, which the Wallace had in tow. Built in 1882, the burden of the steamer was 1,189 tons. Having no motive power, the schooner burned distress signals. The tug Edna G. came to the rescue and the schooner was towed into port with both crews safely aboard. A strange feature of this disaster was the floating wreckage. Captain Howard of the steamer Argo came upon the pilot house and other parts of the superstructure early in the morning, and the appearance of the wreckage led him to believe that the Wallace had been rammed and cut in two. He stood by for an hour or so, searching for survivors. It is believed that the suction caused within the boat when it sank resulted in the breaking loose of the pilot house and other portions of the superstructure.

The steamer Bannockburn went down in a heavy storm on Lake Superior about Nov. 21st, and 22 lives were lost. The disappearance of this ship is still a mystery, and little information is available on the disaster.

On Nov. 29th, the Charles Hebard was driven ashore at Point Mamainse and literally pounded to pieces in a terrific gale on Lake Superior. At first it appeared that the crew of 13 men and a woman cook had gone down with the ship.

The survivors reported that the ship had run on the rocks in the storm, which was accompanied by snow. All efforts to release the vessel failed, so two officers, First Mate Burrell and Second Mate Jackson, offered to carry a line ashore. Though shore was not far away, the sea was boiling between it and the ship. The officers set out in a skiff; twice the furious waves tossed them back against the ship; they started forth again, only to have their small craft capsize. Luckily they were thrown inside the breakers and were able to get ashore. A fisherman and his two sons came upon the scene and helped the officers to pull in the line, attached to a hauser. A "boatswain's chair" was made by those on board, and the crew hauled safely ashore.

1903      The steam barge Belle P. Cross ran aground near the Gooseberry River dock in the early morning of April 29th. Owned by Clow and Nicholson, she was one of the best known steam barges on the Great Lakes at that time. She was pounded to pieces on the rocks, but the men merely had to step off the barge to shore and safety, so high was she beached. The loss, which was not covered by insurance, was about \$14,000.

The steamer A. A. Parker foundered 5 miles from Grand Marais, Mich., in a southwest gale which swept Lake Superior on Sept. 19th. In view of the Grand Marais citizenry, the life saving crew dramatically rescued all hands aboard the foundering vessel. The Parker, carrying iron ore from Superior to Cleveland, was 256 feet long, with a beam of 38 feet. The loss was about \$55,000.

The steamer Marquette sank near Ashland on Oct. 15th. This boat belonged to the Gilchrist fleet, and it was the fifth Gilchrist vessel to be sunk or wrecked in this season. The manner in which the Marquette sank was unusual, since hardly a ripple stirred the surface of the lake. Laden with iron ore, she sprang a leak about midnight, and despite the frantic efforts of the crew to save her, she sank rapidly, bow first. Her end came so rapidly that four members of her crew did not have time to climb into the life boats, so they jumped into the cold waters of Lake Superior instead. There was a great roaring sound,



like an explosion, and the air in the holds blasted through the decks, ripping it to matchwood. Witnesses said that the masts were lifted at least 20 feet into the air by the explosion. All hands were saved.

In attempting to seek shelter in Grand Marais Harbor on Oct. 22nd, from a 50-mile gale on Lake Superior, the barge Saveland was stranded. She was one of the two barges in tow of the steamer Gettysburg. The barge pounded her bottom, and crashed back and forth against the government pier, but the life saving crew was able to rescue the 6 men and a woman aboard the stricken barge.

The steamer Manhattan, which left Duluth with 76,000 bushels of wheat in her hold, was burned on the night of Oct. 26th, near Beacon Light, Grand Island, in Lake Superior. Her crew was safely rescued by the tug Ward. The wheel chains had parted on the vessel and she went out of control, stranding on a reef. As she lay helpless, a fire broke out. She was lightened by the fire and floated off the reef. She floated about for awhile with nothing to guide her and then grounded on Sand Point. The cause of the fire, which completely destroyed the vessel and her cargo, was not determined. She belonged to the Gilchrist fleet.

The steamer Sauber was wrecked off Whitefish Point on Oct. 25th, after she had sprung a leak and her boilers had burst. Nineteen members of the crew were rescued by the crew aboard steamer Yale. Not yet off the boat, Captain W. E. Morse of the Sauber, was blown into the lake when the boilers exploded. A line was thrown to him but he was too weak to grab it, with the result that he was lost in the wreckage. Robinson, an oiler, also was lost. It is thought that he fell between the Yale and the life boat when he missed a life line thrown to him. The ship left Ashland on Oct. 24th with a load of iron ore. About nine o'clock the following morning (Sunday) the vessel sprang a leak, being at that time abreast of Manitou Island. The crew manned the pumps and the craft proceeded on her voyage, but the water poured in faster than they were able to pump her out. Distress signals were set out, and the Yale responded to the Sauber's call for aid, remaining with her until she foundered. When it was evident that she was going



down, the entire crew, with the exception of the captain, took to the lifeboats.

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Duluth Evening Herald (Newspaper) 1892: Sept. 17th; 1899: Aug. 8th, Aug. 21st, Sept. 21st; 1900: May 1st & 2nd, Sept. 14th, Sept. 25th, Nov. 8th & 9th; 1901: Sept. 19th, 20th & 21st, Oct. 3rd; 1902: June 7th, 8th, & 9th, Nov. 7th, Nov. 18th & 19th, 21st, 22nd, & 29th; Dec. 2nd & 3rd; 1903: April 30th, May 1st, Sept. 19th; Oct. 6th, 16th, 19th, 23rd, and 26th-27th.

Duluth, Minn.  
Early Shipping  
Clayton A. Videen  
October 13, 1937

Reid. 10/15/37

MARINE DISASTERS ON LAKE SUPERIOR

1904      The Tug Niagara, at this time one of the largest craft of her kind on the Great Lakes, was pounded to pieces when the pilot struck Knife Island on June 4. He was steering his course, but he did not take the magnetic pull of the compass into consideration. The accident occurred about seven in the evening, in a heavy fog. The boat struck hard, and augmented by the wind and the waves, she was driven still farther on the rocks. The craft blasted distress signals, and the crew and two women passengers were rescued by the tug Edna G., by means of a life raft. During operations one of the women fell from the raft into the heavy sea, but she was saved by a member of the crew before she was out of reach.

The passenger steamer Tionesta caused about \$1,000 damage when she rammed the southeast corner of Northern Pacific Dock #4, on the morning of August 29th. The section which she struck was smashed to bits. She was attempting to dock, when the wind and the current turned her course. The steamer was not damaged, but the services of a tug were required to loosen her from the hole she had ripped in the dock.

1905      The steamer Palmer was sunk in a collision on Lake Superior on May 16th. She was struck between tanks Nos. 1 and 2, the blow almost cutting her in two. So rapidly did she sink that the crew barely had time to board the steamer Harvard, the ship which collided with the Palmer. The Harvard, too, was badly damaged, but she managed to keep afloat. The sailors did not even have time to save their personal belongings as the ship sank in 600 feet of water. She was insured for \$100,000. The disaster was recounted by Leonard McNamara, engineer aboard the unfortunate Palmer. McNamara was asleep in his cabin at the time. When the Palmer was struck, he was thrown from his bunk. He hastily snatched one or two articles of clothing and rushed out on deck. A ladder was run across from the Harvard, and all hands raced off the Palmer. The Harvard, with all hands safe, backed away, and the Palmer sank in a few minutes, plunging down bow first, the air in the hold ripping off her deck and houses.

On the night of May 4th, the "hoodoo" ship Hadley, which ran down the whaleback Thomas Wilson just east of the ship canal and in plain sight of Duluth, ran ashore near Manitou Island. She was renamed the W.P. Rend, but it was always hard to keep a crew aboard her, for the sailors believed she was "hoodooed." Besides running down the Wilson, thereby causing the death of nine men, the steamer Rend figured in several other mishaps.

The steamer Sevona was wrecked on Sand Island Reef, Lake Superior, on the evening of Sept. 1st. Eleven lost their lives. The steamer, loaded with iron ore from the Allouez ore docks, was bound for Erie, Pa. The vessel ran into a terrific gale. Capt. E.E. McDonald, master of the vessel, after trying to make headway against the wind, surrendered and ran his ship for shelter. Raspberry Island escaped the eyes of the lookout and the Sand Island lighthouse was sighted too late; the captain endeavored to bring his craft about, but the raging waves pounded the Sevona against the reef, tearing a great hole in her side. A half hour later she was pounded in two just aft the 4th hatch. Seeing that help must be obtained, the captain called for volunteers, while the rest, including guests, among whom were 4 women, were to set out in life boats for shore, where they would be safe and at the same time get help for the volunteers remaining aboard ship. The boat was launched, but it was swept past Sand Island, upon which the little party tried to land. Four others launched themselves in the remaining lifeboat. After a night of terror on the windswept lake, the boat carrying the women reached shore, being thrown high and dry by the running sea. Safe, but weary, they got together a rescue party, which literally had to cut through the forest and undergrowth to reach Bayfield. The fishing tug Harrow, with fifteen men aboard, breasted the still roaring northeaster in the direction of the stricken Sevona. When the wreck was reached, the rescue party found only 100 feet of the after end and the spars remaining. The captain and the six men who had huddled in the pilot house awaiting rescue had disappeared, as had the pilot house. The second life boat, in which the four seamen had set out, was later picked up, but its occupants had been drowned. Built in 1890, the Sevona was a steel freight steamer of 2,362 tons.



After successfully riding the storm from Two Harbors to Duluth, the steamer North Wind sank in the Duluth Harbor in comparatively shallow water on September 3rd. On coming through the ship canal, the vessel was bashed violently against the north pier. A big hole was opened in her port side, just forward of her waist. The master immediately whistled for two tugs, which came to her aid and towed her into the Northern Pacific Dock at the foot of Lake Avenue. She sank in from 20 to 26 feet of water before they were able to dock her.

The barge Pretoria, laden with iron ore and in tow of the steamer Venezuela foundered near Outer Island (in the Apostle Islands group) on the afternoon of Sept. 2nd, drowning five members of the crew of ten. It was near the scene of the wreck that something happened to the Pretoria's steering gear, the news being signaled to the Venezuela. The Venezuela tried to turn and haul the barge to the lee side of Outer Island, but the tow line broke; the storm increased and the Venezuela was forced to run for shelter herself. It was impossible to help the Pretoria under these circumstances. The Pretoria had a sail up forward, but the wind cut it to ribbons. Caught in the trough of the sea, the wind washed her in the direction of Outer Island. Her pumps were started and her anchor was dropped in 180 fathoms of water. The anchor dragged for about a mile and a half, but finally held. She was pounded heavily by the seas and the hatch combings let the water into the hold. Some of the hatches came off later, with disastrous results. Finally, the covering board yielded and the deck began to float away. The crew, realizing that the barge could not be saved, took to the life boat. The little boat made fair headway until it reached a point about 500 feet from shore, where they lost control of the craft. It turned turtle and all its occupants were thrown into the surging breakers. Five were drowned, while the remaining five clung to the overturned boat until rescued by John Irvine, keeper of the Outer Island light.

The Pretoria, valued at \$50,000, was built in 1900. She was 388 feet long, had a 44-foot beam, and a depth of 23 feet. It is interesting to note that she was the first craft of the Davidson fleet to be lost. Up to that time, Captain Davidson had been engaged in Great Lakes shipping for 43 years without a loss. He never insured his vessels.

The schooner V.H. Ketchum burned off Parisian Island on September 16th, and two members of her crew were drowned while trying to leave the burning vessel in a lifeboat. First discovered in the after cabin, the fire spread so fast that it was soon beyond control. It was obvious that she could not be saved, and the schooner put in for shore and was beached in 23 feet of water off the island. The nine members of the crew, including a woman cook, put out the life boat and prepared to row to the Nottingham, which had taken the schooner in tow. The life boat capsized and its occupants were thrown into the water. In trying to save themselves, the members of the crew forgot about the woman, and the waves carried her away from the scene. One of the ship's officers went after her and found her, but his exertions tired him so that the two sank in sight of the crew, who could do nothing to help.

Had it not been for the passing of steamer Troy, the large steamer Peter White might have been wrecked on October 31st. The White's shaft was broken, and she drifted helplessly towards the south shore, near Devil's Island. She displayed distress signals, the Troy sighted her and towed her into Duluth.

The weather at the period of the general havoc wrought on Lake Superior and in Duluth from November 27th to 29th is interesting in the light of the unprecedented number of marine accidents which took place during that period, several of them close to Duluth. On November 24th the wind was blowing 60 miles per hour and over. At 7:30 p.m. the gale reached the proportion of 68 miles an hour for a few minutes, then slowed down to 66, a velocity which was kept with fair consistency. The wind then died down a little, but another storm was predicted for November 27th. The prediction was fulfilled.

"During the terrific gale which swept the entire upper lakes last night (November 27th) and this morning, the Crescent City, one of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company's big ore boats, went on the rocks about one mile this side of the Lakewood pumping station at 2 a.m. and is probably a total wreck now....Every member of the crew of 26 men escaped and none was seriously injured, although several received severe cuts and scratches during the fierce battle that was raged with the elements before the big craft finally hit the rocks and her engines ceased to thump.



"It was a miraculous escape for all of them and had it not been for the fact that the boat just happened to hit in such a way as to bring her port side up against a rock and thus afford a natural landing place for the members of the crew, some of them would have undoubtedly been drowned.

"The Crescent City was light for ore and was bound for Two Harbors, but Captain Frank Rice realized last night that it would be impossible for his boat to make that port, so he headed on for Duluth.....The gale was terrific and it was impossible to see more than a few feet beyond the prow of the craft. The Crescent City encountered a boat or two, but none of them seemed to be having any trouble and neither the captain nor the crew have the slightest idea what boats they were.

"About 1 o'clock the Crescent City began to drift badly and there was practically nothing to do but keep straight ahead and trust to luck. If the boat had been out in the middle of the lake she would have plenty of chances, but being so near shore and so light, she was practically at the mercy of the wind."<sup>1</sup>

At Lakewood, just a few miles from Duluth Harbor and safety, "the big boat crashed into the rocks. The big beams creaked and the crew made preparations for leaving, thankful if they got away with their lives. The waves were so high and the position of the boat was so precarious that the men did not stop an instant to secure extra clothing or other valuables. They flocked about the ladder which was let down from the ship's side and got off the boat as quickly as possible. About midships, was a big rock linked with a series of them and formed a natural walk to the shore and it was this that Capt. Rice and his men took advantage of."<sup>2</sup>

All the men reached shore safely and they stood about for a few minutes watching the distressed ship and expecting her to be smashed to pieces in a few seconds, but it remained upright and the crew looked for shelter. Some sought shelter at the Lakewood pumping station; others walked to Lakeside. After being repulsed at many back doors because of their unkempt appearance, two of the ship's officers, the second mate and the chief engineer, went to telephone the Duluth Agent of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company, but the telephone operators were afraid to let them in, so they had to resort

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<sup>1</sup> Duluth Evening Herald (newspaper), Nov. 28, 1905.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



to force to gain entrance. The officers could get no one to take them downtown, for the Lakeside residents feared the road would be crossed with live wires and they were afraid to venture on it with their teams. The street cars hadn't been running either, so the sailors were obliged to walk. It was estimated that the gale was blowing at 65 miles an hour at the time the Crescent City struck the rocks.

"The Pittsburgh Steamship Company steamer Mataafa, while trying to enter Duluth Harbor this afternoon (Nov. 28th) at 2:30, collided with the north pier, and is now grounding and bids fair to become a total wreck before night with the pounding the seas are giving her."<sup>3</sup>

"The Mataafa's tow, the M. Nasmyth, is anchored out in the lake about a mile or two and seems to be holding out against the tempest and waves. As they approached the entry the Nasmyth was released from the towline in order to permit the Mataafa to try to make the entry, and the Nasmyth cast anchor at once. The Mataafa endeavored to make the entry the same as the Ellwood and the Pope had a few hours earlier, but the lateral roll of the waves threw her to starboard, and she struck the north pier fairly on the end and squarely with her nose which was battered in the collision.

"She veered to the south and turned, evidently trying to get free from both piers. At one time she was broadside against the canal entry and the waves washed over her in torrents and cataracts. It looked for a time as though she would clear the piers, but her stern could not be cleared of the north pier and kept bumping into it. She also seemed to be laboring forward, where she had hit the pier and was evidently badly injured. Finally, however, she worked around in a circle past the entrance of the pier and over to the north side, which is the side closest to the city. There she was beached and began to go on broadside. They cast an anchor out to stern which seemed to have the effect of forcing her nose up on the beach. While lying in a broadside position she was swept from stem to stern by each wave that rolled in. At times they would splash, when they broke on her side, clear above her masts. She bids fair to go to pieces.....Some men were seen on her stern evidently watching the progress of events, but no sign of life could be seen in the pilot house or any place forward....It seemed as though half the population of Duluth was on the pier's approach and on the

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

shore watching the giant freighter go to her doom.....Men and women gasped every time a wave broke over the doomed vessel and groans were heard when she seemed to shrink like a human being.....As the Herald is going to press, the Nasmyth seems to be dragging her anchor and it is believed that in a few hours she will be on the beach also."<sup>4</sup>

(The following account is taken from the next day's issue of the Duluth Evening Herald): "Overcome by exhaustion and a long winter's night of exposure to the icy spray and biting winds which swept over the lake, nine members of the crew of the steamer Mataafa have met their death in the waters of Lake Superior. Fifteen of their comrades are now safe ashore and resting beneath piles of warm blankets in an effort to recover from the effects of the terrible experiences of the night. The nine men who were drowned were those who remained in the rear part of the vessel. All of those who were forward at the time the boat struck and three who ran forward during the afternoon were saved."<sup>5</sup>

Those who were lost "were in the after part of the ship when it struck and failed to get forward. The unknown fireman (one of the crew who was lost) was the man who was three times washed overboard in an effort to reach the forward part of the vessel, and who gave up the attempt and returned to the stern.

"Every wave that came along would sweep my feet out from under me," said Byrne, (one of the three to run from the after end to the bow of the vessel), 'I saw the fireman go overboard but I could do nothing to save him. I had all I could do to keep from going overboard myself.'

"The stern gradually settled during the night, and the nine men who occupied it were either drowned like rats in a hole or swept from the exposed parts by the waves. The upper parts of the stern were exposed to the full action of the waves, which swept over it completely, and human flesh and blood could not withstand such exposure..... Several hundred people were present at 7:30 this morning (Nov. 29th) when the life saving crew launched its boat in the rolling waves and started for the ill-fated steamer to rescue those who might be alive on board her. The crew had some little trouble in launching the boat because the waves ran very high, although, of course, not nearly as

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Duluth Evening Herald, November 29.



high as yesterday (Nov. 28th). When the little boat was finally firmly on the bosom of the swell, a lusty cheer went up from the watchers on shore."<sup>6</sup>

The little boat managed to reach the stricken craft, rowed over to the lee side, and took on the survivors. Carriages were ready and when the little party reached shore, they were whisked to bed in the St. Louis Hotel.

The Captain's description, in part, is as follows: "There were 13 of us forward and 12 were down the other end. Later three made their way forward, making 16 in my cabin. When we first struck the pier, swinging broadside, a huge roller carried away one of our life boats. A second wave carried away the other boat, and a third smashed the life raft and tossed it overboard. Otherwise, I would have tried, last evening, to launch the boats, and believe we could have gotten all hands ashore.....We spent a terrible night. The doors and windows were swept out of my cabin early in the game, and the water kept coming into the room all night, freezing almost as it struck. Icicles hung from the walls. We had no fire and nothing to eat.....We had hopes when the life saving crew got the lines out to us, but we were so cold it was hard to manage it. The shot line and the trail line were tangled together, and after fruitless efforts to untie them I cut the shot line. The mate went aloft intending to tie the line to a spar. He couldn't do it, however, and I told him to fasten it to a shroud. This he did. When he came down he was so cold he could scarcely walk.....Try as we would we couldn't get the breeches bouy to working....Even before we reached the entrance (to the harbor) the force of the waves was so great that the steel bars on the fore and aft hatches were bent nearly double."<sup>7</sup>

It was argued by many citizens that the men astern should have run forward, but this was almost impossible, though three members of the crew did manage to do it safely.

Some fear was felt for the Mataafa's tow, the barge Nasmyth, left anchored in the lake, off 16th Avenue East, but she and her crew safely rode out the storm. By morning, however, the barge had dragged her anchor as far down as 8th Avenue East.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



The steamer Arizona, employed chiefly as a lumber carrier, was running light when she entered the ship canal about 1 a.m. on November 28th. The waves were dashing over the boat, and this, combined with wind and snow, made it impossible for the captain to see more than a few feet ahead. He managed to locate the piers by the sound of the fog whistles, but just before he entered the ship canal, the wind caught the craft and spun her around three times "like a top." The captain expected to hear the hulk crash into the pierhead at any moment, but fortunately she was righted and steamed between the piers. She drove through with her engines going at full speed and was safely moored at the 6th Avenue Dock.

"When the storm died down somewhat at noon today (Nov. 28th), a steamer was seen to go aground on Park Point, about 2 miles from the aerial bridge, and a little later, another boat was beached there, but up to a late hour this afternoon it was impossible to learn the names of the wrecked craft. When one of the boats first went aground she was on the sand with her broadside towards the full sweep of the waves, but the force of these evidently veered her around until later in the afternoon, her nose pointed almost inland.....The wreck was watched by thousands from every high building and hilltops all over the city.....There is no danger of their breaking up, at least, before the crews can be safely landed."<sup>8</sup>

The steamer Ellwood, a 500-footer, which left Duluth with a load of ore, was turned around and headed back to Duluth when she was several hours out, her skipper deciding that the storm was too severe to buck. "The Ellwood approached the canal at a slow speed with her bow buried deep in the water at one moment and her stern awash the next. Just as she entered the canal, the current struck the Ellwood's bow and, in spite of her headway, she began to swing toward the north pierhead, the crowd along the bridge pier looking on with almost horror, for it certainly seemed the big boat was doomed to swing broadside against the canal. She struck the inside of the pierhead with a glancing blow so easy that there was scarcely a scratch on the steamer's bow to indicate that she had even touched. This touch, however, threw her bow around so that

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Duluth Evening Herald, November 28, 1905.

she headed diagonally across to the south pier, but gaining headway under her own steam again the boat finally swung around and headed safely through the harbor, where the tugs were waiting to catch her lines. She was found to be leaking worse than at first expected, so she whistled for tugs to take her to the shipyard."<sup>9</sup>

The following day's issue of the Duluth Evening Herald brought the additional news concerning the Ellwood: The Ellwood, which was injured worse than first thought, sank in the bay off the Duluth Boat Club, soon after she reached port. As the water was only 22 feet deep, her decks remained above water.

"With several sections of her cabin carried away, the E.C. Pope came foaming through the canal piers at 2 o'clock this afternoon (Nov. 28th), while the crowds on the piers cheered and the steamers in the harbor blew salutes of her safe arrival after a most hazardous passage."<sup>10</sup> At times only her spars and smokestack were visible above the water, and again it seemed certain she would be swamped by the mountainous waves. There was a hole 30 or 40 feet back from her prow; much of the woodwork above the steel was wrecked, and the top plate was bent inward about ten feet.

"The steamer William Edenborn is ashore at Split Rock and has broken in two. She will be a total loss. One man, the second assistant engineer, is lost, but the rest of the crew is safe.....the Madeira was dropped 2 hours before the Ed~~den~~born went ashore."<sup>11</sup>

"The steamer Lafayette and her barge, the Manila, went on the rocks on the north shore, near Encampment Island, during the storm.....Although the Lafayette began to break up as soon as she struck the rocks every member of the crew managed to escape with his life, save one fireman.....Every member of the Manila's crew escaped too and the survivors of the wreck took refuge in some fishermen's huts near at hand and managed to keep warm and dry.

"The Lafayette and the barge had a terrible time of it coming up the lake light. About 4 o'clock Tuesday morning (Nov. 28th) she went aground just a little north of Encampment Island on the mainland. The boat narrowly missed being grounded on Encampment

<sup>9</sup>

Ibid, Nov. 28

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, Nov. 29.



Island, which would probably have resulted in the death of all hands. When the Lafayette struck, the Manila was just behind, but sheered a little and went ashore so close to the steamer that it was possible for the men to jump from the stern of the Lafayette to the stern of the Manila. This is what saved the lives of most of the members of the crew.

"As soon as the Lafayette struck she was broken in two in about the middle and those who were in the stem of the craft had a wild and perilous passage to get across the breach of the stern. The waves dashed madly over the wreck and threatened to sweep every struggling man from the slippery surface of the deck to the cold water on the lee side. It was a perilous trip, that wild run of those frightened and nearly frozen men from the bow to the stern, across the hole in the middle which got wider every minute."<sup>12</sup>

Every man on the Lafayette, with the exception of the fireman, managed to leap safely to the barge Manila. The fireman slipped and fell, and was lost in the water.

The following news account appeared in the next day's issue of the Duluth Evening Herald: "The crews of the steamer Lafayette and the consort Manila arrived in Duluth yesterday afternoon (Nov. 30th) from Two Harbors, after having been rescued by the tug Edna G., in command of Captain Joseph Kidd and five of the captains of the Pittsburgh Steamship Company steamers. The men, who had been on Encampment Island for about 48 hours, were taken off in boats, to which they had to wade to their necks in icy water."<sup>13</sup> Some of the men, due to overexposure, had to be left at the Budd Hospital in Two Harbors. Several had frozen feet and hands.

"The only loss of life was that of Patrick Wade, one of the firemen.....When the Lafayette struck it was the only intimation for hours where she was. The captain, D.P. Wright.....immediately signaled the barge Manila to drop anchor, in an endeavor to try to prevent, if possible, her going on. But it was too late and the anchor did not hold. The barge ran into the stern of the Lafayette, which had veered around broadside to the shore. The Manila then veered around, and because she was lighter, went in

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, Nov. 30.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, Dec. 1.



closer. As she struck the steamer three or four men from the Lafayette leaped from the steamer onto the bow of the Manila, and as the Manila swung in she went so close that the men could grasp the branches of overhanging trees and swing ashore that way. Those of the Lafayette, together with the officers and crew of the Manila, then endeavored to get assistance to the Lafayette.

"The latter broke in two at the third hatch within three minutes of the time she went aground, and those in the stern could not go forward, nor those forward aft..... Those in the stern, which was about fifty feet from the bluff which formed the shore, tried several means of getting a line ashore, but did not succeed until the second engineer went below and got a stout, hard cord, to the end of which he tied a large nut, secured from the engine room. This he cast ashore, and it caught in the trees."

"With the aid of this line a hawser line was cast ashore, and fastened there by the men already on the bluff." Then the rest of the crew aft started across the line. Wade, the fireman, was lost in crossing. "The Lafayette is a total wreck. She is broken in three pieces, with the middle section closed up on shore like a huge book."<sup>14</sup>

A supply scow went ashore about 70 miles up the north shore, just a little below Two Islands, about 1 o'clock on the morning of Nov. 28th, and three men were drowned. Captain Charles Johnson, in charge of the scow, tells the story: "The scow was chartered by the M. H. Coolidge Company from R. L. Martin to take supplies to the company's camps on Two Islands, 72 miles up the north shore. We were in tow of the tug Gillette. The scow had a crew of five men.....About 1 o'clock Monday afternoon it began to blow hard.....We reached Two Islands about 3 o'clock and it was then blowing a gale. When it started to blow we wanted to turn back to Two Harbors but the captain of the tug would not do so.

"By three o'clock, when we got on the lee side of the Island, it was blowing a gale.....I dropped both the bow and the stern anchors, the tow line still being fast. That night the storm continued to increase in fury, and we took turns, two by two, in keeping watch on the towline. It was so dark and the storm was so furious that it was impossible to face it. All we could do was to stand with our hands on the tow line and our backs to the storm.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, Dec. 1.

"About one o'clock Tuesday morning (Nov. 28th) the line parted. I was aft when this happened. Olson and Nelson were on watch at the time. In four or five minutes we were ashore. The scow seemed to go toward the shore like lightning. We struck three times against the rocks, each time the waves would lift us higher up. The third time the scow struck, Hicks and I made a running jump to another rock that we could see sticking up several feet farther inshore.....When I landed on the rock I got up and ran as fast as I could to a higher point. By climbing up the rocks we reached the top of the bluff, out of reach of the water.

"When we left the boat Miller, Olson and Nelson were running up and down seeming to be much frightened. They would not take the jump. When we all started, they all shouted 'good bye' and that is the last we saw or heard of them."<sup>15</sup>

The steamer Spencer, towing the barge Amboy, both laden with coal, were north of Two Harbors. They ran into difficulties on Monday evening (Nov. 27th), for the compass began to "go crazy." This was caused by metallic attraction, so the captain knew the boat was near shore. The boat grounded about 1 o'clock Tuesday morning, and the captain of the Spencer immediately whistled for the barge to throw out her anchors, but she, too, grounded before anything could be done. "It was a most fortunate accident that the barge was caught by the wind and caused her to veer off, for she was heading straight into the steamer's stern, and had she hit the probability is that all hands of both boats would have been lost. As the Amboy veered, the towline caught on a boulder, and the barge was swung around broadside to the shore."<sup>16</sup>

The boats happened to run ashore near the fishing village of Thomasville, 60 miles north of Grand Marais. There was some trouble in getting a line ashore, but with the help of the fishermen this was finally accomplished, and a chair bouy was rigged up. A line ran to each boat and everyone reached shore safely.

The ferocity of the gale which caused so many disasters on the lake can be appreciated better by the "landlubber" when he takes into consideration the havoc wrought ashore. The gale piled the cold water of Lake Superior into the bay, until it was the highest in years, and many of the docks in the harbor were awash. The

heavy concrete approach at the south end of the Aerial Bridge gave way. Trolley

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, Dec. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, Dec. 1.

service was completely demoralized, and most trains were several hours late. Telegraph and telephone poles were blown down, and not a single one of the latter was left standing on Park Point. Buildings were flooded, scattered on the beach, or blown into the water, and many frightened families piled up their furniture out in the street. A giant wave picked up a flat car with 20 tons of scrap iron on it, and whirled it around "like a chip." It was deposited bodily on a scrap heap. The next wave snapped off the two heavy iron trucks as though they were "pipestems."

SOURCES OF MATERIAL:

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1905: May 5, 6, 16, 24; August 15, 19; September 4, 5, 17; November 1, 28, 29, 30;  
December 1, 2.