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## Language

"To the ear untrained to detect its beauties, its sound resembles nothing so much as a person in snow shoes splashing through half-melted snow."

All Slavs love their Slavish languages, etc.

see article Language

Henry Baerlein, Dreamy River, Simon + Schuster, N.Y. 1931  
p. 281.



Geo. Tuthill Barrett, M. A.

Letters From Canada and the U.S.A.

1865

G. Fleischauer

Excerpt

"Water of falls was low and all that was to be seen was a tumbled mass of rock of every size and shape, with here and there a little eddy in the gaps between the crags, indications of the terrible rapids that break and foam about them when the river is at its proper height.

Along the edge of the cliff, I sat until the sun went down. It was one of the prettiest scenes I have met with on this continent. The river ran beneath at the bottom of a narrow gorge, its banks wooded to the water's edge, and dotted with an occasional house that peeped forth from the dense, dark foliage.

## Who Are The Slave

MUSIC:

G. Fleischauer

p. 362  
v.1

All Slavdom sings. No people under the sun has such body of folk songs, and none possess such variety as the Slavs.

They memorize these songs very easily. Many Children of the soil have learned to recite 30, 50 or 100 long poems. The song's adapt themselves easily to the individual's fancy, therefore, they undergo constant changes, and the epic poems are not historical documents.

p. 359

South Slavonic folk music has inspired both Liszt's "Rhapsodies," and Beethoven's "Pastoral Symphony."

The Czech National hymn by Josef Tyl, (1808-1858)

Where is my home?  
Water thro' its meads are streaming,  
Mounts with rustling woods are teeming,  
Vales are bright with flowerlets rare,  
Oh earth's Eden, thou art fair!  
Thou art my home, my fatherland!

Where is my home ?  
By the towers of God 'tis bounded;  
By the noblest sons surrounded;  
True and light of heart are they,  
Firm and bold in deadly fray,  
Offspring grand of dear Bohemia,  
Thou art my home, my fatherland!

p. 357  
v. 2

This is sung by the group of immigrants as they see shore, etc; and at all their lectures and group meetings, and often in the homes. Music was taught.



Excerpt of a letter written from Czech after the recent  
crisis. Dated Jan. 30, 1939.

Since the Germans invasion in their country.....

"We are now living in constant fear and don't know what may turn up the next day. Ever since this all happened, the people have had break-downs and many simply went crazy. There are several reasons for it, some lost their relatives, mothers, brothers, fathers, sisters and even children. Some lost their homes, farms and business houses, others were cut short financially as long as they were doing some kind of transactions with people from the occupied part. When the Germans settled there, and knew they were going to get that part, they began robbing, and in many cases, revenged our people who were politically or even privately disliked. Therefore, thousands of them left the place with bare hands. Their property still belongs to them (what's left of it) but there's doubt if they will ever get more than 30% of the actual value. If they do sell, they will have trouble bringing their money back to Republic, in these cases there are 30% deductions from all cash.

Those who are from the occupied parts have certain privileges, but the rest of us are getting thrashing from all sides. From the 1st. of January, '39, all taxes were increased 100%. The only thing we gained was a tax on autos annulled, but on this account gas was increased which means that by the increase in price, your taxes on your car will be three times higher than they were before. In other words, for a minnon, you can get a nice pike or a bass.

(Letter dropped pro tem.)

Continued Feb. 3

"The other day I interrupted writing because of Hitler having a speech over the radio. As far as we are concerned, as Republic, it's all the same what he says or does, we now are a neutral state. The newspapers are full of bunk these days, constantly are writing about world wars in which U.S. is going to participate. I don't want to believe it, but we never know. Sometimes I wander back to U.S. and try to see things how they could be today. I don't suppose fishing is what it used to be. Fishing is one thing I do get lonesome for. Out here, a person must be an acrobat to catch a blind one, and then give it to the dog or cat (we have both). Once in a while I think of the youngsters in U.S. when looking at a European, a person is compelled to envy them--they have "gyms" playgrounds, schoolgrounds and parks to play in. Out here there's nothing of that sort, and what there is, is private. No matter where the children go, they must pay admission same as adults. In schools you very seldom find a gymnasium, and a schoolground is a rarity. When you want to go skating it costs at least an hour's earnings. I have left activity in sports and gone in for stamp saving.

How are earnings in the U.S. these days? Can a person earn a fare living? Am simply interested, do not plan on returning.



The flat dwellers are forced to desert their homes and take to boats for travel in their "riverside village" when the Mississippi waters yesterday reached their annual highest point. One of the flat-dwellers is seen in the picture as he is rowing his way over inundated Wood Street. (Statement under picture - Minneapolis Tribune, Wednesday, April 12, 1922)

#### VENICE AGAIN APPEARS ON FLATS UNDER WASHINGTON AVENUE BRIDGE.

Little Venice has again appeared on the river flats under the Washington avenue bridge. A personally conducted tour with little flaxen haired Susie Sustiak takes one from Mill street, which is only partly flooded, through two back yards and narrow spaces out to the canal-like Cooper street, where all the families continue to live throughout the annual spring floods. Rudely improvised bridges of narrow planks set on blocks of wood and piles driven into the ground provide means of access from the houses on the edge of the river bank to Mill street.

A boat is kept on Cooper street for those who get dizzy when they walk across the planks. Two little children fell into the water yesterday from the little bridge. Though one house is floating, the family still is cooking and living in there. No one would take them in because there are seven children and they would make a house so dirty.

The little church, which houses the kindergarten on week days and the Sunday School, is surrounded by water, making use of the building impossible. After the water recedes, many chickens are found drowned, according to little Susie. Some people put their fowls in the attic with the hay. Pigeons flying about Cooper street bring to mind the floods of Biblical times.

All the gates around what used to be the yards are locked to prevent the people's wood from floating away. One of the loggers in the little community goes about in his boat at night and knocks on the doors if the water rises dangerously so that the people may get out, but "they don't care," says Susie.

Old Katie, a recluse living in the first shack, as viewed from the Washington avenue bridge, comes out through her window when the water rises high. Katie buys purple skirts and silk waists and has \$17 in the bank. She has many rooms in her house, but uses only two, one for wood, and the other for her stove, bed, and uses boxes for table and chairs.

Spectators may be seen any hour of the day looking over the Washington avenue bridge and commenting on the annual spring floods and the life of the people on the river flats.



No Date. Journal

Bought River Flats in '84, says Witness.

Attorneys continue to fight to disprove resident's claim of 15 years.

Courtroom jammed with river flat dwellers. C. H. Smith, real estate leader, with offices in Phoenix Bldg. today continued their fight in District Court today to prove that residents of Washington Ave. flats have not held undisputed possession of the property of 15 years, and that the property actually belongs to Mr. Smith.

John Medvec, (78 Cooper St. and Mike Sabol, 109 Mill, leaders of the little group who are suing to clear title for defense introduced C. C. Leland, who testifies that he bought the land from Dorilus Morrison, Mpls., pioneer in 1884, and sold it to Smith in 1921.

Both Medvec and Sabol testified they had never paid rent or taxes. Leland showed the record of an abstract of the land which traced it down from the government grant to C. C. and W. D. Washburn and to Dorilus Morrison, then to himself.

The decision of these two cases will test the rights of others who have brought similar suits against Smith and in proposed actions.

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July 4, Journal

Condemnation proceedings were started last September by city to procure the land on "flats." About 200 residents came to court, many of them with the idea of being heard as to value of their property. They offered no objection against the condemnation proceedings.

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SORROW SMITES COLORFUL RIVER FLATS AS MARCH OF PROGRESS DOOMS DISTRICT.

Hissing shovels to change simple homes to industrial centers - old residents, resigned to go about their tasks with heavy hearts.

Within a few short weeks, the colorful river flats, located under the Washington avenue bridge and now occupied by 52 families will vanish.

The shouts of children at play, old women going about their daily duties clad in brilliant colored clothes and their heads done up in scarves will give way to the hissing of steam shovels and the roar of the motor exhausts as the trucks haul away the dirt from the foundations for new barge terminal buildings.

The City Council has decided to change the flat district from a simple home setting to a busy industrial center, and has started condemnation proceedings to annex the land for enlarging the barge terminals facilities. Hearing on the ousting petition has been set for hearing in district court, July 13th.

Saturday the children shouted as usual, playing, but the old folks were so serious; women gathered in groups around the multicolored little homes and discussed the last move to force them to move to make way for city progress. Here and there in the district, the university art students sketched the quaint homes of the flat dwellers. Children, who hail every visitor with shouts and cling to automobiles as they traverse the streets or follow strangers around shouting questions, rarely interrupt the art students.

The people have been told many times before that they must move, but this time it looks more final.

Old time residents of the flats recall good old days when the flats were the scene of many colorful weddings, an event always to be looked forward to and remembered. The dwellers retain their old country ideas of

G. Fleischner - V/H  
(No date listed, but probably 1929 or 1931 from Trib.)

dancing, eating and drinking at a wedding. The day before the nuptials were to take place the home of the bride and the surrounding grounds were gaily decorated with colored ornaments.

The street was roped off and after the ceremony there was old fashioned dancing to the tunes of an accordeon, a mouth organ and sometimes a fiddle.

John Medvec, the oldest dweller on the flats, still works daily for the city sewer department despite his 78 years. Medvec's hobby is gathering drift wood from the river which runs past his back door and sawing and splitting it. This takes up all his spare time. His back yard proves this, because already it is piled high for the coming winter. He heads three generations raised on the flats. His married daughter is Mrs. Frank Harvanco. Most of them are vague about where there next home will be, but when asked, they say, "uptown somewhere." Mrs. Sophie Peterson says, "we will go quietly - we don't want no trouble, although it is the only home most of us have known in America."

A board of appraisal will be appointed by the court and set a valuation on the holdings of each individual. Fifteen or twenty hearings will be held by the board and each property owner will be given an opportunity to be heard.



## The Wood Gatherers of St. Anthony Falls ✓

By: Joel Benton

The Northwest Magazine, July, 1887

G. Fleischauser

Not far below the St. Anthony Falls and in the Mpls. city limits, you can see from the bluff on either side, a curious little village, low down by the water's edge. It is, in fact, 2 villages, for the settlement is divided into 2 parts by the Mississippi river and each occupies a shelving flat of land that extends out not much above the water's level. There are no streets. The houses are dropped about in a strange fashion and in irregular lines, with no reference to a roadway or the pt. of compass known as the flats. They are wholly wooden houses and mostly one-story high, untouched by any other paint than that of frosts, sun marks and storm stains. They look dingy and forlorn in the extreme. Their contrasts with the high mills and elevators and the huge city blocks above them and in plain sight, adds to the feature of picturesqueness which they present, while the white foam of the falls and the lofty descent from the river above, puts in a touch that fulfills the most unique requirement of a painter's canvass.

It seems like a squalid life that is lived there, but not so barren and poverty-stricken as one not knowing might suppose. Dwellers in this sprawling double settlement are not wholly like the refuse social stratum of the goat- and shanty towns that collect sometimes near large cities. These people are mostly steady workers of hard, manual labor. But the children, and the women, whenever time permits, gather billets of wood and the refuse of the sawmills that go down the falls from the river above.

Of the harvest, from April to November, an almost uninterrupted stream comes. Slabs, shingles, strips, blocks, boards and sometimes entire logs hurry-

The Wood Gatherers of St. Anthony Falls

2.

By: Joel Benton

The Northwest Magazine, July, 1887

G. Fleischauer

ing down the river can be seen, which is quite rapid at this point and it is a very novel spectacle to see the way they manage to secure the valuable flotsam that the waters are always bringing to them at their door. Everyone riding to Mpls. from St. Paul, can see them on the car from the windows as they ride over. They have built from dozens of points on the shore....out of their own gathered material, long platforms placed upon rude, low piers, on which they wade to reach the current. With crooked sticks or pronged instruments they grasp the stick of wood that comes in reach, and land it usually, with much dexterity upon the platform, then wait for the next.

Sometimes they don't get it and it goes to the next wood fisher below. Some sticks go out of reach of each platform, but hardly any go out of reach of the whole group, for they all gather large quantities and so nearly alike, it would seem as if the river, in a spirit of benevolence, sought to do its duty by the owners of each platform.

Platforms are of various lengths. Some go only a few feet from the shore, and some appear to be several rods in length. They are strongly placed, and when piles at the end is too much in the way, other piles are made in the rear of it at different distances, clear back to the shore.

Little boys and girls, 10 to 12 years old are kept fishing for wood and taking it into the land. When they gather it, they are quite willing to step out, and are apparently obliged to do so, into the shallow water itself for the prizes they seek. You see them sitting at the edge of the platforms, or running about the shore with bare legs, and ready for any water emergency that might



## The Wood Gatherers of St. Anthony Falls

3.

By: Joel Benton

The Northwest Magazine, July, 1937

G. Fleischauer

occur. This picturesque labor brings more wood than they use, and they have large quantities to sell. Old men, who can't work at trades make a business of it all year long. One year, an old man took 300 cords of wood from the river. Should be worth \$3 a cord at least, he figured, no matter in what shape or irregularity it comes. At that rate, he could make a respectable salary.

The bluffs must rise 40 feet above this village; but the falls, as well as the queer village site below is in the possession of St. Anthony Water Power Co. Germans, Swedes and Poles live here. The Water Co. will not sell even the poorest building-lots, but will permit them to build on the water's edge and charge \$1 a month for the use of the ground. This small rent, with the income from the river and their simple way of life, as they have learned to live it, has made them very thrifty. Some former villagers have left and put their earnings into farms or better homes; others will graduate the same way. In December, the river platforms are all frozen in, and the children skate between them on the ice. The sawmills cease to send down their wood at that season but you see a few teamsters driving to the edge of the east bluff to load up wood that a couple of the men below lifting up from a series of platforms built on the side of the bluff for that purpose. The product is handled carefully, although it is clutched from the river's bed, for they have gotten it by hard work and a lot of patience.

Tribune. May 24, 1923 P. M.

Fall, 1939

#### FLAT DWELLERS' RIOT AS POLICE ATTEMPT OUSTER.

Forty Families Surround Officers When Ejection  
of 15 Residents Is Attempted.

A riot in which men and women from practically every one of the 40 families in the Mississippi river flats district below the Washington avenue bridge shouted defiance at half a dozen policemen resulted from an attempt to eject 15 families Thursday morning.

Things began to warm up shortly after Lieutenant H. M. Burke served a municipal court ejection paper for C. H. Smith on an old woman. The woman's neighbors, who have long claimed squatter's rights to the flats, surrounded Burke and he was forced to call for help.

#### More Police Sent.

A patrol wagon with a load of policemen was rushed to the scene. At almost the same time several big moving vans appeared at other houses and the workmen began hauling out the furniture and loading it up. The property in which all the houses stand is claimed by Mr. Smith.

Then there was havoc. Nobody was hurt, but the air was filled with epithets and threats and orders.

#### Injunction is Served.

Just as the situation got genuinely squally, David Lundeen, lawyer, rushed up and had an injunction served on the whole ejection army. This brought an immediate truce. The workmen carried the furniture back in the house.



Tribune. May 25, 1923 A. M.

Fall, 1939

#### WIVES HOLD RIVER FLAT HOMES WHEN POLICE ATTEMPT EVICTION.

Squatters Win Temporarily With Writ Ordering Stay of Ejection Move.  
Residents Refuse to Pay for Ground Lease---Ordered in Court Tuesday.

Residents of the Mississippi river flats fought for the squatter sovereignty of their homes under the Washington avenue bridge Thursday, and emerged temporarily victorious.

Women of the flats stood guard over their thresholds while police attempted to eject them for failure to pay rent for the grounds on which the dwellings stand. A near-riot was halted when a second court-order was served on police, ordering a stay of ejections.

#### Second Order Revives Hope.

Furniture from the home of Joseph Filek and from that of John Medvec, pioneer of the river colony, was being piled into the moving vans where Mrs. Medvec, 57 years old, fainted. Dr. J. L. Everlof, 1501 Washington avenue south, was called and the woman was revived, but she was hysterical until the second court order brought hope that her home might be restored.

Under the latest order the contending parties must appear in municipal court at 10 A. M. Tuesday, for a determination of the case. Title to the property is held by C. H. Smith, Phoenix building. Acting in his behalf, Clinton A. Rehnke, attorney, appeared on the flats Thursday morning with Police Lieutenant H. M. Burke, and served the ejection papers on the squatters. They protested.

Tribune. May 25, 1923 A. M.

Fall, 1939

### Angry Women Defy Police.

Mrs. Medvec barred the door to her home and defied the police lieutenant to open it. The two men tried to force their way in, and an angry group of women gathered to give aid to Mrs. Medvec. Finally the door was opened and workmen began to pile the furniture into the van. Before they had completed their task, David Lundeen appeared and served the second court order. The furniture went back into the house.

Spokesman for the flat dwellers announced that whether or not they are defeated in court, they will refuse to pay the rent. Rather than this, they announced, the colonists will tear down their shacks and move away.

### Colony 60 Years Old.

For nearly 60 years the squatters have settled on the river shore, have built their homes, and each year, during the spring thaws, have fought against the rising waters of the Mississippi.

In 1919 the government high dam entered as a factor. At that time, the land, the rental for which is now in controversy, was owned by a Mary Leland. In an adjustment for the flowage rights which were found necessary because of the construction of the dam, the federal government paid \$5000 to Mary Leland. The squatters looked upon the transaction as a purchase of the land by the government. Mary Leland later transferred her title to Mr. Smith.



Tribune. May 25, 1923. A. M.

Fall, 1939

### Squatters Refuse to Pay Rent.

Thereafter the dwellers refused to pay rent for the ground and on August, 8, 1922 Mr. Smith, instituted action in municipal court seeking to collect the rent or to force the residents to move. The case was continued until September 29, 1922, when Mr. Smith won by default. The flat dwellers failed to explain the merits they believed was in their cause.

Then followed two court orders of ejection, both of which died under the law because they were not executed within 30 days, The third writ was issued Thursday.

### No Lease Signed, Says Spokesman.

"I've lived here for 38 years," he said. "I bought the place from Mike Balog for \$208. I never signed a lease on the ground, and I don't owe anybody any money for rent on the place. It's all mine, and not any one else's."

Similar stories of a determination to fight the case were expressed by John Gabrick, 108 Mill street; Mike Sabol, 109 Mill street, Mrs. John Harhay, 113 Mill street, Mrs. Mike Lash, 105 Wood street and Mike Rollins, 79 Wood street.

Mr. Smith contends that the flat-dwellers signed leases agreeing to pay rental on the ground. The residents deny the claim. And upon the determination of this issue rests the fate of the river flats.

A penciled note, on article "Daily News" in  
Tribune files, May 29, 1923. P. M.

Fall, 1939

### PEACE, WAR, RESTS ON COURT'S DECREE.

Tenants of Mississippi Bottoms Regard Owners Claim  
for Rent as "Invasion of Territory."

Judgement Day Comes.

Decision Will Mark Truce or Start of Conflict,  
Which May Draw Blood on River Front.

Many wars have been fought to preserve a homeland and the residents of Minneapolis' "Little Bohemia", some of them declared Tuesday, are prepared to fight another one. Tuesday afternoon they were to go into court before Judge Frank E. Reed in the latest phase of their own little conflict.

"The Flats", a level stretch of lowland between the Mississippi river and a precipitous bank, is their homeland. Some of them have lived there forty years. They built their own homes. Every spring they fought the Mississippi to retain their homes. Some of their children have been killed by the "Father of Waters." They have been driven out time and time again. They know what war is. But still they live there. The flats are "Little Bohemia", their homeland.

For many years, since the time when the grandmothers of the children who play along the river banks now first came there as brides, these people considered the land as theirs. They lived on it rent free. Then, two years ago, a man informed them that he had purchased the ground upon which they had built their homes and they must pay him rent.



A penciled note, on article "Daily News", in  
Tribune files. May 29, 1923. P. M.

Fall, 1939

France, they said, pays no rent to surrounding countries. The United States pays no one for its right to exist. Why should "Little Bohemia" they asked themselves, pay some strange man from the city of Minneapolis for the privilege of being "Little Bohemia". They paid no rent.

Last week, C. H. Smith, the owner of the land, obtained judgements against the certain residents of the district for back rent. Police officers started for "Little Bohemia" to serve papers which meant, as far as these people were concerned, "pay or get out." To them it was an unwarranted invasion of territory. Silent, determined, they gathered before the gates of their homes ready, if necessary to fight to the last brickbat and the last pebble on the beach to preserve their homeland.

Just in time to avoid bloodshed, however, their attorneys obtained atemporary restraining order which postponed the day of judgment. Tuesday, the day had come. Attorneys for Mr. Smith, the owner of the land, and attorneys for the inhabitants of "Little Bohemia" were to appear before Judge Reed to fight, legally, a war which may be fought illegally.

If Judge Reed vacates the judgments which give the owner the right to collect or evict, then the residents of the flats are secure -- for a time. But if the court finds that the owner has a legal right to order them and tiehr houses off the land, then they can save their homeland only by force.

Whether the court battle will end the war or start, no one knows but those who know these dwellers in the lowlands best hope it means peace.

Tribune. May 30, 1923. A. M.

Fall, 1939

### FLAT SQUATTERS ORDERED TO PAY OR QUIT HOMES.

River Land Tenants Defiant as Court Hands Down Rent Decision.

Residents of the river flats, under the Washington avenue bridge must pay rent by tomorrow night or more.

Defiant to the end, the flat-dwellers were ordered to "pay or move" when they appeared before Judge Frank E. Reed in municipal court Tuesday afternoon to fight for what they declare are their squatter's rights.

A dozen angry women who insisted that the land was theirs without rent, protested when Judge Reed gave his decision.

"We never paid rent," declared the women, "and we are not going to pay rent."

The court order followed conclusion of a hearing on a restraining order forbidding C. H. Smith, Phoenix building, to eject the squatters from his property. Some of the rentals go back for a period of six years. They vary from \$16 to \$40 a year. Rents due from the defendants are: Mrs. Mike Lash, \$72.50; Joe Filek, \$53; Mike Sabal /SIC / \$97.50; John Gabrick, 73; Mike Rollins /sic / \$67.50; Mrs. J. Harhay, \$147.50; John Marsard, \$130 and John Shedyo, \$58.

Last Thursday court officers tried to evict the women from their homes. The eviction was halted when David Lundeen, their attorney, obtained a restraining order, calling both sides in court for a hearing.

Le Roy Bowen counsel for Mr. Smith, asked the flat dweller's attorney what defense he proposed.

"Well, take one case, the man has lived in the place 38 years," was the answer, "he has never paid rent. Many of these people cannot understand English. When a man has lived there so long, I should think that that's defense."



Tribune. May 30, 1923 P. M.

Fall, 1939

"PAY RENT" ORDER FANS FLAMES IN BOHEMIA.

Militant Joan of Arc Faces Judge Reed with  
Flashing Eyes and Plea against "Rich Guys."

War Councils Held.

"Dese Our Homes," Inquisitive Reporter Told;  
"Somebody Try Put Us Out. He Find Out."

By Joan Lloyd.

While the United States observed Memorial Day, the "Republic" of Little Bohemia, with her menfolk home from their toil in the surrounding provinces of Minneapolis and St. Paul, was a seething cauldron of speculation as to what the next move will be in the strife between the "squatters" and "the rich guys" (a Little Bohemian expression) who have gone into the courts of Minneapolis to lay claim to certain land on the flats upon which these inhabitants of a "little Republic" have built their homes.

Judge Frank E. Reed in municipal court Tuesday issued a mandate: "Pay your rent by Thursday night or you'll have to move," were his words. A dozen women who were reared on the flats and who are now rearing children of their own in the same homes sat in the court room. The judge's words brought them in a body and in a rush before the bar of justice. Led by Mrs. J. Haronko, a militant Joan of Arc, they faced the "law" with flashing eyes and quivering lips.

"We never have paid rent," said Mrs. Haronko. "Never one cent. They are our homes. Why should (sic) /columns were pasted together wrong / he might be somewhat Americanized, the visitor addressed a question.

"Why is everyone so excited?"

Tribune. May 30, 1923. P. M.

Fall, 1939

"The little man shrugged his shoulders nonchalantly but his face was glum.

"The judge, he say pay monies by Thursday night or move out. We say pay monies where. He say that man what say he own our land. That is not right. Why we pay that man for let us live in our homes? Huh? Some dese people, dey say dey pay no monies. I say I pay like other peoples in dis country. But why. I make some fella rich when he don't own my home. I don't know what we do." "YOU GET OUT."

Before the little man has finished his oration, a pock-marked fellow with Herculean shoulders and the biggest fists the reporter had ever seen, joined the meeting. He was followed by several women and children. He stepped up very close, too close really, to the inquiring reporter.

"Hey, wat you do down here? You one of dese rich guys try to drive us out our homes, hey? Yah, you make fool of us, you t'ink. You see! You get out. Dese our homes. Somebody try put us out. He find out. We stay here."

The women nodded their heads in unanimous accord. One small boy, catching the reporter's eye, stuck out his tongue and shook his fist. Several other children, immediately inspired, followed suit. The little man, evidently averse to such beligerent tactics, was inclined to state the case of Little Bohemia more explicitly and peacefully.

"Listen," said he, "I got back my house say we live here 30 years then this land ours. No man can take. Same as home-stead. The judge he is not right. We don't want fight. But we not give our homes. Some guy wat don't have no right."

He got no further. The boy with the beefy shoulders and an admiring coterie broke up the conference.



Tribune. May 30, 1923 P. M.

Fall, 1939

"Hey you, we stay here, see. Dese our homes. We keep 'em. You get out." His fists looked very large and firm. The reporter began to think he wasn't welcome in Little Bohemia.

He left. As he retreated past a homely little garden gate an old woman remarked very audibly, "You come down here again, me shoot you."

Tribune May 31, 1923 P. M.

Fall, 1939

#### 40 RIVER FLAT FAMILIES DEFY OUSTER ORDER.

Refuse to Move or Pay Rent;  
Renew Attempt to Restrain Eviction.

Fathers at Home on Lookout Against any Attempt to Oust.

Forty families living on the river flats beneath the Washington avenue bridge defiantly refused to carry out a court order to move or pay rent. Thursday morning while their attorneys attempted to get another court order restraining the police from evicting the flat dwellers.

"They will not abide by the court order, and refuse to either move or pay rent." David Lundeen attorney for 20 families, said Thursday morning. "The time for either paying the rent or moving will be up at midnight. At noon none of the families has taken steps to go do either."

Injunction to be Sought.

Mr. Lundeen explained that an attempt would be made late Thursday to obtain a court order temporarily restraining any eviction proceedings. This step will be pending appeal of the case.

Few of the heads of the 40 families went to work Thursday morning. They remained at their homes, and throughout the day have constantly been on the lookout for anyone who might attempt to evict their families. They point to the fact that some of the families have lived in "Bohemian Flats" for more than forty years, and have never paid rent to anybody.



Tribune. May 31, 1923 P.M.

Fall, 1939

### Police Prepared to Act.

Lieutenant Harry Burke of the police department who experienced trouble attempting to evict a family on a court order a week ago, said Thursday morning that he was prepared to carry out court orders. He will be accompanied by a detail of the police if another visit to the Flats is made necessary.

Court action Tuesday came when an attorney representing C. H. Smith, who owns a portion of the land, attempted to collect rents. Judge Reed in municipal court dismissed a temporary order restraining Smith's attorney from collecting rents and gave the flat dwellers 48 hours to either pay or move.

Tribune. June 6, 1923. A. M.

Fall, 1939

#### NYE HALTS RIVER FLATS' EVICTIONS PENDING HEARING

With all efforts at eviction of the river flats dwellers halted by order of Judge Nye until the hearing scheduled for June 15, David Lundeen Tuesday filed additional suits in Hennepin county district court in a move to claim title to the river land on behalf of his clients. The new suits were filed on behalf of Joe Filek, John Gabrick, Mike Rollins, Mrs. Mike Lash, and John Blasko. The first suit was filed last week on behalf of John Medvec, 78 Cooper St., who declares he has lived at the same house for 40 years and never paid rent for the land. C. H. Smith, Phoenix Building, is made defendant in the suits, as he is owner of record in the county auditor's office.



Tribune. June 16, 1923 A. M.

Fall, 1939

#### COURT DECISION HALTS EVICTION.

Dwellers Must File Surety Bond by July 3 or Move Homes.  
Trial due to come up in 14 Months, But Case may be Advanced.

Residents of the Mississippi river flats under the Washington avenue bridge were given another breathing spell Friday afternoon when Judge George W. Buffington in Hennepin county district court issued an order to halt any evictions until July 3.

By that day each of the flat dwellers who is fighting for title to the land on which he has built his home must have put up a surety bond of \$250 to guarantee payment of back rent should the case be decided against them on its merit.

#### Two Ways to Celebrate.

If the bond is put up they can celebrate July 4 by preparing to fight in court to prove they are the true owners of the land. If they do not put up bond, Judge Buffington's order is automatically executed, and they may celebrate July 4 in preparing to leave their river homes because authority to evict will then go into effect.

Protesting against the efforts of flat dwellers to "avoid payment of rents" as he calls it, Le Roy Bowen, attorney for C. H. Smith, who is the owner of record of the land in question, declared "that the whole thing is a harassing litigation and there's nothing to it." Taking issue with Bowen, David Lundeen, opposing attorney, declared that the residents are proceeding in good faith in the case because they honestly believe that their tenancy over a period of years rent free makes title to the land theirs. Mr. Bowen, however, agreed with Mr. Lundeen in favor of Buffington's order.

Tribune. June 16, 1923. A. M.

Fall, 1939

#### Decision Pleases Dwellers.

The case came into court Friday P. M. as a result of an order previously issued by Judge Frank M. Nye calling upon Mr. Smith to show cause why the flat dwellers should not be declared true owners of title to the land.

A score of men and women of the flats were in court while the attorneys argued, and they showed themselves highly pleased when Judge Buffington issued the order. Assistant City attorney John O'Donnell, who went with Mayor Leach to the flats for a hearing recently, was in court also but took no part in the arguments.

Trial of the case on its merits, to determine who is the true owner of the land in question, under ordinary circumstances cannot begin for app. 14 mo. because of the crowded calander, but Judge Buffington suggested that if it was found necessary the case might be advanced for earlier trial.



September 2, 1923. Journal

"Down in Little Bohemia where the Mississippi River jostles little red and green and drab houses on one side of the bluffs crowd down on the other side, they begin to wonder what next legal rights will bring them in fights for their homes.

"Last winter, C. H. Smith brought actions to dispossess 15 of them for not paying rent. They resisted and refused to move.

"Next battle was fought Dist. Judge Geo. W. Buffington, when by agreement an injunction was granted, permitting the dwellers to retain their homes pending trial of their court actions, brought to quiet title, in the event they could raise bond of \$250 each to protect Smith from loss of rents.

"Fifty families were represented in the total \$1,750 when seven of the eight families furnished the bonds required.

"Mrs. John Harhay, a widow, couldn't make it, so she vacated her home, went to live with a neighbor and offered it for sale. It is still for sale."

November 2, 1923. Journal

Medvec's case first of seven to be fought in court to prove he had a squatter's right to his cottage. "I bought that little house on May, 1884," Medvec says, his big mustache quivering with agitation. "I paid \$210 for it, but never paid for the land. I'm there all the time, I move in the spring because the river rolls over my floor. I raised my family there." (Other defendants were John Blasko, Joe Felik, John Gabriel, Mrs. Mile Leash, Mike Rollins.)

\*\*\*\*\*



November 3, 1923. Journal

Scared, paid rent, says river folk. Dwellers testify that money was paid by women under coercion.

Small payments were made to C. H. Smith real estate dealer who is owner of record of the property on which they live, but the payments were made only under coercion and they have maintained undisputed possession of the land for more than 40 years, they testify in their fight for title to the land. John Medvec, 70 years old, said he lived there since 1884...and never paid any rent except when his wife was frightened by an attorney for Mr. Smith, so that she paid him \$5. That was in 1920.

Mike Sabol sold Medvec the house.....said his wife paid A. C. Rehnke, attorney for Smith \$40 in 1920 "because she was frightened."

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Minneapolis Journal. Nov. 3, 1923

Fall, 1939

### SCARED, PAID RENT SAY RIVER FOLK.

Dwellers ON Flats Testify  
Money Was Paid by Women Under Coercion.

\*\*\*

"Residents of the flats \*\*\* have made small payments to C. H. Smith, real estate dealer, who is the owner of record of the property in which they live, but the payments were made only under coercion and they have maintained undisputed possession of the land for more than 40 years, they testified in district court, in the opening of their fight for title to the land.

\*\*\*

"The high point of testimony for the flat dwellers, in trial of the first of seven actions they have brought for undisputed title to the property, was evidence given by John Medvec /sic / agen 70, of 78 Cooper street, who said he bought the house he occupies in 1884 and has lived there ever since.

"Every spring, I had to move out when the water came up," he said. "But I have lived there always, and I brought my family up there, too. I never paid any rent, except when my wife was frightened by an attorney for Mr. Smith so she paid him \$5. That was in 1920."

"Mike Sabol, 109 Mill street, who sold Medvec the house at 78 Cooper street, testified that he had never paid rent, but that his wife paid A. C. Rehnke, attorney for Mr. Smith, \$40 in 1920, 'because she was frightened.'"

"The courtroom was crowded by flat dwellers, who expect the case brought by Medvec to be a test as to their own rights under similar conditions."



Tribune. Nov. 3, 1923. A. M.

Fall, 1939

### SQUATTERS OPEN FIGHT TO PROVE TITLE TO HOMES.

Flat Dwellers Under Bridge Will Try to Show Pre-emption Rights.  
Two Claim Purchases in 1884 and Call Recent Payments Coercion.

Flat dwellers under the Washington avenue bridge opened their fight to obtain title to their homes under the rule of squatter's rights before Judge W. C. Leary in district court Friday.

John Medvec, 70 years old, residing at 78 Cooper street, as the first witness declared that he bought his property on May 5, 1884, and never has recognized anyone's right to collect rent. Mike Sabol, 109 Mill street, who declared himself the father of seven children, entered a similar statement. Both declared that they believed themselves owners of land.

Both, however, admitted payments had been made. Medvec admitted that his daughter made a payment of \$5 to A. C. Rehnke, attorney for C. H. Smith, who is owner of record of the property, and Sabol admitted his wife made a payment of \$40 to Rehnke in 1920. Both men, however, insisted that they did not understand the payment was for rent, but because the women had been frightened into payment.

The aim of Le Roy Bowen, attorney for Smith, is to show payments of rent in an effort to establish that the flat-dwellers recognized Smith's claims. On the other hand, David Lundeen, as attorney for the residents, sought to show that the flat-dwellers lived on the property in defiance of any claimants.

The case will be resumed at 2 o'clock Monday afternoon.

Minneapolis Journal. Nov. 6, 1923

Fall, 1939

BOUGHT RIVER FLAT IN '84, SAYS WITNESS.

"\*\*\*the attorney for the defense introduced C. C. Leland, who testified that he bought the land from Dorilius Morrison, Minneapolis pioneer, in 1884, and sold it to Mr. Smith in 1921. Mr. Smith is now owner of record of the flat property.

"Both Medvec and Sabol testified they never have paid rent or taxes on the property. Mr. Leland showed the record of an abstract of the land which traced it from the government grant down to C. C. and W. D. Washburn, to Dorilius Morrison, and then to himself.

"Decision in the Medvec and Sabol cases will test the rights of five others who have brought similar suits against Mr. Smith and in other proposed actions.



Tribune Nov. 6, 1923 A.M.

Fall, 1939

#### FLAT DWELLERS WIN POINT IN SUIT FOR TITLE.

Judge Denies Defendant's Motion to Dismiss River Land Case.

Trial to be Resumed this Morning before Judge W. C. Leary.

Residents of the river flats under the Washington avenue bridge won the first round of their fight for title to the ground on which their homes are built when Judge W. C. Leary denied a motion to dismiss the case in district court Monday afternoon.

Arguments for dismissal were made by Le Roy Bowen on behalf of C. H. Smith, the defendant in the action, who is the owner of record of the property. His contention was that adverse possession required for establishment of title over a 15 year period, on the part of the dwellers, had not been shown. David Lundeen, as attorney for the flat-dwellers, urged against the motion, and Judge Leary ordered the defense to go ahead with its case after denying the motion to dismiss.

#### Transfer of Property

C. C. Leland then took the stand to testify that he and his wife, Mary Leland, were the owners of record of the land from 1884 to 1921, and that they had obtained it through purchase from Dorilus Morrison, pioneer Minneapolitan. In 1921 the Lelands sold the property to Mr. Smith, he testified. Mr. Smith is now owner of record of the flat property.

The present action involves title to the property on which stands the homes of John Medvec, 78 Cooper Street, and Mike Sabel, 109 Mill Street. Both these men in testimony Friday declared that they never paid rent and never recognized anyone's right to the ground, unless it was the United States Government. They said they never paid any taxes on this property.

Tribune. Nov. 6, 1923. A. M.

Fall, 1939

#### Title Traced from U. S.

In testimony Monday, however, Mr. Leland showed record of an abstract to the land, which traced it from the government's grant to C. C. and W. D. Washburn, and through Mr. Morrison to him. He testified that he himself had plotted the ground in the 80's.

Trial of the case is to be resumed before Judge Leary at 9 A. M. today. It is understood that a decision in the Medvec & Sabol cases will be taken as holding for five others pending in court and about a score or more of others over which litigation was in prospect.



Tribune. Nov. 7, 1923 A. M.

Fall, 1939

TESTIMONY IN SQUATTER'S SUIT  
FOR TITLE TO RIVER FLATS IS CONCLUDED.

Testimony in the suit brought by residents of the river flats under the Washington avenue bridge to establish title to the land on which their homes are built was closed before Judge W. C. Leary in Hennepin County, district court Tuesday, P. M.

By tomorrow or the next day the flat dwellers will know whether the land is theirs or whether it belongs to C. H. Smith, owner of record, and they must pay rent. Bonds are on deposit with Walter Ryberg, clerk of the district court, to guarantee the back rent should the court favor Mr. Smith's claim. If the court decides in favor of the flat-dwellers the bond money is to be returned to them.

Testimony in the case traced the history of the river district from the time of its grant by the government down through the ownership of record by John Leland and Margaret Leland to Mr. Smith. The flat dwellers claim title through squatter's rights.

November 14, 1923. Journal

District Judge W. C. Leary ruled they must pay rent or move.

Medvec lived there 37 years without rent. Sabol...25 years.

Excited groups of river flat women gathered in the backyards of their weather stained shacks as news of the ruling spread thru the Cabbage Patch.

"We won't move, and we won't pay," they declared. Militant housewives clenched their broom handles as they talked it over. They would battle attempts to evict them with brooms and mops, they declared, as they waited anxiously for the men folk to return from the mills and factory.

Court gave them 30 days grace to pay or move.

John Medvec says, "We built this house and it belongs to us. The land belongs to the river--if anybody. That's the property of the government. We'll pay taxes, but it isn't fair to ask rent from a riverbed."

Mrs. Annie Romado, next door to Medvec, said the city gave Henry Ford the right to flood the land; by virtue of this act, showed who really owned the flats.

"We'd pay the city willingly. They give us two arc lights and a fire hydrants and schools for our children. If they push their claim for rent, I'll ask damages for the floods that made us live in the upstairs during the spring and turn the street into a lake or C. H. Smith real estate operator who owned the land, showed clear title extending back 50 years.



Tribune. November 14, 1923 P. M.

Fall, 1939

#### COURT DECIDES DWELLERS DO NOT OWN FLATS UNDER BRIDGE.

Residents of Minneapolis' so called "Little Bohemia" under the Washington avenue bridge must either pay rent for the land on which their homes are or move.

In a decision filed in Hennepin county district court Wednesday morning, Judge W. C. Leary ruled that C. H. Smith, realty man in the Phoenix building, is the true owner of the land, and that the claim of the title by squatters' rights put forth by the flat-dwellers is without foundation; that they were not in "defiant possession" for a necessary 15 years.

#### Ends Long Controversy.

The decision of Judge Leary virtually terminates a controversy of several year's standing, colored by a near-riot last summer when women of the flats massed to repel municipal court officers who came to oust them for failure to pay rent.

The action in district court was brought by the flat dwellers to establish title to the land by adverse possession. Seven cases were brought in, but only two were tried and the results were made cinding on the other five by stipulation of oppesing counsel. The cases tried were those of John Medvec, 78 Cooper street and Mike Sabol, 109 Mill street. Both of these men on the witness stand declared that they had never recognized Smith's right to the rent, but the testimony showed that women members of the family had paid out rent money at various times.

Tribune. November 14, 1923. P. M.

Fall, 1939

#### Women Fight Officers.

Mr. Smith, as owner of record of the property, obtained a judgment against each of the defendants in municipal court for rent due, and when refusal of payment continued, court officers finally moved down to the flats, and began to take furniture out of the Medvec home and load it into a van. Women at the time quickly gathered and fought to hold back the moving men and the officers. A riot call was turned in, and a host of police from the South side station dispatched to the scene. Just as the police arrived, David Lundeen, attorney for the flat-dwellers, also arrived with another municipal court order staying the ousting action.

The case then was transferred to district court and Judge Buffington ordered a stay in all proceedings pending trial of the title action on its merits, but the flat-dwellers were obliged to put up deposits of \$250 each to guarantee rentals should the final court action go against them.

#### Rents Ordered Paid.

The rentals, comparatively small sums, have been in arrear for approximately four or five years, in some of the cases, according to the attorneys. The order of Judge Leary Wednesday calls for payment of the various rentals to date as follows:

John Medvec .....	\$139
Mike Sabol .....	\$110
Mike Rollins .....	\$ 75
Joe Felik .....	\$ 62
John Blasko .....	\$ 31
Mrs. Mike Lash .....	\$ 80
John Gabrie .....	\$ 85.

The order of the court granted a stay of 30 days.



Tribune. Nov. 14, 1923. P. M.

Fall, 1939

#### Smith Traces Ownership.

Whether there will be an appeal from the order, Mr. Lundeen declared he was not prepared to say since he had had no opportunity of conferring with his clients. It is estimated that more than 20 similar cases which have not reached the stage of court action will be settled between the contending parties on the basis of Judge Leary's decision.

County records, as brought out in the trial, show that Mr. Smith purchased the property from John and Mary Leland, and the Lelands obtained it from Dorilus Morrison, Minneapolis pioneer, who, in turn, obtained it from the Washburns. The record traced the ownership to an original government grant.

Tribune. Nov. 15, 1923. A. M.

Fall, 1939

### SQUATTERS LOSE FIGHT TO RESIDE ON RIVER FLATS.

Judge Leary Rules Dwellers Must Pay Rent or Move Out.

Squatters on the Mississippi river flats below the Washington avenue bridge Wednesday lost their fight to retain rent-free possession of their homes and lands.

District Judge W. C. Leary, in a decision filed Wednesday A. M. ruled that the true owner of the land is C. H. Smith, real estate dealer, and ordered the members of "Little Bohemia" colony to pay their rent. The decision ended in a controversy of several years' standing which came to a head last summer when women of The Flats massed to repel attacks of municipal officers who had come to oust them for failure to pay rent.

The order of Judge Leary called for the following payment of rents: John Madvec /sic /, \$139; Mike Sabol, \$110; Mike Rollins, \$75; Joe Felik, \$62; John Blaseo, \$31; Mrs Mike Lash, \$80; and John Gabric, \$85.

The decision may be used as a basis in settling a dispute between the Board of Education and Bartholomew Kennedy who claims possession of a part of the athletic field of South High School. When the school board attempted to build a fence on the property several years ago, Kennedy objected on the grounds that the land purchased by the board was his by right of adverse possession.



November 19, 1923. Journal

As a landlord, the city of Minneapolis has fallen down on the job by failing to collect its rent. Only one in six families in City River Flat pay house rent. Charge that one side of street is taxed while the other side goes free.

The tenants are one workman in city's employment, two janitors, in the old Federal Building, and three foundry workers or mill employees.

The man employed by the city pays them six dollars a month for rent. The city gets no taxes for the property because the property belongs to the city. Houses are on 22nd St. between Washington Avenue and 3rd St.

Alderman John Peterson of 6th Ward (who takes care of this vicinity) explained that the property had been purchased for the city's coal terminal, but no river improvements had been carried out. "Families have come and gone and we haven't kept much record of who occupies those houses," he said.

Tribune. November 30, 1923. P.M.

Fall, 1939

### SQUATTERS QUIT FIGHT IN COURT FOR FREE RENT.

#### River Flat Dwellers Drop Suit to Pay Back Dues.

Squatters of the river flats below the Washington avenue bridge Friday abandoned the fight to stay on the land, rent-free.

They announced their intention to pay up back rent to C. H. Smith, whom the courts have given the title of owner, and stay where they are, continuing to pay rent.

A few weeks ago, the squatters lost their case in district court by David Lundeen, attorney, for the flat dwellers, and C. A. Rehnke, attorney for Smith, by which the flat-dwellers abandoned their appeal.

#### Judgment Entered.

Friday morning, judgments were entered with the clerk of district court by David Lundeen, attorney for the flat-dwellers, and C. A. Rehnke, attorney for Smith, by which the flat-dwellers abandoned their appeal.

Back rents due Smith will be paid out of a sum to which seven of the flat-dwellers paid \$250 each as a guarantee to the court that the rent would be paid if Smith won the case.

About 30 other squatters who were not in court, but whose rights to the land were denied by court's decision, will also pay up back rent, it is expected. Most of the rents amount to \$12 to \$15 a year.



November 30, 1923. Journal

Squatters dropped plans for an appeal to higher court and paid back rent totaling \$572 and agreed to pay rent regularly. David Lundeen, attorney for 7 dwellers asked the Hennepin County District Court to give them title to the land under "squatter's rights." He signed a stipulation by which his clients agreed to pay back rent, plus court costs totaling \$110.96 from \$250 bonds which each gave to obtain a court trial. Balance of bonds is to be repaid by the tenants.

\*\*\*\*\*

December 1, 1923. Journal

Saturday the dwellers paid \$139 to \$31 for back rent to C. H.

Smith.

\*\*\*\*\*



Tribune. Dec. 1, 1923. A. H.

Fall, 1939

**SQUATTERS DROP FIGHT FOR RENT-FREE HANDS  
ON PROPERTY UNDER BRIDGE.**

Seven squatters on the river flats below the Washington avenue bridge Friday abandoned their fight for rent free land when they rejected their right to appeal a court decision awarding the land title to C. H. Smith. They announced they would pay up back rent and continue to occupy their homes at rentals ranging from \$12 to \$18 a year. The seven who will pay Smith the back rent are John Blasko, John Nedvec, Mike Rollins, Joe Felik, Mrs. Mike Lash, Mike Sabol, and John Gabrick.

Tribune March 26, 1924

Fall, 1939

LIFE ON RIVER FLATS LOSES SAVOR;  
FOURTH OF POPULATION GONE.

It appears that life down on the Mississippi river flats nowadays "ain't so nice like it used to be."

Fat geese and fat children and fat puppies still waddle contentedly about in the rich black March mud. Square faced Czech mothers, with little white shawls over their heads and exotically dressed infants in their arms, still chatter sociably from fence to fence. And yet - life on the river flats seems to have lost something of its savor.

Spring is coming to the river flats--spring without a flood. The river is so low now that you can almost wade across. It looks as though it were not more than half as wide as it was a year ago at this time, and even a year ago there was no flood. Spring is coming and soon the bluffs across the river will be soft and feathery and green - "just like in the old country." But this prospect arouses no gaily in the hearts of the river flatters.

Something Has Gone.

Spring is coming with Italian skies and floods of golden sunlight and warm friendly dust to replace the snow and mud. Already two shiny new Fords have found homes on the river flats. And they're tearing down the Northern Pacific railroad bridge that used to frown down upon the little blue and green and salmon houses. That ought to let in a lot more spring sunshine. Everybody ought to be happy, and yet something has gone from the river flats--something including about one-fourth of the population.



Fall, 1939

All along the narrow cluttered streets of the river flats this spring you'll see vacant houses. That robin's egg blue house with the red and yellow window sashes you can pick it out from the street car window as you cross the Washington avenue bridge--The windows that used to look so gay with their flower plants stare at you lonesomely as you pass.

Empty, too, is the smug little brown house with the wide porch and the green window sashes, down where the water's edge used to be. So is the gray cabin with the sky blue door that S. Chatwood Burton, the artist from the University used to have for his studio. The salmon pink house with the green window sashed is not to get a new coat of paint this year. There's a "For Sale" sign on the quaint dark little grocery store, and a spirit of moving in the air.

Not that the inhabitants of the river flats will admit that anybody's moving out, at least not adult inhabitants. John Medvoc /sic/ the Elder, spokesman for the squatters in their long fight against paying rent, a fight which is now before supreme court after having gone against them in the district court, will look surprised if you mention it to him.

#### All Profess Ignorance.

"Moving out?" he repeats with a lift of his shaggy white eyebrows. "Moving out? Where'd you hear anybody was moving out?"

Amie Rollins' rosy-faced mother shakes her head when you put the question to her and shows her even white teeth in a perplexed smile.

"I o understand English so good," she amiably announced.

The girl in the grocery store regards you stolidly across the pink-frosted cup cakes. "I don't know anything about it." she says primly.

Tribune March 26, 1924

Fall, 1939

After their case was decided against them in the district court, residents of the river flats paid up their rents to the owner of the property. Some of them had to pay quite a sum in back rents. Maybe they decided that it wasn't worth it. Might ask John Medvoc /sic/ the Elder. You'll find him any morning nowadays busy with broom and rake, cleaning up the Old World courtyard back of his house. Children, geese and puppies mingle in amiable confusion about his feet.

"How about?" you ask. "Is it the rents that make the people move away?"

"Rents? What you mean? We pay our rents now," he'll reply with an innocent look. "People move out? Maybe, I don't know nothing about it. /sic/ "

"Maybe it's the flood," you suggest. "Think you're going to have a flood this year?"

John pushes his cap back and runs his fingers through his thick gray hair.

"Flood? Maybe," he observes, non-committally. "Maybe we get a flood."

"But the river's lower this year than its ever been before, isn't it?" you protest.

Pay Rents Just the Same.

"Yah but you just wait till April. Then see. Maybe we get a flood, but we pay rents just the same. Maybe we get a flood. Maybe we have to move out, stay a week, lose a lot of chickens, all catch cold. -- then see if we got to pay rent just the same, Sure we do."



Tribune March 26, 1924.

Fall, 1939

Annie /sic / Rollins' young sister, who is seven and goes to school, has another idea. Annie and her father and mother and the rest of the young Rollinses live right under the railroad bridge. The houses on either side of them are vacant.

"Maybe we gotta move because things will fall off the bridge when they tear it down," Annie's young sister pipes up. "My mother says maybe pieces of iron will fall down on our houses. We don't like it. Sure lots of people are afraid. They move uptown."

Annie's mother enters the conversation at this point. "No," she says, shaking her head, "No."

"Pht!" I live here already when they built that bridge, says John Medvoc /sic / the elder /sic /. They never drop nothing. Nobody move for that."

#### Little Girls Explain.

Two bobbed haired little girls about 10 and 12 years old were raking away for dear life in the yard next door to the Rollinses Wed. morning.

"Getting ready to make a garden?"

"Naw, we're just having fun. Nobody lives here."

"Lots of people moving uptown, eh?"

"Uh-huh."

"What's the matter? Is it the rents? Or is it because they're afraid things will fall on them from the bridge?"

Tribune March. 26, 1924.

Fall, 1939

"Maybe, but that ain't all. This place ain't so nice like it used to be. It's getting different. People don't like it no more."

"Think you're going to have a flood this year?"

The 12 year old girl pushed her hair out of her eyes and looked disconsolately out at a narrow river. "Naw," she sighed, "Nothing ever happens here no more."



✓  
H. Fleischauer - (Flat Dwellers) XII

LIFE ON RIVER FLATS LOSES SAVOR; FOURTH OF POPULATION GONE.  
(Minneapolis Tribune, March 26, 1924.)

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be. So is the gray cabin with the sky blue door that S. Chatwood Burton, the artist from the University used to have for his studio. The salmon pink house with the green window sashes is not to get a new <sup>coat</sup> ~~mark~~ of paint this year. There's a "For Sale" sign on the quaint dark little grocery store, and a spirit of moving is in the air.

(At this time, the long fight against paying rent is before the Supreme Court, having gone against them in District Court. No adult will admit they are moving.)

After their case was decided against them in District Court, residents on the river flats paid up their rents to the owner of the property. Some of them had to pay quite a sum in back rents. Maybe they decided it wasn't worth it.



December 6, 1924. Journal

Five of seven tenants on 22nd Ave. S. have to pay rent after  
Dec. 15.

Three will be charged \$12 each.

Two who live in shacks \$5 each.

One already pays \$6. His rate will stay the same.

A widow now being supported by charity can stay without paying.  
it was ruled.

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Tribune. Dec. 6, 1924. P. M.

Fall, 1939

### ALDERMEN ACT TO COLLECT RENT ON CITY PROPERTY.

#### Occupants of River Homes Do Not Pay, Committee Learns.

Investigation by James G. Houghton, building inspector, and by the claims division of the legal department, shows that tenants occupying six city-owned dwellings on property purchased for river terminal uses are paying no rent to the city, according to reports submitted to the council committee on efficiency and economy Friday. One tenant has been paying the city \$6 monthly rental.

After considering all the circumstances the committee recommended that the \$6-a month tenant continue to pay the same rental; that tenants of two other houses pay \$15 a month, and that tenants of three houses pay \$12 a month. A city-owned shack on the property, occupied by a widow, will draw no rental, if the committee's recommendations are approved by the council.

The committee recommended that Fred Gram, purchasing agent and Horace Johnson, auditor in the city comptroller's office, confer with concerns selling materials and merchandise to the city and ascertain if they are willing to extend the 2 per cent discount for cash in 10 days to 15 days.

It was recommended by the committee that heads of departments and other city employees whose duty it is to approve in voices of purchases sign the invoices promptly and return them to the city comptroller's office in order that the city can take advantage of the 2 per cent discount. Delays in signing invoices have lost the city the discount in many instances, Mr. Johnson told the committee.



Tribune. June 1, 1928. A. M.

Fall, 1939

LEACH HEARS SQUATTER'S STORY  
IN VISIT TO RIVER FLAT HOMES.

Women and Children Crowd Small Street  
as Leaders of Colony Discuss Eviction Suit--  
Mayor Assures Square Deal for Shirt-Sleeved Conferees.

Down on the river flats, under the Washington avenue bridge, the children were allowed out-doors half an hour later than usual Thursday night.

Inside the salmon-colored houses, and the sky blue houses, and the unpainted houses with red doors, there was much jubilant conversation. There was a ring of triumph even in the barking of the dogs, and the geese cackled complacently as they waddled homeward in the dusk.

The residents of the flats were celebrating two historic and auspicious events in the long fight of the squatters to retain, rent-free, their homes on the river front.

Win Restraining Order.

On the last day of grace granted them by municipal court for payment of their ground rent, Judge Frank M. Nye in Hennepin County district court Thursday signed an order restraining municipal authorities from driving them out -- for the time being, at least. That was one event.

The other was a visit from the mayor of Minneapolis. Straw hat on the back of his head, half smoked cigar between his fingers, he talked things over with them, heard their side of the story, made a speech in which he assured them a square deal -- and had his picture taken with half of the juvenile population hanging onto his coattails.

Tribune. June 1, 1928. A. M.

Fall, 1939

#### Mayor Appears Unannounced.

Taken all in all, it was a larger night. Not every night does a mayor pay a visit to the river flats. Many of the residents saw Mayor Leach for the first time Thursday night when, unannounced, he appeared among them. No public speaker -- not even Wm. Jennings Bryan, his palmerest days -- ever had a more attentive audience.

They'd just had supper down on the flats, and the shirt-sleeved males had gathered in front of John Medvee's house to discuss Judge Nye's order, when the mayor's long grey touring car poked its nose around the curve in the road at the top of the hill.

#### Children Wave Leach Banners.

Inside of three minutes, apparantly, everybody in Little Bohemia had been informed of his arrival. Inside of five minutes children were out -- waving flags and banners on which had been printed, hastily perhaps, but with obvious enthusiasm, the slogan: "Vote for Mayor GEORGE E. LEACH."

While the children crowded about, and the dogs managed to get into everybody's way, while hunting for their masters shoes to lick, and while mothers appeared from all directions with exotically clad infants in their arms, Mayor Leach talked things over with Medvee and John Harvanko and other community leaders.



Tribune. June 1, 1928. A. M.

Fall, 1939

### Leaders Discuss Eviction

"We don't expect to live here for nothing, and we don't want to cheat anybody, but we think we've got some rights." Harvanko argued -- "We'd like to know what right they think they got to throw us out of these homes. I was born here. So were many of my neighbors. We ain't going to be throwed out without a fight."

"I've come down here to hear your side of the story," Mayor Leach said.

"I don't know whether you've got a right to stay or not, but anyhow I'm here to tell you you'll get a square deal. If you have a right to stay here, I'm going to do everything in my power to see that you are not molested."

### Visits Medvec's Mother.

Followed by the crowd, Mayor Leach -- still talking with Medvec and Harvanko -- led the way to Medvec's house. There, close by the waters' edge, with the gaunt black railroad bridge high overhead, he had a visit with Medvec's mother.

Mrs. Medvec was among those whom police several days ago ordered to move out for failure to pay her ground rent. Medvec charges that they struck her, bruising her so badly that he had to call a Dr. She was so startled Thursday night, however, at the sudden appearance of the Mayor on her back porch, that she had comparatively little to say.

Tribune. June 1, 1928. A. M.

Fall, 1939

### Old and Young Gather.

For a quarter of an hour perhaps, she and the Mayor visited-- while people continued to appear from the bright-colored houses along the water front. Old women with white handkerchiefs over their heads -- here a bobbed-haired flapper in a periwinkle blue tweed suit -- men in blue work shirts, hats pulled low over their scowling faces -- children, children, everywhere.

"Where's he?" they demanded. "That's him? Straw hat? Eh? Huh!"

Far off, up in the air, tiny yellow street cars crept noiselessly across the Washington avenue bridge, from one towering green bank to the other. The settlement is in Minneapolis -- and yet thousands of miles away.

### O'Donnell Explains Case.

John T. O'Donnell, assistant city attorney, who accompanied the mayor on his visit, made a speech in which he explained to the squatters the standing of their case in the courts.

Judge Nye's order, he explained, calls upon the plaintiff and owner of the property, C. H. Smith, to come into district court June 15 and show cause why the present dwellers should not be declared entitled to the lands on which they have built their homes. On behalf of the flat-dwellers, their attorney David Lundeen, filed suit in district court Thursday to settle the title of the river property in question. The Squatters maintain that they had adverse possession of the property for many years, that they have paid rent to nobody, and that therefore the title to the land is justly theirs.

Then Mayor Leach spoke to them. There was a scuffling of feet as his hearers moved closer. Children crowded in among the adults.



Tribune. June 1, 1928. A. M.

Fall, 1939

### Leach Assures Square Deal.

"Sh - it ain't nice you should cry when the mayor he talks," one mother scolded the baby in her arms.

"I've lived in Minneapolis all my life -- and I can't remember a time when you people were not living down here on the flats," Mayor Leach said. "Perhaps you have no legal rights to this land -- the courts must decide that. But in your fight for your homes, I sympathize with you. To have his own home -- that is a chance that every American citizen should have.

There was a general nodding and smiling as the mayor finished. "Gee, I'm for that guy!" the flapper in the tweed suit murmured approvingly.

There followed the business of taking pictures. A large, sad-eyed woman -- with one baby in her arms and another clinging to her skirts -- called the mayor aside.

"My man -- he in jail in St. Paul," she muttered. "Bootlegger."

"That's too bad. Is he guilty?" the mayor inquired.

"Yes -- I got nine kids," she observed plaintively.

More pictures -- handshaking -- nods and smiles -- the long grey touring car glided up the hill again.

The squatters then retired into salmon-colored houses, their sky blue houses, their unpainted houses with red doors -- to talk.

June 4, 1929 (or 7) Journal

Now they know that they have to go, they ask "When do we have to get out? And how much are you going to pay us?"

Joseph A. Hadley, assistant in the city attorney's office started serving notices of the July 13th hearing late yesterday and expects to finish today.

News of his arrival spread rapidly through the colony, and soon Hadley was accompanied on the trip along Cooper and Mill St. by a troop of children, while the women lined up in front of their gates to receive their printed bulletin. Most of the men were at work on the city construction crews and railroad section crews. Many of the women unable to speak English called their children to interpret. They wanted to know if he had bought the money with him, etc.

Mrs. Steve Ocel of 70 Mill St. said moving would not be a hardship for several members of the colony who owned houses in other parts of the city. They rented them out to obtain funds to tide them over the winter. It's not much down here but when you have your own shack, there is no worry about landlords or how much noise you can make.



July 17, 1929. Journal

Three real estate men are sent to set prices on their property. Tenants will have opportunity to express approval on the value set. Inspection of project follows a meeting to be held on July 23.

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G. Fleischauer.

# FLAT DWELLERS FAIL TO DISPUTE EVICTION PLAN.

Residents on West River Section Face Removal Resignedly.

(Minneapolis Tribune, June 1, 1929.)

Resignation was the principal emotion evinced by the dwellers on the river flats, north of Washington avenue south, when told Friday night that the city had taken steps to remove them, through condemnation proceedings, from the homes some of them have occupied for nearly half a century.

There were a few, a very few, who bridled at the thought of vacating permanently the premises that even the mighty Mississippi had been able sporadically to make them quit for a time in the spring when high water inundated their land and forced them to take to the highlands above the gas house.

"So, the city is against us and wants to fight," spoke up one deep-chested Slovak. "Well, we'll fight 'em," he scowled.

Better counsel prevailed, however, when they were told that the city would pay for every inch of land and for every house and shack on it, although deep regret was voiced by the old-timers at the mere thought of being driven from their beloved flats. The land to be condemned will be used by the city for additional barge terminal facilities.

"It is the only home I have known in America," many of them say. Mrs. Sophie Peterson, now 73, says, "I came to America from Sweden when I was 24, and went to work on a farm. Gustav built this little house in 1882, the year before I came to him and lived in it alone. All our children were born from here and buried from here, except one, (Arthur)."

"Many of the dwellers here always objected to paying rent, but we have paid rent every year. That's a lot of money - \$16 a year. My husband suffered a stroke of paralysis many years ago, when Arthur was a lad, and I have worked hard to make ends meet. Arthur never got married. More than twenty years he has worked for the Milwaukee Road."



Tribune. June 4, 1929. P. M.

Fall, 1939

**'LAW' INVADES RIVER FLATS AND ORDERS COLONY TO MOVE.**

Hardships small for many who own income-producing property.

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With a bundle of printed official notices setting forth in technical legal terms the city's intention to move them, Joseph A. Hadley, assistant to the city attorney, a flock of noisy youngsters at his heels, rapped at doors of picturesque homes of 16 of the 52 families and "served."

The invasion was an important event in the lives of those whom he visited. Only the women and their numerous children were at home. Their men were away at work, in railway gangs, sewer and paving crews.

Cautiously the doors opened to Hadley's rap.

"Got your notice of condemnation here," he told them.

"Don't want none," one replied and slammed the door.

"This is a notice that you have to come to court and settle with the city," Hadley called. "The city's going to take this ground."

"Got the money with you?" eagerly demanded the woman, opening the door again.

Hadley pushed the notices into her hands.

"Here is one for you and one for your husband," he replied. "No, I haven't got the money with me. It'll be some time before you have to get out. You'll have to be in court for July 13 for the hearing."

Tribune. June 4, 1929. P. M.

Fall, 1939

"No speak English, Say it is /sic/ Slovak," the woman asked. Hadley shook his head.

"You and your husband.... courthouse.... July 13," he tried to explain.

But the woman had decided she couldn't understand, and Hadley turned to check her name off his list.

Up and down the narrow streets--- Cooper and Mill--- he went, the children following, demanding a copy of the notice. At each little dwelling he stopped, fumbled with the intricacies of the gate latches, and carefully walked to the back door.

Soon, the women began to gather on the corners, chattering excitedly over the booklets containing the notices. A man who had been too busy splitting a log he had salvaged from the river to take interest in the stranger's visit, shuffled over to one group to see the book.

He thumbed through its few pages and shook his head. It was too much of a task to trace the meaning of the numerous "aforesaid and hereinafters" that cluttered up the sequence of the words he understood.

Past the little Bohemian church, once the scene of solemn worship, gay wedding occasions and community festivals, but now boarded up, deserted and becoming a ruin he went over to the home of John Medvec, 78 Cooper street. Above the way, some of the little homes bore "for sale" signs, one of them setting up a price of "1,000."



Tribune. June 4, 1929. P. M.

Fall, 1939

Mrs. Medvec, who had lived in her little home with John since 1883, answered the knock. Attired in old country fashion, she came with a cloth wrapped about her head and barefooted.

"You came to chase me out?" the old lady asked."

But Hadley told them not yet, and possibly not until spring.

"I live here since 1883," she said wistfully, "and now maybe we go and camp maybe over there," and she pointed to the U campus across the river. "You talk Slovak? Yes? N o?"

Although some of them will have to hunt new homes when the condemnation proceedings are finished, many of them will be able to move into homes they have owned for years, according to Mrs. Steve Ocel, 70 Mill street.

Even though they owned property they found it convenient to live on the flats and rent out their other homes, providing themselves with funds to tide them over the winter and seasons when work is slack.

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Thousands, who cross the Washington avenue bridge by street car, motor car or afoot last week, looked down on the amphibious settlement known as "the flats" where every spring the flooding Mississippi plays hide and seek, running through the back gates, over fences, and dodging between trees that give the river bank community its meager shade. "It must be spring", says residents of the flats, when they look out the kitchen window and see Father of Waters at the stoop, ready to deliver his yearly package.



*F.* Fleischauer - (Flat Dwellers) XIII

-- RIVER FLAT DWELLERS READY TO FLEE IN FACE OF FLOOD.  
 Minneapolis Tribune - March 24, '29.  
 Rising Waters Lap around Homes of Colony.

The ice broke somewhere along the upper regions of the Mississippi Wednesday night, and so the children along the river flats, tucked away under the Washington avenue bridge, didn't have to go to school Thursday. Instead, they donned hip boots, those that had 'em, and pitched in to help their parents get the navy out of drylock, rope the furniture together and prepare to move.

All night masses of ice and water tumbled down the Mississippi and by 9 A.M. today the water had seeped around the edges of the little levee that cuts off the edge of the flats from the river. It poured in over the streets and lapped at the doors of the houses closest to the river. When it reached its crest about 11 A. M., it was higher than it had been since the last flood of 1922.

It looked like moving days for some 100 inhabitants of the flats, but they watched the waters rising without emotion. They're used to moving out on a minute's notice. Old timers sat in the sun on rickety fences, curled their feet about the pickets and puffed away indifferently at their pipes.

"It won't get much higher", they said sagely, "the old flood days are gone." And so, while one or two of the waterfront houses reported three inches of water in their living rooms and while the younger men and women assembled their furniture and prepared to get to higher ground, the old fellows just smiled. And they were right. The water began to fall shortly after 11 A. M. and down at the government dam, near the Soldier's Home, it was reported that immediate danger of evacuation was past. As fast as it had risen, it began to subside.

But it made locomotion a little difficult for some of the flat dwellers. One group of houses, on the edge of the water, was cut off from the rest of the colony by two feet of water. They built a rickety bridge of narrow planks and quit worrying. Two boys in an old scow plied up and down the street, running errands for everybody and chanting their own version of the song of the gondoliers.

But the youngsters got the biggest thrill out of it. They stayed home from school to help their parents in case of real flood. They splashed around in the water all day, dragging ice cakes, and old logs and watching <sup>the</sup> rush of ice in the main channel out beyond them.

The water flooded an area about 200 yards wide, and about three times that long. Water seeped into about half a dozen homes and inundated the front yards of practically all along the waterfronts. Back one block, the river flats are only three blocks wide... The residents were enjoying the situation hugely. They were high and dry, and the housewives went about their business without interruption, while the youngsters played about ~~their~~ in the canals of "Little Venice" not far away.



RIVER FLATS SETTLERS MOVE TO ACCOMODATE ANNUAL RAMPAGE OF MISSISSIPPI

Mpls. Journal. March 24, '29.

Spring Inundation Breaks Tranquillity of Riverside Hamlet --  
People Shift goods out of Harm's way --- Danger Wanes.

Old settlers of the river flats, below the Washington avenue bridge, are close friends of the Mississippi. They enjoy the quiet, easy and comfortable life upon its brink. And for most months out of twelve, the men draw on their big pipes, the women keep house and talk to one another over fences, and children play in the street with little thought for the broad expanse of water flowing quietly by a few feet from their front yards.

They may prefer their life by the river's edge, FAR BENEATH THE roar of the street cars and the hum of the city traffic; but once a year the river does assume a threatening attitude. This one time every twelve months when river people make ready to pick up their belongings at a moment's notice and move - a few feet at least, to higher, safer dryer levels. Usually they allow about an inch to spare.

This year, the inundation came Thursday morning - early. At 6 A.M. the river began rising. Before long it was up a foot, coming higher, seeping through the embankment erected last summer. Two of the small streets were soon covered, water approached the doorsteps, and by the time it began to make inroads upon the living rooms and submerged the floors, the inhabitants went into action.

Clothing, dishes, tables and chairs moved as did the water. Before long the Mississippi drove the dwellers out of doors, into back yards. But then, it stopped and the dwellers, minding it not at all, let their children enjoy the fun. Rubber boots were put into immediate use,

G. Fleischaur

those who could wade carried others, and one or two old scows in the village, the other disabled one being set upon immediately by repair men, was soon being poled up and down the small canals facing the two dozen houses in danger. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Only six houses were standing in the water, and the folks of those six didn't seem to receive much sympathy from the others. The river, though, in its brief rampage, had reached a higher level than in 1920, when the locks above Coon Creek Dam, 15 miles up river, broke, letting down a flood of water which emptied all but five houses.

A yearly housebreaking is to be expected on the river flats. And the material for plank bridges is evidently held in readiness for canals were bridged almost immediately, wet ground was covered, and nobody seemed perturbed about the inconvenience of moving things around a little.

By noon, the Mississippi had receded a foot. Clothes remained in the yard to dry, as did much of the furniture; and the families seemed indisposed to take it back.

"You can't tell," they said, "it might come up again tonight."

The river folk, however, are now out of danger. The foam-covered river is still menacing, and an area of two city blocks was inundated. But the settlers aren't excited about it. They have gone back to their slow and comfortable way of living, and it's much too soon yet to worry about next year.



July 23, 1929. Journal

Members of the board to value land are F. L. Palmer, Phillip Brancheau, and Joseph H. Schanfeld.

Mr. Palmer says that the colony appears to realize the need for condemnation and are reconciled to the thought of moving. All they ask is that the city do the best it can for them in way of damages.

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Minneapolis Journal. Aug. 6, 1929

Fall, 1939

# NO PLACE LIKE HOME, RIVER RESIDENTS TELL APPRAISERS.

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"Values averaging about \$1,000 each have been placed on the one and two-room houses by members of the river flat colony, some of whom have lived there for more than 40 years. One man told Joseph Kepple, attorney for the colonists, he wanted \$1,300 for his house.

Prices from \$100 to \$400.

"F. L. Palmer, chairman of the board of appraisers, said he had found members of the colony had sold the houses among themselves for prices ranging from \$100 to \$400 and most houses have depreciated substantially since the sales were made.

"It's astonishing to go through some of those places and learn under what conditions people can live," Mr. Palmer said. "They have no light or water down there, and there are many other handicaps. Some of the houses are as neat as a pin."

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August 6, 1929. Journal

Values are approximately \$1000 each on the one and two room houses.

Palmer says they had sold the houses among themselves for \$100 to \$400 and most houses have depreciated since the sales.

"They have no light or water down there, and many handicaps. Some of them are tiny, but as neat as a pin."

Several older ones are reluctant to move. Younger ones want "more desirable quarters." All have been courteous to appraisers.

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Fall, 1939

# RIVER"FLATS" ARE VALUED AT \$32,000

"A valuation of approximately \$32,000 was fixed on 120 panels of land on the river flats above the Washington avenue bridge by a District court commission in a report filed today with the clerk of District Court.

"The appraisal was made following institution of condemnation proceedings by the city to obtain the property for expansion of the Mississippi river barge terminal in Minneapolis.

"Members of the commission which filed the report today included F. L. Palmer, Philip Brancheau and J. A. Schanfield."



October 31, 1929. Journal

Plats have 120 panels of land. Valued at \$32,000 by a District Court commission.

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Tribune. Nov. 1, 1929 A. M.

Fall, 1939

#### RIVER FLATS AWARDS MADE FOR 162 TRACTS.

Awards aggregating about \$30,900 are given owners of 162 tracts of land in the river flats below the Washington avenue bridge by the appraisal commissioners appointed July 15 by District Judge Paul W. Guilford in the condemnation proceedings started by the city to acquire the property for enlarging the municipal river terminal. The commissioners' report was filed Thursday with the clerk of the district court by Thomas Kilbride, assistant city attorney. The owners have 30 days in which to appeal to the court from the awards. The report names only the fee owners, and in the case of corporating or estates the awards are lumped in a single amount.



February 11, 1930. Journal

A check for \$29,303.62 was turned over to the Clerk of Courts as damages in city's condemnation of flats property. Money to be held by court clerk pending settlement of action of the city to establish a rail and barge terminal, it will be appropriated among the various property holders affected.

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Tribune. May 21, 1930 P. M.

Fall, 1939

#### SQUATTERS PROTEST TERMINAL AWARDS.

There was a certain amount of noise and confusion, all devoid of legal restraint and dignity in the courtroom of Judge Reed Tuesday, when a score of squatters from the flats gathered to protest the distribution of awards in the city's condemnation procedures to acquire land for enlarging the river terminal.

They were unable to comprehend court procedure and they could not afford to hire attorneys. But they wanted to protest and did.

When Judge Reed discovered that several of the petitioners lacked counsel he appointed Al Dretchko as referee and arranged a hearing late Tuesday. The claimants telling their stories through a Polish interpreter. Court will later consider facts.



Tribune May 31, 1930 P.M.

Fall, 1939

### Council Starts River Flats Colony Ouster to Prepare for Terminal.

A petition asking for the appointment of an appraisal commission to assess the property, was filed in District Court Friday by Thomas Kilbride, assistant county attorney. It is the first step in the condemnation proceedings through which the city hopes to require the land.

Two hundred and 3 parcels are cited in the petition and 136 fee owners are named, ranging from the State and Federal government, and a group of the socially elite, down to the flat dwellers themselves. Not all of the owners' names are known. There are several entries such as John Blank and George Blank.

### Hearing Set for July 13.

Hearings on the petition will be held on July 13 and several of the flat dwellers have indicated that they will fight just as they did when attempts to make them pay rent back in 1923.

But it is not often that condemnation proceedings are halted by the objection of residents. The city has decided that it needs that room for its expanded barge terminal. It has issued \$225,000 in bonds to pay for the purchase of the land and its improvement. It is ready to go ahead.

If the condemnation goes through, even paying rent won't be enough. They will have to move to make way for the barge terminal.

Tribune July 4, 1930 P.M.

Fall, 1939

### Dwellers in Quandry.

With "owners" to the left of them and "owners agents" to the right of them, the "flat" dwellers, to whom a rent receipt is a curiosity, are in a quandry. Those who have the money to pay rent or taxes, or leases -- the "owners" all use different expressions, the Squatters say, don't know whom to pay or how much.

At the office of City Engineer, N. W. Elsberg, it was said that nothing can be done so far as starting the proposed coal terminal is concerned until Spring at least. The river first must be dredged. Whether the Gov. will do it is still a question. Reports of surveys have been sent to Washington but thus far the city officials have heard nothing.

The Squatters have been told by the city officials that they must be ready to move on short notice.

### Elite on West Side of Street.

The "elite" of the "flats" live on the west side of Mill street. In addition to Mill street, there are two others, Cooper Street which lies nearer the river and Wood Street, so named because of the almost constant present of driftwood.

Nearly every spring Wood Street goes haywire and makes a play to become a steamboat channel. Besides boasting of "streets" the "flats" have numbered houses -- and most of them are numbered more conspicuously than in many of the city's better areas.



Tribune July 4, 1930 P. M.

Fall, 1939

The "flats" really has a better name although few people in Minneapolis who have never paid a visit to this Kaleidoscopic array of dwellings know it. In the city surveys the section is listed as the "Washington avenue addition." This is revealed in the tax receipts of the "elite" on the west side of Mill street. The "elite" are so listed because they pay \$14 to \$21 a year in city taxes. They are never bothered with paving assessments for there is no paving. They are not bothered about sewage taxes for the same reason. A few "town pumps" along the main street serve as the water supply. These of the "elite" will be paid for their homes because they have been paying taxes, but others will not.

#### Built Home in 1882

One man said he built his home on the Main street in 1882 and brought his bride there. He reared a family of 4 daughters 3 of whom are married, while a third, a comely girl of 19, who appeared in Sailor's trousers, still remains with his father.

"Things haven't changed much in the flats in all those years," the father said. "These same houses were here then. Whenever a man decided to leave the flats he just sold his shack for whatever he could get and moved on. If they couldn't sell they wrecked the place and sold their lumber."

One woman who had resided on the east side of wood street for 16 years said she never heard of any rent paying until after the city allotted money for the ground. Then, she said, she was served with a court summons in a civil suit to vacate or pay both rent or taxes for 16 years back. She went to court she said and faced a man she had never seen or heard of who claimed the property. The case is still pending.

Tribune July 4, 1930 P.M.

Fall, 1939

When this woman's daughter grew up, she married a "flats" dweller who promptly bought the shack next to that of his mother-in-laws.

"I just bought the house and paid for it," he said. "The fellow I bought it from had no papers of any kind and I had no papers. It was all first buying and houses among ourselves before the city decided to build the coal terminal and put up that \$35,000."

Contrary to general belief living is not at its lowest ebb in the district. Furniture in general is fair, a few even have telephones and quite a number have automobiles.

The section in many respects resembles a Yaquis Indian Village. Some of the homes are surrounded by picket fences and neat gardens, others have fences built of boulders and driftwood, while a few have fences of corrugated sheet metal. Roofs range from ordinary shingles and tar paper to iron plates. Patchings on the house may be made of anything from beaver board to a hammered-out tin can.

Life has been easy on most of the dwellers these many years, but they are ready to move when the city demands it or when work on the coal terminal starts. The one thing that bothers them now is this innovation called "rents and leases." And they want to know where the owners have been keeping themselves these many years that the "Washington Avenue Addition" was either baked in a hot sun, covered by the the river or buried in snowdrifts.



July 4, 1930. Journal

Flats between the Washington Ave. Bridge and Northern Pacific Railroad Bridge on riverbed. No one ever appeared to collect taxes or rent which is liable any spring to be more water than land. Since the city began to pay approximately \$35,000 for about ten acres of the flats for coal terminal. So many "owners" have popped up they will soon have to wear badges to keep from selling to each other.

With "owners" to the left, and "owner's agents" to the right, flat dwellers to whom a rent receipt is a curiosity are in a quandry.

River has to be dredged first, N. W. Elsberg, city engineer says. Maybe the city has to do this, maybe the government. Reports of survey have been sent to Washington but no one answers as yet.

Squatters have been told by the city officials that they must be ready to move on short notices.

The "elite" of the flats live on the west side of Mill St. Cooper and Wood which is the street lying nearest to the river and so named because of the almost constant presence of driftwood."

Nearly every spring, "Wood St. goes haywire and makes a play to become a steamboat channel."

The Flats were listed in the city surveys of this section as the Washington Avenue section. Although few papers in Mpls. who have ever visited the kaleidoscopic array ever know it.

"Elite" so listed because they pay \$14 to \$21 a year taxes. Never bothered with paving assessments because there is no paving. A few "town-

pumps" along Main St. serves as water supply. "Elite" will be paid for their homes because they have been paying taxes, the others won't.

Things haven't changed much in the flats. Since I came in 1882, one man said. These same houses were then, whenever a man decided to leave, he just sold his shack for whatever he could get and moved on. If they couldn't sell, they would wreck and sell the lumber.

No papers were ever exchanged in the sales.

In many respects, this place resembles a Yaquis Indian Village. Some have picket fences. Others fences are built of boulders and driftwood and a few corrugated sheet metal. Roofs are made anything from ordinary shingles, tar paper or top plates. Patchings on house made of anything from beaver board to a hammered out tin can.

Where have the owners been keeping themselves while their property was either baked in a hot sun, covered by the river, or buried in snowdrifts.?



Minneapolis Journal. July 4, 1930.

Fall, 1939

#### CITY PLAN TO PAY RIVER SQUATTERS DEVELOPS OWNERS

"For nearly half a century a colony of squatters has lived in the flats along the Mississippi river between the Washington avenue and Northern Pacific bridges without molestation. No one ever appeared to collect either taxes or rent in that section which is liable any spring to be more water than land. Life was peaceful--and inexpensive. Many reared large families, and there are still large families.

"But say most of the more than 200 people who still live in the squalid homes, since the city decided through condemnation proceedings to pay approximately \$35,000 for about 10 acres of the 'flats' for a coal terminal site, there have been so many 'owners' pop up that they will soon have to wear badges to keep from selling to each other.

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"One woman who had resided on the east side of Wood street for 16 years said she never heard of paying rent until after the city allotted money for the ground. Then, she said, she was served with a court summons in a civil suit to vacate or pay back rent and taxes for 16 years. She went to court, she said, and faced a man she had never seen or heard of who claimed the property. The case is still pending.

"When this woman's daughter grew up she married a 'flats' dweller, who promptly bought the shack next to that of his mother-in-law.

Minneapolis Journal. July 4, 1930

Fall, 1939

"I just bought the house and paid for it," he said. The fellow I bought it from had no papers of any kind and I have no papers. It was just buying and selling houses among ourselves before the city decided to build the coal terminal and put up that \$35,000.

"Contrary to general belief, living is not at its lowest ebb in the district. Furniture in general is fair, a few even have telephones and quite a number have automobiles.

"The section in many respects resembles a Yaquis Indian village. Some of the homes are surrounded by picket fences and neat gardens, others have fences built of boulders and driftwood, while a few have fences of corrugated sheet metal. Roofs range from ordinary shingles and tar paper to iron plates. Patching on the houses may be made of anything from beaverwood to a hammered-out tin can.

"Life has been easy on most of the dwellers these many years, but they are ready to move when the city demands it or when work on the coal terminal starts. The one thing that bothers them now is this innovation called 'rents and leases.' And they want to know where the 'owners' have been keeping themselves these many years that the 'Washington Avenue addition' was either baked in a hot sun, covered by the river or buried in snowdrifts."

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Tribune. July 14, 1929 A. M.

Fall, 1939

Judge W. Guilford of the Hennepin County district court appointed a board to set evaluation prices on river flats.... first step of city to obtain property for terminals. Board was: Joseph W. Schanfeld, F. L. Palmer, and Phillip Brancheau.

The hearing was held late Sat. P. M. and the court was attended by nearly 200 residents of the flats, inc. women and children, who came expecting to be asked their evaluation of the property. They were not consulted, however.  
(A condensed account from the Tribune.)

Tribune

Feb. 21, 1931 P.M.

Fall, 1939

### 50 Families Ordered to Quit River Flats.

Fifty families living on the flats on the west side of the river north of the Washington avenue bridge were notified Saturday by N. W. Elsberg, City Engineer, that the houses in which they have been occupying as "Squatters" must be vacated by April 1. The removal was ordered so that the city may clean up the area prior to the construction of the new coal docks and the dredgings of the new harbor which the federal government will begin this spring.



Minneapolis Journal. Feb. 22, 1931

Fall, 1939

### PICTURESQUE 'RIVER FLATS' DOOMED HOMES TO BE VACATED BY APRIL 1

The picturesque little community known as the 'River Flats' or 'Little Lithuania,' entered its last five weeks of life today.

N. W. Elsberg, city engineer, was serving notice to all dwellers beneath the Washington avenue bridge that they must vacate the premises by April 1 to make way for the construction of a new coal dock.

For years the flats has been a tradition. Always good for a story when the spring floods inundated the 'streets,' always good for color in a story of the river, the tumble down shacks and the old brown church will be replaced by the cross, angular buildings of progress.

Most of the families have clung to their humble dwellings, have fought to save them since the first mention of the project. But it was a losing fight. 'Progress' was against them--and progress always shatters traditions.

The flats will live, though, in scores of paintings, etchings. S. Chatwood Burton, head of the art department of the University of Minnesota, has drawn, etched and painted the little community from every angle. Others, struggling artists of the school, have daubed the browns and grays and the colorful costumes that make the flats a picture on their canvases.

February 22, 1931. Journal

The tumble down shacks and the old brown church will be replaced by the crass angular buildings of progress. Will live in scores of etchings, paintings, etc.

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G. Fleischauer - (Flat Dwellers)

Journal, March 11, 1931.

FLAT DWELLERS ORDERED OUT

Family Facing Total Loss

Others Salvage Lumber as Homes Come Down to Make Way for Terminal.

"Sitting on the weathered, wooden bench in front of the little shingle-sided house which for 50 years has been 'home', Gus Peterson and his wife today looked out over the familiar scenes on the Mississippi river flats, north of the Washington Avenue bridge, and wondered where they are going and what they are going to do.

"For orders have come for them and for the other residents on the flats to move to make way for the new city coal terminal, and, according to Mrs. Peterson, it is not easy for them to leave the place where they have spent their entire married life, and make a new home 'up in the city.' Today she spent her spare time looking for that new home.

"When Mr. Peterson came to America 50 years ago, he built his house on the flats, the first resident of that picturesque community below the bridge. Two years later he brought his bride to the new house and they have lived there since. Together they have gone through the spring floods, which used to inundate the flats every year, moving to higher ground when the waters came too high, and returning to their home when the floods receded.

"A little garden patch and a flock of chickens have helped to fill Mrs. Peterson's busy days and she is afraid that 'up in the city' she would not be able to find a place for her poultry flocks. Although she is past 70, Mrs. Peterson is going to school to a nearby settlement house, getting help on her reading and writing, and after school scouring the Riverside district for a new home. The flat dwellers have taken the order philosophically -- and they consider the moving orders final.

G. Fleischauer      Journal Mch. 11, 1931

"They say that the man to whom we paid our rent has gone some place, and they can't find him, so we will not get paid for our house," said Mrs. Peterson; "That don't seem quite right. When we have been citizens for 40 years," but even that she passes with a shrug of her shoulder.

"Their situation is typical of many of the flat dwellers. The colony is moving out. But bit by bit, as belongings are gathered, the sheds and shanties of the settlement are being torn down as their owners prepare to vacate to make way for the new terminal. If nothing else, the squatters are thorough about their moving. Houses which stood for 50 years are coming down, the nails removed and the lumber salvaged, to be put into some use elsewhere.

"It is not the first time the colony has been threatened with eviction, but this time it is final. Solemn faced youngsters with their heads in shawls, tied just as their elders tied them in the old country, still play in the muddy streets, but one by one the shacks are coming down, while one by one the piles of lumber grow.

"The days of the picturesque little community are over. Picket fences are to be seen in stages of demolition and hammers and crowbars are plied daily as the buildings disappear one by one, and the land which one held, Little Bohemia, Little Lithuania, or the "Cabbage Patch", as the place was variously called, will be covered with terminal bridges and warehouses.

"The colony has gone through many vicissitudes in its existence of about 50 years. Many of the people now moving out were born in the houses they are now wrecking. Many times its residents have been threatened with eviction for not paying rent, when for years they acknowledge no man their landlord, and swapped, sold, or traded their squatter's shacks with the freedom-born of long tenure.

"Old settlers who have lived out their lives, wander about vacantly,



G. Fleischauer - (Flat Dwellers)

wondering where they will go. Many refuse to go far, for in the years they have spent on the river, they have learned to love the place, and if they can find a place to live not far off, they will be more reconciled to their losses.

"But the first of April must find them all gone, orders from the city engineer's office says. Veteran squatters predict there will be more than one hold out although they think that most will be gone by the first. Children do not seem perturbed, only a little excited; "Sure, we're moving," they say.

G. Fleischauer - Ukrainians

#### Julian Calender Xmas.

Ukrainians do not observe their Christmas until January 7, 13 days later than we do. This is because they observe the Julian Calender, instead of the Gregorian we follow. In their homes in the old country, the floors are spread with straw and the long kitchen table is covered with hay the night before Christmas. This is to bring the significance of the holy day more sharply to them.

Christmas evening, they have a big supper at nine o'clock. Their holiday bread, paroky, is on the table with honey and poppy seed. (Paroky is made of plain dough cut round, the size of a tea cup, 2 pieces put together with a mixture of plums between. It is then boiled in salt water and strained, cooled quickly by dipping in cold water, covered with a sauce made of onions and fried in pure linseed oil - probably linseed.) Next comes beets and onions boiled together and served in one great bowl. Then mushrooms stewed in a sort of gravy. After that comes sauer kraut, big bowls of it. Holopchi also made of cabbage, comes after the kraut. In English, the dish would be called stuffed cabbage leaves. The tenderest and best leaves are boiled and stuffed with rice. When it is not fast time, meat is also put in the leaves.

Dessert is some kind of sauce made from plums, dried peaches, pears, oranges or apples.

After eating, they go to church.

At four o'clock the next morning, they go to church again.

At noon, on Christmas day, they have their big holiday meal which has been prepared ahead of time. The meal is the same as it was the night before with many things added. They have been fasting from meat for forty



G. Fleischauer - J. Calendar Xmas.

days, but this is the last day of the fast. It is often a sausage the housewife has made many days before, or sometimes a chicken or a pork roast.

Exchanging gifts is not popular mostly because they do not have money. Instead, to show the good will, they exchange suppers with a relative or friend. Huge baskets made from willow splits are packed with complete dinners carried by the children, half the size of the basket over the fields to be the family. They stop on the way at every house to sing Christmas carols and perhaps receive a penny or two for the song.

In Russian homes .....

Every fruit or vegetable that is raised on the peasant plot is represented on the Christmas supper table at six o'clock on the evening of the day. With the white or wheat bread is served "babalka", a sauce made of honey and ground poppy seed. All the food eaten in the Russian household for three days following Christmas has been cooked before the day, for these are holidays, and not even the mother takes a rest.

There is a ceremony of burking and snuffing out the Yuletide candles which is the only light allowed for the Christmas supper table. When it is finally blown out, the path of smoke from the smouldering end is watched eagerly by every member of the family. If it goes straight toward an outside door, it is supposed to forecast a funeral in the house. If it spreads out over the room, taking no definite course, the Russian peasants predict that there will be a wedding in the home, and if the smoke blows toward the stove or open fireplace, it is the sign a baby will be born under the roof ere Christmas comes again.

G. Fleischauer - Russian homes. Xmas

The true Christmas spirit is found in the Russian manner of giving. The poor of the country are taken into the homes of those who have enough to share with them, and they are fed and sheltered during the three day holiday. If they are in need of clothing, they are clothed; or if ill, they are nursed. The visitor is known as the big guest and treated with every respect by the people who still believe that there are still saints walking on the earth, possibly in the garb of a beggar to whom they offer hospitality.

Minneapolis Journal, Sunday, January 7, 1923, P. 2.  
Ukrainian report given by Mrs. M. Protzei, 316 Fourth St. N.E.



E. Fleischauer - Information II

By calling dockmaster at Federal Barge Line - ft. Wash. Ave. bridge.

1st. seawall began in 1926.

Additional dockage - 1932, 1935.

People were moving away in groups between 1926, 1931.

1931 - City bought property - remaining houses moved out or wrecked.

Coal docks were started 1931 - ended 1932.

Barges had been running in since 1926 -  
1932 their barges began.

Coal docks belong to them.

G. Fleischauer - IV.

#### BRIDGE ACROSS MISSISSIPPI ALONG WASHINGTON AVENUE.

The Washington Avenue bridge was built in 1886.

In 1890, it was widened.

In 1905, it was strengthened for street car service.

There has been a lot of talk for a long time about evacuating the rest of the flats, but it will be five years yet before they tackle a new bridge across there. - - -

(By the superintendent of the Washington Avenue Bridge.)

#### WATER WORKS IN THE FLATS.

Before water was piped down there, the village drew their water from the red pump along 22nd. avenue.

At one time, the flats extended along 19th avenue to 22nd avenue.

Many homes were evacuated in 1925.

When the river terminal was put in, in 1925, (call River Terminal) water was piped in then. The Water Department bought the water main along 22nd. street up to the little half block called 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  st. The River Terminal was 30 feet lower than 22nd. st.

First one to have water was house nearest bridge, 203, 22nd Ave., in 1928.

Second house, 248 ...Eastiss; and third...Cutlass.. 269, 22nd.Ave... both this fall (1933)

The rest of the houses could have it any time now.



G. Fleischauer - River Flats

A Bakery truck made the rounds of the flats daily. An accordionist, playing Slovak music calls the housewives to the wagon.

The Gus Petersons, residents of the flats for 46 years, found their shack in the shadow of the new railroad bridge over the Mississippi river.

From the University Campus's river bank, was a view of the flats with the loop skyline in the background.

For years, the flats have been a paradise for art students with their quaint multicolored houses.

G. Fleischauer - February 24, 1929.

Carrie Finstrom - resident of the flats.  
Scandinavian.

When the people moved down here they paid five hundred dollars for every one of the lots, and they got cheated. There wasn't even any ground, it was all just limestone chips from all the quarries around here. This place was filled with quarries. The David C. Bell Company used to be right where the wooden stairs are now and they took all the good rock out of the place to build their First National Bank. The people had to bring mud up from the river, and haul loads of dirt and fertilizer down here, and finally the weather washed some better land into the hollow. Now when the city came to move us out and buy the land, they got us to sign a paper, and after we signed it, we found we got cheated out of a boulevard. They promised us one, but they gave us just a little slice of land. Bastiss was the only one who didn't get cheated.

I had to chop my house right off and pull another big ten room duplex down. They didn't pay nearly enough. I bought the place with insurance money after my mother died, and my brother and I had it in a joint title that whoever lived the longest kept it and so the place is mine. We paid five dollars a year for the ground to keep that shack on it; that's my storeroom now, but if they move us off 22nd. st. to build a new bridge, that's where I'll move to. They are building a retaining wall beneath the St. Mary's and Fairview Hospitals, and we call that Suicide Blvd. because it is a blind corner and everyone is going to be killed coming around there.

I always say that the Czechs think they are better than the Slovaks, and the Slovaks think they are better than the Germans, and the Germans think that they are better than the Liptovs and the Liptovs think that they are better than the Speezocks.....



Tribune March 12, 1931 A.M.

Fall, 1939

#### MILL CITY FLATS SQUATTERS HOMES BEING WRECKED

Coal Terminal will Take Up Land Held Many  
Years Without Rent.

Squatters houses which have stood for 50 years on the Mississippi river flats are being torn down and their tenants are leaving to make way for a new coal terminal.

Residents of the flats have been ordered by the city engineer to vacate by April 1 but veteran residents of the colony predict that date will find a number of squatters still occupying their patched up shacks.

The colony has survived many vicissitudes in its half century of existence and more than one attempt to evict its members has failed.

Several times efforts have been made to force the tenants to pay rent, but they continued to swap, sell and trade their squatter's shacks with the freedom of long tenure.

Tribune March 13, 1931 A.M.

Fall, 1939

### "THE PASSING OF BOHEMIAN FLATS."

"Thousands of Mpls. residents will regret the passing of Bohemian Flats, the name by which the colorful river front community under the Washington avenue bridge across the Miss. has long been known.

"There humble people living in humble homes seemed to have created a little world of their own, quite detached from the city's general atmosphere. There a police officer was seldom summoned. There old-fashioned church bells called the people to worship in tiny churches. There were picket fences with little gates giving into tiny yards, flower boxes in windows; usually careful attention was given to keeping neat and clean every inch of the home-owner's land.

"There lived a people contributed to the American melting pot from many nations. Over their heads roared the traffic of a busy city quite unheeded and apart from their scheme of life which seemed to radiate a contentment and tranquility most charming. Past their front yards flowed the Mississippi. Sometimes a houseboat moored there to give an additional touch of color. Across the river was the sandstone bluff and on its brow the buildings of a great university. In evening hours, there was a most friendly glow in the lights of the Bohemian flats community. Sometimes they were reflected from kerosene lamps. Its general appearance was like that of a little fishing village in some old world seaport minus, of course, the ships that go out to sea. It had the charm of an old picture to all who observed it.



Tribune March 13, 1931. A.M.

Fall, 1939

"Sometimes the river rose into its little streets and moved things about. In instances it has been the home for a half century of simple folks who were happy there and in their humble way have contributed their part to the building up of Mpls. If they were not rich in worldly possessions, in most cases they seemed quite happy and content. One wonders if they will ever be quite happy again in a better home spot, away from the singing river, the little churches, the old neighbors, the flower plots, the picket fences and the friendly twinkling lights. They find themselves cast up in the path of progress. Their homes will give place to coal docks in the city's river terminal system. But a coal dock, however necessary, is not picturesque and the old Bohemian flats community was."

April 3, 1931. Journal

Sixteen houses and Frank Badnarek's fort still standing.

E. R. T. Peterson, in charge of settlement said that he did not think there would be any forced ejection without settlement.

One reason the settlement is held up: Difficulty in locating owners of land. Meantime, Frank B. sits in his fort with two cents in his pocket, a half a loaf of bread for provender, armed with a sheaf of receipts to prove he has paid ground rent. First skirmish won yesterday when the city engineer told him that every possible effort is being made to provide for him.

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Excerpt from letter to the Editor of the Journal April 6, '31...

by Edith M. Schussler

A simple picture it was indeed; but down here dwelt happiness, a disappointment, sorrow, joy; and ambition, too showed her disquieting head. At many windows hung curtains adorned with embroidery that well might have hung in mansions. There were rude carvings above rough cabin doors. In front of one cabin hung a small red bonnet and on another a white one; the red one announcing the arrival of a son, and the white one the arrival of a daughter. Altogether a homey, heartwarming settlement by the water front. A small garden of your own. A dog or a cat, or chickens and geese that went for strolls beyond the front gates, fishing from the back doorstep - a veritable Utopia.

Men were already at work tearing down the rickety old buildings, and one felt each sound of the ax or hammer must be a blow upon the hearts of the old inmates.

Minneapolis Journal. April 6, 1931.

Fall, 1939

ADIEU, RIVER FLATS.

To the Editor of the Journal:

All along the banks of the Father of Waters, progress has robbed us of historic buildings and beauty spots, but never has he touched our hearts so deeply as through the passing of our own picturesque "River Flats," the last chapter of which closed April 1.

I saw them during the late sawmill days. At that time little settlements extended well up to the old bridge that spanned the river to Eastman Island. It was a bright Sunday afternoon, and the dearest lad of all and I -- a spring in our step and a song in our hearts -- started for a stroll down Lover's Lane, a beautiful walk lined with trees, extending along the residential side of the island, and a favorite resort of young lovers, and old ones too, in those days. The river had menaced the Flat dwellers for some hours, but had now receded.

As we crossed the bridge we joined the crowd that was watching the men and women below, wading about in the black mud. After hours of anxiety, these folk were taking up the tangled ends and trying to restore order from chaos. Once more men speared logs for firewood and again smoke rolled out from stove pipe chimneys. Here one rescued a marooned dog; there another retrieved a frantic goose mired in the mud. Each was so engrossed in his task he gave never a thought of the crowd that gazed down upon him.



Minneapolis Journal. April 6, 1931. P.M.

Fall, 1939

The following Sunday we again visited the Flats, this time going down to get a closer view and wandering along the length of the tiny domain. The kindly spring sun had dried out the mud, and with the old order renewed, life was going on as of yore. A pretty bride smiled out from the folds of her veil as a wedding party passed us. In doorways or on rude benches old men dozed or smoked, and young men danced or played the accordion. Women with kerchiefs bound about their heads were also grouped about, the younger ones attending to the needs of their infants, while the older ones knitted and smiled at the rest. The old dog drowsed with one eye half open, ready to respond to his playful little master's slightest commands. The frantic gander of yester-week, with his adoring family, waddled noisily hither and thither. Bright pink and red geraniums peeped out from the small windows of many a shack -- and from out those same windows too, came fragrant odors of victuals do /sic / doubt destined to give strength and renew the courage of many a tired, ravenous sawmill hand.

A simple picture it was indeed; but down there dwelt happiness, disappointment, sorrow, joy; and ambition, too, showed her disquieting head. At many a window hung curtains adorned with embroidery that well might have graced a mansion, and rude carvings above rough cabin doors revealed a groping quest for beauty. In front of one cabin hung a small red bonnet and on another a white one; the red, I learned later, announced the arrival of a son and heir, the white that a little daughter had come to bless the home. Altogether a homely, heartwarming place was this little settlement by the water front.

Time followed his own relentless course. But at last it was decreed that we once more return to the old stamping grounds. Since then the dear lad and I have made countless visits to that gradually diminishing district by the river, and many a time it was borne upon us that in this wonderful city it was the one could truly work out his own destiny!

Minneapolis Journal. Apr. 6, 1931. P. M.

Fall, 1939

For couldn't he have a small garden of his own, fish off his own back porch if need be, raise chickens and geese without raising ructions in the entire neighborhood should these lively, noisy fowls choose to take a ramble past front doorways? And couldn't one have a cat and dog or indeed any number of them if the kids in the family so willed? Truly a veritable Utopia, it was, nicht wahr?

But now comes the final injunction, "Move on," and the little handful of old flat dwellers with misty eyes have packed their Laves and Potatoes and trekked onward -- where? Progress declares "No matter" and I do not know.

Yesterday we again crept down the bank below Fairview Hospital and followed the old path leading to the colony below the bridge. Men were already at work tearing down the rickety old buildings, and one felt each sound of the ax, or hammer must be a blow upon the hearts of the old inmates, we turned away.

"It is gone," I said chokingly!

"Yes, honey, and with it a bit of our youth," As he answered he reached a helpful hand to assist me up the slippery bank. Then, with the spring in our step perhaps noticeably a bit slower to others, but with the old song in our hearts, and a fervent hope that all may be well with these one time people of the River Flats, we retraced our way up the homeward path.

--Edith M. Schussler."



MINNESOTA ANNALS

Page 16

Day and Date  
of Publication

Source: Minneapolis Journal. April 6, 1931.  
(Publication, Edition, Page, Col.)

Place of Publication Letter To Editor Column Date line of story

Where consulted Date consulted Fall, 1939

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Your Item No. Page No. Your name

MINNESOTA ANNALS

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Your Item No. Page No. Your name

WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION (Minnesota)  
Federal Writers' Project, 415 Harvard St. S. E., Minneapolis

April 7, 1931. Journal

Mike Hibbin's of the flats fails to get settlement due to several mistakes. Only document he has is a receipt for purchasing the house for \$60. He never bothered to look up the owner of the property on which his house was built. Next he paid for ground rent for 5 years to someone who didn't even own land. And besides all that, the real owner didn't even know that she had a tenant, so she paid the taxes. Now Judge W. C. Leary says that if any settlement for condemnation was forthcoming, she should get it.

(Little Bohemia has complicated history)

Gertrude Hartman, 2436 Chicago Ave. sought award for \$219 set as the value on a lot in the Cabbage Patch.

Testifies that in 1918, she obtained a quit claim deed to lot 8, block 6, Washington Ave. addition, which in parlance means Little Bohemia. Got paid from Sheriff Earle Brown but never ascertained whether lot was occupied, flooded or used. He simply paid the taxes and let it go.

Meantime, it was known in Cabbage Patch as 113 Cooper because there was a house on it.

Nineteen twenty-five Mike Hibbin took a fancy to the house and in the customary manner of the flats, obtained title simply by paying \$60 to the owner who moved out. Then trouble began.

"Village sprawled and scrambled in the sun beneath the rippling rapids below St. Anthony Falls, piles of gravel taken from the river now stretch. "It's no fun to be alone in the middle of a vanished village" five families held out on the railroad property at the other end of the train bridge, but Frank is alone in "flats". Contractors are dumping <sup>dirt</sup> in now because city can get it free if they take it now.



Tribune April 7, 1931. PM.

Fall, 1939

RIVER FLAT LEARNS HE PAID RENT ON WRONG LOT. EVEN SHOWS \$60 RECEIPT FOR HOUSE, BUT COURT AWARDS \$219 TO STENOGRAPHER.

Life on the river flats was a merry one while it lasted and real estate transactions were novel but Mike Hibben found out in District Court there were a few things about real estate he had neglected to learn.

As a result, he was the first resident of the river flats colony to lose his home and fail to get a settlement, due to several mistakes.

In the first place, the only document he could show in support of his claim that he purchased a house was a receipt for \$60. In the second place, he didn't bother to look up the owner of the property on which the house was built. Next he paid ground rent for almost five years to someone who didn't even own the land.

#### Stenographer Files Petition.

In the fourth place, the real owner of the lot didn't know that she had a tenant, so she paid taxes and Judge W. C. Leary held that if any settlement for condemnation was forthcoming, she should receive it.

The case which added another chapter to the complicated history of Little Bohemia came before Judge Leary on a hearing on a petition presented by Gertrude Hartman, 2436 Chicago Avenue, stenographer and bookkeeper in the office of Earle Brown, former sheriff. Miss Hartman sought award on the \$219 set as the value on a lot in the flats colony, following its condemnation. Her action started a flood of revelation as to how property transactions were conducted in the "Cabbage Patch."

Tribune April 7, 1931 PM.

Fall, 1939

#### Never Looked At Lot.

Miss Hartmann [sic] testified that in 1918 she obtained a quit claim deed to lot 8, block 6, Washington avenue addition, which in common parlance meant Little Bohemia. She obtained the deed from Mr. Brown but never ascertained whether the lot was occupied, flooded, or was being used for anything. She paid the taxes and let it go at that.

In the meantime, lot 8, block 6 was known in the "Cabbage Patch" by a different designation. It was No. 113 . Cooper street, and it was called that because a house was upon it.

#### Paid \$60 To Occupant.

In 1925 Mike Hibbin took a fancy to the house and in the customary manner of the flats, obtained title simply by paying \$60 to its occupant, who obligingly moved out, Mike moved in.

Then the trouble started. Acting in good faith, a former Mpls. real estate agent, went to the colony to collect rents on Lot 7. Block 8, but unfortunately picked on Mike Hibbin who happened to be living on Lot 6.

Mike didn't know his real estate game, so he obligingly started paying ground rent and kept on paying. He found when action was started on the condemnation that he had been paying rent for the wrong lot but he was no more surprised than Miss Hartman was when she discovered that she had a paying tenant on her land and who was paying rent to some one else.



Tribune April 7, 1931 P.M.

Fall, 1939

#### Plea For Share Denied.

Mike's plea for a share of the settlement was denied by Judge Leary, who held Miss Hartman was entitled to the \$219 awarded by the city for the land. Mike also lost the rent he paid for the lot someone was using.

The decision was the first to go against any of the dwellers on the flats who have moved out to make way for the new coal terminal. Of the \$29,203.62 originally set aside by the city to pay for the condemnation, \$13,858.12 is still remaining in the fund, unclaimed.

A few veterans are still holding out at the river, in spite of the fact that the city has started to fill in the land.

Meanwhile, affairs of the colony grow more tangled daily. Contractors have tangled dumping dirt on the site of the settlement, as the city will receive the dirt free if it is accepted now.

April 10, 1931. Journal

Mystery owner of 38 lots for which no fee holders have appeared so far is preparing to file a petition in District Court within a week asking \$8,101.07 set by city as value of parcels. Owner is E. H. Bray estate. Has constituted a stumbling block to the settlement for many of the flat residents who lost their home when the city took over the property as the site of the new municipal coal terminal. At present there is \$13,800 remaining of the fund, but the Bray estate will take \$8,101.07 of that.

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Tribune, April 10, 1931. P. M.

Fall, 1939

#### RIVER FLATS OWNER WILL ASK \$8,101

Bray Estate To File Claim as Missing Holder of 38 Lots --  
Will Clear the Way for Others.

Possibility of settlement of claims on most of the property in Little Bohemia squatter village on the river flats, appeared today when it was disclosed the "absentee owner" of 38 of the lots, for which no fee holders have appeared so far, is preparing to file a petition in District Court within a week asking award of \$8,161.07 set by the city as the value of the parcels.

"The mystery owner" is E. H. Bray estate, which has constituted a stumbling block to settlement for many of the flats of residents [sic] who lost their home when the city took over the property as the site of the new Municipal Coal terminal.

#### No Word From Estate.

Under the method of condemnation dwellers have been appearing at hearings when awards have been granted for the lots, at which time the residents have proved ownership of buildings erected on the property and have received compensation for the loss of their buildings from the award.

But so far the Bray estate, holders of a good share of the property, had not been heard from and apparently could not be located.

Petition for the awards, however, will be presented soon by a Mpls rep. it was disclosed today, thus opening the door to settlement of claims for many of the holdouts on the flats. Frank Badnarek, and Mr. and Mrs. Gus Peterson, the oldest residents of the "cabbage Patch" are believed to be living on the Bray parcels.

Tribune. April 10, 1931. P. M.

Fall, 1939

Four heirs to the Bray estate, left by a former Mpls. family who are living in the east, have refrained from coming forward until this time in order to allow the condemnation process to be carried through.

At present, some \$13,800 remains in the fund appropriated for the condemnation of the "Cabbage Patch" but the \$8,101.07 claim of the Bray estate, together with claims from a Washburn estate, which are expected shortly, will take up most of the fund, it was said.



G. Fleischauer - (Flat Dwellers)

Minneapolis Journal, March 31, 1931

LONE DEFENDER OF RIVER COLONY FLATS SAYS HE'LL FIGHT EJECTION TO THE LAST DITCH.

Defies City To Move Him Out - Others evacuating rapidly.

"Get out? You bet I won't get out, not till they pay me."

"For 42 years Frank Badnarek has lived in the flats, and the only thing that has ever chased him off his "land" has been the rising Mississippi river, and each time the curling brown waters have receded from about his home, he has returned.

"Now with much of the colony wrecked to make way for the new coal terminal, with his friends leaving daily to let him wage his battle single handed, with scattered piles of lumber and rubbish littering up the place where once the picturesque colony stood, he is making his last stand.

"All he has left of his various homes is a 6x8 shack. He vows he shall stay until he is paid for his property.

"Scattered ruins have replaced the grey and brown shacks of settlement as wrecking bars have eaten into the homes of little Bohemia.

"By tomorrow, all but half a dozen of the veteran squatters will be gone from where they have defied ejection for 50 years.

"A few have become beligerent. Faced with eviction, no jobs, no place to go, they have assumed defiant tones.

"What's a guy to do?" asked one who described himself as a "Citizen" of the flats yesterday when a group of them gathered around a burning shed; "I was born in the shack they're kicking me out of. I can't even get a job on the river. Is that fair?"

"Mrs. Gus Peterson came from Sweden in 1883 to flats (a bride). "Of course I'm sorry to go," she says, "but we would have been paid for the

G. Fleischauer - (Flat Dwellers)

house. I'm getting too old for the place, but we have had some good times down here.

"But up on the other end of the colony, Brank Badnarek breathes defiance and is sitting tight. With barely a place left for him to sleep, he is holding his ground and vowing he will keep it. "Let 'em come" he said, "I'm ready for them. Let them try to throw me out. I've beat the river and I'll beat them."

As far as he is concerned the next move is the city's. With what defense he would offer resistance, he would not say.



Mpls. Journal, April 29, 1931.

'Lone Defender' OF RIVER FLATS HAULS DOWN OLD GLORY. SURRENDERS  
AS TRUCKS BURY HOME FORT UNDER GRAVEL.

Friends help Frank Badnarek and Faithful Dog Move Out.

The 'Lone Defender' has been beaten.

For many weeks, while houses were falling all around him, Frank Badnarek, dweller for 42 years on the river flats held his ground. After all his friends had gone, he still remained, holding out in the last house in Little Bohemia. But the trucks finally got him. Yesterday, when wet, muddy gravel from the bottom of the Mississippi river came sliding through the door of his shack, he gave up the fight. For three weeks, the trucks had been dumping their loads all around him, leaving his house standing in a hole with the roof peaking over the edge. The section is being cleared for the new Municipal coal terminal. Frank remained, willing to put up with a few inconveniences so long as he could get in and out of his one room fort. Yesterday, when they started to fill up his doorway, he quit. Hauling down his flag which had been snapping defiantly in the breezes, he capitulated to the roar of motors and crash of boulders. Hauling out his few belongings, with the help of a few friends, he wrecked the home which has been the only place he knew for many years. Sitting upon and a his trunk/with/washtub and bushel basket packed with odds and ends he had salvaged through the years, he shrugged his shoulders and wondered where he would go.

Employed in a steel mill, he was injured in an accident and never has completely recovered. His mother took sick and lingered near death for months. Doctor's bills but into his small savings. His mother died and funeral expenses took the last of Frank's slender funds. To cap his

misfortune, he has lost his home to make way for the new coal terminal on the flats. With a title to the property tangled in a welter of litigation and back taxes, he could not gain compensation for his dwelling. With no place to go, and no way of getting there if he had any place to go to, he determined to stick it out to the bitter end. That bitter end came with the load of gravel that crashed through his door. With his sole companion, a Scotty, Frank sat on his trunk beside a pile of old lumber which had been his home and shrugged his shoulders philosophically.

"What can a man do with all those trucks?" was all he said.



April 29, 1931. Journal

Yesterday when wet, muddy gravel from the bottom of the Mississippi River came sliding through his door, he gave up the fight.

For three weeks, trucks have been dumping all around him.

\*\*\*\*\*

June 17, 1931. Journal

Petty (Frank Badnarek's dog) sole companion of his master, the Lone Defender of the Flats has been entered in the Journal's Animal hero Award Contest for his loyalty to the man who now finds himself parted from his home he has had for 42 years.

\*\*\*\*\*



May 8, 1931. Journal

Twelve thousand four hundred eighteen dollars and ten cents is now on hand in the office of the clerk of District Court waiting for all owners of property in vanished village, now filling up with gravel from the Mississippi River, preparatory to construction of the new municipal coal terminal.

Nobody claims it. Fee owners of property have to be paid, no one else can collect. They seem reticent about coming to get it.

Joker is the tax collector, in this case, the county, which is only waiting for fee owners to be granted their awards in order to claim back taxes, which in remaining cases, total almost more than awards.

Thus the city has the land, those who could have the money don't seem to want it, and those who want it, can't have it. And in five years, the remaining funds will revert to the state, which will put the city in the unique position of having purchased the land, which is within the city limits from the state.

\*\*\*\*\*

Tribune

May 8, 1931 P.M.

Fall, 1939

\$12,418 WAITS FOR FLATS OWNERS BUT THEY DON'T APPEAR  
FOR SETTLEMENT , AND INHABITANTS CAN'T BE PAID.

Is there anybody in Minneapolis who would like  
\$12,418.10?

There is that much on hand in the office of the clerk  
of District Court waiting for the fee owners of property in  
the vanished village of Little Bohemia, now filled in with  
gravel from the Mississippi river, preparatory to construction  
of the new municipal coal terminal.

But nobody has claimed it. There are plenty of former  
inhabitants of the village who would like to get it, but  
awards for the loss of their homes cannot be made until fee  
owners of the property are themselves paid. And they seem to  
be reticent about coming into court to claim the remaining  
\$12,418.10 of the fund established for condemnation of the  
squatter town.

The joker in this situation is the tax collector, in this  
case the county, which is only waiting for fee owners to be  
granted their awards in order to claim back taxes, which in  
remaining cases, total almost more than the awards.

Thus the city has the land, those who could have the  
money don't want it, and those who want it can't have it.  
And in five years the remaining funds will revert to the  
State, which will put the city in the unique position of  
having purchased the land, which is within the city limits,  
from the State.



Tribune. May 15, 1931. A. M.

Fall, 1939

### CRIPPLE WILL LOSE LEAN-TO ON FLAT.

Squatter Kept Self Respect in Home of Own --  
Now he Must Go.

Down on the river flats by the Washington avenue bridge, once dotted by rows of peaceful if unsightly houses, now torn and disrupted to make way for the municipal barge terminal, police Thursday found one last squatter to evict.

They told Charlie Morson to move on, to leave the little board and sheet iron lean-to he built two weeks ago when he left a lodging house in the Gateway district in order to find freedom and quiet.

The little lean-to is on the ledge overlooking the Mississippi. There is in it an old cot, a crude fireplace. The children who played along the river helped Charlie build it, helped him gather the boards and sheet iron. The lean-to is cold, uninviting, dirty, but it is protected by trees and there is peace and quiet at night, and to Charlie Morson it is home.

Thursday night, seated on some boards in front of his home, with an old railway lantern at his feet, Charlie told his story. In the light of the lantern, he looked like a weire gypsy, his head covered with an old ren bandana handkerchief, his crippled hand swinging idly by his side, his injured leg, poisoned by a nail, held carefully in front of him. He is 48, talks brokenly, haltenly.

"I can't find work," he explains without self-pity. "When I ask for work they look at my hand. See. "He holds out the injured hand for inspection. "I hurt it ten years ago in a powder explosion."

Tribune. May 15, 1931. A. M.

Fall, 1939

"I couldn't stand it up there in the public lodging house. It was too noisy. So I came down here. I don't mean any wrong. Down here it's different. I can go to sleep and be by myself and pray to God."

He got to his feet slowly and walked through the confusion of kegs and pails and collected junk that is littered about the home of Charlie Morson. From the river came the low coughing and pounding of a dredge, deepening the river channel.

"I've lived in Minneapolis a long time," he said brokenly. "See here," He fumbled in the pocket of his trousers, a bent and twisted little man, old before his time, and brought forth a worn wallet. He took out a piece of paper, ragged along the creases. It was signed by the official of a large construction company. It read: "Carl Morson has worked for us as a sewer digger and we have always found his work satisfactory." He put the paper away and mumbled, "But I can't get work."

He lives on scraps from the butcher shop and dried bread from the bakeries. The children who play along the river feed him, too. "Today they brought me some salt," he said, "They like me, I make faces for them."

\*\*\*\*\*

He brushed the dirty sleeve of an old blue shirt across his eyes after telling of his wife who had died. He turned and went back into his tiny board and sheet iron house to peace and quiet that is on the river flats..... a weary little man trying to hold his self respect by having a home of his own.... But Friday is moving day.)



April 28, 1934. Journal

Frank Badnarek prepares to surrender as gravel is piled around house and in "parlor" windows. "Trucks to the right of him, trucks to the left of him, vollyed and thundred."

He stood his guns, run up a flag and hold his fort.

\*\*\*\*\*

NAME: Mamie Groscoast  
2101 2nd St. Mpls.

1.

DATE: Feb. 19, 1938

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys ~~Elies~~chauer

Mamie Groscoast.....Czech, but American-born.

2101 2nd St. Mpls., (around the curve by the coal docks.)

35 years old.

Grade school education, and telephone operator 10 or 11 years.

Grandfather was a miller and postmaster.

Men worked in the mills and railroad yards. In 1931, many went on the farms. This is so different now, it's hard to say how it was. One little street ran from here. "It was so romantic....all trees..... It's been an interesting place and I've enjoyed living here. We were not allowed to go way down by the river because it was too dangerous, but we always wanted to go anyway. The village below was filled with dogs. You don't see many dogs any more, but there were plenty of them here then. People would have laughed at pedigreed pups, there were just all mixed ones then. It's sort of interesting sitting on the windows now wathhing the boats come in."

There used to be a train bridge right in front of the sandpiles (white sandpiles by their house) but the U. bought it out and moved it way over. There were many big houses too, but they were all knocked down first. They were nearer to the river and the water washed out their foundations.

The Dairy cow woman was across from Carries.

During the floods----all those near the river had boats. The women go out in the boats to get their clothes and pillows. Their houses were half in water. "They'd go out in these blooming boats and go paddling around there." We thought if we could only live there.

Every summer the artists came from the University with big canvases.



Mamie Groscost  
2/19/58  
G. Flieschauer

2.

One painted her on the back porch with a big tub of leaves.

She used to be a Sokol.

Her husband, German, was a truck driver on the WPA, and a union man. She says, "People think that dictatorship is so wonderful, but they ought to be under it for awhile. We need Democracy."

\* \* \*

NAME: Josie Verabec  
2101 2nd St., Mpls.

DATE: Feb. 19, 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Flieschauer

Josie Verabec - Born in Apator, Czech, 1873.

Education: 3 grades of school. "At that time, farmer's children can't do anything like go to school. Different in this country."

Came to America when she was 20 years old with four sisters. Their mother had died, and their father, 48, had married a girl 24 with 14 cows and a mortgage. They all worked on their father's farm, and came to America together when their father gave them the money.

When she got here, she went to Omaha, Nebraska, where her sister was being married so that she would not be alone in America. "It was very lonesome when I first come, but good eat. Cleveland was president then. On the farm where I go, butter is ten cents a pound. Good eggs for five cents the dozen, two big watermelons for ten cents. Everything much better."

She worked for a landlady who had 14 czech boarders for ten dollars a month. Each boarder paid four dollars a week for bed and wash and food.

One was a Bookkeeper, and she married him. ( a nephew to the landlady.) "Two babies come, then he say he go to Chicago. He put me on my sister's farm. She had cows, but they no give milk because they are going to have babies; so we bought the milk from the next cows for the babies and coffee. Then I got a letter from him and it was here in Mimeoapolis, so I come to. He no want me no more, so I give him two babies and a divorce. Next I marry a machinist who work across the river at Powers. He died a long time ago. I work all the time washing clothes and cleaning houses for many, many years.

\* \* \*

When she left Czecho-Slovakia, she left most of her clothes there . .



Josie Verabec  
2/19/39  
G. Flieschauer

2.

"me single yet. Me no wanna go on farm. Clothes me have only good on farm."  
She brought her feather bed and three pillows, however.

\* \* \*

When she had time, she used to crochet "fascinators" which is a square woolen schawl for the shoulders or head. "Make money now for my good friends and myself for Christmas.

\* \* \*

In the old country:

"Only Christmas tree we have be at school. No tree at home....never... our stepmother no care for us so "priest's wife"...no catholic, protestant, braid big pan of good bread....sweet bread with lots of butter, made for poor children. Presents were pencils, writing books, nuts and "apples once." The very poor children got shoes from the "priest's wife." She no call him "priest".. he be "Minister."

On Christmas eve...."me no eat all day....me so hungry....mama boil barley, and boil dry mushrooms, chop and put in barley and some grease, put in oven and make brown.

Christmas day: eat beef soup, pork and potatoes. The rest of the days, soup, soup, soup, and potatoes three times a day. The soups were usually rice, milk, or potatoes. Rye bread bake on oven... make much better taste than in pan. White bread same way.

In winter time, work in the barn in day time beating wheat with a stick. At night, make threads for cloth, fix feathers for feather pillows. Once in a while, men come with accordion and ask to dance, but we have one small room and hay loft above. We sleep on top of stove, so no room to dance, so they are sent away. We have meat only on hollowday (holiday)...father no like that if I laugh. All week work like slave on farm. On Sunday, pray, pray and sing songs.....

No allowed to see king's castles and big churches when cousin take us on train to Praha to see Sokols act...."Oh I wish I could see all those things.....no, all I do is go to church."

My country all broke now. I hate to get my papers to see how it break. "I don't want to go back. I like this country. I got it better here. Once I almost jump into the Seine there. My father made me go to school with a jacket like a patchwork quilt, and all the little girls and boys laugh at it.

Valentine Day: no send pretty papers, but men brought great big cookies made to hearts to their sweethearts. "

She had never seen a safety pin or a banana until she came her. Now she works for a young German and his wife. Wife be young and quick and says "Hurry up and be done and sit down. I say when I be done, I be done, I no rush and kill myself. I work easy with much time.

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#### Flats:

Their house is on the site where one of the stone quarries were. They paid \$450 for the hole, and filled it with dirt for 10 cents a load.... (38 yrs. ago) That took many weeks to fill. City brought some down from streets. Next door stop it because it was street sweepings and there were horses on the street then. They just dropped it here, but he covered it with sand. House was square to begin it. Kitchen added on, then upstairs made for more people.....called "1st attic." First it had only a front door.

A bank curved most of the way around two sides. Once horses fell down the bank and broke our shed and their feet.

"Once coal caught the fire, couple of years ago. Fireman can't choke that because it big fire." It used to be the best place to live. Now it is nasty. All soot and dirty and smoke.



Josie Verabec  
2/19/39  
G. Flieschauer

4.

Karistesh (not certain about spelling) was a Slovak woman who kept cows in the cave for milk. She sold it for five cents a quart, but gave me more. The cows just stayed in the cave alone. In Europe, the little girls and boys have to watch by them all the time. There are two sticks in the ground with a young tree wound around and the cows could go under or jump over, but they have to stay inside when they are watched.

The little church was under the train bridge (left of Wash. from 21st.) When the flats were moved, one woman wouldn't go. They broke off her shed and knock her house down. She say, I no move, so she build a fire on a little kerosene stove and cook outside and sleep outside."

Brewry had gone from this side by the time she came. "I just see by cellar down in cellar down in bank for beer.

Belongs to a Bohemian insurance lodge, but no church.

Lives where she works but goes to her daughter's house - the house she speaks of here - at 2101 2nd St., Mpls.

\* \* \*

"There used to be a whole mess of those houses down there until just about eight years ago," Kerrick said, "they were painted all bright colors, green yellow, blue.....sometimes just half of it was painted. They grew gourds and painted them. The strings of gourds were hanging all over the place, I guess they sold them. Every house had a picket fence around it when I was there, just a wooden fence, and lots of the houses were made of driftwood. The people were down there catching driftwood all the time, standing on a big wide sandbar in the Mississippi and fishing it out piece by piece until they had enough. They got all their fuel for the winter that way, too. Each one had a celery bed and a flower bed and grew lots of garlic and peppers and poppy seed. They knew how to cook with that stuff, too. I used to paint down there all the time. The kids sat for their pictures. We never paid them but I used to take the stuff down to make goulash and then eat with them. I ate with lots of them without ever knowing their names. Grandma and grandpa I usually called them.

The pigs and cows sometimes lived in the house. They had the stable right inside because there was no space outdoors.. the houses were too close. There were so many fences and houses and kids there was hardly space to walk around. The kids on the lower levee were always dirty, but they were healthy little devils. They built some kind of a steam bath house down there, Regular Turkish Sweat, quite a big affair, they stuck their kids in their naked and boiled the germs right out of their hides. They made homebrew and for a while they bottled it. Their funerals were almost as big as their weddings, they had long celebrations for both of them.

For a while there was a portable sawmill that they used to cut the logs they rescued from the river. All that stuff has been moved out now though.

When I came back from Europe, the first thing I noticed was those women flogging their clothes against the rocks down in the river, just like



Kerriok  
Jan. 9, 1939  
G. Fleischauer

2.

they did in the old country. That's how they did all their washing. The place was full of big boulders then.

When we came down to paint, they thought we were just plain nuts. They thought just painting was wasting our time. They were tolerant of us but they thought we ought to be doing something worthwhile now that we were grown. Guess they all thought they were pretty good themselves because they were imported people.

They made their own cigars.

After the flavor of Arthur Kerriok, WPA artist  
Jan. 9, 1939

NAME: Mrs. Susan Cupka

DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Mrs. Susan Cupka, Born 1903 in Vazec, Slovakia, finishes her Mother's (Mrs. Shingler) interview.

"When we were children in Europe, we used to go in the fall picking wild mushrooms, to sell. We saved a little to use for the bigger holidays. We had every kind of berry grow there, strawberry, blueberry, and logan berries, but we didn't eat them ourselves unless they could not be sold in the city.

We always raised our own flax to make linen for our clothes. The girls were taught to sew while they were very young. They made all this beautiful embroidery on their skirts and aprons, and on the men's clothes. Each village dressed a little bit differently, but everyone in one village dressed very much alike. Even the styles for marriage were different. We were all Slovaks but each one went into his own dialect, calling everything by a little bit different name.

In the spring, when we began to work outside again, everyone celebrated. The climate about the same as ours. The men plowed the fields in April, and after the first day when the men came back, the women waited for them to sprinkle them with water to insure good crops.

When the first flowers bloomed, the girls made wreaths from cowslips, pinks and violets and all the other wild flowers, which they placed on their heads and danced on the fields, singing, then finally, throwing them into the falls, making wishes for good harvests as they did so.

"I do get lonesome for that. Everything is so open there... the fields and all. We never wore shoes then and it was such a good feeling to go running through the high grasses barefooted. We had big ovens made of brick outside to use in the summer time. One of us had to crawl into it to



Mrs. Susan Cupka  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

2.

make it <sup>very</sup> clean, and I used to love to watch mother pull out the big loaves of bread with a long stick like the bakers use here. From the left over dough she always made little figures of men for all the children.

They didn't have a doctor in town and most of the people doctored themselves. The state provided a midwife for confinements; but I imagine more than one person died of ruptured appendix and thought it was a tummy ache.

In the winter time, the women spun flax and embroidered. The men made wagons, sleds and dolls from blocks of wood for their children. Even their skates were made of wood with a thick strip of wire attached to the middle running from the toe to the heel, and were held on by ropes.

When the snow was especially fresh, about eighteen or twenty of the peasants congregated to go sleighing down the biggest hill they could find, which was often a mile and a half long or so. The men had to pull the sleigh up again, and two or three rides in one evening was usually enough for everyone.

When they washed clothes, they began soaking them, then boiled them for an hour or two. Next day they were taken out and hauled down to the river where they paddled them with wide sticks. They were rinsed over and over until they were snow white, then paddled some more and rinsed again. They usually had so many clothes it was only necessary to wash once a month unless there was a baby in the house.

Most of the women had no irons, so when the clothes were still slightly damp, they were rolled with a rolling pin until they were smooth. Usually the blacksmith's wife had a regular flat iron. They would starch and iron the ladies shirts for church in exchange for a handful of vegetables or dried fruits.

Like most other parts of Slovakia, their wedding feasts lasted for

Mrs. Susan Cupka  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

3.

three days. The party left from the bridegroom's house before going to the church to be married after which they went to the bride's house for the wedding feast. They stayed there until about midnight, then go back to the groom's to continue celebrating. Gypsy bands played for them, charging twelve dollars for three days for the band. They usually danced the two-step, or chardis, and sometimes three together.

When the wedding party moves to the groom's house, they take the bride's bedding and her hope chest in a big wagon and go singing through the streets at midnight. The hope chest in this community is filled by the girl and her mother and sometimes an aunt or grandmother. It includes about twenty five shirts and skirts for both him and her. The skirts are usually pleated or gathered so closely that they can be expanded or made smaller if the girl grows heavier or loses weight. The bride is obliged to give gifts to the men relatives of the groom. This is usually a shirt she has made herself of homespun. She gives the groom's mother a nice shawl or skirt. The groom gives his bride a pair of boots, made wither of felt or leather.

Their father dies, and the mother decided to come to America, expecting to find so many things better. "We certainly did, too. We like our country, but we love this one."

The <sup>trip</sup> train to the sea port at Bremen, Germany, took three days. Their boat trip was seven days, and not a very comfortable time. "We traveled a bunch of people together in one room. Each one had his bundle of clothes and feather pillow. At that time, \$200 of American money equaled \$250 of theirs. The trip cost \$1300 of European money. The mother drew it out like a mortgage on their property.

When they came here, relatives told them of the Bohemia Flats. So they rented a house which they later bought for \$165. There were five rooms in t



Mrs. Susan Cupka  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

4.

in the house, and for the first year, her mother kept boarders to earn their living. The next year she began going out to do housecleaning and laundry work in private homes. The payment for the house was called a lease rather than rent and was paid two or three times a year. (They cannot remember to whom it was paid, a lawyer came collecting is all they remember.) Their city was had been piped below the bridge, but they never put it in their house, but went to the pipes for it instead.

The oldest boy, 16, began working in the sash and door Co. (Wabasha) 10 hours a day for \$1.25 a day. She began working in a laundry and a store. Together they raised the family, paid off the mortgage in Europe and bought their home on the flats.

They lived near enough to the river to be flooded each spring when the ice broke. The police usually kept pretty good track of the floods, and warned them so they could be all packed and ready to leave when the first warning came. They moved to higher ground until it was safe again, two or three families living together, many going to the buildings around them, some staying in the beer caves. Afterwards, they had to go back and clean out all the sand and dirt that the water washed in, dry them out and move in again.

Moved out in 1931.

"We have never taken anything from anyone. We have always worked.  
Susan Cupka is married now and has four children of her own.

Slovakia has always been under someone's yoke, yet it is such a tiny place. They have rich iron and coal mines but they are all controlled. They have some of the best textile workers in the world there, and one of the best glass factories. It makes the Bohemia glass that is noted for its beautiful ornamentation and hardness.

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NAME: Mrs. Susan Shingler

DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Mrs. Susan Shingler, born 1887 in Vazec, Slovakia, under the rule of Austria Hungary. Came in 1914, a widow with four children.

In Slovakia, Vazec was considered a progressive little village about twenty five years ago. It had a population of approximately six or seven thousand people, and mostly a farming district.

Most of the farmers in the village owned their own property, a pair of oxen and milk cows. Some owned bee hives, and others a blacksmith shop, and although money was very seldom seen, they bartered their products among themselves whenever occasion called for it. (These people, as a race, are very proud and do not want anyone to give them a thing. They come out on relief with hatred.

Besides that, a band of gypsies was usually no farther away than the edge of the village who made nails, wagon chains, knives and rings, who came constantly to the peasant's door, selling their wares for money and sometimes even for food.

In Vazec, the average cottage had three rooms with a big hay loft overhead. One of these rooms was used for cooking and eating. It was equipped with a home-made stove built of bricks which had an iron top and oven, a long wooden table and bench. Sometimes they had silverware, but most of the people ate from one large pan with a wooden or horn spoon they had made themselves.

One room was used for sleeping, and the other one for storage, where great bunches of corn were hung by their husks along the rafters to dry, long strings of dried pears, peaches and apples dangling from the ceiling, buckets of honey, etc....piles of dried berries and poppy seed.

Mrs. Shingler says that either the people did not know about preserving food by canning it, or it was considered too complicated or expensive for them. She had never heard of housewives canning until she came to America to live.



Susan Shingler  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

2.

Some of the peasants of the poorer villages never killed their animals for meat, but Mrs. Shingler says they had a herd of swine and a flock of sheep. They butchered whenever they needed meat. The woods around them were filled with wild bear and deer, but the people were never allowed to kill them for food. The lord would often ride into the village and select a group of men to go hunting with him. He paid each man a little bit--"just a few pennies, not at all very much" to accompany him on the chase. Whatever game was killed, was taken to the land-owner's house. Without him along, no one was allowed on the hunting grounds.

\* \* \*

Mrs. Pehncheck:  
U. of M. Library

Feb. 1939

G. Fleischauer

They didn't live there because they wanted to. They had to live reasonably at first. Every one of them has bettered themselves.

Education high ideal, father Catholic Loyalist---

Good old King Wenzel (?)

Dewey Albenson used to have a studio there.



NAME: Wallace

DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Referred to: Mrs. Oiestad of 2210 9th St. So. (about Bender House)

Came here one year ago September from China. Wanted place near U but across river was so expensive. Found this house...four rooms for nine dollars, did a lot of repairing, made a rock garden, put up trellises, etc. furnished with carved dark furniture from China. Muslin draperies bound in two inch bands of blue....copper trays of fruit...etc. "We liked the view so, it was just like being out in the country. Some people thing that this is a tough place to live, but there is no more respectable place in town. No one else but the very rich have a view like this. Both taught in China. Now he teaches Zoology at U. All our friends wonder how we ever found this place.... We just heard about it and liked it so when we came that we took it. We used to carry water on Saturday and fill a great big tank in the kitchen to use all week. Last month we got the city water put in. The water from the spring got so awful we couldn't use it. It had become all full of gas. If we had a pail of it standing in the kitchen, you couldn't stand to be in the room.

About the only organization they are active in is to help China...they both lecture for it. The Minneapolis Committee for Non-Participation in Japanese Agression.

At one time before the city moved the railroad in, Carrie's house was a great big one. The cottage she lives in now is really just a little part out of the big house. She had eleven rooms upstairs full of roomers, and three families living downstairs. She had just bought it the year and a half before for \$3500. The city gave her 4900 dollars for it when they tore it down. She leased the lot under the bridge for five or ten dollars a year... two room shack still standing which she used now as a storeroom, and intends

Wallace  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

2.

to move back into it if the houses along 22nd are ever moved away. There was a court all around her boarding house, with the red pump in the middle of the court. Now the red pump stands on the boulevard of 22nd.

\* \* \*



NAME: Mrs. Bastiss

DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Mrs. Bastiss - from Lonice, Czech. 65 years ago--Catholic.

Her father was a miller and owned their own property, so she had never worked out until she came to New York. She was eighteen when she came, and had made the trip with friends bringing only the clothes she had on and a feather tick.

Her uncle in New York was a cigar maker, and she stayed there with him for two years. She had learned to speak German in the school she attended in Czech, so she went to do domestic work in a German home.

Minneapolis started down here," she said, "there were little boats on the river, the breeze and the beautiful banks. Everyone had flowers growing from their window boxes or around the trees. It was just like a park, and on Sundays, all the people used to come down to have picnics and take pictures., and walk around the little houses."

Her first home was on the Upper Flats in Minneapolis (present home) It is a small cottage along 22nd Ave. So. and one of the fourteen remaining homes. The people came here because of the beautiful scenery then. They have out most of it down now. There used to be a quarry behind Petro's house. Her husband worked in the lumber yards on 2nd Ave. as foreman grading lumber. He has been dead for 21 years now. Hurt by falling from a stone quarry 36 feet high. "It wasn't his fault. If it should happen now, I should get some money. At that time they have no ambulance, so four men carried him home with his skull broken. Invalid for three months.

There were six children to raise, two of the boys worked their way thru college. Albert, the alderman in Mpls. now, studied law at night, and supported the family by working in the day time. His brother Emil, also worked and helped, studying electrical engineering at the same time. Both are in the

Mrs. Bastiss  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

2.

the city now.

There was not the same Washington Avenue bridge then, and not much University, there was a small bridge, but it was taken up while she was living there.

Slovak Polish, Irish, French, Germans all lived down here.....all workers.

She has city water now. Three of the fourteen houses have.

Logs driving down the river in the spring raised the river for floods, and when the snow melted, the river rose. It never came to the Upper Levee, but she remembers the people moving into their homes during those days.

In Czech, the people who had money had trees. She remembers having a Christmas doll. They did not celebrate Dec. 25th any other way than in the church. The next day, they celebrated as we do on Christmas. The children had presents if the people had money enough. They never said Santa Caluse, but always the Christ Child.

At Easter time, they had red eggs, but they never said the bunny brought them, just called them chicken eggs. The game of rolling eggs as they do in Wash. now was popular among her people.

"Chech is a beautiful country. Too bad it was broken." She had lived in the city and gone to a school much like our American schools (to eight grade.)

The farmers couldn't do that. They were pressed under the Franz Joseph. Now they are under the Hitler." I just want to go back for a visit.

Always had newspapers around for the children, so they would like an education.....even when they were little.

(Christmas tree ornaments sewed onto a linen shelf scarf in the dining room. A pleated silk scarf tied over her white hair. She had just come in from cleaning the snow from the walks when we arrived.

\* \* \*



NAME: Mrs. Anno Petro, nee Hayda  
276 22nd Ave. So., Mpls.

DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Born in Monhan, Slovakia Territory on January 23, 1867.

Raised on her parent's farm in Slovakia. She had attended a small school in the village where Bible, knitting and music were taught. At the age of twelve, the children were confirmed, and education ended there unless they could afford to attend a higher school. There was only one school room, besides another adjoining room where the teacher lived. They had only men teachers and there were about fifty pupils each year.

Land was not measured by acres, but she estimates her father's farm was about twenty acres.

When she was seventeen, her father died, and she went to one of the lord's houses to work as a servant. Her wages were twenty five dollars a year. She had some friends who had worked on farms as servants to the lords, receiving only a small percentage of the crops they raised and no freedom at all. They had broken away and come to America. They wrote letters to her telling how free they were, so she began to think this was a "sweet land," too.

When she was twenty years old, her grandmother gave her \$150 of Old Country money to come. She went directly from Ellis Island to her a farm in N. Y., fifty years ago. 3 yrs. N.Y. truck farming - 1 dollar a day. Saved money to send for mother & grandmother. From there she came to her friend's in Minneapolis. Her friends had a big house where they took in roomers, so she lived there, working for her living.

The lumber business was prominent at that time and many of the immigrants worked on the logging crews. Some of the men were single and boarded at the rooming house where she lived. Micheal Petro was one of them. He had been born in Austria the same year as she had been. (In 1897 he got his

Anno Petro  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

2.

second citizenship papers, breaking away from the Emperor of Austria.

There were no Czech churches here at that time. There was no great ceremony for her as was "the custom always"; but they went to a German church with a German preacher officiating, whose language she had never learned, so she did not understand any of the ceremony excepting to know that she had been married.

Michael Petro worked in the sawmills for 15 years, then became a section man on the tracks. 33 years ago they moved down to Bohemian Flats. Their first house was the lower steps and cost them one dollar a month for rent for 5 years (to Water Power Co.? to gov. (?). She did not seem clear about this.) Their next house was located where 3rd Street was and cost them twenty five dollars a year. After that they bought a place for six hundred dollars under the bridge....one of those places now cleaned up, after they had lived there 4 and one half years. At first they cooked on small wood stoves, and carried their water from the well in the middle of the village. They picked up their own wood from the river banks and hills, always having plenty.

Until the squatters were moved out, they followed more or less the customs of their native land here. Always wearing aprons and head shawls to church, and going to market with their willow baskets over their arms. She said, "If its true about the bridge, I can't figure it out, why they would move us. My house I own now, and the next door house is mine. My husband built this one 28 years ago for us. If it's true, God only knows what they are going to do next."

In her own country, she said, the little village she lived in did not celebrate Christmas our way. To her home it was a strictly holy day. Although many of the other villages had Christmas trees, she had never heard of one until she came to America. There was no visiting allowed on her farm,



Anno Petro  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

3.

they could not sweep the floor, and outside of milking the cow, no chores could be performed. For two and a half hours they sat in church, and all day they prayed. The food was prepared the days ahead, and no presents were given.

(Christmas season now-----Small artificial tree covered with tinsel and cotton with small twisted wax candles snapped on the limbs.)

When she came over, she brought one feather pillow, a bright woollen scarf and only the clothes she was wearing.

(She wears high black shoes as a hangover from the days when girls in Europe wore boots or went barefooted. She always wears a peasant apron and a dust cap. She has a dozen blooming plants in the winter, drawing sharp bright lines against the snow covered hills outside. Above her door is a bouquet of dried peppermint plant hanging upside down, which is used for stomach aches. She denies (with a great deal of excitement that this is to keep the "evil eye" away as one of the Bohemian neighbors insisted.)

Her husband died of heart trouble a year ago. Sundays she goes to church, and every other day when she is not busy feeding the few chickens she has cooped up in the back yard, carrying in buckets of coal or water, or chopping long logs, she sits by the windows and reads the Bible she brought from Czech, 52 years ago.

Worked at Donaldson's as scrubwoman from 1920-30.

Potatoes couldn't be raised by the river because they rotted even though potatoes are one of their most important foods.

\* \* \*

NAME: CITY ENGINEER  
E.R.T. Peterson  
101 (vault) Court House

DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Owner of the land on the flats;

Fidelity Trust Co.

Farm Lands Investment Co. --- several Washburn heirs mostly and

Charles E. Russell.

Charles H. Smith

Florence E. Robinson

Jenny E. Lane, also connected with the Washburn family.

Once used to be known as the Danish flats, and was settled by the Danes.

\* \* \*

S. S. Thorpe was the first barge to come up the river in 1926. It came from St. Louis. Most of them hauling cotton, however, came from Memphis.

The dock house was built in 1927. In 1928, the land was acquired by the city by condemnation by a resolution of Alderman Peterson.

The Nuremburg Brewery and another one where the radio towers are now used to be there. In 1905 the last one was blown out of there by dynamite after having been abandoned for many years.

At one time, houses lined both sides of Wood St. and both sides of Cooper, which run parallel with the river.

In 1917 the high dam was completed. All those houses were torn off those streets before then because they were the ones that were flooded each spring. Logs jammed the river while the people were there. So many at at time you could walk to the other side on the jammed logs.

In April, 1916, they had the highest water on record, but there was a hard flood in 1911 also.



E.R.T. Peterson  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

2.

Finstrom's house used to be a two-story affair. The little place she lives in now was separate from the rest and behind the big one. She used her black shanty on the hill to store potatoes, but if they ever have to move from 22nd, she plans to go back and live in it, and be the sole survivor of the flats.

In 1928, a survey was made of every house. Photos were taken of each one. There were 59 houses and one church left. They were all immaculate, he says, "rag rugs on the floors, and featherbeds....every one so high you couldn't see the top of them. One house was right under the Washington Avenue bridge and had to be ripped down. Some Slovak people had lived there fifty years. "I don't believe the man had had a bath since he came there fifty years ago. Anyway I got the General hospital to come and get him and they gave him a bath, and he died the next day. They had a boy who worked at the Foundry.

After the people got out of there, I tried to get a wrecking company to tear the place down, so I told the people that they could have all the lumber from the place if they did the work and cleaned the ground up good. In less than three hours the place was completely cleared.

Photographer who took picture of flats:

A. E. Kairies  
617 4th Ave. So.

Neg. dev. for about 25 cents each.

\* \* \*

NAME: Anna Sabol  
2119 Washington Ave.  
DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Anna Sabol: 57 years old. Been in America 38 years.

Lived 10 years in flat, going directly there from Europe.

Brown house below bridge... 2119 Washington Avenue...owns the place.  
(also has spring water)

In Europe, she lived in a little village like the flats where they  
raised cows mostly. (Babic Czechoslovakia.)

Her husband came from Europe, too.

He was a flour mill worker. She worked in the paper mills. She came  
to the flats because she had an uncle who lived there.

Her house was in the flood, but she never minded it. Lived along  
Mill St. Owned house and sold it for \$80.

When she came, she brought just a little bundle and a feather pillow.

Went to school 6 years in Europe,...reading, writing, etc.

No organization but the Luther League.

National affair in costume held by the church at Dania (Danu) Hall, MPIS.  
Cedar Ave., Old country dances,,,,,circle dances. Violin and accordian music.  
Held once or twice a year.

#### CUSTOMS:

Birth....godmother brought presents. There was a big party at the  
baptism. Held a week or two after the child is born. The godfather stands  
up, asking for offering for the babies.

WAKES: Day person is brought from the mortuary until burial there is  
eating and drinking, people stay all night.

CHRISTMAS TIME: Go around and serenade the neighbors under their



NAME: Micheal Matlach (F. B.)  
595 Endicott Bldg., St. Paul, Minn.

DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

6 years old when he came with parents from Czechoslovakia. Went to a farm in Nebraska first. His father came because in the winter time he had to dig stumps. It was tiresome work and nothing for it. He was one of the cottagers there. Czechs from his village went to Nebraska first and wrote, "Come before it is too late." It was to better him. Educated ones came for of more freedom. He said, "I was raised on the prairies of Neb. and then went to school and studied law."

Does not belong to any church.

He belongs to the Sokols, and the Western Bohemian Fraternal Association. "That's not the only lodge there is, though," he insisted, "competition in lodges are keen. The Sokols, besides their internationally known gymnastics put on theatricals, and public exhibitions of their gymnastics. Women and men drill separately most; but sometimes mass drill. Once in three years there is a great one with aid of other units in Northwestern District (Minn. and part of N. Dak., and part of Wisc.) Dues for this organization are 35 cents a month.

Besides the Sokols, are the free thinkers, mostly called rationalists now. They take rational view of religion because science has given us a little different view than the Bible tells on the world. For instance, he said, Anthropology....the study of man...the Bible tells a man was made at such and such a time, but science figures it out more scientifically...how Darwin says, like."

He has written a manuscript which he has given to Ester Jeraby at the Historical Library. It is mostly a list of the Bohemian lodge, a history of

Michael Matlach  
Feb. 1939  
G. Fleischauer

2.

the first Czech teachers and professors in Minnesota. Anna Hedobety was the first teacher of the Czechs in St. Paul. Antonin Jerka taught German to the public schools. V. K. Franda about 15 years ago was principal of Central High School in St. Paul. John and Anton Zelensky were professors of physics at U. John is now teaching physics at Yale, but Anton had retired because of 65 age limit....lives in Mpls.

Vytlacil, Vaclav: now in New York, but once a painter in the flats. Exhibited paintings of the lower levee at the public library in St. Paul.

The houses in the flats were after the European style, looking like little cigar boxes on a narrow street. They were, he said (referring to the people) oblivious of drama and mankind in its tender moments in the metropolis about them. There was an editorial in the Tribune about that time (1931). It was a nice "editorial." I took pains to translate it because it had such a nice poetical---style."

Ref. to Father Hovarka, Cath. priest on 21st and 5th.

\* \* \*



NAME: Rev. J. M. Vrudny  
419 Ontario St., Mpls.  
DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Rev. J. M. Vrudny - pastor Slovak Lutheran Church

Born in Slovakia, 1888.

Began training for ministry there, but came here when twenty five years old and finished studies in America.

Not well acquainted with history of flats having only been among this congregation for six years. However, related prevalent superstitions, folklore practised in his village in Europe, and related by members of his congregation to him as part of their life when they first moved to Bohemia Flats.

Many of the Slavs believe in the departed spirits visiting them. When the table was set for the Christmas Eve supper, a place was always left for the departed because they really believed that they were present.

On Xmas Eve - just at sunset before church bells ring, the young ladies who want to get married, begin to sweep the kitchen floor. When the bell starts to ring, they take all the sweepings out. The villages are usually small enough so every one knows each others name. The first man they see, they believe they will get a man by that name to marry. "The nicest part of that is it usually works. The sweetheart hangs around waiting for her. The girl not only gets a kick out of it but usually a kiss."

Before services Christmas Eve, the wives or houseladies go down to the stable to give the cows bread and Christmas wafers, and garlic to the horse. That is done so that the cows will be good milkers for the year; and the garlic is supposed to make the horses spry.

Then they will all go to a candle light service. Christmas day is another long service when the streets are empty and everyone in the whole village is in the churches. The young girls and women do not take seats but stand in front for the two and a half hour service. It is considered a disgrace for

them to move at all and sometimes they faint before it is ended. The young married girls wear hats with a great deal of fancy ornaments on them. When church is over, they put the hats away again, and they use it for about five years. After that, they are too old to wear a hat. Then they have to dress like the old ladies.....So they wear shawls, just like that thing you have on your head now." he stopped to laugh heartily, then said, "I always have to laugh with myself when I see all those young University girls wearing the headress of Europe's old women."

Christmas celebration lasts about 10 days there because they are mostly farmers and do not have much to do in the winter time.

Kriciar - 1 penny

filler -  $\frac{1}{2}$  penny

Shoemaker was the school teacher because he had the most education.

"Each village has its own superstitions, but the people from this part has a spring custom called "Morena."

When spring came, they made a dummy, usually a woman and stuffed it with hay or straw. The boys take it up and carry it, dragging it on the street, and singing as they leap down the road until they get it to the river. They throw it in the water singing, "Drown the winter." It is said that this is a heathen custom, and was supposed to have good effect on their crops.

"When the day after Easter came, the boys and men went around sprinkling water on any girl they found outside. In some parts, they took birch branches and swung them on the women, especially on the young girls. This is traced to the early happenings in the Christian church, when Christ rose from the dead, the people congregated on the streets and would not go away. The High priest did not like this and tried to force them away by swinging sticks and at them and throwing water on them.



If someone is visiting, or they have visitors, and a headache starts, they think it is an evil eye before them. They have a ready cure, though. The mother, who is really the family doctor, takes a pan with water, and goes to the oven and takes out seven pieces of burning charcoal and throws them into the water, praying as she does it. The fire is put out by the water, and the sick person washed in this water. In some places, they drink of it. ("the nicest part about it is that they really get well.")

If a farmer takes the oxen or a herd of swine to market, he has to watch them, and if he meets someone with empty pails it is a sign of bad luck, and signifies that he will sell nothing, so he turns back without trying. On the other hand, if he meets someone with full pails, it means that his luck will be good that day.

NAME: Mrs. Kieferle

DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Mrs. Kieferle is 53 years old now., born in this house.

Parents were among the first settlers here, came from Baden, Germany.

It was all hills and water in the pocket and it reminded them so much of their home. They bought a lot here for \$500 when they could have got one up above for less; but they chose this place because the real estate men told them that this was to be the navigation center of the northwest in a few years. They were the first settlers on the upper levee, but it was a great picnic ground then.

Father worked in the lumber yards and at Coopers, making flour barrels, butter tubs and so forth.

(parents died in 1924, and 1925. Piece in newspaper about them.

Mother's name was Kaltenback.)

Journal - newspaper library.

Her husband was a butcher for 22 years, now a night janitor at court-house. At first, the people below were called the Shanty Irish.

Costumes: "Slovak kids used to wear three or four petticoats with wide lace showing on the bottom.

A fruit house up north used to dump fruit into the river. The kids took logs and sticks to reach for a banana or orange.

A negro minister used to bring 20 or 30 down to the river to be baptized every year. About 15 years ago is the last she remembers.

Quarries behing Petros at one time low wagons filled with rocks, such big pieces...passed by all day...blasting all the time.

Used to be a great place for sliding from Cedar to the river. The river used to be wider before the seawall was built. They were not allowed on the river, but they made ponds near it to skate on.



Mrs. Kieferle  
2/1939  
G. Fleischauer

2.

University students used to rent a bob sled from down here. Sled held about 12 or 15. Became almost an established sport.

They talked of shipping scrap iron from here. They needed more land than they had.

Spring 1926, they came and told set price that they wanted ground and house had to be moved back for the railroad. This house can't be moved on the hill because the roof is too high to go under the bridge. Kitchen upstairs and downstairs has been added. Had high fence to keep chickens for fresh eggs. During the floods, their friends, part Bohemian, part German, brought, oh, such a load of feather ticks. They laid on them and covered with them. They lugged it all in and we were always bewildered of how we should make space for it all.

Excursion boats used to stop across from us where the warehouses are now. One time a load of automobiles came up on the boat and everyone got excited, thinking that at last, this was becoming an important shipping spot. The cars stayed there for a few days, and after we had all gone down to see them they took them away.

They used to haul coffee, tea, sugar and big <sup>bales</sup> ~~balls~~ of cotton up, now nothing but coal comes.

Taxes used to be 50 or 60 dollars a year, but now they have only a half a lot, so it is cut some.

They have one of the two furnaces in the valley.

There are three places with running water.

Children want to get away, but all her brothers and sisters have nice homes, and no one wants this house, but her girls want a bathtub. One son just got back from the CCC. One daughter is a typist at the court house and the other goes to South High.

Boy, 18, goes to Mary Miller Voc. studying jewelry, medal.

\* \* \*

NAME: THOMAS SHAFAR

DATE: Feb. 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Thomas Shafar: 88 years old. From the beer city of Budweise, Bohemia.

Came here in 1869 working his way up on a steamer.

On May 1st, went to work on the police force, in 1886.

Served 23 years. After 20 years, pension began, so he retired.

Aubrecht had a store here for about two years. Kokesch started his store about 1888, and kept it about 29 years.

Danish woman and a man living here first. He was always fishing, and she was always washing and scrubbing.

Appearance: Lots were run clear to the river.

When Slovaks and Scandinavians came, the rest moved out.

During the floods, moved the people out in the patrol wagon to the Sunday Schools on 30th Ave.

4 or 5 sawmills used to be above the flour mills (before he came) rafts down the river bringing lumber.

Lived in the flats first. Bought this place, after living across the streets renting.

Sawyer Brewery: Henriches and Norenburck and one other man.....When it was time to move the houses and change leases, a woman came out and chopped the ropes.

The salons closed on Sundays. Went to the brewery for a keg and took it to some house in the flats. By evening they were all filled up and fighting. They came after him with teakettles filled with hot water if he went to try to straighten them out.

\* \* \*



Anna Sabol  
2/19/39  
G. Fleischauer

2.

their windows. No Xmas tree in Europe. Make mushroom soup. Juice from sauerkraut with diced mushrooms and salt and pepper in it.

Bread dough is dried first, then made into small rounds, rolled in poppy seed with honey for the Xmas feast. Some of these are put under the pillow on Xmas Eve, so the young girls will dream about their boy friend. On Christmas Eve, they never ate until the stars come out. Just before supper, all got holy bread from church. Dip it in honey and eat it.

EPIPHANY, If a girl has a boy friend she goes steady with, he plants 2 trees in front of her house when she is not looking. Hang leaves on the house here. The people take them in and make like tea for cough medicine.

As soon as somebody moved out of the flats, another party moved in. One Co. had a motorcycle, holding races, starting at the bottom of the hill and going up to the top of the bridge.....about 12 years ago.

People went out in boats and canoes, picking wood out of the river.

She has a loom, and makes rugs.

NAME: Mrs. Franklin Vanek  
1245 Lincoln Avenue  
St. Paul, Minn.

DATE: Feb. 19, 1939

INTERVIEWED BY: Gladys Fleischauer

Bozena Vanek has never lived on the flats; but well acquainted with conditions, and lectures at many national affairs.

"They went there because of the trees, and the way it was located, cupped down there between the hills and cliffs." She said, "that is how many of their villages were situated, isolating them from the industrial parts. The many trees probably attracted them, too. In Europe, the trees are all claimed by the landowners. The peasant's pick up the twigs and branches to burn. For that "privilege" they are allowed to take care of the new trees. Whenever one is taken out, they plant more. These are called "little schools of trees." They nurse them thru, therefore, they love the forests. At one time, they used to hold their worship in the forests. After many, many centuries, these are almost virgin forests. Now after the recent crisis, the Germans took it over in two months; being short of wood, have cut down great groves of them, then took over the Czech's locomotives to transport the trees to Germany.

The Czechs are a more cosmopolitan people. Costumes have been influenced by western costumes.....Germans, Scandinavians.....only in the mountains or wooded villages are they very different.

Their national dance is sort of a quadrille like dance, something like our old tyme square dance. The music for this is made of 22 old folk songs, one following the other, the steps changing as the music changes.

They use their theatres to impress the history they are so proud of on the people.....in poems, plays, music, etc. The Hungarians or Austirans are just entertained, and never get the real point because they do not know



Mrs. F. Vanek  
2/19/39  
G. Fleischauer

2.

that it is there, but the Czech people look for it and are disappointed if they do not get it.

Their St. Wenzel Day is about the same time as our Thanksgiving... celebrate as we do...eating and drinking.

One Slovak says to another: "What would you do if you were made the emperor? Other Slovak: If I were made Emperor, I would put fresh straw in my wooden shoes every day.

1st Slovak: Oh! If I were the emperor, I would make for milk to run thru the river, then I would just lie on my stomach to drink it."

The Czechs are very fond of telling this because they think it shows how much the Slovaks really need the Czechs to "mother" them.

Maurice Kimball, who is a writer of Czech affairs, broadcasted the recent crisis from there, and he said, "Czechs are more like the Scotch than <sup>part</sup> any/of the Slavs. The main difference is that they are not so attached to their hard liquor. They even have bagpipes, although they are different than the Scotch bagpipes. There is a little bag with a goat's head on it. They put the bag under their arm and pump air into it with their arms. It sounds like a clarinet or a flute. (a man at the Y.W. is supposed to have one)

Kolachki Day at Montgomery is run by the Irish because the fathers are Irish, the Mothers are Bohemians.

"Germans paraded in and took the ore and coal mines from Czech. Left 60% of the porcelian and glass industries. Left only the anthracite coal and textiles. They took all the iron, but we can laugh at that because iron is just about gone. During the last 1000 years, it was all taken out of the ground.

Germans eat a hard dumpling. Get indigestion. Make him good and sick. But I tell you, we feel that they just borrowed the place for a little while. You can't make a Nazi out of a democrat."

G. Fleischauer - Czechs (Miscel.)

# ORGANIZATIONS - FREE THINKERS

Interests are primarily social and intellectual. They meet regularly, not to worship, but to play, to dance, to debate, to discuss and study questions of current interests or to stage dramatics. p.198

Both Catholic and Protestant Bohemians consider them dangerous as an aesthetic element, while the missionary societies look upon them as a force for evil "working overtime" and trying to destroy belief in God. The Free Thinkers have a leader, however, and they refer to him as their preacher. They have not been able to escape the need of some presiding official at such affairs as weddings and funerals.

Insurance Organization - Bohemian Slavic Fraternal Benefit Union

In the extra-church pastimes of a national, social or political nature, much of the leadership is furnished by the free thinkers. The 202 other groups wait for the pastor or priest.

Because so many of them own their own property, they are interested in the ballot.

Physical fitness not only an ideal, but also a characteristic of the Czech communities. Proficiency in the drills, demonstrations and tournaments of Sokols was a matter of great pride. Fathers and sons work together in the program in a most wholesome spirit.

(Immigrant Farmers and their children, by Edmund de S. Brunner  
Doubleday and Doran & Co., Inc., 1929.)



G. Fleischauer - Czechs,

Newspaper is a leisure time device for keeping the various Czecho-Slovak settlements in touch with one another.

Why they came to Minnesota - Minn. has 37.8% foreign-born farm operators, one of the states reporting the largest actual number. Though farmers, no land on the flats to farm, so worked on labor jobs, saved money to buy farms later.

To those who have given no attention to the development of the Sokols in the United States, the very word Sokol is mystifying, because it has not yet become as firmly established a part of the vocabulary of this nation as it is destined to become when its purposes, aims and ideals are more thoroughly understood.

The word Sokol is the Bohemian name for the falcon. The falcon is a bird, fearless, swift of action and sure of flight.

To Dr. Tyrs, founder of the Sokols (nearly seventy years before) the falcon symbolized that indomitable courage which his and thousands of other true Bohemian families cherished through two centuries of defeat and oppression, and he adopted its name for the gymnastic training society which he first established at Prague in 1862. This society or union was the forerunner of today's globe-encircling Sokol alliance.

This organization of the Sokols, Feb. 16, 1862, was without doubt the most forceful factor in the social unification of the Bohemian people. The society met the need for association and interchange of national hopes and aspirations at a time when Austrian government was casting suspicious looks at all public gatherings. The Sokol Union, originally created for the purpose of fostering gymnastic training and physical improvement, was destined to become the most important development in the history of the Bohemian people.

G. Fleischauer - Czechs, etc.

From 1889, the Sokol union has had an uninterrupted growth. Its beneficial influences today are felt throughout the world, and its members by the hundreds of thousands. Today there are over 3,500 Sokol units in 37 countries.

The first Sokol society in the U.S. was founded in Chicago as the Bohemian gymnastic union. Its teachings soon spread throughout the country. This society was one of the first to proclaim the equality of men and women. Its constitution required that every member must be or must become a citizen of the U. S.

At the present time there are 311 Czecho-Slovak Sokol units in the U. S. holding classes. In the winter there are dances, in the summer, picnics. Dramatic and singing societies within the organization are formed. In 1906 in St. Paul, a ladies auxiliary was established. In 1908, the Minneapolis group was founded. Have their own summer camps. One at Pine City. Sharew were sold to Sokol members to raise the funds to take care of it. Camp building built, bathing facilities established.



G. Fleischauer - Czechs (Misc.) Language.

Language:

Up to 1960, Czechs and Slovaks used the same literary language, then Slovak dialects was adopted as Slovak's language. Now the political union is bringing them back to the Czechoslovak language. P.11.

Dreamy River  
By Henry Baerlein, 1930 NY  
Simon and Schuster (pub.)

Southern Slavs have softened a great many of their words by dropping some of the excessive consonants which make printed Slovak look like a prime thicket. "To the ear untrained to detect its beauties, its sound resembles nothing so much as a person in showshoes splashing through half-melted snow.

The Slovak Language has diphthongs in cases where the other Slavic tongues use simple vowels. It is more broken up into different dialects than perhaps any other living tongue and is nearest related to the Czech language between which it and the Serbo-Croatian dialects forms a link of connection. There are very many words not found in the Czech tongue, and many features brought nearer to Russia, Polish, and Serbian than to Czech.

Until 1840, Slovak hardly had a literary language distinct from that of the Czech. Since then, they have developed an independent form. P. 281

All Slavs love their Slavic languages. The old Slavic language with all its richness and beauty, which gave birth to the modern Russian, Polish, Czechs and Serbs. Croats language was already so highly developed, that even today, after many centuries of political and national life, the Slavic languages represent a strong bond of union among the different slav

G. Fleischauer - Czechs (Miscel.) Language

Slovaks have a polyglot jargon because of its many outside influences.



G. Fleischauer

Essex and Ontario St. in the University of Minnesota District, and soon after the work of building a new church was begun. The new church building was dedicated to the service of the Lord on Nov. 4, 1908. Two year later, Rev. Micetok resigned his call here to accept a call to Lansford, Pa.

After the departure of their pastor, the congregation extended a call to the Rev. Karol Hauser, its former pastor. He accepted and led the congregation for the second time. In the year 1911 the congregation erected a brick parsonage next to the church. Hauser served until 1920 and resigned pastorage to retire to private life. Rev. J. Vojtko became his successor and served for six years. During his pastorage, dissension arose among the members with the result that many left the church and organized a new congregation. Then came Rev. J. S. Ontko who served for six years until he died. Then came Rev. Vrundry of Bethlehem, Pa.

Congregation has a parochial school....no school building, but has a class room in the basement of the church. Because of that they teach only the 6th, 7th and 8th grades. Children of the lower grades receive their religious instruction off Saturdays, and for 6 weeks during the summer vacation. ~~Esauher~~

Teachers have been:

Mr. G. Derer

Mr. J. Sedory

Mr. P. Sandor

Mr. P. Karcis

Mr. T. Tomko, and Mr. A. M. Perko, its present  
teacher.

G. Fleischauer

As early as 1880, Slovaks of the Evangelical Lutheran faith, began to arrive and settle along the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis. In the earliest days of their settlement, they took care of their religious needs by holding family worship in the little shanties in which they lived. That same year they became acquainted with a German Lutheran Pastor, Rev. Frederick Sieverson, and he offered them the use of his church each Sunday morning, where they held services with the reading of the Postilla. This continued until 1888.

Rev. Sieverson then contacted Rev. Karol Hauser, who was able to speak the Czech language, and persuaded him to come to Minneapolis to take care of the religious groups of Bohemians that was increasing in amazing numbers along the river bank. Especially was he needed to administer the Lord's Supper.

Rev. Hauser came to help. A congregation was formally organized with 36 charter members on August 2, 1888. The Rev. Karol Hauser became the first pastor of the St. Emmanuel Slovak Lutheran Congregation, and he was installed as a minister of the church on the 1st Sunday of Advent, 1888.

Services were continued in the German Lutheran Church until they obtained their own building which was located on Cooper St. in the Flats.

The Rev. Hauser served as pastor for five years, resigning his pastorate here to accept a call to Freeland, Pa. His successor was the Rev. D. Z. Laucek, who served the congregation only 11 mos.

The Rev. J. S. Micatek became the successor and served the congregation from 1896 to 1910. During his pastorate, the congregation grew and flourished, so that the church building became too small. The congregation therefore made plans for building a larger church. A plot of ground was purchased on