



Minnesota Works Progress Administration:
Writers Project Research Notes.

Copyright Notice:

This material may be protected by copyright law (U.S. Code, Title 17). Researchers are liable for any infringement. For more information, visit www.mnhs.org/copyright.

APR 3 1939

April 1, 1939

Mr. Thomas C. Bieger
Minnesota State Historical Society
St. Paul, Minnesota

Dear Mr. Bieger:

Confirming conversation with your Mr. Babcock of a few days ago when Mr. Lawson and I called upon him in your absence, the Federal Power Commission has before it the matter of gathering all the information possible concerning the past use of streams having developed or undeveloped power on them, as arteries of communication and commerce.

This involves a search of historical records, old newspaper files, etc. for definite references relating to the use of each stream and its tributaries for the transportation of goods or people, which may come under any of the following headings:

Anything dealing with the use of a definite stream as an artery of communication or commerce in a definite locality (transportation of goods or people), which may come under the following headings:

- Fur trading,
- Transporting logs or lumber,
- Ferryboat operations,
- Development of water power for public use,
- Line of communication,
- Line of boat navigation,
- Commercial fishing.

Reasons for the development of that use, and for its decline, are also important. A great multiplicity of data covering the same use at the same location is not necessary, though a substantial amount sufficient for conclusive evidence is desired. Primary consideration is to show the extent to which public use has been made of definite streams. Statistics or figures on any phase of commercial use, navigation improvements (wharves, clearing of waterways, etc.), operations or attempts which failed, - are all of importance to us.

Mr. Thomas C. Bieger

-2-

April 1, 1939

As mentioned to Mr. Babcock, the Federal Writers Project people have kindly consented to cooperate in this research, since it is so closely in line with the purposes underlying the formation of their organization; and Miss McElchren, of the Minnesota group, will accordingly be sending one or two of her workers to make contact with you or Mr. Babcock toward getting under way with this work. Mr. Lawson or someone else from our staff may also be back in St. Paul again from time to time on the same matter, and anything you can do toward putting likely material at their disposal, will indeed be appreciated.

Yours very truly,

Payette S. Warner,
Regional Director

cc- Miss McElchren,
Acting Minnesota Director
Federal Writers Project
415 Harvard St., SE
Minneapolis, Minnesota

cc- Mr. J. T. Frederick,
Regional Director
Federal Writers Project
423 East Erie Street
Chicago, Illinois.

April 5, 1939

Attention: Mrs. Scanlon
Mr. Erickson
Mr. Staples

The Federal Power Commission is interested in gathering all the information possible concerning the past use of streams having developed or undeveloped power on them, as arteries of communication and commerce.

Definite references are needed relating to the use of each stream and its tributaries for the transportation of goods or people, which may come under any of the following headings:

ANYTHING dealing with the use of a definite stream as an artery of communication or commerce in a definite locality (transportation of goods or people), which may be classified as follows:

1. Fur trading,
2. Transporting logs or lumber,
3. Ferryboat operations,
4. Development of water power for public use,
5. Line of communication,
6. Line of boat navigation,
7. Commercial fishing.

Reasons for the development of that use, and for its decline, are also important. A great multiplicity of data covering the same use at the same location is not necessary, though a substantial amount sufficient for conclusive evidence is desired. The primary consideration is to show the extent to which public use has been made of definite streams. Statistics or figures on any phase of commercial use, navigation improvements (wharves, clearing of waterways, etc.), operations or attempts which failed, are all of importance.

To avoid a duplication of work it is necessary to divide the rivers and streams of the state into three major divisions. The first group will comprise the four most important rivers: Mississippi, Minnesota, St. Croix and the Red River. The second group will comprise smaller rivers that have served as important arteries of commerce in the past, or are now providing water power for their respective communities: Root, Rum, St. Louis, Cannon, Pigeon, Ottertail, Crow, Zumbro, Redwood and Crow Wing. The third group will be made up of streams that were utilized by fur traders, missionaries, early settlers, etc., for small commercial ventures, transportation, etc.

Assignments covering any phase of the work will be completed within the same period that they are given. Material will be found at the libraries, the State Historical Society Library and the files of the Writers' Project. All copy must be submitted at the conclusion of the period. Every source and reference must be noted in complete detail.

Editor,

Lucile Driftmier