



Minnesota Works Progress Administration:
Writers Project Research Notes.

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MINNESOTA
COUNTY
HISTORIES
SERIES

WABASHA COUNTY

Franklyn Curtiss-Wedge



MINNESOTA
FEDERAL
WRITERS
PROJECT

Prepared by

MINNESOTA FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT
Works Progress Administration
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- - -

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FOREWORD

In the process of collecting data for a State Guide Book, the workers of the Minnesota Writers' Project were repeatedly astonished by the average citizen's ignorance of the natural and social forces that have made his State. The landing of the Pilgrims and the founding of Jamestown we found were often more real to a Minnesotan than the migration of thousands of Europeans to the Northwest two and a half centuries later, or the birth and development of his own community.

This ignorance we ascribed to the schools--especially to the history text-books. But school histories, designed for use throughout the country, have naturally enough placed their emphasis on national rather than local issues. Their aim is, moreover, not only to impart facts but to inspire patriotism. Yet, we argued, if patriotism like all emotions, has its deepest roots in childhood, surely its earliest promptings come from the familiar countryside or street in which the child plays and feels at home. Before a youth's love of country can spread out to embrace distant states as diverse as Maine, California and Texas, he must have come to identify himself with the soil from which he has sprung, and to share with his neighbors the traditions of a common struggle. To this end every child is certainly entitled to a knowledge of his immediate environment and of the changing forces in the past that have produced the type of life he now shares.

Thus it was that we decided that the Federal Writers' Project should undertake the compilation of this home knowledge for Minnesota's boys and girls.

We have taken the county as a relatively small unit base. Our hope is that through these studies, boys and girls may be aroused to a greater awareness of their own localities, and perhaps to a new pride in the accomplishments of their forbears.

We do not claim to have produced comprehensive county histories. We have been able to emphasize only those occurrences that have most widely affected its evolution from a wilderness, and to suggest the courage and endurance demanded of builders of a commonwealth. We have included the names and contributions of local pioneers since we believe them as worthy of remembrance and honor as many famed military heroes. For historical material state and county histories have been used, while for their "atmosphere" the authors have drawn extensively upon contemporary newspapers and personal records.

Aside from a brief description of the county's natural setting, we have said little of the contemporary scene. This has been intentionally omitted with the thought that the modern picture should be contributed by the pupil himself. It is hoped that at every possible point the teacher will require a written description of the modern machine as contrasted with the tool of yesterday. (A threshing machine vs. a scythe; a modern cooperative creamery vs. the old churn, etc.).

These pamphlets should be regarded primarily as an experiment. We have had no precedent to follow. Until they have been tried out in the classroom, we are not even sure what age group will be most responsive. We have therefore adopted two forms of writing; for the junior high school age we have used the straight narrative, trusting to the intrinsic drama to sustain interest; for younger pupils we have attempted to present the picture in the guise of fiction. It is our hope to prepare a study of each of Minnesota's 87 counties. Several are now completed, but their final form will be determined in part at least by the manner in which teachers and students react to these first issues.

It has been the unflagging interest and cooperation of Dr. Rockwell, Commissioner of Education, that has made this work possible. He has given so

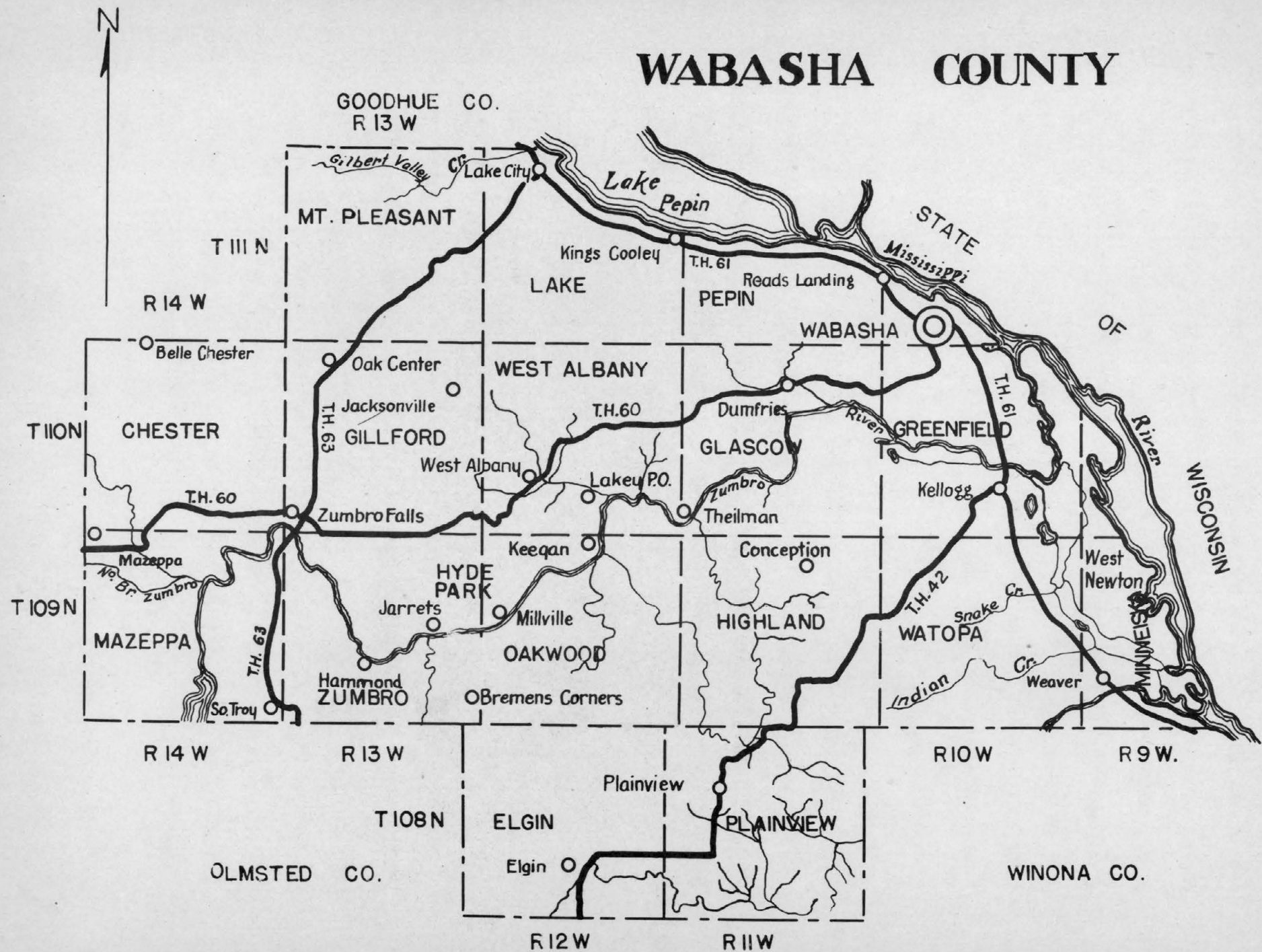
generously of his time and his experience that it is difficult for us to express adequately our appreciation. To Dr. Blegen, Secretary and Superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, who read our manuscripts and checked their accuracy, we wish also to acknowledge our profound gratitude.

Minnesota Federal Writers' Project

Dr. Mabel S. Ulrich, Director

June, 1938

WABASHA COUNTY



OUR OWN COUNTY

(Wabasha)

Where We Live

Wabasha County is in the southeastern part of the State. Its boundaries are very irregular. On the north and west is Goodhue County. Lake Pepin and the Mississippi River are on the north and east, and separate it from Pepin and Buffalo Counties in Wisconsin. Winona County is on the southeast. Olmsted County is on the south and west.

The southern boundary is 42 miles from the Iowa Line. The courthouse at Wabasha is 73 miles from the State Capitol at St. Paul.

How Lake Pepin Was Made

Lake Pepin is not a true lake. It is merely an enlargement of the Mississippi. Through the centuries the Chippewa River in Wisconsin has washed out large quantities of earth from the land along its banks. The Mississippi current is too slow to carry away all this earth that the Chippewa pours into it, so a natural dam has been formed in the river bed. This does not wholly stop the flow of the Mississippi, but it holds back enough of the water so that it spreads out and makes a large lake that extends nearly to Red Wing.

Millions of Years

Nothing that has been built by white men in Wabasha County is very old. The rocks and the rivers and the soil are very old indeed, so old that the wise men who study them say that if they are wrong a few million years it does not make much difference. But there are people still living who remember when everything here was wild, with only a few log cabins scattered far apart.

A Good Place To Live

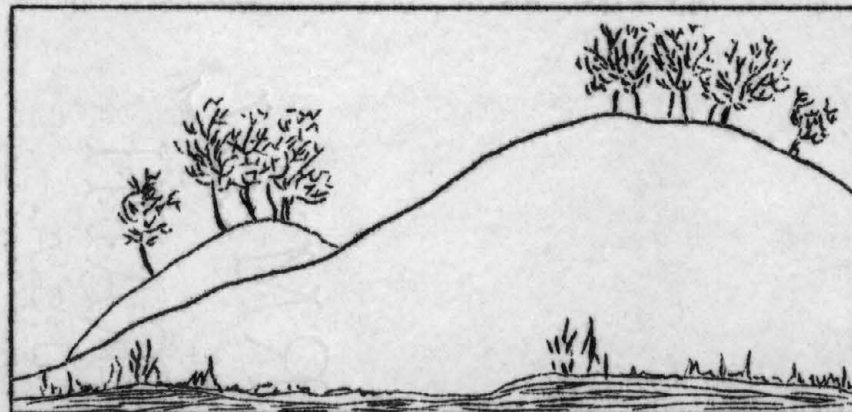
The Mississippi River and its branches were great natural routes of travel long before there were any trails or roads or railroads. Along the Mississippi came the first wild people who made this region their home. Once here, the Zumbro and the Whitewater made it easy for them to travel to the prairies south and west from the great river.

The rivers did more than furnish easy travel.

They also helped make it a very good place for wild tribes to get a living. Fish and turtles were plentiful. Wild waterfowl came in season. Fur-bearing animals were in the swamps and the woods that lined the watercourses. Large game roved the prairie that the inland rivers led to, and game birds found shelter in the prairie grass. This meant food to eat, furs for clothing, and skins to make rude shelters. All the simple needs of savage life were here for the taking.

A Wild People

We do not know who the first people were who lived in Wabasha County. Scattered here and there on the high banks of the watercourses are many earth mounds which were made by an uncivilized race which we call the Mound Builders. Some think that they came from Asia and gradually made their way across the Aleutian Islands to Alaska, and then southward and westward until they reached the Mississippi Valley.



People do not agree as to when the mounds were made. Some believe it was about the time Columbus discovered America. If this is so, we can think of wild people living in Wabasha County when Columbus was meeting his first Indians in the West Indies.

They must have been here for many years. With the few crude tools they had, it would take them a long time to build the mounds they left. Everything we know about these strange people we have had to learn from the articles found in the mounds. They had arrowheads, spearheads, hammers, and axes, all made out of stone; cooking pots made out of baked clay and crushed rocks; necklaces made out of beads and claws; fish-hooks and needles made out of bones; and smooth handstones for cracking corn. They knew how to make fire. This means they were not very different from the Indians.



There were many mounds in Wabasha County, along Lake Pepin and up and down the Whitewater and Zumbro Rivers. Some can still be seen but most of them have been plowed over so many times that they are now smoothed down. Perhaps the round and oval ones were for graves. The ones made in the shape of birds and animals may show which tribe built them. Sometimes a wild tribe



had one animal or bird it adopted for its own and regarded as a sort of special brother. Building a mound in the shape of this animal or bird may have been just another way for a tribe to sign its name.

Many boys and girls have picked up arrowheads and spearheads in Wabasha County. Some were left by the Mound Builders and some by the Indians. In the Historical Society Museum at St. Paul are many pieces of pottery which came from Wabasha County mounds.

In Tepee Days

Perhaps the Mound Builders stayed here and their descendants were the Indians the first explorers found here. Perhaps they went away and the Indians moved in.

It is interesting to picture Wabasha County as it was when the Indians lived here. The river bluffs, then as now, looked like castles and towers. These bluffs are cut by deep gorges at the mouths of the various streams that empty into the main river. The Zumbro used to spread out about two miles from its mouth and reached the Mississippi through various channels. This left a large area of low swampy land sometimes covered by water. (The picture has been changed somewhat in recent years by a channel dug between Kellogg and the Mississippi.) In the spring and early summer, when the snow and ice melted, all the streams overflowed and there were heavy floods.

Along these streams was a heavy growth of hardwood timber, mostly oak, ash, elm, and birch. Butternut trees and hazel bushes dropped their harvest of nuts; maple trees were running with sweet sap. Fringing the timber were vines loaded with rich grapes, blackcherry, plum, and crabapple trees bending under their burden of fruit, and luxuriant patches of raspberries and gooseberries.

Back from the streams stretched the prairies. Great fires swept over them often, but in season they were green with waving grass as far as the sight could reach and dotted with wild strawberries and brilliant lilies, asters, goldenrod, blazing star, roses, harebell, phlox, and fringed gentian. In the winter a deep blanket of unbroken snow lay over everything, and ice covered the river.

Wild animals and birds were everywhere. Herds of buffalo and droves of deer and elk also ranged the woods. Grasshoppers kept up a constant hum and motion. Crickets sang in the grass and bright butterflies fluttered in the flowers. Birds kept up a constant concert. Eagles soared overhead.

Prairie hens led their flocks about and the males flapped their wings in loud booming. Wild turkeys strutted and spread their tails in the sunshine. Grouse preened themselves in the bushes.

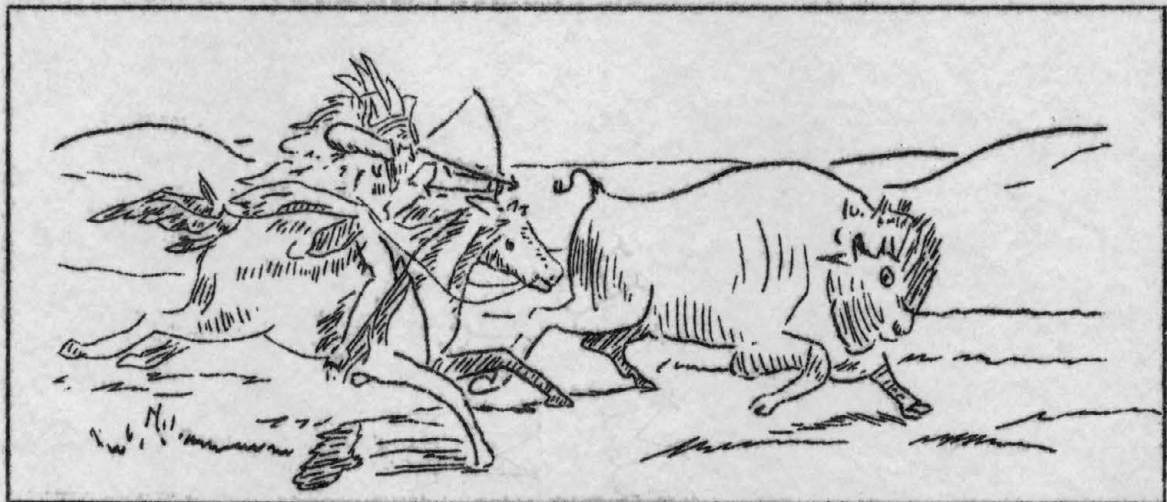
Ducks, geese, herons, cranes, and brants rested on the water, as they winged their way north in the spring and southward in the fall.

Passenger pigeons were so numerous that flocks of them actually darkened the sun. When they were nesting they made so much noise that they could be heard for miles. Their weight often broke down the branches on which they roosted.

Such animals as bears, foxes, wolves, polecats, raccoons, minks, martens, muskrats, weasels, fishers, beavers, lynx, squirrels, chipmunks, rabbits, badgers, woodchucks, bobcats and others roamed about and sought their food and stalked their prey.

Everywhere was action and noise.

Until the white men came and began to buy furs, the Indians killed only the animals and birds they needed for their own use, and the killing they did had little effect on the teeming supply.



Indians at War

When the first explorers came to the upper Mississippi Valley they found Dakota Indians hunting and fishing along the river as far south as Iowa.

The Dakota Indians were members of the great Sioux family, so we usually call them the Sioux. Dakota means a union of friendly tribes, which is almost the same as the United States motto, E. Pluribus Unum, you see on all the coins, and which means many joined in one. Sioux is a short form of Nadouessioux, which means snakes or enemies. This was the name their Indian enemies called them.

The Minnesota Sioux had their headquarters in a large village on Lake Mille Lacs. That was a good place for their homes because the lake was bordered with large quantities of wildrice which was one of their favorite vegetable foods.

South of Lake Superior were the Chippewa Indians, deadly enemies of the Sioux. These Chippewa who are sometimes called the Ojibway, belonged to the Algonquian family. Chippewa and Ojibway are the same word, Chippewa being the way the whites pronounced it.

The Chippewa got guns from the whites before the Sioux did, and they began to push westward, fighting as they came. Finally in a great battle fought at Mille Lacs, they beat the Sioux and drove them out. Then the Sioux built their villages along the Minnesota and farther down the Mississippi.

They did not build any villages in Wabasha County, but they found good hunting here, and sometimes camped here for several months. When the settlers first came there were Sioux Indian villages where Red Wing and Winona now are. In going from one village to another the Indians often passed through Wabasha County.

Hunting-Fishing-Fighting-Eating

The Sioux Indians of this region lived by hunting and fishing. The squaws raised a little corn and a few pumpkins and squashes. Wildrice, fruit, berries, nuts, edible roots, and maple sugar helped out their diet. Most of their meat was roasted over the open fire, but they also had pots for stewing and boiling.

In spite of the fact that there was so much game here they often went hungry. They were skillful with bows and arrows, but an arrow does not shoot far and the hunter had to be very cautious to get near enough to make a killing. In the summer, meat spoiled very easily and the only way they knew to preserve it was to cut it into strips and hang it in the sun to dry.

Their villages were made of poles and bark and had only one room. A pole frame for the older people to sleep on was usually the only furniture. A fire was built on the middle of the dirt floor and the smoke was supposed to go out of a hole in the roof. Usually the room was thick with smoke. Around the fire the members of a large family sat or lay down on the floor. When the fire died down at night the room was bitterly cold.

They ate with stone or bone knives and roughly scooped out wooden spoons. Everyone cut his own meat from the roast or dipped his hands into the pot to fish out a favorite piece of the stew. Fingers were the only forks. All food was eaten without salt, for salt was something the early Minnesota Indians knew nothing about.

In the warmer weather bands usually moved about and lived in tepees, which they made by stretching skins over a frame of poles.

Before the coming of the white men, clothing was entirely of skins and was very scanty. The younger children wore nothing at all in the summer. The men wore a breechcloth and sandals in summer, and added leggings, and a fur blanket in the winter. For celebrations they wore a war bonnet with turkey feathers showing the number of Chippewa they had killed. They painted their faces and bodies in gaudy colors and wore necklaces and arm bracelets made from the teeth of the larger animals. The squaws wore jackets, short skirts, a head band, and sandals. These were decorated with beads as were the sandals and war bonnets of the braves.

After the coming of the white men, the men began to wear trousers

and jackets, and cloth blankets came into use.

The Chippewa and Sioux were still at war. Chippewa war parties would hide behind the trees and rocks near the foot of Lake Pepin and shoot their arrows at the Sioux when they came paddling up or down the river in canoes.

So the Sioux had to keep constant watch, and often they organized war parties to make raids against the Chippewa. When the warriors returned with a collection of scalps there was a big celebration with dances, feasting, and games. Many other events and anniversaries were celebrated the same way. One of the biggest of these was the Ke-ox-ah celebration held every fall at Winona. The Sioux then gathered from other villages and spent many days in having a great festival.

Then a thousand or so braves in elaborate costumes stamped their wild dances around the blazing campfires, and chanted their weird songs to the monotonous drumming of the tom-tom while the medicine men in hideous masks jumped high into the air.

There were many contests of skill. The young men shot their arrows and spears at targets, wrestled and ran races and played games. A favorite game was lacrosse. This is something like tennis but it is played on a large open field and there is no limit to the number of players.

When the Indians camped in Wabasha County they lived in much the same way as they did in their Winona and Red Wing villages except that here they lived in tepees and the celebrations were not on such a big scale.

Sioux Boys and Girls

The Sioux boys and girls led rather a happy life, but by no means an idle one. Sioux parents in spite of being savages were loving and kind to their children and very proud of them. The children were never punished except when they became too mischievous and bothersome their mothers in sudden anger might chase them with a stick. Even then they were usually

swift enough to get away and the mothers' anger was soon over.

The boys had to learn to hunt and fish, to make and paddle canoes, to make bows and arrows, to swim, to find their way through the woods, to stalk game, to choose between edible and poisonous roots and berries, and to be constantly on the alert against skulking Chippewa. Above all a Sioux boy was taught to be brave and courageous and never let anyone know when he was in pain.

The girls had to learn to cook, to make clothes, and to dress furs. They even had to learn to make the frames for the tepees, for squaws did all the work except hunting, fishing, and fighting.

Some of the young people even learned to write after a fashion. The Indians did not have a real written language until the white missionaries invented one for them, but they could express simple ideas very well with crude pictures. For instance if an Indian wished to tell his friends that a chief and two hunters had passed in a certain direction in the fifth moon of the year he would select a smooth place on the bark of a tree and scratch a picture of three men and a deer with five lines under it. Then he would draw a few feathers in one of the men's heads and over the whole picture he would draw a pointing arrow.

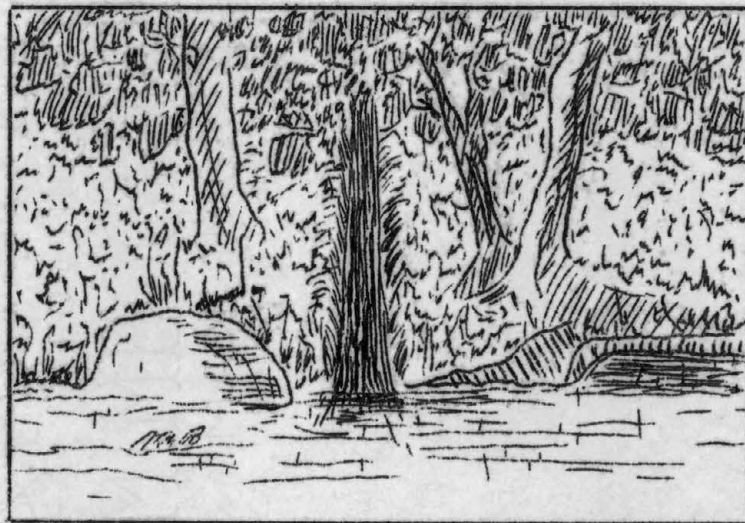
Happy Indian Children

Most of the children had pet animals which they had tamed. Some had ponies, and every village was overrun with dogs.

Like children the world over, the Indian boys and girls played games that made them strong and healthy as well as happy. They played hide-and-seek among the trees. They swam in the rivers. Sometimes they imitated the young beavers. A beaver has a broad, flat, furless tail. Going to the top of a steep, clay riverbank the playful young beavers would make a plunge, stick their broad tails under them and with these for sleds would shoot down the bank and into the river. Their wet bodies soon made the slide

smooth and slippery. The Indian children would then drive them away and play on the slide themselves with only their own bodies for sleds.

Another favorite game was pitching corn or pebbles at a hole in the ground. A sort of dice was played with marked seeds. Other games were "make believe" at being grown people. With a bear skin on one of the boys, they played "hunt the bear". With bows and arrows they played at hunting or at fighting the Chippewa. The girls "played house" with dolls which were made by putting a small skin around a piece of wood. And of course the boys played at the war dances which their fathers held.

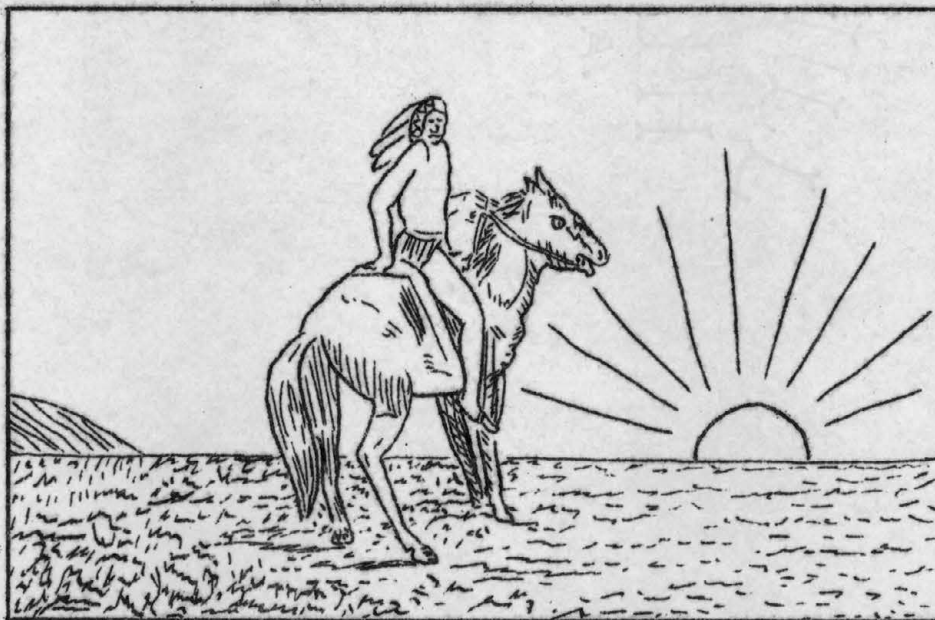


Indian Life Changes

The coming of the whites brought many changes into Indian life. They still roamed about and lived by hunting and fishing. But now they had steel knives and iron pots in their tepees; they had cloth garments and blankets to wear; they had hatchets to cut down trees and firearms to kill game. They began to hunt furs and meat for white men, as well as themselves, and trade them for luxuries. They killed so many animals that soon these became less plentiful and harder to get. So the Indians came to depend more and more on the white man for many of the things they needed and gradually lost the ability to get along by themselves.

Worse still, the white man brought whisky. No longer brave warriors

and fearless hunters, independent and free in their own forests, many Indians became drunken, surly, lazy beggars. The days of their reign over river and forest and prairie were nearing an end.



The Indians Leave

As more and more white people came to Minnesota they needed more and more land. They wanted this to be a white man's country and not an Indian hunting ground. But before the Government could buy the land it was necessary to decide just what land was claimed by each tribe. So a big meeting of Indians was held at Prairie du Chien in 1825 and boundaries agreed upon. The land claimed by the Sioux took in all of what is now southern Minnesota, some of Iowa and South Dakota, and a strip in Wisconsin that stretched from near where La Crosse is now to near the present Stillwater.

The approval of this boundary by the Government made Wabasha County and the lands across the river in Wisconsin a part of the Sioux hunting grounds. But not one of the tribes lived up to its agreement to keep on its own land, and the Indians were soon at war among themselves again.

In 1830 the Sioux sold to the Government all their land in Wisconsin. Then by two treaties signed in 1851, they agreed to give up all their land

in Minnesota except a reservation along the Minnesota River which was to be their home. But although they agreed to move there, for years they continued to camp and hunt in Wabasha County.

By 1862 they had all left and were living on their reservation. That was the year they rose against the whites and killed several hundred settlers. For this they were all exiled from the State.

Three Great Chiefs

The Indians went, but their memory lives in the name of the county. The name belonged originally to three great Indian chiefs, grandfather, father, and son. All three had their home at what is now Winona. To tell these Wabashas apart they are numbered I, II, and III.

Wabasha I led more than a thousand braves to fight for the British against the Americans in the Revolutionary War. Wabasha II, his son, also fought for the British in the War of 1812. But he must have been more civilized than some of the Indians, for when some of his savage friends from other tribes wanted to eat a white soldier they had killed, he would not let the feast go on. "We came to fight the Americans," he said, "not to eat them."

Wabasha III was one of the leaders in the Minnesota Indian uprising. Because his braves voted to attack the settlers, he took part in it, but he advised them strongly against it, and saved the lives of many captive white women and children.

The Indians Today

Long after their exile from the State some of the Sioux began to long for the scenes of their old home in this region. A few began to drift back. On Prairie Island just above Red Wing one group found a place to their liking and formed a small settlement. There their descendants still live, but they have adopted the ways of the white man, and the old wild life is no more.

The White Men Come

It was about 250 years ago that white people began first to know about Minnesota. Coming west through the wilderness from the settlements along the St. Lawrence, men from Europe at last dipped their paddles in the waters of the Mississippi. Some came just for adventure and to have exciting experiences away off here in the wilderness. Some came to get new land for their kings. Some thought that there was a waterway from the Mississippi right through to the Pacific Ocean. Some wanted to learn new things about geography that had never been put in a book. Some came to teach religion to the Indians. Many came to get rich out of furs.

Why They Came

At this time the countries of Europe were ruled by monarchs and noblemen. So that these kings and nobles could live in luxury, indulge in every pleasure, and carry on their wars with each other, the common people were taxed more and more. These common people were little better than slaves. They were so poor that thousands of them did not have enough to eat or wear.

Still the rulers were not satisfied. They wanted more gold, more jewels, more rich clothes and thick carpets, more sugar and spices, and more choice food. First they hoped to get these things from India and China. But the Turks blocked the land and sea routes to Asia. To go around the southern point of Africa took a very long time and was dangerous. For years and years they kept hoping they would find a shorter way. This, as you have learned, is what Columbus started out to find, and why, when he landed at the West Indies he thought he was in China.

After Columbus, other explorers came. The shores of North America became well-known in Europe.

In time there were prosperous colonies along the Atlantic coast and thriving trading centers on the St. Lawrence in Canada.

In Mexico and South America the Spaniards found gold and jewels as

they had hoped. Along the Atlantic coast the Colonists found the religious liberty or the better homes they had come for. The Frenchmen along the St. Lawrence did not give up the old dream of discovering valuable minerals in the New World, but they soon learned that the quickest way to get money was to collect furs.

Adventurers sent out from Montreal and Quebec reached Lake Superior and Lake Michigan and then turned their thoughts still further west.

When They Came

It is possible that two young French noblemen named Radisson and Groseilliers reached the Mississippi as early as 1655 and spent the winter with Indians on Prairie Island, a few miles above Red Wing. If this is true, they probably hunted in Wabasha County. But historians have argued about this point for many years and they will probably never agree.

The first year that we know white men came to our State is 1680. This was 73 years after Jamestown was settled, 60 years after the Puritans came to Plymouth, and almost a hundred years before the American Revolution.

Most of the early explorers of the upper Mississippi River passed Wabasha County, and some stopped here. There were no correct maps, and we cannot be sure of the exact location of many places the explorers wrote about. But it is easy to tell when they stopped in Wabasha County because all their maps showed Lake Pepin.

Father Hennepin

Perhaps Father Louis Hennepin was the first white man who saw Wabasha County. United States histories say that a Frenchman named La Salle, starting from a fort in Illinois went down the Illinois River to the Mississippi and then down that river to the Gulf of Mexico.

While he was at that Illinois fort in 1680, La Salle sent Father Louis Hennepin, who was a Belgian friar, and two French soldiers, Accault and Auguelle, to explore the upper part of the river. Hennepin was glad to

make the trip because he had come to America to convert the heathen Indians to Christianity and he was eager to meet the Indians in the Northwest. The three men were captured by a war party of Sioux and carried in canoes past Wabasha County into the northern part of the State.

The party slept one night at a point on Lake Pepin. Hennepin says that the Sioux chief had with him the bones of a relative tied up in a bag made of decorated skins. To make Hennepin sorry for him he began to cry. When he was tired with his wailing one of his sons began. He told Hennepin that it was the thoughts of his dead relative and his son murdered by hostile Indians that made him so sad, and that the only way his tears could be wiped away was for Hennepin to throw some presents on the bag. To stop the unpleasant sounds Hennepin gave the chief tobacco, axes, knives, beads and wampum bracelets. That is why Hennepin named the lake Lac des Pleurs, which is French for Lake of Tears.

Part of Hennepin's story sounds as if he had a very good time in spite of his hardships. He went hunting and fishing with the Indians. There were so many fish that sometimes they were caught on hooks without any bait, but the easiest way was to let the eagles catch them and then frighten the birds into dropping them. They even got a big shovel-nosed sturgeon by frightening an otter who had caught it. Hennepin says that the head of this fish looked like a demon, but they enjoyed eating it anyway. Some of Hennepin's hunting and fishing was in Wabasha County.

After many adventures up and down the river, the three white men were rescued by a courageous explorer named Du Luth who had come from the Lake Superior country to look for them. The meeting of these men, away off here in the wilderness, so far away from France and other white people, must have been very exciting.



The First Fort

Nicholas Perrot was another man who had lively times in this region. He was a fur trader in the Northwest for many years. In the late summer of 1685, just five years after Hennepin was here, he set out for the Mississippi River hoping to get a rich supply of furs. When he reached Trempealeau, which is not far down the river from Wabasha County, the river froze over so he had to spend the winter there. He tells of many wild beasts near his camp. Later he built one or two forts near the foot of Lake Pepin.

Some people say that one of his forts was on Tepeeota Point in Greenfield Township just below Wabasha. Ruins have been found there that may have been this fort.

It was at Fort St. Antoine on the Wisconsin side of the river that Perrot raised a flag in 1689 and laid claim to all the upper river country in the name of the King of France. This was a very important event.

A Man Who Was Fooled

One of the young officers with Perrot was named Le Sueur. He built a post of his own on Prairie Island in 1695.

While he was at this post the Indians told him about some peculiar bluish-colored earth which could be found on the Minnesota River. They showed him a handful and he thought it was copper ore.

The French always hoped to find valuable minerals in North America, so now Le Sueur hurried back to France to tell about his copper find and to fit out an expedition.

He returned in 1700 and built a fort near what is now Mankato. Here he dug out many tons of blue clay. Then he loaded two tons into canoes, and floated down the river past Wabasha County, to the Gulf of Mexico.

But when he reached France he found that his rich copper ore was just two tons of Minnesota earth!

A Chain of Forts

French officers, priests, and soldiers passed Wabasha County on their way to the stockades they built at or near Frontenac, just a little way up Lake Pepin. These stockades were a part of the French plan for a series of frontier forts that were to keep the Indians in order, to make the country safe for the fur trade, and to keep any other nation from taking over the land.

France Loses Possession

All these explorers, missionaries, and soldiers carried the flag of France. So the first flag that ever floated here bore the three lilies of the French King's banner.

The war which histories call the French and Indian War was a part of a long series of wars in Europe. When in 1763 these wars came to an end for awhile, France had to give to Great Britain all its land east of the Mississippi. The French King, a year earlier, had given the land west of the river to Spain. That made Wabasha County actually a part of the Spanish Kingdom, but the Spaniards never came here, and there ownership was just on paper.

The First Yankees

The British commander at Mackinac in Northern Michigan was Major Robert Rogers. In 1766 he sent Jonathan Carver, a native of New England to win the friendship of the Indians and to learn something about the land which the British had recently taken from the French.

Carver wrote the first English book about this region. It is very

interesting as a book of adventure. In it he gave a long description of how Wabasha County looked before the white men began to change it.

Peter Pond, another New Englander saw Wabasha County only a few years later. Pond had been a brave soldier in the French and Indian War and a fur trader near Detroit. In the spring of 1773 he set out from Montreal with canoes paddled by French Canadian boatmen and loaded with goods to trade with the Indians. That fall he came up the Mississippi. Along the way they stopped to hunt and fish. Pond says that the crabapples in this region were especially good after the frost had touched them.

High on the banks of the Minnesota River, Pond and another trader built their houses and there Pond traded for two seasons. Pond's story of his experiences has been published. He could tell interesting things but he did not know how to spell very well.

Here is the way he writes about an adventure he had, when returning to his post after a trading expedition far to the westward.

"I was now Destatute of frends or assistans Except my One own men and they Could not aford me Aney Asistans in the Provishon Line of Which I was Much in want. Nighter Could thay Assist me in the transportation of My furs. I then Concluded to Leave a Boy to take Care of them until we Could Return with Sum Provishon. The Poor fellow Semd Willing to Stay by himself and all we Could aford him was three Handfulls of Corn. In Case of want I Left Him two Bever Skins which Had Sum Meat on them and wone Bever Skin which he Could Singe the haire of and Roste in the fire that he Mite live in Cas we ware Gon Longer than we Kalkalated."

The boy got along even on these provisions and he was alive but weak when many days later Pond returned with provisions.

First American Flag

Carver and Pond, as we have seen, were both born in New England and were real Yankees. But their journeys to the West were before the Revolutionary War so they came as British subjects and brought the British flag.

After the Revolutionary War, Great Britain gave up the land east of the Mississippi to the new United States. A few years later, Spain gave the land west of the Mississippi back to France. In 1803, France sold it to the United States. This sale was called the Louisiana Purchase, and our county was a part of the miles and miles of land bought by the United States. The Indians, however, still claimed it. So the United States had to buy Wabasha County twice, once from the French and once from the Indians.

The United States sent a brave young lieutenant, Zebulon M. Pike, to look over its new territory. He had orders to go up the main branch of the Mississippi to its source, to find out where the Indians lived and how many there were, to try to gain their friendship and to find good places for military posts and government traders' houses.

Pike came in 1805 and spent the winter far up north on the Mississippi River. He was the first to bring the American flag to Wabasha County. It did not look exactly like our flag now, because it had fifteen stripes instead of thirteen and fifteen stars instead of forty-eight.

On their way up the Mississippi, Pike and his soldiers passed the mouths of the Whitewater and the Zumbro Rivers on a rainy afternoon. Some of them camped for the night near Tepeeota Point. The next night was clear and after the party had had supper in what is now Pepin Township, they started to sail up Lake Pepin, with songs and violin music. But a sudden storm came up, and before they could get to shore again the boats were almost swamped.

Civilization Arrives

Now many years afterward, the United States decided that it was time to build a fort on the site that Pike had selected at the mouth of the Minnesota. It was one of several planned along the Mississippi.

Colonel Leavenworth and his soldiers passed Wabasha County in 1819 on their way to start a military camp which is now Fort Snelling. Then

began a long list of later American explorers, who came to find out more about Minnesota and finally to make good maps of it.

The first steamboat, the Virginia, came up the Mississippi in 1823 and from that time white people knew more and more about Wabasha County. When the Indians first saw this "fire canoe" with its shrill whistle, its big roaring paddle wheel, and the hissing steam, they were very much frightened and ran and hid, but finally some of the braver ones went on board to examine this strange monster.

Curious Maps

The early maps of this region look very curious today. In making their maps the explorers could only guess how many miles they had traveled. Except for a few names which they themselves gave, they had to use the Indian ones for tribes and rivers. They did not know how to spell these names and usually just guessed from the way the Indians said them.

Copies of many of these maps are in the library of the Minnesota Historical Society at St. Paul. Some are printed in a book called The Aborigines of Minnesota which can be found in almost any library. Boys and girls can see these maps and by reading the explanation can pick out the part of the map intended for Wabasha County.

Coueurs de Bois

Even after the French Government no longer owned the Mississippi Valley, wandering Frenchmen still came here for furs. They were called coueurs de bois, which means couriers or rangers of the wood.

Sometimes they did some trapping themselves, but they usually visited the Indian villages and bargained with the chiefs for their furs.

At the close of the Revolution most of the fur trade in Minnesota was carried on by one big company called the Northwest Company. Their agents built posts within easy reach of the Indians.

The Demand For Furs

At this time it seemed as if everybody wanted furs. At first it was because the monarchs and nobles wanted to dress up with rich furs that the traders had made their money. Ermine was especially in demand. Ermine is the fur of a weasel which in winter changes to a pure white all over except the tip of the tail, which stays jet black.

Later furs became more and more the fashion and people in New York and the other eastern cities who were getting rich, wanted them as much as the kings and princes in Europe did.

Eli Whitney invented the cotton gin about this time, and cotton began to be cheaper. But still most of the clothes people wore were made of wool, flax and silk. But in cold weather nothing was so comfortable as furs. In the Eastern States every family that could afford it had a horse and carriage, and no one considered a drive in winter quite comfortable unless he could be tucked in with a snug buffalo or bearskin robe.

Minnesota was rich in fur-bearing animals and it was just the time for the fur trade to flourish here.

Furs Of Many Kinds

By the time the fur trade in Minnesota was at its height the buffalo had already been driven farther west.

The furs which the Indians of Wabasha County secured in the greatest quantities were muskrat, beaver, mink, otter, fishers, badger, silver, gray and red fox, raccoons, marten, bear, wolf, deer, and rabbit.

Wilderness Stockades

Trading posts were really small forts, for the traders had to protect their goods and their furs. Around the post was usually a stockade built of one or more rows of logs stood up on end. The gateway was also of logs and was built very strong. Inside was a log storehouse, a log home for the trader and his family, and usually a log home for the helpers and their families.

The stockades were mostly on high banks along the rivers, with deep woods stretching about them.

Often for months at a time the people in these stockades were shut in by the deep snow, seeing no one at all but each other and the Indians.

But life was not all dull. At their meals the men ate heartily of all kinds of game, and then sat about, smoking, telling stories of their thrilling adventures, and singing old French songs. These songs were very bright and gay. One of the favorites was "Alouette" which the boys and girls of Minnesota still enjoy singing.

Some Sharp Bargains

To these stockades the Indians brought their furs. The actual cash they received was little. The traders kept on hand a supply of articles which they knew the Indians wanted. The most popular were blankets, guns, powder and lead, kettles, knives, tobacco, looking glasses, scarlet cloth, flints, and, of course, whiskey. The flints were used for striking sparks to make fire.

There was much sharp bargaining, and the number of furs the trader got depended on how much the Indians wanted these things.

One account book that has been saved, shows the prices. Muskrat skins were worth 20 cents apiece in cash at the fur depots. This trader's account book shows that he got 100 skins for a gun which cost \$6.50 in St. Louis. He got 60 skins for a blanket which cost \$3.25, a tin kettle which cost \$2.50 or a yard and a half of scarlet cloth which cost \$3.00.

But even at such prices the ordinary trader did not get rich. Goods had to be shipped in and the furs shipped out. Helpers had to be paid. All this was expensive. Then the Indians usually spent the money as soon as the season was over, and the trader had to give them credit for their hunting outfit the next season. The next season some might be sick and some dead, and once in a while one was dishonest. Then the trader lost what he had loaned them.

It was the big fur companies that made most of the money. It was the money made by getting furs cheap in Minnesota and selling them for a high price in New York that helped build up one of the first great family fortunes in America, that of the Astors.

Where The Furs Went

The American Fur Company was in control of the Minnesota trade after 1815. This company had its Minnesota headquarters at Mendota.

As soon as the river was opened each spring, the guns, blankets, calico, and other things the Indians all wanted, were shipped by boat from Prairie du Chien to Mendota where they were stored in warehouses. The traders brought there the packs of furs they had gathered during the winter and sold them. Then they bought the trade articles and the supplies they needed for their posts and were ready for another season. The trip was made by river, first by canoe, and later by steamboat.

At Mendota the furs were sorted and then shipped down to the river on their way to New York.

Young and Strong

Nearly all the fur traders were young. One had to have strength and health to live so far from the comforts and safety of civilization. Courage was necessary too and plenty of good sense, for to deal with the Indians the traders had to know when to be good-natured and when to pretend to be very angry. They also had to be able to think quickly for one never knew what might happen.

Gay Costumes

From the Indians the traders learned that clothes made of skins were best suited to the wear and tear of the wilderness. But they also had the love for dashing colors all adventurers seem to have.

Their rough and serviceable buckskin trousers and jackets were fringed and trimmed with beads, shell, or horn. Beads in many bright patterns

covered their moccasins.

Under the jackets were shirts of bright calico and around the waist was a broad sash also of brilliant color. Into this belt was thrust a knife where it was always handy for use. For winter they added fringed buckskin coat, knitted scarf, and beaver cap.

The voyageurs or canoe men had a style of headwear all their own, a scarlet stocking cap decorated with a rosette or a coon tail.

Wabasha County Traders

In many parts of Minnesota, the fur traders went away about the time the pioneers came. But in Wabasha County some of the fur traders stayed and became pioneers themselves. The early settlements then grew up around their posts.

Wabasha County was a good place for trading posts. It was easy to reach by canoe, it was not far from the fur company headquarters at Mendota, two large Indian villages were only a few miles away, and the region was rich in fur-bearing animals.

Augustin Rocque, Jr. had a post below Tepeeota Point not far from Wabasha, in 1816. Born in Canada of French blood, Rocque was brought up in the fur trade by his father who had a post at Read's Landing, now called Reads, as early as 1800. In the War of 1812 the son was an interpreter for the British. After the war he built a number of posts.

In 1826 he had one at what is now the city of Wabasha, and there he spent the rest of his life. When he died in 1856 he was buried, as he had asked, on top of a bluff, where today one can look down on the city and up and down the river where he had so many adventures.

The Indians gave him a name, Wah-jus-tah-chay, which means strawberry. Probably it was because his outdoor life had burned his face a bright red. He was a friend of many of the American explorers and helped some of them find their way. The Government has a picture of him at Washington, taken

when he went to the National Capital in 1837 to help make the treaty between the Sioux Indians and the United States.

Other traders built posts near the Rocque post and brought their families here. Among them were Duncan Campbell, Oliver Cratte, James Buisson, Francis La Bathe, and Alexis Bailly. Most of the early fur traders in Minnesota were French or French half-breeds. Grown-up in the wilderness, they had little schooling. But Cratte was an Englishman, Campbell was half Irish, and Bailly was well-trained in a good school in Montreal.

Campbell was the son of an early fur trader and an Indian woman. His father was born in Ulster in the northern part of Ireland. When General Henry H. Sibley first came to Minnesota, Duncan was a boy of sixteen. Sibley met him at Prairie du Chien and took him to Mendota. When their Indian guide led them out of their way, stole a barrel of whiskey and left them, Duncan helped the party find their way again. At Wabasha they visited Rocque. Sibley says it was the only habitation of a white man between Prairie du Chien and Mendota, a distance of 300 miles.

He wrote, "Rocque, upon our arrival at his door amid the peltings of a pitiless storm, received us with genuine hospitality, and insisted upon our remaining his guests during the night, which invitation was gladly accepted. As he was well supplied with provant (provende, meaning provisions) including wild honey and fresh venison, we fared royally, and the old gentleman provided for us comfortable beds, a luxury we had not had for several days." General Sibley was young then, and he says: "To add to our enjoyment, Mr. Rocque had a pretty sixteen year old daughter, who vied with her parents in endeavors to make our unexpected visit agreeable." The strong and bright young Campbell probably came in for his share of the attentions of this pretty girl. Only 3 years later Sibley engaged a man to carry mail between Mendota and Rocque's post.

Bailly was born on the Canadian shore of Lake Huron. His parents were well-to-do French people. He entered the fur trade when he was young. When only 23, he made a trip through the unbroken wilderness from Fort Snelling to Pembina on the Canadian border, driving a herd of cattle for the starving colonists there. When he returned, he brought with him five families who settled at Fort Snelling.

He was the fur agent at Mendota for a while and then came to Wabasha. The Indians trusted him, and he was a great help in getting them to sign the treaties in 1851. In the two places where the treaties were signed, Bailly built a large arbor of branches and leaves for a meeting hall. He lived at Wabasha for many years after it became a village, and did not die until the first year of the Civil War. His wife was a daughter of Jean Baptiste Faribault and a sister of Alexander Faribault, the man who founded Faribault, the city.

Cratte was born in Liverpool, England. His parents died when he was a small boy and his sister brought him to Canada. He learned the blacksmith trade. For a while he was government blacksmith at Fort Snelling. The Government formed a plan for teaching the Indians how to farm. Oxen, carts, and plows were supplied to them. Cratte was sent to Wabasha to do their blacksmithing for them. He built a log cabin on the levee and filled up the cracks with mud and sand. The first winter he used it for a shop and slept and cooked in the same room where he worked. In the spring he built a lean-to and moved his shop into it. Then he was ready to bring down his family. He lived here until his death in 1884. By that time a prosperous city had grown up around the place where he had built his shack.

La Bathe was part French and part Indian. He was born at Mendota in this State and was brought up at a trading post there. Besides the post he opened at Wabasha, he had several others. When the Indians moved away, he moved with them to the Lower Agency in the Minnesota Valley near Redwood

Falls. Because he was a grandson of Chief Wabasha II, he had much influence with the Indians for many years. But when the Sioux decided to drive all the white people from Minnesota in 1862 he was one of the very first of the 500 people they killed.

For the people at the Wabasha posts, a Catholic chapel was opened in 1842, only a year after the first chapel in the State was dedicated at St. Paul. Father Augustin Ravoux who had charge of the St. Paul Chapel, visited Rocque and listened to his plea for a chapel here.

A friend donated a log cabin which had been built at Mendota. This was placed on a raft of logs and floated down the river to Wabasha. It was set up at the present end of Main Street. Priests could not get here regularly, so after a while the building was used for other purposes. In this cabin the first newspaper in the village was printed and for a while school was held here too.

Read's, which was once called Read's Landing, also grew up around a trading post. Edward Hudson built a post there in 1840. By this time lumbering had begun on the Chippewa line, so his warehouse was built out of lumber instead of logs.

Charles R. Read bought the old Hudson warehouse. Besides dealing with the Indians, he sold goods to the whites that had begun to come into the region. This was the first regular store in the county.

The traders at Wabasha did not want another trader so near. The Indians did not like him because he sold goods to the pioneers. So Read could not expect an easy time. But he was a brave man and well able to look after himself.

He was born in England. When 10 years old he came with his brother's family to Canada. He was always looking for adventures and he soon left his brother and came to the United States. When he was 17, he led a company of Americans into Canada to help those Canadians who were revolting against

England. Captured, he was sentenced to be hanged as a rebel. But his jailers liked him so much that they persuaded the Queen to pardon him.

Next he joined the American Army. While serving in the West he learned to know the Indians. After his discharge from the Army he decided that a life in the Mississippi would be not only exciting but that he could make money there trading. So he settled at the spot we call Read's, but which everyone used to call Read's Landing.

One day when he was sitting in front of his store, Little Crow rode up with twelve of his Indian warriors. They told him they had come to kill him and clean out his place. Read picked up a chair and hit Little Crow over the head, cutting his face and knocking out some of his teeth. The other Indians went for him and for a while it seemed that he had no chance at all. But a half-breed friend came up just in time with an axe, and together the two men drove the Indians away.

He lived to see his landing grow into an important village.

Read's business was so good that in 1850 a man named Fordyce S. Richards opened a post near him and began to trade with the Indians and sell supplies to the lumber camps on the Chippewa. Richards was born in New York and first came to Wisconsin where, from fur traders, he heard about Wabasha County and decided to locate here. He later became a farmer and at one time was postmaster.

Augustin Grignon was not so brave as Read. He and Joseph Rolette, Sr. had posts at the mouth of the Zumbro in the winter of 1821-22. Rolette was not here himself but hired a man to run his post. Wanting all the trade for himself, this man persuaded the Indians to tear down Grignon's cabin and scatter his goods. Grignon ran away into the woods and never came back.

The Wood Choppers

After the Indian treaties of the 1850's more and more people came into Minnesota. So many came up the Mississippi that more and more steamboats

were needed to bring them. These steamboats did not burn coal or oil as they do today. They burned wood, and they had to have so much of it to keep their engines going that there was not nearly enough room in the boats to carry it all. So every few miles the boats had to stop to take on a load. They usually bought it from wood choppers who built cabins along the river, cut down trees, and piled them on the banks to wait for the boats.

Two of these choppers, Michael Agnes and Louis Krutely, came up from St. Louis in 1851, and settled near what is now Minneiska.

But they did not sell much wood, so they had a hard time getting along. All they had to live on was fish and game, and a little flour and salt that they got from the steamboats. When these were gone they would climb a tree and anxiously look up and down the river for a steamboat. In the winter when the river was frozen they almost starved.

After awhile these men decided that a river bank that made a good landing-place for steamboats looking for wood, was also a good place for the steamboat to let off passengers. So they laid out a town which they called Minneiska and a village grew up there.

The first year that Agnes and Krutely came here they did not try to raise any crops. The next year they decided to do a little farming. Four other men opened farms on the riverbanks. These were the first men who came to the county to farm, although the traders for many years had raised vegetables and grain for their own use.

Lake City

The first settlers in Lake City also came to open farms. In 1853, Jacob and Philip Boody selected claims on the beautiful plain which is now the principal part of the city. Patrick Conway and his two sons, James and William, came the next spring. They were followed by Abner Dwelle and family, and John Boody. Among those who came in 1855 were Abner Tibbets, William Berry, Seth Skinner, and Samuel Dougherty. All of them became leading men in the county.

Among the first settlers in Lake City were Eastern families whose fathers and mothers had come from England. Others were Irish. A famine in Ireland in 1846 had driven many people to America, and some began to find their way to the West.

Abner Dwelle was born in New York State. His father and grandfather who was a sea captain, both fought in the Revolutionary War. When Abner was still a boy on the farm, he learned the wool-carding and spinning trade. Like his ancestors who had come from England to Massachusetts and then to New York State, he had the pioneer spirit. From New York he moved his family to Michigan, which certain people then thought was far out West.

After he had a good farm cleared, he decided the neighborhood was getting too crowded. So he came to Lake City. First he had a log cabin and then a good frame house. Two of his sons were soldiers in the Civil War. Here he lived for the rest of his long life.

Samuel Dougherty was born on Long Island, New York, where his English ancestors settled in Colonial days. His grandfather too was a veteran of the Revolutionary War. Because the schools were so far away, Samuel's mother taught him herself. She made him study regular hours just as though he were in school.

While he was a boy he learned the blacksmith trade. Before he was twenty he owned a shop. Soon he helped to start a school. Later he moved to Bloomington, Illinois. After he had helped to build up that city, he began to look around for something else to build. He came up the Mississippi and when he saw the plains where Lake City now stands he was sure that this just the kind of a place he wanted. The farms showed that the land was fertile and other farmers would come to settle there. The flat fields beside the lake gave plenty of room for long, broad streets, and for enough buildings to make a city, while the lake bank was a fine place for steamboats to land. Mr. Dougherty looked all around him and decided that one of the greatest

cities of the new Northwest might easily grow up here. So he bought the farms of Jacob and Philip Boody, and he and Abner Dwelle and Abner Tibbets laid out a village.

For his own home he put up the first frame dwelling in the village. The lumber came by raft from Read's Landing. This building, 18 by 26 feet, was used later as a kitchen for a large building. A small shack was used as a blacksmith shop. It had no windows and no chimney, but it was a great convenience to the settlers who wanted their plows sharpened. Later Mr. Dougherty became a banker. He lived in Lake City until his death, and the family is still here. One of his sons was a major of sharpshooters in the Civil War.

Mr. Dougherty in after years liked to tell stories of the early days. Indians were constantly passing between Red Wing and Winona. They camped on the shores of the lake near the houses. Once in a while they would invite themselves to dinner. But they were usually polite enough, and the settlers were not frightened.

The plain where they marked out the village was covered with trees and behind it were smooth stretches of prairies. There was plenty of game, and one day Mr. Dougherty saw a herd of 19 elk on the prairie back of the village. The streams were filled with fish and the only thing that could keep a man from getting all the prairie chickens and ducks he wanted, was that he was too lazy. Large packs of wolves were often seen on the ice.

Seth Skinner started selling a small stock of goods in a board shack. A bigger store, a hotel, sawmill, gristmill, and grain warehouse soon followed.

A Wrecked Steamboat

At one time, it seemed as if West Newton in Minneiska Township would become an important village. Near here in the early fifties a large steamboat, the West Newton, was wrecked. The pilot house with the name printed in bright paint was all that was left above the water. The owners could not raise the boat and the pilot house soon became a landmark. People began to call the neighborhood West Newton.



Three men laid out a village here. A plat was surveyed with broad streets and boulevards, and sites for churches, hotels, business houses, and residences. Parks, playgrounds, and public buildings, all were planned for. Copies of the plat were sent to Chicago and New York and many lots were sold at good prices. But when the buyers arrived here, all they found was a wrecked steamboat, a natural landing, and a few scattered cabins.

A hotel, two stores and a post office were added to the cabins and the village showed a little life.

Farming in Greenfield

A flourishing farming community was started in Greenfield Township in 1854. Two brothers, Levi and Aaron Cook, walked up the Zumbro Valley looking for a farm. Near the western line of the present town, they came upon a beautiful branch stream. Along this stream was a bench of unusually fertile land. To own a home here almost for nothing seemed to the Cook brothers like a wonderful dream come true. So they took their claims right away. During the same year Dr. C. C. Stauff settled nearby. He was a German who had already been living a year in Wabasha. Soon a number of cabins were nestling against the sides of the valley and scattered about on neighboring claims.

A Good Start

Now there were five villages along the river, Wabasha, Read's Landing, Minneiska, Lake City, and West Newton.

In Greenfield Township was a happy farm settlement. There was hardly any one in the rest of the county, which still looked about as it did in the days of the early traders. Heavy woods were along the rivers, and great prairies stretched back from the forests.

People began to think about opening farms farther back from the Mississippi.

Free Land for All

At this time the population of the United States was growing rapidly. People were swarming here from Great Britain, Germany, and the Scandinavian countries. Some were farmers and workingmen who had a hard time to get along in Europe and hoped for a better living for themselves and their children in a new country. Some were businessmen who saw a new chance in trade and industry. Some were men who were important enough at home but who hoped to become even bigger leaders here. Some were people who had rebelled against their government and fled for their lives. Others who had lived in places where they had almost no liberty longed for the freedom of speech and life that they could find in this "land of the free."

All these people from Europe began crowding the eastern states. Wise men believed it a good policy to encourage them to settle the western region.

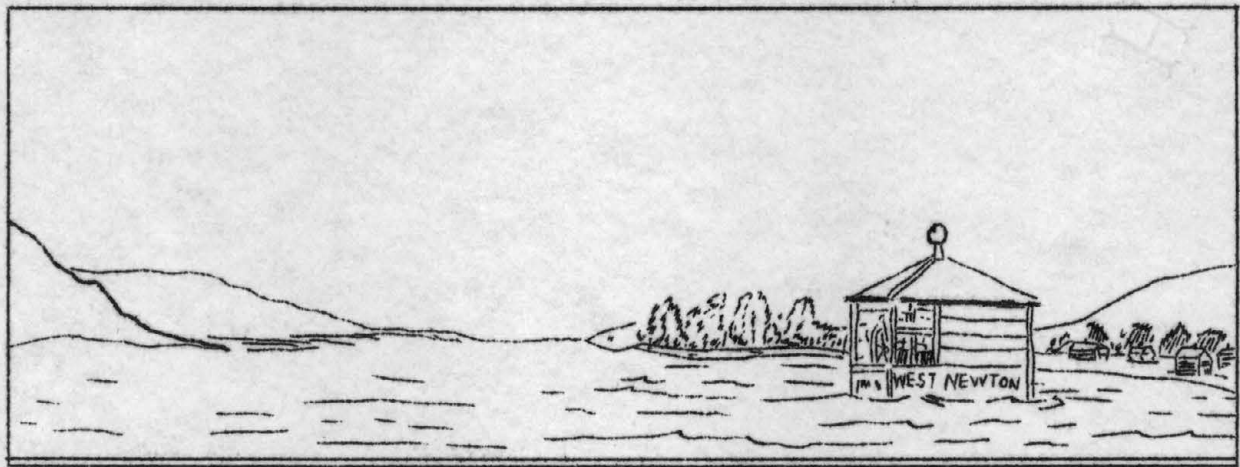
So the Government passed the Preemption Act. This was a plan for getting the great tracts of land bought from the Indians into the hands of white people who wanted homes and farms.

Now any grown person could drive stakes around 160 acres of Government land, build a cabin, and start a farm. This was called taking a claim.

When he had paid the Government \$1.25 an acre the settler received

a "patent." (A patent was the same as what we call a deed.) This was called "proving up." Many old families in the county still have one of these patents among their papers. Later the Homestead Act was passed, and then settlers could get a farm just by living on it for five years and paying a small fee.

Soldiers of the War of 1812 and the Mexican War and later the Civil War were given scrip that gave them farms without paying anything except a small fee, just as soon as they had settled.



Then, too, there was school land and railroad land. To help support schools the Government gave the State two sections of land, each one mile square, in every township. This was called school land. The Government also gave the State thousands of sections which the State could give to companies who wanted to build railroads. This was called railroad land.

Settlers could buy this school or railroad land for a very small sum.

Land was easy enough to get in those days, but it took hard work to make it into a farm.

The Land Office

The place where all this land business was done was the United States Land Office. Before the land office was opened the land had to be surveyed and corner stakes put at the corners of townships. These townships were six miles square, and were divided into sections one mile square, and quarter sections of 160 acres.

The land office for Wabasha County was at Red Wing.

This office was an interesting place. The immigrants would go there and pick out a piece of land on the map. This was called filing or preempting. Then they would make their way to the place that was to be their home. Sometimes they took a chance on settling on a place without going to the land office first. This was called "squatting." Then they had to file and prove up later.

Often it happened that two squatters wanted the same piece of land. Then one might drive the other out or move in when the first squatter was away. This was called jumping a claim. Claim jumping caused much trouble and even deaths in Wabasha County in the early days.

An Outlaw Band

The most serious trouble over claim jumping was in Greenwood Township where several people were killed. Here an outlaw band called the "Dresser Gang" raided the settlements again and again. Dashing out from their hidden retreat, they would run off a settler's oxen and steal anything they could find. Then they would prepare to defend themselves against punishment.

One night this gang set out for the cabin of Dr. Timothy Enright, who had settled at Tepeeota. Dr. Enright was away from home but he had taken in for the night a man named Polhemus. The outlaws shot Polhemus through the head, killing him instantly.

The claims of two settlers, George Hayes and E. Madison Wildes, were "jumped" by Dresser and a companion named Baird, who built a cabin on the line between the claims. Young Andrew Wildes, decided to take things into his own hands. He coaxed a young chum to help him, and the two boys tore down this cabin while the outlaws were away. When the outlaws returned, they were so angry they said they would rebuild the cabin even if they had to shoot everybody in the neighborhood.

Hayes then persuaded the neighbors to form a posse and drive the outlaws away. They found Dresser on the roof and Biard inside at work on the cabin. Dresser warned them he would shoot the first man who dared to touch a board.

Madison Wildes stepped forward. Dresser fired and Wildes died the next day. When the sheriff did not make an arrest, another posse from Wabasha was led by A. A. Weston, chairman of the county board. This time they got the men. The outlaws were taken to the prison at Stillwater. But they escaped and boldly came back again.

Baird was again arrested but once again escaped. This time he left the country. When J. J. Stone, the deputy sheriff, tried to take Dresser, the outlaw's wife shot him from the door. A few days later, the leader of the posse, was fatally wounded by a shot fired through a window. Dresser was again arrested. Again he escaped, and was never heard of again. The day of the outlaws was over.

Some Troublesome Indians

The Indians who roamed through Wabasha County for several years after the treaties were signed gave little serious trouble though they were often a great nuisance.

They often pitched their tepees at Wabasha, where some of the residents were sons and daughters of Indian mothers. Settlers became used to looking up and seeing a painted face peering at them through a window. The savages never learned that they should knock before coming into a strange house. Sometimes a housewife would turn from her stove, or a child look up from play, to see three or four Indians standing in the room. Usually they wanted food or "coshpop" which was their way of saying 10 cents.

But it was not so easy to get used to the savage yells that sometimes kept up far into the night, when the wild native dances were being held. Then the monotonous beating of the drums was almost harder to bear than the

yelling. Their pride in a handful of fresh Chippewa scalps was still more upsetting.

Nevertheless some of the white children became good friends of the Indian children. A few even learned to speak the language.

One day a pioneer family at Wabasha was sitting at dinner when the door suddenly opened and five dusty faces looked in, one above the other. The youngest face was painted with black and red streaks, around eyes that gleamed with mischief. Two feathers sticking upright from the hair completed the picture. The boy's only clothing was a strip of bright cloth around his middle.

One of the white boys recognized the face. Jumping up, he said in Sioux, "Now Dick what does all this mean?" "Indian hungry," was the reply. "But why are you here with that face?" "Dick dandy," was the answer. By this the white boy understood that the Indian had decorated himself for the entertainment of the family. "Dick Dandy" was the name the children gave to the young Sioux ever after.

At one time a massacre nearly took place in Greenfield Township. A hotel had been opened in Section 22 on the south bank of the Zumbro River where a ferry carried passengers back and forth. The newcomers who landed at Wabasha bound for the Zumbro Valley, found the ferry a great convenience.

But they were not so pleased with the large body of Indians who decided to camp nearby, for they were often noisy and troublesome, especially when they returned from drinking whiskey with their tribesmen at Wabasha.

One day they came back in a bad mood. They rushed toward the hotel, waving their bowie knives, and acted as if they were going to kill all the whites in the neighborhood. Fortunately their squaws were sober, and they snatched away the knives and made the drunken braves go to the camp.

Another time they stole the ferry boat and floated it down the river. The settlers formed an armed posse but they recovered the boat without bloodshed.

Half-Breed Tract

People did not make farms back from the river region in Wabasha County as soon as in some of the other counties around here. This was because of what was called the Half-Breed Tract. Many of the early French fur traders in Minnesota had married Indian women. The children, part white and part Indians, were called half-breeds. When the Indians began to sell their land to the Government, a large tract was set apart for these children to live on when they grew up. This tract took in much of Wabasha County and some of Goodhue. The Government gave these children scrip that permitted each to choose 480 acres anywhere in the tract. It seemed a fair plan, but it did not work out well.

Some of the immigrants knew about this tract, and if they wanted a farm here they would buy a piece of scrip from the father or guardian of a half-breed child. But many of the newcomers had not heard about this arrangement. They came in, squatted on a claim, built their cabins, and started to farm. Then, when they had things in good shape and were about ready to prove up, a man would come along with half-breed scrip which he had bought, and order the squatter to get off. Men who did this were called "speculators."

They were not like the settlers who bought the scrip because they wanted a farm here. All they wanted was to make money quickly by buying land for very little and selling it at a good price. Of course they could get more money for a farm that had been started, than they could for the wild land, and they did not care at all what became of the squatter and his family. But the squatters refused to stand for this sort of treatment.

One speculator was taken to a hole in the ice and told he would be ducked if he did not leave the country at once. He took this strong hint, and was never seen in this part of the country again.

The settlers formed a sort of club of resourceful, courageous,

and muscular men. They collected enough money to send a man to Washington to see what the Government would do about all this. They got maps of all the townships in the county, and marked every quarter section where a settler had made improvements.

The land office became a very exciting place. The members of the Wabasha Association, armed with revolvers, took turns standing in pairs at the door. Looking at these firm men, none of the speculators dared to try to get title to any land already settled.

Finally, the Government arranged it so that the squatters on the tract could prove up on their claims. Before many years, nearly every acre of government land in the county had been taken by settlers.

Even then the trouble was not all over. The settlers who had bought scrip from parents or guardians sometimes had to pay all over again when the half-breeds became of age.

The Prairie Settlers

After the steamboats began their regular trips on the Mississippi, except sometimes in the winter, the river settlements could keep in touch with each other, and with the older towns and cities to the south. This made life near the river more exciting than life on the prairies and along the inland valleys; and more comfortable because it was easier to get timber and other things for their houses.

Most of the early inland settlers came from the older States and were of British blood. Farmers settled on the prairies of Wabasha because they were easy to reach, because land was almost free, and because the rich soil was easy to cultivate and a few months after planting would produce a good crop for a family to live on. Then too, there was plenty of game for the family to eat while the crops were growing.

Men with money saw a chance to make more money here. There was water power to run mills. The river fords on the rough trails were good

places for the hotel business, or for blacksmith shops. When trading, farming, industry and business had gotten started, ministers, doctors, lawyers, and teachers also came. Carpenters, harnessmakers, shoemakers, plasterers, millwrights, and wagonmakers were needed. There was a living for everyone.

A Long Journey

By the time the prairies here began to be settled, there were railroads running from the Atlantic coast to Rock Island, Illinois, and to Dunleith, now East Dubuque, Illinois, both on the east side of the Mississippi.

The pioneers usually came as far as they could by railroad, then up the river by steamboat to Wabasha County, and then inland by stage.

Sometimes the men came alone first, and walked about the county to select a place to live before they sent for their families or went back after them.

But it was more exciting, as well as cheaper, to come by prairie schooner. This was a large wagon covered with a sort of round-topped tent. Sometimes it was drawn by a yoke of oxen, sometimes by a team of horses. The family loaded onto the wagon as many provisions, supplies, farm tools, and household goods as it could carry, and then they started out. Sometimes they even brought a pig and a few chickens and led a cow or two.

The grown people and the older children usually walked beside the wagon. The babies rode inside. The father carried a gun to shoot game and ward off robbers and Indians. Camp was made each night in the open, around a campfire. Sometimes, over Sunday when they rested, they even set up a stove in a sheltered spot.

The farther west these settlers came the worse they found the roads and trails. Rivers had to be forded, sometimes the wagons were overturned by hitting a stump, wheels were often mired deep in the mud. Ten or fifteen miles a day was about all they could make.

Starting a New Life

When the pioneers reached here everyone had to work. To make the country what it is they went through "hardships of pioneer life." First of all there were two things they had to think about; one was a place to live and the other was something to eat. The wagon in which some of the settlers came, a tent, a log cabin or sometimes a house made out of sod, gave them a place to live. To add to the scanty food they brought with them or could buy, and the game they shot, they had to get a garden started if they were to have enough to eat.

Building The Cabin

On their journey west the pioneers passed many log cabins and found out how to build them. They had read something about them too, for the eastern newspapers often printed letters about the wonderful opportunities of Minnesota, and how to get along here.

The first step was to select some good straight trees of about the same size. Along the river courses these were easy to find on the claim where the cabin was to be built, but back on the prairies the settlers had to go several miles from their claim to find the kind of trees they needed.

When the trees were picked out, the fathers cut them down and the boys trimmed off the branches. The bark was left on. Then notches were cut near each end of the logs and building was ready to start. Everything had to be done with an axe and a hatchet. Even hammers were scarce and saws scarcer, and only a few people had nails or hinges.

Two logs notched at their ends were placed on the ground in parallel positions partly sunk in the earth. Then two logs were laid crossways with their notches fitting snugly into those of the first two. For the door casing two split logs notched the whole length of the round side were set upright, and into these notches the ends of the sharpened wall logs were fitted.

Row on row of logs were laid until the walls were about eight feet high. Then they were chinked-in with split poles, sod, clay, or mud. Standing logs were placed to make the front and back supports of the roof. Poles were then laid across these logs, and brush and sod piled on the poles. Sometimes the roofs were covered with "shakes," which were a sort of shingle split from logs and partly smoothed. The doors were made of split poles fastened to cross bars by wooden pegs, and all opened inward on leather hinges. They were locked at night by placing pole bars across the doorway on the inside. Usually there was a window, but glass was scarce and a piece of cloth was often the only covering for the opening.

The floor was sometimes of hard earth. Sometimes it was puncheon, that is, split poles with the round side down.

The fireplace at one end of the cabin was of logs smeared over on the inside with clay. The chimney was built the same way.

Under the roof was a loft reached by a pole ladder. Here the children slept on the pole floor. Overnight visitors usually slept up there.

The lower floor was a single room about 12 x 20 feet. Sometimes a sheet or curtain was hung up to make two rooms. Not much furniture had been brought from the East. Stools were made of sawed-off logs. Tables were made of logs split in two, with pole legs. Beds for the parents were made by stretching ropes across poles. These beds could be swung up against the walls in the daytime. Mattresses were made of tick stuffed with straw or feathers. In the winter the people snuggled in between two of these fluffy feather ticks, one under them and one over them.

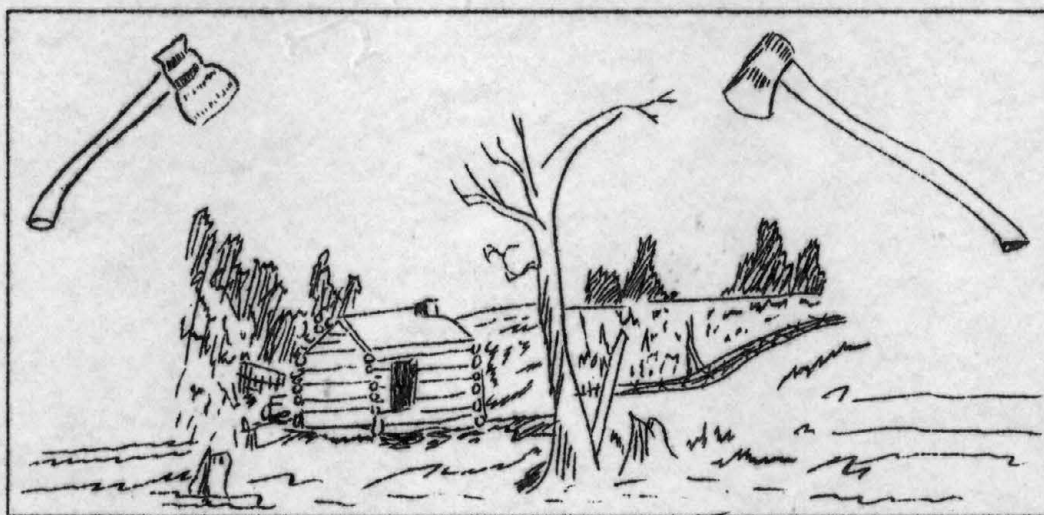
Hardly anyone had stoves. Cooking was done over the fireplace, with the help of a pole cross-bar. At the sides of the fireplace were hung the brightly polished pans and kettles. There were not many dishes and the men sometimes made dishes and spoons of bark and wood, as the Indians did.

In one corner of the room was a big pile of firewood. Perhaps a

spinning wheel or a big chest stood in other corners. Ears of corn and bunches of herbs were hung to dry from the pole ceiling. Food and dishes were kept in a cupboard fastened to the wall. Books and newspapers, usually very few, were kept in another cupboard with a few sheets of writing paper, and perhaps pen and ink. Extra bedding was piled on the floor against the wall and clothing was hung wherever there was room for a peg. Outside the door was a bench with a pail where everyone washed. Sometimes skins were pegged-up to dry on the logs, and a dressed deer or two strung up under the eaves.

In the yard was a hole in the ground for storing potatoes and rutabagas. Oxen and cows were kept in a pole shed covered with hay. Hay for feeding was left in the stack.

When it was hard to get logs, settlers sometimes made their homes of sod which they cut into squares, and used like bricks. And sometimes their homes were caves hollowed out of a hillside with a front and door of logs, although in Wabasha County sod houses were not as plentiful as in the western part of the State where there were no trees.

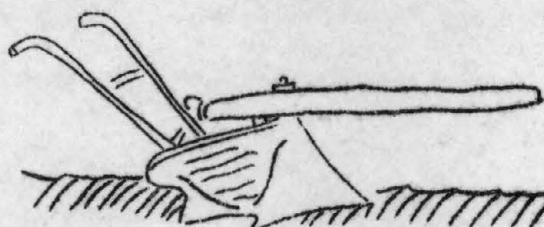


Breaking The Land

As soon as the pioneer farmers had their homes built, the next thing was to plant some crops. In the woods they had to cut down the trees and clear out the brush before they could plow. They had no dynamite, and gunpowder was too scarce for blasting, so the stumps were left in the ground

to rot and the crops were planted between them.

The prairie sod was very tough and thick, and filled with wiry grass roots. To break it, it was necessary to use a plow drawn by four or six oxen. About two acres could be broken in a day. Hardly any of the settlers had more than one yoke of oxen, so they took turns helping each other. The mosquitoes were so thick that sometimes blood streamed from the oxen as they worked.



A few acres of potatoes, rutabagas, and field corn were the usual crops. Pumpkin and squash were planted between the rows of corn. Though the soil was rich these crops were not heavy. After only one breaking, the soil was filled with lumps and sod. Gophers, blackbirds, pigeons, prairie chicken, crows, grasshoppers, and chinch bugs ate up the seed and growing plants. But agriculture had started and, in spite of the drawbacks, the pioneers clung to their hope of bumper crops to come.

Saving the Water

One of the serious problems of the early settlers was how to get water. Away from the rivers and brooks water was scarce and they had to be very saving in using it for drinking, washing, cooking, and watering their cattle. Sometimes it was brought in barrels, from streams or springs several miles away.

The settlers started to dig wells like the ones they had used in New England, where water lies in the sand and gravel just a few feet below the surface. At Plainview they found a very good supply of water in the blue clay about 30 feet from the surface. But for the most part the surface wells of Wabasha County were unsatisfactory. Many dried up in the dry season, the water often did not taste good, and there was always the danger of disease. To get the water a bucket was lowered down the well by a long rope. Later there were pumps, but it was not until many years afterwards that the water

problem was solved with deep wells that were driven or drilled.



Sickness and Health

For the most part the early settlers were healthy. It was usually only strong people who had the courage to start a new life in the wilderness. But some of the families brought along their elderly relatives, often not strong enough to stand all the hardships they found here. Many of the children suffered from the lack of green vegetables and fruit. Even the healthiest people can get infectious diseases from impure water. There were no quarantine laws, and people did not always know the danger of being with those who were already sick.

Early Doctors

There were few doctors in the early days and they were far away from most of the homes. The mothers often had to be doctors and nurses both, even in the most severe cases. Some were wonderfully successful not only in treating their own families, but their neighbors as well.

The first regular physician who practiced in Wabasha County was Dr. F. H. Milligan, who lived in Wabasha Village. For two or three years he was the only doctor, not only in the county, but also for many miles up and down both sides of the river. He sometimes said that to get to his patients he had to travel over an area as large as some of the New England States. After several years he found that the winter work was too hard for him, and he moved away.

Dr. Chauncy Gibbs was the first physician in Plainview. He had practiced for many years in Ohio. Worn out and in failing health, he came to Wabasha County in hopes of lengthening his life by resting on a farm, could not bear to see people sick when he knew he could help them, so he was soon at work again. But he did not have the strength and in a few months he died.

All the early physicians had a hard life. At any time of day or

night, in any kind of weather, there might come a knock at the door with a plea to help a sufferer often many miles away. Then the doctor would pack up his few medicines and fewer instruments and, on horseback or in a buggy, set out on the long and dreary ride over rough roads and Indian trails, fording unbridged streams, through snow and mud and pelting rain, to reach the lonely cabin at last.

He supplied medicine, he performed operations, he pulled teeth, he furnished glasses, he gave advice about health and other matters, he was "guide, philosopher, and friend" to everyone.

Often he had to operate by candlelight in a little room crowded with people, sometimes with merely a knife from the cupboard. Hot water was often the only antiseptic, and he had no help but that which the families and neighbors could give him.

But he did the best he could and, even though he did not have drug-stores, hospitals, or nurses, he saved many lives.

Early Schools

The early settlers of Wabasha County came from communities where everybody went to church Sundays and sent their children to Sunday and day schools. So one of the first things they did after they were settled in their new homes was to hold Sunday services and to plan for schools.

At first each family with children would put in a little money to pay the teacher. Those who had no money would furnish wood to keep the school warm. The teachers were poorly paid, sometimes as low as 10 dollars a month. In some districts the families took turns boarding the teacher free, and then the pay was even less.

Before schoolhouses were built, classes were held in many queer places. Some were in little one-room homes where the mother kept on with her housework while the children studied and recited. Some were in empty cabins, in carpenter shops, and even in hotels.

The textbooks were few and poor. They had been brought here by the families and no pupils had two alike. Lessons were written on slates. Sometimes a family of three or four children owned but one slate among them, and each had to wait his turn to use it. Each family furnished a bench. The size of the bench depended on the number of children in the family. The pioneer teachers did their own janitor work, and the older boys helped with the fires.

The school year was much shorter than it is now. In most districts three months in the winter was all the schooling the children had. In other districts, where the winter snow was usually too deep for the children to travel far, the younger children went to school three months in the summer, and the older ones who were needed on the farm had to learn what they could by studying at home in the winter with the help of their parents.

The first school in the county was a "private" one at Wabasha. Here was the first district organized in the county, and school was held in the little log Catholic church that had been floated down from Mendota. In Plainview the first school was held in a carpenter shop where the carpenter worked in the same room. The Lake City children were a little better off. Their school was over a carpenter shop instead of in it. They could hear the carpenters while they were studying, but could not see them.

An amusing story is told about one district in Mount Pleasant Township. The first school was held in a small granary. At that time it was the style for ladies to wear large hoop skirts. The teacher in this district followed the style. But after she got into the little room there was no space left for the pupils, so she had to take off her hoop skirts before the children could get in.

In District 12 in the same township the school was held in the shanty of the teacher who was a bachelor. He often stopped in the middle of his teaching to do his cooking.

The first school in Mazeppa was held in a store and later in a claim shanty. A log school which was built there was swept away by a flood.

District 40 in Highland Township had a peculiar eight-sided school-house also used for a church. A prominent man paid for having it built at Wabasha, and then it was hauled to Highland in sections.

As the county began to grow more buildings were put up just for schools. They were usually of logs and were built by the fathers of the district. These one-roomed schools were not very comfortable. In the middle was a large, square iron stove. The pupils sat around the room facing the walls where wide boards stuck out for desks.

It was many years before some of these little log schools were replaced with wooden buildings, and in most of the older districts when the new schools were built it was on the exact spot where the pioneer children had learned their first lessons. Perhaps your father can tell you whether this is true in your district.

Going To Church

The fur traders at Wabasha had been brought up in the Catholic faith by the early Catholic missionaries. In the early forties Father Augustin Ravoux, the priest at St. Paul and Mendota, began to visit them. When the pioneers began to come in, during the 1850's, Protestant services were also held at Wabasha. Similar services were held at Lake City, and soon afterward Father Ravoux began to make visits there too.

The early settlers on the prairie were mostly Protestants who belonged to the Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist churches, a few to the Episcopalian and Church of Christ (Disciple) churches. There was hardly a pioneer family that did not belong to a church of some denomination. The parents read the Bible themselves and wanted their children taught in it. They felt the need of gathering together to worship God just as they had done back East. So religious services were held in every community in

the county almost as soon as the settlers got here. Sometimes a few families together held a religious meeting out-of-doors. Often they met in homes. Usually the meetings were in the same places as the schools. The children were not forgotten, and sometimes weekly Sunday schools were started even before regular services were held.

At first the leader at the religious meetings was some pioneer who had been active in church work in the East. Ministers were scarce. Those who visited the scattered meetings usually came from the larger villages and made long journeys from place to place on horseback, preaching, presiding at funerals, performing weddings, and sleeping where night overtook them.

It was not long before regular churches were organized. Then church buildings and parsonages were put up. Because the settlers were widely scattered most of these churches were built in the villages where there were more people to help pay for them. In some counties now there are nearly as many churches out in the farm districts as there are in the cities and villages. In Wabasha County there are only a few country churches, but there are several churches in almost every city and village and nearly everyone still goes to service just as the pioneers did so many years ago.

Early Mails

Wabasha was the first place in Minnesota outside of Mendota and Fort Snelling to have a mail service. In 1837 Sibley engaged a man to carry mail between Mendota and Rocque's post. Mail from down the river was brought up from Prairie du Chien by boat in the summer and by soldiers in the winter. The soldiers made the trip on ice, sometimes in a dog sled, sometimes on foot. The cold made the trip a very uncomfortable one, and the storms and the holes in the ice often made it dangerous.

When the old Territorial Road was opened through Wabasha from Mendota to the Iowa line a regular mail service was established from St. Paul to Lansing, Iowa.

Later other roads were built in the county. The main roads were stagecoach routes. At first the stages ran only once a week.

Post offices were opened in homes, stores, hotels, and cabins. People went to these post offices to get their mail, but families living far away were sometimes not able to go for several weeks. In the hardest winters they could not make the trip at all and were without mail for months at a time. When a man did go to the post office, he usually brought back the long-awaited mail for all his neighbors. A few of the families subscribed to a weekly newspaper or a monthly magazine printed far away.

It was not many years before they could subscribe to a newspaper printed in their own county. Wabasha County had a newspaper at a very early date. In the spring of 1857 the family of William C. McMaster came to Read's Landing from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Two of the sons, Joseph, 29 years old, and William J., 19 years old, were printers. Having secured a press, they decided to publish a newspaper. At that time it was proposed to call the village Waumandee, so the brothers named their paper the Waumandee Herald. The first issue was dated May 9, 1857, but they did not get it ready until May 12.

To celebrate the event they went for a boat ride. The skiff was upset, and Joseph and a younger brother named Thomas together with two other men were drowned. This was the end of the paper. A few months later, Norman E. Stevens, another young printer, arrived from Illinois, and with the help of the businessmen bought the plant. He issued the first number of the Wabasha Herald on June 27. Late in 1860 he was persuaded to move the paper to Wabasha to help in the county seat fight. Although it has had several owners, the paper has kept right on and is still being published. There are also other newspapers in the county that are nearly as old.

Early newspapers were set by hand. The printer picked out the letters one by one and placed them in lines a newspaper column wide on a

metal "galley" which he held in one hand. The type was then arranged in "forms," a page in size, and the headlines were put in. The paper was then printed on a Washington hand press and folded by hand.

Long Cold Winters

The settlers found the winters hard to endure. It is true that New England, New York, and Pennsylvania have long winters and deep snow. But the thermometer does not usually drop as low as in Minnesota, and the communities the pioneers had left were thickly settled so that the main roads were opened soon after every storm. The Wabasha County pioneers had not realized what the first few winters would be like out here in a new country.

The winter of 1856-57 was especially severe. Early in November came a terrific storm. Others followed and the snow lay 4 feet deep on the level until the following April. In some places the wind sweeping over the prairies buried the little shacks under a mountain of snow.

Many of the pioneers had but recently arrived and were not prepared for such a season. They had no news, no letters, no visitors. About all the families could do, day after day, was to huddle in their little cabins and, after the necessary work was done, pass the time as best they could.

The wood which the prairie settlers had gathered from miles away was soon used up. The men and boys spent part of their time shoveling tunnels into the snow to get at the dry grass. Some had to be used for the cattle, but much was used for fuel, after the women and girls had twisted it into wads.

That year very little food had been raised on Wabasha County farms. Most of the settlers had guns but powder soon became scarce. Lead for bullets, which were made by pouring the hot metal into a soapstone mould, was also scarce.

The deer were not moving about much for their sharp hoofs crushed

through the crust which formed on the snow. At times when the crust was softer, herds of deer trampled the snow down to the ground in a large circle and huddled together for warmth while they ate the dry grass from the frozen ground. If the hunters were lucky enough to find one of these herds it was easy to get a fresh supply of meat, but this did not often happen. Deer meat without salt was all that some of the settlers had to eat for weeks at a time.

Many of the families lived on corn meal ground up in a little hand coffee grinder. Some of the old families still have one of these grinders in their attic.

In the early weeks of spring everything was flooded with slush and water. This moisture left the soil in still better condition for crops, however, and there followed a season which was unusually pleasant. To most of the settlers this made up for the hard winter. But some were discouraged and moved away.

A Lawyer with Money

By this time, a little hamlet had been started at Plainview. Located on a rich stretch of land called Greenwood Prairie, it was first named Centerville. The first settler was J. Y. Blackwell. He had been a lawyer in Iowa where he had made considerable money. Visitors often stopped at his Iowa home and told stories of the new Minnesota country where there was plenty of chance for a man with money to make much more. More interesting to the children were the stories of the adventures met here.

So in 1856 the family packed their goods and started out for Greenwood Prairie. Mr. Blackwell put up a house, half logs and half boards, near what is now the southeast corner of Broadway and Jefferson street. Many people stopped at his home on their way from the river landings to the rich lands further south and east, so he decided that this was a good place for a hotel.

This hotel, which was built of timber, was put up on the southeast

corner of Broadway and Washington Street, just where the Plainview Hotel is now. It was opened with a big celebration on July 4, 1856. So the Nation's birthday is also the birthday of business in Plainview. Ozias Wilcox opened a store across the street from the hotel. A blacksmith shop and a carpenter shop were started. A few settlers took land nearby.

This little settlement fared better that winter than the people farther out on the prairies. The store was well-stocked with provisions and the owner was liberal with credit. Winds swept around the corners of the building and cleared a little courtyard. White walls, hard and icy, rose to the top of the crust-covered snow. Steps were cut into the walls, so people could reach the court easily.

Although business was good, Mr. Blackwell was so discouraged by the winter weather that he moved his family back to Iowa in the spring. The others in the hamlet "stuck it out" and a prosperous village grew up.

Four Sturdy Vermonters

The story of the first settlers in Elgin on the borders of Greenwood Prairie is especially interesting. They were four men who came from Vermont and their names were George Bryant, Henry H. Atherton, Curtiss Bryant, and George Farrar. The farms they had left in the East were small and hilly. The soil was yellow and poor. Stones from a few inches to several feet across had to be taken out every spring after they were brought to the surface by the frost and snow. These stones were piled into fences to enclose the small rough fields. There was little level land anywhere.

To people who had tried to make a living on such farms, Greenwood Prairie seemed a true paradise. On an April evening in 1855, when the four men arrived, the sun was just setting and a gentle breeze rippled the prairie grass. A bubbling spring whose waters formed a brook that flowed into the Whitewater reminded them of the brooks in the State they had left. Here, after kindling a campfire from sticks in a nearby grove, they spread their

blankets on the ground and went to sleep under the stars.

The next morning they were awakened by the songs of thousands of birds and the deep booming of the male prairie chickens. At once they set to work cutting down trees and putting up a cabin. This little one-room cabin was built of logs and shingled with elm bark. It was on the White-water River at the eastern end of what is now the principal business street of Elgin Village.

The men staked out claims and went back East to get their families. Their stories of the new country made several of their old neighbors decide to join them here. For a time several good-sized families with growing children had to live in the one small cabin. But more cabins were soon put up on the prairie. Several acres were broken and even a few fences built. The settlement was well started.

Back in Vermont these settlers had been used to fruits and berries and plenty of pies. Preserves were always on their tables. They wanted the same things here. So the women and children gathered and canned wild crab-apples, plums, grapes, strawberries, and gooseberries. When nothing else was to be had for the pies, the housewives made them of sorrel and brown sugar.

One of the first to raise cultivated fruit here was I. W. Rollins of Elgin. He planted some apple seeds sent him from Vermont. They wintered well for two seasons and some of them were top-grafted with shoots also from Vermont. Other seeds were soon planted. There were some discouragements with winter killing and destruction by small animals, but in seven years a good crop was harvested. This encouraged others and Elgin became an apple center.

Mazeppa Mill Site

The water power at Mazeppa early attracted settlers from the East. In 1854 Ira O. Seeley built a bark cabin on the west bank on the Zumbro River near what afterwards became the mill dam. He decided, however, that as he was not interested in starting a village he would settle on the farm land a

little farther east. He went to Wabasha to meet his family and, when he came back, opened a farm in Front Creek Valley.

In the meantime a family named Ford had been living for many years in New York State where the father, Joseph, and his son, Orville D., owned farms. There were also two younger sons. The farms were small and not very profitable. To give the boys a better chance the family decided to move to the Mississippi Valley. The two New York farms were sold and the whole family started on their journey. The women and the younger members were left with relatives in Illinois while the father and oldest son came on to Minnesota. They arrived at Read's Landing by steamboat and decided to look over the Zumbro Valley. Arriving at the hill east of the present village, Joseph Ford said: "We will go no further, this valley shall be our home." Although there was nothing to be seen but oak and brush on the east bank of the stream, and heavily wooded timber for 15 miles on the west side, there was plenty of wood and water and he counted on the protection from cold and storms the timber would give. Then, too, he could think of many uses for the water power.

They selected a half section each and put up a comfortable cabin.

Orville then went back to Illinois. He bought oxen and provisions and with them the whole family started overland for their new home. When they reached Galena on the Mississippi, they boarded the War Eagle for Read's Landing.

Only one team had ever before driven over the trail from Read's Landing to Mazeppa, but they were not discouraged by bad roads, and the party set out with a hired horse team and a wagon in which the six women and three children rode. Orville and one of the younger brothers followed with oxen, cow, and supplies. The next day the cabin was furnished, the stove set up, and housekeeping started.

It was not long before there was a village there with a store, blacksmith shop, harness shop, sawmill, gristmill, and hotel. The stage stopped

twice a week on the way from Dubuque to St. Paul and return, so the new post office received mail from each direction.

The first comers discovered a cave in the side of a bluff near the junction of Trout Brook with the Zumbro River. It was about 15 feet high and nearly as wide for about 40 feet, where a smaller passage extended still further back. The side, roof, and walls were solid limestone. Here the Indians had carved birds, fish, other animals, and various marks.

The Indians who stayed after the whites came would never go into the cave. They said that a demon lived there. Some of the first settlers lived in the cave for a while and others kept their horses there.

Soon after the first settlers arrived they staked out a trail to Red Wing. The stakes were made of peeled saplings and placed close enough together so that one was always in sight.



Exploring the Cave

Another interesting cave was found in section 12, Chester Township. It was first explored by whites in 1855. The entrance was in the side of a mound, and one had to go down a very narrow passage to get in. Some of the entrances to the different rooms were so low that a person had to lie down to get into them. But it was worth going in, for the interior was very interesting. One of the rooms was like a tipped-up jug with the entrance through the mouth. In one was a pool of pure water. In another was a pit so deep that it took a long time for a pebble to reach the bottom.

Some of the rooms were hung with beautiful stalactites that looked like stone icicles. These are made from the little particles of lime in the

water that drips down from the roof of a cave.

River Fords

Most of the villages along the Zumbro were started at places where the river was shallow enough for a ford. At Zumbro Falls the ferry was started. The first bridge was made of five flatboats strung together with an iron rod fastened to a stone pier in the middle. But these boats were smashed by the ice and had to be replaced with a wooden bridge. Then the wooden bridge was swept away by a storm. The next one wore out. Later the present bridge was built.

A Brave Mother

One of the prominent pioneers of Wabasha County was a woman, Mrs. Gill. Her husband came to what is now Gillford Township and took a claim. In the fall he returned to Illinois to spend the winter. On his way back to Wabasha County with his family in the spring, he was taken sick and died. Carrying out his wishes, Mrs. Gill settled on the claim and farmed it in a very efficient way. The neighbors admired her courage and her pleasant disposition so much that they named the town for her. There are twelve other places in the United States whose names are pronounced the same, but they are spelled Guilford. The Wabasha County town is the only one spelled Gillford.

Undaunted By Cold

Chester Township began with a winter hunting, trapping, and fishing expedition on Trout Brook in the southwestern part of the town. In the party was James M. Kimble. He was so pleased with the stream and its fine trout that he made up his mind to settle here. He returned to St. Paul for supplies, and then with a companion came back to his new location. Hundreds of people were waiting at Mississippi points, but the two men pushed on and put up a tent on the banks of the brook. Here in the cold February weather they made themselves as comfortable as they could while they built a cabin. Mr. Kimble brought his family in the spring. Soon they were joined by neighbors.

A Touch of Scotch

A group of Scotch people directly from their native land located in the northeast part of West Albany Township and started what is known as the Scotch settlement. Many years later some of the young people of these families moved to Lyon County, and started a new settlement there just as their grandparents and parents had done in Wabasha County. As the years passed, the older people in the West Albany settlement died or moved away, until finally there was only one Scotch family left in the neighborhood.

Settlement Spreads

While these settlements were being started in Plainview, Elgin, Mazeppa, Zumbro Falls, Chester, and West Albany, settlement was also spreading through the other townships of the county. The story of each one is interesting and well worth reading about. They can be found in histories of the county that have been written for grown people.

In 1856 and 1857 Wabasha County was a busy region. Gristmills were started here and there on the streams. More stores, hotels, and blacksmith shops were opened. Villages sprang up and around them. More roads were built. Steamboat landings were crowded with people who landed from the steamboats and took their seats in the stagecoaches to go to their new farms. Drawn by four horses these stagecoaches rattled over the new roads at a great pace, while the drivers tooted away on their horns. New post offices were started, sometimes in stores or hotels, sometimes in the home of the postmaster. More schoolhouses and churches were built. Wabasha County became a settled community.

Vanished Villages

Some of the villages that were started did not live long. Two miles east of Plainview a group of men founded one that was first called Greenville and later Greenwood. But it was almost impossible to get water there. People did not want to buy lots because it was inside the Half-Breed

tract. So in time business moved to Plainview and Greenwood died.

At West Newton, where so many elaborate plans had been made, the river began to wash away the land and soon the whole site was under water.

For awhile it seemed that Tepeeota on Tepeeota Point would become much more important than Wabasha. This caused much hard feeling between the people of the two places, only a few miles apart.

It was soon found, however, that because of the bar in the river, boats could land at Tepeeota only in high water. Added to this came money troubles, and the owners were unable to carry out their plans. The residents moved away, and people began to avoid the deserted streets. Later some one set fire to the empty buildings and in a few hours everything was swept away.



Hard Times

Just when the people of Wabasha County were feeling encouraged again after the severe winter of 1856-57, came the hard times which started in the fall of 1857. The whole country suffered. Banks failed in the eastern cities, and there was little money in the whole country. The stores could not give credit. They could not even buy goods themselves.

Even this did not discourage the pioneers. They knew that in spite of all the drawbacks they had to meet in getting started here, Wabasha County was still a good place in which to live. The few who wanted to leave had to stay anyway because they had no money to go anywhere else. So everyone made the best of things and kept alive somehow. Sometimes they were hungry, but nobody actually starved. Spring found them ready to break more land and plant more crops.

Better times came in the next few years and people were happy. Their dream of a "new home in the west" had come true. They were "growing up with the country." Already some were becoming prosperous. All were glad they were here.

County Government

In the meantime the county had been organized and local government was started.

In the early days the government of what is now Wabasha County was shifted about. After the Louisiana Purchase, the land west of the Mississippi River, which had previously been claimed by France, then Spain, and then France again, became a part of the Louisiana District of the Territory of Indiana, and later, of the Territories of Louisiana, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa.

It did not make much difference. The only white people here were in the fur trade, and since each fur trader was a sort of king over his own post, there was not much need for any other government or laws.

Real government started when Minnesota became a Territory. The Territory was much bigger then the State is now. The west boundary reached to the Missouri River, in what is now North and South Dakota. There were nine counties. Wabasha County took in all the southern part. Its northern boundary was a line drawn straight west from the mouth of the St. Croix River at Hastings.

A ruler laid along this line will show that Wabasha County is the parent of a large number of counties in southern Minnesota and South Dakota. It is as old as any county in the State. The boundaries were soon cut down and the final "W" was dropped from the name. There have been no changes in the county's boundaries since 1855.

Alexis Bailly was the first justice of the peace. Before this the people had depended on Augustin Rocque to keep order and settle disputes.

When Bailly was appointed justice, Rocque called the men together and gave them some advice. He said in French, "My sons, it is necessary for you to be very careful now, because the law has come to town. The law is the devil and Mr. Bailly is the law."

The first county election was held at Wabasha in 1853. There was only one voting place. All the votes in the county were cast at the home of Rocque. But there was still not much need for government, and the men elected did not take office until March 6, 1854. They made Wabasha the county seat and divided the county into election districts. More settlers had begun to come in, and Wabasha was too far away for some of them to go to vote.

These early officers all worked very hard for law and order and to get a good government started. They willingly gave their time from their personal duties to help make Wabasha County the pleasant place to live in that it is today.

Townships Organized

When Minnesota became a State on May 11, 1858, Wabasha County was divided into eighteen towns. They were Chester (Bear Valley), Elgin, Gillford (Fuller), Glasgow (Richland), Greenfield, Highland (Smithfield), Hyde Park, Lake, Mazeppa, Minneiska, Mount Pleasant, Oakwood (Pell, Pellville, and Sherman), Plainview, Sand Prairie, Wabasha, Watopa, West Albany (New Albany), and Zumbro.

All did not have the names they have now. The ones in parentheses are the ones they had first. Most of them had their present boundaries, but some have been changed. Others have had cities or villages out from them. Lake City has been separated from Lake Township. Wabasha is now a city and there is no Wabasha Township. Sand Prairie was a town for only a year and then it was added to Greenfield.

For the most part the boundaries of the organized townships of Wabasha County, except those along the Mississippi, follow the survey lines

of the Congressional Townships which are six miles square.

This is not the case with Zumbro, Hyde Park, and Mazeppa. Zumbro Township was at first crossed by the Zumbro River. This made it hard for the voters to meet, especially in the spring when the water was high. It was also bad for the people to visit their town officers on business. There is a story of one justice of the peace who stood on the bank of the swollen river while he married a couple who stood on the other bank.

So in 1861 the voters decided to divide the town along the river. The new town north of the river was named Hyde Park. A little later some land south of the Zumbro and east of the south branch was taken from Mazeppa and added to Zumbro.

There was no town hall so the voters gathered in a schoolhouse, or in a cabin, a mill, hotel or store, or even out-of-doors. They elected officers, levied taxes, appropriated money, and talked over the affairs of the town.

There was no filing of the names of candidates in advance as there is now and no printed ballots. A voter would nominate a candidate and the vote would be taken by hands, by voice, or by writing the name on a slip of paper. District school meetings were much the same.

The women did not attend any political elections in those days. It was not until many years afterward that they were allowed to vote on school affairs and hold school offices. Now an amendment to the United States Constitution makes it possible for women to vote at all national, state, county, town, and school elections the same as the men.

A Big Board

County boards in the new State of Minnesota were at first made up of the chairmen of the town boards. This gave Wabasha County a board of eighteen for its eighteen towns. So large a number of men not only had trouble finding convenient times for all to meet, but it was also expensive

for so many to travel to a central place. Fortunately these difficulties were ended in 1860 when the Legislature decided that a county board should consist of members elected by districts instead of from each town. This gave Wabasha County a board of five county commissioners as at present.

County Seat Contest

In the early days, before automobiles and good roads made travel easy, it meant a great deal to a city or village to be the county seat. People who could make only one or two trips a year away from their own neighborhood usually went to the county seat. Such a trip was a thrilling event for the whole family and was planned months in advance. Some people had to go to court. Some had business with the county officers. Some had other errands. This brought trade to the hotels, stores, and blacksmith shops.

When Lake City began to grow, the people there thought they had a better place for a county seat than Wabasha. An election was held in 1860 and Lake City won out. But the county officers would not move from Wabasha. Lake City tried again in 1867. At the election, 4,052 votes were in favor of Wabasha, and 3,013 were for Lake City. This made 7,065 votes. There were only about 13,500 men, women and children in the whole county. In those days only the men voted. Two years before there had only been 1,120 votes cast for Governor. Votes in a county did not grow locally from 1,120 to 7,065 in two years, even when the people were excited about something important. So one could see that some one had cheated in the county seat election.

The newspapers of each village wrote many bitter things about the people of the other village. A Lake City paper said that at Wabasha a mob took the ballot box from the counters and filled it with illegal ballots. The Wabasha newspaper said just as unpleasant things about the way the election was carried on at Lake City.

The quarrel was taken to law. After three and a half years the

judge declared that both sides had been to blame, but he decided the case in favor of Wabasha.

The first courthouse at Wabasha was a stone schoolhouse which had been built in 1858. It was made over for the county officers and a jail in 1860. Since then it has been made larger. In 1872 a large building was put up in the rear for a jail and the sheriff's home. About this time town halls were built in various parts of the county.

Civil War

After the hard times of 1857, there were several good years and then came the Civil War. Wabasha County furnished one of the first companies in the whole country to enlist in that conflict.

Word reached Washington on April 14, 1862 that Fort Sumter had been taken by an armed force of Confederates and that the Southern States were in rebellion. Governor Ramsey of Minnesota happened to be in Washington on business at that time. He at once offered 1,000 men from Minnesota to help defend the Union. This was the first offer made of any troops for volunteer service.

Patriotic meetings were at once held in all parts of the State, and men were urged to enlist in the Army to save the Union.

One of these meetings was held at Wabasha. It was a cruel period to ask men to leave their families and homes just when they were getting their farms well started, and all knew the damages of war to soldiers.

But the men of Wabasha County were made of stern and patriotic stuff. Within a few days a full company of Wabasha Volunteers was organized. This was Co. I, First Minnesota Infantry, and it arrived at Washington in time to take part in the First Battle of Bull Run.

The soldiers from our county fought in some of the bloodiest battles of the war and made a glorious record. Some were business and professional men, some of them were unmarried men from farm homes. But most of them were

married farmers, few of whom had been in their new homes more than six years. While they were gone, their wives and their older children carried on the work at home. This was as important and as heroic as the fighting the husbands and fathers were doing in the South.

The war ended in 1865 and the men came back, leaving many of their comrades buried in southern cemeteries.

Conditions Change

They found that, in spite of the fact that so many men all over the United States had been in Army service, many new families had moved into all the southeastern Minnesota counties.

Conditions now began to change. Up to this time most of the settlers were equipped only with oxen, or horses, a wagon, an iron plow, and a few hand tools. The number of acres a family could cultivate was limited by its own time and strength. A few cows, pigs, and chickens, a patch of corn, rutabagas and potatoes, a field of wheat seeded by hand and cut with a hand "cradle", sometimes a woodlot, provided enough for the family and sometimes a little to sell or to trade in at the store for things they could not raise or make on the farm.

But now improved farm machinery began to come in. All this machinery, reapers, mowers, harvesters, grain separators, improved plows and cultivating machinery was operated by horse power. Wabasha County and all southeastern Minnesota were then ready to raise wheat on a large scale.

Home living changed also. Frame houses began to replace the log cabins. People used kerosene lamps instead of the tallow candles they had made themselves. Cook stoves and heating ranges were used instead of fireplaces. The younger women put away their spinning wheels. Sewing machines came into use. Men's clothes were bought in stores instead of being made at home. The shoemaker found that all he was asked to do was to mend shoes and boots; the factories had taken away his job of making them. Better roads

were built. Wabasha County was becoming modern.

Golden Stream Wheat

From all over the county and from the counties farther south, farmers of the sixties and seventies carted their grain to the river points. The trip was an annual excursion for the whole family. With the women and younger children on top of the grain in the oxcart and the men walking along the side, the start would be made in the early morning. Sometimes a cow was led along to furnish milk for the children.

Usually the men carried guns to shoot game and help supply their provisions. For days ahead neighbors would make their arrangements to meet at a certain place for their first night's camp. Others from farther away would join them, and often a train of more than one hundred carts would be formed in this way.

The happiest times which some of the pioneer children ever spent were when they took these trips. Many of them, now old, remember the friends they made while sitting around the campfires, comparing experiences with each other, and listening to the exciting stories of the older people.

Then, too, there was much that was interesting to be seen at the river towns, with the busy steamboat landings piled high with grain or filled with steamboat passengers.

While the children were watching these sights, the father would sell his wheat to the buyers, and the mother would do her shopping in the stores.

For some years there were only a few places in the whole world that shipped out more raw wheat than Read's Landing. Another thing that made Read's Landing a busy village was the lumbering on the Chippewa. Lumberjacks and rivermen would come into the village for their Saturday night celebrations and spend their pay money there. In the late fifties, Read's Landing had seventeen hotels and boarding houses and twenty-one saloons.

For a few weeks every Spring, usually in April, the village was

especially busy. The ice goes out in the river below Lake Pepin before it does in the lake itself. Captains would bring their boats as far as Lake City and wait there until they could continue the trip. Sometimes there were as many as 32 boats and 1,500 passengers waiting for passage through the lake. Hundreds of impatient travelers would complete the trip by stage or even on foot. When the lake ice finally broke up, there was a great race between the steamboat captains to see which would first steam through the lake and beat the others to St. Paul.

German Population Grows

The early settlers of Wabasha County, as you have seen, were mostly English whose ancestors had first settled in the Eastern States. There was also a sprinkling of Irish and Scotch. Two Norwegian families from Wisconsin came in 1854 and were the first settlers in Plainview Township. Other families of foreign birth soon came in. After the Civil War, more and more Germans began to come. By 1870 more than a quarter of the people in the county had been born outside the United States. A third of these were Germans, and the Irish and Canadians came next. Many came directly from Europe. Some had first stopped in older States or counties. Some had families and settled on wild land or bought a farm. Many were single men who worked as hired men, until they had enough money to get married and have a farm of their own.

Lutheran churches were now built and Catholic churches increased.

Since the beginning of the century, there have been only a few newcomers and most of these are from Iowa. Now there are less than a tenth of the people in the county who were not born in the United States. Those born in other countries are mostly middle-aged or elderly people who have been here for many years.

Some of the early settlers moved away after staying here a few years. Some were discouraged by the cold winters, the hard times of 1857,

or the farm setbacks in the seventies. Others still had their pioneer spirit and thought they would do better in a still newer country.

But most of the early settlers were "stickers." Even today one can hardly walk a mile without finding a farm whose owner bears the same name as the family which first settled on it.

Coming of the Railroad

For many years the only way of getting around except by walking was by steamboats on the river and by horses and oxen on the land. With the building of the railroads there came a great change. The first railroad in this region ran along the Mississippi following the old Indian trails and the old Territorial Road.

Grading and track laying for the railroad started from St. Paul southward and from Winona northward. By 1870 trains were running from Winona to Weaver in Wabasha County. Then the people eagerly listened to news of the crews working from the north. The tracks reached the county line on July 11, and before the end of the month regular trains were running from Lake City to St. Paul. On the morning of August 15, 1871 the tracks were nearing each other.

The people of the county called a holiday, and a large crowd rushed to the scene. Two miles above Weaver the last spike was driven. The first train came through on September 7, and within a few months Minnesota people could ride by railroad from St. Paul by way of La Cross to Chicago and then on to the eastern cities.

Steamboats kept on running for a time afterward, but they became fewer and fewer. The river towns lost their steamboat business, and Read's Landing shrank into the small village it is today.

A railroad was opened in the Zumbro Valley in 1877. When the money gave out, the millers of Mazeppa were so anxious for railroad service in both directions that they paid for finishing the road to Zumbrota in 1878.

It was also in that year that a railroad was built across the prairie from Plainview to Eyota.

These railroads helped to build up the inland villages and gave the farmers a better chance to sell their crops.

Some of the villages in the Zumbro Valley had already been started as convenient stopping places on river fords. Mazeppa was already an important milling town even though the flour had to be carted to market. Some of these villages were moved a short distance to be nearer the railroad stations. A few new villages grew up around stations that the railroad officials selected for shipping points for the farmers.

When the railroad was built up the Zumbro Valley, it was what is called "narrow gauge." That is, the rails were closer together and the cars much narrower than on ordinary railroads. This saved money. It did not cost so much to grade the roadbed, and the short ties were much cheaper than the wider ones. The line was changed to what is called "standard gauge" in 1903. A few years ago the part of the line from Mazeppa eastward was given up.

New Era in Farming

One of the reasons for the building of the railroads into the county was to move the wheat to markets.

But at first the railroads did not do the farmers as much good as was expected. It soon became plain that the day of the big wheat crops was over. Year after year the wheat had been using up the richness out of the soil, and now the yield began to be less per acre. Hoards of grasshoppers for several seasons in the early seventies also reduced the crop. Then in 1878 came the climax. That year the weather was very bad for wheat and the crop was almost an entire failure.

This taught the farmers that it was not a good plan to depend too much on just one crop.

Some of the families who still believed that one large crop was the best way to farm, moved away into the Red River Valley where there was still plenty of wild land that had never been cultivated.

Most of those who stayed changed their ways of farming. They still kept on raising wheat, but they began to plant more of other crops. They raised more corn and fed it on the cob to hogs in ensilage to cattle. They raised more fruit and vegetables. They bought improved machinery and introduced more modern methods.

As soon as the farmers had more money to spend, the cities and villages grew much faster. Wabasha County then in country and town became more as it is today.

Dairying Becomes Important

In the early days the families themselves used most of the milk their cows produced. When they wanted butter they placed the milk in shallow pans and then skimmed off the cream. This cream was placed in a crock and beaten into butter by hand with a paddle. Later, butter was made in a churn. Some of the housewives made enough butter to sell in the villages, or to trade in at the stores for groceries.

The first dairy factories usually made only cheese, though a few made butter also. These factories used whole milk. The skim milk was returned to the farmers. With a market for their milk and plenty of skim milk to feed to the pigs, they decided to raise bigger herds of dairy cattle and bigger droves of pigs.

Then in the late nineties, people began to buy cream separators. The housewives stopped making butter at home. Cream, separated from the warm milk instead of skimmed from pans, was sold to the creameries and the skimmed milk used on the farm. When this happened dairying and hog raising became still more important.

In time some of the farmers decided that they should own the

creameries themselves. Then cooperatives were started. This gave the farmers a much bigger outlet for their milk and cream, still nearer home.

Later Years

Since then, the story of Wabasha County has been much the same as the story of the other counties in this part of the State.

Young men from Wabasha County fought in the Spanish-American War and the World War, just as the young men from the county fought in the Civil War. Many of them are still here but the Civil War veterans are gone.

Automobiles, busses, trucks, and tractors, and even airplanes have taken the place of horses and oxen, wagons and carts. Mail comes to every home every day. Paved highways lead to all parts of the State. Radios and telephones are in many homes.

In this wonderful development the men and women of today have taken their share, and the boys and girls through their organizations have already begun to do their part, just as the boys and girls of long ago helped their parents develop a prosperous county from a stretch of wild timber and prairie.