

St. Croix Riverway

Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix



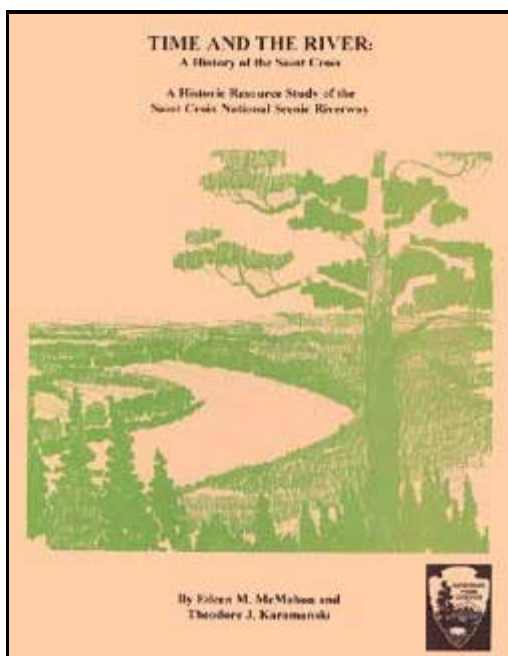
TIME AND THE RIVER A History of the Saint Croix

A Historic Resource Study of the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*River, take me along in your sunshine,
Sing me your song ever moving, and winding and free,
You rolling old river, you changing old river.*

Bill Stains, 1978

It has been a genuine pleasure to get to know this rolling old river. And like anyone else who has had the pleasure of canoeing its serene waters we would like to thank those people who are responsible for the protection and care of the St. Croix, from the Minnesota and Wisconsin Department's of National Resources, to the private citizens of the St. Croix River Association, to the staff of the Minnesota-Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission, but most importantly the women and men of the National Park Service.

Among the staff of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway we would particularly like to acknowledge the help of Jean M. Schaeppi, Supervisory Park Ranger for Interpretation, Michael Lindquist, Marshland District maintenance employee, and Tony Andersen, former Superintendent of the Riverway. Ms. Schaeppi in particular was a valuable partner in gathering historical site information regarding the Riverway. We are also grateful to Don Stevens of the Midwest Regional Office for helping to facilitate this project in many ways, most especially through his helpful and astute comments on the draft of this report.

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INTRODUCTION:

The St. Croix: River of Paradox

Rivers are symbols of hope and agents of change. The steady flow of bright water means renewed life for an entire valley. The constant current flowing of its course is a model of restless motion and ceaseless change. From Mark Twain to Norman MacClean rivers have served in American literature as an outlet for adventure and a place of retreat, symbols of the opportunities of an expanding nation and oasis of individual renewal. "Eventually," MacClean wrote, "all things merge into one, and a river runs through it." Paradoxically rivers represent both flux and continuity. As the ancient Greeks observed in the fifth century B.C. it is not possible to step into the same stream twice, for no sooner has one entered a stream than that water is swept on by the current. Yet, while rivers constantly change they are themselves ancient. For more than 10,000 years the St. Croix River has added its cold clear northwoods waters to the flow of the Mississippi River. For the people of its valley the St. Croix has been a source of hope and renewal, as well as a vehicle of transformation.

Rivers are highways that bring together people from distant places. Rivers also serve as barriers and boundaries. In the seventeenth century the St. Croix River brought the Chippewa invaders who, after a century of bloodshed, drove the Sioux from the land of their fathers. In more recent times the river has brought, thanks to United States Army Corps of Engineers lock and dam projects, invaders from the Baltic Sea, in the form of zebra mussels. For this exotic species, like human immigrants from Europe before them, the St. Croix has been a river of opportunity as new colonies flourish and indigenous populations are vanquished from a transformed ecosystem. As a highway of change the St. Croix has consistently exerted its stiffest penalties on those populations, human, animal, and plant that reside closest to the river. During the nineteenth century logging dams transformed shoreline habitats; floods, such as in 1965, have deluged the homes and businesses along the banks of the river; and it was the property owners along the upper St. Croix who lost their homes when the federal government declared it a Wild and Scenic River.

The St. Croix has been the vehicle by which a significant portion of the north woods has been transformed; yet the river has also served as a barrier to travel, people, and change. It has not been as bloody or decisive a boundary as Europe's Rhine River or even America's Potomac, still the St. Croix has been a border river. Where nature created one valley and one watershed, politicians saw the St. Croix as a logical dividing line between the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Rivers are natural barriers, better at impeding the spread of wildfires than preventing the migration of plant or animal species. For human populations the St. Croix sped the movement of people and goods along its north-south access, while at the same time the river was an obstacle to east-west movement, necessitating bridges and ferries. These improvements were unknown before the nineteenth century and rare before the twentieth century, making possible the river's function as a frontier, first between the Chippewa and the Sioux, and later between two states. The political boundary hardened the

natural division of the valley between east and west bank. School districts, local governments and road commissions defied the logic of propinquity and excluded people living on the other side of the river. A river valley shared in common by two Indian peoples and then two states too often became a resource for both to exploit and neither to protect.

In his 1965 contribution to the *Rivers of America* series James Taylor Dunn dubbed the St. Croix as a "Midwest Border River." The theme of border river embraces more than the political division between Minnesota and Wisconsin. The St. Croix Valley is also divided between ten different counties whose jurisdictions overlap with eleven different municipalities. Hundreds of township and thousands of individual property lines further subdivide the valley. Quite accurately one of the earliest European-American settlers in the region described the establishment of the first county as beginning the "dismemberment of the St. Croix valley." [1] The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 and the Lower Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway Act in 1972 created a new set of boundaries along the river. Upriver from Stillwater, Minnesota the St. Croix River was divided between a zone of federal management to the north and a zone of state cooperative management along the lower river. This division reflected the historic difference between the narrow wild waters of the Upper St. Croix and the broad, lake-like reaches of the Lower St. Croix. The former was a north woods river, evocative of Hiawatha or Hemingway, its valley dominated by wilderness, timber extraction, cutover farms, and more recently tourism. The lower river is marked by farms rooted in deep black soil, prosperous river ports, the scene, a century ago, of belching smokestacks from mills and steamboats. The upper river has been the hinterland, the resource rich frontier, of the more heavily populated and urbanized lower river.

The upper river is a remote, isolated corner of the American Midwest. In contrast the lower river is on the border of the dynamic Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan area. Originally the St. Croix towns such as a Stillwater and Prescott, Wisconsin vied with the Twin Cities on the Mississippi for metropolitan status. Having decisively lost that competition the Lower St. Croix gradually fell under the ever-lengthening suburban shadow of the Twin Cities. During the early twentieth century the metropolis sought hydroelectric power and summer homes along the St. Croix. By the last half of the century, urban sprawl, industrial pollution, and metropolitan traffic flows became realities for the Lower St. Croix Valley.

In recent years the St. Croix's location on the fringe of a growing urban center has overshadowed the crucial historical position of the river valley on the border between the two great inland waterways in North America, the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. Before there was a Minneapolis or a St. Paul, before the sources of the Mississippi were known, the headwaters of the St. Croix were accessed via portage trail by Indians and fur traders on the move from Lake Superior to the Mississippi. The portage between Lake Superior waters and the St. Croix was crucial to making the region the cockpit of the conflict between the Chippewa and Sioux and the scene of intense fur trade rivalry between the Northwest Company, the XY Company, and later the American Fur Company. The unsuitability of the rapid, rock strewn Upper St. Croix to offer navigation to more than birch bark canoes brought an end to the river's strategic role as a regional link, although the desire to maintain and later revive the waterway through the building of a modern canal was sustained throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In spite of the fact that the upper river itself was bypassed by commerce, the valley corridor of the St. Croix continued to link the Upper Mississippi with Lake Superior through railroads and later highways.

The St. Croix is not a large river in terms of its size, nor a great river in terms of its impact on the development of the United States. It flows for 165 miles from its source, a long narrow finger of water known as Upper Lake St. Croix, to the Mississippi River at Point Douglas, where the river, once again placid and lake-like ends its journey. Between the

river's mouth and its source the St. Croix drains 7,760 square miles. [2] Much smaller rivers, the Chicago River and Buffalo Creek, have given rise to great cities. Other, larger rivers became crucial pathways to the interior, such as the Columbia or the Hudson Rivers. The St. Croix was selected in 1968 to be one of the first wild and scenic rivers within the National Park System, yet for most of its history the significance of the St. Croix has been within the framework of the Upper Midwest region. If the St. Croix's story is not of national significance, it is crucial to understanding the north woods history of Wisconsin and Minnesota.

The St. Croix valley encapsulates the history of the Upper Midwest, from its role as a voyageurs highway to its Bunyanesque contribution to the logging frontier. Its painful transition from a countryside patchwork of the ethnically diverse cutover farms, to a thinly inhabited tourist haven in the "land of sky-blue waters," mirrors a transformation forced upon much of the region. The Upper Midwest, the area bordering the Upper Great Lakes of Huron, Michigan, and Superior and the Upper Mississippi River, does not have a firm place in the regional history of the United States. The South or the Great Plains, and certainly New England, have more clearly established regional identities, in part because their place in national history is well known. The people of much of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota share a common experience of land, labor, and cultural heritage, but that experience must be understood before it can be used to bind separate states into a self-conscious region. The St. Croix River valley, on the frontier between the Mississippi and Lake Superior drainage, on the border between Wisconsin and Minnesota, with its rich lower valley and more rugged up country, has a story that reflects the experience of a region and illuminates the nature of a nation. As writer James Grey observed a half century ago, "The Upper Midwest contains within itself the memory of everything that America has been and the knowledge of what it may become." [3]

This study is an environmental and a social history. It seeks to explore the interactions between the land and waters of the St. Croix and the people who have called the valley home. It is a history of the land, how that land was perceived, altered, and how people adjusted to the reconfigured environment. "The valley was considered too far north and the soil too sterile for cultivation," recalled W.H.C. Folsom, one of the first European-American settlers in Taylors Falls, Minnesota. Soil quality and climate are immutable factors in regional history and examples of the way environment shapes historical development. Environmental history is the story of how the natural landscape interacts with social and cultural forces. Just a few years after the St. Croix was dismissed as an agricultural region it became the seat of hundreds of new frontier farms. Folsom noted, "Many of those who came here in 1838 found out their mistake and made choice of the valley for their permanent home." What had changed was not the length of the growing season or the quality of the soil, but the settler's perception of the valley. Environmental imagination, the interplay between land and culture, is a critical ingredient to this north woods story. The St. Croix valley offered opportunities and imposed constraints on all of the plant and animal communities within its corridor. But just as important to determining the history of the valley were the ideas and institutions of the people who came to live there, what anthropologists refer to as a people's "cultural script." The stories about the St. Croix that follow are about the dialectic between a natural blueprint and a cultural script. [4]



Frontispiece: The St. Croix River Watershed
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CHAPTER 1:

Valley of Plenty, River of Conflict

Moving almost silently through the forest Little Crow approached the place where he had set one of his steel beaver traps. Through the morning mist the Mdewakanton Sioux leader saw that someone had preceded him to the site. The stranger lifted the trap, heavy with a fine, fresh beaver carcass, and was about to remove the valuable catch when he suddenly looked up to see Little Crow. With "a loaded rifle in his hands" Little Crow "stood maturely surveying him." The stranger was not a Sioux, or as Little Crow himself would have referred to his people, a Dakota. The man was dressed in the manner of the Chippewa. For two generations the Dakota and the Chippewa had been at war for control of the Upper Mississippi and St. Croix River valleys. This Chippewa had been caught not only deep in Dakota Territory, but also in the act of committing the worst type of thievery, robbing another hunter's trap. As an act of war and self-defense, Little Crow "would have been justified in killing him on the spot, and the thief looked for nothing else, on finding himself detected." [1]

"Take no alarm at my approach," said Little Crow. Instead of raising his rifle, the Dakota chief spoke gently. "I only come to present to you the trap of which I see you stand in need. You are entirely welcome to it." The wary Chippewa was further taken back when Little Crow held out his rifle. "Take my gun also, as I perceive you have none of your own." The chief capped this unlikely encounter by offering the stunned Chippewa a healthy piece of advice, "depart. . .to the land of your countrymen, but linger not here, lest some of my young men who are panting for the blood of their enemies, should discover your foot steps in our country, and fall on you." With that, Little Crow turned his back on the rearmed enemy and traced his steps back to his village.

The story of Little Crow's gesture was recorded by the United States Indian Agent Henry Rowe Schoolcraft in his narrative of an 1820 journey to the Upper Mississippi country. Schoolcraft included the story because it illustrated the contradictory perception held by European Americans of the Dakota people. Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike who had visited Little Crow's village in 1805 had described the Dakota as "the most warlike and independent nation of Indians within the boundaries of the United States, their every passion being subservient to that of war." Yet Schoolcraft also noted that they were "a brave, spirited, and generous people." Little Crow's gesture was magnanimous, but it also was an exercise of supreme self-confidence by a warrior whose mastery over his opponent did not depend upon his ownership of a mere firearm. Through his exaggerated generosity, Little Crow counted a notable coup. Through Little Crow's action the Chippewa thief was reduced in status from that of an invader, to that of a mere beggar. The encounter also underscores an important historical point. For the Dakota and the Chippewa, the most important event on the St. Croix between the mid-eighteenth century and mid-nineteenth century, was not the expansion of the fur trade nor the arrival of European-American settlers, but a terrible and persistent intertribal war. It was the interests and actions of the Indians, not those of a handful of fur traders or Indian agents that shaped the early history

of the valley. [2]



Figure 1. A Chippewa Family, c. 1821. Courtesy of the National Archives of Canada.

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CHAPTER 2: River of Pine

For nearly 150 years European and American merchants had passed through the St. Croix Valley, attentive to the number and location of Indians within the valley, mindful of the presence of wild game, sometimes observing its agricultural prospects, but largely unconcerned about the timber resources of the region. The bright and articulate George Nelson, who first entered the river valley in the fall of 1802, was an exception. The "beautifully wooded" islands and hills of the valley struck him, and with a merchant's eye he predicted they could be as commercially important as the timberlands of the St. Lawrence valley. The St. Croix's "splendid groves of pine" he wrote "could as easily be floated down the Mississippi as from Chambly to Sorel." More typical, however, was the U.S. Army Lieutenant James Allen's terse dismissal of the upper Saint Croix landscape as "poor, and pine; none of it fit for cultivation." [1]

Interest in the region's forest resources dramatically increased during the 1830s. The French scientist Joseph N. Nicollet, who journeyed up the valley in August of 1837, reflected this new interest in the valley's forests. In passing the mouth of the Sunrise River he noted "The banks of the St. Croix are still covered with black alder, sumac five or six feet tall, white and red oak, soft maple and some walnut or oil nut or shagnut trees. White pines are mixed with deciduous trees, and there are wild plum trees on the ridges." Above the mouth of the Snake River he noted that the patches of tall dark pine became more abundant. "They crown the peaks of hills and mix with other species which border the St. Croix." Nicollet's heightened appreciation of the region's forest cover may simply reflect his educated eye, but it is likely that he understood that during the 1830s trees replaced furs as the most coveted commodity within the valley. [2]

Nicollet's journey up the St. Croix came at a critical time in the region's history, as federal agents were negotiating to clear Indian title to the valley. The impetus for this change was a rising chorus of voices demanding access to the pine forests of the St. Croix. Forests hardly worth noting a generation before had been rendered into promising assets by the growth of towns and farms in the valley of the Mississippi. The St. Croix, Chippewa, Red Cedar, and Rum Rivers, all tributaries of the Mississippi that boasted vast forests of pine became the wooded hinterland that helped to build downriver towns such as Winona, Rock Island, Davenport, and St. Louis. In the post-Civil War era the demand became even more insistent and the market more lucrative as the treeless plains were surveyed into 160-acre homesteads. The exchange of a sod house for a frame home built of Wisconsin or Minnesota pine was a badge of success for the homesteader and the basis of many a lumber baron's fortune. [3]

The fur trade had divided the St. Croix valley between a upper river dominated by the Chippewa and economically tied to Lake Superior, and a lower river, home to the Dakota and linked to St. Louis based traders. In terms of transportation geography the logging frontier would restore the unity of the valley. The entire river system would be harnessed to

bring the winter's harvest of logs to the collecting booms along the lower river. Like a funnel the St. Croix River was used to concentrate the wealth of the entire valley at its mouth. The forests of the upper river played a large role in building towns and the industry along Lake St. Croix, as well as the nearby cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis. The logging frontier first made manifest the dichotomy of a thinly inhabited upper river resource frontier and the prosperous urbanized lower river. In the course of doing so it wrought a massive transformation of the valley's landscape and severely, in some cases irrevocably, altered its ecosystem. Through its involvement in the lumber industry the St. Croix played its most important role in American history, but at a cost still being exacted today.

Lumbermen attempted to transform the free flowing wild river into a disciplined industrial waterway. Never before and never again would the river be used so intensely. Mill operators began each day by studiously noting its fluctuations in level. Around blazing campfires log drivers endlessly debated the ebb and flow of its current. By building dams as assiduously as the all but eliminated beaver, by blasting boulders and constructing booms the lumber men made each mile of the St. Croix's 165 mile length serve the purpose of delivering logs to mill and market. Like the tentacles of some great industrial monster the lumber industry probed, damned and controlled even the remotest of the river's tributaries, bending their wild reaches to its commercial purpose. The early lumbermen more than doubled the natural transportation capacity of the St. Croix watershed to 330 miles of water capable of carrying logs to market. When the industry expanded further in the wake of the Civil War more splash dams and stream improvements brought the size of the St. Croix system to a staggering 820 miles of useable waterway. The St. Croix was more than a logging river. For better than a half century, when the ice went out each spring, from its headwaters to Stillwater, it became a river of pine. [4]

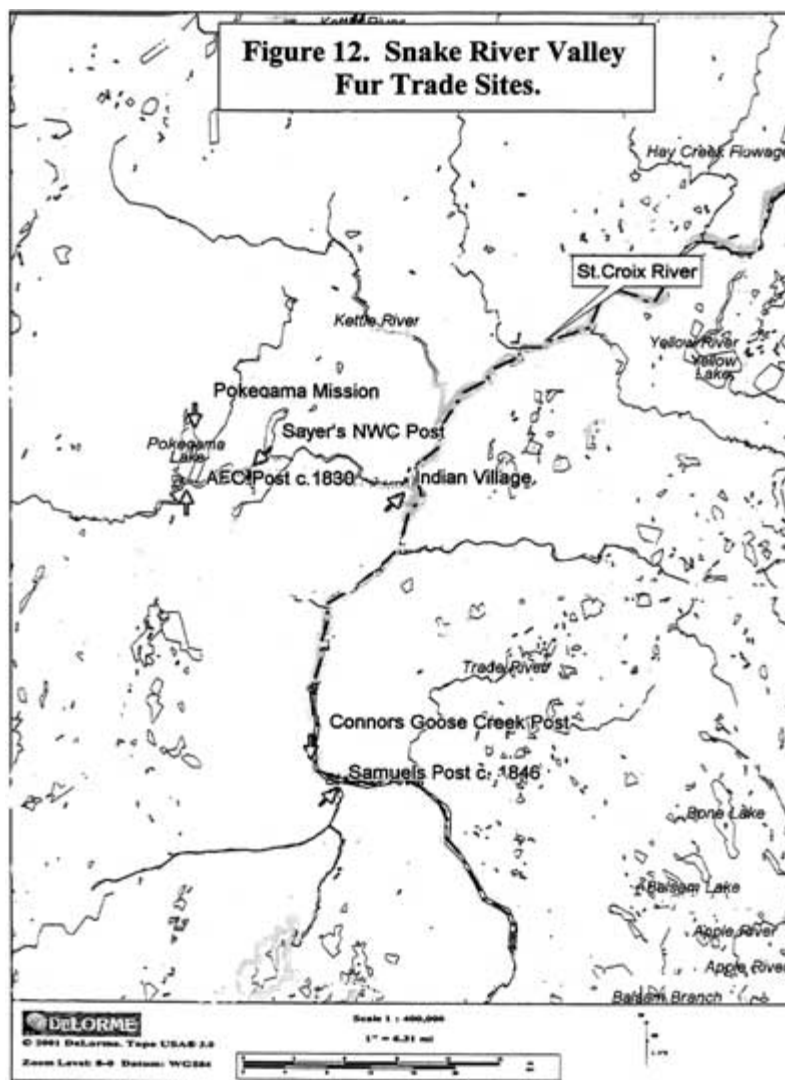


Figure 12. Snake River Valley Fur Trade Sites.
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CHAPTER 3:

"The New Land": Settlement and the Development of Agriculture in the St. Croix Valley

The Upper Middle West of the United States has been blessed with an amazing waterway system. From the Great Lakes to the mighty Mississippi River and all its tributaries as well as numerous fresh water lakes and streams, there were ample water resources to whet the appetites of farmers and manufacturers. "In an earlier, more confident time," wrote economists Brian Page and Richard Walker, "the Midwest was commonly held up as an example to the modern world of the true path to capitalist growth: a potent mix of agricultural extension agent, railroads, and heavy industry." Agricultural settlement here went hand in hand with industrial development. While some settlers came with no greater expectation than to acquire a piece of land to farm for their families, the St. Croix Valley had already been connected to a national and even international market through the fur trade and logging industry. This connection to the larger world, in many ways, acted as the lure for potential pioneer settlers. Lumbering and business interests needed the products farmers produced. As the timber frontier pushed further up river lumber companies left vacant, unproductive, and often tax delinquent lands that needed to be disposed of. Businesses in the old lumber towns needed new customers to replace the retreating world of the lumberjack. Farmers eagerly filled this void.

Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, northern manufacturing centers exploited the region's raw materials and also created a demand for its agricultural products. The industrial revolution, in turn, made farming the great expanse of land in the Midwest and the St. Croix Valley more efficient and profitable. Farmers, businessmen, and financiers worked in mutual support to transform the St. Croix River Valley from a remote frontier into an accessible, settled land. The St. Croix Valley was an integral part of the Midwestern and national economy from its earliest days of settlement. [1]

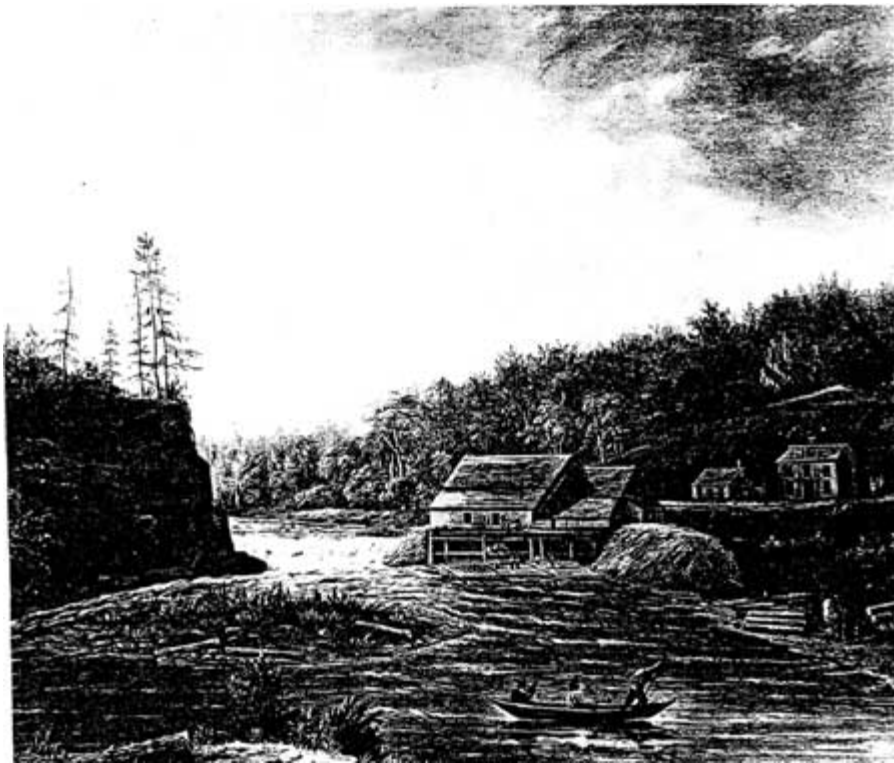


Figure 26. The disputed site of St. Croix Falls in 1848 from an oil painting by Henry Lewis. The dispute between William Hungerford and Caleb Cushing retarded the development of the site—which was probably a good thing.

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CHAPTER 4:

Up North: The Development of Recreation in the St. Croix Valley

Written with Rachel Franklin Weekley

In 1936, the twenty counties of northwest Wisconsin cooperated in a tourist brochure that promoted the region as "Indian Head Country." The name was derived from the shape of Wisconsin's St. Croix borderland that appeared to the imaginative as the silhouette of a human profile. Pierce County was the chin, St. Croix County the mouth, and Burnett County formed a prominent "Roman" nose. For the tourist boosters the choice of "Indian Head" was obvious. Not only did the large nose suggest the Indian profile on the "Buffalo" nickel then in circulation, the Indian was the symbol of all that was uniquely American. The Indian was a symbol of wild, unrestrained nature. Never for a moment did the tourist promoters think of labeling the twenty county area "Swedish Head," or "Polish Head" country. Such a label was, of course, ludicrous even if it did call to mind some of the people who had devoted their lives to the unsuccessful effort to bring agriculture to the cutover. That history was too recent, too painful, too prosaic. It would be as untrampled nature — a romantic, even ridiculous impossibility given the history of logging and farming — that the St. Croix region would be sold to the public.

As the St. Croix River began its emergence from wilderness to a developed and settled region, American attitudes towards nature and the wilderness were in a process of transformation. During the colonial era, America was seen, on the one hand, as a land of abundance and a refuge from Old World ills, but its primeval forests were also seen as a hostile wilderness filled with savage beasts and men. While it bestowed bounty on those able to meet its challenges, nature was a harsh taskmaster and it extracted a heavy price from those less fit. What enabled Americans in the first half of the nineteenth century to change their perspective on nature was the industrial revolution. Man became the master of nature instead of its victim. The industrial revolution, however, also scarred and even destroyed nature's beauty and exposed its fragility. At the hands of man nature was no longer to be feared, but cherished. [1]

This appreciation of nature had its roots in the eighteenth century Enlightenment when the natural world was held up as inspiration and a model for social organization. If human society followed the laws of nature instead of the dictates of the artificial, superstitious inequalities stemming from the medieval world of feudalism and traditional religion, it could find peace and harmony. These beliefs found expression through political, economic, social, and artistic channels. But whatever the ultimate aim, nature had to be experienced first hand. In eighteenth century England the term "picturesque" came to describe a natural scene that depicted the beautiful and evoked the sublime. This perspective on nature inspired the popular artistic genre of landscape painting. This glorification of nature continued into the early nineteenth century Romantic Movement with its reaction against the ugliness of the industrial revolution. Nature was not only beautiful, sublime and a guide to social order, but also a source of spiritual renewal for people severed from their rural

roots in ugly urban cities.

In the United States the Romantic Movement developed its own unique perspective on nature. The English writer William Gilpin introduced to Americans the practice of rambling about the countryside in search of the beautiful and sublime and made "picturesque travel" a popular recreational pastime. It was trumpeted as a way to exercise both the mind and the body. Gilpin's tours of England's North and Lake Countries were used as models for American expeditions. The sparsely settled American landscape was ripe for "picturesque travel." The unspoiled vistas, mountains, valleys, lakes, and rivers came to be considered America's cathedrals and works of art that rivaled the manmade art treasures of the Old World, and certainly equaled or excelled any scenic wonders in Europe. Americans expanded the definition of the picturesque and applied it to their more rugged and unspoiled wilderness. The American wilderness came to be seen as part of the country's unique heritage and a national treasure, and became the subject matter for the paintings of the Hudson River School, the poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the prose of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the philosophy of Henry David Thoreau. [2]

While the industrial revolution marred nature, it also ironically made nature more possible to enjoy. The invention of the steamboat and the railroad allowed people to experience natural wonders first-hand without forgoing many of the creature comforts of civilization. There they could experience spiritual renewal and regeneration from the more fast-paced and wearisome world of the city. While the wealthy had always been able to escape the city, their motivations had been chiefly to escape the heat, the smell, and the diseases that often plagued urban centers. Their country, mountain, or seashore retreats sought to duplicate the comforts of home, rather than lure them into the world of nature. But increasingly throughout the nineteenth century the wealthy were joined in these rural retreats by the expanding middle class who turned to the world of nature for health, recreation, and social activity.

This cultural context shaped the way late eighteenth and early nineteenth century white explorers and settlers perceived the St. Croix River Valley when they first ventured there. Its distinctive geographic formations, such as the "Old Man of the Dalles," provided explorers with navigation references, but also drew them into the unique splendors of the river valley. George Nelson, the Canadian fur trader who wintered in the valley in 1802-3, noted in his diary:

Whenever this country becomes settled how delightfully will the inhabitants pass their time. There is no place perhaps on this globe where nature has displayed & diversified lands & water as here. I have always felt as if invited to settle down & admire the beautiful views with a sort of joyful thankfulness for having been led to them. There is nothing romantic about them, frightful rock, & wild & dashing water falls. Nature is here calm, placid & serene, as if telling man, in language mute, indeed, -- not addressed to the *Ears*, but to heart & Soul: It is here man is to be happy: a genial & healthy climate — the rigour [sic] of winter scarcely three months, & in that time no very severe cold: I have diversified the land with hundreds of beautiful lakes all communicating with each other by equally beautiful streams, full of excellent fish, & ducks of twenty Species, Swans, & geese with abundance of rice for you & them. The borders well furnished with grapes, plums, thorn apples & butternut &c, &c. The Woods Swarming with Dears [sic] & bears & beavers: not one noxious or venomous animal insect or reptile: come my children, come & settle in this beautiful country I have prepared for you, & be happy. [3]

Nelson's paean to the Upper St. Croix Country was most likely added to his diary many

years after his winter in the valley. It reflects the power of a picturesque landscape to overcome the realities of Nelson's last days on the river: cold, wet spring weather, rapids, portages, mosquitoes swarming, and king fear of a Dakota attack. Romanticism was necessary to transform a a truly wild landscape into a picturesque retreat and the mastery that came with technology and private property made possible the evolution of the Upper St. Croix from a battleground between the Chippewa and Dakota to the white man's "Indian Head" Country vacation destination.

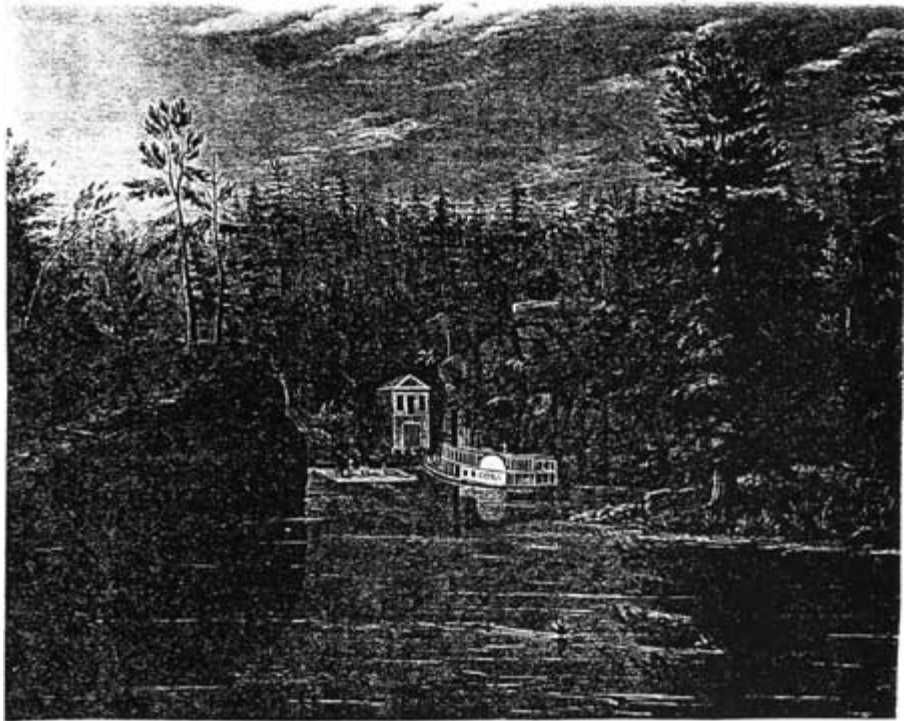


Figure 29. The "sublime" and romantic Dalles of the St. Croix was captured in this 1848 oil painting by Henry Lewis. Titled the "Gorge of the St. Croix" the painting helped to promote the St. Croix as an ante-bellum tourist destination.

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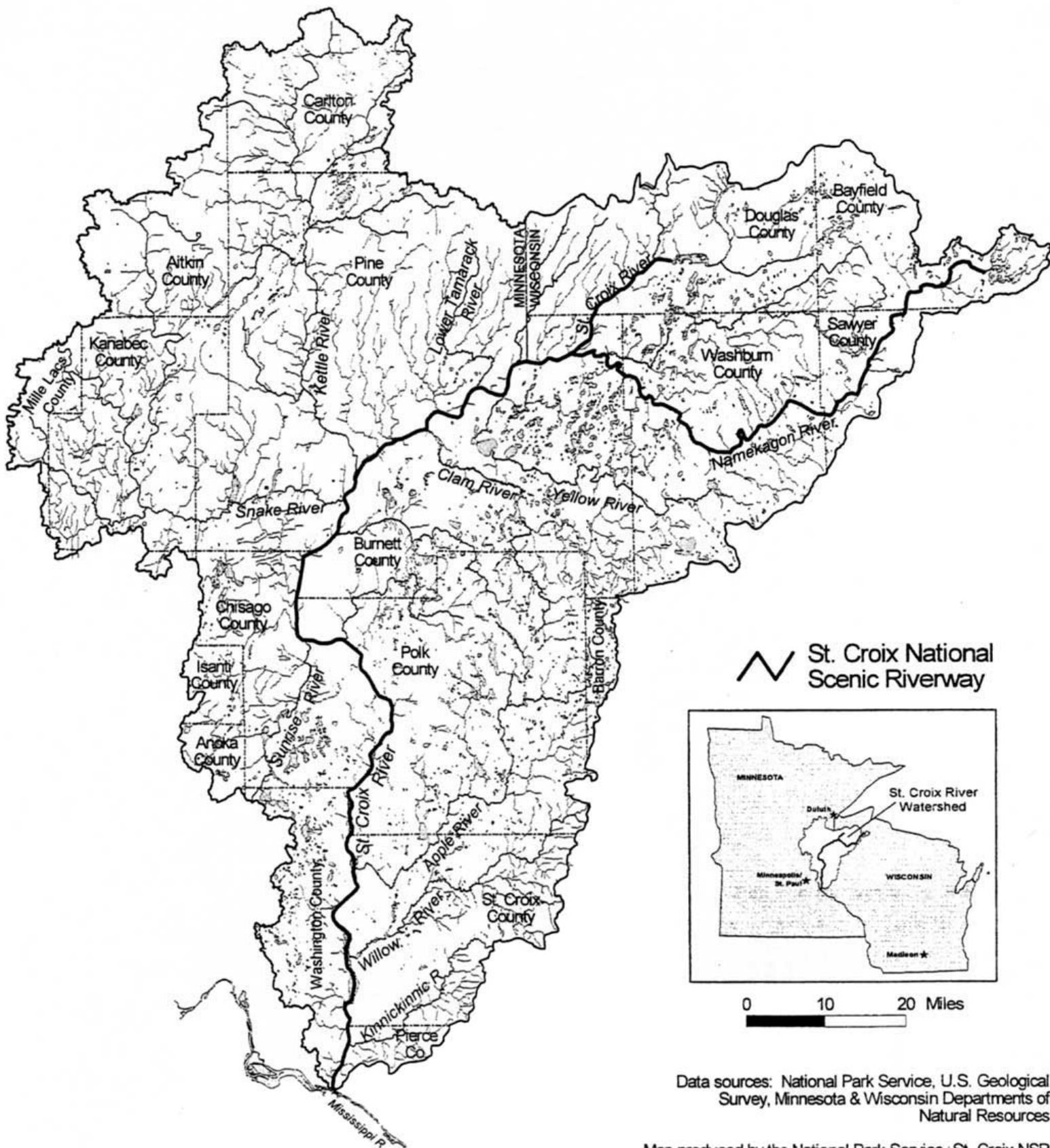
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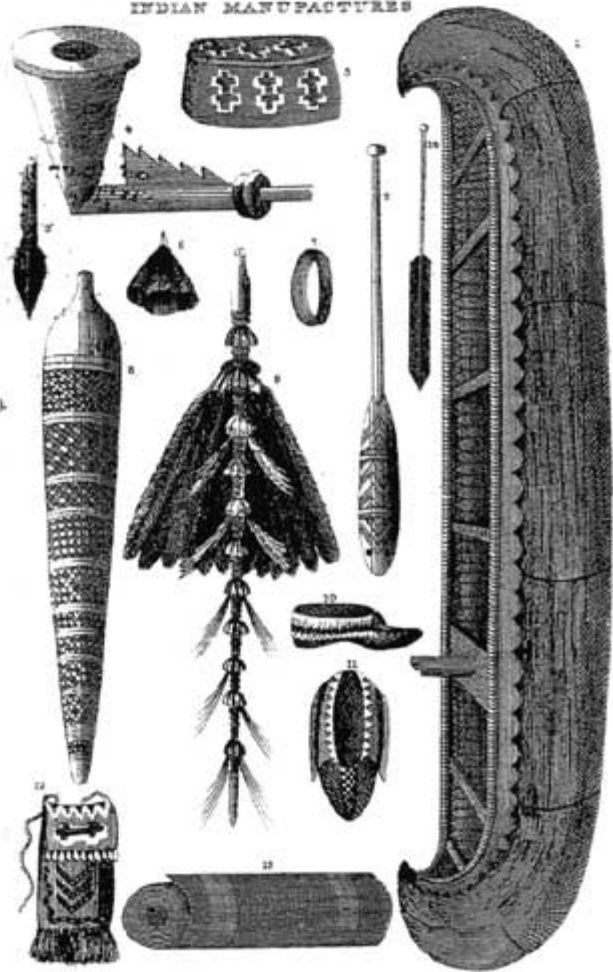
Frontispiece: The St. Croix River Watershed







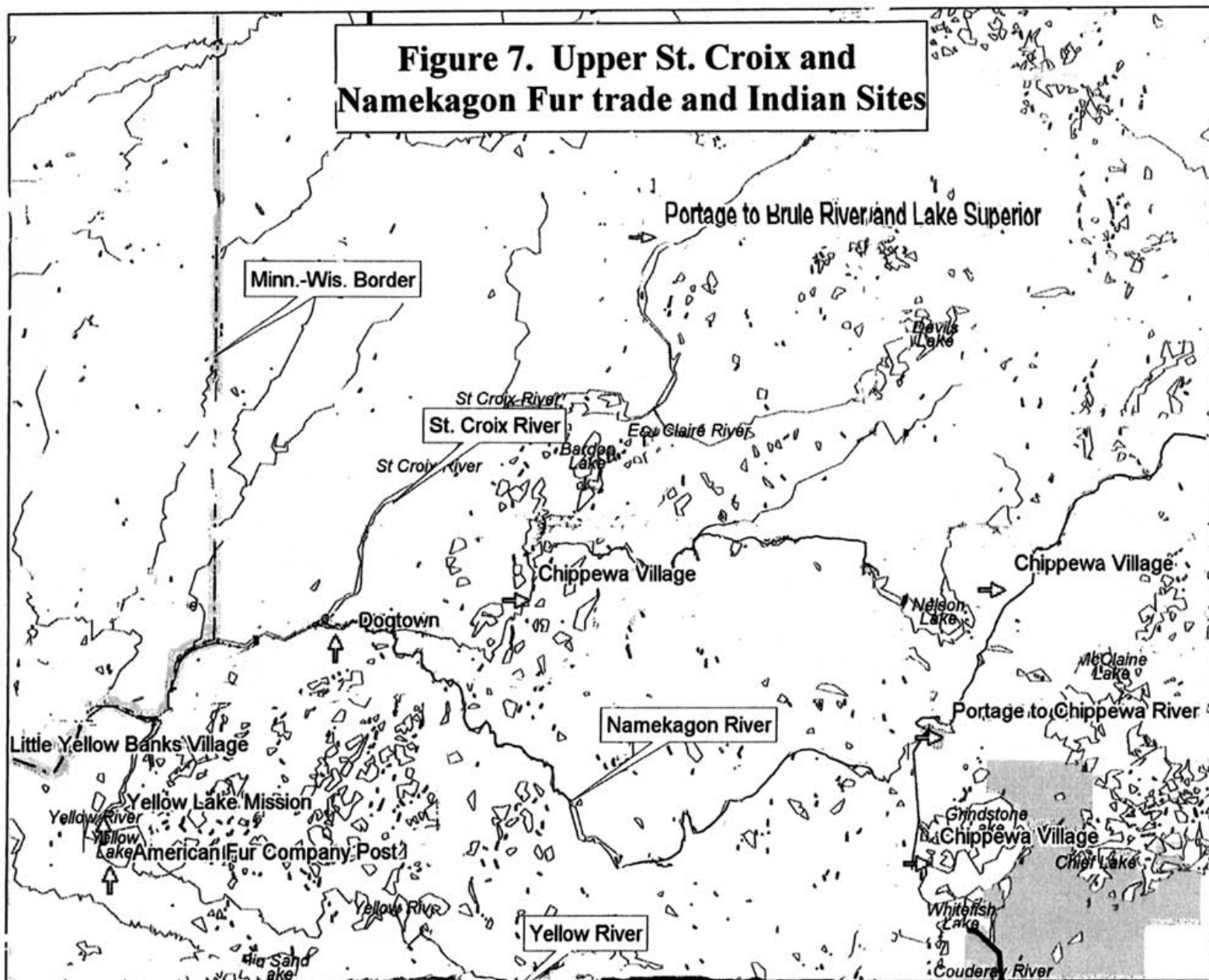
INDIAN MANUFACTURES



1. Birchbark canoe.
2. Cedar steering paddle.
3. Makuk (to store berries).
4. Catlaite pipe bowl.
5. Arrowhead.
6. Bird-hunting arrow tip.
7. Bracelet.
8. Pipestem.
9. Ceremonial pipestem.
10. Moccasin.
11. Moccasin.
12. Bandolier bag.
13. Bulrush mat.
14. Light cedar paddle.



Figure 7. Upper St. Croix and Namekagon Fur trade and Indian Sites



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Scale: 1 : 450,000 Zoom Level: 8-0 Datum: WGS84 Map Rotation: 0° Magnetic Declination: 0.3°E

5 mi

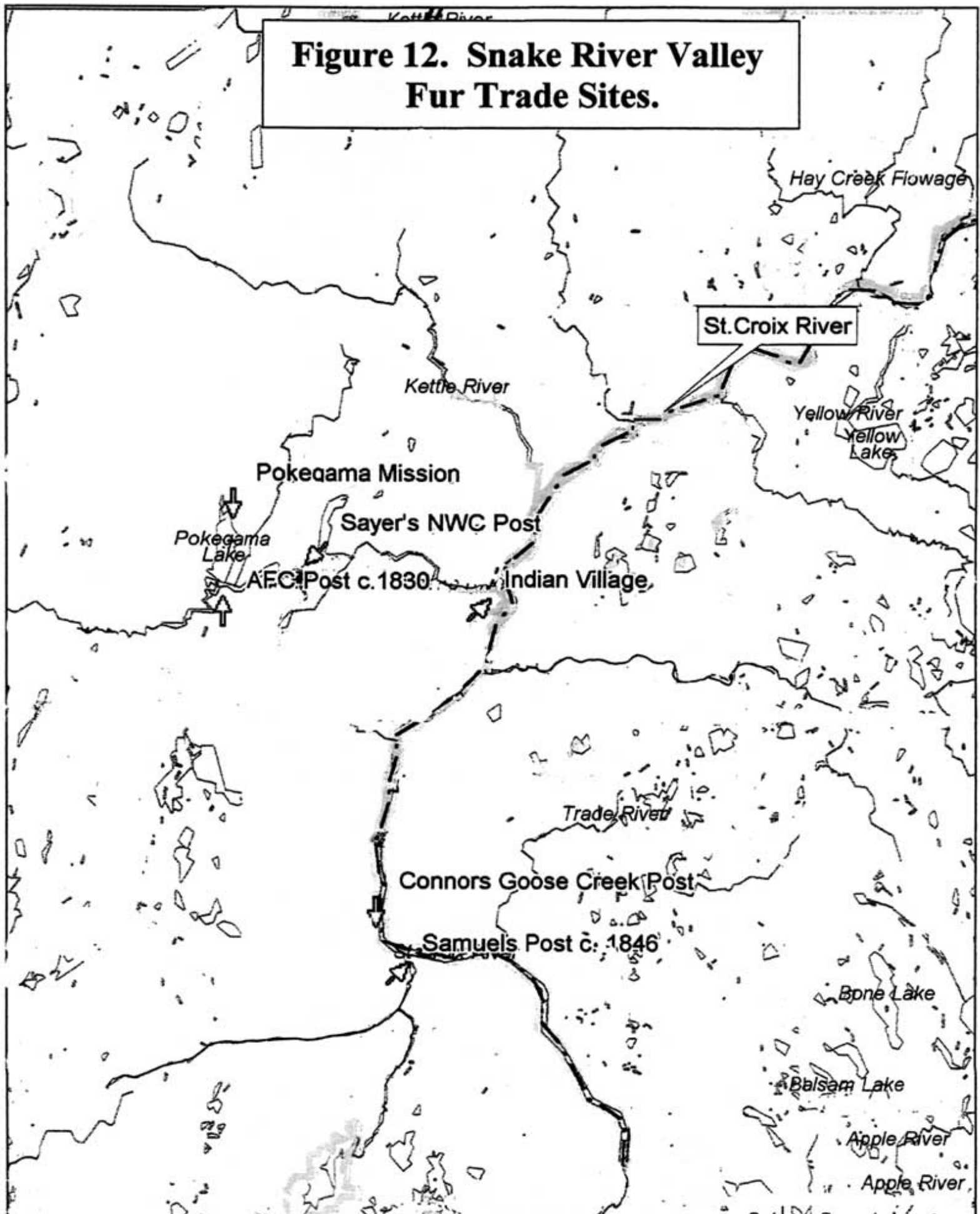








**Figure 12. Snake River Valley
Fur Trade Sites.**





© 2001 DeLorme. Topo USA® 3.0

Zoom Level: 8-0 Datum: WGS84

Scale 1 : 400,000

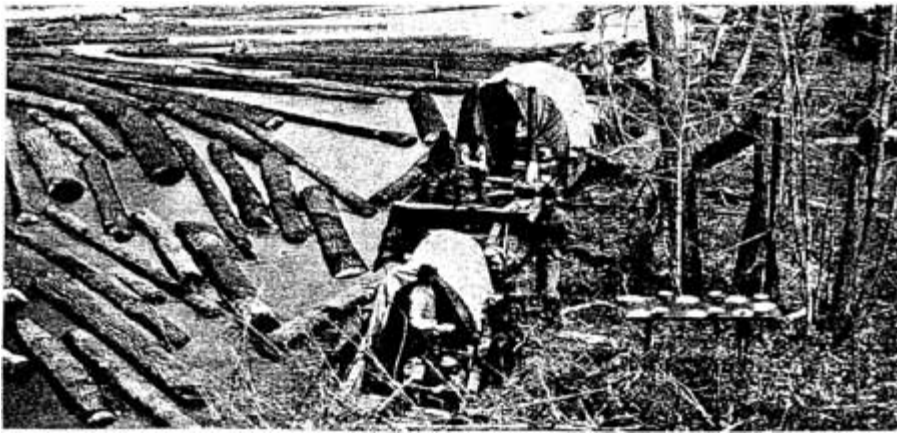
1" = 6.31 mi



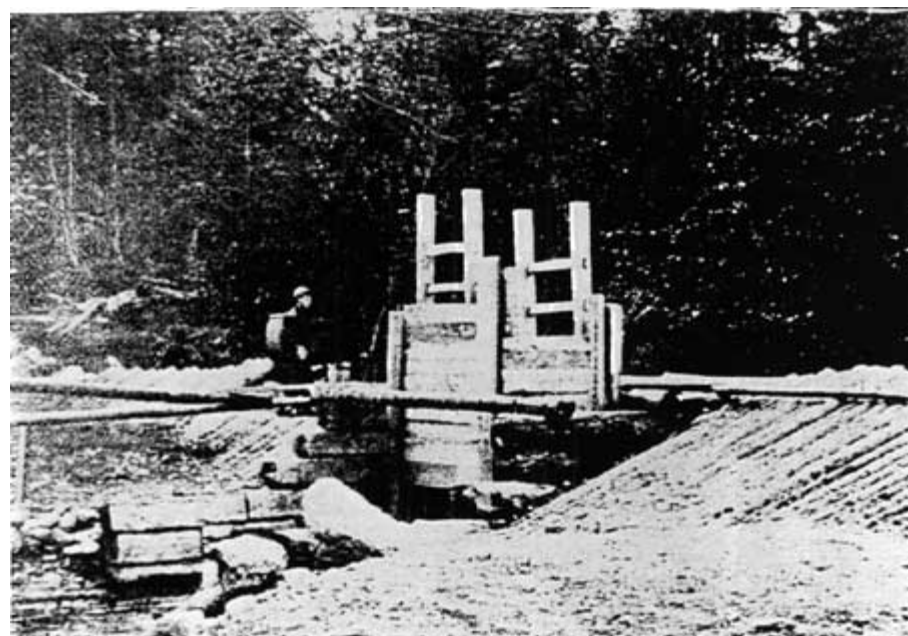
















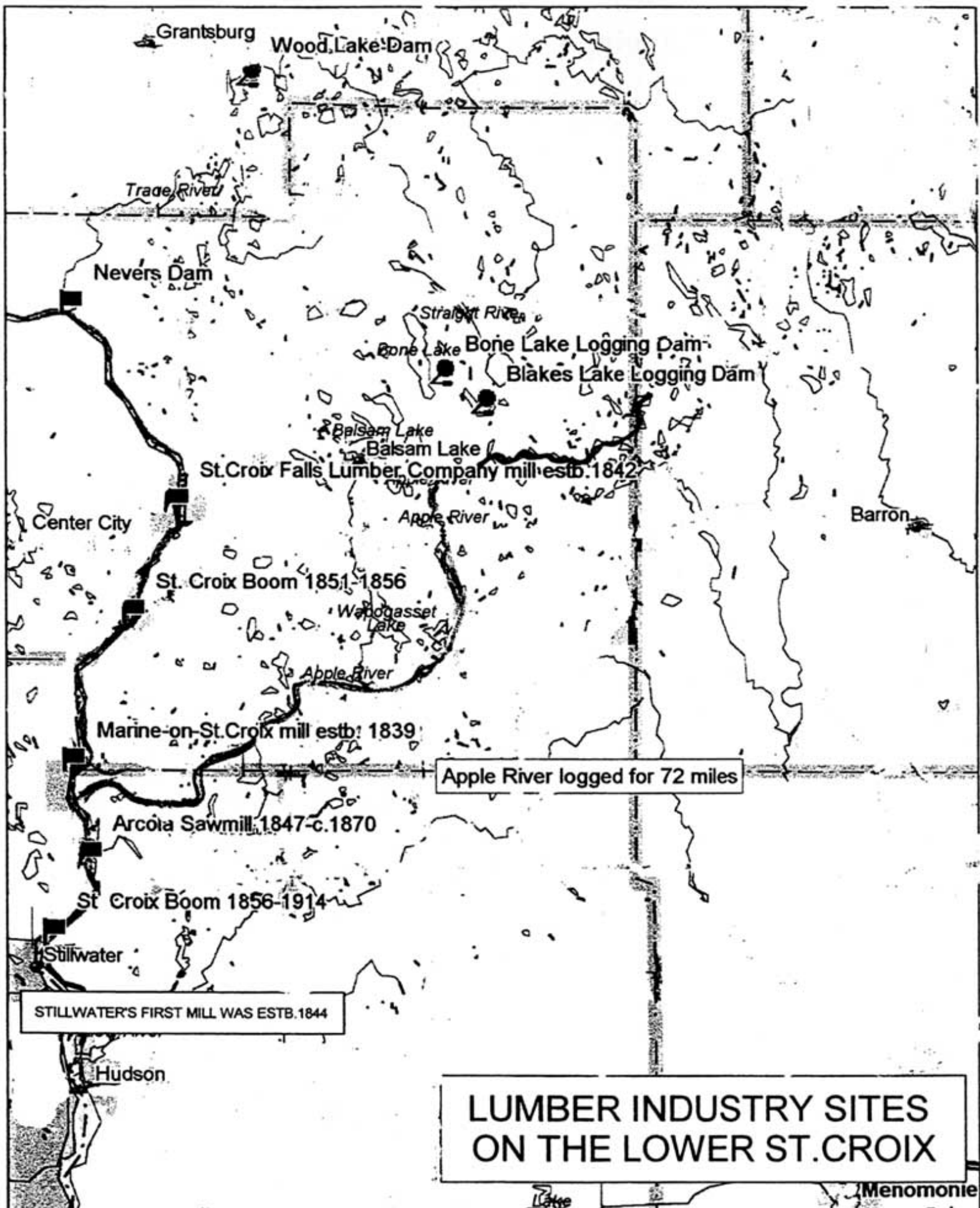


Figure 21. Lumber Industry Sites on the Lower St. Croix.

Zoom Level: 8-0 Datum: WGS84

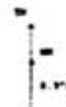
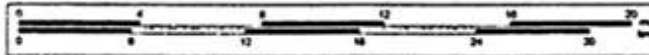
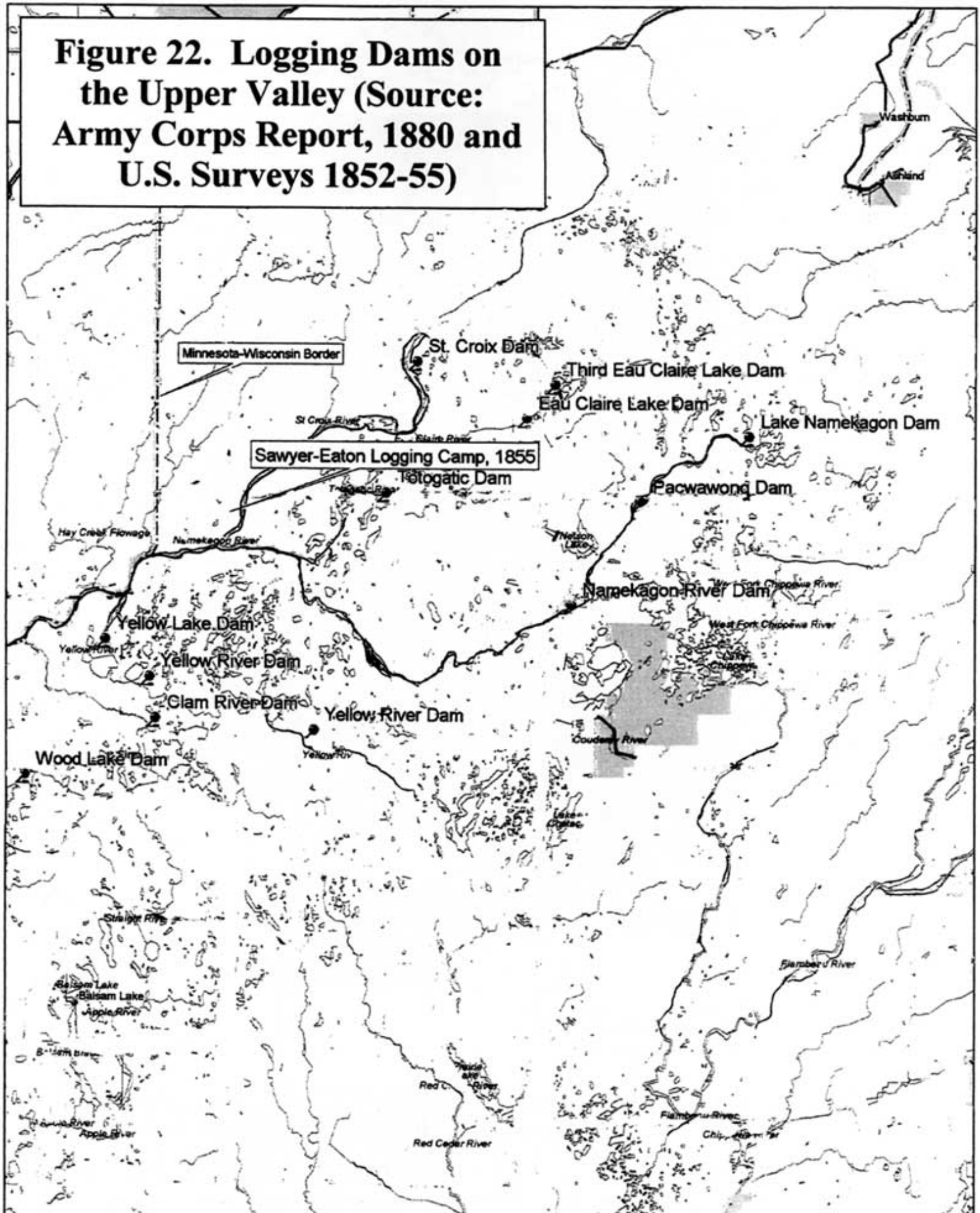


Figure 22. Logging Dams on the Upper Valley (Source: Army Corps Report, 1880 and U.S. Surveys 1852-55)



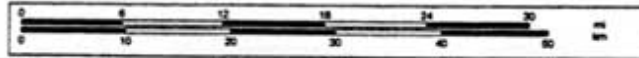


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Zoom Level: 8-0 Datum: WGS84

Scale 1 : 800,000

1" = 12.63 mi





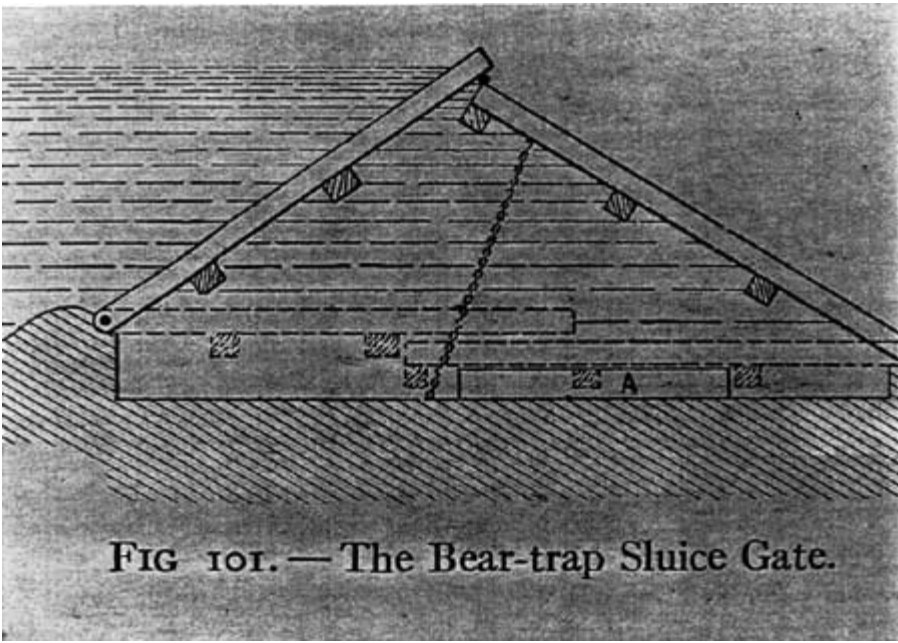
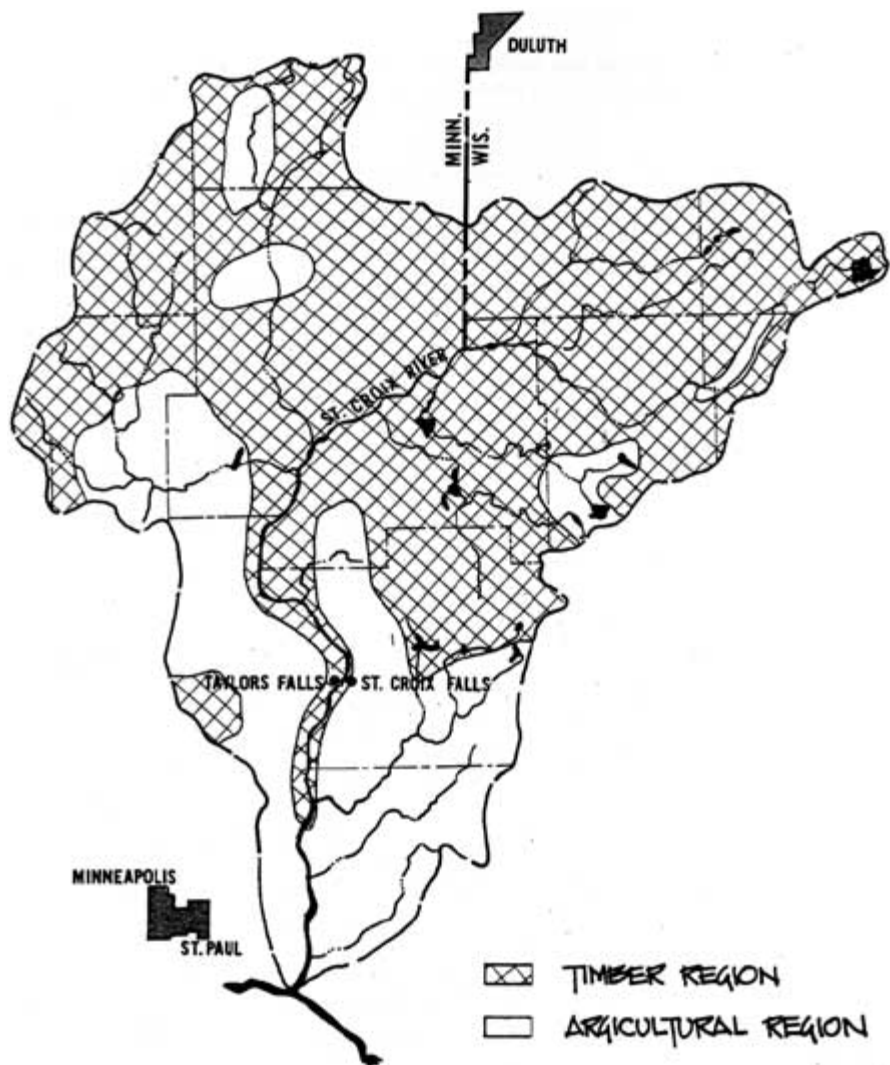
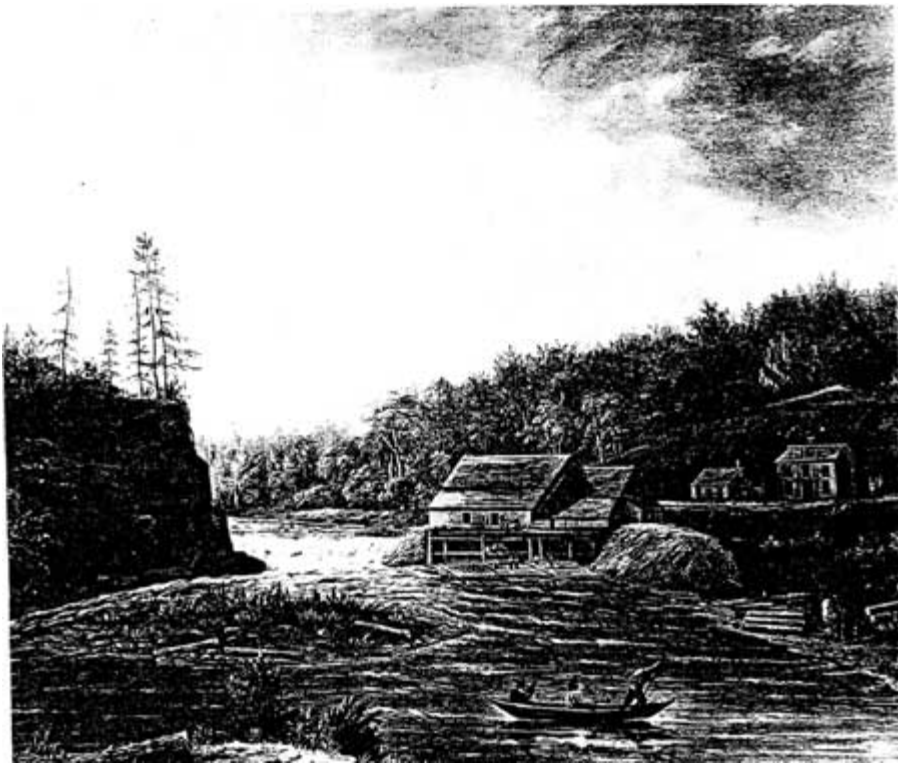
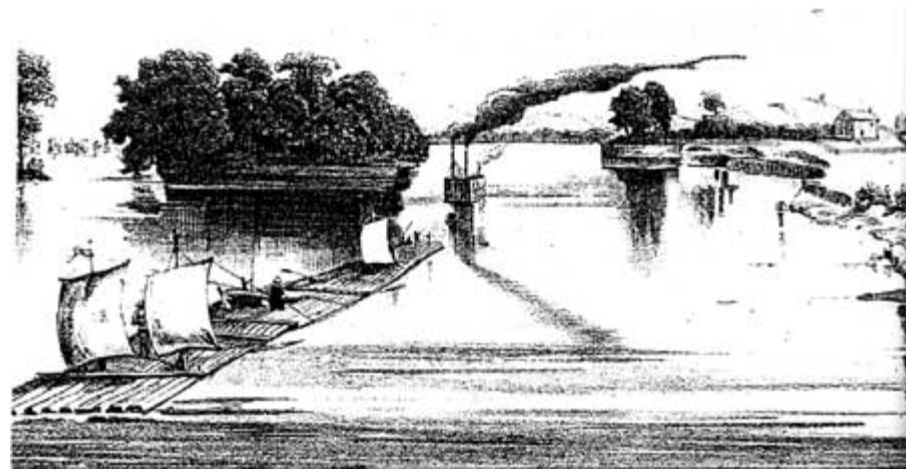
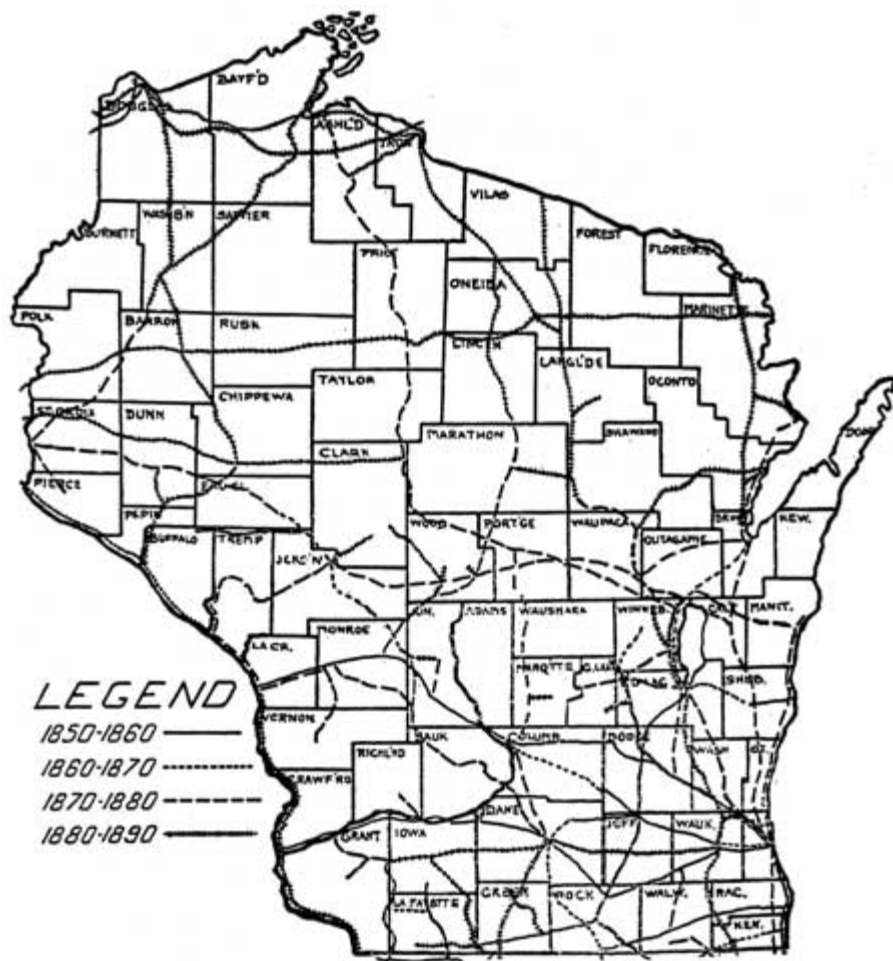


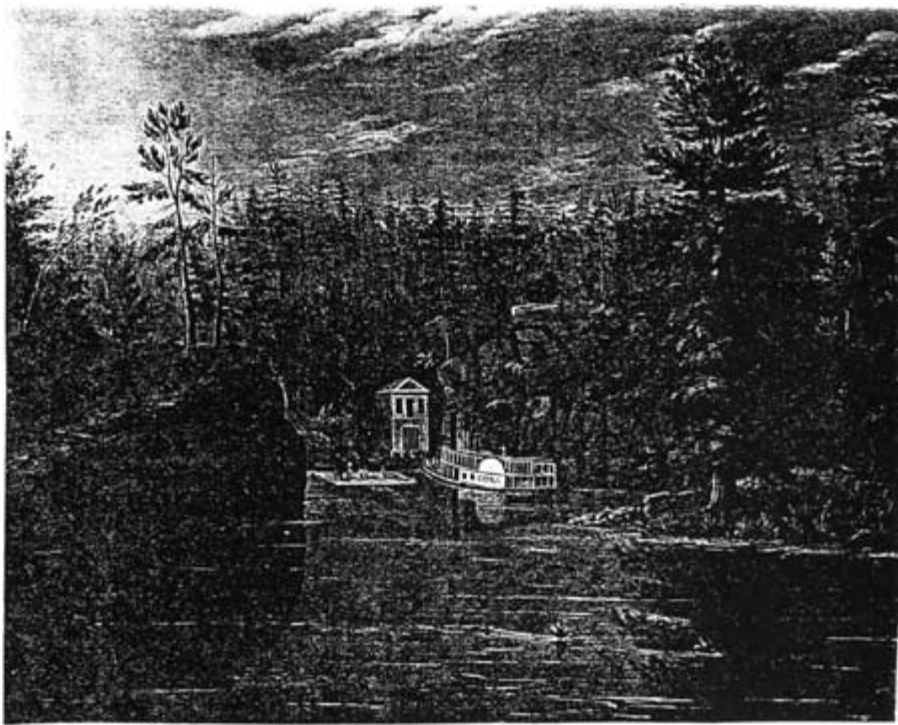
FIG 101. — The Bear-trap Sluice Gate.











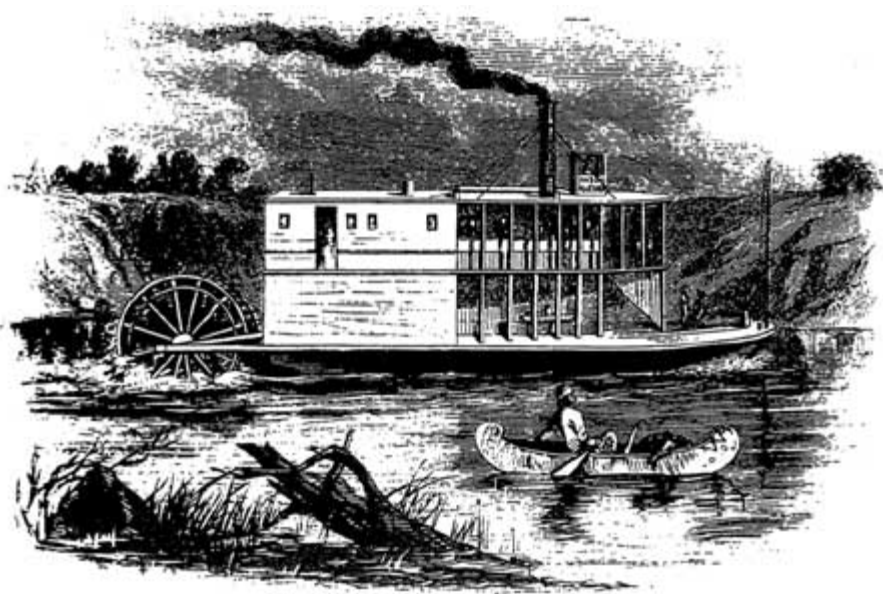
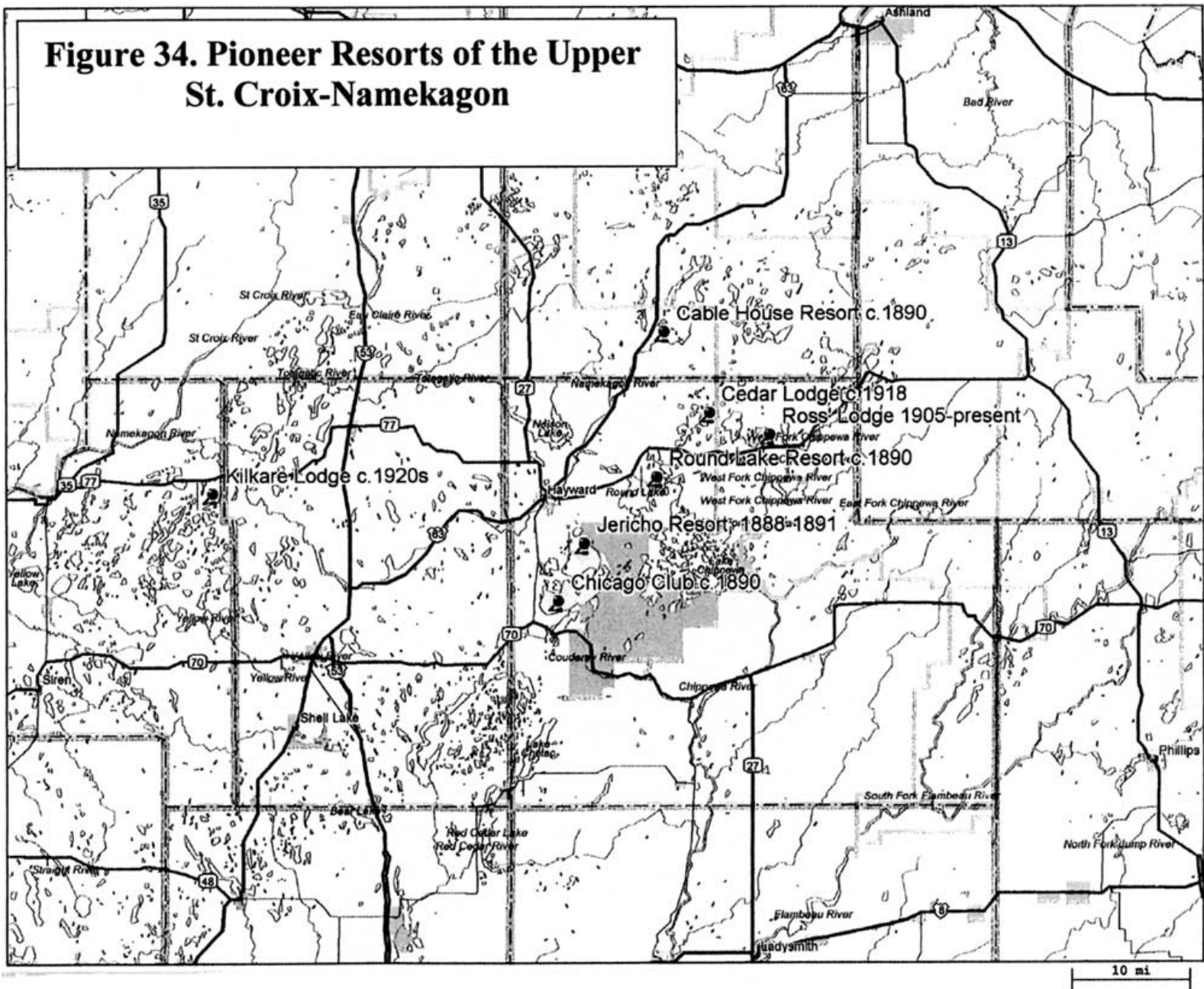








**Figure 34. Pioneer Resorts of the Upper
St. Croix-Namekagon**



10 mi

NEW CHICAGO ADDRESS
100 No. La Salle St.
Suite 900

Board of Governors

Charles C. Brown
Real Estate
Walter M. Johnson
Walter M. Johnson Candy Co.
George E. King
The Lumber Co.
William J. Green
Hendrick & Bock
Earl A. Grossmeyer
Hendrick Lumber Co.
George L. Kane
Insurance

KILKARE LODGE
OF WISCONSIN



TELEPHONE
FRANKLIN 1000

Board of Governors

Charles V. Dwyer
McIntosh Brothers Co.
Merrill A. Law
Insurance
H. A. King
H. A. King Co.
Vernon O. McDougall
Hendrick & Bock
Eugene W. Shaw
Attorney
Foster E. Smith
Insurance

Dear Sir:

How many times have you wished you could just drop the grim grind of business for a few days, and get away to some real, honest-to-goodness, next-to-nature recreation? Without having to cross a dozen states or spend a mint of money to find it?

Hundred per cent realization of that sort--only a short train-trip or an average motor drive away, and at the same time really inexpensive--is getting harder and harder to find every year. That's why, when we organized and announced KILKARE LODGE of Wisconsin, we practically closed out our entire membership quota the very first season.

This letter, therefore (suggested by a mutual acquaintance who is already a "Kilkarian") is not in any sense part of the regulation "Membership drive." We do have open, however, a few more opportunities to join our congenial ranks--and I feel certain that once you know exactly what KILKARE LODGE has to offer, you will want to enjoy its advantages both for yourself and for your family. Soon!

Briefly....KILKARE is the city man's ideal set-up in a North Woods camp. Fully appointed Club House, our own farm, complete commissary, a chancey golf course, three lakes that are jewels, swimming, boating, trail-riding, shooting and trout-fishing. A hand-picked membership that you'll enjoy knowing. And just far enough away to give you picturesque solitude without putting you off from civilization. Best of all, it's a perfect play-place for the whole family: as any of our members will tell you!

Details of Kilkare Lodge that speak for themselves are shown on the pages inside. A location map also appears on the back page. Please give them your attention.

Then if you are interested, just have your secretary drop this card in the mails, properly filled in, and I shall be very pleased to give you without any obligation many interesting points omitted from this letter.

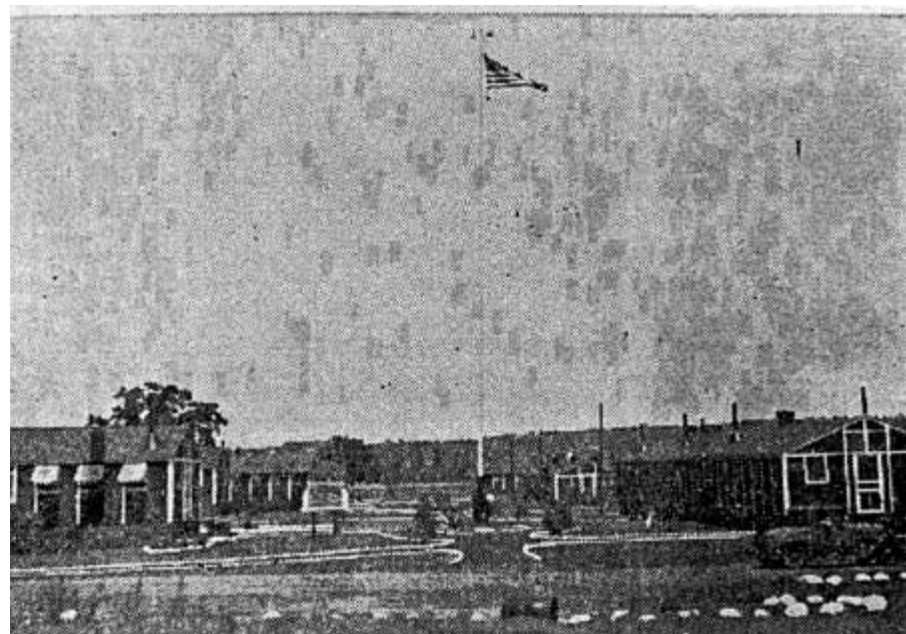
The very best part of my information will be the surprisingly ~~low~~ COST for which you can enjoy every facility for year-round recreation that Kilkare Lodge affords....and it affords them all!

Cordially yours,

Secretary







St. Croix Riverway

Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix



ENDNOTES

Introduction

¹W.H.C. Folsom, *Fifty-Years in the Northwest* (St. Paul: Pioneer Publishing Company, 1888), 34.

²James Taylor Dunn, *The St. Croix: Midwest Border River* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1979), 5.

³Walter A. Rowlands, "The Great Lakes Cutover Region," *Regionalism In America*, edited by Merrill Jensen (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), 334.

⁴Folsom, *Fifty-Years in the Northwest*, 34. For other examples of environmental history approaches to regional studies see: William Cronon, *Changes on the Land, Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); James J. Miller, *An Environmental History of Northeast Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998); and Robert Bunting, *The Pacific Raincoast: Environment and Culture in an American Eden, 1778-1900* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997).

Chapter 1

¹Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Narrative Journal of Travels Through the Great Chain of American Lakes to the Sources of the Mississippi River in the Year 1820* (Albany: E. & F. Hosford, 1821), 309-12; Zebulon M. Pike, *An Account of Expeditions to the Sources of the Mississippi and Through Parts of Louisiana, to the Sources of the Arkansaw, Kans, La Platte, Pierre Jaun, Rivers* (Philadelphia: C. & A. Conrad, 1810), 94-5.

²Nicholas Perrot, "Memoir on the Manners, Customs, and Religion of the Savages of North America," *The Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Region of the Great Lakes*, ed. Emma Helen Blair (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 119.

³Elliott West, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1998), 17; Ruth Landes, *The Mystic Lake Sioux: Sociology of the Mdewakantonwan Santee* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), 28.

⁴Perrot, "Memoir," *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 130-1.

⁵*Ibid*; Gary Clayton Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind: Dakota-White Relations in the Upper Mississippi Valley, 1650-1862* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1997), 6-7; Louis Hennepin, *A Description of Louisiana*, ed. John Gilmary Shea (New York: John G. Shea, 1880), 227-39; Jonathan Carver, *Travels Through North America in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768* (London: J. Walter and S. Crowder, 1778), 264.

⁶Landes, *Mystic Lake Sioux*, 195-7.

⁷Daniel S. Wovcha, Barbara C. Delaney, Gerda E. Nordquist, *Minnesota's St. Croix River Valley and Anoka Sandplain* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 19; William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984), 97; Hennepin, *Description of Louisiana*, 322-3; Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 7.

⁸Landes, *Mystic Lake Sioux*, 28-29; Perrot, "Memoir," *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 120-1; Hennepin, *Description of Louisiana*, 322-3; Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian, Myth and Reality* (New York: Norton, 1999), 131.

⁹Landes, *Mystic Lake Sioux*, 162-70; Hennepin, *Description of Louisiana*, 323.

¹⁰Hennepin, *Description of Louisiana*, 323, 244-5.

¹¹Perrot, "Memoirs," *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 103; Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, *Schoolcraft's Expedition to Lake Itasca: The Discovery of the Source of the Mississippi*, edited by Philip P. Mason (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1958), 90; Joseph N. Nicolet, *The Journals of Joseph N. Nicolet: A Scientist on the Mississippi Headwaters With Notes on Indian Life, 1836-37*, edited by Martha Coleman Bray (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1970), 146; Samuel W. Pond, "The Dakotas or Sioux of Minnesota as They Were in 1834," *Minnesota Historical Society Collections*, 12, 345.

¹²*Ibid*.

¹³Gary Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 2-3, 13; Pierre de Charlevoix, *Journal of a Voyage to North America*, Vol. I (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1761), 280.

¹⁴Pierre Esprit Radisson, *Voyages of Peter Esprit Radisson*, edited by Gideon Scull, (New York: Peter Smith, 1943), 201-9.

¹⁵Perrot, "Memoir," *Indian Tribes of the Upper Mississippi*, 159-65; R. David Edmunds and Joseph L. Peyser, *The Fox Wars: The Mesquakie Challenge to New France* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 16-7; William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1984), 129-30.

¹⁶William W. Warren, *A History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984), 120; David L. Fritz, *Historic Resource Study: St. Croix National Scenic Riverway*, Unpublished draft. (Omaha: National Park Service, 1989), 14.

¹⁷"Geographical Names in Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Historical Collections I* (1849) 113; Benard de la Harpe, "Le Suer's Voyage up the Mississippi," *Wisconsin Historical Collections XVI* (1902) 185-6; Dunn, *The St. Croix*, 28-9; *Stillwater Messenger*, 25 July 1917; *Stillwater Messenger* clipping in the Hjalmar Otto Peterson Papers, Minnesota

Historical Society, St. Paul.

¹⁸Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 11-3; Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 36-7.

¹⁹Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 36.

²⁰Meyer, *History of the Santee Sioux*, 10-1; Hennepin, *A Description of Louisiana*, 202-3; Richard White, "The Winning of the West: The Expansion of the Western Sioux in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Journal of American History* 65:12 (1978), 319-43.

²¹Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 27.

²²*Ibid*, 22-3.

²³William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibway People* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984), 80-6.

²⁴*Ibid*, 155-62; Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 46-9.

²⁵*Ibid*, 44-9.

²⁶*Ibid*, 51-4; Kenneth P. Bailey, ed. And trans. *Journal of Joseph Marin, French Colonial Explorer and Military Commander in the Wisconsin Country, August 7, 1753–June 20, 1754* (n.p.: privately printed, 1975), 93-4.

²⁷Arthur S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West To 1870-71* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 231-5; Grace Lee Nute, "Marin Versus La Verndrye," *Minnesota History* 32:4 (Dec. 1951), 226-238; Francis Parkman, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (Boston: Little Brown, 1908), 85-6.

²⁸Bailey, *Journal of Mr. Marin, Junior, 1753 and 1754*, 72-5, 93-7.

²⁹Anderson, *Kinsmen of Another Kind*, 59; Alexander Henry, *Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories Between the Years 1760 and 1776* (Edmonton, Alberta: M.G. Hurtig, 1969), 187-8, 194-200.

³⁰Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 243-4.

³¹*Ibid*, 244-9.

³²Warren, *History of the Ojibway People*, 10, 220, 279-97, 337; Henry, *Travels and Adventures*, 153.

³³Connor, *et al*, *Archeological Investigations Along the St. Croix* 1983, 320-340.

³⁴Jonathan Carver, *Travels Through North America in the Years 1766, 1767 and 1768* (London: J. Walters and S. Crowder, 1778), 104-6, 476-7; James Stanley Goddard, "Journal of a Voyage, 1766-67," edited by Carolyn Gilman, *The Journals of Jonathan Carver and Related Documents*, edited by John Parker, (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1976), 190.

³⁵Carver, *Travels Through North America*, 100, 104-6.

³⁶Carver, *Travels Through North America*, 476-7, 533; William E. Lass, *Minnesota: A History* (New York: Norton, 1998), 67-9; Stephen H. Long, *The Northern Expeditions of Stephen H. Long: The Journals of 1817 and 1823 and Related Documents* edited by Lucile M. Kane, June Holmquist, and Carolyn Gilman (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1978), 50, 96.

³⁷Peter Pond, "Narrative of Peter Pond," *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest*, edited by Charles M. Gates (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1965), 39-66; Charles Gautier de Verville, "Gautier's Journal of a Visit to the Mississippi, 1777-1778," *Wisconsin Historical Collections*, 11 (1888), 102-5.

³⁸Augustin Grignon, "Seventy-two Years Recollections of Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Historical Collections* 3 (1857) 244-7, 288; Harold Hickerson, *Ethnohistory of the Chippewa in Central Minnesota* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974), 153-6.

³⁹George Nelson, *A Winter in the St. Croix Valley: George Nelson's Reminiscences, 1802-03*, edited by Richard Bardon and Grace Lee Nute (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1948); Michel Curot, "A Wisconsin Fur-Trader's Journal, 1803-04," edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites *Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, XX, (1911), 396-471; Thomas Connor [John Sayer], "The Diary of Thomas Connor," edited by Charles M. Gates and Grace Lee Nute, *Five Fur Traders of the Northwest* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 1965), 243-78. The alleged Thomas Connor journal is unsigned and has since been generally accepted to be the work of John Sayer, a veteran partner in the Northwest Company. For more details see: Douglas A. Birk, *John Sayer's Snake River Journal, 1804-1805: A Fur Trade Diary from East Central Minnesota* (St. Paul: Institute for Minnesota Archaeology, 1989).

⁴⁰Curot, "Fur Trader's Journal," 465; Birk, *Sayer's Snake River Journal*, 7; Nelson, *Winter in the St. Croix*, 43; Bruce M. White, "The Regional Context of the Removal Order of 1850," *Fish in the Lakes, Wild Rice, and Game in Abundance: Testimony on Behalf of Mille Lacs Ojibwe Hunting and Fishing Rights*, edited by James M. McClurken (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2000), 203.

⁴¹Nelson, *Winter in the St. Croix Valley*, 21; Sayer, "Diary of Thomas Connors [sic]," 266-7.

⁴²Curot, "Fur Trader's Journal," 416, 420, 438; Nelson, *Winter in the St. Croix Valley*, 20.

⁴³Nelson, *Winter in the St. Croix Valley*, 21; Curot, "Fur Trader's Journal," 439.

⁴⁴Nelson, *Winter in the St. Croix Valley*, 44, 46.

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⁸⁹*St. Croix Union* (Stillwater, Minn.), 12 September 1856.

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⁹¹Rosenfelt, *Washington*, 11; Folsom, *Fifty Years in the Northwest*, 356.

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⁹³Folsom, *Fifty Years in the Northwest*, 334.

⁹⁴Folsom, *Fifty Years in the Northwest*, 306-7.

⁹⁵Rosenfelt, *Washington*, 11-2; Folsom, *Fifty Years in the Northwest*, 356.

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¹¹⁰*St. Croix Union* (Stillwater, Minn.), 8 May 1857.

¹¹¹*St. Croix Union* (Stillwater, Minn.), 15 December 1855.

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¹²¹*Stillwater Messenger*, 24 May 1859.

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¹²³Thompson, *The Rise and Decline of the Wheat Growing Industry in Wisconsin*, 27-9.

¹²⁴Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, 92-3.

¹²⁵*St. Croix Union* (Stillwater, Minn.), 3 November 1855.

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¹⁴⁸Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, 417-8.

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¹⁵¹Thompson, *Wheat Growing in Wisconsin*, 71-3.

¹⁵²*Stillwater Messenger* 1 December 1876.

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¹⁵⁴Robert C. Nesbit, *The History of Wisconsin: Urbanization and Industrialization*, Vol. III (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1985), 87-9.

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¹⁵⁶Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, 430-1.

¹⁵⁷Current, *The History of Wisconsin*, 431-2; Blegen, *Minnesota*, 296-7.

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²³⁹*Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), 30 May 1890, 17 October 1895, 3 October 1895.

²⁴⁰*Messenger* (Stillwater, Minn.), 21 January 1875.

²⁴¹*Messenger* (Stillwater, Minn.), 21 January 1875.

²⁴²*The Heritage Areas of Burnett County*, 30-1; *Messenger* (Stillwater, Minn.), 21 January 1875; *Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), 31 August 1877, 10 October 1884; Peet, "Burnett County Wisconsin," 48; Nesbit, *The History of Wisconsin*, 38.

²⁴³*Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), January 1875. Information available suggests a bridge connecting Grantsburg and Marshland was constructed during this time stimulated in good part due to the cranberry trade.

²⁴⁴*Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), 10 October 1884.

²⁴⁵*Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), 18 April 1879.

²⁴⁶*Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), April 1877 and 1887.

²⁴⁷Folsom, *Fifty Year in the Northwest*, 239-40; *The Heritage Areas of Burnett County*, 30-1; *Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), 14, 21 July 1876, 20 April 1877, 4 November 1887.

²⁴⁸Peet, "Burnett County Wisconsin," 46.

²⁴⁹Peet, "Burnett County Wisconsin," 48, 90, 97; *Burnett County Through the Years*, at Burnett County Historical Society.

²⁵⁰Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.

²⁵¹Burnett County Homemakers Clubs, *Pioneer Tales of Burnett County*, (Danbury, Wis.: Dan-Web Printing Co., Bicentennial Edition), 11, 22, 101-2.

²⁵²*Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), 1 August 1879.

²⁵³Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.

²⁵⁴*Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), 20 March 1891.

²⁵⁵*Polk County Press* (Osceola Mills, Wis.), 21 September 1895; Arlan Helgeson, "Nineteenth Century Land Colonization in Northern Wisconsin, " *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 36(2)(Winter 1952-1953), 119.

²⁵⁶Robert F. Fries, *Empire in Pine: The Story of Lumbering in Wisconsin 1830-1900* (Madison, Wis.: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1951), 169; Edward L. Peet, "Burnett County Wisconsin," (Grantsburg, Wis. The Burnett County Board of Immigration, 1902), 71.

²⁵⁷Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 31-3; Clark, *Farming the Cutover*, 6, 11; Peet, "Burnett County Wisconsin," 101.

²⁵⁸Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 33.

²⁵⁹Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 26.

²⁶⁰Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 9.

²⁶¹Peet, *Burnett County Wisconsin*, 69, 101-2; Clark, *Farming the Cutover*, 5.

²⁶²Peet, *Burnett County Wisconsin*, 69, 101.

²⁶³William A. Henry, *Northern Wisconsin, A Handbook for the Homeseeker* (Madison, Wis., 1896), 162-4.

²⁶⁴Peet, *Burnett County Wisconsin*, 5-7, 58-9, 73-4.

²⁶⁵Peet, *Burnett County Wisconsin*, 57-8.

²⁶⁶Peet, "Burnett County Wisconsin," 26-7.

²⁶⁷Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 13; Peet, "Burnett County Wisconsin," 9.

²⁶⁸Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 10, 20-2, 30; Peet, "Burnett County Wisconsin," 9, 11, 98; *Burnett County Sentinel* (Grantsburg, Wis.), 16 July 1880, 17 July 1885, 6 August 1886.

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²⁷⁰Peet, *Burnett County Wisconsin*, 48.

²⁷¹Connor, *et al*, *Archeological Invesitigations*, 1983, 121-151.

²⁷²Peet, *Burnett County Wisconsin*, 48.

⁷²³Peet, *Burnett County Wisconsin*" 7-9, 99.

²⁷⁴*The Heritage Area of Burnett County* ,9, 30.

²⁷⁵Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 27-8, 34-43; Marple, *The Visitor Who Came to Stay*.

²⁷⁶Marple, "Rocks, Minerals and Folly," in *From a Visitor Who Came to Stay*.

²⁷⁷Peet, *Burnett County Wisconsin*, 33, 35-8, 53.

²⁷⁸Peet, *Burnett County Wisconsin*, 42.

²⁷⁹Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 55-7, 63.

²⁸⁰Carl Kuhnly, Oral History Transcript, Burnett County Historical Society, 1985.

²⁸¹Harry D. Baker, Oral History Transcript, 1950.

²⁸²Clark, *Farming the Cutover*, 11-2, 31, 60.

²⁸³*The "Far North" Community of Burnett County — Danbury*, 1966, Burnett County Historical Society.

²⁸⁴Marple, *The Visitor Who Came to Stay*.

²⁸⁵Clark, *Farming the Cutover*, 13-4.

²⁸⁶Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.

²⁸⁷Clark, *Farming the Cutover*, 12, 18-20; William L. Bowers, *The Country Life Movement in America, 1900-1920* (Port Washington, N.Y.; Kennikat Press, 1974), 3-6.

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²⁹¹Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 58-60.

²⁹²Carl Kuhnly, "Homesteading in Wisconsin, Up Hill — Down Hill, All the Way," in Burnett County Historical Society File, 1985.

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²⁹⁴*Ibid.*, 68-72, 85

²⁹⁵Ibid., 93-4.

²⁹⁶Lucy B. Darr, "Ku Klux Klan Activity in Pierce, Polk, and St. Croix Counties, Wisconsin," Student Paper (University of Wisconsin-River Falls, 1959); Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 93-114.

²⁹⁷Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 93-114.

²⁹⁸Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 164-5.

²⁹⁹Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 150-6.

³⁰⁰Raymond E. Murphy, "The Geography of the Northwestern Pine Barrens of Wisconsin," *University of Wisconsin*, 1(Madison, 1931), 70, 79, 84, 106.

³⁰¹Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 117, 123-9, 132-5; Murphy, "Northwestern Pine Barrens of Wisconsin," 70, 83, 88-9, 106.

³⁰²Murphy, "The Geography of the Northwestern Pine Barrens of Wisconsin," 70.

³⁰³Gough, *Farming the Cutover*, 136-9.

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³⁰⁶L.G. Sorden, "Some Events in Wisconsin's Forest History." Paper delivered to the Forest History Association of Wisconsin, Inc., Wausau, Wis., 28-29, September 1979, 15, 17 in the Burnett County Historical Society.

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¹⁹*The Messenger* (Stillwater, Minn.), 9 August 1859.

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⁷¹*Stillwater Lumberman* (Stillwater, Minn.), 5 October 1877.

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⁷³Dunne, *Captain Jolly*, 47.

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⁹²George H. Hazzard, *Interstate Park: Lectures, Laws, Papers, Pictures, Pointers*, (St. Paul, Minn.: 1896), 3.

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⁹⁵As quoted in Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 40-1.

⁹⁶As quoted in Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 41-2.

⁹⁷Dunn, *The St. Croix*, 98.

⁹⁸Transcript of Interview of Harry D. Baker; as quoted in Richardson, *Picturesque Landscape Assessment*, 116-7.

⁹⁹Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 32.

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¹⁰²The *Dalles Visitor* (Taylors Falls, Minn. and St. Croix Falls, Wis.) Summer 1992.

¹⁰³Merritt, *Creativity, Conflict and Controversy*, 275.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*; The *Dalles Visitor* (Taylors Fall, Minn. and St. Croix Falls, Wis.) Summer 1992.

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¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 283-4.

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¹²⁸As quoted in Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 35.

¹²⁹Alexander Wilson, "The View from the Road: Recreation and Tourism," in Scott Norris, ed., *Discovered Country: Tourism and Survival in the American West* (Albuquerque: Stone Ladder Press, 1994), 5.

¹³⁰From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 36-8.

¹³¹Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 33.

¹³²Blegen, *Minnesota*, 500.

¹³³Transcript of Interview with Harry D. Baker, 1950.

¹³⁴James Taylor Dunn, *Saving the River: The Story of the St. Croix River Association, 1911-1986*. (St. Paul: St. Croix River Association, 1986), 3-5. See for more complete account of the history of the St. Croix River Association.

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¹³⁶As quoted in Dunn, *Saving the River*, 12.

¹³⁷Dunn, *Saving the River*, 12-3.

¹³⁸As quoted in Dunn, *Saving the River*, 15.

¹³⁹Dunn, *Saving the River*, 15-6. Writing in 1986, Dunn reported that the Army Corps of Engineers had not done any snagging on the river above Stillwater declaring it "maintenance free."

¹⁴⁰Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 38.

¹⁴¹Ed L. Peet, *Burnett county Wisconsin* (Grantsburg, Wis.: The Journal of Burnett County, 1902), 27, 55, 66.

¹⁴²Timothy Bawden, "Escape to Wisconsin: The Early Resort Landscape of Northern Wisconsin, 1890-1920," *Wisconsin Preservation News*, 22(4)(July-August 1998), 2-3; Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*,

¹⁴³Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.

¹⁴⁴From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 58-9.

¹⁴⁵Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.

¹⁴⁶Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, "A Tour Around Lost Land and Teal Lakes," n.p.

¹⁴⁷Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, "A Tour Around Lost Land and Teal Lakes," n.p.

¹⁴⁸*Lakes and Resorts of the Northwest* (Chicago: Chicago & Northwest Railway, 1916), 3,8, 19. In Hayward were listed the Giblin Hotel, Cornick's Spider Lake and Teal Resorts, Grindstone of the Pines, Idelhurst Lodge, Boulder Lodge, Hubbard-Teal Lakes Resort, Clover Leaf Lodge, William's Grindstone Lake Resort, Sand Lake Resort, Round Lake Club, Berger's Resort, Sportsmen's Paradise. In Chisago City were listed the Dahl's House, Island Resort, Glee's House, and Hotel Chisago.

¹⁴⁹As quoted in Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 45-6.

¹⁵⁰Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 49-50.

¹⁵¹Raymond E. Murphy, "The Geography of the Northwestern Pine Barrens of Wisconsin," *University of Wisconsin Papers in Geography* 1(1931), 95-6.

¹⁵²From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 52-3.

¹⁵³Blegen, *Minnesota*, 532-5; Minnesota State Board of Health, *State Laws and Regulations Relating to Hotels, Restaurants, Places of Refreshment, Lodging Houses, and Boarding Houses* (St. Paul, Minn., July 1932).

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¹⁵⁵From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 59, based on Homeseekers Land Company Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul, Minnesota.

¹⁵⁶Transcript of Interview with Harry D. Baker.

¹⁵⁷Murphy, "The Geography of the Northwestern Pine Barrens of Wisconsin," 110.

¹⁵⁸Murphy, "The Geography of the Pine Barrens of Wisconsin."

¹⁵⁹"A Gothic House at Taylors Falls," *Minnesota History* 27(2)(June 1946), 125-6.

¹⁶⁰*Here's How Kilcare Lodge Looks Today!*, Pamphlet, Burnett County Historical Society. [1929]

¹⁶¹Murphy, "The Geography of the Northwestern Pine Barrens of Wisconsin," 72, 93-5, 107.

¹⁶²Glad, *The History of Wisconsin*, 216-9.

¹⁶³Warren James Belasco, *Americans on the Road: From Autocamp to Motel, 1910-1945* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1978), 8.

¹⁶⁴*Burnett County Sentinel*, (Grantsburg, Wis.), 5,12, 19, 20, 26, 27 January 2000; 2, 9,16, 23 February 2000

¹⁶⁵*Pioneer Tales of Burnett County*, 103-4; *Johnson's Weblake Resort*, Pamphlet in Burnett County Historical Society.

¹⁶⁶Bawden, "Escape to Wisconsin," 3.

¹⁶⁷Murphy, "The Geography of the Northwestern Pine Barrens of Wisconsin," 76.

¹⁶⁸Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 44-5.

¹⁶⁹Robert C. Nesbit, *Wisconsin: A History*, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press,

1973), 470-1.

¹⁷⁰Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 43-4.

¹⁷¹Glad, *The History of Wisconsin*, 494; Marple, *The Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.

¹⁷²Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*; *Rice Lake Chronotype* (Rice Lake, Wis.), 28 November 1979; *Work at Camp Riverside*, n.p., n.d., Burnett County Historical Society; *The St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 6 April 1941.

¹⁷³Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.; Burnett County Homemakers Clubs, *Pioneer Tales of Burnett County*, 99; Carol Ahlgren, "The Civilian Conservation Corps and Wisconsin State Park Development," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 71(3)(Spring 1988): 184-204.

¹⁷⁴*Work at Camp Riverside*, 18. Burnett County Historical Society's clipping file contains this pamphlet. It only identifies the bridge as crossing the St. Croix River along the St. Croix Trail. This would seem to indicate that the bridge is at the CCC Bridge Landing site on the Park Service map. See also William Gray Purcell, *St. Croix Trail Country: Recollections of Wisconsin*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1967).

¹⁷⁵Burnett County Homemakers Clubs, *Pioneer Tales of Burnett County*, 73.

¹⁷⁶Workers of the Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration in the State of Wisconsin, *Wisconsin: A Guide to the Badger State* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1941), 22-3; Murphy, "The Geography of the Northwestern Pine Barrens of Wisconsin," 93.

¹⁷⁷Eldon M. Marple, *A History of the Wayward Lakes Region...Through the Eyes of the Visitor Who Came and Stayed* (Hayward, Wis.: Chicago Bay Graftix, 1976), 81. The researchers have not found specific reference of the type of fish initially released at the Hayward fishery, however, given the fact that resorts in the area advertised that trout fishing was plentiful and the WPA Guidebooks stated that the St. Croix River was favored by trout fishermen, it is probably safe to assume that the CCC constructed fishery and others constructed by the CCC primarily released trout.

¹⁷⁸WPA Writers, *Wisconsin*, 23-4.

¹⁷⁹Transcript of interview of Fred Etcherson by David J. Olson, 30 July 1970, in Wisconsin State Historical Archives — River Falls.

¹⁸⁰*The Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, 6 April 1941.

¹⁸¹Rachel Franklin Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*. Unpublished report (Omaha, Neb.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior National Parks Service), 68-9.

¹⁸²Weekley, "Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix," 69-70.

¹⁸³Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*,

¹⁸⁴From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 71-2.

¹⁸⁵Dunn, *The St. Croix*, 207-8; *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 1 July 1945.

¹⁸⁶Dunn, *State Parks of the St. Croix*, 47-9; Weekley, "Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix," 70-1.

¹⁸⁷Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, 67-8. There is not enough information available to determine the extent of the impact of the dam on the Namekagon River. This information is supplied to provide an example of WPA work in the river valley.

¹⁸⁸Merritt, *Creativity, Conflict and Controversy*, 288.

¹⁸⁹From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 54-5.

¹⁹⁰WPA Writers, *Wisconsin*, 113, 115, 471-2, 477-8.

¹⁹¹From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 55.

¹⁹²From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix River*, 55-6.

¹⁹³Compiled and Written by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, *Minnesota: A State Guide* (New York: Hastings House, 1938), 295, 453-9; also from Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 57.

¹⁹⁴Workers of the WPA Writers' Project in the State of Minnesota, *Minnesota: Facts, Events, Places, Tours* in *The American Recreation Series* (New York: Rhode Printing-Publishing Co., 1941), 24.

¹⁹⁵Compiled by the Workers of the WPA Writers' Project in the State of Wisconsin, *Wisconsin: Facts, Events, Places, Tours*, in the *American Recreation Series* (New York: Bacon & Wieck, Inc., 1941), 15-7.

¹⁹⁶*Vacation in the Indian Head Country of Wisconsin*, 1936-1986 Anniversary Edition, in Hudson Public Library; "Constitution and By-Laws of The Wisconsin Indian Country, Inc.," Annual Update, Wisconsin Indian Head Country, 1948, in R.A. Peabody Papers, 1941-1954, State historical Society of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Area Research Center, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, River Falls, Wisconsin.

¹⁹⁷From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 63-4.

¹⁹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁹Norene Roberts, *Historical Reconstruction of the Riverfront: Stillwater, Minnesota* (St. Paul: St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1985), 40-49.

²⁰⁰Jeffrey A. Hess, Stillwater Bridge National Register of Historic Places Nomination, August, 1988, Section 8, p.6.

²⁰¹Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 59.

²⁰²Blegen, *Minnesota*, 532-5.

Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 60.

²⁰⁴Ibid., 72.

²⁰⁵*Wausau Record-Herald* (Wausau, Wis.), 2 September 1936.

²⁰⁶Louis Phelps Kellogg, *The French Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1925), and *The British Regime in Wisconsin and the Northwest* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1935).

²⁰⁷Louise Phelps Kellogg, "A Portrait of Wisconsin," *Wisconsin Magazine of History*, 25(3)(March 1942), 265.

²⁰⁸Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.

²⁰⁹Editorial staff of *Popular Science Monthly*, *How to Build Cabins, Lodges, and Bungalows: Complete Manual of Constructing, Decorating, and Furnishing Homes for Recreation or Profit*, (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1934 & 1946), 5; Ralph P. Dillon, *Sunset's Cabin Plan Book* (San Francisco: Lane Publishing Company, 1938); and from Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 62

²¹⁰*Summer Camps and Cottages* (Chicago, Ill.: National Plan Service, 194?). The Minnesota Historical Society has not been able to locate the exact date of this publication.

²¹¹Marple, *The Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.

²¹²Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration, *Minnesota*, 130-1; Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration, *Wisconsin*, 117, Current, *Wisconsin*, 30-1. Anthony Wise to Mr. Joe Mercedes, Wisconsin Tourist Board, 3 December 1947. Anthony Wise, Report on "Winter Tourist Trade In Wisconsin," to the Hayward Chamber of Commerce. [1947].

²¹³Anthony Wise to Mr. Joe Mercedes, Wisconsin Tourist Board, 3 December 1947. Anthony Wise, Report on "Winter Tourist Trade In Wisconsin," to the Hayward Chamber of Commerce. [1947]

²¹⁴"History of Telemark," Wise Collection. State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madisan.

²¹⁵"A Capsule History of the Telemark Recreational Community," Wisconsin Historical Society File; Chicago *Sun-Times*, 13 July 1969.

²¹⁶Janice Ward, *Next Stop Dresser Junction*, (Osceola, Wis.: *The Osceola Sun*, 1976), 108-9.

²¹⁷Karamanski, *Saving the Saint Croix*, 29-30.

²¹⁸Karamanski, *Saving the St. Croix*, 32-4.

²¹⁹As quoted in Karamanski, *Saving the St. Croix*, 36-9.

²²⁰Dunn, *Saving the River*, 28.

²²¹Dunn, *State Parks of the St. Croix Valley*, 34-5.

²²²From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 72-3.

²²³Marple, *Hayward Lakes Region*, n.p.

²²⁴From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 74-5; Dunn, *Marine on St. Croix*, 92

²²⁵*Chisago County Press*, 5 September 1957, 3 July 1958, 28 August 1958.

²²⁶Karamanski, *Saving the St. Croix*, 44.

²²⁷From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 79.

²²⁸From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 80-1. NSP is now Xcel Energy.

²²⁹See for more complete account, Karamanski, *Saving the St. Croix*.

²³⁰Dunn, *State Parks of the St. Croix*, 32-3, 40-1.

²³¹David S. Boyer, "The St. Croix," *National Geographic* (July 1977), 37.

²³²Karamanski, *Saving the St. Croix*, 228.

²³³*Ibid*, 136-151; *Minneapolis Tribune*, 12 & 14 October 1972.

²³⁴Karamanski, *Saving the St. Croix*, 169-207.

²³⁵*Pioneer Press* (St. Paul, Minn.) 31 May 1981.

²³⁶Burnett County Homemakers Clubs, *Pioneer Tales of Burnett County*, 50, 60, 104.

²³⁷Northern Initiatives Strategic Planning Workgroup, *Northern Initiatives: A Strategic Plan for the Next Decade*, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (Summer 1994),

²³⁸From Weekley, *Recreation and Tourism Along the Saint Croix*, 83-4.

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St. Croix Riverway

Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix



CHAPTER 1:

Valley of Plenty, River of Conflict (continued)

The Dakota and Their Neighbors

Dakota's ability as warriors, their generosity, and their pride as a nation were all defining characteristics of the first historic inhabitants of the St. Croix valley. The Dakota could afford to be generous because they occupied one of the largest and richest regions of the North American interior. The early French fur trader Nicholas Perrot called it "a happy land, on account of the great numbers of animals of all kinds that they have about them, and the grains, fruits, and roots which the soil there produces in abundance." The St. Croix was the northeastern border of a Dakota homeland that extended along the Mississippi River and its tributaries, from the mouth of the Wisconsin River on the south to the headwater lakes in the north, and along the Minnesota River westward to the Great Plains. Not just its vast extent made this homeland rich. The diversity of landscape at the disposal of the Dakota offered a cornucopia of resources to the nation's hunters and gatherers. The Dakota lands straddled the northern woodlands and transitional prairie ecosystems and were united by rich riverine corridors and pockmarked by countless lacustrine clusters. Only the long hard winters of north central America tempered the possibilities of an otherwise lavish and diverse environment. [3]

"Places are defined," observed historian Elliott West, "in part when people infuse them with imagination." The Upper Mississippi landscape found by European American explorers such as Pike and Schoolcraft was shaped by the choices made by its Dakota inhabitants. Other Indian peoples, such as the Shawnee or the Huron, would have looked upon the rich bottom lands along the Mississippi and envisioned fields of maize, or later white settlers saw commercial lumber in white pine thickly arrayed in ranks along the margins of the northern lakes. The Dakota, however, arranged their homeland as a grand hunting preserve. Like most Native American people's of the Upper Midwest the Sioux structured their lives around a seasonal subsistence cycle. In the case of the Mdewakantonwan this cycle was based on hunting, not the gardening of maize or beans that played an important role in the lives of the Algonkian Indians who dominated the Great Lakes region. Dakota men were hunters and warriors. Fittingly they approached hunting as they approached war, cooperating with other Dakota to overwhelm their prey yet always alert to the possibilities of individual recognition. [4]

The Dakota began their year amid the thousand lakes of northern Minnesota and Wisconsin. Large lakes of the St. Croix valley, such as Chisago, Pokegama, and Upper St. Croix became the sites of villages of one hundred or more deerskin lodges. Men were active throughout the winter hunting white-tailed deer. Generally able to structure their hunts to suit their palates, the Dakota hunters would alternate the taking of deer with the hunting of winter bears. In winter deer and elk were a bit too lean and therefore dry when cooked to suit the taste of the Dakota. Bear on the other hand were heavy with fat in the winter and when taken and rendered added savor to other meat. Women prepared meals

and treated hides. During the late February and March days, when the winter sun formed a crust of ice upon the deep snowdrifts of the forest, the Dakota hunters stalked herds of elk. These graceful grazing animals favored the open prairies during most of the year but retreated to the fringes of the forest when winter was at its worst. Moving swiftly over the frozen snow with their snowshoes the Dakota could take large numbers of elk, as they broke through the surface snow and struggled in the drifts. [5]

The proud hunters were greeted with the cry "Kous! Kous!" as young boys saw the men return to the village burdened with heavy loads of meat. Soon every lodge was empty as the entire community, young and old, rushed out to honor the hunters. The shouts continued to rent the evening air until the men laid down the meat at the door of their lodges. A successful late winter elk hunt became the occasion for a great round of feasting among the Dakota lodges. A hunter established his status in part by forcing upon his guests more food than could be consumed. Eating to the point of nausea was the mark of a true Dakota. When elk hunting failed, as it occasionally did because of a lack of snow, the Dakota relied on fish taken in the adjacent lakes. Like true hunters the Dakota favored spearing fish to the use of nets or hooks, and if their efforts failed or yielded meager results, they accepted a shortage of food as a natural part of the season. Wild plants helped to bridge the rare seasons of want and the more common seasons of plenty. In 1767 Jonathan Carver witnessed the Dakota chewing the soft, inner fibers of "a shrub," perhaps the red willow, which he said tasted "not unlike the turnip." [6]

When the sap of the maple tree began to run, in March or April, the specter of a season of want disappeared. Women took the lead organizing the work of tapping maple trees, gathering sap, and boiling the liquid into sugar. Besides a few old men or boys who might help tend the fires, the sugar camps were composed entirely of women. Most of the men were off trapping or hunting waterfowl. Women united by kinship ties often came together to share the work and fun of making sugar. The sugar camp might be occupied for as long as a month and as many as one hundred trees could be tapped. The hardest part of the sugar making was the preparation of wooden troughs used for boiling. Although the bottoms of these hallowed logs were smeared with mud to retard their burning, exposure to the direct flames of the rendering fires meant that troughs had to be continuously replaced. Such work was well-rewarded when the finished sugar was gathered in birch bark containers and the women of the family held feasts in which bark pans of sugar were passed around for all to enjoy. Amid the laughter and stories that were shared, the women and children joined in jokes and dares. A frequent dare was to see who could drink the most of what one anthropologist called "a revolting concoction," liquid tallow. The tallow was used in small amounts to help process the sugar. Around the sugar campfire some women responded to their challengers by drinking cupfuls. Then everyone awaited the results on the winner, who often became sick or sleepy. [7]

In summer whole villages of Dakota took to their canoes and journeyed down the St. Croix to its junction with the Mississippi. Amid the hills and river terrace prairies just west of the great river roamed herds of buffalo. Before the Europeans came the buffalo ranged throughout the domain of the Dakota and more than any other reason accounted for the abundance that normally marked the life of the Mdewakantonwan Sioux. The Dakota held their summer buffalo hunts on both banks of the St. Croix. Bison ranged throughout western Wisconsin and small herds were even known to graze in the marshy pine barrens of the St. Croix's headwaters region. The most popular place to hunt the buffalo, however, was on the lower St. Croix and along the Upper Mississippi. In 1680, the missionary-explorer Father Louis Hennipen accompanied the members of a village of Mille Lacs Dakota on a buffalo hunt as far south as Lake Pepin, on the Mississippi. There they killed more than 120 bison. [8]

The summer buffalo hunt was a defining cultural experience for the Dakota of the St. Croix valley. The buffalo provide the means and the rationale for the Dakota community. In contrast to many of their Algonkian neighbors who lived much of the year in small groups of only several families, the Dakota lived in villages composed of hundreds of people. The village functioned as a unit, not as a congregation of individual hunters. This discipline was established by the requirements of the buffalo hunt. "They assemble at nightfall on the eve of their departure," the fur trader Nicholas Perrot observed, "and choose among their number the man whom they consider most capable of being the director of the expedition." This master of the hunt and his adjutants assigned each man his role in the coming endeavor, scout, shooter, or as a policeman enforcing tribal discipline. Unlike the popular image of a Sioux buffalo hunt, with hunters racing over the plains on horseback, shooting their prey, the Dakota approached the hunting grounds via birch bark canoes. Upon the receipt of reports from the scouts the leader would quietly dispatch the hunters, sometimes with the use of smoke signals, who would drive the herd toward its destroyers. Hennepin witnessed two hundred men converge on a buffalo herd from opposite slopes of a large hill. The two groups of hunters "shut in the buffalo whom they killed in great confusion." Sometimes the bison could be driven by means of prairie fires over a high riverbank and dispatched in that way. The traditional technique of the Dakota buffalo hunt was a group effort leading to a massive slaughter of game. The aftermath of such a hunt, the ground packed with bleeding animals in their death throes, might strike modern readers, as it did the nineteenth century artist Paul Kane as "more painful than pleasing," but such a sentiment would have been foreign to a hunting people like the Dakota. [9]

The excitement of the hunt slowly gave way to the drudgery of processing the harvest of meat and hides. In the disciplined structure of the Dakota buffalo camp much of this work fell to the women. Some were given the task of quartering and butchering the bison. Others may have been regarded as specialists preparing hides that would become blankets, clothing, and crucial to the Dakota's mobility -- tents. The most laborious task of the women was the drying of thousands of pounds of meat. This was done over slow burning fires with heat, smoke and sun joining to preserve thin strips of buffalo for up to a year. So important was this task that the prudent hunt leader never selected a kill site far removed from a large supply of firewood. It often took weeks to properly dry and store the meat of a single large kill. [10]

A successful buffalo hunt provided the Dakota with security from want for the remainder of the year. Hunters continued to pursue game throughout the year, including buffalo. But the July hunt was purposely designed to produce not fresh meat for the moment, but an insurance policy for the rest of the year. The Mille Lacs Dakota with whom Hennepin lived in 1680 were particularly scrupulous to husband their harvest for the future. The Frenchman observed that "The women buccanned [dried] the meat in the sun, eating only the poorest, in order to carry the best to their villages, more than two hundred leagues from this great butchery." " So fundamental was this hunt to the prosperity of the Dakota that hunt leaders were given extraordinary powers to ensure that nothing or no one endangered the community endeavor. Hennepin encountered one group of Dakota celebrating an early buffalo hunt. They arrived ahead of the rest of the village and rather than wait, made a large killing on their own. The hunters of the main party were furious and destroyed the early arrival's lodges and took all of their meat. One of them explained to the priest "having gone to the buffalo-hunt before the rest, contrary to the maxims of the country, any one had the right to plunder them, because they put the buffaloes to flight before the arrival of the mass of the nation." [11]

In late summer the Dakota would return to the northern lakes. Men would hunt waterfowl and deer, while the women prepared for the vital harvest of wild rice. The rice harvest was second in importance to the buffalo for the prosperity of the Dakota. The Upper St. Croix

country excelled as a habitat for the tall aquatic grass known as wild rice. Early French explorers, such as Nicholas Perrot, described the plant as "wild oats," which was actually more accurate because it is not a rice at all but an annual cereal grass. In later years the European-American fur traders labeled the St. Croix valley as the "Folle Avoine country," using the French words for wild rice to characterize the region. The dam on the St. Croix River at Gordon, Wisconsin destroyed one of the finest wild rice habitats in the region when it flooded the marshy shores of the natural river to create a large recreational lake known as the St. Croix Flowage. For generations before the dam Indian women relied on this rich stretch of river. Dakota women would sometimes seed lake or stream shores to increase their future harvests, but the majority of the wild rice crop grew naturally. Harvesting the crop so as to ensure its return the next year and processing it as a food source required considerable ingenuity and long hours of work. Women gathered the rice in a canoe in which they carefully shook the grain from the tops of the grass, often by means of a wooden stick, so as not to damage the plant. Once a canoe load was brought ashore. "The rice was then separated from the chaff by scorching it in a kettle," recalled an early Minnesota settler, "and then beating it in a mortar made by digging a circular hole in the ground and lining it with deer skin." [12]

Prior to the eighteenth century agriculture seems to have played a very small part in Dakota life. The amount of wild rice available in the homeland of the Mdewakanton Sioux assured a steady source of natural cereal. Small plots of corn were sometimes planted near village sites, but the amount was never enough for maize to serve as a sustaining element in their diet. Its role seems to have been as a source of diet variety. Similarly they would establish plots of tobacco near their villages. Most of what the Dakota desired was obtained by hunting or through the gathering of wild plants.

The final stage of the Dakota's annual subsistence cycle began in October or November, "the moon of the deer." For one or two moons the large villages would break up into smaller bands that would then cooperate in a communal hunt of white-tailed deer and occasionally elk or woodland caribou. Often they would employ tactics reminiscent of the buffalo hunt, coordinating the movement of large numbers of hunters to drive the deer toward designated shooters. Before the hunt ended in January, with a return to their large semi-permanent lakeside villages, the deer hunters often succeeded in bagging large numbers of deer. Samuel Pond, an early settler who knew the Sioux well, estimated that two Dakota bands combined to kill two thousand deer during the year. [13]

The abundance of food resources that was a manifest part of Dakota life in the St. Croix valley could give the impression, as historian Gary Anderson has observed, that their lives were "rather idyllic." But the abundance came at a cost. The toll was levied, in part, by the Dakota's frequent movement across the Upper Mississippi landscape. "They have no fixed abode," declared Pierre de Charlevoix somewhat erroneously, "but travel in great companies like the Tartars, never stopping in any place longer than they are detained by the chase." Early French geographers referred to the Dakota as the "wandering Sioux." Andre Penigault, who lived with them in 1700, described the Dakota as "toujours errante," always wandering. The French did not see that the abundance of Dakota life was based on their movement, the ability to exploit each segment of their varied homeland at its peak for hunting and gathering. Their large, semi-permanent lakeside villages were an exception to this movement, and it was while in residence in these villages that the Dakota were susceptible to a shortage of resources. Because these sites were occupied repeatedly over the years they suffered from a shortage of firewood and reduced game populations in their vicinity. It was the very young and especially the very old who bore the burden of the seasonal cycle. Those who could not keep up with the group risked the health and well being of the other family members. [14]

"Hunting is the principal occupation of the Indians," declared Jonathan Carver who lived among the Dakota during the 1760s. Typical of European observers he sneered at what he perceived as the "indolence peculiar to their nature," but did not see the contradiction when he described Dakota hunters as "active, persevering, and indefatigable." The fact was that successful hunting cultures such as the Dakota required considerable energy and sacrifice from their hunters. Bringing down an enraged buffalo or elk at close quarters with a compound bow was fraught with risk, as was the pursuit of game across a frozen boreal landscape. Dakota women also bore a heavy burden. On the move the burden was not merely metaphorical but might entail a pack and tumpline of well-over one hundred pounds.

The abundance of the Dakota excited the envy of their Indian neighbors and attracted the notice of the French. Pierre Esprit Radisson and Medard Chouart, Sieur Des Groseilliers, the first Europeans to penetrate the interior of northern Wisconsin, first encountered the Sioux during the winter of 1659. Unusual climatic conditions had ruined the winter hunts of the Menominee among whom the French were staying. After being forced to eat the dogs of the village starvation gradually consumed its inmates. As the horrible winter came to a close representatives of the Dakota arrived in the village. The eight well-fed Dakota men, each accompanied by two wives bearing baskets of wild rice, strongly impressed the haggard Europeans. Without hesitation they accepted the invitation of the Dakota to visit their lands. [15]

The Dakota demonstrated considerable forbearance, even generosity toward their Algonkian neighbors to the east. But like Little Crow's decision to spare the life of a Chippewa robbing his trap, the Dakota peoples' generosity was calculated. As early as 1650 the Dakota allowed remnants of the Huron, who had been driven from their homelands near Georgian Bay by Iroquois invaders, and a small group of their Ottawa allies to settle in Dakota Territory near Lake Pepin. The Dakota were at least in part motivated by the desire to obtain French trade goods from the two tribes that had been the backbone of the early western fur trade. But Sioux generosity seems to have been misinterpreted as a sign of weakness by the Huron and Ottawa who tried to drive the Dakota away from the Mississippi. This major miscalculation of Dakota capability and intent, led to the complete expulsion of the Huron and Ottawa from Dakota lands. For the next hundred years the Dakota were intermittently at war with eastern Algonquin the Iroquois had driven tribes, many of whom, like the Huron west. Traditional enemies such as the Cree to the north and the Illinois to the south continued to be the focus of annual Dakota war parties, but warfare with the Huron, Ottawa, and especially the Fox also became common. The Fox arrived in Wisconsin in the seventeenth century, driven from the Michigan peninsula by the Chippewa. Their arrival in what is now Wisconsin brought them into collision with the Eastern Sioux. Chippewa oral tradition holds that for a brief time the Fox actually occupied the upper Saint Croix valley and the region around Rice Lake, Wisconsin. The Dakota and the Chippewa began their relationship, which would later stain the waters of the Saint Croix with much blood, as allies against the Fox. In 1680, a joint Dakota-Chippewa war party, perhaps as many as eight hundred men, fell upon the Fox villages in east central Wisconsin. Only after suffering severe losses were the Fox able to repulse the attack. [16]

As the enemy of the Dakota's enemy, the Chippewa became neighbors with whom the Eastern Sioux shared hunting grounds, trade, and brides. The Chippewa originally entered the river and lake country of the Wisconsin border as Dakota guests, not as invaders. As allies the Chippewa were allowed to hunt and trap in the St. Croix and Chippewa River valleys. It was an alliance of two of the most numerous and expansionistic native peoples of the North American interior sealed with Fox blood and sustained by substantial and mutual benefits. The Dakota shared in the Chippewa's regular access to French trading goods. The Chippewa won access to lands rich in white-tailed deer, beaver, and wild rice.

The Dakota secured metal tools and firearms to improve subsistence activities and their military efficiency. According to Chippewa oral tradition, the Dakota first encountered firearms when a Chippewa peace delegation arrived in a Sioux encampment on the St. Croix River. The incident ended badly when a proud Dakota warrior denied the power of a musket and dared the Chippewa to shoot at him. One fearful crack of the gun led to the death of the Dakota. This incident damaged the alliance. Nonetheless, relations were patched and early in the eighteenth century the Chippewa were allowed to establish a village in Dakota Territory, just south of the current national riverway, near Spooner, Wisconsin. [17]

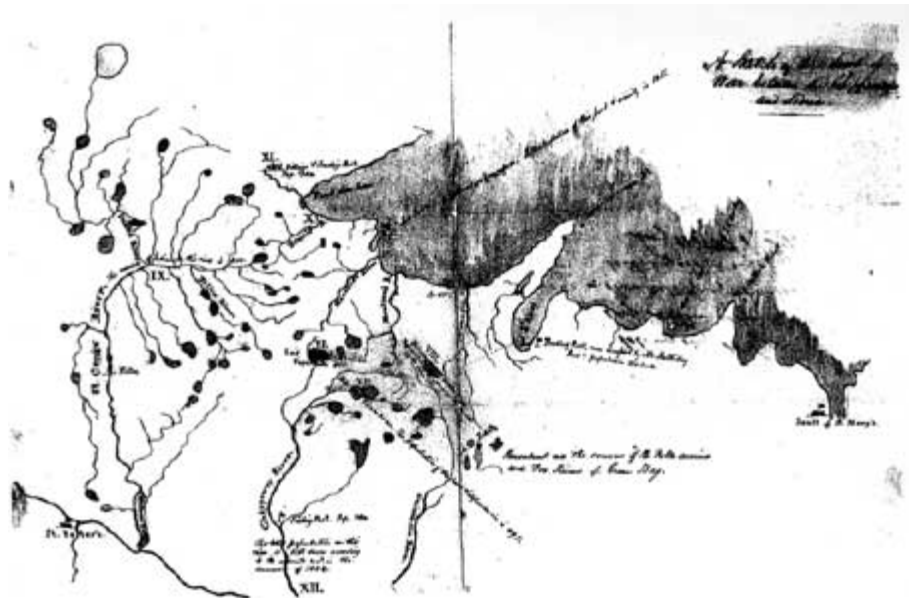


Figure 2. "A Sketch of the Seat of the War Between the Chippewa and Sioux," by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft, Courtesy of the Clements Library, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
(click on image for an enlargement in a new window)

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St. Croix Riverway

Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix



CHAPTER 1:

Valley of Plenty, River of Conflict (continued)

Strangers on the Land: The St. Croix Indians in the Settlement Era

In the wake of the treaties several new kinds of European-Americans came into the St. Croix country. Lumbermen were the largest group, followed by farmers and merchants. Of most direct interest to the Chippewa were the missionaries. Showing much less scruple for the division between church and state than modern public officials, the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs relied upon missionaries to carry out the transformation of the St. Croix bands from hunters and gatherers, to sedentary agriculturists. The work had actually begun four years before the treaty, in 1833, when Reverend Frederick Ayer established a mission school at Yellow Lake, about a mile from the trading post. Ayer was a Presbyterian sent west by the American Board of Foreign Missions. After two years of difficult work trying to win the support of the Yellow Lake band, Ayer moved the mission to Pokegama Lake. The soil there was much more conducive to agricultural experiments and the supplies of wild rice and fish were reputed to be more reliable. These factors made the Snake River band more sedentary than the Yellow Lake Chippewa. Best of all Ayer received an invitation from the Snake River people to bring his school to their band. In time Pokegama became the most successful mission in the region. In 1838, the Presbyterian missionaries working among the Chippewa agreed to consolidate their efforts at that site. Ayer was joined at various times by William Boutwell, Edmund Ely, and Sherman Hall. The government lent support to their effort by locating one of the official Indian model farms at the south end of Pokegama Lake. Jeremiah Russell, of the Indian bureau, sought to carve a farm out of the wilderness. He hoped that in time it could be a nursery for Chippewas schooled in European-American agriculture. [85]

As agents of change the missionaries caused tension and division among the ranks of the Chippewa. No two Chippewa responded to the presence of these new strangers in the same way. The leaders of the Snake River band saw the mission school as a positive development that would give their children the means to learn the white man's letters. Others may have accepted the missionaries out of regard for their farming efforts, which after all provided a backup source of support during times of famine. The Yellow Lake band was deeply divided by Frederic Ayer's initial mission. At a council soon after his arrival Ayer was told in no uncertain terms he was not wanted there. "The Indians are troubled in mind about your staying here," said one speaker, "and you must go—you shall go." But a second faction in the tribe felt contrary, and the next day told Ayer that they were grateful for what he had done, "you have clothed and provided for us. Why should we send you away?" Ayer was invited to stay, but in the months that followed he was constantly unsure of his position, "things were not as they should be." The band chief remained constantly, in Ayer's words "on the fence," as he tried to maintain a consensus among his badly divided people. When the missionary left Yellow Lake the chief must have been greatly relieved. Reverend Boutwell had an even more difficult time with the Leech Lake Chippewa. After receiving several warnings they poisoned the missionary's

daughter. Fortunately the girl recovered and Boutwell quickly left for the friendly clime of Pokegama Lake. [86]

The modest success enjoyed by Ayer and Boutwell was partially based on the care each took to cultivate the fur trade elite that had long influenced life along the St. Croix. Ayer became a friend of Lyman Warren. The veteran fur trader was a devout Presbyterian who used his money and influence to help Ayer build his base among the Snake River band. Boutwell earned entry into any trading post in the region by marrying the daughter of Ramsay Crooks, the managing partner of the American Fur Company. This Chippewa *Metis* woman was described by one contemporary as "a commanding figure" who did much to win her husband a hearing among her mother's people. Even so the missionaries often skirmished with their Indian neighbors across a cultural divide. Frederic Ayer, at great trouble and expense, brought farm animals to the lake mission. His effort to have a proper American farm were sometimes frustrated by Indian hunters, who when hungry did not differentiate between wild game and domesticated animals. "At Fond du Lac and Pokegama," wrote the Reverend Sherman Hall, "they have been much tried this summer with the Indians. They have killed several cattle at the latter place for the mission, and one at Fond du Lac. Some have appeared otherwise hostile." Nonetheless, the missionary was convinced he and his colleagues would "preserve in efforts to save these wretched heathen." On another occasion Ayer lost considerable face when he accused an Indian women of stealing several shirts left out in the sun. He went so far as searching, and none to gently, her lodge, only to find out that Mrs. Ayer had simply misplaced the items. The Indian women felt disgraced by the affair, although she never took action against the missionary. "Some of the Indians laughed heartily," at the crestfallen man of God, "others made remarks rather sarcastic." [87]

It was not, however, the cultural barriers that separated the Chippewa from the evangelical Christians that led to the demise of the mission in the St. Croix valley. In the end it was the rekindling of the ugly war between Dakota and Chippewa that broke up the mission and its agricultural experiment. With the withdrawal of the Dakota to the west side of the Mississippi with the 1837 treaty, there was hope that European-American commerce could expand in the region and the chronic wars might be brought to an end. This hope was shattered in 1839 when four Leech Lake Chippewa killed a Mdewakanton leader at Lake Harriet, the site of a successful Protestant mission to the Dakota. The attack was the action of a few rogue warriors. The bulk of the Chippewa wanted to maintain peaceful relations. Two large delegations of Chippewa, one from Mille Lacs the other from the St. Croix had just met with Dakota leaders at Fort Snelling where they smoked tobacco and pledged amity. When news of the murder reached the Dakota, they vowed to reward treachery with treachery. Dakota war parties fell on the Chippewa returning unsuspectingly from the Fort Snelling conference. The St. Croix people were surprised at the present site of Stillwater, Minnesota and twenty-three Chippewa, mostly women and children, were killed. "I was on the battle-field of Lake St. Croix soon after the conflict, " recalled a missionary, "and saw the remains of the slaughtered Chippeways scattered in all directions. The marks of bullets were upon the trees, and the shrubbery was all trodden down. Some of the dead were suspended upon the branches of the trees." A new round of vengeance raids followed. One ambush led to the deaths of two of Little Crow's sons in the forest between the Snake River and St. Croix Falls. The scalping knife fell on the Lake Pokegama settlement in 1841. [88]

The mission was located on east side of Lake Pokegama, although the majority of the Snake River band lived on an island in the lake. The island village gave the Chippewa extra protection from Dakota raiding parties. A few of the Snake band, however, trusting the protection of the mission had settled in cabins on the mainland. The evening before the attack a large Dakota war party secreted themselves in the brush adjacent to the mission. Their plan was to wait for the Chippewa to commence work in their fields and then fall

upon them. This ambush, like so many others, was spoiled by several overly anxious warriors. That morning the Chippewa were late in canoeing from the island to the mission and those on the mainland did not go to the fields. When a solitary canoe of two men and two young girls approached the shore, it was fired upon. The Chippewa were thus alerted to the danger. Those on the mainland barricaded themselves in several cabins while those on the island took up arms. The Dakota laid siege to the cabins for several hours before giving up in frustration. At least one Dakota was killed in the fighting as well as two young Chippewa girls. The Missionary E.F. Ely found the little corpses on the shore. "The heads cut off and scalped, with a tomahawk buried in the brains of each, were set up on the sand near the bodies," he latter recalled. "The bodies were pierced in the breast, and the right arm of one was taken away." [89]

Although the Snake River band had successfully defended their village, they feared a return by the Dakota. The band broke up into family groups and retreated into the wilderness. The mission was abandoned by its acolytes. "The Indians were scattered," recalled Elizabeth Ayer, "and dared not return." For a time Reverend Ayer tried to visit the scattered members of the band in their isolated camps, but when it became clear they did not intend to return to Pokegama the Presbyterians had no choice but to abandon their mission. In 1842 the mission was removed to La Pointe. Not until the spring of 1843 did the Chippewa return in force to Pokegama Lake. The mission was briefly reestablished. But the rapid increase in the number of European-American lumbermen and a handful settlers in the region made the missionaries lose faith in the location as an effective base from which to convert the Chippewa to the white man's God and a farming lifestyle. The Reverend William Boutwell, who also served as a field agent for the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, encouraged the Snake River Chippewa to abandon Pokegama Lake and locate at Mille Lacs, where wild rice and fish were abundant and contact with whites less frequent. The mission in the St. Croix valley was abandoned in 1845. [90]

The missionaries also soured on their prospects along the St. Croix, Rum River, and other areas ceded in the 1837 Treaty because of the pervasive presence of whiskey traders. While the St. Croix had been Indian territory, the agents of the Office of Indian Affairs had the power to regulate who traded there, where they traded, and with what wares. After 1837 the valley was simply another part of the Wisconsin Territory, a vast region with large opportunities and little in the way of civil administration. Alcohol, which in times of competition between fur traders had always greased the wheels of commerce, now became the principle article of trade for men intent on separating the Chippewa from their annuity payments. By 1844 William Boutwell complained to a fellow missionary that the ceded lands were "inundated with whiskey." [91]

Among the unsavory traders who entered the St. Croix at this time was Joe Covillion. He was a *Metis* who took over the former mission school at Yellow Lake and used it for his post. Located on the Yellow River just where it leaves Little Yellow Lake, the trading house was the scene of many drunken reveries and a key location in the first murder mystery in the St. Croix valley. In 1845 Albert McEwen hired Covillion to guide him to timberlands in the Yellow Lake region. McEwen had a large amount of gold coin he hoped to use to secure title to lands upon which a profitable speculation might be made. McEwen never returned from the trip. Covillion explained that he had actually not been with McEwen and he cast suspicion on a Chippewa who was alleged to have actually served as guide. Not long afterwards McEwen's body was found stuffed in a hallow tree about ten miles from Covillion's post. Preliminary investigation revealed that Covillion had in his possession a large amount of gold coins, McEwen's watch, and a fist full of land warrants. Calmly the trader explained that he obtained these from the Chippewa in trade. Later that winter the Indian whom Covillion had claimed guided McEwen was found dead in his camp. Covillion, the owner of "considerable property" retired to Taylor's Falls, where he

died in 1877. [92]

Another less than worthy trader of this period was Maurice Mordecai Samuels. In 1846 he had a trading post at the mouth of the Sunrise River. In time honored fashion he established himself with the Chippewa by taking one of their women as his wife. Latter he relocated to St. Croix Falls where he operated a "ball alley" and trading post. Samuels was described by fellow pioneer W.H.C. Folsom as "a shrewd man and an inveterate dealer in Indian whisky." No friend of the fur trader, Folsom accused Samuels of being "unprincipled" and "repellant" to the "moral sense of the community." There can be little doubt about how repellant was the type of whiskey sold by Samuels. He did not trouble to import the product from the Ohio Valley where it was abundant and cheap, for less expensive still was to use grain alcohol and then attempt to impart the right flavor and color by artificial means. Samuel's recipe included boiled roots and tobacco, which according the Folsom poisoned many whites and Indians. One consumer of the concoction went insane and leapt from a high point of the Dalles to the falls below. Samuels profited handsomely from his trade with the Chippewa and in time became a leader of the community of St. Croix Falls. [93]

National Park Service archeologists have explored the site of Samuel's 1846 trading post at the confluence of the Sunrise and the St. Croix River. The post consisted of a main building where Samuels lived and conducted his trade and a second flimsy outbuilding that served as a barn or other shelter for animals. The diet of the traders who lived there at this time was somewhat different than that of the Northwest Company traders a generation earlier. In addition to local meat products such as fish and rabbit, Samuels consumed a large amount of pork. Whether this pork was slaughtered on the site from his herd of livestock or sent up river salted in barrels, Samuels was in a much less isolated position than earlier traders. An historic site within the Riverway from this period can be found where Goose Creek enters the St. Croix River. In 1846, Thomas Connor, an old veteran of the Northwest Company, operated a trading post at that location. William Folsom, who visited the post in 1846, described it as a "bark shanty, divided into rooms by handsome mats." [94] The location has been tested for archeological remains on many separate occasions and has also been much visited by collectors of antique bottles and metal detector enthusiasts. Archeological explorations by the National Park Service's Midwest Archeological Center revealed the foundations of a structure from the mid-nineteenth century. The site, however, was not confirmed as Connor's post because the remains of a chimney seemed to clash with Folsom's description of the post as a portable bark shanty. Artifacts found at the site, such as gunflints, glass beads, and kaolin pipes suggested the occupation of the site by temporary traders or Indian hunters in contact with traders. [95] Trading posts like Connors or those of whiskey traders were seldom occupied for long periods of time. The whiskey traders were particularly active in the wake of an annuity payment.

Whiskey was an important commodity at all trading posts but the whiskey shops of men like Samuels and Covillion in particular were the scenes of many degrading and deadly spectacles. Bad liquor sold with no restraint led to trouble at Alexander Livingston's grog shop on the St. Croix at the mouth of Wolf Creek. Livingston, who may have operated in cooperation with the veteran fur trader and whiskey dealer Joseph R. Brown, was gunned down in 1849 after a "drunken melee in his own store." Livingston died of his wound, while his killer, a *Metis* named Robido, escaped prosecution. Another whiskey dealer to die as a result of his own greed was Miles Tornell, a Norwegian operating near Balsam Lake. Tornell refused to back down in the face of competition from a German-American whiskey dealer, a man identified only as Miller, who operated a post on the lake. The German resolved the competition by hiring a Chippewa to murder Tornell. When the crime was detected, the Indian was executed, while Miller was merely flogged. In 1847, one of

Samuels' subordinates, Henry Rust, was killed in a brawl with a drunken Chippewa, Notin. Unlike most such cases this one came to trial. The verdict reflected the outrage many early settlers felt toward the whiskey traders. Notin was found not guilty and a criminal complaint was issued against Jake Drake, the Samuels employee who sold Rust his stock of booze. Drake himself fell victim to foul play shortly thereafter, an inebriated *Metis* slew him near his Wood Lake post. [96]

The presence of the whiskey dealers and the availability of treaty money accelerated the abuse of alcohol among the Indians of the valley. James Hayes, Indian agent to the Chippewa, complained of the "cupidity and heartlessness of the whiskey dealer," which he blamed for the "accounts of outrages and crime" that washed over the St. Croix frontier in the wake of the treaties. Among the Dakota, who had formerly lorded over the St. Croix, the impact was even more pathetic. "They *would* have whisky," wrote missionary Gideon Pond. "They would give guns, blankets, pork, lard, flour, corn, coffee, sugar, horses, furs, traps, any thing for whisky." As a result "They killed one another. . .they fell into the fire and water and were burned to death, and drowned; they froze to death, and committed suicide so frequently, that for a time, the death of an Indian in some of the ways mentioned was but little thought of by themselves or others." [97]

Between the rapacity of the whiskey dealers and the incompetence of federal authorities the St. Croix Chippewa benefited little from the financial terms of the 1837 land cession. In 1838 the Office of Indian Affairs bungled the first payment due them. The Chippewa had been told to gather on Lake St. Croix, near the future site of Stillwater, Minnesota, to receive their payment in goods and supplies. The Chippewa began to gather there in July. Every steamboat ascending the river was besieged by anxious Indians who sought their due from white immigrants, not appreciating that they "had nothing to due with payments." All summer and most of the fall the Chippewa waited, faithful and famished. The large congregation of Indians stripped the surrounding area of both firewood and game. Only in November with the Indians starving and freezing did the promised goods finally arrive. One hundred barrels of flour, twenty-five of pork, bales of blankets, boxes of guns and ammunition, even casks of gold dollars were all unloaded while thick flakes of snow covered the ground. Desperately hungry the Chippewa tore into the food. Many ate too much too soon, and suffered agonizing cramps for their trouble. According to one witness, "many of the old as well as the young died from overeating." In the meantime ice formed on the St. Croix rendering useless more than a thousand canoes the Chippewas had brought to transport their goods. They were forced to destroy the craft, rather than let them fall into the hands of the Dakota. Only that which they could carry on their backs could be taken north to their winter camps. Much of the food, money, and goods had to be left behind. During the long agonizing march up river and during the harsh winter that followed many Chippewa perished. As pioneer chronicler William Folsom noted, "their first payment became a curse rather than a blessing to them." [98]

In this manner the thousands of dollars of federal assistance to the Chippewa that the chiefs had seen as the means to maintain their fur trade lifestyle only further impoverished the Indians. J. F. Schafer, who distributed supplies to the Chippewa in 1851 complained of "the introduction of liquor among the Indians immediately after issuing provisions." When Schafer saw the Chippewa trading "their Blankets &c. for liquor," he tried to suspend the distribution of goods until the whiskey dealers left the payment site at the mouth of the Snake River. Indian agents frequently referred to the St. Croix Chippewa as "exceedingly poor, and naked and needy." William Warren, who had spent his life living amongst the Chippewa, advised the Governor of Minnesota "there is not under the sun a more wretched people than they are & will continue to be so as long as they remain in close proximity to a bad white population." Governor Alexander Ramsay himself described the St. Croix band as "the most miserable and degenerate of their tribe." [99]

The condition of the Indians excited more fear than pity among the European American settlers and lumbermen who were quickly moving into the ceded lands along the St. Croix. There was little attempt on settler's part to understand the customs and traditions of the Indians they found living in the valley. Typical of these cultural clashes were the numerous stories of Indian men barging into the cabins of white settlers and demanding food. Chippewa etiquette required visitors, however uninvited, to be fed. That kindness, of course, required some reciprocation, but not immediately. Whites regarded these visits as intimidation and complained to Wisconsin and Minnesota officials of "marauding Indians." Whenever something went missing, Indians were the first suspects. When early settlers in St. Croix Falls were missing a pig of lead, they accused the Chippewa of the theft. The Indians denied the crime, although the whites later noticed, "that all their war clubs, pipes and gun stocks had been lately and elaborately ornamented with molten lead." These types of actions, and encounters with lumbermen, inclined federal officials to revoke the provision of the 1837 treaty that allowed the Chippewa to remain on the ceded lands. [100]

On February 6, 1850 President Zachary Taylor issued an executive order ending the Chippewa's right to hunt and fish on the ceded lands. Local Indian agents were given the responsibility of determining which Chippewa were to be removed and where they would be relocated. The news caused considerable consternation among the Chippewa of Lake Superior, but among the St. Croix bands there was some interest in removing to another area. Only a month before the President's order the Snake River Chippewa had petitioned their agent for removal to the Crow Wing River in the Minnesota Territory. Portions of the band had already left the valley and crossed over the divide to Mille Lacs. Plans were made to remove all of the Chippewa from the valley, but typical of the slipshod manner in which Indian removals were managed federal authorities were unable to gather together the majority of the Indians in the region. After working all summer to make the move work Indian Agent John Watrous was able to effect the removal of 288 St. Croix residents to the Crow Wing River. Few of these remained long; nearly half were gone in a month. No concerted effort was again made to remove the St. Croix bands, nor were they awarded reservation lands in subsequent federal treaties. In the wake of President Taylor's order and the botched removal program, the St. Croix Chippewa were left in a legal limbo. They were not recognized as having rights in the St. Croix valley, yet there they resided for the next eighty years on lands unused or abused and abandoned by European American settlers. This precarious, furtive lifestyle led to the St. Croix band of the Chippewa being dubbed "the lost tribe." While the government may have lost sight of where they were, the Chippewa themselves were never "lost," or even in hiding. All they lost was the opportunity to live on at the Lac Court Oreilles Reservation. Instead they simply continued to live in small, band communities within the valley, where they live today. [101]

With no remaining legal claim to the St. Croix than the Chippewa, farmers of the lower St. Croix had no tolerance of the Dakota. In 1855, a large band of Dakota established a winter camp in the valley near Marine Mills. At first residents regarded the Dakota as interesting exotics. "They were really a curiosity to many of our citizens; they having not seen since their settlement here so large a party of Indians before," reported one townsman. In seeing the Dakota "dressed in pure Indian winter style" the people of Marine shared with each other "not a few half suppressed, half frightened remarks at [of] ridicule." The merchant in charge of the local general store brought out a large barrel of crackers that the Indians "devoured" with the noise of "a flock of hungry geese." But it was not long before the Dakota ceased to be interesting and were regarded by most people in the area as a nuisance. One farmer complained the Dakota were, "frightening our wives and children, plundering our premises, laying vicious hands on every thing their savage eyes crave, and not leaving unmolested the domestic sanctity of our potato hoes." Without the least irony the settlers complained "and what is worse they are killing all our deer, --this last offense

amounts to an unpardonable crime." [102]

The opportunity to hunt in the under utilized forests of the St. Croix is what lured the Dakota back across the Mississippi River. What recently arrived farmers regarded as "our deer" were, of course, a resource the Dakota had relied upon for generations as part of their seasonal subsistence cycle. Changes in the population and ecology of the Upper Mississippi country made their old hunting grounds on the St. Croix more attractive than ever. The growth of settlements such as Red Wing, Hastings, and St. Paul, and their adjacent agricultural districts, where by 1850 more than five thousand European Americans resided, taxed the game populations along the Mississippi. Development along the St. Croix was focused more on logging, with Swedish immigrants only just beginning to establish farmsteads north of Stillwater. The presence of these whites was not yet enough to deplete the game resources of the long contested region. The Dakota may also have felt somewhat shielded from Chippewa attack by the small population of newcomers. Every January or February in the 1850s the Dakota undertook hunts in the valley. These were male dominated hunting parties, with only a handful of women and children in the company. In addition to helping to prepare the deer hides the women made moccasins that they sold for bread in Stillwater. The Apple River was a particularly rich hunting preserve. "They were heavily laden with skins, game, &c., and seemed to be well pleased," recorded the *St. Croix Union* in January of 1857, at the conclusion of that year's hunt. The amount of game brought down by these hunting parties was indeed prodigious. "How many deer did you kill?" asked a reporter who visited a Dakota camp in 1855. In answer one of the hunters "held up both hands, and motioned with them quite deliberately, ten times—indicating, as we interpreted it, One Hundred." A year later when the Dakota left their hunting camps near Marine the local populace estimated, with perhaps some exaggeration that between eight and twelve hundred deer had been taken. [103]

The hunting success of the Dakota perturbed the European American settlers because they counted on game as a source of food and barter during the first years of farming. "It is hard for the industrious and poor white settler to have his wood and stacks of hay burnt up," the *St. Croix Union* editorialized, "his traps and their booty stolen, and his game shot down, and much of it wasted." The settlers formed committees, signed petitions, and lobbied the territorial governor, but to no avail. The new white residents of the St. Croix complained the Dakota had not become sedentary and blamed the government who "allowed a set of scheming rouses with a pittance of whiskey to cheat them out of their annuities." But nothing was done to stop the Dakota visits, which continued till the 1860s, when their villages were pushed far up the Minnesota River valley and the St. Croix ceased to be a lucrative hunting ground. [104]

Tragically throughout the painful twilight of Indian tenure, while English and Swedish voices replaced those of the Chippewa and Dakota along the St. Croix, the vicious intertribal war continued. The conflict was no longer really about territory, as treaties with the United States had awarded the valley to others. Vengeance, however, continued to exert a powerful spell. Remembering the wrongs of the past helped to obscure the problems of the present. Just as important was the need of young men to find a way to assert their manhood in a traditional way. Economic decline narrowed their range of opportunities to win distinction, so the feud continued.

In March of 1850, a war party from the village of Little Crow, the son of the Dakota leader who had first negotiated with the Americans, surprised a Chippewa camp on the Apple River. The ambush was a complete success. Eleven Chippewa women and children, and three men, were killed as they made maple sugar. One boy was captured. The next day the jubilant Dakota passed through Stillwater on their way west. They "went through the scalp dance, in celebration of their victory—forming a circle round the Chippewa boy—their

prisoner—and occasionally striking him on the face with their reeking trophies," recorded the *Minnesota Chronicle*. The encounter was no different than hundreds that had come before and others that would follow. But the times and the river were different. With hope, boldness, and perfidy new people and new ways were dominating the valley. What once was seen as the way of wilderness war now, with the passage of the frontier and the disinheritation of a people, was deplored as simple, tragic, murder. [105]

The wretched attack at Apple River was one of the concluding scenes in the long history of Dakota dominance of the St. Croix Valley. After the tragic Sioux Uprising of 1862 the Dakota were removed far from the border river. Indian voices continued to be heard along the waterway but after 1862, those people were the Chippewa. They outlasted their ancient enemies by sheer persistence and they endured in the valley after the 1837 cession of their lands to the United States by practicing that same virtue.

The majority of the old Snake River band of Chippewa abandoned the valley during the 1850s, relocating to Mille Lacs. The bands at Yellow Lake and along the headwaters of the St. Croix, however, remained where they had always lived. Lacking land tenure they lived as squatters on government or lumber company lands. Wild rice and cranberry harvests remained vital to their subsistence and were supplemented with the yields of hunting and fishing. Furs continued to be traded, although the exchange now took place with small town merchants at a general store and not with red-sashed voyageurs at a trading post. During the late 1860s the United States government began to move Chippewa on to designated reservations. Most of the St. Croix Chippewa were related to tribal members living at the Lac Courte Oreille Reservation. A smaller number had family connections to the Chippewa of the Bad River Reservation. In time the reservations were subdivided into individual family allotments. The St. Croix Chippewa were not based at any reservation and most received no allotments and little in the way of educational or health services. While Bad River and Lac Courte Oreille were recognized Indian communities the St. Croix Chippewa pursued an independent existence largely unknown to the government. People in northern Wisconsin began to refer to the St. Croix band as "the lost tribe." [106]

Of course, the Chippewa were the last people in the valley to be "lost." They adapted to the rise of the logging industry by utilizing it as a source of wage labor. Chippewa frequently worked as lumberjacks and river drivers. In the latter task they excelled. In 1902, the loggers Gear & Stinson employed an entire crew of Chippewa to bring their drive down the Clam River. [107] A resident of Shell Lake later recalled "the young men, many of them, are our best drivers on the river; quick, sprightly, active." [108] Edward St. John, a *Metis* logger employed a large number of his Chippewa kinsmen in his forest operations. One of his logging campsites, located in Pine County, Minnesota, exists within the Riverway. The camp was operated by St. John for the Marine-on-St. Croix lumber company of Walker, Judd, and Veazie. During the last years of the nineteenth century between 150 and 175 Chippewa continued to reside along the St. Croix. [109] Trouble for them came when the pine forest was cut and there no longer were log drives on the river. This period coincided with the rise of fish and game regulations that made it difficult for Indians to live off the land on a full-time basis. Private ownership of land was also at its peak during the first years at the end of the nineteenth century restricting their ability to gather wild foods. Cranberry marshes that had been utilized for generations, for example, were increasingly drained to grow hay for dairy cows. White farmers, often from foreign lands, sometimes nursed fears about the native people who lived around them. In 1878, several Swedish settlers started a panic that spread like wildfire through Burnett County, Wisconsin. A large gathering of Chippewa was exaggerated into the beginnings of a concerted attack by both the Chippewa and the Dakota on all settlers. Scores of farms were abandoned in anticipation of an attack the Governor called upon General Philip Sheridan to dispatch federal troops to restore order. The army exposed the entire affair to be a

misunderstanding, although it did recommend to Wisconsin that the Chippewa not be allowed to "roam about in bands." [110] As squatting on private lands became problematic some of the Chippewa bought parcels of land where families erected wooden shanties and invited friends and kinsmen to settle as well. One such collection of wigwams and houses was located about a mile up the Namekagon River from the St. Croix. Called Dogtown or Ducktown it was home to as many as fourteen families and was occupied as late as 1938. John Medoweosh, a band leader, owned a tract of land at the junction of the Yellow and St. Croix rivers. He lived there for many years with an extended, multi-generational family. Augustus Lagrew, a *Metis* with a full-blooded Chippewa wife, owned land a few miles from Shell Lake, Wisconsin, that also served as place of congregation for the Chippewa. Gifts of food or small loans by white neighbors helped the Chippewa get through hard winters, although rarely did the Indians beg for handouts or apply for formal aid through the county poor fund. [111]

There are scores of historic sites associated with the post-treaty occupation of the valley by the Chippewa. One such site was the Pacwawong Lake village site that was occupied from the mid-nineteenth century until about 1910. It was located about where there is now a boat launch, which destroyed the historical integrity of the site. Another village site from this period was at Little Yellow Banks on the St. Croix River in Pine County, Minnesota. The area had been utilized as a camping site by the Dakota and before them by prehistoric Native Americans. Several Chippewa families lived there until the 1930s when, according to oral tradition, they were displaced to make way for a Boy Scout camp. There are also many sites of historic and prehistoric Indian burials in the valley. [112]

The United States Government rediscovered the St. Croix Chippewa in 1910 when Senator Robert M. La Follette held a Senate hearing on the condition of Indians in Wisconsin. The fact that the St. Croix Chippewa had in the past received little in the way of annuities prompted several congressional efforts to provide them with federal relief. But the St. Croix Chippewa were not given what they needed most, a guaranteed land base within their homeland. Not until 1934, with the passage of the Wheeler-Howard Act (Indian Reorganization Act), did the St. Croix Chippewa receive a federally recognized reservation. After eighty landless years the St. Croix people could not be brought together at a single location. Instead the new 3000-acre reservation was spread out over eleven separate Burnett County locations.

In the years that followed the Chippewa grew more and more like their neighbors whose ancestors hailed from Europe. Most of the St. Croix band became practicing Christians. One of their numbers, Philip B. Gordon, became the first Indian priest in the United States. He served not only his own people, but for many years was the beloved pastor to a largely white parish in the St. Croix valley. [113] Chippewa children participated in the same rural schools as the sons and daughters of farmers. Yet, in spite of these marks of assimilation the Chippewa remained anchored in their Indian identity. This identity became more important in the 1970s when the "Red Power" movement sparked greater political assertiveness. One result of this was the so-called "Walleye War" that was triggered in 1983 when the federal court established the rights of the Chippewa to fish outside of state regulations. The decline of both agriculture and forest products in the region had forced both whites and Indians to rely more on jobs in the tourism and recreation fields. Whites feared that the Chippewa's exercise of treaty rights would degrade stocks of fish that were critical to maintaining tourism. These tensions, which became violent in some parts of the North Country, were largely restrained in the St. Croix Valley. [114]

A more important assertion of Native American status came with the establishment of casino gambling. In 1974, President Richard Nixon approved changes in federal Indian policy that sparked a general move toward greater independent control of reservation lands

by the tribal community. Although unanticipated at the time this led to a gradual expansion of restricted enterprises, from garbage dumps to gambling, on Indian reservations. The St. Croix Band of Lake Superior Chippewa took advantage of this change to establish two casinos, at Turtle Lake and Danbury. In a stunning turnaround, the St. Croix Tribal Enterprises became the largest private employer in Burnett County. Hundreds of white as well as Indian people found jobs in the gaming rooms and hotel complex. Profits from gambling led to the growth of a series of family, housing, and health services for the tribe.

At the 1837 council that resulted in the cession of their St. Croix lands the Chippewa chief Maghegabo tried to explain to Governor Henry Dodge that his people would endure in the valley. "Of all the country that we grant you we wish to hold on to a tree where we get our living & to reserve the stream where we drink the waters that give us life." The chief then placed an oak sprig, the germ of new life, on the council table. "Every time the leaves fall from it, we will count it as one winter past." After more than one hundred and fifty leaves have fallen from that symbolic tree the St. Croix Chippewa are more numerous and more economically successful than at any point in their history. Through exercise of the same patience and persistence that had served them so well in the long twilight struggle with the Dakota, the Chippewa survived the wave of white emigration that broke over the valley in the mid-nineteenth century. For them the St. Croix and the Namekagon remain "the waters that give us life." [115]



Figure 11. Dakota Village.

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St. Croix Riverway

Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix



CHAPTER 2:

River of Pine (continued)

From Fur Trade to Fir Trade

Fur traders, as businessmen familiar with the region and its resources, seemed to be in an excellent position to profit from the rising market for lumber in the 1830s and 1840s. But turning the opportunity into an actuality proved frustratingly difficult. Some traders like Joseph Duchene, or as he was known to all, La Prairie, who had come to the valley as a young man to work for the Northwest Company, were too old by the 1830s to take up a new line of trade. After working for many years for the American Fur Company in the St. Croix valley, Duchene lived his last days near Pokegama Lake. He suffered from poor eyesight and was known to the Chippewa as Mushkdewinini, "the old blind prairie man." Duchene was cared for in those last years by his son-in-law, Thomas Connor, another Nor'Wester who was disinclined to pursue the opportunities offered by the logging boom. Connor operated a trading post on the St. Croix River, at the mouth of Goose Creek; content to continue trading with the Chippewa, and watching the pine float past his door. The Warren and Cadotte families that had so long controlled the trade of the valley from Lake Superior struggled to make the transition to logging. Lyman Warren saw the handwriting on the wall in 1838 when he left the American Fur Company. Leaving the Lake Superior country he settled on the Chippewa River, near the falls and established a sawmill. He was, however, struck with illness in 1847 and he died before becoming deeply involved with logging. His son William W. Warren was the best educated of the new generation. He was a young man with a scholarly disposition and weak health. He died in 1853 at the age of twenty-eight, after completing his manuscript history of the Chippewa people. [5]

Those fur traders who were in a position to profit from logging were men with trade contacts with the downriver towns that comprised the market for St. Croix pine. Logs unlike furs could not be carried over the Brule portage to Lake Superior. The bulky commodity had to follow the dictates of gravity and go south with the river's flow. Fur traders tied to Mackinac like the Cadottes lacked the market and supply contacts to make the transition from furs to logs. Joseph Renville Brown, the less than scrupulous trader who had lived among both the Dakota and Chippewa of the St. Croix had the necessary downriver contacts. He was a classic frontier man on the make, anxious to make his fortune, be it by furs, land, or timber. As early as 1833 Brown had been cutting pine on the upper St. Croix, most of it seems to have been for developing his trading posts and farm, but some may have been sent down to the Mississippi. Certainly by 1836 Brown had begun to log commercially. Located at the current site of Taylor's Falls, Minnesota, Brown had a crew of loggers strip the river flat of timber. He likely had additional logs cut upstream and floated down to the falls. Brown continued to trade with the Chippewa, which may have distracted him from pursuing the logging venture with vigor. Upwards of two hundred thousand feet of pine were cut by his men, but before the bulk of it could be floated down river they were burned in a forest fire. The remainder of the logs was simply abandoned on

the riverbank when Brown, with a characteristic sudden change of direction, decided to quit the St. Croix and resume fur trading on the Minnesota River. [6]

Brown's early logging on the St. Croix had been an illegal intrusion on Chippewa land. Indian Agent Lawrence Taliaferro tried to ward off European-Americans cutting pine on Dakota or Chippewa land. But with pine boards selling for sixty dollars per thousand feet in towns like Galena, Illinois, the center of the lead-mining region, the number of people willing to violate the law was great. In 1836, Brown's sometime partner in the fur trade, Joseph Bailly, complained to Congress. "A few years back the labor of a few Lumbering parties operating with whip saws was sufficient to supply the wants of that market, but now that the country is settling with a rapidity unexampled in the history of our country it requires greater supplies." Was it the government's intention, Bailly asked, to let the whole population of the Mississippi valley "suffer for want of Lumber because a few miserable Indians hold the country?" [7]

Even without government sanction fur traders and others attempted to make their own agreements with the Chippewa to secure access to the pinelands of the upper St. Croix. In March 1837, three of the American Fur Company's former lions in the region, William Aitkin, Henry Hastings Sibley, and Lyman Warren brought together a conference of St. Croix and Snake River Chippewa for the purpose of securing a ten year lease on the forests of the upper river. William Dickson tried the same tactic and like the above-mentioned traders, agent Taliaferro foiled him. Men with more modest expectations simply discretely made their way up river with a handful of laborers and after offering gifts to the local Chippewa band, began to cut pine. One Joseph Pitt led one such party to the falls in 1836. He obtained the consent of the Chippewa only to be run off by the Indian agent Lawrence Taliaferro. [8]

Failure to come to terms with the Indians could be quite costly, as John Boyce of St. Louis discovered in 1837. He led eleven men past the falls in the autumn of that year. With logging equipment, six oxen, and a mackinaw boat he pushed up the St. Croix to the vicinity of the Snake River, where he established a logging camp. The Snake River band, which well understood the great value the white man placed on pine lumber, protested Boyce's activities. "Go back where you came from," ordered Little Six, a bandleader backed by more than one hundred of his people. Boyce sought the mediation of the Presbyterian missionaries at Lake Pokegama. They advised him to leave and the Chippewa threatened to prevent Boyce from removing any of the pine. "We have no money for logs; we have no money for land. Logs cannot go," was their firm policy. Boyce persisted in spite of all threats and harassments, although his efforts came to naught in any event. In May, after a winter of logging, Boyce tried to raft his harvest downstream. The Chippewa, in a manner Boyce regarded as menacing, followed the drive. High water and hungry, unpaid, thoroughly dispirited men led to the loss of most of the logs. With the Chippewa looking on Boyce also lost most of his logging equipment when the mackinac boat upset while being lined down the falls. The boat itself was saved when the shrill whistle of the steamboat *Palmyra* "broke the silence of the Dalles." Aboard were other lumbermen who rendered Boyce assistance saving his boat and recovering some of the logs. Perhaps most important, the steamboat bore the news that the United States Senate had ratified the 1837 treaty of session, appeasing the Snake River Chippewa. It was too late, however, for Boyce. The few logs that were recovered and sold did not come close to meeting the expenses of the venture. Pioneer chronicler William Folsom recorded that "Boyce was disgusted and left the country." [9]

The Treaty of 1837 opened the St. Croix valley to European-American occupation and loggers surged into the valley to exploit the new frontier. John Boyce had paid a high penalty for beginning operations prematurely. As did a number of the other lumbermen

who were on the river immediately in the wake of the treaty. In September 1837, Franklin Steele and several partners ascended the river in a bark canoe and a scow loaded with supplies and men. They built several cabins at the falls, filed land claims on the best mill sites, and scouted good timberlands up river. Four other groups of lumbermen arrived that fall. Steele's group organized themselves as the St. Croix Falls Lumber Company and construction was begun on a twenty thousand dollar sawmill. They controlled an important waterpower site, but retained inexperienced millwrights and lumbermen. Their mill was not completed until 1842, in part because the site posed considerable construction challenges. Franklin Steele soon sold his share of the company, and the firm fell under the control of absentee owners and men more interested in land speculation than logging. The most important of the former was Caleb Cushing, a prominent Democratic politician in Massachusetts and a veteran United States diplomat. As logging expanded on the St. Croix it became clear that the head of the Dalles was not the best place to locate a mill and subsequent lumbermen elected to drive their logs farther downstream to lower Lake St. Croix. This did not deter Cushing from continuing to make sizable investments in the site and in timberlands upriver, as well as wrangling with his partners in costly lawsuits. The latter worked their way up to the United States Supreme Court. Cushing was not able to establish his control over the company until 1857. By that time the bloom had long since left the bright promise of the falls site. Other towns had been platted and emerged as logging centers. The *Polk County Press* mocked St. Croix Falls's hopes of being the industrial center of the river. "The ruthless hand of time has made sad ravages, and though the industrious relic hunters might find there a dam by a mill site, they would not find a mill by a dam site." [10]

The ill-fated St. Croix Falls Lumber Company did succeed in making history in its career of failure and misfortune. Quite unintentionally the company caused the first rafts of lumber to be sent down river to St. Louis. In 1843, the company's boom below the falls gave way before high water. The entire corporate stock of logs was borne away on the flood. While this meant the newly completed mill could not cut the lumber, the company could still salvage something if the logs could be caught downstream. John McKusick a young logger just arrived from New England collected about two million feet of logs. These were assembled into rafts of five hundred thousand feet each and floated down the Mississippi to St. Louis. In the years that followed literally thousands of rafts of logs would follow in their wake. John McKusick used the proceeds from his share of that log sale to purchase the machinery for a water-powered mill. That mill was established at Stillwater where it played a major role in making that site, as opposed to St. Croix Falls, the lumber center of the river. [11]

The surest way to making money in this early stage of the logging boom was to keep things simple -- get a crew of men to the upper St. Croix, cut several hundred thousand board feet of trees, drive them over the falls, assemble them into a raft and float them to growing river towns, preferably one not too far south. In May of 1838 Lawrence Taliaferro reported that two hundred men were at work in the pineries of the St. Croix and the Chippewa, by October the number had grown to five hundred. These small-scale operators benefited from what amounted to a free resource. The patchy pine lands of the lower river were not surveyed by the General Land Office until 1847 while the tall timber of the upper river was not mapped until the 1850s, so even if an individual wanted to purchase the land he was logging it would have been impossible. Even preemption claims were not possible on unsurveyed lands in Minnesota until Congress extended that privilege in 1854. With federal land policy making legal purchase impossible and the market clamoring for more lumber, the pioneers of the pineries responded in the best, unscrupulous tradition of the frontier -- they took what they needed and damned the consequences. The era of free timber on the lower St. Croix lasted at least a decade, from 1838 to 1848, and on the upper river private fortunes were made off public lands well into the 1850s. [12]



Figure 13. Oxen haul a big pine log to the river landing. From *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1860.

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St. Croix Riverway

Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix



CHAPTER 2:

River of Pine (continued)

The Impact of Logging on the St. Croix Valley

Like the fur traders before them the lumberjacks embrace of the St. Croix valley transformed it. They had turned the forest they all valued, many appreciated, and a handful loved, into lumber, a utilitarian if prosaic commodity. The volume of lumber produced by this single valley was staggering. During the peak year of 1890 the St. Croix valley, as either logs or lumber, had produced 450 million board feet. The total production between 1840 and 1912, if loaded on to standard log cars would have required 2.2 million rail cars. As a single train such a span of cars would be long enough to reach across the continent more than six times. The transfer of this wood from where nature intended it along the Upper Mississippi valley to the treeless region to the south and west made the agricultural settlement of the Great Plains possible. The majestic white pine of the St. Croix lived again—in some cases still lives—as homes, barns, corn cribs, fence posts, doors, from the support beams in great public buildings to lowly outhouse seats. While the establishment of grain farms on the plains was not in itself an unmixed ecological benefit, in the balance the loss of a vast forest for the gain of a breadbasket was a trade nineteenth century Americans would have been pleased to accept. [113]

Masked behind the balance between the Upper Midwest's loss and the Great Plain's gain is the enduring impact of the logging frontier on the St. Croix valley. The sudden, dramatic loss of the valley's forest was an ecological change unrivaled since the last descent of the glaciers. The vast plains of old-growth white pine, an area exceeding four thousand square miles and boasting trees two to three hundred years old, have never been replaced. White pine had dominated the presettlement forest because of its ability to adapt to a wide range of conditions. But the impact of intensive logging and forest fires was to destroy the natural reseeding mechanism of the forest. Well-meaning, but misguided efforts to reseed white pine led to the introduction of an Asian tree disease known as blister rust that devastated white pine seedlings and led to the elimination of most efforts to replant the forest's most valuable and beautiful tree. A generation of hardy immigrants broke their lives trying to follow the axe with the plow on the cutover lands. Only a persistent handful, blessed with a patch of rich soil, survived. The homesteads of the rest are today lost amid succession forests of poplar or plantations of jack and Norway pine. The myth of the upper river as a land of inexhaustible forest resources was quickly replaced by the myth of the region as future agricultural cornucopia – each myth burdened with tragic consequences. Much of the Upper St. Croix is again a forest, but it is not, nor can it ever again be, a wilderness. It is rather a curious mix of the failure of agriculture and the success of silviculture, as much a product of human design as a Kansas wheat field. [114]

Logging vastly changed the valley through urbanization. While logging took place at widely scattered, only temporarily occupied sites, milling and transportation concentrated the harvest of wood on specific, reoccurring locations. Initially these were waterpower sites

on the lower river such as Taylors Falls and Marine. Eventually most of the energy of the logging frontier focused upon Stillwater and it grew to a city of more than a dozen mills and thousands of inhabitants, the majority of whom were beholden to the forest for their livelihood. After the Civil War a new pattern of town development followed the blueprint of the steel rail. A string of new mill towns sprouted along the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad and along the North Wisconsin Railroad. Hinckley, Minnesota and Hayward, Wisconsin each came to symbolize the success and failure of the logging frontier. These hinterland towns did not displace Stillwater's importance as the principle funnel through which the bulk of the pine flowed. Pine remained largely oriented to the river, but when the softwoods had been cut, the railroad towns became the focus of hemlock and hardwood production. These towns and much of the cutover countryside turned their backs on the St. Croix River. [115]

The St. Croix River itself was left vastly changed by the logging frontier. What had been in 1837 a wild river, disturbed only by a handful of Chippewa fish weirs, had become one of the most controlled and manipulated river systems in America. There were between sixty and seventy gated dams in the St. Croix watershed and uncounted numbers of splash dams, hastily constructed of brush and earth. When combined with the loss of forest cover to logging and frequent brush fires, the dams left as their legacy a river that flowed much less clear and whose banks were more prone to erosion. The habitat of brook trout and other native fish that favored clear, cold waters was gradually destroyed. The strong current of the Upper St. Croix River, the flushing action of the multitude of dams, sent waves of turbid water to the lower river. Where the current slackened, the sand and earth suspended in the river settled into bars and shoals. Where steamboats easily navigated in the 1840s, commercial vessels repeatedly were grounded in the 1880s. Even when the loggers did not hold back water at Nevers Dam, dredging and wing dams were necessary for boats to effectively navigate between Stillwater and Taylors Falls. In addition to all of the silt and sand sent down river the lumbermen infringed on the St. Croix at Stillwater with extensive landfills. The mill owners had created more than ten acres of new waterfront land either by accidentally creating the conditions for mudslides or by consciously trying to increase their river frontage by dumping massive amounts of slabs and sawdust into the St. Croix. Such annual depositions further clouded the water. [116]

While logging as a business continues and will continue to linger in the valley in the twenty-first century, the logging frontier ended in 1914. In that year the boom at Stillwater, the great net of wood and chain that captured and sorted all of the pine driven on the St. Croix, handled its last log. It was a demise that had been long expected. More than a decade before William Folsom, one of the valley's first pioneers, who had lived and prospered long enough to become its first historian, observed:

The business has been a wonderful one; it has enriched many; it has furnished and is still furnishing a means of livelihood for thousands but is going rapidly and like the sands in the hour glass that keeps running, ever running on, its day will soon come. And then what?

Most of the men of Folsom's generation, had come as young men from New England to make their fortunes in the woods. Reflecting on their lives before marble clad hearths, in the comfort of homes paneled with finely grained wood, they took satisfaction in their accomplishments. The white pine boom had lasted long enough to see them into plush retirement or honored internment as founders of prosperous communities. [117]

Younger men were left to ponder the question posed by Folsom, "then what?" Many men cast their lot with the business of logging not the valley of the St. Croix. From the boss logger of the river Frederick Weyerhaeuser to a modest lumberman like William Veazie,

many a man who made his fortune on the St. Croix gambled he could make another in the rainforests of the Pacific Northwest. Some who stayed moved into farming, which by 1900 supported more people in the valley than logging. Others looked to tourist excursions, manufacturing, or mining to be the next boom for the valley.

The men who prospered in the lumber boom left behind ravaged forests and splendid Victorian homes. Visitors to Stillwater can today see the homes of Roscoe Hersey, the partner to Isaac Staples, and that of Captain Austin Jenks, who made his fortune rafting St. Croix timber down the Mississippi River. The lumber barons of Stillwater had the financial means to build in whatever style struck their fancy and they did so with the intention of erecting not only a comfortable home but a monument to all that they had accomplished in their lives on the frontier. John McKusick arrived from Illinois in 1840 and stayed on in Stillwater, eventually founding its first sawmill. His brothers Jonathon, Ivory, and Noah joined him in Minnesota all joining in the lumber business. Today the Ivory McKusick house in French Second Empire splendor stands in Stillwater as an example of how well the family did. Albert Lammers celebrated his success in the lumber industry by building elaborately with wood. In 1893, he chose the Queen Ann style, with its elaborate millwork and hand craftsmanship, for his new home, which still may be seen today at 1309 S. Third Street in Stillwater. Like the McKusick, Jenks, and Hersey houses, the Lammers mansion is on the National Register of Historic Places. William Sauntry was not one of the founding generation of St. Croix lumbermen, but he did so well through his association with Weyerhaeuser that he was able to join the elite in 1891 with his own fine residence. It was not, however, a place where Sauntry lived out a prosperous and contented retirement.

The young men of Stillwater could take little comfort from the fact that their fathers had done well. On the frontier social mobility moved in two directions and the challenge for those who stayed in the St. Croix valley was to find a path to profits that did not lead to the played out pineries. Among those who stumbled in pursuit of illusory new ventures was William Sauntry, the most successful and promising of the second-generation of St. Croix loggers. Although he lacked formal education and polished manners, Sauntry had convinced Frederick Weyerhaeuser to trust him with management of some of the timber trust's biggest projects, from the boom company to Nevers Dam. In the years that followed those coups Sauntry demonstrated again and again his mastering of the business of logging. He directed the Ann River Logging Company, the large and multifaceted company that cut the bulk of the remaining pine on the St. Croix. There was a swagger and, what one historian called an *esprit de corps*, about the lumberjacks who worked for the Ann River Logging Company. In 1891, for example, they showed off their prowess by loading a sled with a mountainous 31,480 board feet of logs and then hauling it for their own ice-rut roads for one mile. Sauntry was the hard-driving, tireless, and inspirational leader of the company. When the Ann River outfit cut its last log, Sauntry invested his sizeable fortune into a variety of mining ventures. But he was in a new field in which he lacked an intuitive grasp of what spelled success or failure. His energy and drive only plunged him deeper into losing investments. By 1914, he had lost all that he had won from the forest—money and reputation. His splendid house on Fourth Street in Stillwater became just another asset to be wagered on an increasingly bleak future. When even his old associates from the Ann River Logging Company turned their backs on him, William Sauntry purchased a revolver and put it to his head. [118]

That same year in Stillwater Frank McCray, the master of the St. Croix River Boom, hopped on to the last pine log to ever enter the boom. Workers watching from the cribs and log channels sent up a hallow cheer. More than thirteen billion board feet of logs before that, in 1856, a much more spry Frank McCray had guided the first log through the Stillwater boom. To mark the occasion the lumbermen invited all of their old employees to the boom company boarding house for a farewell feast on the banks of the river. The old

timers slapped each other on the back and told again the stories of their youthful antics and the epic scenes of a river of logs. The St. Croix River had remained an important logging stream much longer than any of its Lake States rivals, longer than Michigan's fabled Tittabawassee or Muskegon, longer than Wisconsin's Chippewa River. Yet, the era opened and closed within the course of one man's working life. "It makes one sad to realize," a veteran of the logging era later wrote, "that a great industry has absolutely faded, like a mist before the sun, largely because of the greed and hurry and lack of foresight of the generation that is gone." [119]

Back in 1837, during negotiations with the United States Government, the Chippewa had proposed not to sell their lands, but to lease them to the Americans. The Chippewa were aware that the desire of lumbermen for access to St. Croix pine was pushing them off the land. "It is hard to give up the lands," lamented Chief Flat Mouth. "They will remain but you may cut down the trees and others will grow up." The Chippewa proposed a lease of sixty years. Although the American negotiators brushed their offer aside, the Chippewa had rather accurately predicted how long the lumber frontier would last. They missed the actual ending of logging by only seventeen years. But when the St. Croix Boom closed, it was not the native people of the valley that inherited the deforested lands. New people from old lands across the ocean were already reimagining the St. Croix as a cutover cornucopia, a North Star of opportunity. [120]

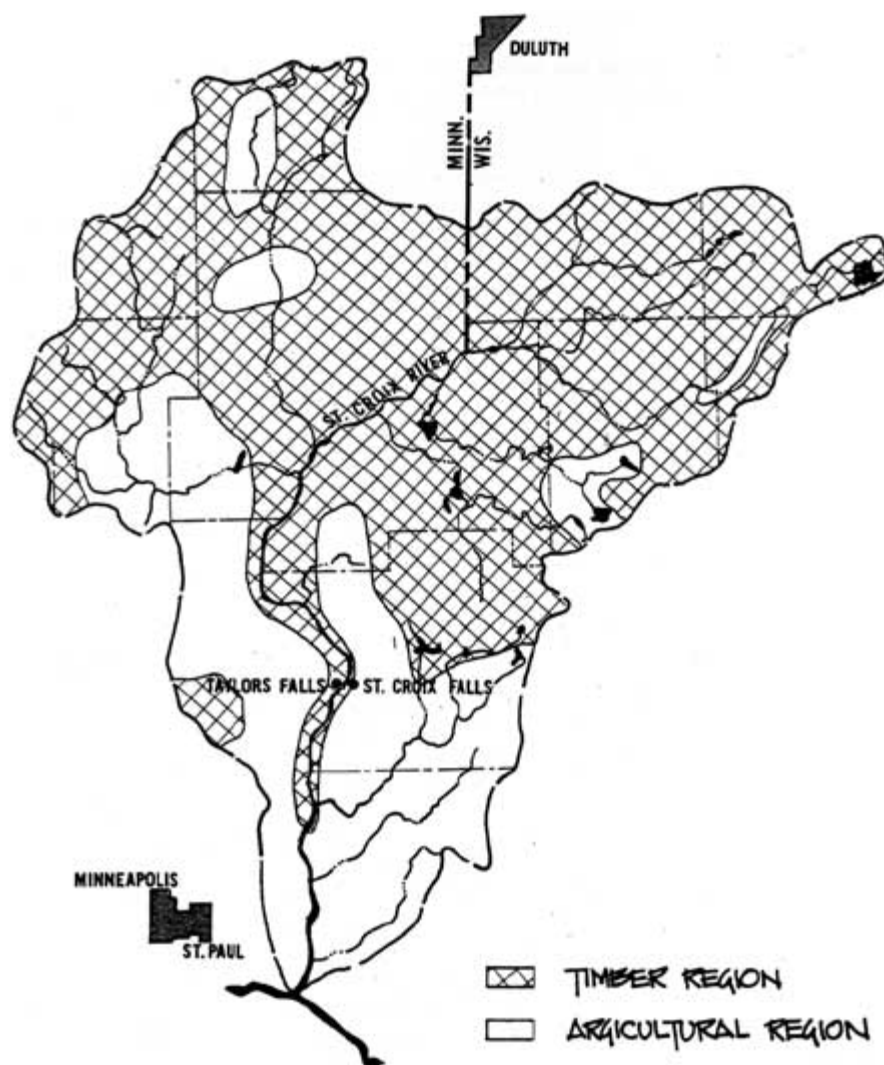


Figure 25. This map of the natural division of the St. Croix watershed into farming and forest regions is based upon soil types. In the late nineteenth and twentieth century farmers coming into the valley had no idea that the St. Croix's agricultural potential was so restricted.

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CHAPTER 3:

"The New Land": Settlement and the Development of Agriculture in the St. Croix Valley (continued)

Dividing the Valley

More than logging or the fur trade, the extension of agricultural settlement along the St. Croix necessitated a complete restructuring of the valley's natural landscape. When the Chippewa and Dakota Indians signed the Treaties of 1837, the valley was opened to a new system of land exploitation. The blueprint followed by the agriculturalists who came to the St. Croix flowed from the fertile brain of Thomas Jefferson. Although he never saw the landscape of the Upper Mississippi, Jefferson had played a hand in the creation of the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The Northwest Ordinance provided the principles and guidelines for the establishment of democracy and government in the territories that were north of the Ohio River and extended west of Pennsylvania to the Mississippi River. It was an extraordinary piece of legislation with far-reaching consequences for the future development of this country. New states formed out of this territory were to be admitted as equals to the original thirteen and slavery was banned. This ensured a free labor system in the North and that all the rights of U.S. citizens in eastern states would be enjoyed in the West. This was no trivial consideration for westward migration.

While the Northwest Ordinance provided the means for the expansion of the Union, it was the Land Ordinance of 1785 that laid the basis for federal land sales and patterns of distribution. Because it claimed so much uncharted and unsettled territory, the federal government had to establish an orderly method to transfer remote lands to private ownership. The Ordinance stipulated that all government lands be surveyed and divided into townships of thirty-six square miles along meridian lines. Each township was to be cut into thirty-six sections of one square mile each. This land then could be divided into half-sections of 320 acres catering to the interest of speculators and quarter sections beginning at 160 acres and sub-divided down to 40 acre plots for the average homesteader. Townships and sections that bordered on major rivers or lakes simply had a square shape with a fractured edge rather than extending the boundary across the waterway.

The Land Ordinance profoundly shaped the physical landscape of America. French lands in North America traditionally were claimed and laid out with respect to drainage basins. The grid system established by the Ordinance and the Anglo-American tradition of using rivers as boundaries had enormous consequences for the St. Croix Valley. Dozens of townships used the river as their boundary. Their respective governments began the division of the river community long before statehood created the biggest divide. The Land Ordinance also altered cultural patterns of settlers in the valley. In many European farming communities, homes of agricultural workers were clustered in villages, and peasants hiked out to tend the fields. The French also had brought to North America, as can be seen in Prairie Du Chien the practice of using rectangular-shaped long lots with the narrow ends bordering a road or

river respecting the natural shape of the land. Houses built along these thoroughfares formed small hamlets with all settlers having access to the road or river. However, the American rural landscape, marked out in square miles indifferent to the natural contours or quality of the land, placed settlers onto single farmsteads with solitary homes. Old Indian trails or paths that followed the natural lay of the land were abruptly severed by fenced-in private property. Immigrants had to adapt to the more individualistic and self-reliant American land system as well as the responsibilities of self-government. [2]

Federal surveying teams began penetrating into the Wisconsin frontier in the late 1830s. They first began in the populous mining region of southwestern Wisconsin. From there land offices opened in the southeastern portion of the state and moved north and west. This in part reflected the Ordinance's logic to move east to west and south to north in order to maintain regularity of the thirty-six-square mile township. It also reflected the general pattern of population migration westward. As this land was made available the Wisconsin frontier gave way to farms with amazing speed. By 1845 federal land sale offices sold nearly three million acres in the territory. However, the natural transportation afforded by the Mississippi River and other water systems such as the Wisconsin and the St. Croix Rivers into the northwestern portion of the Wisconsin territory brought lumber barons and lumberjacks, provisioners, and farmers who supplied the lumber camps into the north woods ahead of the federal surveying teams. [3]

The St. Croix Valley was among the most remote regions of the Old Northwest Territory. Although mostly Indian Territory, legal jurisdiction for matters concerning soldiers, fur traders and the like fell under territorial governments' authority. Early on the St. Croix Valley came under the jurisdiction of the Indiana and then the Illinois territory. And between 1819 to 1836, legal jurisdiction over the valley was across Lake Michigan in Crawford County, Michigan when it then became Crawford County of the Wisconsin Territory. However, only Indians, fur traders, and soldiers from Fort Snelling knew anything about the land's beauty and abundance. Outsiders considered this area too far north and the soil too poor for successful cultivation of marketable crops. Only loggers who hoped to exploit its vast timber resources ventured here and there with little thought of permanent settlement. Once in the St. Croix Valley logging entrepreneurs discovered to their surprise its relatively healthful climate free from the malarial fevers of the lower Mississippi and its rich black loamy soil, not to mention its physical charms. These loggers and their families joined former traders and soldiers and formed the first permanent settlements along the St. Croix River. [4]

It was not until 1848 that the first federal land office opened along the St. Croix in St. Croix Falls -- a good ten years after Chippewa and Dakota lands were ceded. By then many squatters had laid claim to some of the land in the valley. Squatters often had a disreputable reputation back East as unscrupulous individuals who settled on land whose title was in dispute with the aim of wresting control of it. However, in the Old Northwest Territory they were simply settlers who arrived before the land surveyors and began farming virgin land. By making their own marks on trees and planting a small plot of land these men and their families hoped to begin a new life. While Congress raged indignantly over the actions of these usurpers of federal lands, western politicians who were more familiar with frontier conditions defended the rights and actions of their constituents. Some accommodation had to be made between the Land Ordinance system and the realities of the frontier. In 1841, therefore, Congress passed the Pre-Emption Act. It granted squatters the first opportunity to purchase lands they had already settled for the minimum amount of \$1.25 an acre. This Act was later replaced by the 1862 Homestead Act that granted a free quarter section to any settler who farmed it for five years. [5]

The land under the jurisdiction of Crawford County, Wisconsin included the entire western

portion of the Wisconsin Territory east of the Mississippi River and north to Canada. Its county seat was in Prairie Du Chien, the old French fur-trading town. Anyone living east of the Mississippi in the Wisconsin Territory was required to travel to the town for any legal transactions. In the few years between 1838 when land was opened for settlement and 1840 when the U.S. Census was taken, 351 non-Indian people had settled in the "Lake St. Croix District" which ran from St. Croix Falls to the Chippewa Mission at Pokegama. [6]

The early history of the St. Croix Valley was inexorably tied to the founding of the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. One of the more colorful and influential characters to shape this history was Joseph R. Brown, the former soldier, fur trader, lumberman, farmer, storekeeper, and government official. In pursuit of his own interests, Brown played a key role in establishing St. Croix County. Unlike some of the early lumbermen, Brown's main interest in land claims along the rivers was in their potential to serve as ferry landings and town sites rather than their waterpower or timber resources. He knew once the Upper Mississippi River Valley was opened for settlement prospective homesteaders would flock to the area and they would need places to disembark, temporary accommodations, provisions, and access to interior lands. One available site was at present day Taylors Falls, but Brown felt it had no adequate landings for steamboats and the area was too hilly to build a large and profitable town. Instead, Brown banked on a claim near Fort Snelling. It seemed like a perfect location to build a northern Davenport, Galena, Dubuque, Peoria, or even a Chicago. It was at the northern reaches of navigation on the Upper Mississippi since narrow channels and sandbars limited access to the Falls of St. Anthony. It was also the only site available for settlement in that vicinity since Fort Snelling was on the northeastern shore of the Minnesota River at its mouth and the western shore of the Mississippi. The southern shore of the rivers was still in Indian hands. Since settlement was also heading up the St. Croix River, Brown hedged his bets by making three claims. One was at the mouth of the river near present day Prescott, another was at the head of Lake St. Croix where he had a warehouse to supply his upper river trading posts, and the third was on the lake at St. Mary's Point by the small voyageur and half breed settlement. [7]

In 1839, Brown made his first foray into politics when he sent a petition to the Wisconsin Territorial legislature for a permit to run a ferry from his claim across the Mississippi to the Fort Snelling reserve. The legislature's select committee proposed it as a bill, but for unknown reasons opposition to the bill arose and resulted in its indefinite postponement. Brown learned that the only way to promote his interests would be to immerse himself in the politics of the area. Thus, he began a venture into government work by winning a position as Justice of the Peace. Previous to his appointment all legal transaction in the region required a trip to Prairie Du Chien. Brown helped make legal matters more convenient for settlers in the St. Croix Valley as well as to make himself a key figure.

Brown also set up a whiskey depot on his claim across from Fort Snelling that quickly became a popular recreation site for lonesome soldiers short on entertainment. After a drunken spree that put nearly two-thirds of the men in the guardhouse, army commanders were determined to put an end to Brown's house of libation. It seems, however, that Brown's whiskey shop was only a pretext for claiming the best ferry landing between the Fort and the Falls at St. Anthony. St. Anthony Falls was obviously a choice spot for waterpower. Several officers from Fort Snelling, including the commanding officer, dabbled on the side in land speculation there when not occupied with military matters. If the Falls area was to flourish, these would-be entrepreneurs needed to eliminate competing commercial and settlement sites such as Brown's. They also laid claim to a prime landing spot at the mouth of the St. Croix River at present day Prescott. For military reasons the Fort commanders decided to extend its boundaries to oust the collection of old fur traders, refugees from the Red River colony in Winnipeg, and various French Canadian vagabonds. Besides their penchant for liquor at Brown's whiskey shop, Major Joseph Plympton felt

they were using up more than their fair share of fuel wood near the Fort and their horses and cattle overgrazed public lands. He ordered Lieutenant James L. Thompson to mark out new boundaries for the fort that included what is now the Twin Cities. They reached from St. Anthony Falls east to Lake Calhoun to a line south of the Minnesota and Mississippi River and east nearly to St. Paul's Seven Corners. About 150 squatters not connected to the military installation were told to leave the area. In October 1839, in a show of support for Fort Snelling's actions, the Secretary of War sent an order to the U.S. Marshal for the Wisconsin Territory to remove the settlers immediately and use force if necessary. The order, however, was misdelivered and delayed for months. [8]

In the meantime, outraged settlers formed a citizens' group and selected Brown to present a petition against the military reserve extension to the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature in Madison. They hoped the civil government would stop the extension of the military holdings into land for civilian settlement. In November 1839, Brown accompanied Ira Brunson, the Representative for Crawford County as well as its deputy marshal, to Madison where Brunson submitted to the territorial government the citizens' petition against the military reserve's extension of its boundaries to the east side of the Mississippi. By December the Territorial government passed a resolution against the military reserve extension to the east bank of the Mississippi and notified the Secretary of War that the military was preempting land that was under the civilian control of the Wisconsin Territory without its consent. By March 1840 the dispute reached Congress. The War Department's influence in Washington led to the petition's death in committee. Fort Snelling lost no time and by May forced squatters from the newly extended military reserve. [9]

Fort Snelling's land grab had important consequences for settlement in the Upper Mississippi River Valley. Many of the evicted squatters moved up river to St. Anthony Falls to join a small group of settlers already there. They would make this site the region's center of immigration and business rather than the land occupied by the Fort at the confluence of the Mississippi and the St. Croix Rivers. St. Paul and Minneapolis, which emerged out of this settlement, would create a major metropolitan area further removed up river from the mouth of the St. Croix River. [10]

Still determined to advance his interests Brown pressed other business on the Wisconsin Territorial Legislature in the winter of 1839-40. Out of his "Black Betty," a type of satchel common on the frontier, he produced another citizens' petition requesting that a new county be formed out of northwestern Crawford County with a county seat at Chanwakan, which was south of the military reserve on the Mississippi not far from Prescott and the St. Croix River. The Wisconsin Territorial Legislature was aware of the growth of immigration to its northwest region and was ready to entertain the idea of a new county up there. However, loggers from the Marine and St. Croix lumbering companies had also recognized the need for more accessible local government along the St. Croix River and had submitted their petition to the legislature to create St. Croix County with the county seat at Prescott. Brown quickly recognized the greater viability of a proposed county centered along the St. Croix River rather than the Mississippi, especially when the military reserve issue had not yet been entirely settled. However, he was determined to prevent Prescott from becoming the seat of government since he knew that a syndicate of Fort Snelling officers controlled it as well. Instead of submitting his own petition, Brown focused on finding a compromise with the lumbering interests along the St. Croix. [11]

The lumbermen's goal was to have all the timberland on the St. Croix and Chippewa Rivers fall within the new county's boundaries. Brown, on the other hand, was more interested establishing the location of future ferry landings, town sites, and farmsteads for arriving immigrants. By January 1840, a compromise bill passed the legislature establishing St. Croix County. It excluded the Chippewa River drainage basin because inhabitants there

still identified with Prairie Du Chien. St. Croix County's southern boundary, then, was fixed at the Porcupine River -- which is now Rush River -- on Lake Pepin. From its first fork its boundary went in a straight northeasterly direction to the Hay Fork of the Red Cedar River and then directly north along the Bois Brule River to Lake Superior, and westward along the lakeshore to the Canadian border. Its western boundary was the Mississippi River. Since the location of the county seat was disputed, the Wisconsin legislature wisely allowed the inhabitants to vote on where to place it. Since the land in the St. Croix Valley was not yet surveyed, county commissioners had to have the consent of the occupant of any land it wished to claim and that the occupant had to pay at least eight hundred dollars to the county treasury. If the occupant agreed to these terms, his claim as a squatter to 160 acres was secured as well as the value of his land increased. The fledgling county then would have cash to begin governmental responsibilities. Since the population base was so small, two representatives and one councilman were to be elected at large from St. Croix and Crawford Counties. [12]

On August 3, 1840 the first county elections were held to determine the county seat. Brown, in a concession to the upriver loggers, put forth as a potential government center his unsurveyed claim on the north end of Lake St. Croix where he had built a warehouse, or storage shed. While not an ideal location for a great commercial city, it had a steamboat landing and waterpower. "Joe Brown's Claim," as it was called, received forty-five votes to Prescott's thirteen. Brown had finally outmaneuvered his Fort Snelling rivals. He also managed to be elected treasurer, surveyor, and register of deeds. Brown paid the eight hundred dollars to the county thus securing his claim as well as future profits. However, the consequences of the Brown-Fort Snelling rivalry for the St. Croix River Valley was to disperse commercial and government activities along the river thus preventing the more logical development of a major urban center at the junction of the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers near Prescott and Point Douglas. [13]

Territorial elections were held on September 28. Through deft political maneuvering Brown also managed to get himself elected as territorial representative by putting his name on the ballot in the St. Croix district as well as in Prairie Du Chien, thereby ensuring a plurality of votes in the bi-county election. Ever vigilant in his quest to attract farmers to the valley, Brown proposed a bill by December in the territorial legislature to build three roads in the new county. The routes were to extend from Marine Mills down along the river passing by Dacotah -- the new name for "Joe Brown's Claim" -- and veering westward through Prospect Grove (now Cottage Grove) to Grey Cloud Island on the Mississippi; one from Marine Mills up to St. Croix Falls; and another from Prescott's ferry to Grey Cloud Island. The bill was approved by February 1841.

A year later Brown proposed sending Congress a memorial for an appropriation for a survey of a new military road from Fort Howard on Green Bay to Fort Snelling via Plover Portage on the Wisconsin River and Dacotah on the St. Croix. This would cut the travel distance from five hundred to two hundred miles by avoiding the water route along the Fox and Wisconsin Rivers. Brown also put forth a resolution to have the public lands north of the Wisconsin River surveyed. Both measures passed without a hitch. Brown thereby enhanced the prospect of settlement for the north territory as well as increased the value of "Joe Brown's claim." [14]

The county seat at Dacotah began inauspiciously. The initial settlers were all Brown's relatives. While many people passed through the settlement on their way to the pineries, few chose Dacotah as a permanent settlement. With no finished lumber available the first "court house" was made from tamarack logs with mud plastered in the chinks to keep the wind and cold at bay. While the county commissioners met here, David Irwin, a judge from the Green Bay district court, was appalled on his first visit in June 1840 by its

primitive conditions and lack of formalized proceedings. He was quoted as saying that he would never again go to that "God-forsaken spot." Even when he was accused of neglecting his duties, Irwin refused to go back to Dacotah. The Wisconsin Territorial Legislature was then forced to amend the St. Croix County bill and give Crawford County legal jurisdiction there. Commissioners were allowed for convenience sake to set up their offices at Red Stone Prairie on the Mississippi River, now Newport, Minnesota. Joseph Brown even abandoned Dacotah in 1843 for Grey Cloud on the Mississippi. By 1846 Dacotah was all but a ghost town. [15]

However, the beauty and resources of the St. Croix did not depend upon the likes of Joe Brown to attract settlers and prosper. By the 1840s the St. Croix River Valley as well as the Upper Mississippi River Valley had emerged from a mysterious country of wilderness and Indians to a well-known area mapped out and described by explorers. Eastern developers and potential settlers had already begun migrating here. [16] The first towns in the Old St. Croix County were, of course, lumber centers with suitable mill sites, such as Stillwater, Marine, St. Croix Falls, Osceola, Hudson, Arcola, and St. Anthony Falls. According to an 1842 census twenty-seven men and two women lived in Marine Mills. Seventy-one men and five women had taken up residence at St. Croix Falls. Other settlements appeared near fords in the St. Croix that were most conducive to shipping, such as Afton; or places that had been Indian trading centers, such as the Dakota mission which became the nucleus for Newport. The old trading post Crow Wing gained importance when the Winnebago/Chippewa agency was located across the Mississippi River from it. St. Paul had begun to take the lead as a commercial settlement thanks to the failure of the Fort Snelling land syndicate. [17]

These rudimentary settlements attracted tradesmen and entrepreneurs eager to make their mark or fortune on the frontier. The range of economic activities of early settlers, however, was limited to serving a local economy with traders often resorting to barter. Logs rather than agricultural products monopolized river transportation. The first farmers were initially loggers or mill workers who saved enough of their wages to claim land for a homestead. Wives and children then joined their men folk in the north woods. Raising livestock was the quickest entrée into farming since there was a ready local market among timber men for meat and dairy products. Once a flourmill was built in Afton, farmers turned to grain to supplement lumberjack diets with pancakes and biscuits. Seasoned wood from cleared land could also fetch a profit from the steamboats that plied the St. Croix. However, agricultural expansion was hindered by the lack of roads and the collapse of the county government. [18]

By 1841, St. Croix county business was back in Prairie du Chien. The county had no taxing system and owed Joe Brown back rent on the unfinished county "building" he had erected. By 1843 county commissioners stopped meeting entirely. County Clerk William Holcombe, however, sought to resurrect the moribund county government. In 1843, he petitioned the Wisconsin legislature for a variance to permit the clerk to act as sheriff so legal elections could be held under his supervision. The office of Judge Probate was also revived. Yet, even with these changes most legal matters still had to be presented in Prairie du Chien. In 1845, Holcombe and other St. Croix citizens asked the legislature to relocate their county seat. They argued that since St. Croix County now had more people than Crawford County, it should not be subordinated to a government with a smaller population. The legislature agreed and granted St. Croix citizens the right to vote on a new county seat. The people of St. Croix County, however, never held an election. [19]

Apparently, the three former commissioners, Joseph Furber, William R. Brown, and Philip Aldrich, feared that St. Paul would dominate the selection process while their interests lay along the St. Croix River. However, the Wisconsin legislature, with its sights on statehood,

was frustrated by the lack of governmental organization in the county. In 1846, it seized the initiative and selected Stillwater, the most important logging center on the Upper Mississippi, as the seat of county government. In that year Stillwater rivaled St. Paul with approximately the same number of permanent families, ten and twelve respectively, and three to five stores. It was not until the following year, 1847, when Franklin Steele built a dam and sawmill at St. Anthony Falls, that the embryo for St. Paul's twin city of Minneapolis was conceived putting these settlements on the trajectory for metropolitan dominance in the North Country. The territorial legislature also wasted no time in building the first road from Stillwater to St. Paul that year. [20]

With its northwestern county back on track, the Wisconsin legislature began its quest for statehood and applied to Congress in 1846. Since the Erie Canal had opened in 1825 connecting Lake Erie to Albany, New York and the Hudson River down to the Port of New York on the Atlantic Ocean, the Great Lakes and Mississippi Valley region became accessible to east coast entrepreneurs and pioneers. Settlers by the tens of thousands began migrating here with Wisconsin being a major beneficiary. Immigration into the territory was so swift that by 1845 Wisconsin counted 155,000 residents in a mid-decade census exceeding requirements for statehood. Wisconsinites proceeded to elect delegates for their December convention. Statehood seemed quickly assured. [21]

Wisconsin's northwestern boundary, however, became a hotly disputed issue that had profound consequences for the St. Croix Valley and its residents. The original border for the Wisconsin Territory designated by the Northwest Ordinance extended to the Mississippi River. Between the St. Croix River and the Mississippi was the growing city of St. Paul and approximately one-third of what is now the state of Minnesota. The Wisconsin territorial legislature intended to keep possession of its rich timberlands, prairies, rivers, and lakes. The settlers on the St. Croix, however, had other ideas. They saw their interests and identity as different from the farmers and miners in the south and eastern portions of the territory. St. Croix men were lumberjacks who came from Maine or other New England forested states. They by-passed most of Wisconsin and its typical path of settlement by heading directly up the Mississippi from Illinois to the St. Croix River Valley. Their acquaintances were old fur traders or soldiers who had transformed themselves into town-site speculators and lumber entrepreneurs. When St. Croix County was created, it encompassed the entire St. Croix Valley and encouraged its residents to think of the watershed much like the old French traders before them. The St. Croix's geographic remoteness and economic uniqueness created a culture apart from other settlers in the Wisconsin Territory. Settlers here realized that this far northern country had no chance to secure any major public institutions, such as a capitol city, a major university, or a penitentiary — Madison had a lock on these. St. Croix residents felt their best interests politically and economically would best be served by separating themselves from Wisconsin and forming a new territory and proposed a boundary near the Chippewa River. [22]

When the issue of Wisconsin statehood was brought before Congress, expansionists such as Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois proposed a third view of where the territory's western boundary should be placed. They argued that a state with its boundary to the Mississippi would be too large to manage. In addition, by creating another state out of the Old Northwest Territory the North would gain an advantage in the growing sectional crisis with the South over expansion and slavery. They proposed setting Wisconsin's western boundary at the St. Croix River. When the enabling legislation passed Congress, the politically powerful expansionists won. Wisconsin's boundary was designated at the St. Croix River. [23]

Statehood enabling acts, however, were generally considered recommendations, not

binding acts. Wisconsin's constitutional convention had the right to consider Congress's actions regarding their boundary proposal. Many Wisconsinites were appalled at the prospect that they would lose so much territory in the northwest. Nor were all St. Croix County residents happy that their river valley community might be divided; yet they were encouraged by Congress's willingness to create a new territory. Therefore, much was at stake on what would happen at the state constitutional convention. The citizens of St. Croix County faced the daunting task of convincing both Congress and most of Wisconsin that the boundary should run further south than either of them wanted. They had to choose their delegate to the convention carefully. That they did by electing William Holcombe, one of the original founders of St. Croix Falls Lumbering Company who also had interests in steam boating and land speculation. [24]

Holcombe skillfully made the case that Congressional expansionists were right that a state with its boundary to the Mississippi was too large, and that another state would work to the North's advantage in national politics. He also argued that Madison, nearly three hundred miles away, was too far and remote a location of government. Echoing the democratic philosophy of Thomas Jefferson, Holcombe added that St. Croix County residents were self-reliant frontiersmen who needed and wanted a government that was close by and accessible in order to exercise their democratic rights effectively. The St. Croix River Valley with a boundary from present-day Winona to the western edge of Michigan's Upper Peninsula, he proposed, would form the nucleus of a new territory made up of people with common interests in lumbering and business. Stillwater, "the hotbed of St. Croix separatism," planned to be the capitol. A divided valley, he argued would "alienate the interests of society, perplex the trade and business of the river, and retard the growth of the settlement."

If Holcombe had made his case to Congress, he might have made some converts. By arguing before the Wisconsin constitutional convention that the state should give up more land than even Congress proposed as well as access to Lake Superior, his amendment was received coolly. However, Holcomb did win a compromise. The convention did agree that the valley should not be divided even at the cost of some territory for Wisconsin. It proposed a new boundary from Lake Superior south to the Mississippi, which ran approximately fifteen miles east of the St. Croix. Holcombe and his supporters seemed to have victory close at hand. If Wisconsin voters accepted the proposed constitution, the St. Croix Valley would not be part of the state. The only opposition in the state to the loss of territory came from Crawford County. Residents in Prairie du Chien feared they would be left on the fringe of Wisconsin and politically marginalized in a state dominated by eastern interests. The proposed constitution, however, foundered on other issues. There were provisions in it to ban bank chartering which reflected the typical western settlers' suspicions of outside moneyed interests controlling their destiny. The convention also had written a constitution that was fairly liberal for the time. Married women were to enjoy property rights, and Negroes were to be granted suffrage. Conservative Badgers, even some in St. Croix County, roundly rejected the document in an April 1847 election. [25]

Wisconsin's second constitutional convention in the spring of 1847 was smaller and more politically balanced and representative of the sentiments of the territory than the first had been. In the interim, political influence along the St. Croix shifted to the "Bostonians" — a group of eastern capitalists that included Caleb Cushing, Rufus Choate, and Robert Rantoul, Jr.. In 1845, these men formed the St. Croix and Lake Superior Mining Company. They planned to mine copper on the upper St. Croix and to develop timber resources and waterpower at St. Croix Falls as well as at the Falls of St. Anthony. This syndicate felt their economic interests were not compatible with the farmers, merchants, and lead miners in the southern half of the state. The inclusion of a ban on bank chartering in the first constitution convinced them that pioneers were in general suspicious of eastern investors.

Controlling their own territory would give them the tax breaks they felt were needed to promote their economic goals. They *had* to get a boundary favorable to their interests. Some confidently predicted Cushing would be the first territorial governor with Stillwater the new capitol. The Bostonians and others in St. Croix County hoped the new body's more pragmatic members might be influenced to turn over more land to the valley than the compromise worked out in the previous convention. They selected a new delegate, George W. Brownell, to represent them. Brownell was a geologist and mineralogist who came to the St. Croix Valley in 1846 where he discovered lead and earned a living as a newspaper editor. He was also an agent of Cushing's. The Bostonians felt they found a representative who could advance their interests in a new constitutional convention.

The new delegate made a dramatic entrance into Madison by arriving on snowshoes after a three-week trek to demonstrate the remoteness of the St. Croix River Valley from Madison. Brownell reintroduced Holcombe's original proposal for the border and made the same Jeffersonian claims of the need for democracy to be close to the people. These Wisconsin convention delegates, however, were savvier than their predecessors. Perhaps because of the close ties between Brownell and Cushing, they did not buy the argument advanced that the St. Croix Valley was "worthless" to Wisconsin. They realized that the St. Croix Valley had singular natural resources in timber and waterpower. By simply accepting the boundary of the enabling act -- the St. Croix River -- they could claim at least some of these resources and shore up its statehood quest by assenting to Congress' original act. Other bolder delegates wanted to claim as much of the Old Northwest Territory as possible. They set a boundary from the first rapids of the St. Louis River near Lake Superior to the mouth of the Rum River down to the Mississippi thereby seizing the entire St. Croix Valley as well as the St. Paul area. Their proposal swept the convention by a vote of fifty-three to three. [26]

As long as the valley was not divided many St. Croix residents were resigned to their inclusion in Wisconsin. Others on the west side of the St. Croix River, however, wanted no part of the new state and schemed to create a new territory. Individuals such as Morgan Martin, Wisconsin's territorial delegate to Congress, envisioned a Minnesota Territory and future state that included not only land stretching from Holcombe's original border to the Mississippi, but also land further west into the Louisiana Purchase Territory. The Dakota Indians, however, would have to be approached to sell their land. Martin's fur-trading associates stood to benefit from the opening of land not yet depleted of fur-bearing animals. They also thought the St. Paul area would attract more settlers if the Indians were pushed further west. This faction took their case directly to Congress.

By the spring of 1848 the St. Croix River Valley found itself at the center of a heated national debate that threatened to jeopardize Wisconsin's admittance into the Union. The Minnesota faction found a supporter for their scheme in Robert Smith of Illinois. Smith argued Brownell's position that the St. Croix Valley was too remote from Madison and that it would be economically unfeasible to divide settlers on the river under two governments. If left intact and outside Wisconsin, the St. Croix settlers could form the nucleus of another state. Expansionist in Congress did not miss the implications of this proposal for creating another northern state. Other Congressmen, however, did not think Minnesota a viable territory because of its small population. Congress also had more pressing issues in the aftermath of the Mexican War and the acquisition of new territory in the Southwest that reignited sectional issues of the expansion of slavery west of Texas to spend much time reflecting on the remote northern country and potential Indians problems. For the most part, Congress was anxious to remove the Wisconsin-Minnesota issue from the national stage and create another northern state, so it sought a simple solution. It voted to admit Wisconsin to the Union on May 29, 1848 with its northwestern border as specified in the enabling act — the St. Croix River. The valley was separated because of political

expediency, the Anglo-American tradition of using rivers for borders, and perhaps self-interested politicians in the St. Croix area scheming for another state prematurely. [27]

While the rest of Wisconsin celebrated its new status in the Union, St. Croix River Valley residents lamented their separation from each other. The river that had initially united them, now divided them. They found themselves under different governments and legal jurisdictions that would forever complicate life along the St. Croix. The most immediate problem was that St. Croix County, Wisconsin did not have a county seat since Stillwater was across the river. St. Croix County on the Minnesota side had a county seat but no legal authority under it. Wisconsin's elevation to statehood marked the end of the Old Northwest Territory leaving the area between the St. Croix and the Mississippi a rump territory with its legal status in limbo. Wisconsin quickly rectified this situation by choosing a new county seat for its portion of St. Croix County at the mouth of the Willow River initially called Buena Vista. In 1852, it changed its name to Hudson. While Congress declared that Wisconsin territorial laws were in force across the river, residents there found themselves with no courts, no law officers, no legislature, or representation in Congress. They had to politically mobilize themselves once again. [28]

Since it had been the county seat, Stillwater's residents took the lead in convincing Congress to grant territorial status to Minnesota. Word went out to settlers of the region to meet in Stillwater for a convention on August 26, 1848. They were encouraged by the likes of Joe Brown, who still schemed to make his land claim on the St. Croix the center of settlement. Among their concerns was that in their current state of political limbo, Congress might not appropriate money for internal improvements. The convention resolved to petition Congress and President James K. Polk for a more clearly defined territorial status. They unanimously elected Henry Sibley of Mendota, Iowa Territory (who volunteered to travel to Washington at his own expense) to present their case. At first Congress was reluctant to seat Sibley but relented when they decided he was a delegate of the remnant Wisconsin Territory. The expansionist Senator Stephen Douglas helped him steer through Congress a bill to create a new territory. Douglas's assistance, however, tinged the Minnesota cause with a Democratic Party hue that southerners quickly turned into a sectional issue. Although independent frontiersmen and believers in popular sovereignty, Stillwater politicians were decidedly uninterested in the national implications of Minnesota statehood. But the spirit of Manifest Destiny was on their side and on March 3, 1849 the Minnesota Territory was formed even though its population was not sufficient. Its boundaries matched those of today's state. St. Croix County was renamed Washington County after the first president October 27, 1849. [29]

Despite Minnesota's arrival as a territory, residents on both sides of the St. Croix River regretted their separation for years to come. Wisconsinites, whose north woods identity remained in tact, longed to be part of the new territory. Minnesotans, in turn, pitied their poor Wisconsin cousins for being so close to them but captive of another state. [30] In his visit to the region in the late 1840s, travel writer E.S. Seymour noticed the depressing effect of using the St. Croix as a boundary between the two territories. "Another circumstance detrimental to the prosperity of this place, at least temporarily, is the location of the boundary line," he wrote. "Several of the citizens [of Wisconsin], preferring to unite their fortunes with the new Territory of Minnesota, have removed from St. Croix to some of the thriving towns now springing up in that flourishing territory. The only business now prosecuted at the Falls is that of the sawmills, and incidental business connected with it." [31]

If the conflict of ambitions that marked the end of the Wisconsin Territory resulted in a divided valley, the Northwest Ordinance and the Land Ordinance at least established a common method of creating political order and organizing economic exploitation in the St.

Croix Valley. Land, of course, would be the major attraction for prospective settlers. Still, it came with the considerable added attraction and guarantees of the American political system — freedom, individual rights, and the pursuit of happiness — as well as the political mechanisms to make these possible. [32] By the mid-1840s the federal land office was inundated with pleas that the land along the St. Croix be surveyed. Squatters logged trees they had no legitimate claim to. Speculators petitioned Congress and President John Tyler to do something about the theft of timber along the river for fear that any legitimate business enterprise would never take root in the region. Therefore, the General Land Office authorized the opening of a land office in St. Croix Falls in 1848 (It was moved to Stillwater in 1849), and Willow River (Hudson) in 1849. This signaled the opening of legal settlement. [33]

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St. Croix Riverway

Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix



CHAPTER 3:

"The New Land": Settlement and the Development of Agriculture in the St. Croix Valley (continued)

Farms or Forests? The Cutover Debate

While promoters lured settlers to the cutover, a forestry movement had also been growing in the state following the national trend to protect the country's rapidly depleting forests. The State Horticultural Society had been promoting reforestation of Wisconsin's timberlands and conservation for some time, and in 1893 it helped found the Wisconsin Forestry Association. By 1897, the state legislature created a commission to draw up plans for conserving, protecting, and utilizing state forests. Among its findings, it reported that of the original seventeen million forested acres in Wisconsin, eight million were cutover lands and claimed that at least forty percent and probably more was unfit for farming. It speculated that about ten million acres was solely fit for trees, and that if the state ever expected to collect taxes on it, only timber products could supply the income to pay any rates. By 1903, Wisconsin created its first State Forestry Commission. While it marked the beginning of state efforts at conservation, it inadvertently became a declaration of war to those promoting agricultural settlement in northern Wisconsin. [285]

Conservationists even found a few supporters among the homesteading pioneers. Soren J. Uhrenholdt is a good example of an individual who believed good farming practices and conservation were not mutually exclusive. In 1883, he and his wife Christine emigrated from Denmark, initially settling on a farm in Waupaca County. In 1899, the family came to the Seeley area to carve out a permanent homestead. By the spring of 1900 they had settled on 120 acres of cutover lands just north of the village. What distinguished Uhrenholdt was his dedication to his native values of planning and using every acre for what it was best suited for. He worked closely with the University of Wisconsin Agriculture School, attending its farmer's courses, and prospered by growing seed potatoes that he sold throughout the country. In one year he grossed six thousand dollars. In lean years he was tempted to sell off some of his timberlands, but felt in his heart that forestlands could be valuable in their own right. He, therefore, began to practice sustained-yield forestry and even began to reforest some of his own land. This caught the attention of the Agriculture School as well as 4-H Clubs, schools, and many others who sought out his advice. His old farmstead is off Highway 63 near Pacwawong Lake. When he settled here on cutover land in 1900, Mr. Uhrenholdt began to reforest his land. In 1916, the College honored him for his outstanding cooperation. The original homestead is now the Uhrenholdt Memorial Forest and is now owned by the state of Wisconsin. [286]

Conservationist's hopes for the cutover, however, were dashed in 1915 when the Wisconsin Supreme Court declared state land purchases to create forests was unconstitutional. Public opinion was with the court on this decision. Governor Emmanuel Phillip had voiced his objections to removing so much land from the tax rolls, preferring productive farms. He also felt reforestation was a federal responsibility. In addition, the nineteenth century

romantic notion of the rugged individual bringing the wilderness into productive use was still too strong and prevalent for a state mandated plan to return the cutover to its original pristine condition to challenge.

This anti-conservationist view was also fortified by the Country Life Movement of the early twentieth century, which tried to encourage the reversal of migration from rural to urban areas that had accelerated during this period. By the 1890s, the Director of the Census declared that the American frontier was closed. While scattered public lands were still available, there was no longer a frontier line between "civilization" and "wilderness" to keep alive the independent, pioneering spirit of the yeoman farmer. America was also undergoing rapid urbanization. This trend was noted as early as the 1870s census when farmers were no longer the majority of the nation's gainfully employed. By 1910, less than one-third of the United States' population was farmers. The causes for this historic shift were due to mechanization and greater efficiency of agriculture, the transportation revolution, and the expansion of industry. However, a loosely organized movement sprang up among Progressive reformers in land grant colleges, state and federal departments of agriculture, and among urban, educated middle class Protestants, who were alarmed at the migration from rural farms to cities. They believed in the yeoman ideal as the moral and economic backbone of the country. Not fully realizing the causes behind this movement, these reformers tried to persuade farmers to stay on the land by helping them realize the virtues of rural life over the corrupting influences of city life. In this climate of public opinion, many intellectuals believed the Wisconsin cutover had to be "redeemed" by the yeoman farmer from logging depredations. Family farms and tight-knit rural communities could redeem the region. Agricultural promotion and settlement of the cutover accelerated, and land values rose. [287]

It was the yeoman farmer who epitomized the cutover settler. They were family farmers, many of recent immigrant stock, who came with the expectation that hard work, family cooperation, and assisting neighbors would bring them an independent, if not a prosperous, life in rural America. While some immigrants came directly from the old country, many had first found jobs in factories, mines, or railroad work. They were attracted to the cutover by the prospect of becoming an independent farmer and enjoying rural community life. Many settled in communities of "their own kind." Scandinavians and Germans continued to settle in the North Country, but were now joined by Poles, Finns, and Latvians, as well as "Americans" from other regions of the country. Fishing and hunting opportunities also attracted many farmers from southern Wisconsin. [288]

Historian Robert Gough has argued, "that farmers coming to the cutover at the beginning of the twentieth century inherited this legacy of an unregulated, ill-informed, short-sighted, and loosely managed system of land distribution." [289] When farms began to fail in the 1920s, farmers began to blame lumber companies for their financial woes for charging too much for their land and profiting unfairly. The facts, however, do not support the populist complaint. Companies did profit from the sale of cutover land, but no fortunes were made. [290]

Settlers to the cutover were lured to the region by confidence in the current scientific knowledge of the time and trust in the honesty of land dealers and future market opportunities. These pioneers, however, came with few resources, and since they did not enjoy the benefit of squatters' rights and homestead laws, they started off with more debt and smaller farms than farmers in the lower St. Croix Valley. Upper St. Croix Farmers in the cutover would have fewer cushions to ward off blows from the failure of their soil, the weather, or the market than their counterparts down river. But by 1920, many cutover farmers had made a good showing for themselves. The U.S. Census for that year showed that land values in the cutover had increased to forty-seven percent of Wisconsin's average

and thirty-three percent of farm acreage here was improved. Burnett and Polk Counties counted impressive gains in land brought under cultivation and improvements made. [291]

Despite these gains, however, the cutover was a comparatively poor region in 1920. "A land of plenty?" wrote one Burnett County pioneer. "For starters there were forest fires, poverty, horse flies, diphtheria, pregnancy, open air toilets, and 'blood, sweat, and tears.'" [292] These smaller farms produced crops worth one-third less than the rest of the state. Part of the reason was due to the fact that many farms were still in the frontier stage of development. Some settlers were part-time farmers either by choice or economic necessity. These men worked periodically in the woods or in sawmills leaving little time for farm expansion. Some farmers were simply not interested in participating in a commercial agricultural market. They instead preferred the enjoyment of the natural environment and the outdoor life of hunting and fishing and farmed to support this lifestyle. Families were able to supplement their income from harvesting cranberries and blueberries. [293]

The farmers who did apply themselves to agriculture and participated in the commercial market, gradually turned toward dairying in part because of the climate, limitations on the soil, and because it required less capital outlays. Although it was more labor intensive, dairy products paid well. Bayfield County Finns and Danes led the development of cooperative creameries and cheese factories. Between 1910 and 1930, these sprang up throughout the cutover, and hay became the principal crop. [294]

Farmers had also been encouraged by the Board of Immigration to turn to dairying. In 1911, B.G. Packer, a lawyer and former secretary for the Farmers' Institutes, became the Board's secretary. Packer was responsible for changing the direction of the Board's purpose from simple recruitment of settlers to an advisor role to farmers. The Progressive Movement, which championed scientific solutions to social and economic problems, had a significant influence on the Immigration Board and the Agricultural School. Outside experts became increasingly interested in cutover farmers, who they patronizingly assumed needed their professional guidance to be successful farmers. "In doing so," Gough claims, "it laid the foundation for the public policies which would later discourage agricultural settlement in northern Wisconsin." [295]

Perceptions of cutover immigrants were also influenced by the "One-hundred Percent American" movement that sprang up from ethnic conflicts over the United States's siding with the Allied Powers rather than the Central Powers in World War I. The subsequent rise of the Red Scare led to a revival of the nativist movement in the 1920s. The Board of Immigration increasingly came to view some settlers as more desirable than others and some as more in need of assistance than others. African-Americans, who began their Great Migration to the North at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, were positively discouraged from settling in the cutover. Polish-Americans also came to be viewed as less than desirable by the state experts. They were described as drinkers and brawlers, infested with lice, and "helpless" when it came to farming. Immigrant churches, especially Catholic ones, were thought to hinder Americanization.

The Ku Klux Klan even spread its tentacles into the North Country. In 1924, the town of Luck in Polk County became host to a Klan den. Some people initially thought it was a social organization, — something the "dreary northern town" could use. They hoped the Klan might promote farm legislation or encourage its members to stop drinking or mistreating their wives. Its promotion of "American" standards and institutions, which meant Anglo-Protestant values, however, turned off many people in the area who were Catholic. Its white supremacy philosophy, hostility to bootlegging, and its fascist-like marches and salute also triggered public animosity. Hudson, River Falls, and Ellsworth became centers for anti-Klan resistance with support coming largely from the Catholic

Knights of Columbus and bootleggers. The Klan's presence in the area was short-lived, but it managed to create "a great deal of trouble between what had been good friends, families and neighbors," reported an old-time resident. Many people of the next generation agreed that, "It is best forgotten." [296]

The eugenics movement of period also colored outsiders' perceptions of cutover residents. Eugenists feared that isolated settlements of single ethnic groups would result in physically degenerate "hillbilly" people. These attitudes mingled with the growing perception that much of the land in the cutover was sub-marginal agricultural land. The Jeffersonian yeoman farmer ideal also took a beating in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Rural Americans began to be viewed as "backward, immoral, and increasingly dangerous." When an agricultural depression of the 1920s followed in the wake of the high-priced farm products of the World War I years, many farmers faced the prospect of failure. State and federal experts were ready to step in to prevent northern Wisconsin from turning into another Appalachia. [297]

In 1927, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture began taking new inventories of county lands. Their conclusion for the state's northern counties was less sanguine than reports earlier in the century. Bayfield County went from having sixty to 70 percent of its lands deemed suitable for agriculture in 1916 to seventy-five percent assessed as submarginal for agriculture. Recommendations were made that at least twenty percent of the land be reforested. Reforestation advocates, thereby, gained support for their crusade. [298]

In the 1920s, Prohibition also gave the cutover an unsavory reputation. During Prohibition many areas around the country, of course, ignored or even flaunted the Nineteenth Amendment. Northern Wisconsin residents were generally "wet" on the issue. Economic hard times also encouraged the making of moonshine from potatoes. Some people in Luck in Polk County reputedly made this a "sideline." The cutover's remoteness and frontier-like environment along with its cross-roads position between the Twin Cities, Chicago, and Canada made it an ideal hideout for Chicago bootleggers. Al Capone allegedly spent \$250,000 for a four-bedroom house equipped with machine-gun portals on Cranberry Lake in Sawyer County. In 1934, John Dillinger escaped to the cutover. His pursuit by the FBI and other law enforcement agents made national headlines, and helped create the image of northern Wisconsin as a lawless place.

The cutover's reputation was not helped either by stories published in Milwaukee newspapers that focused primarily on forest fires, hunting accidents, bear attacks, and any violent crime. The presence of unassimilated Native Americans along with the North Woods' reputation from the logging era as a haven for houses of prostitution also gave it an exotic and sinful place that needed reforming. However, the region unexpectedly got a reputation as an "upscale" vacation destination when Calvin Coolidge spent a ten-week summer vacation at Cedar Lake Lodge on the Brule River in Douglas County. Many elites became smitten by its "wilderness" ambience and thought it should become a resort location like New York's Adirondacks. [299]

For a variety of reasons then, settlers stopped coming to the cutover in the 1920s. The number of farms increased by less than three percent, and acreage only increased by a little more than four percent. When the Great Depression hit in the 1930s, farming in the cutover reached crisis proportions. While farm products declined throughout the state and even the nation, cutover farm products fetched a proportionally lower price for their goods. The sandy soil in the Pine Barrens produced grasses lacking in nutrition. Potato growing was also limited since the soil was too light and lacked the necessary plant foods. Dry summers turned into droughts for this sandy soiled region. Few farmers here practiced crop rotation or other means to improve pasturage. One observer described the cutover farms as,

"Cropped fields. . .where a few cattle. . .find scanty grazing, are. . .These poorly fed and poorly cared for herds are the basis of a dairy industry. . .The industry is, however, small-scale in character, with poor barns and equipment and meager returns." Geographer Raymond E. Murphy admitted that the farms were too scattered for creamery trucks to collect milk profitably and farms were too far from the creameries to make a daily run. Farmers, however, began to find a summer market for their dairy products in the growing resort industry. To supplement their incomes many farmers turned to fur farming of beaver, silver fox, and chinchilla rabbits, as well as gray and white rabbits for meat. Many also turned to commercial cranberry growing in the marshy, acidic soil that ran through the Pine Barrens. Local Indians harvested wild rice by hand to supplement the tables of sportsmen. [300]

When the remaining land in the cutover went unclaimed, the old stumps and brush became an even worse fire hazard. Tens of thousands of acres burned in the 1930s convincing many experts in the state that farming had not "redeemed" the land in the cutover. To add insult to injury cutover residents were also more likely to need relief than their counterparts elsewhere in the state, and relief rates there matched other depressed regions of the country like Appalachia and the Dust Bowl area of the Great Plains. This put tremendous pressure on county agencies that required more in taxes but faced declining property values and a declining tax base. Since the 1920s tax delinquencies had become increasingly common in the cutover. This only increased during the Depression. Many farmers who could not pay their taxes simply gave up. "Almost as numerous as the occupied farms are the abandoned, tumbled-down farmhouses surrounded by fields going to waste," wrote Wisconsin geographer Raymond Murphy in 1931. "Sometimes only a few stones and a patch of quack grass remain to mark the site of a former home, and to give the impression of poor land and unsuccessful farming." The Pitted Sand Plain in northern Burnett, northwestern Washburn, and southeastern Douglas counties displayed characteristic features of farm abandonment. The first phase, Murphy noted, was that of "One little shack out in grassy barrens. . .occupied by an old man who formerly grew corn and a few other crops." Fire had destroyed much of the humus in the soil and many farmers neglected to build it back up. "After a year or two of use the corn field 'got away' and now is a bare expanse of ripple-marked sand." Near the shack a few vegetables are still grown, but they hardly repay the effort, and the old, paralytic settler barely manages to exist." In the second stage homes were abandoned, windows were broken, and cleared land was overgrown with quack grass. The third stage is marked by decayed, tumbled down homes, and the growth of scrub oak and jack pine. Murphy found few orchards in the Pine Barrens since frost often struck any time of the year. He was also critical of local farming practices. "Instead of the use of scientific farm practices to combat handicaps of soil and climate, the common practice seems to consist of meeting declining yields by cutting down acreage until returns are not enough to pay the taxes on the land, and the county must take possession." [301]

What was particularly depressing about the Pine Barrens and the cutover in the early 1930s was the lack of young people and children. "The region is characteristically one of people past middle age — weatherworn old Scandinavians who came here with their wives and children many years ago," wrote a contemporary observer. "The children have grown up and gone. The Barrens does not hold its younger generation. No new settlers are moving in, and one gets the impression that when the present hardy survivors pass on there will be none to take their places." [302]

Despite these problems northern Wisconsin did not experience a net population loss in the 1930s. When the urban industrial economy collapsed, rumors circulated that subsistence farming was possible in the North Country. Many unemployed city workers joined the "back-to-the-land movement" that sprang up in the decade. Between 1935 and 1940 the population increased in the cutover as did the number of farms. Most of these new settlers,

however, "were not serious farmers. They saw themselves as temporarily eking out a semi-subsistence existence, squatting on or renting cheap land, or perhaps living on part of a relative's farm." Gough claimed that these "farmers" had "a negative effect on agricultural development in the cutover." They did not clear new land or raise crops for market. "The properties they left behind when they moved on contributed to the image of the region as filled with abandoned farms." [303]

Despite these problems in the cut over, it was also the industrious yeoman farmer who managed to survive these economic hard times. By relying on family labor, the frugal household economy of the farm wife, off-farm work, and catering to the growing tourist industry, many farm families made it. Some even managed to redeem tax delinquent land before foreclosure. Gough found in his study that the majority of land that actually experienced foreclosure in 1930 belonged to individual speculators and land companies. [304]

However, New Deal agricultural programs were the last nails in the coffin for many family farmers in the cutover and across America. Large commercial farmers were more able to take advantage of these programs than subsistence and marginal farmers. The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 aimed to raise farm prices through agreements to limit farm production. Farmers who had surplus acres and could still farm for the market as well as their families could participate in the program. The same held true for the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act of 1936. This act promoted conservation by encouraging farmers to remove land from cultivation. In sum, New Deal agricultural programs promoted the cash economy of commercial farming and undermined semi-subsistence farming. The Department of Agriculture also began to take the approach that lands that did not produce for the market were inefficient and unnecessary. These low-producing areas, it feared, would become another Appalachia if the surplus population not needed for commercial farming was not moved off the land. This view was reinforced by the migration of Kentuckians to northern Wisconsin. Through the 1930s Wisconsin underwent a series of relocation programs sponsored from federal, state, and county governments. This was a major reversal from the Jeffersonian ideal of the nineteenth century and the Country Life movement of the early part of the twentieth century. [305]

The Northern Wisconsin Settler Relocation Project, which began in 1934, specifically targeted the cutover. By 1940, when the Project ended \$500,000 of federal funds had been used to purchase between four to five hundred farms in seven cutover counties. These included Sawyer and Bayfield Counties where the Namekagon River begins its meandering descent into the St. Croix River. W.A. Rowlands and Dean Christenson of the Wisconsin College of Agriculture requested the money from the U.S. Department of Agriculture then headed by Henry A. Wallace. L.G. Sorden, from the Agricultural Extension of the University of Wisconsin in Madison, headed the project. He was convinced this was the best course of action for both the farm families as well as for the future land use of the cutover. "All the settlers whose farms were purchased," he claimed, "were living on submarginal land, which was either too light and sandy, too stony and rough, or so isolated from markets that they were definitely uneconomic farm units." He felt the relocation was a great benefit since, "as many as 80% of the families whose farms were purchased received public aid." They clearly were not prospering in the cutover. "On the average, \$2000 was paid per farm," Sorden reported. "These 'farms' ranged from a tar paper shack in the woods to a few quite well-developed farms." [306]

Of the families that relocated only 38 percent asked for new farms. They obtained financing from the Farm Security Administration. One-third decided to retire since they were too old to begin again elsewhere or take up a new line of work. The Wisconsin Rural Rehabilitation Corporation built "retirement homesteads" in northern Wisconsin for these

people complete with modern conveniences, a large garden, and even a small barn for milk cows. The county maintained these homes for a nominal fee. Others chose new occupations ranging from woodworking, to general laborers, to resort work, to mercantile businesses. The title to the lands they vacated was transferred to federal, state, or county governments for forestry uses. [307]

Sorden defended the relocation project in 1979 citing the fact that nearly all the families who were approached to relocate chose to do so. "When the project was explained and when the families were given time to think it over and talk it over with other people in whom they had confidence," explained Sorden, "98% of these families were willing to sell and relocate." Counties also benefited because "this isolated settler relocation project immediately made possible a saving in school costs of more than \$15,000 per annum by closing rural schools." Sorden noted. "In addition, several thousand dollars worth of school transportation cost was eliminated. Road costs were reduced by the elimination of maintenance and snow plowing. Relief costs were cut materially by placing many of these families in a position to make their own living." Sorden took great satisfaction in the role he played in this project, and was confident that these people were given renewed hope "by their removal from isolated areas to established communities where they and their families [had] a chance to start over again with a more secure financial and social future." [308]

Historian Robert Gough, however, has taken a rather different perspective on outside intervention into the cutover. While farming did survive in the cutover after 1940, these farms either were worked part-time as a hobby or became much larger operations. In the 1930s, farmers with good land were encouraged by state experts to expand their holdings and turn to dairying. Those who did not have the capital or were not interested in the labor-intensive work of dairying farmed in a different way than the yeoman family farmer of yore. They grazed horses for recreational riders. They grew Christmas trees, pumpkins, or ginseng, or became orchard farmers. Most depended upon income from off the farm, especially the "farm" wife. "The new economic plan for the cutover which deemphasized farming and stressed reforestation and tourism," Gough argues, "did not attract new residents to northern Wisconsin or enrich the ones who already lived there." In 1990, the Wisconsin counties with the lowest per capita income were all in the cutover. They included Burnett and Sawyer counties, as well as Forest, Iron, and Rusk. [309]

The reduction in farms and the changed nature of those that remained affected the social fabric of the cutover. "To those of us who helped clear a stump-farm from the cut-over, there is nostalgia for the events of those times," recalled one old-timer, "for the feeling of pride when another acre of clover was added, for the excitement of a burning pile of stumps, or for the alarm when a wild-fire swept across the nearest hill." [310] "No longer could the bonds of rural neighborhoods be fostered by school pageants and district business meetings in one-room schoolhouses," lamented Gough. "With school consolidation, the daily rhythm of life now centered more on urban places with schools. . .encouraging the expansion of urban and commercial attitudes into the countryside once dominated by the values of yeoman farming. . .For the people in the cutover committed to yeoman farming these were sad developments." [311]

Historians may be divided over the role played by the limitations of the cutover's environment in the region's failure to sustain family farms, but all agree that larger economic forces played an important role ending that dream. Settlers here began undercapitalized and with more debt than more "pure" homesteaders. They undertook the task of trying to transform the cutover into a farming community when new trends and economic realities were transforming America. Mechanized farming required fewer hands on the farm, but allowed for larger commercial farms. The agricultural slump of the 1920s and the Depression of the thirties made farming less viable for many family farms. The

consequences were that by 1920 the majority of Americans lived in urban areas, and this trend would continue unabated for the rest of the century. [\[312\]](#)

In the 1920s and especially during the New Deal years of the 1930s conservation, the forestry movement, and the budding tourism industry had gained in strength and momentum. The yeoman farmer was no longer the icon of American society. Preserving the nation's forests and other natural resources and encouraging a variety of people to enjoy the outdoor life grew in importance. The Upper St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers were prime areas for recreational development and reforestation, both working in concert together. Although the Lower St. Croix was a more established and prosperous dairy land, it too faced the expanding needs for recreation as well as the spread of suburbia from the Twin Cities. As farming faded in the valley a new vision of how to order the landscape was gradually winning acceptance. The myth of the yeoman farmer would yield to the myth of the "North Woods."

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St. Croix Riverway

Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix



CHAPTER 4:

Up North: The Development of Recreation in the St. Croix Valley (continued)

Tourism in the Ante-bellum Years

Although it was the glowing accounts of the St. Croix's abundant natural resources that enticed the first permanent settlers to the region, tourists also began venturing into the St. Croix Valley to enjoy its natural splendors in the first half of the nineteenth century. "It was the Mississippi and its steamboats that inaugurated the trade and spread the fame of Minnesota as a vacation land," wrote historian Theodore C. Blegen, "promising to the enterprising tourist the adventure of a journey to a remote frontier coupled with the enjoyment of picturesque scenery and of good fishing and hunting." The first steamboat tourist to Minnesota was an Italian named Giacomo Beltrami who made the trip in 1823. He found the scenery and towering bluffs comparable to the beauty of the Rhine River. [4]

When Henry Schoolcraft documented the St. Croix River in 1832 for the U.S. Government, the river truly joined the ranks of the picturesque rivers of the world. "Its banks are high and afford a series of picturesque views," he wrote. In 1837, Joseph N. Nicollet, a French expatriate, followed Schoolcraft's path exploring and mapping the Northwest Territories. He, too, was struck by Lake St. Croix's beauty. "The shores are rugged and steep, interrupted by lovely, sheltering coves," he related. "The shallows are plentiful. It is indeed a picturesque river." [5]

The first person, however, to recommend the Upper Mississippi Valley to tourists was George Catlin, a self-trained artist from Philadelphia. Catlin's ambition was to visually record North American Indians in their natural environment before they "vanished." In 1835 and 1836, he ventured into the Old Northwest Territory to record the Sioux Indians. Catlin was so enamored by the country that he encouraged a "Fashionable Tour" of a steamboat trip from St. Louis to the Falls of St. Anthony. He wrote:

This Tour would comprehend but a small part of the great, "Far West;" but it will furnish to the traveler a fair sample, and being a part of it which is now made so easily accessible to the world, and the only part of it to which *ladies* can have access, I would recommend to all who have time and inclination to devote to the enjoyment of so splendid a Tour, to wait not, but make it while the subject is new, and capable of producing the greatest degree of pleasure. [6]

Many adventuresome travelers responded to Catlin's recommendation and began to take fashionable tours of the Upper Mississippi River. In 1837, the widow of Alexander Hamilton, Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton, took the tour to Fort Snelling from the Falls of St. Anthony. She, of course, was given a royal welcome by the soldiers at the fort. When she returned to the East, she gave her stamp of approval for the "Fashionable Tour." It was, however, more the artists of the period who painted the Upper Mississippi Valley that

enticed crowds to come here. In 1839, John Rowson Smith and John Risley painted a panorama of the Upper Valley, with which they then toured the country. The panorama was invented in England by Robert Barker in the latter half of the eighteenth century. There were several huge canvases done of landscapes. To transport them the canvases were rolled up into scrolls. These scrolls were then presented to the public by unrolling them in order one at a time or by displaying them in their entirety as a cyclorama. In the summer of 1848 Henry Lewis painted a panorama of the Mississippi between St. Louis and Fort Snelling that included scenes of the St. Croix. Lewis's painting "Gorge of the St. Croix," the first steamboat landing in the Dalles, and "Cheever's Mill," the beginnings of St. Croix Falls, were twelve feet high and twelve hundred yards long. His completed work of the Mississippi from the Falls of St. Anthony to New Orleans took up 45,000 square feet of canvas. Within a decade at least eight to ten panoramas of the Upper Mississippi toured the country. [7]

Honeymooning couples, small parties, and even groups of a hundred or more, soon made traveling the Upper Mississippi River a popular pastime. Some even chartered their own boats to avoid the immigrant throngs and freight stops common on the usual steamboat runs up river. Tourists came from as far south as New Orleans, and when rail service reached the Mississippi from Chicago, Pittsburgh, New York, Boston, and even Europe. Artists and writers found the region inspiring and prominent politicians and journalists, such as Millard Fillmore and Thurlow Weed of New York, as well as other dignitaries made the Upper Mississippi an important stop on their travel itineraries. River towns made them feel like honored guests by welcoming them with gala receptions. It was the rare exception for a traveler up the Mississippi not to be struck by the beauty and grandeur of the scenery both by day and night, and to be fascinated by the first-hand glimpse of Indians in their traditional life. [8] "Indian Watching" was a unique attraction of a trip up the Upper Mississippi and St. Croix River and could be done in "safety." A Dubuque newspaper advertised the trip as a "convenient and certain" way to watch Indians living in their native world. [9]

During the summer of 1849, the travel writer Ephraim S. Seymour of New York State made his "Fashionable Steamboat Tour" of the Upper Mississippi River. He followed the usual path of tourists by starting in St. Louis. He made a stop in Galena and then traveled up river to Fort Snelling and the Falls of St. Anthony. Unlike other tourists who stayed on the Mississippi, Seymour ventured into the St. Croix Valley and set about collecting information on Indians and lumbering as well as describing in detail the scenery from the Willow River to St. Croix Falls. In 1850, he published *Sketches of Minnesota, the New England of the West*, which introduced the scenic splendor of St. Croix Valley to the American reading public. Seymour was also the first to promote the healthful benefits of the climate from ills such as ague, which plagued more southern climes, as well as consumption. In his book, Seymour related an encounter he had with an old friend from Galena whose health had been impaired by repeated attacks of cholera. The friend hoped a trip up river to Minnesota might restore his health. "A few days spent in sporting and fishing among the brooks, rivers, and lakes of this bracing climate," Seymour proclaimed, "had rendered him quite robust and healthy." And he advised that, "Such excursions might be recommended to many invalids, as far superior to quack medicines and expensive nostrums." [10]

During the 1840s northerners began to lure southerners away from the lower latitude resorts that they had patronized, such as the Virginia Springs and the Harrodsburg Springs of Kentucky. Some venturesome southern residents had also escaped from the oppressive heat of the South into the Hudson Valley and Niagara Falls. In 1842, Daniel Drake wrote *The Northern Lakes: A Summer Resort for Invalids of the South* that encouraged southerners to explore the Great Lakes region aboard ship. Drake claimed that by coming

north of the 44 degree line of latitude one could escape "the region of miasms, musquitos (sic), congestive fevers, liver diseases, jaundice, cholera morbus, dyspepsia, blue devil and duns!" The gentle rolling of the boat and cool lake breezes, he claimed, could cure hysteria and even hypochondria. But before the era of widespread rail linkups, the Great Lakes were not easily accessible to those in the South. However, the Upper Mississippi River's "Fashionable Tour" was an attractive alternative with all the same healthful benefits. [11]

By the 1850s, the St. Croix attracted its share of travel writers and artists. In 1852, Edward Sullivan published *Rambles and Scrambles in North and South America* that described his adventurous canoe trip down the Brule and St. Croix Rivers. And in 1853, Elizabeth F. Ellet traveled up the St. Croix in the comfort of a side-wheeler steamboat with thirty staterooms to "explore" the frontier. Her explorations resulted in the travelogue, *Summer Rambles in the West*, which eloquently described in picturesque terminology the scenery of the Dalles and the Lower St. Croix Valley. She wrote of the Dalles:

Within a short distance of the termination of our voyage, a scene presented itself which nothing on the Upper Mississippi can parallel. The stream enters a wild, narrow gorge, so deep and dark, that the declining sun is quite shut out; perpendicular walls of traprock, scarlet and chocolate-colored, and gray with the mass of centuries, rising from the water, are piled in savage grandeur on either side, to a height of from one hundred to two hundred feet above our heads, their craggy summits thinly covered with tall cedars and pines, which stand upright at intervals on their sides, adding to the wild and picturesque effect; the river hemmed in and overhung by the rocky masses, rushes impetuously downward, and roars in the caverns and its worn by the action of the chafed waters. These sheer and awful precipices, mirrored in the waters, are here broken into massive fragments, there stand in architectural regularity, like vast columns reared by art; or some gigantic buttress uplifts itself in front of the cliffs, like a ruined tower of primeval days. [12]

Through the 1850s and into the 1880s, the St. Croix attracted local artists well versed in the picturesque. Robert Sweeny was a St. Paul pharmacist turned artist. In 1858, the Minnesota Historical Society commissioned him to paint flowers, plants, and Indian artifacts. He then turned his attention to the St. Croix and painted in a documentary-like fashion the lumber mill sloughs at St. Croix Falls, the wood arch bridge over the river at Taylors Falls, and Indians coming ashore on Lake St. Croix, and the Dalles. His paintings and sketches depict the picturesque qualities of the wilderness. Augustus O. Moore followed Sweeny. His sketches aimed to show that in the St. Croix Valley man and nature could live harmoniously. Another artist of the St. Croix was Elijah E. Edwards who was principal of the Chisago Seminary, as well as clergyman, professor, and writer. Many of his painting and sketches were of the Dalles with an eye for light and romantic views, but they also included sketches of the other rivers and water falls in the valley. Many of these paintings and sketches can be found in the Minnesota Historical Society collection. [13] While these artists recorded and interpreted the St. Croix River, their influence only extended to the local region in attracting visitors.

By the mid-nineteenth century many towns along the river, such as Prescott, Hudson, Stillwater, Osceola, and Taylors Falls provided hotel accommodations for both new settlers and some venturesome tourists. Tourism in the St. Croix Valley got a boost from the Twin Cities when John P. Owens, the editor of the St. Paul *Minnesotan*, took an excursion on the steamboat, *Humbolt*, in 1853. "The little Humbolt is a great accommodation to the people of the St. Croix," he wrote. "She stops anywhere along the river to do any and all kinds of business that may offer, and will give passengers a longer ride, so far as *time* is concerned, for a dollar, than any other craft we ever traveled upon." The boat graciously stopped at

Marine Mills to allow its hungry travelers to lunch at the Marine House. Owen also stopped in Taylors Falls and made an assessment of this town's accommodations. "This Chisago House, is *better furnished*, and as well kept — barring the inconvenience of having no meat and vegetable market at hand — as any house in St. Paul, St. Anthony, or Stillwater," he wrote. "We never hated to leave a place so much in our life, when absent from home." [14]

By the mid-1850s, the St. Croix Valley had a good introduction to the traveling public. Minnesota, however, courted tourists more aggressively to its "Land of Ten Thousand Lakes" than did Wisconsin. Therefore, the valley remained off the beaten path for most tourists. As early as the 1850s Minnesota was determined to create recreational retreats that could rival eastern resorts, such as Saratoga Springs in New York State. Many hoped it would become the playground of the wealthy. Minnesota historian Theodore Blegen has written that tourism in Minnesota began with the establishment of journalism in the territory. "Every newspaper was a tourist bureau," he claimed. James M. Goodhue, the editor of the *Minnesota Pioneer*, was a leading booster of the recreational attractions of the territory. He made appeals to residents all along the Mississippi to escape the epidemics of cholera and malaria that plague southern climes for the healthy air and cool breezes of the North Country. "Hurry along through the valley of the Mississippi, its shores studded with towns. . . flying by islands, prairies, woodlands, bluffs — an ever varied scene of beauty, away up into the land of the wild Dakota, and of cascades and pine forests, and cooling breezes." [15] John W. Bond, the premiere pamphlet promoter for Minnesota, wrote in 1853 "we have springs equal to any in the world." Rather than lure easterners, however, the ease of travel up the Mississippi made the target audience southerners. "Gentlemen residing in New Orleans can come here by a quick and delightful conveyance," Bond explained, "and bring all that is necessary to make their living comfortable in the summer months, and a trifling expense. For a small sum of money they can purchase a few acres of land on the river and build summer cottages." Bond intended to promote the Falls of St. Anthony, which he believed would "rank with Saratoga, Newport, and the White Mountains in New Hampshire." [16] In 1854, Earl S. Goodrich, the editor of the *St. Paul Pioneer*, beckoned southerners to the cooler, more refreshing northern retreats with biblical allusions. "Miserable sun-burned denizens of the torrid zone," he wrote, "come to Minnesota all ye that are roasting and heavy laden and we will give you rest." [17]

Travel writing, art, and real estate promotion all blended together in the effort to highlight Minnesota. By the late 1850s, Minnesota's beautiful lakes and streams were painted by Edwin Whitefield. Whitefield had also done landscapes and residences in the Hudson River Valley and the Mississippi River. By 1856, his travels brought him to St. Paul. As an artist and newly established land speculator, Whitefield captured the beauty and promoted Minnesota lakes and land through his paintings. Within the next few decades many tourists left the fashionable river tours and explored a Minnesota where ghosts of Indians and explorers still lingered. [18]

Despite its scenic beauty, however, the St. Croix was primarily a working river. The only means of travel was by steamboat, and what boats plied its waters were not luxury crafts, but packets and freight boats carrying supplies, livestock, export items, and pioneer settlers. The St. Croix Boom north of Stillwater also hindered the free flow of river traffic, as did the seemingly endless stream of logs floating down river. By summer's end the log run was finished, but the warmer, drier season lowered the water levels and exposed sandbars and narrower channels making excursions more difficult, but not impossible. In August 1859, an excursion steamer disembarked from Stillwater with thirty-five to forty citizens aboard. The *Kate* picked up more passengers at Marine and Osceola bringing its number to nearly a hundred. For the occasion, the boat was decorated with banners and evergreens. Although it left early in the day, the steamer did not reach the Dalles until the following morning due

to "unavoidable detentions on account of the low stage of the water and heavy freight," and was hung up on bars. Apparently the passengers were not very put out by the long trip as the delay was "amply atoned for, in the privilege of passing through the 'Dell' just as the sun was peeping over the mountains and dispelling the most beautiful mist and spray from that most beautiful and romantic spot." [19]

Despite the problems for travel on the St. Croix, the towns along the water still enthusiastically planned for and promoted their attractions, hoping to cash in on tourists venturing into the Old Northwest. In 1857, the four-story Sawyer House was built in Stillwater. It was considered the largest and finest hotel in the Minnesota Territory. Its "spacious rooms for social events made it one of the outstanding hostelries in the development of Minnesota." [20] Summer cottages were planned for the shores of Lake St. Croix. "The day is not far distant," claimed *The Messenger*, "when nice cottages. . .will reflect their white and dancing shadows from the bosom of Lake St. Croix." In June 1857, the *St. Paul Advertiser* gave Marine a boost claiming, "to the invalid, the pleasure seeker, as well as the sportsman, no place affords more ample inducements for sojourn and recreation." [21] In 1859, Stillwater welcomed regional visitors to its Fourth of July festivities. The steamer *Itasca* brought visitors from St. Paul and other stops along the Mississippi. The passengers enjoyed the annual parade, a German Singing Society, and tumblers from the Turner Society. After a cold supper in the armory, the visitors enjoyed a ball at the Sawyer House until the whistle from the boat summoned them for their late night journey home. [22]

Slavery and the Civil War put a damper on tourism in the late 1850s and early 1860s. While outright abolitionism was not much of a force in Wisconsin or Minnesota, "Free Soil, Free Labor, and Free Men" was. In the summer of 1860, a Mississippi slave owner vacationing at the popular Winslow House in St. Anthony brought along a slave woman named Eliza Winston. Winston had apparently been promised her freedom, and once on free soil she gained the support of an abolitionist and petitioned the Minnesota court for her release from bondage. The court sided with her and granted her request with no challenge from her master. Anti-abolitionist sentiment, however, had been aroused whereby a mob proposed to send Winston back to her master and tar-and-feather the abolitionist who aided her. The Underground Railroad whisked her to Canada and the matter was legally ended. Hotel owners, however, feared the loss of southern tourists' patronage if they risked losing their slaves if they brought them along. The *Stillwater Democrat* warned that the "'intermeddling propensities of Abolition fanatics' would keep nearly a hundred of wealthy Southerners and the Negro servants from spending the summer along the shores of Lake St. Croix." But by the next spring the war had started and southern visitors stopped coming. [23]

While the Civil War brought a halt to the tourist trade, the local population found the river a delightful break from their daily toils. For many pioneers, a steamboat trip along the St. Croix was their first opportunity to view the panorama of the valley. "This was our first visit to the Upper St. Croix," wrote a member of an excursion party in 1859, "and we must admit that all our pre-conceived ideas of the beauty and grandeur of the Valley, fell far below the reality. To those fond of the wild and beautiful in Nature, we know of no place, East or West, where such a taste can be more fully gratified than in the vicinity of Taylor's Falls." [24] In August 1856, the editor of the *Prescott Transcript* rounded up a party to take a steamboat excursion trip up to Taylors Falls. "The weather was delightful," he reported, "the boat [was] provided by Capt. Martin and his obliging assistants with every possible accommodation, and all were in fine spirits. . .The scenery along the lake and river was observed with a pleasant interest by the party, to the most of whom it was new." The group was also intrigued "by the antics of some forty or fifty thousand big sturgeon that gave us a grand fancy dance around the boat as we passed along. . .They present one of the

most interesting piscatory sights imaginable." [25] The abundance of game along the river not only provided sustenance for the first pioneers, but also supplied the sportsman with a wide variety of birds, animals, and fish. From its earliest days of settlement sportsmen were also attracted to the St. Croix Valley. In his 1849 book, *Sketches of Minnesota*, Seymour wrote to his nationwide audience that the lower St. Croix Valley was "a fine country for sportsmen. . .Deer are killed here in great numbers. . .The bear and the large gray wolf are often seen. Wild geese and ducks resort here in great numbers...The best trout fishing in the northwest is said to be on the Rush River. They are caught in immense quantities, not only with hooks, but also with scoop-nets." Seymour also noted that the St. Croix had groves of trees "alive with pigeons, which were constantly rising from the ground in large flocks." The birds he referred to are the now extinct passenger pigeons that once crowded midwestern skies in the nineteenth century. [26] "The country surrounding our city is filled with game," boasted the *St. Croix Union* in 1854. "Not infrequently do we hear a sportsman relate the experience of deer shooting. . .or what sport they had in 'bagging' a drove of prairie chickens. Deer are so plentiful. . .Our hunters have become so well acquainted with the habits of this animal and so adept in the use of the rifle that it is a matter of no common occurrence to find their tables well supplied with venison. . .We have a great many streams filled with [trout], and it is fine sport for those who are disposed to engage in it." [27]

One unusual method to hunt deer was created by a Dutch hunter named Otto Neitge. In 1853, Neitge bought land in what is now Deer Park. Within five years he built a trap to catch deer with an eleven-foot palisade of posts. Deer could jump in but they could not get back out. Once a herd of one hundred became trapped inside the park, Neitge shot and slaughtered the annual increase, which he then sold in St. Paul and to Fort Snelling. Neitge also tried to do the same with bears, but they proved too troublesome. In 1874, the North Wisconsin railroad passed through Deer Park, and many people discovered Neitge's deer hunting secret. He developed a reputation as "a low, cowardly" sportsman who "shot, from between the poles of the stockade, many of the captive deer." This prompted Neitge to abandon this form of hunting, but his park lives on as a village name. [28]

In the 1850s, between Marine and Taylors Falls was an area valley residents called in the 1850s the "bear hunting ground." The innkeeper at the Marine Mills Hotel loved to serve this local delicacy to his visitors. From time to time a "General Bear Hunt" was organized out of Prescott for a two-day excursion for "all who desire to share in the sport." An amateur poet from Hudson enticed hunters with the following:

Come on then, ye sportsmen with high boots, rifle and blanket, and I will
shortly conduct you to the forests where my forefathers, as they chased the
swift elk and the huge black bear, would proudly exclaim,
No pent-up willow huts contain our powers,
But the unbounded wilderness is ours. [29]

Since winters were so cold and long, many hearty souls took to winter sports. In the winter of 1863, the *Stillwater Messenger* announced, "Members of the Skating Club and all others are invited to call and examine our stock of skates, skating caps, hoods, nubias, sontags, balmoral skirts, balmoral shoes, gloves, mitts, &c." [30] A year later the paper reported, "The warm days and cool nights we have had lately have made the skating good upon the lake, and large crowds are enjoying the sport during this pleasant weather." [31] Springtime brought out the baseball enthusiasts of the St. Croix Baseball Club. [32]

When the war was over, the St. Croix Valley returned to the national scene. Famed journalist Horace Greeley visited the St. Croix Valley in 1865. He was not only impressed by its wheat production, but also by its healthy climate, and recommended the area for

those plagued by ague and chronic coughs. The Stillwater *Messenger* quickly echoed these sentiments. The paper even joined in the exaggerations that often accompanied the literature written about the health benefits of the area. "Pine emits an odor peculiarly healing and highly beneficial for invalids, hence it is no uncommon thing for small parties to take up their quarters in the wilderness, and spend the winter there with numerous gangs of lumbermen." [33] Consumption suffers, in particular could find relief in the pineries of the upper St. Croix. A poem was even written about the health-giving pine trees:

For health comes sparkling in the stream
From Namekagon stealing;
There's iron in our northern winds,
Our pines are trees of healing. [34]

Health seekers from the South and East were also enticed back to the region after the war by handbooks, such as *Tourists' and Invalids' Complete Guide and Epitome of Travel*. [35] By the end of the 1870s southerners began to come to the St. Croix again in noticeable numbers. "Capt. Jack Reaney came up on the steamer Knapp Tuesday, and has been rusticated in the upper St. Croix Valley for a few days," wrote the *Burnett County Sentinel*. He informs us that the tourists from the south are coming up in large numbers, and many of them find their way to the St. Croix river." [36]

By the 1860s, a new medium was developed that was able to portray the unique scenery of the St. Croix to a wider audience -- the stereograph. Between the 1860s and 1880s making and selling stereographs of the St. Croix became a profitable business. The most noted photographers of the St. Croix in this period were William Illingworth, Charles A. Zimmerman, William Jacoby, and Benjamin Upton, and Joel E. Whitney. Whitney was the first major commercial photographer in Minnesota. While he began his business taking daguerreotypes of people, in the 1850s he brought his camera along on a twenty-five mile hike around St. Paul and St. Anthony taking eighty landscape pictures. By the 1860s, the demand for landscape photographs became the "bread and butter" of commercial photographers, and the St. Croix Valley was included in the search for these picturesque and sublime pictures. [37]

In 1875, John P. Doremus of Patterson, New Jersey began photographing the river as part of a "floating gallery" on a boat that was "a little palace itself." "He started out from St. Anthony over a year ago," related the *Lumberman*, "with the intention of taking views along the Mississippi and its tributaries down to New Orleans." The paper expressed appreciation for his carefully considered photos. "He takes it leisurely and does his work in fine shape, the views he has of the St. Croix being the best we have ever seen." The charms of the St. Croix were now visually documented to attract more tourists looking to escape the oppressive heat, humidity, and illness of the lower Mississippi. [38] The St. Croix Valley's fame spread further when in 1885 Eastman's roll film was developed. In 1900, Kodak's Brownie camera made photography easier and cheaper for visitors to the St. Croix to share their experiences with friends back home. [39]

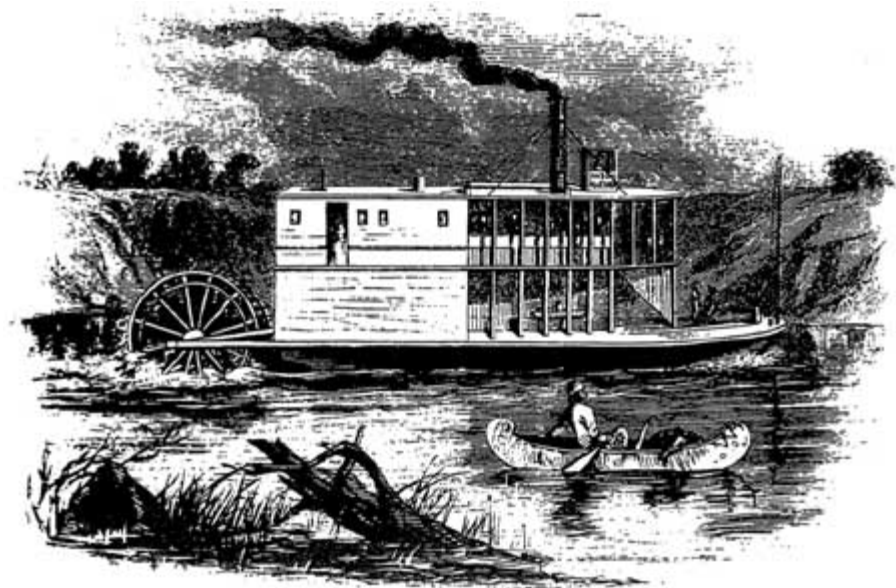


Figure 30. Steamboats provided tourists with easy access to the Upper Mississippi Valley and allowed tourism to begin as early as the 1830s and 1840s.

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St. Croix Riverway

Time and the River: A History of the Saint Croix



CHAPTER 4:

Up North: The Development of Recreation in the St. Croix Valley (continued)

Preserving the St. Croix River

President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal had a profound influence on reawakening popular interest in preservation and protection of the St. Croix River. Its culmination was in many respects the passage of the Wild and Scenic River Act by Congress on October 2, 1968 that designated the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers as National and Scenic Rivers. With so many tourists and sportsmen enjoying the St. Croix Valley issues of control over the river and its proper usage once again emerged. By the 1920s the Northern State Power Company had bought up extensive frontage on the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers. In 1928, the Power Company applied for a permit to build a dam on the St. Croix at Kettle Rapids. Sportsmen complained that the dam would flood some of the finest small mouth bass fishing areas on the river. The dam never materialized because engineers for NSP even questioned the feasibility of a large dam on the river. Innovations in coal-generated power plants prompted the NSP to let their permit elapse. However, the company owned 29,238 acres of land on the St. Croix River. Since it was such a large landowner on the river, the Northern States Power company could not help but be a factor in determining the future of the river. [\[217\]](#)

Back in the 1930s the Army Corp of Engineers aimed to revitalize the towns on the lower St. Croix by reviving a plan created in the Herbert Hoover years of dredging a nine-foot channel on the Mississippi. The plan required a series of locks and dams along the entire length of the river. The Corp was permitted to use relief funds to hire workers and finance construction contracts. In 1936, a dam was built at Red Wing on the Mississippi that backed up water on the St. Croix. Although conservationists, such as the Izaak Walton League, complained that the creation of a slackwater pool would harm wildlife, the economic distress of the times caused such objections to fall on deaf ears. By 1940, the Army Corp of Engineers' feat of turning the Mississippi River into a giant canal made the federal agency appear to be critical to the economic well being of river valleys and towns. Struggling farmers in Wisconsin and Minnesota appealed to the Corp district headquarters in St. Paul to turn the St. Croix River into a "Little TVA of the North" with a dam at Kettle River.

The Kettle River project united the interests of northern farmers, who wanted more electrical power for milking machines and the like with the Army Corp of Engineers who wanted more dams to control flooding down river. In 1945, a River and Harbors Act authorized a study of the St. Croix River basin. Among the proposals was rebuilding Nevers Dam to a height of forty-five feet. Damming the river would create a thirty-mile lake between Nevers Dam and Kettle River, and would create a reservoir from there to Danbury. The proposed project would affect seventy-five miles of the St. Croix River. [\[218\]](#)

The Northern States Power Company, conservationists, and townspeople on the river were determined to oppose the project. The motive of conservationists was obvious — to preserve wildlife habitat and fishing streams. Public opinion in the towns on the lower river were against the dam for fear of flooding and because so much work and money had already been spent on promoting tourism and in the Interstate Park and all along the river. The Northern States Power Company, however, had other interests in the fight. In the past they had cooperated with the federal government in conservation efforts and now felt they were being edged out by the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) program, a creation of the New Deal. The REA had done much to bring remote rural areas into the twentieth century by creating the means for farmers to purchase electric power cheaply. But if the REA were behind the Kettle River dam project, the Northern State Power Company would have a new competitor — the federal government. In 1947, after a long, bitter struggle dam permits were denied.

The Army Corp and farmers had failed to create a united effort. The sole aim of farmers was to create hydroelectric power, which was somewhat at odds with the goal of their allies, the Army Corps, whose aim was flood control and improved navigation. Because the proponents of the "Little TVA of the North" did not put forth a unified and concerted effort, the St. Croix River was spared during the 1940s and 1950 -- the age of unprecedented dam building in America. Even in 1953 the Federal Power Commission refused to grant the Wisconsin Hydroelectric Company a permit to build a twenty-five-foot dam on the Namekagon. The decision was based on the "unique" recreational features of the river. "The canoeist has the illusion of being in a forest primeval, far from civilization," wrote the presiding judge. The Namekagon case was a milestone in recognizing that energy development and the deep-rooted need for unspoiled recreation should be balanced. However, despite these efforts to maintain the natural setting of the river, by 1953, there were twenty-three dams and hydroelectric plants in the St. Croix Basin. The upper Namekagon had five small dams including electric generating stations at Trego and Hayward. [219]

In 1947, revitalized by these developments, the St. Croix River Improvement Association was renamed the St. Croix River Association. While water flow and channel depths remained on their agenda, the association expanded its concerns to include sewage disposal and river pollution, parks, roads, and bridges along the river, wildlife and fish propagation, pleasure boating. [220]

Thanks to local, state, and even federal efforts, by 1950 a series of state parks and wild life refuges were created in the St. Croix River Valley. The Interstate Parks were no longer the sole preserver of the river's scenic wonders and resources. The creation of recreational forests by the CCC encouraged the private sector to add to the preservation of the St. Croix for posterity. In 1945, Alice M. O'Brien donated to the state of Minnesota the 180 riverfront acres of land her father, William O'Brien, had owned north of Marine on St. Croix. Within two years the Minnesota state legislature officially established it as a state park. In 1951, Alice O'Brien donated an additional fifteen acres, and in 1958, S. David Greenberg donated a sixty-six acre island. Over the years the William O'Brien State Park has grown through personal gifts and through the efforts of the Minnesota Parks Foundation to 1343 acres. [221]

During this same period, the state of Wisconsin began to develop the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area in Burnett County, approximately one mile north of Grantsburg. The property contains 25,000 acres of restored wetlands. It was necessary to construct miles of dikes and a series of water-control structures to recreate a thriving marsh habitat. The marsh is home to several species of birds and animals, and is used by hunters and naturalists. The William O'Brien State Park and the Crex Meadows Wildlife Area have

contributed yet another dimension to the development of leisure activities, by offering bird watching, wildflower appreciation, naturalists talks, and walking tours. [222] Through the establishment of the St. Croix River State Park and the Carlos Avery Wildlife Area the state of Minnesota further expanded these opportunities.

The state of Wisconsin added to its forestland when it bought Soren Jensen Uhrenholdt's forestlands as a demonstration plot. Jensen's children donated more land as a memorial not only to Soren but to his wife and also a son and grandson who died in the armed services. On August 15, 1947, few months after his death, the Uhrenholdt Memorial Forest was dedicated in the town of Seeley "among the lofty pines he preserved," wrote his neighbor Eldon Marple, " — a fit tribute to a man of vision who had the courage and wisdom to carry out practices he knew to be right,. The tree did grow!" On May 6, 1969 a Nature Trail was dedicated to the public in Uhrenholdt's forest. [223]

Another example of local efforts to preserve the heritage and environment of the St. Croix-Namekagon River Valley was the revival of the old Portage Trail along the Namekagon River near Hayward, once used by Indians, fur traders, and explorers, as a hiking route. In 1965, a local society under the leadership of Lyman Williamson set its goal to preserve what was left of the trail. Thanks to an 1855 government land survey and some help from old time hunters and farmers, the group was able to locate sections of the old trail. Williamson laid out the route and obtained permission from property owners to make the improvements and allow hikers to use it. On May 22, 1966 the historic trail was reopened with the help of more than two hundred Boy Scouts of the Chippewa Valley Council and their leaders cleared out the logs, brush, and debris strewn on the path. Since most of the trail is on private property, however, permission is usually needed for groups to traverse it.

Despite all these efforts at preserving areas along the St. Croix River, it was not enough to protect the unique qualities of the river. By the mid-twentieth century the St. Croix River Valley began to take on a suburban quality, in part from the dramatic growth of communities on the river and due to its close proximity to Minneapolis and St. Paul.. The commuting time and the ease of travel between the Twin Cities and the St. Croix were drastically changed thanks to the automobile. Before long towns and resorts along the St. Croix, particularly Stillwater, functioned as virtual suburbs of the metropolitan area. The presence of commuters in the valley was also noticed in many communities. "With the end of the 1940s more and more city dwellers, having first come into the valley as summer renters," wrote James Taylor Dunn, "were establishing themselves in Marine as permanent residents, commuting to their jobs in Stillwater, St. Paul, and Minneapolis." The various parks and recreation areas attracted these newcomers, but at the same time a surge in residential population threatened to drastically alter the ambience of the area. [224]

In 1957, Theodore A. Norelius, editor of the *Chisago County Press* was the first to voice the opinion that the St. Croix's scenic and recreational features deserved national attention. The Northern States Power Company still owned extensive tracts of land along the St. Croix River. For years it had graciously allowed sportsmen access to the game and fish on their land. Norelius, however, feared that in an era when nuclear power seemed to be the future of electrical energy, the utility might be tempted to sell its lands to real estate developers who would subdivide the land for cottages. "If Mr. Public has a place or places to play in the future," he asserted, "now is the time to consolidate all efforts here in the upper Midwest and ask for a gigantic St. Croix Federal Park, perhaps named the 'River of Pioneers National Park.'" Only in this way, he argued, could sportsmen avoid signs stating "Private" and "No Trespassing." "This is your land," Norelius wrote, "protect it and preserve it for all posterity." [225] Through a bit of luck Norelius's editorials received the attention of the National Parks Service when U.E. Hella, director of the Minnesota State Park System passed it along to Howard Baker, director of the Omaha office. Norelius won

the support of Minnesota Senator Hubert H. Humphrey, but state and federal agencies did not make the St. Croix a park proposal priority.

All this began to change, however, as public concern for environmental protection grew. In his influential books, *The Singing Wilderness* (1956) and *The Listening Point* 1958, Sigurd Olson drew attention to the threats against the environment. He argued that the unique values and beauty of the North Country were very fragile and threatened by development. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, created a national sensation by her convincing arguments about the devastating harm caused by pesticides on wildlife. As the 1960s became an activist decade the environmental movement enjoyed a revival of public interest and support not seen since the Progressive Era's conservation movement. Along with these noteworthy books was the 1959 National Park Service report, *Our Fourth Shore: Great Lakes Shoreline Recreation Area Survey*. This work helped bring the National Park Service into the Great Lakes region. While it did not specifically target the St. Croix River Valley, the river would never have received the attention it later did without it. [226]

On September 3, 1964 the U.S. Congress passed the Wilderness Act. This marked another significant shift in American attitudes towards nature and the outdoors. This act required federal agencies to identify and preserve areas as part of a national wilderness preservation system. Along with other criteria, these basically included regions unspoiled and uninhabited by humans. The aesthetic and spiritual qualities of nature were once again valued for their own sakes, but this time they were perceived as benefiting the public good. Emphasis turned from parceling natural resources as commodities to a more holistic approach based on ecological values that ultimately would benefit everyone. [227]

This modern view of environmentalism was clearly evident along the St. Croix during the 1960s. Concerns about pollution of the river, injury to its native species, and over-development of adjacent lands, led to calls for its protection. The Saint Croix River Association rose to challenge the Northern States Power Company (NSP), which proposed the construction of two new power plants near Oak Park Heights and Bayport, Minnesota, just south of Stillwater. Although only successful in stopping the building of one of the generating stations, the power plant project awakened the people of the St. Croix to a broader environmental cause — protecting the river's ecosystem. [228]

Although much time, effort, and political wrangling went into it, by September 12, 1968 the House of Representatives passed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act with a vote of 265 to 7. On October 2 the Senate was on board with the House bill, and in the closing days of Lyndon Johnson's administration the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was signed giving the St. Croix and Namekagon River from St. Croix Falls up to Gordon, Wisconsin national distinction as a protected area. Making the park a reality, however, also required a new approach to park management. The type of park the St. Croix would become was unprecedented. It not only faced the problems of dealing with extensive private ownership issues along its extensive banks, but the legislation that created the park did not give the National Parks Service final authority. That authority was to be shared by private, county, state, and federal agencies. The National Park Service's administration of the river was haunted by the legacy of divided authority that had long plagued the St. Croix Valley. The concept of a park the length of the upper river ran counter to deep rooted traditions, from the Anglo-American custom of using rivers as boundaries to the 1785 Land Ordinance's imposition of a grid system of property ownership along the rivers, and perhaps most strikingly, to the National Park Service's power of condemnation that flew in the face of what some owners of river lands regarded as their American right to private property. It would take several decades of conflict, court cases, and interagency cooperation before the riverway park concept could be fully realized. [229]

In 1970, the St. Croix Valley got another boost to protect it as a wild and scenic river when the St. Croix River State Forest was established. The forest was the culmination of agreements made between the Department of the Interior, Northern States Power Company, and the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota. It is a narrow stretch of land on either side of the river reaching from Nevers Dam Site in Polk County to Danbury in Burnett County. Its purpose was to create a buffer zone along the river corridor and provide more recreational options for the public. The land had belonged to the Northern States Power Company. The National Parks Service facilitated the donation of 4600 acres to the State of Minnesota. Additional contributions to the cooperative river-park concept included the opening of Wild River State Park. By 1978, Wild River State Park opened to the public, relieving the overcrowding of hikers and campers in William O'Brien State Park. In 1982 the Afton State Park joined the St. Croix parks system with "1684 acres of steep bluffs, deep wooded ravines, broad rolling fields, and some impressively sweeping views." Chester S. Wilson, who had served as Minnesota's commissioner of conservation, conceived the idea for this park. As recreation boomed and visitors flocked to the available water sites along the river, Wilson felt that the Afton area was one of the last remaining scenic spots for a state park on the Minnesota side of the St. Croix. In 1967, he asked the Minnesota Parks Foundation for assistance in obtaining the key tract of land at the mouth of Trout Brook until the Minnesota legislature could authorize a state park. Through the work of foundation members, enough money was raised from individuals, corporations, and foundations to buy the necessary land. In 1969, the Minnesota legislature passed a bill authorizing the Afton State Park, and the Minnesota Parks Foundation turned over its land to the state. The park, however, had no public facilities and did not welcome visitors for twelve years. By 1981, the Department of Natural Resources finally opened the gates to this latest addition to the St. Croix River system. During the 1980s, the state of Wisconsin established Kinnickinnic State Park across the river from Afton. [230]

In July 1997, *National Geographic* commented on the changing face of the valley. "Today the St. Croix is an asset for its own sake," wrote David S. Boyer, "no longer for its wild rice or furs or timber, nor for other purposes of man's pocketbook, but now for his silence and his soul." [231]

But silence was becoming increasingly rare on the lower St. Croix River. During the late 1960s and early 1970s the sprawl of the Twin Cities metropolitan areas began to lap against the banks of the St. Croix. Scores of new bedroom communities arose to provide a status address and a high quality of life for doctors, lawyers, airline pilots, 3M managers, and corporate executives. [232] Recreational boat traffic on the lower river exploded during the 1960s, particularly on summer weekends. The National Scenic Riverway played no role in protecting the river downstream from Taylors Falls because it had not been included in the 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson bitterly regretted the last minute deletion of the lower river from the original bill and in 1971 he introduced into the Senate a new bill to create a Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. Concern over cost and administration made the National Park Service less than enthusiastic about the proposal. But development pressures on the lower river were desperately needed to be brought under control. At the time Nelson's bill was announced plans were underway to construct a series of high rise condominium towers at Hudson. Development along the St. Croix was moving forward so fast that many people felt a new river bill could not be passed soon enough to be of any good. Yet, in what Minnesota Governor Albert Quie accurately described as a "legislative miracle" Nelson's bill was approved by the Congress in October, 1972. [233]

The Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway differed considerably with the legislative mandate for the management of the upper river. The lion's share of the agency's responsibility on the lower river was to cooperate with local government's to manage

traffic on the river and control development along its banks. As a result the National Park Service took much less of an ownership role on the lower river. This proved to be more challenging than traditional park management. It also was very expensive as the park service devoted considerable sums to a program to purchase easements on riverfront property in an effort to freeze development at existing levels. National Park Service managers were forced to become involved with numerous local issues from zoning rules to marina construction and bridge building. [234]

The Lower St. Croix National Scenic Riverway helped to create a forum by which suburban sprawl could be checked along the river. Still it was up to each municipality along the river to embrace or reject the partnership opportunities the new park offered. Emblematic of the way many river towns responded was the experience of Stillwater. Rather than be swallowed up in the Twin Cities' commuter world, Stillwater sought to retain its historic charm and identity, as well as cater to tourists. By the mid-1970s the town began an ambitious restoration program. The buildings and homes from the era of the lumber barons and jacks were painstakingly restored and renovated into shops, restaurants, and museums. "This combination of natural and mad-made attractions, plus some carefully orchestrated festivals," wrote the *Pioneer Press*, "have created in Stillwater an increase in tourism unlike most other towns in the state." Its fifty-year old Lowell Inn continues its tradition of fine dining and accommodations. Picnickers now enjoyed the spot where the old Stillwater boom collected its logs. Its annual "Lumberjack Days" and revived steamboat excursions celebrate its yester years for residents and visitors. "The 'birth place of Minnesota' now is experiencing a robust rebirth of its own." [235]

The growth of recreation in the Upper St. Croix and Namekagon region is illustrated by a 1976 census of Yellow Lake. In that year the village reported a year-round population of only ten, but a summer census revealed hundreds of people made it their summer home. The largest resorts in the 1970s were Log Cabin Hollow, Lucky Strike Resort, Carl Peterson, Birch Grove, Al Anderson, Pursel's Resort, Atlasta Resort, Larry Hanson, Yellow Lake Lodge, Norway Slope, and Ray Pardun. Yellow Lake even had its own resort owners association. "We have wonderful summers and autumns," wrote one resident, "and tourists from all over the U.S. and Canada are with us then." In the early part of the twentieth century Burnett County was described as the poorest county in the state and that Webb Lake was the poorest town in the county. However, by the 1970s most of its lakeshore lots had been sold and new summer homes as well as year-round homes for retirees from the Twin Cities were built. [236] Winter sports enthusiasts made recreation a year round activity. Cross-country skiers, snowmobilers, sledders, and skaters joined their nineteenth century counterparts who found the weather brisk and exhilarating.

In 1993, the well-entrenched tourist industry along the upper river prompted the Department of Natural Resources in Wisconsin to begin the Northern Initiatives Project for northern Wisconsin. This project was the result of an internal review of the DNR that revealed that the agency played a greater role in the economic well being of the northern half of the state than in the south. Decisions made by the DNR relating to deer permits, fishing bag limits, and the like had a profound impact on which areas tourists chose for their vacation destination. The DNR invited the residents of northern Wisconsin to share in the decision-making of how to manage the state's natural resources. The Initiative concluded that northern Wisconsin had successfully transformed itself into:

a unique and distinguishable regional entity. . .with its reputation for clean air, water, healthy forests and abundant public opportunities. It is a place where sound science shapes environmental policy, guides sustainable management and ensures expenditures that yield commensurate environmental benefits. The North has a viable and diverse economy that is compatible with its ecological

and social values. It is a place where residents and visitors can live, work and play in harmony and safety. [\[237\]](#)

At the dawn of another century and millennium, the recreational experience along the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway is perhaps more structured than at any time in its history. State and federal park units have imprinted the landscape with standardized signage, trails, structures, and campgrounds. Private concession operators supplement these public resources with additional recreational facilities and tourist amenities. Developed areas have been "returned" to their "natural" states in an attempt to enhance the Riverway's "wild" and "scenic" character. [\[238\]](#)

The St. Croix is not a wild river, but Congress has designated it a scenic river and its scenic qualities constitute its principle economic asset. That asset is today managed with a rigor that would have been unimaginable to the American Fur Company and which would astonish even an organizational genius like Frederick Weyerhauser. But it is useful to recall that the valley has long been managed by its human population, from the family hunting zones established by the Chippewa to the 160-acre farms that sprang from federal homestead law and immigrant dreams. Our management reflects our desires and our values. Over time from furs, to lumber, to wheat, to dairy, to scenery we have varied how we manage the valley based upon our economic needs. The Bible says the "Earth abides," and history teaches us that people change. The landscape of the beautiful St. Croix is a product of abiding, persistent nature and the restless, changeable human societies that have called the valley home. The St. Croix is what we have made it and it will be what we dream it to become.

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