



[Minnesota Geographic Board.  
Records.](#)

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[Jan 12, 1931]

The problems to be dealt with in beginning the work of the State Geographic Board of Minnesota seem to fall into two classifications. The first has to do with the preparation of a state gazetteer. The second relates to the initiation of work to bring about a more "sensible" nomenclature for Minnesota's geographic features -- its "lakes, streams, places and other geographic features."

Before an extensive campaign to bring about the second aim can be undertaken, it is necessary to do a certain amount of preliminary work in the classification of existing geographic names, or, in other words, to prepare a preliminary state gazetteer. As Mr. Babcock and Mr. Pleva have indicated, the development of a card file will be a necessary step in this work. I do not think that the ideas embodied in the card forms that they have suggested are necessarily the best that could be worked out, however. For example, Mr. Pleva suggests what I think would be a somewhat cumbersome three or four file system. I am confident that all the necessary information can be placed on a single well-planned card, and that, aside from this card file, the only file necessary is a combined correspondence and petition file, to which references can be made on the file card. The card, a sample of which I have designed tentatively, would have to be somewhat larger than a 4 x 6 card, and, by utilizing both sides, would contain a complete history of the name of the geographic feature and a record of all proceedings in connection with that name.

Cards would be filed under the name in common use until approved or altered by the state and national geographic boards. In the suggested system, names for geographic features not previously named

would be marked with an asterisk to differentiate them from those already named. As soon as state and national geographic board decisions had been made, the approved name would be filled in, and it henceforth would be filed under the name sanctioned by the boards. The correspondence and petitions would be filed under the "name in use" until a decision had been reached, and then shifted over to the name adopted by the board. By means of cross references, the whole system could be integrated into one file which would be a permanent, official record of the procedure of the board as well as a record of the geographic names.

Before this work could be begun, however, a comprehensive bibliography of materials relating to geographic names in Minnesota would have to be compiled. This bibliography should include all printed works and maps, as well as any manuscript material that may be located. Perhaps a great deal of reliance would have to be placed on county and regional histories. In compiling the information, I suggest that Upham, Geographic Names be used as a basis for the preliminary work, and that the name used by Upham be adopted as the "name in use" unless there is a United States Geographic Board decision on record for that feature. All available sources dealing with the naming of the geographic features could then be recorded on the card, in the manner employed by the United States Geographic Board as illustrated on page 57 of the Sixth Report of that board.

If a file card such as I have suggested is adopted, it undoubtedly would be an economy of time, space, and eventually, of money, to have the forms printed. To do this, however, an appropriation of some sort would have to be obtained, or the co-operation

of the three state departments represented on the board would be required to obtain the necessary funds for the work. I do not know how much money would be needed for this purpose, but it is my guess that the cost of printing twenty or twenty-five thousand cards on a light-weight **stock** of about the size of the sample card would not be exorbitant.

The next problem to be considered in the working of such a project would have to be that of personnel. I can agree with Mr. Babcock that there are definite limits to the work which untrained persons can do. I am confident that with a reasonably free hand in the selection and direction of a small staff the compilation of the necessary information could be accomplished with a minimum of error. The responsibility placed upon the director of such a job would be very great, however, and he should be in a position to give the work close supervision.

It would be desirable, at the beginning, to clear up any legal questions arising from the peculiar legal structure. If there is any reason to feel that the state geographic board might be called upon to pay any costs in connection with the alteration of any name, or the naming of any previously unnamed geographical feature, then the time to settle that question would seem to be now, before any extensive program of work is begun. The attorney general's office would undoubtedly give the opinion upon request.

In the formulation of the campaign of publicity to get the local communities to take the initiative in changing inappropriate or duplicated names of things, a three-fold program could be undertaken. Copies of the form letter which has been devised for distribution among the county commissioners of the state should be sent out. A vigorous program of newspaper publicity would have to be

undertaken, and the co-operation of county historical societies, library groups, women's clubs, farmers' associations, 4-H clubs, and civic groups, should be obtained.

It seems to me that one of the functions which the State Geographic Board should perform in the near future is that of going over the decisions relating to Minnesota geographic names which the United States Geographic Board has already made. Undoubtedly there are some, such as that on "Pig Eye" (U.S.G.B., Sixth Report, p. 602), which the Minnesota board would recommend that the national group reconsider. Other decisions should, I think, be approved by the State Geographic Board, even though it is a matter of routine procedure in most cases. Close co-operation with the national board should be an aim of the state body, and all names which appear in the gazetteer should have the approval of both the state and national boards.

A. J. L.

1/12/38

TCB

February 14, 1938

Mr. Cass of the conservation department is having made about a thousand mimeographed cards for experimental purposes in connection with the work of the State Geographic Board.

In the course of our conversation two interesting things developed. I mentioned the question of filing cases and he at once raised a strenuous objection to the use of wooden filing cases and stated that either the department of conservation or the highway department might be able to purchase sufficient steel cases to accommodate the work as it goes along. He also is willing that the department of conservation should undertake to print from twenty to twenty-five thousand cards when once a form has been stabilized.

The second development came when I mentioned the problem of publicity. He pointed out that on the staff of the conservation department are trained publicity men and he expressed the opinion that if, at the next meeting of the State Geographic Board, you brought up the question of utilizing this force to publicize the work of the board, Commissioner Wenzel would adopt the idea enthusiastically. He thought, however, that before the question is brought up, the lines of the publicity campaign should be pretty well outlined so that a consistent, long range program could be begun. It seems to me that this suggestion is worthy of consideration. The service of trained publicity men would be invaluable in properly publicizing the work of the board. With that idea in mind, I am making up a tentative plan for your approval.

AJL

TCB

March 28, 1938

Attached hereto are three samples of the "Jewett Plats" published by the Itasca County Abstract Company. It seems to me that, regardless of their other virtues or weaknesses, these maps would be extremely valuable for the work of the State Geographic Board. Mr. McAllister's letter, I believe, answers the questions raised by the committee in considering the question of purchasing this set.

AJL

## REPORT ON WORK OF THE STATE GEOGRAPHIC BOARD, 1938

Early last year the necessity for organizing a program of work to comply with the requirements of the law passed by the 1937 session of the Minnesota legislature became evident. In the furtherance of that work a two-fold program was begun. The one phase contemplated the assembling of data bearing on the derivation of Minnesota geographic names which is to be published as a gazetteer. The other phase contemplated establishing some relationship between the board, on one hand, and the various local governmental agencies and the people of Minnesota, on the other.

In the furtherance of this first phase of the work regarding the gazetteer of geographic names, we had first to determine in what form the material should be assembled. Using as a basis for proceeding, the card forms devised originally by Mr. Babcock and Mr. Pleva, a graduate student in the department of geography at the University of Minnesota, and the card used by the United States Board on Geographic Names, we devised a form card which is adequate for all the needs of the board. It combines simplicity and flexibility of form and with a minimum amount of confusion can be used successfully for the work. The blank cards were furnished by the WPA office, and arrangements were made in November with the department of conservation to print on a multigraph machine a sufficient supply of these cards to care for needs within the next few months. A misinterpretation of Mr. Pleva's report, submitted at the conclusion of his work in the department of conservation this summer, resulted in a cancellation of the order

to print these cards on the ground that there already was such a card available. Mr. Pleva, however, referred to the card which we had devised, and not to some form card prepared elsewhere. Nevertheless, as a result of that misunderstanding, only about ten thousand of twenty-five thousand cards were printed at that time. A sample of the cards is attached to this report.

The assembling of the data for the gazetteer contemplated the employing of a considerable number of WPA workers who would search through the various sources of information about the geographic names of Minnesota and condense this information so that it could be recorded on the cards. The plan was to begin with the simplest source, and proceed from that to the more difficult research problems. Accordingly, a force of five workers, which previously had been engaged in indexing the volumes of the manuscript United States Census for 1860, began work on August 8. Despite the fact that the qualifications of these workers were not what we felt to be the most desirable for the work, they have made considerable progress. During the four and one-half months since they began work, they have assembled data as recorded in Warren Upham's Minnesota Geographic Names, for eleven counties, and the assembling of information is practically complete for fifteen more. This work, of course, will require minor revisions for typing, but in general it may be regarded as complete. No cards have been typed for two reasons. In the first place a competent typist has not yet been assigned to do this work. In the second place the conservation department has not yet completed the task of printing the cards.

During December a tentative plan was worked out with Mr. Van de Mark of the Writers' Project whereby he would assign a force of

four to six competent persons to work on the project. This arrangement was possible because the Writers' Project is under orders from the national director of writers' projects to compile a gazetteer and encyclopedia of Minnesota which is to be almost identical in nature with that required of the State Geographic Board. Actually, this arrangement has not been put fully into effect, although there has been an understanding so that both groups might go ahead with their work without duplicating each other's work.

On February 4 a form letter was sent to the chairmen of the board of county commissioners in every county of the state. This letter contained a general invitation to the counties to call upon the State Geographic Board for advice and assistance, and a notice that the board was in a position to take action on name changes that were submitted to it. Copies of chapters 35 and 63 of the Session Laws of 1937, which defined the relationship of the board to the local communities, and defined the powers and duties of the State Geographic Board, together with suggestions as to forms of procedure were also sent.

The volume of business brought before the board has not been great. It has, however, been sufficient to indicate a potential public interest which may overwhelm the board if once it is aroused. It should be borne in mind that the board, as such, consists of three members, the commissioners of conservation and of the highway department, and the superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society. No funds were provided for the conduct of the business of the board, nor for the establishment of a personnel to carry on the very considerable amount of research work required to

answer questions about geographic names or to compile the gazetteer. It is left to the board, therefore, to seek means for furnishing this information and performing this work outside the regular channels. The members of the board, therefore, have each designated a member of their staff whose duty it shall be to see that this work is carried on as well as facilities permit. Because no funds are available for the purchase of supplies it is necessary to purchase them from funds allocated to the different departments. This is not a desirable arrangement. Perhaps the forthcoming legislature might be persuaded to provide this necessary appropriation.

Among the proposals for changes in names which have been called to the attention of the board during the past year several are deserving of special mention. The proposal to name an artificial lake created at Bronson, Minnesota, by the erection of a dam across the Two Rivers was laid before the board. On July 22, 1937, the board of county commissioners of Kittson County at an open meeting determined that the name of this lake should be Lake Bronson in accordance with a petition to this effect signed by residents of Bronson. At the same time, or shortly thereafter, counter petitions asking that the lake be named Lake Floyd B. Olson were filed in the office of the commissioner of conservation who thereupon requested that the county board refrain from action until further investigations were made. Nothing further having developed in this case, the citizens of Bronson undertook to insure the adoption of the name and their petition to the postmaster general for consent to name the town Lake Bronson was granted. It would seem that the protest of the State Geographic Board is not going to be effective.

There are a number of pending cases. In Crow Wing County the citizens of Merrifield desire to change the name of Long Lake to Lake Merrifield. A petition to that effect was addressed to the board in October. The board, wishing to determine more fully the attitude of the people, referred the petition to the county commissioners of Crow Wing County. As soon as they have made a decision the petition will again be referred to the State Geographic Board.

AJL

REPORT ON WORK OF THE STATE GEOGRAPHIC BOARD

July 21, 1938

In January various recommendations were made regarding the future activity of the State Geographic Board in its work of preparing for future publication a gazetteer of Minnesota geographic names, and the initiation of action to bring about a more "sensible" nomenclature for Minnesota's geographic features. During the past six months work has been done in both categories to bring them a step closer to fulfillment.

On February 4 a form letter was sent to the chairman of the board of county commissioners in every county of the state. The letter contained a general invitation to the counties to call upon the State Geographic Board for advice, and a notice that the board was organized and ready to take action on any name changes that were submitted to it. Copies of chapters 35 and 63 of the Session Laws of 1937 -- the former outlining the procedure to be followed by the local communities in changing names of lakes, and the latter establishing the State Geographic Board and defining its duties and powers, -- a sample petition to guide local petitioners, and a formal notification to the State Geographic Board of county action were enclosed. To avoid the necessity for writing long and involved letters explaining to individual inquirers the procedure to be followed in changing the names of lakes and streams, a mimeographed sheet was produced outlining the procedure to be followed.

The work done so far is but the bare beginning of what will have to be done, but it indicates that action has been taken. It will have to be followed by a campaign of publicity, and it seems logical that the best results would be obtained if such a campaign could be begun now while the tourist season is at its height. It is suggested that the publicity staff of the department of conservation be called upon for this purpose to guide the publication, in the newspapers of the state, of a well-balanced campaign to stimulate activity.

Among possible subjects for articles for such a campaign of publicity might be suggested the following: (1) The account of the creation of the State Geographic Board -- its personnel, powers and duties. (2) The relation of the State Geographic Board to the United States Committee on Geographical Names. (3) The relation of the work in classifying and changing geographic names in this state to the work in other states -- there are twenty-five or twenty-six state geographic boards in existence, and one gazetteer has been published. (4) The need for a State Geographic Board in Minnesota. Numerous illustrations of the point can be found. One such is suggested by the fact that there are ninety-nine Long lakes in the state, and ninety-one Mud lakes, to say nothing of the other names which are duplicated. In all, more than one hundred names are repeated five times or more. (5) Minnesota is a land of ten thousand lakes or more. Of these, according to a survey published by the department of drainage and waters in the Department of Conservation in 1928, less than 5,500 have names. This survey lists only those lakes about which meander lines have been run. (6) One of the functions of the State Geographic Board will be that

of tracing the historical derivation of the names of geographic features. This phase of the work alone will afford hundreds of opportunities for news stories which can be carried on over a long period of time. Many more topics for news releases can be suggested.

It is part of the function of the State Geographic Board to prepare for publication a gazetteer of the geographic names in the state. In fact, the successful performance of the work of changing names of features depends upon the completion of such a gazetteer. During the winter the first steps were taken to insure the compilation of such a gazetteer. A form card was devised and a thousand cards were mimeographed. The cards were put into use for experimental purposes by recording the geographic names in Aitkin County as listed by Upham in his Minnesota Geographic Names. For a portion of the county, the names of lakes recorded in Willard's Gazetteer of Meandered Lakes in Minnesota were added to the Upham list. The use of the cards on this experimental county has demonstrated their adaptability in most, if not all, cases that will have to be met in the compilation of the gazetteer.

In the compilation of the material for the gazetteer it is planned to utilize a number of WPA workers. For this purpose the employment of the workers, who now are completing the index to the United States census of 1860 as a part of the historical society project, is contemplated. It is expected that work by this group will be commenced within the month of July, for the census project is almost completed. The WPA office is undertaking to supply the project with a sufficient number of workers, cards of a suitable quality of the kind designed by us for this

purpose, a typewriter and filing equipment. With the exception of the typewriter, this material has not yet been delivered, but its arrival is assured. It may be necessary for the State Geographic Board to obtain funds for printing the cards. This, however, is the smallest item in the cost of obtaining form cards of the kind needed.

Attached hereto is a copy of a statement of the actual expenditures of the various departments on work for the State Geographic Board as reported to the secretary. The statement shows that the department of conservation has expended about forty-four dollars and fifty cents for supplies for the board. The historical society has spent six dollars, and the highway department has made no contribution in the way of money or supplies. I am informed unofficially that the department of conservation has employed Mr. Edward Pleva for a period of a month or so to do some work relating to Minnesota geographic names. The amount of the salary to be paid Mr. Pleva has not been reported, but it should be included in the statement of that department's contribution to the work. On the other hand, no attempt has been made on the part of the historical society to estimate the value of the time spent by various members of its staff in work for the State Geographic Board, although the amount of time so spent is considerable.

There are a number of questions which should be decided by the board. One of these is the question of the custody of the official files of the board. Such records, or copies of them, it would seem, should be in the possession of the secretary of the board. A typical case is that of the correspondence relating to the naming of an artificial lake at Bronson, Minnesota.

Only a small part of the correspondence actually has been placed in the files of the board. It is suggested that some official decision be reached on this point.

For the sake of continuity of action it is suggested that regular meetings of the State Geographic Board should be held quarterly or oftener, if the board sees fit. In the future, the need for more frequent meetings will arise, especially when the board is required to take official action upon name changes. One such case is at this time confronting the board. The board of county commissioners of Kittson County held a hearing on July 22, 1937, on the question of naming the artificial lake, which was created by the erection of a dam over the Two Rivers at Bronson, Lake Bronson. A counter petition was filed at the hearing asking that the lake be named Lake Floyd B. Olson. The county board voted to name the lake Lake Bronson. Because of this decision a storm of protest has been raised, and the question apparently is now before the State Geographic Board.

A number of facts stand out in this case. In the first place, it is not apparent that the board of county commissioners notified the State Geographic Board of the impending hearing, as required by law. In the second place, it is not apparent that the State Geographic Board ever was notified officially of the decision of the board of county commissioners. In the third place, the county board has proceeded as though the name selected is official and final, and has ordered the name placed on maps. Actually, two steps remain before the name can be considered legal: (1) Approval by the State Geographic Board; (2) approval by the United State Board on Geographical Names. The situation offers an opportunity for the State Geographic Board to

test its strength and diplomacy. The question also may involve other points. For example, in this case, the petitioners seeking the designation of the lake as "Lake Bronson" were all residents of the Bronson community. The protests came from residents in other portions of the county. Which is to bear the most weight -- the wishes of the people who live in the immediate vicinity of the lake which is to be named, or those living somewhat farther away? It is of interest to note that chairman Herman C. Wenzel has asked the county officials to withhold further action until the evidence has been examined by the State Geographic Board.

A number of other inquiries regarding changes in the names of lakes have been received. These have been answered either by the chairman or the secretary of the State Geographic Board. The volume of such correspondence has not been great, but it is an indication of a latent public interest which, once the spotlight of publicity has been directed upon the desirability of changing the names of lakes, may soon overwhelm it with a flood of correspondence and requests for information which will require tedious and painstaking research. Therefore, the necessity of getting an appropriation for the establishment of a permanent staff will be pressing. The question of what kind of a staff and the amount of the appropriations needed for its maintenance cannot be stated at this time, but supplies and equipment will have to be provided from some source. Closely connected with that is the problem of finding working quarters for such a staff. Can the historical society find the space for the State Geographic Board employes, when and if such a staff is established? That would appear to be the logical place

for the work to be carried on, for a very great deal of it will involve detailed historical research, for the prosecution of which the society is ideally equipped.

Respectfully submitted,

*Arthur J. Larsen*

Statement of Mimeograph work done by Department of  
Conservation for Minnesota State Geographic Board

Index Cards	5x8	1000	\$6.00
	Stencil	1	.13
	Typing	30 minutes	.25
	Running	45 "	<u>.45</u>
			\$6.83
Petition to Board of County Commissioners - 100 copies - 2 pages			
	Bond, legal size	200 sheets	.60
	Stencils	2	.25
	Typing	30 minutes	.25
	Running	20 "	<u>.20</u>
			\$1.30
Letter to Board of County Commissioners - 100 copies			
	Bond, letter size	100 sheets	.25
	Stencil	1	.12
	Typing	20 minutes	.18
	Running	10 "	<u>.10</u>
			\$ .65
Copies of Ch. 35 Session Laws 1937 - 100 copies 3 pages			
"	"	" 63 " " 1937 - 100 " 1 page	
	Bond, letter size	400 sheets	1.00
	Stencils	4	.50
	Typing	1 1/2 hrs.	.75
	Running	30 minutes	<u>.30</u>
			\$2.55
Letter Minnesota State Geographic Board - 100 copies			
	Bond, letter size	100 sheets	.25
	Stencil	1	.13
	Typing	20 minutes	.17
	Running	10 "	<u>.10</u>
			\$ .65
Mimeograph Ink	1/4 lb.		.30
			<u><u></u></u>
			\$12.28

The statement submitted by Mr. Gould of the department of conservation does not include the itemized cost of mimeographing 500 copies of the instructions governing local procedure in changing names. The estimated cost of this would be:

Paper	\$1.25
Stencil	.13
Typing 20 minutes	.18
Running, about 40 minutes	<u>.40</u>
	\$2.96
Letter heads 5000	<u>30.00</u>
	\$32.96

The Minnesota Historical Society has contributed:

Postage (Letters to county commissioners)	\$5.22
Copy <u>Sixth Report</u> , U. S. Geographic Board	<u>.80</u>
	\$6.02

D. T.  
File.

Aug. 1, 1938

AJL:

I feel more than ever that we should get the geographic name work started. Could you not, with Miss Bell's co-operation, get the thing going? Even if you used temporary cards for the first work. Perhaps the cards we ordered are now here. I see some packages in the office. The main thing, however, is to begin the work. I saw Miss Bell for a minute the other day and I got the impression that she could easily arrange to start at least a part of the group~~s~~ on the names.

TCB

D.T.  
file

Aug. 1, 1938

AJL:

I did not hear from Mr. Vandermark this morning . If he calls, will you ask him kindly to write me a letter on the subject. Tell him that I ~~xxxx~~ am interested in the county histories and that he can depend on me to reply. As the thing now stands, I am somewhat foggy as to just what he would like to have me do. Of course, it would not be possible for me to certify every volume as correct in all details. To do that would entail a complete re-checking of every source of information used in a given volume, and many of the sources are local, inaccessible to me. In a word, what we can do is to read a volume and to offer such criticisms as our reading suggests. If this kind of critical help is desired, we shall be glad to give it. We should do it, however, with the understanding that for the accuracy of the work in all details the project and the individual workers are responsible. Everything really hinges upon their methods and scholarship.

TCB

TCB

October 26, 1938

I was interested to know that the Great Northern Railroad has collected information about geographic names along its line. I wonder if we can get access to that file. If you think it desirable, I might contact Mr. Moore of the Great Northern publicity staff. He has been very friendly and probably would try to make this information available for us. Or would you rather write directly to Mr. McKenney?

The book to which Mr. Hill referred is A History of the Origin of the Place Names Connected With the Chicago and Northwestern and Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railways, by W. H. Stennett (Chicago, 1908). This society has a copy. Do you suppose the Great Northern contemplates a publication of a similar nature.

AJL

Oct. 26, 1938

AJL:

Mr. Hill told me that he thought the Great Northern would be glad to give us access to the geographic names file. Just how far they would want to go in letting us use it remains to be seen. Probably Mr. Hill himself would be the best medium of approach. Why not drop in at his office ( 1453 W - First National Bank Bldg. ) and ask him? You could say that you came at my suggestion and were acting for the Society in the matter.

I am very much pleased about the Finnish newspaper. By all means let us get the earlier file, arrange this file and bind it, and acquire any additional files that it is possible to get. Send Mr. Harju's bill to me when it comes in.

I have asked Mr. Wenzell for a meeting of the Geographic Board next Monday.

TCB

Geog. B2.

TCB

November 23, 1938

Mr. Cass called, in some perturbation, yesterday regarding the form card for the geographic names project. He informed me that in the report submitted by Mr. Pleva at the conclusion of his work this summer, a supply of form cards especially devised for such a project could be obtained in any quantity from the University of Minnesota, and because of this, the mimeographing of the card, which we submitted was being discontinued.

It happens that the form for the card which we devised was worked out independently by us. However, it was discussed with Mr. Pleva at different times during the summer. Mr. Pleva did not mention at any time any form cards devised by the university even though I specifically asked for information of that sort. The card which we devised was discussed with Mr. Cass several months ago. It has been demonstrated that it is satisfactory and we now have had a supply of ten thousand printed. Using this card as a basis, the work of compiling information on geographic names in the counties is now complete.

Mr. Pleva's report has not been seen by Mr. Blegen although Mr. Pleva was employed, I believe, on the condition that he work in co-operation with Mr. Blegen. Neither Mr. Blegen nor I have had an opportunity to see the recommendations he made.

AJL

C O P Y

Mr. Babcock

February 1, 1939

Miss Bell informs me that Miss Boynton does not wish to be transferred and would prefer to remain on the historical society project even though her salary on this project will be considerably lower than it would be at the university. Miss Boynton already has spoken to Mrs. Blackburn about the matter and Mrs. Blackburn promised her that if we want her back she can be reassigned to work here. I have discussed this with Mr. Blegen and he has agreed with me that if she wishes to return we should do everything to make it possible for her to do so. In spite of the handicap under which she works she is by far the ablest person working on that project. Perhaps you will get in contact with Mrs. Blackburn about this and tell her that we will be glad to have Mrs. Boynton return.

AJL

6  
April 15, 1944

REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE STATE GEOGRAPHIC BOARD

The act establishing the State Geographic Board (Laws, 1937, ch. 63), to consist of the Commissioner of Conservation, the Commissioner of State Highways, and the Superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, made it the duty of the board, and gave it the power and authority, to determine the correct and most appropriate names of geographic features in the state; to name unnamed features; to change names of features, in co-operation with county boards, for the purpose of eliminating duplication of place names within the state; and to prepare an official dictionary of geographic names which it shall publish either as a completed whole or in parts when ready.

In order for the board to carry out the duties laid upon it by the legislature, it must first collect and tabulate available information about Minnesota place names. It cannot determine the correct and most appropriate names of geographic features unless it knows the various names by which a feature is called, and something about the history of those names. It cannot name unnamed features unless it knows what those features are. It cannot eliminate duplication of place names unless it knows what duplication exists in the state. And, most certainly, it cannot prepare and publish an official gazetteer of Minnesota without assembling and arranging the information for it.

As soon as it was organized, the board made plans for listing the names of all geographic features in Minnesota, with the location of each by township, range, and section, information about the origin of each name, and other pertinent data. WPA workers on a project sponsored by the board culled the names from maps, atlases, gazetteers, travel accounts, newspapers, and numerous other sources, and compiled the information on slips. Before the work of gathering all available material was completed, WPA was disbanded. With the cessation of

WPA, the result of the project's work was turned over to the board. It consisted of approximately 200,000 slips, each containing information about one place name acquired from a single source. Since many sources were used, there are several slips for most names. While this mass of material is badly written, unorganized, and filed in the worst possible arrangement, nevertheless it has great value. The proportion of inaccuracies is small, considering the lack of training of all the workers and the poor caliber of some of them; and the inaccuracies are fairly easy to detect in comparing all the slips for one name.

The work of checking, consolidating, and putting these records into shape is a large task. The permanent records are typed on 5 x 8 cards. Ultimately the records should include a card for every natural and cultural feature in the state, with as much of the following information as can be provided: ~~The~~ location by county, township, range, and section; the various names and spellings under which a feature is known; the pronunciation of unusual names; the origin of the name -- when and by whom named, for whom or what named, <sup>why</sup> ~~who~~ so named; its area or dimensions, such as the acreage of lakes, the height of hills, etc.; the dates of platting and incorporation of cities and villages; the date of organization of townships; and, in the case of lakes and streams, the number assigned by the Water Resources Division of the Conservation Department. Cross references are made for each of the various names by which a feature is known. Decisions of the U. S. Board on Geographic Names are typed ~~in~~ on the cards in red, and decisions of the State Geographic Board are indicated by a red asterisk, and the date of the decision is given in each case; and decisions of both boards are written in on a master map, which was given to the board by the Highway Department. (~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> Sample cards, showing how this information is listed, ~~is~~ attached to this report.)

To make the records convenient for reference, at least three different files will have to be maintained: (1) a file arranged alphabetically under each of the

eighty-seven counties, as experience has shown that the work of collecting information and building up the records can best be done by counties; (2) a file arranged alphabetically for the state as a whole, to take care of features that are included in more than one county, as well as to refer to place names when it is not known in what counties they are located; and (3) a file arranged by location -- township, range, and section -- to take care of the many unnamed features in the state.

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ful. There was much duplication of work, and much wasted effort. Nevertheless, a large amount of valuable information was accumulated which, under existing circumstances, could not have been acquired otherwise.

Mrs. Berthel has devoted a great deal of time to this work. At various times, for periods of weeks and sometimes months, the Historical Society has arranged to relieve her of her normal activities to allow her to carry on the Geographic Board work. Since the cessation of WPA, she has spent much time in organizing the records and handling correspondence. The work is still seriously handicapped by the disorganization of the records. If a way could be found to hire a typist, even for part time, progress in getting the records in shape could be accelerated considerably.

In spite of difficulties, considerable progress has been made with the records. The information has been checked, consolidated, edited, cross-referenced, and filed alphabetically under <sup>23</sup>~~22~~ of Minnesota's 87 counties; and cards covering 12 counties have been made for the general alphabetical file for the state as a whole. In the file by counties only a few of the cards have been typed, but the information on them is usable.

Even a casual inspection of the records so far accumulated gives evidence of the enormous confusion in Minnesota place names. Not until all the records are consolidated and properly filed will it be possible to know just how great this confusion is. Confusion and duplication in names exist for all types of geographic features, but they are more extensive in the case of lakes than with other features. In the Gazetteer of Meandered Lakes of Minnesota published by the Department of Drainage and Waters in 1928, there are listed 99 Long, 91 Mud, 76 Rice, 43 Bass, 40 Twin, 39 Round, 36 Clear, 32 Sand, Sandy, or Sands, 25 Pine, and 25 Cedar lakes, and many others that are duplicated several times. How many more unmeandered lakes repeat these names we do not know. There are hundreds of lakes throughout the state that are known by more than one name -- some of them by as many as five or six names -- and hundreds more that bear no names.

The public should be acquainted with this situation and with the need for remedying it, for the board must have the support of the public to accomplish its purposes. The little publicity that the work of the board has received at various times has brought forth a response in the way of inquiries about names and the procedure to follow in changing them which is evidence of a considerable interest in the subject throughout the state. It is hardly worth while to have much publicity, however, until the records are in order, for it encourages inquiries which are difficult, if not impossible, to handle under the present circumstances. Some requests for information require hours of research, when a few minutes would suffice if the records were usable.

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This method proved to be very successful in eliminating confusion and duplication of names in the areas of the national forests; and, at a meeting of the board on June 18, 1942, the question was raised whether agencies of the state might not be called upon to perform a similar service for areas outside the national forests. It was suggested by Dr. Strunk, who was then a member of the board, that the game wardens and other employees in the Department of Conservation might undertake this work within the areas assigned to them, and that action so initiated might go far toward eliminating unnecessary duplication of names and toward giving satisfactory names to hitherto unnamed features. So far, nothing has been done in regard to this matter.

A serious difficulty that the board has met in naming and renaming geographic features has been the inertia of local people. The board has had many requests to change names; but when the persons making the requests are sent petition blanks and informed of the procedure to follow, they apparently drop the matter and no more is heard from them.

If, as the records of a county are completed, they could be mimeographed and sent to game wardens and other field workers of the various state depart-

ments in that county, to the county boards and other officers, and to the local newspapers, enough interest might be aroused locally to result in action. The mimeographed records would show very clearly the extent of confusion and duplication in names in the area, and they might also bring forth from local people corrections and additional information that would be highly useful to the board. A statement of the board's policy in regard to the type of names which it considers appropriate should accompany the mimeographed lists. The board has not yet adopted such a policy; but since its decisions are submitted to the U. S. Board on Geographical Names, it might be well to follow the policy that governs the national board.

A budget request, providing for a biennial appropriation of \$5000 to carry on the work of the board, was presented to the 1943 legislature, but no appropriation was made.

April 15, 1944

## REPORT OF THE WORK OF THE STATE GEOGRAPHIC BOARD

The act establishing the State Geographic Board (Laws, 1937, ch. 63), to consist of the Commissioner of Conservation, the Commissioner of State Highways, and the Superintendent of the Minnesota Historical Society, made it the duty of the board, and gave it the power and authority, to determine the correct and most appropriate names of geographic features in the state; to name unnamed features; to change names of features, in cooperation with county boards, for the purpose of eliminating duplication of place names within the state; and to prepare an official dictionary of geographic names which it shall publish either as a completed whole or in parts when ready.

In order for the board to carry out the duties laid upon it by the legislature, it must first collect and tabulate available information about Minnesota place names. It cannot determine the correct and most appropriate names of geographic features unless it knows the various names by which a feature is called, and something about the history of those names. It cannot name unnamed features unless it knows what those features are. It cannot eliminate duplication of place names unless it knows what duplication exists in the state. And, most certainly, it cannot prepare and publish an official gazetteer of Minnesota without assembling and arranging the information for it.

As soon as it was organized, the board made plans for listing the names of all geographic features in Minnesota, with the location of each by township, range, and section, information about the origin of each name, and other pertinent data. WPA workers

on a project sponsored by the board culled the names from maps, atlases, gazetteers, travel accounts, newspapers, and numerous other sources, and compiled the information on slips. Before the work of gathering all available material was completed, WPA was disbanded. With the cessation of WPA, the result of the project's work was turned over to the board. It consisted of approximately 200,000 slips, each containing information about one place name acquired from a single source. Since many sources were used, there are several slips for most names. While this mass of material is badly written, unorganized, and filed in the worst possible arrangement, nevertheless it has great value. The proportion of inaccuracies is small, considering the lack of training of all the workers and the poor caliber of some of them; and the inaccuracies are fairly easy to detect in comparing all the slips for one name.

The work of checking, consolidating, and putting these records into shape is a large task. The permanent records are typed on 5 x 8 cards. Ultimately the records should include a card for every natural and cultural feature in the state, with as much of the following information as can be provided: the location by county, township, range, and section; the various names and spellings under which a feature is known; the pronunciation of unusual names; the origin of the name -- when and by whom named, for whom or what named, why so named; its area or dimensions, such as the acreage of lakes, the height of hills, etc.; the dates of platting and incorporation of cities and villages; the date of organization of townships; and, in the case of lakes and streams, the number assigned by the Water Resources Division

of the Conservation Department. Cross references are made for each of the various names by which a feature is known. Decisions of the U. S. Board on Geographic Names are typed on the cards in red, and decisions of the State Geographic Board are indicated by a red asterisk, and the date of the decision is given in each case; and decisions of both boards are written in on a master map, which was given to the board by the Highway Department. (Sample cards, showing how this information is listed, are attached to this report.)

To make the records convenient for reference, at least three different files will have to be maintained: (1) a file arranged alphabetically under each of the eighty-seven counties, as experience has shown that the work of collecting information and building up the records can best be done by counties; (2) a file arranged alphabetically for the state as a whole, to take care of features that are included in more than one county, as well as to refer to place names when it is not known in what counties they are located; and (3) a file arranged by location -- township, range, and section -- to take care of the many unnamed features in the state.

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APR 20 1954

A HISTORIC REVIEW OF CREEKS, STREAMS AND RIVERS ORIGINATING IN CLEAR-  
WATER COUNTY AND FLOWING TO ALL POINTS OF THE COMPASS,  
FROM WITHIN THE BORDERS OF THE COUNTY,  
WHICH CLASSIFY CLEARWATER COUNTY AS THE HEIGHT OF LAND IN THE HEART OF  
THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT.

\*\*\*\*\*

ELK CREEK in the extreme South end of CLEARWATER COUNTY flows North into ELK LAKE which in turn discharge its waters into the ITASCA LAKE in the ITASCA STATE PARK. The ITASCA LAKE discharge its waters into the MISSISSIPPI RIVER, which in turn is the OFFICIAL SOURCE of the FATHER OF WATERS in the UNITED STATES on its way to the GULF OF MEXICO.

INDIAN SPRINGS CREEK: There is a chain of Lakes and interlocking network of small springs and creeks which originate in Township I43 N. Range 38 West on the WHITE EARTH INDIAN RESERVATION in the Southwest Corner of CLEARWATER COUNTY which form an unnamed CREEK, which originate in Section Nine according to the present map. For the present we shall name it "THE INDIAN SPRINGS CREEK." This is the official source of the BUFFALO RIVER which flow South and finally West into the RED RIVER OF THE NORTH near GEORGETOWN in CLAY COUNTY.

AUGINAUSH CREEK originate in Section 31, Township I45 N., R. 38 West, on the WHITE EARTH INDIAN RESERVATION, and flow Northeast into RICE LAKE in Section 27. It is rated as an excellent BROOK TROUT STREAM.

BUCK BOARD CREEK originate in a small Lake in Section 32 in the Township of RICE and flow Northwest entering the WILD RICE RIVER in Section 2, Township No. ### I44 N. R. 38 West on the White EARTH INDIAN RESERVATION. It is a spring fed creek and considered one of the best BROOK TROUT STREAMS in the South part of the County.

MOSQUITO CREEK originate from a group of springs in Section I9 in NORA Township, and flow Southwest and enter RICE LAKE in the North End in Section I4 in the Township of FALK. It is well known for its heavy run of Northerns during spawning season in the early spring. The name would indicate that it is a good place to ### steer clear of in June and July!

SUCKER CREEK begin its ### journey to the East from HEART LAKE in RICE Township, crossing TRUNK HIGHWAY NO. 92 in Section 25 in the Township of ITASCA and flowing directly into the MISSISSIPPI RIVER ## in Section 27 in ITASCA Township. It is considered a good TROUT Stream. WE recommend it especially for GERMAN BROWN TROUT.

BEAR CREEK'S course is in the Township of BEAR CREEK and flow Northeast and swing to the Southeast entering the MISSISSIPPI RIVER in Section 26 in BEAR CREEK Township. The BEAR CREEK was ### named by the first settlers who found it the home of numerous bears who are not always the best neighbors, especially when you are pioneering in the wilderness.

WILD RICE RIVER originate in Section 27 in the Township of RICE, and flow to the Northeast, thence Northwest, and after having performed a half circle is again flowing South and West, and again performing a half circle is flowing North into RICE LAKE which is a part of the WHITE EARTH INDIAN RESERVATION. From the Northwest Point of the RICE LAKE it flows Northwest and eventually West and South and finally North into the RED RIVER OF THE NORTH near HALSTAD in NORMAN COUNTY.

THE NORTH BRANCH OF THE RICE RIVER originate in LAKE MINERVA and flow West and South and finally connect with the main RICE RIVER in Section 2I in the Township of MINERVA.

MOOSE CREEK rise in Section 2I in the Township of MOOSE, and originate in a bed of COOL SPRINGS and flow Northeast into MOOSE LAKE on the border of CLEARWATER and BELTRAMI COUNTIES, which in turn empties its waters into the LITTLE MISSISSIPPI RIVER. It is a fair BROOK TROUT CREEK.

THE LITTLE MISSISSIPPI RIVER originate in Section IO in the Township of SHEVLIN, from a group of springs about two miles Northeast of the Village of SHEVLIN, and flow Southeast and enter BELTRAMI COUNTY from Section 2I in CLEARWATER COUNTY, winding its way down too and enter MOOSE LAKE near its Eastern End. From the Lake continue ~~East~~ East to MONOMIN LAKE which it enter on its way to join the FATHER OF WATERS passing just South of its border. From the source of the LITTLE MISSISSIPPI RIVER over to the CLEARWATER RIVER is a very short distance. At one time about 50 years ago a group of smart politicians was considering connecting the two rivers. Its motive seemed to be to take WATER from the CLEARWATER RIVER and divert it into the LITTLE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, which would have destroyed the BEAUTIES OF CLEARWATER RIVER and its USEFULNESS to the PEOPLE who reside along its borders. THANKS to a group of public spirited men at BAGLEY, SHEVLIN and the NORTH SECTION of CLEARWATER COUNTY this steal was SQUELCHED in the making.

LAKE

WALKER BROOK originate at WALKER BROOK, in Section One, in the Township of NORA, and flow Northwest entering the CLEARWATER RIVER just South of BAGLEY the COUNTY SEAT OF CLEARWATER COUNTY

CLEARWATER RIVER. Our next subject is our beloved CLEARWATER RIVER with its CRYSTAL CLEAR and SKY BLUE WATERS flowing thru a land of beauty from GROVES OF BEAUTIFUL PINES and HARDWOOD TIMBERS in the South to the open prairie lands in the Northern Section of CLEARWATER COUNTY'S rich farm lands favorable to the BLACK SOIL in the FAMOUS RED RIVER OF THE NORTH!

It originate in a small Lake in Section 29 in the Township of POPPLE and flow East to the VILLAGE OF BAGLEY. Here it deflect sharply to the Northeast and continue on to a point on the border of CLEARWATER and BELTRAMI COUNTIES in Section 36 in the Township of DUDLEY and continue on EAST for a short distance when it again gradually swing to the Northwest and enter the Lake at the Southeast point of CLEARWATER LAKE. At the NEVING DAM and the site of the STATE FISH REARING POND it leave CLEARWATER LAKE and again enter CLEARWATER RIVER in Section I2 in SINCLAIR Township and continue on ~~its~~ its course Northwest where it intersect the RED LAKE INDIAN RESERVATION at Section 22 in GREENWOOD Township. From here ~~the border between the RESERVATION and CLEARWATER COUNTY~~ Northwest it serve as the border between the RESERVATION and CLEARWATER COUNTY terminating its course in CLEARWATER COUNTY at Section 6 in HANGAARD Township. From here on its course is generally West to Northwest entering the RED LAKE RIVER just North of RED LAKE FALLS, where it join the RED LAKE RIVER on its way to the RED RIVER OF THE NORTH and on to the HUDSON BAY in NORTHERN CANADA bordering the NORTH POLE! It is SPRING FED thruout its entire course in CLEARWATER and BELTRAMI COUNTIES above CLEARWATER LAKE, which make it the IDEAL HOME for RAINBOW and GERMAN BROWN TROUT!

The MINNESOTA CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT have just completed a wonderful "IMPROVEMENT PROJECT" on the CLEARWATER RIVER South of CLEARWATER LAKE which WE rest assured will make it one of the greatest TROUT FISHING WATERS in this Section of the STATE!

RUFFY BROOK is one of the most important streams and well known for its splendid TROUT FISHING WATERS. It was the first stream in CLEARWATER COUNTY in which BROOK TROUT was planted in 1909. The fingerlings were ~~###~~ hauled out by Ole A. Engebretson and Andrew K. Brandvold farmers in LEON Township, in lumber wagons drawn by horses. This planting was a complete success and the fore runner of TROUT STOCKING in the rest of the CREEKS and RIVERS in CLEARWATER COUNTY! They picked up the TROUT at BAGLEY, which was a long and weary trip to make with horses in a rough and snake like trail!

The RUFFY BROOK originate in a small Lake in Section 27 in the Township of HOLST, and flow generally North and slightly West thru the Townships of LEON, and GREENWOOD, entering the CLEARWATER RIVER in Section 22 in GREENWOOD Township bordering the REDLAKE INDIAN RESERVATION. It is SPRING FED by a series of LARGE COOL SPRINGS which make it one of the IDEAL BROOK TROUT STREAMS IN CLEARWATER COUNTY.

LOST RIVER originate in a series of LARGE SPRINGS in Section 35 in EDDY Township. It flows Northwest and finally into PINE LAKE. It leave PINE LAKE in Section 21 and flow thru the village of GONVICK and on North and West into WINSOR Township where it was originally lost in a flat swamp area. But, drainage has opened a channel for its course West when it finally enter CLEARWATER RIVER near TERREBONNE in RED LAKE COUNTY. PINE LAKE is noted for its wonderful WALL, EYED PIKE and NORTHERN PIKE FISHING, with DUCKS and GEESE hunting in the fall of the year!

NESSETH CREEK originate in Section 33 in the Township of EDDY and flow North into LOST RIVER in Section 27 in EDDY Township. Both the LOST RIVER and NESSETH CREEKS are well known BROOK TROUT WATERS being fed by LARGE COOL SPRINGS thru out the area. Its TROUT FISHING WATERS are among the best in the COUNTY. WE invite special attention by the CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT to the NESSETH and LOST RIVER!

SILVER CREEK originate in Section 13 Township of EDDY and flow North thru EDDY, PINE LAKE, LEON and into WINSOR Township where it connect with the LOST RIVER in Section 34.

CLEARBROOK CREEK has its source in the STEENERSON and DEEP LAKE just Southeast of CLEARBROOK. Those Lakes are SPRING FED and located just South of the LAKEHEAD PUMP STATION. It flow Northwest thru the Village of CLEARBROOK, and enter the SILVER CREEK in Section 30 in the Township of LEON.

OLLESTAD CREEK originate in Section 24 in LEON Township and flow North into JOHNSON LAKE, a beautiful Spring Fed Lake. From this point it wind its way on North and enter Sinclair Township in Section 7, and pass on North and connect with the CLEARWATER RIVER in Section 6 in SINCLAIR Township.

SPIKE CREEK originate in BASS LAKE located in Section 20, in the Township of SINCLAIR, and flow North into ANDERSON LAKE in Section 16, thence North into SPIKE LAKE established by the CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT when the SPIKE LAKE DAM was constructed. A few rods below this DAM it join up with CLEARWATER RIVER.

SANDY RIVER has its source in Section 36 in ROOSEVELT Township in BELTRAMI COUNTY, and flow North into the SANDY LAKE from which point it continue its course Northwest entering CLEARWATER COUNTY in Section 24, and continue on its course to the LOWER RED LAKE entering it in Section 22.

# 4.

It is an ideal stream for BROWN TROUT with long deep pools, high banks, and medium fast running water with splendid rapids at many points and fed by many ~~####~~ COOL SPRINGS. It should be stocked from ~~###~~ CLEARWATER COUNTY East to the DEBS area in BELTRAMI COUNTY. I consider it a SUPER STREAM for GERMAN BROWN TROUT! ~~#####~~

BUTCHER KNIFE CREEK originate in the SWANSON LAKE located in Section 2I in CLOVER Township and flow Northwest into the RED LAKE INDIAN RESERVATION thru a string of three good fishing lakes on its course and enter CLEARWATER RIVER at Section 7 in the Township of GREENWOOD. We have not been in position to find the ~~####~~ reason for this odd and dangerous name. It is undoubtedly of Indian origin

RED LAKE RIVER is the MAJESTIC RIVER which flow West out of the LOWER RED LAKE in Section 29 and West into PENNINGTON COUNTY and continue on Northwest to the CITY OF THIEF RIVER FALLS, where it turn and flow directly South to RED LAKE FALLS in RED LAKE COUNTY, and continue on in a South-Westerly course to the CITY OF CROOKSTON in POLK COUNTY, from where it continue on Northwest until it enter the RED RIVER OF THE NORTH at EAST and WEST GRAND FORKS, on its way to the CITY OF WINNIPEG, LAKE WINNIPEG and on to the HUDSON BAY in the vastness of NORTHERN CANADA.

MISSISSIPPI RIVER the beginning and the end of our historic review is now presented for the final survey of the WATER SHED in CLEARWATER COUNTY, which is of NATIONAL and INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE. It is also known as THE FATHER OF WATERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

The height OF LAND or the point at which form the division of waters flowing NORTH or SOUTH in CLEARWATER COUNTY is in Section I5 in the Township of RICE, on TRUNK HIGHWAY NO. 92, where WATERS from the WILD RICE RIVER flow NORTH, and immediately to the Southeast on the SOUTH side of the HIGHWAY flow SOUTHEAST from LONG LAKE and into the MISSISSIPPI RIVER, which after flowing NORTHEAST enter LAKE BEMIDJI in BELTRAMI COUNTY, and EAST to CASS LAKE, WINNIBIGOSHISH, BALL CLUB, past GRAND RAPIDS and SOUTH to AITKIN and on to the TWIN CITIES on its way SOUTH to the GULF OF MEXICO!

This will establish without a question of doubt that CLEARWATER COUNTY in the STATE OF MINNESOTA is the HEIGHT OF LAND in almost the very CENTRAL PART of the NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT at which WATERS originate within its borders and FLOW TO ALL POINTS OF THE COMPASS, and finally empty into some of the MAIN RIVERS in the LAND, and coming to rest in INTERNATIONAL WATERS NORTH AS WELL AS SOUTH!

WE are proud of our central, magic and strategic location which should be an attraction of great historic value to men and women interested in the topography of the BEAUTIFUL ITASCA STATE PARK in the HEART OF MINNESOTA'S WONDER LAND IN CLEARWATER COUNTY in HEART OF NORTH AMERICA THE LAND OF FREEDOM!

The number of Creeks, Brooks and Rivers in CLEARWATER COUNTY is 25. There are a large number of Springs, Streamlets and Rivulets which are not compiled which eventually enter some of the above named waters.

ALBERT ANDERSON,  
Clearbrook,  
Minnesota.  
County Commissioner 4th District,  
Clearwater County.  
April 19th, 1954.

*Albert Anderson,*  
*Clearbrook,*  
*Clearwater County,* *Minnesota.*