

Edwin Whitefield

SETTLERS' ARTIST

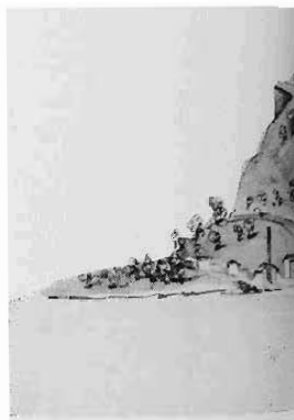
BERTHA L. HEILBRON

WHEN for the first time Edwin Whitefield "looked upon the Mississippi River," he recorded in his diary that he could see "nothing very remarkable about it." The time was August 16, 1855, and the place, the mouth of the Fever River below Galena, where this itinerant artist of long experience in depicting the scenery of New England and eastern Canada had boarded a steamboat a few hours earlier. As he pushed upstream, however, the traveler found that the views "increased in variety and interest," and by the time he reached Prairie du Chien he could exclaim enthusiastically: "I never saw any country which pleased me half so much as this." He even expressed his belief that "Nothing of the kind can be imagined more beautiful." Lured by the valley's attractions, he continued northward, and on August 27 arrived in St. Paul. Though "not quite so picturesque" as he had been led to expect, he still found the crude territorial

capital a good subject for a "large sketch." While there he spent an evening with Governor Willis A. Gorman, "a plain, easy, pleasant sort of a man."¹ Thus began Whitefield's

¹ Whitefield Diary, August 16, 17, 27, 28, 29, 1855. Twelve diaries, kept at intervals from 1850 to 1890, and a collection of Whitefield's papers and works are owned by the Boston Public Library; the Minnesota Historical Society has copies of the diaries for 1855-56, 1858, and 1859-60, and of other papers relating to the artist's Minnesota years. All were made available through the kind co-operation of Mr. Sinclair H. Hitchings and Miss Lucia Blackwelder of the Boston Public Library. Valuable items and information were furnished by Whitefield's granddaughter, Mrs. Frances C. Bond of Wellesley Hills, Massachusetts.

Miss Heilbron is well known for her work in the field of western American art. She is also the author of The Thirty-Second State: A Pictorial History of Minnesota (1958), of which a second edition will appear this summer.





In the two unfinished water colors shown here, Whitefield sketched Wabasha (left) and Fountain City, Wisconsin (below), as seen from a Mississippi River steamboat.

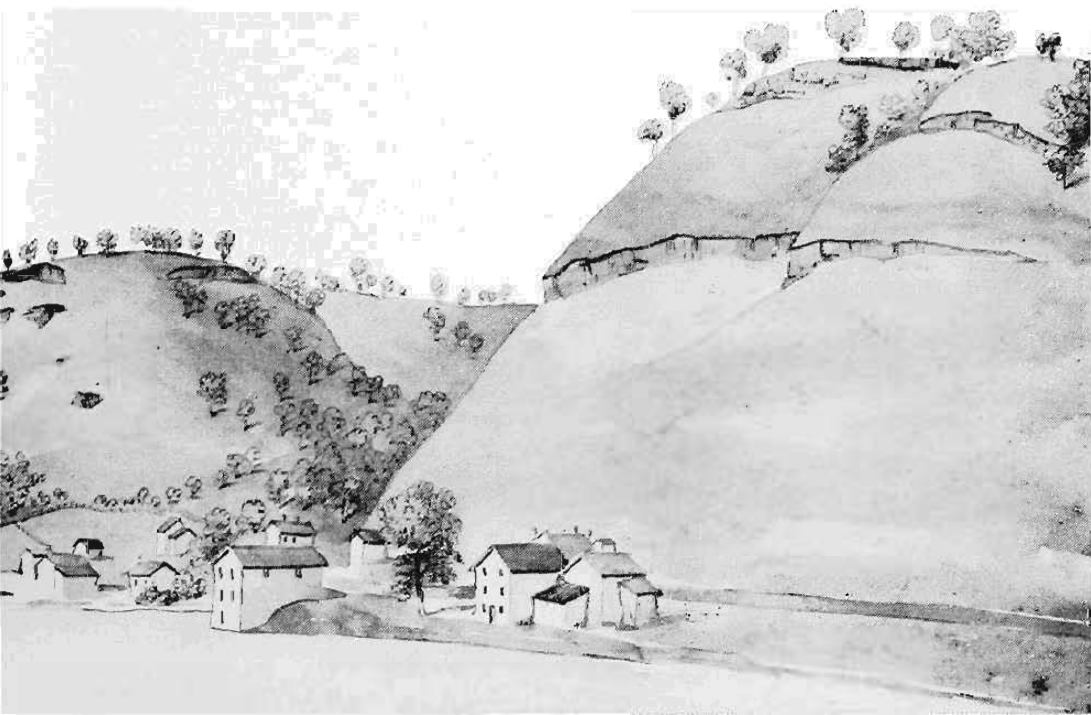
interest in the Minnesota country — an area with which he was to be closely identified for nearly half a decade.

Almost a year was to pass before Whitefield undertook a second excursion to the upper Mississippi. In the interval he traveled widely by rail, steamboat, stagecoach, and on foot, his itinerary extending eastward from Galena to upstate New York, and northward to Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and other Canadian communities. Back in Galena in the summer of 1856, he boarded the "Ocean Wave" bound for St. Paul, where he arrived on July 25. But he stopped only

briefly for breakfast before taking the first stage to St. Anthony, where, according to his diary, he registered at the St. Charles Hotel and promptly "walked up to Cheever's Observatory about 1 mile from the centre of town, and commanding a very fine view of St. Anthony's Falls and the two towns of St. Anthony and Minneapolis." The artist's next remark makes clear the object of his visit: "It will make a capital picture."²

By this time Whitefield had published a long list of lithographed views in color of North American cities — Albany, Brooklyn, Baltimore, Boston, Cincinnati, Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, Toronto, and Galena among them. These he sold to subscribers, who were personally solicited, at prices

² Whitefield Diary, September, 1855, to July, 1856, especially July 22 and 25, 1856.



varying from two to fifteen dollars each. Since in Galena alone he obtained 160 subscribers for his view of the city, his picture business must have shown a considerable profit.³ Obviously, it was to add to his album of American municipalities a view of the Falls of St. Anthony flanked by the twin towns of Minneapolis and St. Anthony that the artist traveled to the upper Mississippi in 1856. Since he came highly recommended and was hailed in the local press as the “distinguished publisher of views of different cities in the United States and Canada,” he soon had subscribers enough to make his Minnesota project financially feasible. The elevation afforded by Cheever’s Tower proved an ideal spot for making sketches, which he quickly completed. It was not until September, 1857, however, that the print entitled “View of St. Anthony, Minneapolis and St. Anthony’s Falls” had been lithographed by Endicott and Company of New York and was ready for delivery to subscribers. In announcing its publication, the discerning editor of a local newspaper commented that the print was not only appropriate “for parlor ornament or for a gift,” but predicted that it would be “of historic interest a few years hence.”⁴

During the interval between his arrival and the publication of his lithograph, Whitefield found a new use for his talents as he became involved in a project that for a time transformed him from an itinerant print maker into a settlers’ artist intent on frontier promotion. Tall, thin, and wiry, with features accented by bushy sideburns and chin beard, a high forehead, and keen eyes that peered from behind metal-rimmed spectacles, he looked more like a country schoolmaster than a professional artist. Certainly he had none of the earmarks of an aggressive promoter. Yet it was this man of retiring mien who had the imagination and the energy to put his art to commercial use by advertising pictorially the townsites — many of them existing on paper only — that were springing up daily on the Minnesota frontier. To the circulars, pamphlets,



Edwin Whitefield and his wife, Lillian, probably taken in Chicago around 1860

and articles describing prospective towns commonly distributed by land promoters of the 1850s, he added attractive views in color revealing the charms of embryo settlements and undeveloped farms — pictures that could be displayed as works of art or used to illustrate articles and lectures. As a member of a company organized in the autumn of

³ Whitefield Diary, September 17, 1855; February 20, June 24, 1856. For a list of more than fifty city prints by Whitefield, see I. N. Phelps Stokes and Daniel C. Haskell, *American Historical Prints*, 94 (New York, 1933). Whitefield’s “View of Paris,” Ontario, published in 1853, sold for two dollars, according to a newspaper clipping in the Whitefield Family Papers owned by the Minnesota Historical Society.

⁴ *Minnesota Republican* (St. Anthony and Minneapolis), August 7, 1856; *St. Anthony Express*, August 9, 1856; *Minnesota Democrat* (Minneapolis), September 13, 19, 1857. The St. Anthony lithograph, measuring thirty-four by nineteen inches, was the thirty-ninth city view produced by Whitefield. Evidently whenever possible he sketched from an elevated position, causing one biographer to remark: “Where he sat to get some of his views unless he travelled with a balloon, will remain a mystery.” See Harry T. Peters, *America on Stone*, 401 (New York, 1931).

1856, Whitefield found an opportunity to implement his ideas by utilizing his special talents.⁶

WHITEFIELD had been in Minnesota only a short time when a writer for a St. Paul newspaper predicted that his "love of adventure and the beauties of nature, and zeal for making explorations, will make him an invaluable acquisition to the Territory." For already he was involved in a project that had all the characteristics of a real-estate boom, and with two Minnesotans he had made a preliminary survey of an area west of Minneapolis dominated by the Kandiyohi lakes. By September 15, he had organized the Whitefield Exploring Company and was ready to start westward once more, this time with some twenty companions and equipment that included two saddle horses, five wagons, and provisions for eight days in the field.⁶ A month later, twenty-two experienced and energetic pioneers, most of them members of the exploring group, organized the Kandiyohi Town Site Company.

⁶ Victor E. Lawson and Martin E. Tew, *Illustrated History and Descriptive and Biographical Review of Kandiyohi County*, 8 (St. Paul, 1905).

⁶ *Daily Minnesotian* (St. Paul), September 30, October 1, 2, 1856.

⁷ Kandiyohi Town Site Company, *Constitution* (Minneapolis, 1856); Lawson and Tew, *Kandiyohi County*, 8; William W. Folwell, *A History of Minnesota*, 4:79 (St. Paul, 1930); Edwin Whitefield, "Kandiyohi," in Whitefield Family Papers; *St. Anthony Express*, October 11, November 1, 8, 1856. Karns City was located in Collins Township, McLeod County, according to records in the office of the register of deeds at Glencoe, July 18, 1859.

⁸ Whitefield Diary, May 2, September 22, 1855; F. St. George Spendlove, *The Face of Early Canada*, 69, 70 (Toronto, 1948); George C. Croce and David H. Wallace, *The New-York Historical Society's Dictionary of Artists in America*, 682 (New Haven, 1957); Boston Museum of Fine Arts, *M. & M. Karolik Collection of American Water Colors & Drawings, 1800-1875*, 304 (Boston, 1962); Peters, *America on Stone*, 401; Stokes and Haskell, *American Historical Prints*, 94; *Pioneer and Democrat* (St. Paul), August 17, 21, 1858; *Minnesota Republican* (St. Anthony and Minneapolis), August 20, 27, 1858. The Whitefield family in Minnesota included four of the artist's children by an earlier union — Alfred, Wilfred, Cordelia, and Constance — as well as Lillian and her infant daughter.

Among those who signed its constitution were John Swainson, president, John H. Stevens and S. D. Karns, members of the financial committee, and Whitefield, who was one of its two agents. Swainson had emigrated from Sweden and settled at Chisago Lake northeast of St. Paul in 1854; he may well have heard about the Kandiyohi country from Jacob Fahlstrom, a Swedish fellow townsman who engaged in the central Minnesota fur trade earlier. Stevens not only built the first house on the west bank of the Mississippi at the Falls of St. Anthony, but in 1854 he platted Minneapolis in the vicinity. In the following year, however, he helped to organize the McLeod County townsites of Glencoe, and there he decided to settle. Not far off, on the shores of beautiful Lake Marion, Karns had laid out Karns City which, like many paper towns, did not flourish.⁷

Unlike these experienced men of the frontier, Whitefield was new at the game of townsites promotion, though he had speculated briefly in Canadian real estate. Far from the rough and tumble of the American West, he had been educated in England, where he was born on September 22, 1816. After emigrating about 1840, he studied drawing and established himself in New York and New England as a professional artist, producing pictures of Hudson Valley estates and North American scenes, illustrating a book on American wild flowers, and specializing in lithographed city views in color. He also taught drawing, and it was while instructing in a girls' seminary in Canada in 1855 that he met and married Lillian Stuart, one of his pupils.⁸

Though Whitefield's experience as an author was limited when he arrived on the upper Mississippi at the age of forty, he was to provide ample proof that he was not only a skilled draftsman, but an articulate and able writer and lecturer. How he used his talents as artist, author, and speaker to promote the sale of lots in undeveloped Minnesota townsites is reflected in hundreds of drawings, water colors, and lithographs,

across with water about three feet deep, and the whole overgrown with tall reed grass higher than the head of the tallest man in the crowd." Undaunted, they "concluded to make a grass-bridge; and accordingly all hands set to work carrying grass as fast as it could be mowed; and in this way the water was sufficiently covered to enable the horses and wagons to cross."¹¹

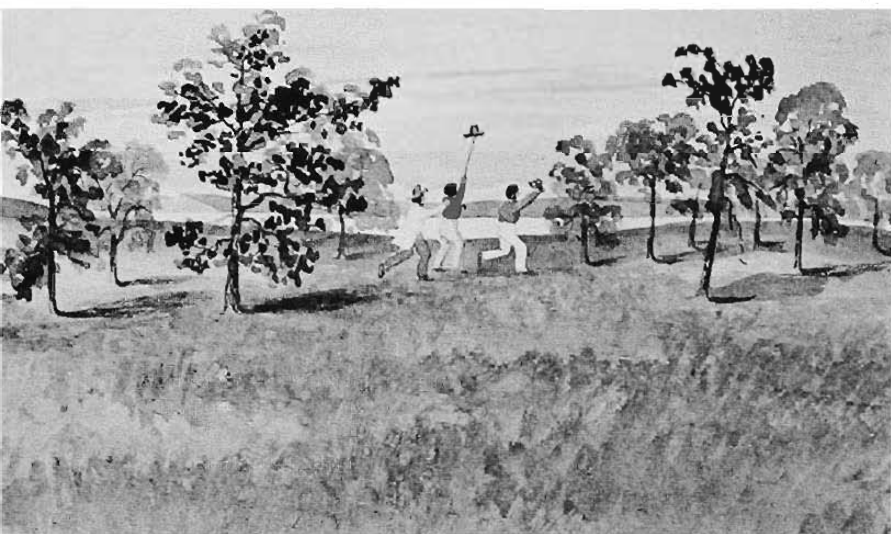
The hardy travelers reached their goal before the end of the day, and that evening "all met in council after supper" and decided to lay out the town of Kandiyohi on two adjoining lakes, Minnetaga and Kasota. Their special interest in this townsite is doubtless explained by a glance at the plat prepared by the company's surveyor, David Charlton. In the center of 184 square blocks, separated by appropriately named streets, is a Capitol Square—a feature that is lacking on other Minnesota town plats. Evidence that these promoters looked upon Kandiyohi as a future state capital is to be

found in their comparison of its location to that of Madison, the capital of Wisconsin, which also borders on two lakes. After remarking that the situation of Madison "has been highly and deservedly praised," Whitefield commented: "but let any person who is acquainted with that place visit the site of Kandiyohi and he will acknowledge that the latter bears away the palm beyond all comparison." The similarity of the Madison and Kandiyohi locations was stressed by local newspapers, and it may be easily surmised that the Kandiyohi Town Site Company received support from influential politicians who had dreams of a new capital after statehood—dreams which never materialized, though they closely approached realization. When Minnesota became a state in 1858, Congress actually granted land for a seat of government at Kandiyohi, and bills calling for the removal of the capital from St. Paul to that place were seriously considered by the legislatures of 1861, 1869, 1871, and 1893. Both legislative houses passed the bill of 1869, and it was prevented from becoming law only because Governor William R. Marshall vetoed it. Not until 1901, when the land was sold by the state,

¹¹ Whitefield, "Kandiyohi"; *St. Anthony Express*, November 8, 1856. The artist pictured this adventure in a sketchbook owned by the Minnesota Historical Society. Diary entries are lacking from July 25, 1856, to January 1, 1858.

An unfinished sketch of the "first shanty at Karns City"





Whitefield's water-color record of "The discovery of Fairy Lake"

was the Kandiyohi capital issue finally settled.¹²

Having found a site for what they obviously believed would become Minnesota's capital city, the explorers continued their work, staking out towns named for three of their group—Charlton, Whitefield, and Swainson—before returning to Minneapo-

lis. Today, township names like Lake Lillian and Whitefield on the map of Kandiyohi County serve as reminders of the ambitious

¹² *Minnesotian*, October 3, 1856; *St. Anthony Express*, November 8, 1856; *Minnesota Democrat*, November 29, 1856; Whitefield, "Kandiyohi"; Lawson and Tew, *Kandiyohi County*, 8, 9, 94-96; Folwell, *Minnesota*, 3:9 (St. Paul, 1926).

In camp on the shore of Fairy Lake, Todd County



promoters who knew the area at first hand before the earliest settler built his claim shanty there.¹³

ANOTHER AREA exploited by Whitefield was the Sauk River Valley in the vicinity of Sauk Centre of *Main Street* fame. Working in co-operation with Charles Cook and A. C. Ashley early in 1858 he obtained the passage of a bill by the Minnesota legislature to "incorporate the town of Kandotta." As soon as the lands were surveyed, Whitefield purchased a tract extending from the Ashley River to Fairy Lake, both of which he named. The artist's enthusiasm for this "magnificent country" was unbounded. "This part of the state has been very correctly termed 'The Farmer's Paradise,'" he wrote, adding that "A region more inviting . . . cannot be found in the whole public domain." Others evidently shared the promoter's enthusiasm, for he reported that he explored the vicinity of Fairy Lake in May, 1858, and upon returning to it three months later he found that "the tide of emigration had overswept the whole country around, so that scarcely a claim could be picked up."¹⁴

As early as January, 1858, the "new town called Kandotta had been laid out," and Whitefield had prepared share certificates for sale. His views of the embryo community as it looked at this time show that three

¹³ Whitefield, "Kandiyohi"; *Minnesota Republican*, January 1, 1857; Lawson and Tew, *Kandiyohi County*, 90, 371; Warren Upham, *Minnesota Geographic Names*, 271, 272 (*Minnesota Historical Collections*, vol. 17, 1920). Kandiyohi, Whitefield, Karns City, and Glencoe are located on Joseph S. Sewall and C. W. Iddings' *Sectional Map of the Surveyed Portion of Minnesota* (St. Paul, 1860).

¹⁴ Whitefield Diary, February 1, 4, March 1, 1858; Whitefield, "Sketch of Minnesota," in Whitefield Family Papers; A. H. Hendrickson, "Complete History of Kandota," in *Sauk Centre Herald*, June 7, 1928; *Minnesota House Journal*, 1858, p. 338, 340; *Senate Journal*, 1858, p. 231, 364. The modern spelling of the name is "Kandota."

¹⁵ Hendrickson, in *Sauk Centre Herald*, June 7, 1928; Whitefield Diary, January 4, 11, 1858, March 12, 1859; Whitefield, "Sketch of Minnesota"; Whitefield, "The Lakes of Minnesota," nos. 4 and 5 (1859). The latter work is an illustrated manuscript volume owned by the Minnesota Historical Society.

crude buildings had been erected. He seized every opportunity to praise the locality, stressing the possibilities for developing water power on the Ashley River; the easy transportation both to St. Cloud and the Red River country afforded by the "New State Road" which ran through the townsite; and the rolling countryside with soil of the "best quality" that characterized the entire area. The Sauk River "meanders through the finest country in Minnesota," declared Whitefield in an article published in the *Chicago Press and Tribune* of April 12, 1859. He asserted that this is "a country possessing everything which the new settler can desire: prairie, timber and meadow land interspersed in such an advantageous manner that scarcely a claim can be found which does not possess all three." Though Whitefield purported to be writing about "A Winter Trip to Fort Abercrombie," he managed to devote about a third of his text to Kandotta and its advantageous location. He told of a group of travelers whose sleigh was damaged as they approached Kandotta while en route from St. Paul to the Red River. During an enforced wait for repairs, one of the party conveniently compiled "some notes respecting the climate, soil, etc., of this particular portion of the country," and these Whitefield incorporated into his narrative. Apparently the visitor learned that the climate of central Minnesota is marked by the "most delightful [winters] that can well be conceived of"; that "no country in the world can be found where finer crops can be raised"; and that the soil consists of the finest "black loam varying from two to six feet in thickness."¹⁵ In short, here was a "farmers' paradise" that could not fail to attract settlers.

It was at his favorite townsite of Kandotta that Whitefield chose to reside during much of the period from 1858 to 1860. Although typical frontier activities like plowing and erecting log buildings occupied much of his time, he did not forget that he was still an artist. He spent many a day indoors at his easel, and on one occasion he noted that he was busy "Cutting vistas



Lithograph of Kandotta in 1857, showing the Ashley River in the foreground and Fairy Lake in the distance, at right

on my claim." His sons, Alfred and Wilfred, lived at Kandotta almost constantly, and both took claims of their own in the vicinity. It was not until October, 1858, however, that Whitefield moved his wife, Lillian, and his daughters to the crude new settlement. After a strenuous trip they arrived "safe and sound," causing the husband and father to record gratefully in his diary: "Home is found at last! Kind Providence be thanked!" During the winter that followed, Whitefield made countless trips to St. Paul and St. Anthony, always in the hope of raising money, which was excessively scarce in the years that followed the panic of 1857. On an otherwise disappointing trip in December, 1858, he managed to obtain enough

cash to purchase a "capital stove," though he experienced what he described as the "poorest Christmas I ever passed in my life" while on the return trip to Kandotta. But there were compensations on New Year's Day, when he and Wilfred reached their wilderness home to be "received very joyfully especially as we brought with us a new stove and plenty of provisions." An appropriate celebration followed, with all the family enjoying roast beef and plum pudding. Few such intimate glimpses of life at Kandotta are to be found in Whitefield's diary. Lillian did not remain there long; by mid-April of 1859 she was ready to return to St. Paul, where Whitefield arranged for her room and board while he made a long

excursion into Wisconsin, Illinois, and Missouri. Not until February, 1860, "after an absence of nearly 10 months," did the artist return to his townsite, and then he remained only a little more than a month. He seems to have left for the last time on March 22, 1860.¹⁶

The log hotel that Whitefield built at Kandotta continued to serve as a convenient stopping place for travelers between St. Cloud and the Red River country long after his final departure. Among travelers who enjoyed rest and refreshment at this primitive hostelry was a pioneer Minnesota clergyman, Edward Eggleston, who was to gain fame as the author of the *Hoosier Schoolmaster* and various other popular novels. In the summer of 1860 he stopped in Kandotta with an astronomical expedition bound for Saskatchewan to observe a total eclipse of the sun. Eggleston described Kandotta as "a single house on a high ridge, at the foot of which flows the Ashley River, a branch of the Sauk. In front of the house stands a tall flag pole, and the whole place has a romantic aspect." The word picture matches in most respects Whitefield's water colors of his wilderness home. Its failure to develop is reflected in Eggleston's concluding comment: "the population of Kandotta is five. . . . The town is like Eden before the creation of Eve." Whitefield's affection for the Sauk River country continued, however, through the years; his descendants owned the Kandotta property over many decades, and his son Wilfred lived in nearby Sauk Centre until he died in 1926.¹⁷ Today

only the name of Kandota Township in the southwest corner of Todd County serves as a reminder of Whitefield's dream for the area's future.

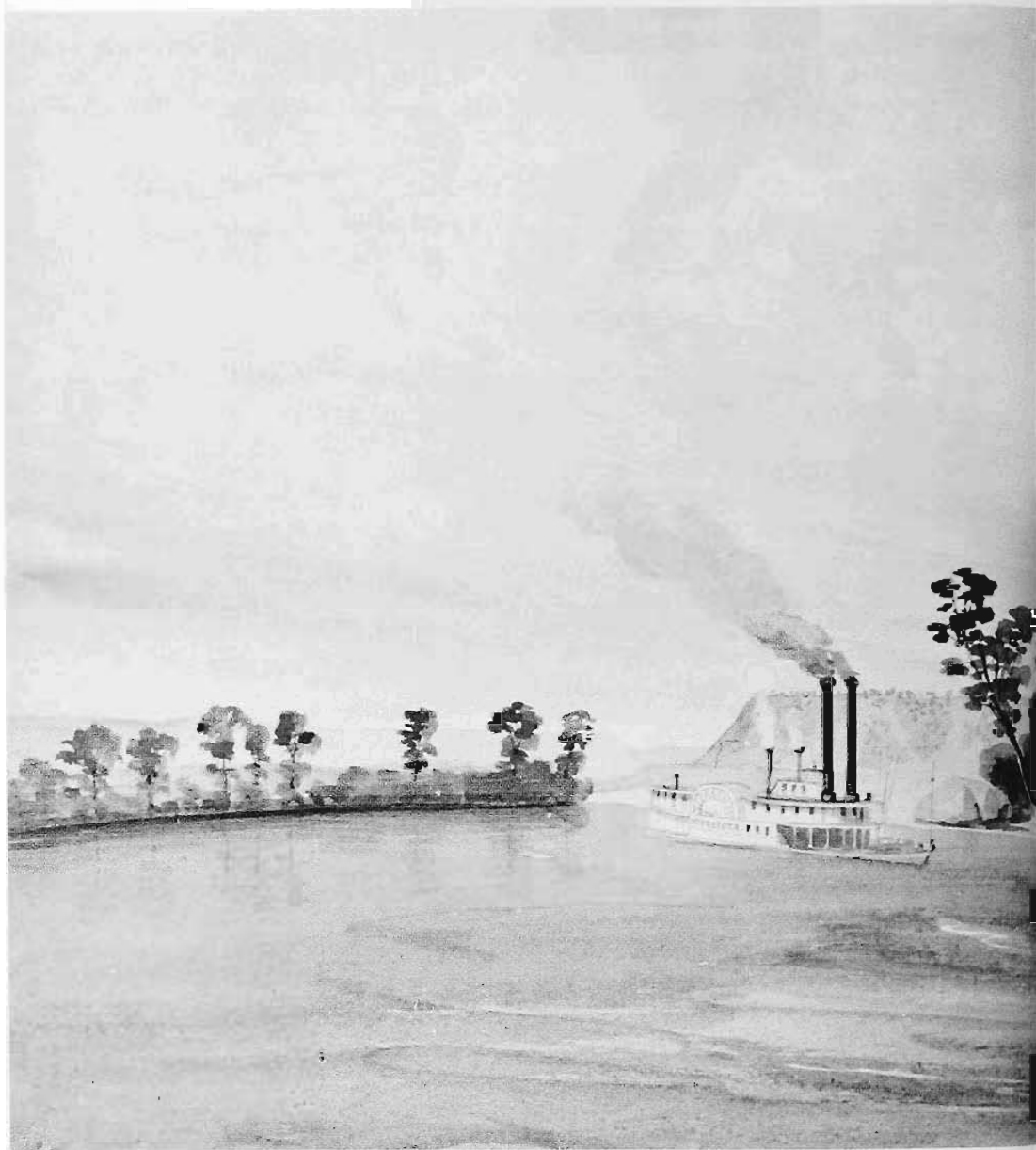
THE METHODS used by Whitefield to publicize both the Kandiyohi and Kandotta projects are well illustrated by his activities in the winter of 1856-57. In November he left Minnesota for parts south and east, carrying with him sketchbooks crammed with drawings and water colors, as well as portfolios filled with more finished views. Some of the latter had been enlarged and developed for display at the Minnesota Territorial Fair of 1856 in Minneapolis. With these materials at hand, the artist-promoter was ready to embark on a career in which he used the product of his skill as an advertising medium. The enlarged pictures were especially useful in illustrating lectures on the Minnesota country. Although Whitefield was supposedly working for the Kandiyohi company, a Minneapolis newspaper editor predicted that his activities would "doubtless benefit Minnesota as a whole." And another local journalist, who described the artist as a "Good Emigrant Agent," exclaimed enthusiastically: "We hardly know how any more successful method of advertising the attractions of the Territory could be devised." He went on to "advise our eastern friends who wish to catch a glimpse of the North-West without the trouble of a journey, to be present at Mr. Whitefield's lectures, if he comes anywhere within their range." The artist carried with him letters of introduction from friends in Minnesota. One, addressed to a firm in Providence, Rhode Island, described Whitefield as "The Great North American Artist," and noted that he "visits your City for the purpose of acquainting the People thereof with the resources, condition, and prospects of Minnesota."¹⁸

In advertising the Minnesota country, Whitefield received valiant support from his wife. Writing from Galena, Illinois, in December, 1856, he told Stevens that "she

¹⁶ Whitefield Diary, March 21, May 21, July 11, 13, 15, 17, October 18, 24, December 15, 18, 23, 25, 1858; January 1, 2, March 21, April 15, 24, 29, 1859; February 8, March 22, 1860.

¹⁷ Whitefield Diary, July 13, 15, 1858; April 2, 1859; *Minnesotian*, June 22, 1860; Ben DuBois to the writer, April 17, 1959.

¹⁸ *Minnesota Republican*, November 13, 1856; *Minnesotian*, November 15, December 3, 1856; *Minnesota Democrat*, November 29, 1856; James W. Taylor to William T. Bascom, Columbus, Ohio, November 12, 1856, Whitefield Family Papers; T. Frank Russell to Lippitt & Martin, Providence, Rhode Island, November 12, 1856, Whitefield collection, Boston Public Library.



A view on the Mississippi below St. Paul: A s

is very enthusiastic about Minnesota, and is setting all the women she gets acquainted with perfectly crazy on the subject. She will prove a better agent than myself I verily believe. Almost every hour of the day she is either carrying out my drawings to show, or bringing people in to see them."¹⁹

Whitefield also reported to Stevens that he had sent illustrated articles to a number

of magazines and newspapers, including *Harper's* and the *New York Tribune*. A typical example appeared in *Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* for May 30, 1857. There Whitefield used both words and pictures to describe the country west of St. Anthony in

¹⁹ Whitefield to John H. Stevens, December 24, 1856, Stevens Papers in the Minnesota Historical Society.



approaches a "wooding station" to take on fuel.

the vicinity of Lake Minnetonka and the lower Minnesota River Valley. As a lure to settlers, he declared that "in the West school-houses, churches, communities — nay cities spring almost literally in a day, and families that a few years previously were toiling for a pitiful subsistence in the crowded Atlantic towns, find themselves in their new homes, not only possessed of the

comforts of life, but . . . enjoying the luxuries and refinements of the most happy civilization." To tempt sportsmen, the artist told of fishing from the shore near the new town of Excelsior on Lake Minnetonka, where in quick succession he landed three "enormous pickerel, weighing at least fifteen pounds" each. Later he took a "stroll around the embryo town" and admired the large

"number of building sites which commanded enchanting views of the lake." The artist spent the night in comfort in a local inn which provided him with "something to eat, something to drink, and something to sleep upon, things not always found in the most sumptuous hotels in new countries."²⁰

In much of what he wrote, Whitefield expressed enthusiasm for the waters that distinguish the Land of Ten Thousand Lakes. "How can a country where lakes abound be other than interesting and agreeable?" he queried. "What adds so great a charm to the landscape as the gleaming of water seen through the bright green foliage?" For the farmer, he pointed out, the advantages of abundant lakes and streams are obvious. As a promoter, however, the artist saw even greater possibilities in this unique natural resource of the Minnesota country. "Go in whatever direction you may, north, south, east or west," he wrote, "you are sure to come upon lakes every few miles." By adding to these a climate where even the winters are "delightful . . . with a pure atmosphere, a bright sun, and not a breath of air to stir the calm serene," Whitefield could brand Minnesota as not only a land of beauty, but "*undoubtedly the health-*

iest state in the Union." In his opinion, it could not fail to become "the resort of health and pleasure seekers both from the consumptive East and the fever-stricken South," and he predicted that "By the sparkling water of Fairy Lake, on the banks of Minnetonka, or within sight of the spray of St. Anthony's Falls will summer residences be erected."²¹ Built they were, especially on Lake Minnetonka, from which year-round residents now commute daily to the great city that has grown up about the Falls of St. Anthony.

WHAT SUCCESS Whitefield and his associates had in selling townsite shares can only be guessed. His personal gain from the venture never was great. For a townsite painting "about 20 feet long" he asked two hundred dollars, offering to "take \$100 in a lot . . . and the other \$100 . . . in cash as it will take that sum at least to pay for the painting." He doubtless had promotion in

²⁰ Whitefield to Stevens, December 24, 1856; Philip D. Jordan, ed., "Rural Minnesota as Seen by an Artist," in *Minnesota History*, 30:111-121 (June, 1949). The latter is a reprint, with introduction and notes, of the account which appeared in *Leslie's*.

²¹ Whitefield, "Kandiyohi," and "Sketch of Minnesota."

Whitefield's preoccupation with real estate is revealed by the notes he made on this water-color sketch of the new town of Chaska.

*Flat back of the river lower than the banks, and liable to be overflowed.
Lots (1/2 acre) are selling from \$100 to \$150, and on the river for \$500.
Claims (160 acres) for \$1000 to \$3000.*

All the houses except the two front unpainted.



mind when he published lithographs of some of his Minnesota views, though he usually sold the prints on a subscription basis. Most pretentious among them was his large color lithograph of the Falls of St. Anthony, Minneapolis, and St. Anthony. Unfortunately, its completion coincided with the panic of 1857, and many of the artist's subscribers probably lacked the cash to pay for their copies. More modest both in size and subject matter were his views for a "Series of Minnesota Scenery," picturing Kandotta, an exploring party on Fairy Lake, and the ever-popular Minnehaha Falls. Planned and executed during a visit to Chicago in the spring of 1858, they illustrate the speed with which Whitefield worked. His view of Kandotta, begun on stone on April 29, was completed on May 1; he saw proof of the "black stone" of a Minnehaha view one day, and produced the "tint-stone" on the next. These Minnesota prints are now rarities much sought after by collectors. Another product of Whitefield's Minnesota years is a book about "The Lakes of Minnesota." Comprising thirty-seven original water colors of lake and river scenes in Minnesota and Wisconsin, with accompany-

ing manuscript text and maps, it bears all the earmarks of a book which never found a publisher.²² Manuscript descriptions of Minnesota and of the Sauk River Valley preserved among Whitefield's papers also seem to have remained unpublished.

A real-estate office known as the Minnesota Land Agency, opened by Whitefield in St. Paul in 1857, was in operation but a short time. Like the towns platted by the Kandiyohi Town Site Company, Karns City, and scores of other communities that existed on paper only, this business was a victim of the panic of 1857. Assessments of as much as twenty-five dollars leveled in that year against shares in the Kandiyohi and Whitefield townsites give further evidence of the disastrous effect of the financial depression on these wilderness business projects. Kandotta, where Whitefield and members of his family lived as pioneers, likewise failed to develop. In an attempt to keep this project financially sound, the artist received assistance "not exceeding the sum of Six Hundred Dollars" from one Nelson Mitchell of Charleston, South Carolina, with the understanding that the latter would "become entitled to one half of said Town-site."²³

With the failure of his efforts to promote the settlers' frontier, Whitefield found it necessary to put his artistic talent to more lucrative uses. At various times, for example, he designed embroidery patterns, filled orders for lithographs from the owners of steamboats, invented and promoted the sale of a "Drawing Machine" and gave lessons in its use, and taught drawing and perspective to classes organized in Minneapolis, St. Anthony, and Prescott, Wisconsin. Only one fellow member of the frontier promotion business was somewhat more successful in his land dealings. This was Stevens, whose townsite at Glencoe persisted and prospered.²⁴

FOLLOWING THE Minnesota episode, Whitefield went to Chicago, where he continued to live from 1860 to 1864. While there, he added to his series of city views

²² Whitefield to Stevens, December 24, 1856; *Minnesota Democrat*, September 13, 19, 1857; Whitefield Diary, April 28 - May 10, 1858. The Minnesota Historical Society has copies of Whitefield's view of St. Anthony and Minneapolis and of numbers 1 and 3 of his "Minnesota Scenery" series.

²³ Certificates for shares in Karns City and in the "Towns of Kandi and Yohi" are in the Minnesota Historical Society, and the Boston Public Library has some unused certificates for shares in Kandotta. For notices of assessments on shares, which called upon owners to "pay same within 30 days, or forfeit" their holdings, see the *Minnesota Democrat*, July 4, August 1, 1857. Copies of a broadside advertising the Minnesota Land Agency are in the Whitefield Family Papers, and an undated "Memorandum of agreement" between Mitchell and Whitefield is in the collection of the Boston Public Library.

²⁴ Whitefield Diary, March 16, 17, 18, 19, 1858; June 16, October 23, 27, November 11, 19, December 16, 1859; January 5, 14, 21, 23, 26, 28, February 1 - 5, March 30, 31, 1860. A broadside advertising Whitefield's course in "Perspective Drawing" is in the Karolik Collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. See also Lucile M. Kane, "The Papers of John Harrington Stevens," in *Minnesota History*, 34: 146 (Winter, 1954).

seven lithographs of the Illinois metropolis. When on display by the Lakeside Press in 1959 with other "Famous Chicago Prints," they were described as the "most finely executed of all views of the city before 1871." Another product of the Chicago years consisted of "combination drawing cards of which any combination would form a symmetrical picture" — a clever and amusing device which was patented by the ingenious artist.²⁵

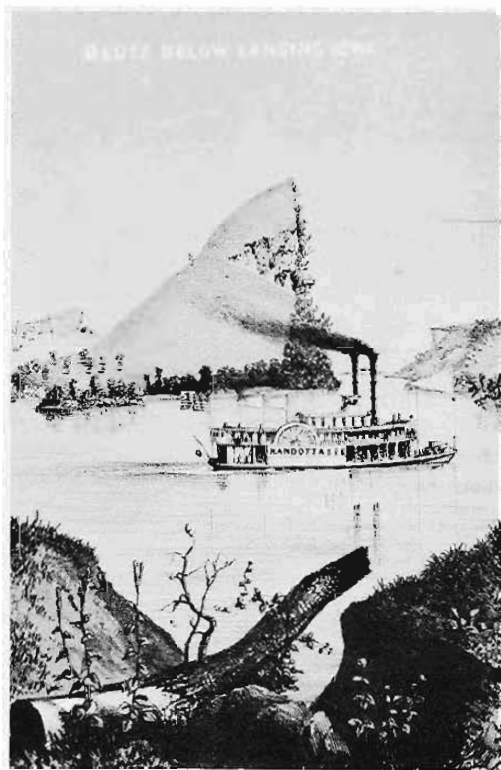
Upon leaving Chicago, Whitefield again made his home in the East, living chiefly in Massachusetts at Reading and Boston. He died at the home of a daughter in Dedham on December 26, 1892. Much of his later life was devoted to writing and illustrating a series of volumes on *Homes of Our Forefathers*, the first three of which deal with the New England states, and a fourth with Boston, Old England, and Boston, New England. Issued at intervals between 1879 and

1892, they must have been much in demand, for they passed through numerous editions, the Massachusetts volume alone appearing in six different versions. As examples of American pictorial history, they earned for their author-illustrator a reputation as "the real pioneer in the recording of our early architecture."²⁶ These books and the city litho-

²⁵ "Whitefield's Views of Chicago," in *Chicago History*, 3:2 (Fall, 1951); announcement of exhibition of "Famous Chicago Prints" by the Lakeside Press (June 30, 1959); Spendlove, *The Face of Early Canada*, 69. Circulars advertising the drawing cards are in the Whitefield collection of the Boston Public Library, which also includes a diary for 1864 labeled "Chicago to Detroit and Montreal."

²⁶ *Boston Evening Transcript*, January 18, 1893. This obituary also notes that Whitefield "left a mass of material, both in the way of colored sketches and descriptive manuscript." An incomplete list of his published works, with a penciled note by Frank Weitenkampf of the New York Public Library, is in the Whitefield Family Papers. Among those not listed is a *New England Drawing Book* issued in six parts.

A continuous panorama of the upper Mississippi appears in this series of patented "drawing cards," which may be fitted together in any order.



graphs are Whitefield's best-known works, though his modest water colors of Minnesota towns and scenes have far more appeal.

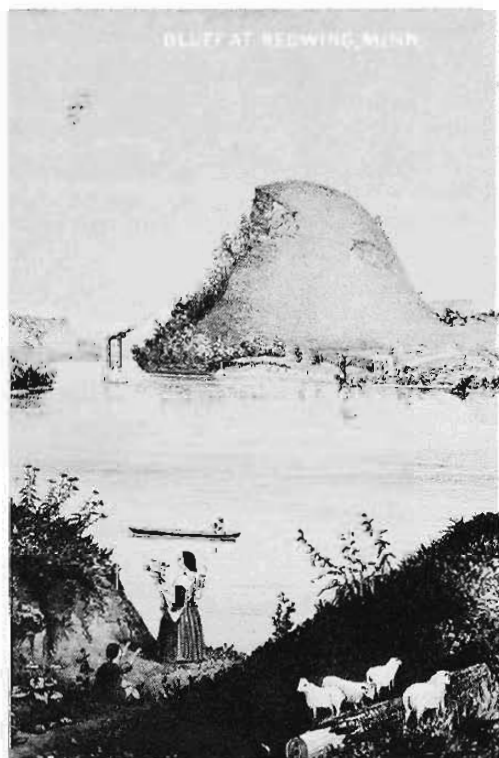
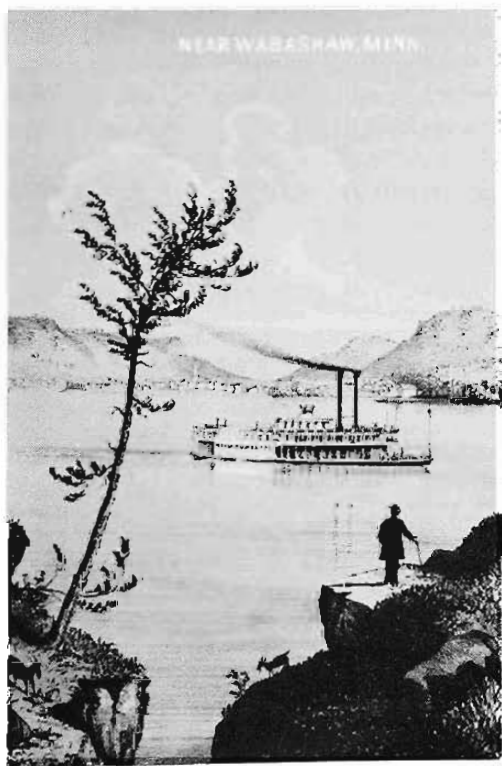
Throughout his life, Whitefield continued to look back longingly upon his Minnesota experience, and to refer nostalgically to Kandotta and Fairy Lake. In 1871, for example, he wrote to Wilfred at Sauk Centre, reporting that he and Lillian were "striving . . . to get together money enough to be able to settle down at Kandotta," for, he added, "we like Minnesota and look forward to it as our future home." As late as 1888, when he was planning a trip to England to assem-

ble material for his book on the Bostons of two worlds, he announced incidental intentions in a letter to J. Fletcher Williams, secretary of the Minnesota Historical Society. "I shall do my very best to induce all the English farmers that I can to emigrate to Minn.," wrote Whitefield. "I have in years past been the means of sending many persons to Minn. and I have not the slightest doubt that I can do it again."²⁷

That this artist-promoter of the 1850s helped to attract settlers to the North Star State at a time when it was much in need of people seems obvious. It seems more than likely, too, that he appreciated the potential value of the area's lakes and rivers in making the state a sportsmen's, as well as a farmers' paradise, luring fishermen from far and wide. Today, Edwin Whitefield's pictures of the region, and especially of its waters, are to be found by the score in American and Canadian art and historical collections, providing a fresh and authentic visual record of the frontier he was striving to exploit while pioneering as a commercial artist.

²⁷ Whitefield to J. F. Williams, May 2, 14, 1888; Minnesota Historical Society Minutes, May 14, 1888, both in Minnesota Historical Society Archives.

THE PICTURES on pages 62 and 63 are from the Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis; those on page 68 are from the Karolik Collection in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the ones on pages 64 and 74 are from the Chicago Historical Society, as are the drawing cards reproduced below; all others are from the collection of the Minnesota Historical Society. The plat of Kandiyohi shown on page 66 is from Lawson and Tew, *Kandiyohi County*, page 9.





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