

1995 Project Abstract

For the Period Ending June 30, 1997

This project was supported by the Minnesota Future Resources Fund

*Lac qui Parle Historical Mission Trail*  
**Title:** ~~Minnesota Heritage Trails, C39~~  
**Project Manager:** Rachel Tooker  
**Organization:** Minnesota Historical Society  
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St. Paul, MN 55102-1906  
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**Legal Citation:** ML 1995, Chp.220, Sec.19, Subd. 12(g)  
**Appropriation Amount:** \$181,000

Statement of Objectives

A new trail will be built to better interpret the historical and natural resources of the area. This will be facilitated by a scenic overlook above the lake and Fort Renville. Through the use of interpretive signs, visitors will learn more about the historical and natural resources of the area while they take advantage of the new recreational opportunities.

Overall Project Results

One mile of trail and an wooden deck overlook were built at the site. The trail has four signs to provide orientation and to allow visitors to explore the natural history of the site. Nearly every visitor will benefit from this expanded offering. Official attendance at Lac qui Parle was 1,510 last fiscal year, but it is only staffed on a limited basis for two months each year. Actual traffic past the site is much higher, and the new trail is expected to attract more traffic through the area, and we hope that they will stop and explore the trails system.

Project Results Use and Dissemination

See attached photographs and drawings of some examples of the finished trails

November 1, 1997  
LCMR Final Work Program Update Report  
LCMR Work Program 1995

I. Project Title and Project Number: Lac qui Parle Mission  
Historical Trail

Program Manager: Rachel Tooker  
Agency Affiliation: MN Historical Society  
Address: 345 Kellogg Blvd West  
St. Paul, MN 55102-1906  
Phone: (612) 297-7451  
Fax: (612) 297-3343

- A. Legal Citation: ML 95, Chp.220, Sec.19, Subd.12(g).  
Total Biennial LCMR appropriation: \$181,000  
Balance: \$50,000 encumbered; \$131,000 liquidated

Appropriation Language:

This appropriation is from the future resources fund to the Minnesota historical society to construct a mile-long trail for hiking and biking, including an overlook at the site of the historic Lac qui Parle Mission. The trail must be accessible by persons with disabilities.

- B. Status of Match Requirement: N/A

II. Project Summary:

This project will construct a mile-long trail along the east side of County Road 32 in the right-of-way, beginning near the Lac qui Parle Mission. Use of the right-of-way eliminates a number of challenges to the project. The need for multiple easements will be reduced to an optional spur on the trail, and the proposed path will cause the least amount of disruption to the surrounding State Wildlife Refuge. Furthermore, this route offers the least number of grade changes, making it easier to meet ADA requirements. The trail will start at the Lac qui Parle Mission and go north along the east side of the road. Near the site of Fort Renville, a spur

will go up to the cottonwood tree (a Chippewa County Historical Society historic site) on the east side of the road, and the main trail will cross the road to meet the new overlook. From the overlook, the trail proceeds along the west side of the road to an existing observation area (see attached map). The trail will be approximately 12 feet wide, and meet ADA standards. Signs will be installed along the trail as appropriate.

III. Final Work Program Update Summary:

This project was a late addition to the LCMR appropriation for 1995, so the first year was spent doing preliminary investigative work. In July 1995 the LCMR approved work on Activities A.1 and A.2. On April 24, the LCMR approved the current version of the workprogram in full. Continued planning work commenced at that point.

The site terrain posed many difficulties. It was finally agreed upon to build the trail on both sides of the highway, using the right-of-way. Northbound trail traffic is on the east side of the road, and southbound trail traffic is on the west side. A special feature of the trail is a wood deck overlook near the Fort Renville site. Construction documents were prepared in late 1996, and work on the trail will began in spring 1997. By mid summer 1997 the trail was complete and the interpretive markers were installed.

IV. Statement of Objectives:

A. Lac qui Parle Mission Historical Trail

A new trail will be built to better interpret the historical and natural resources of the area. This will be facilitated by a scenic overlook above the lake and Fort Renville.

Timeline for Completion of Objective:

Objective A: Lac qui Parle Mission Historical Trail

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
Surveying	xxxxxxxx				
Design			xxxxxxxx		
Construction			xxxxxxxx		

V. Objectives/Outcome

A. Title of Objective/Outcome: Lac qui Parle Mission Historical Trail

A.1. Activity: Property Line and Trail Survey

A.1.a. Context within the project: Survey work must be done to determine the exact route that the trail will follow. The survey of the property lines will tell us if any easements are necessary.

A.1.b. Methods: The survey will analyze the topography and natural resources of the site to determine the most appropriate and least intrusive path for the trail to follow.

A.1.c. Materials: N/A

A.1.d. Budget

Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$2,500  
LCMR Balance: \$0 Liquidated: \$ 2,500  
Match: N/A  
Match Balance: N/A

A.1.e. Timeline

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
Product:					
Survey Documents			xxxxxxx		

A.1.f. Workprogram Update: Thomas Ellig did extensive work with existing maps and affected individuals and organizations to determine possible trail routes. Since all work was done by MHS staff, no costs were charged to LCMR.

The only potential need for an easement was the proposed spur to the Chippewa County Historical Society site. This is the only part of the proposed trail route that is on

private land. After weighing the costs of this spur, we decided to eliminate this option.

The revised trail plan created an area that needed professional property line surveying. This work was completed in conjunction with the preparation of construction documents.

A.2. Activity: Archaeology Survey

A.2.a. Context within the project: This survey is necessary to determine if the proposed trail will adversely affect any archaeological resources. The survey may also lead to more information about the site that can be incorporated into the interpretive signs.

A.2.b. Methods: The survey will build upon archaeological work done for the site's master plan in 1978. The final costs of this activity will be higher if mitigation is necessary. In that event, the budget for trail construction (A.4.) will be reduced.

A.2.c. Materials: N/A

A.2.d. Budget

Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$7,500  
LCMR Balance: \$7,500  
Match: N/A  
Match Balance: N/A

A.2.e. Timeline

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
Product:					
Archaeological		Survey Report		xxxxxxxxxxxxx	

A.2.f. Workprogram Update: Archaeological consultation was done with MHS staff, so no costs were charged to LCMR. Using the right-of-way of County Road 32 avoided the need

for archaeological mitigation. The funds designated for archaeology were used to cover construction cost overruns.

A.3. Activity: Trail and Overlook Design

A.3.a. Context within the project: Detailed plans and construction documents are necessary to properly build the trail.

A.3.b. Methods: MHS will contract with a landscape architect to prepare construction documents for the trail, interpretive signs, and the overlook.

A.3.c. Materials: N/A

A.3.d. Budget  
Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$21,200  
LCMR Balance: Liquidated \$ 21,200  
Match: N/A  
Match Balance: N/A

A.3.e. Timeline

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
Product:					
Construction Documents			xxxxxxx		

A.3.f. Workprogram Update: Building on our experience with the Minnesota Heritage Trails project, we contracted with the firm Sanders, Wacker, Wehrman and Bergly to prepare construction documents for this trail. Construction documents were prepared for the spring 1997 construction season.

A.4. Activity: Trail Construction

A.4.a. Context within the project: This activity is the core of the project itself. It will improve access to the historic area and its

surrounding natural areas, allowing a wider range of visitors to experience and learn from the site.

A.4.b. Methods: The trail will meet ADA standards. The main trail will be bituminous, but the spur will probably be crushed gravel. The trail will be constructed to accommodate visitors on foot, bicycle, wheelchair, etc.

A.4.c. Materials: N/A

A.4.d. Budget  
Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$127,300  
LCMR Balance: -\$13,200 Liquidated: \$ 90,500  
Match: N/A Encumbered: \$ 50,000  
Match Balance: N/A

A.4.e. Timeline

	7/95	1/96	6/96	1/97	6/97
Product:					
1 mile of trail, 12' wide			xxxxxxx		
3 wooden bridges					xxxxxxx
Spur trail to tree site					xxxxxxx
Trail upgrade at Mission site					xxxxxxx

A.4.f. Workprogram Update:  
Construction of 1 mile of trail was completed in early 1997. This involved a aglime trail leading to and from the mission site, and an asphalt trail on the shoulder of each side of the highway. Attached are photographs of the two trail types.

A.5. Activity: Overlook Construction

A.5.a. Context within the project: This part of the project will allow visitors to the trail to rest and view the surrounding landscape and wildlife from an elevated area.

A.5.b. Methods: The proposed site for the overlook is just south of the Fort Renville area. This has a small clearing in the trees for viewing of the lake, overlooks a goose gathering area, and will allow construction with minimal intrusions on the landscape. The landscape architects will produce specifications for how the overlook is to be built.

A.5.c. Materials: N/A

A.5.d. Budget

Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$9,500

LCMR Balance: Liquidated: \$9,500

Match: N/A

Match Balance: N/A

A.5.e. Timeline:

7/95 1/96 6/96 1/97 6/97

Product:

Overlook Structure xxxxxxxxxx

A.5.f. Workprogram Update:

The overlook was built in conjunction with the trail.

Attached is a photograph of the overlook.

A.6. Activity: Interpretive Signs

A.6.a. Context within the project: These will be an integral part of the trail, enabling visitors to learn about the surrounding environment through self-guided tours. The site is unstaffed, so this is the primary means that visitors have to learn the story of the area.

A.6.b. Methods: Small signs and markers will be created to highlight specific features and further allow visitors to understand how the different areas of the site relate to one another.

A.6.c. Materials: N/A

A.6.d. Budget

Total Biennial LCMR Budget: \$13,000

LCMR Balance: Liquidated: \$ 7,300

Match: N/A

Match Balance:

A.6.e. Timeline:

7/95 1/96 6/96 1/97 6/97

Product:

Interpretive Signs xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

A.6.f. Workprogram Update:

MHS staff who developed interpretive materials for the Minnesota Heritage Trails Project did the same for this trail. Many expenses were staff only (non-LCMR).

Production of the signs was completed as planned with the other trail signs, and the signs were installed at Lac qui Parle at the end of the summer.

## VI. Evaluation

Visitor surveys will be undertaken to determine whether the learning objectives have been met. Visitors should gain a broader understanding of the historic site and its surroundings, and understand the connection between the human history on the site and the natural features.

VII. Context within field: Increasingly, visitors are asking for a recreational experience to complement their historic site visit. Walking and biking trails are one way to do this. By preserving and interpreting the natural environment that surrounds the historic site, we can offer visitors a new dimension to their site visit.

Through its historic sites, the Minnesota Historical Society constantly plans new and innovative ways to interpret sites and expand programs. One important trend is recognition of the environment in shaping human history. These trail systems will give visitors the opportunity to understand how people from the past interacted with and changed their environment. The trail will give visitors an understanding of human interaction with the

environment that covers a span of time from pre-European contact to the present day.

VIII. Budget Context:

IX. Dissemination:

The trail will be announced via public media outlets to the local community, who will have opportunities to participate in the planning process. Designs will be documented in written specifications and all projects will be publicly bid. Information regarding the design of the trail and related interpretation will be shared with peers in both natural and cultural history interpretation. Press announcements will be developed to market the trail.

X. Time: The project will be completed by the end of F.Y. 1997.

XI. Cooperation:

The program manager will spend approximately 5% of her time on this project in conjunction with the Heritage Trails project, Subd. 12(d). This will be matched with approximately 5-8% of time provided by Thomas Ellig, the Southern District Manager (also in conjunction with Heritage Trails project).

XII. Reporting Requirements:

Semiannual six-month workprogram update reports will be submitted not later than January 1, 1996, July 1, 1996, January 1, 1997, and a final six-month workprogram update and final report by June 30, 1997.

XIII. Required Attachment:

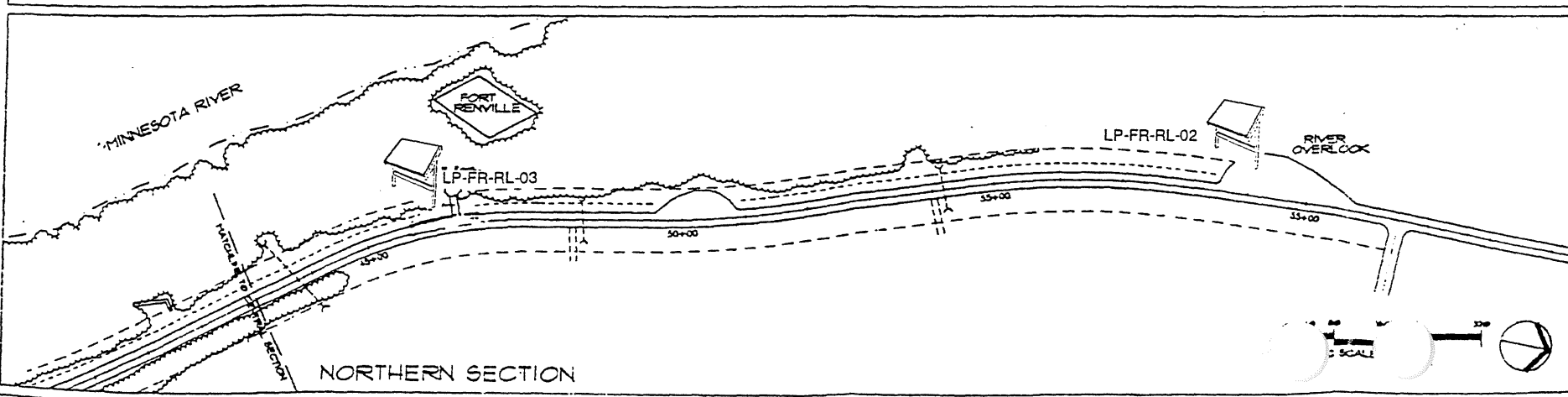
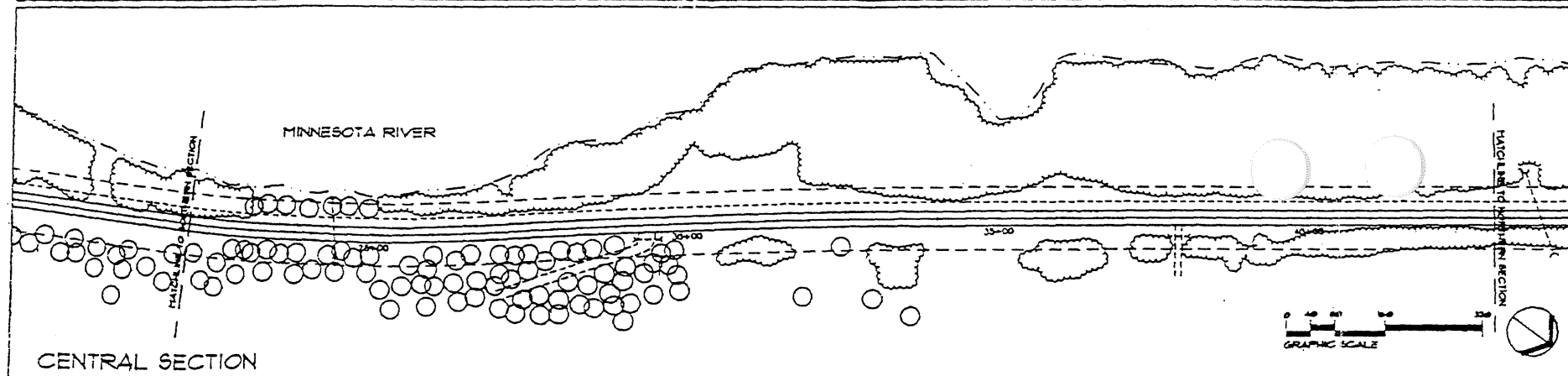
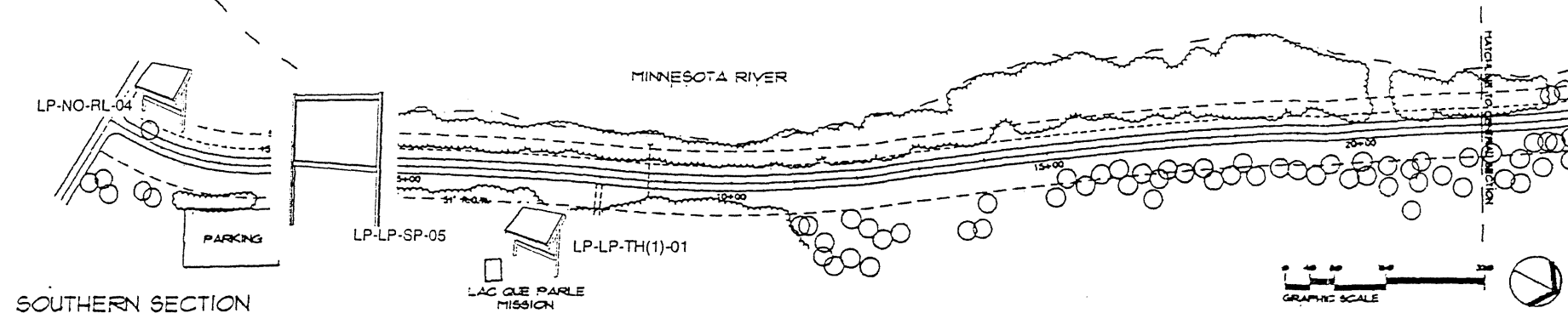
1. Qualifications: See attached (June 8, 1995 Workprogram).
2. Project Staffing Summary: See attached (June 8, 1995 Workprogram).

# Lac Que Parle Mission Trail

## Totals

1 Parking Lot special

4 rails/trailhead

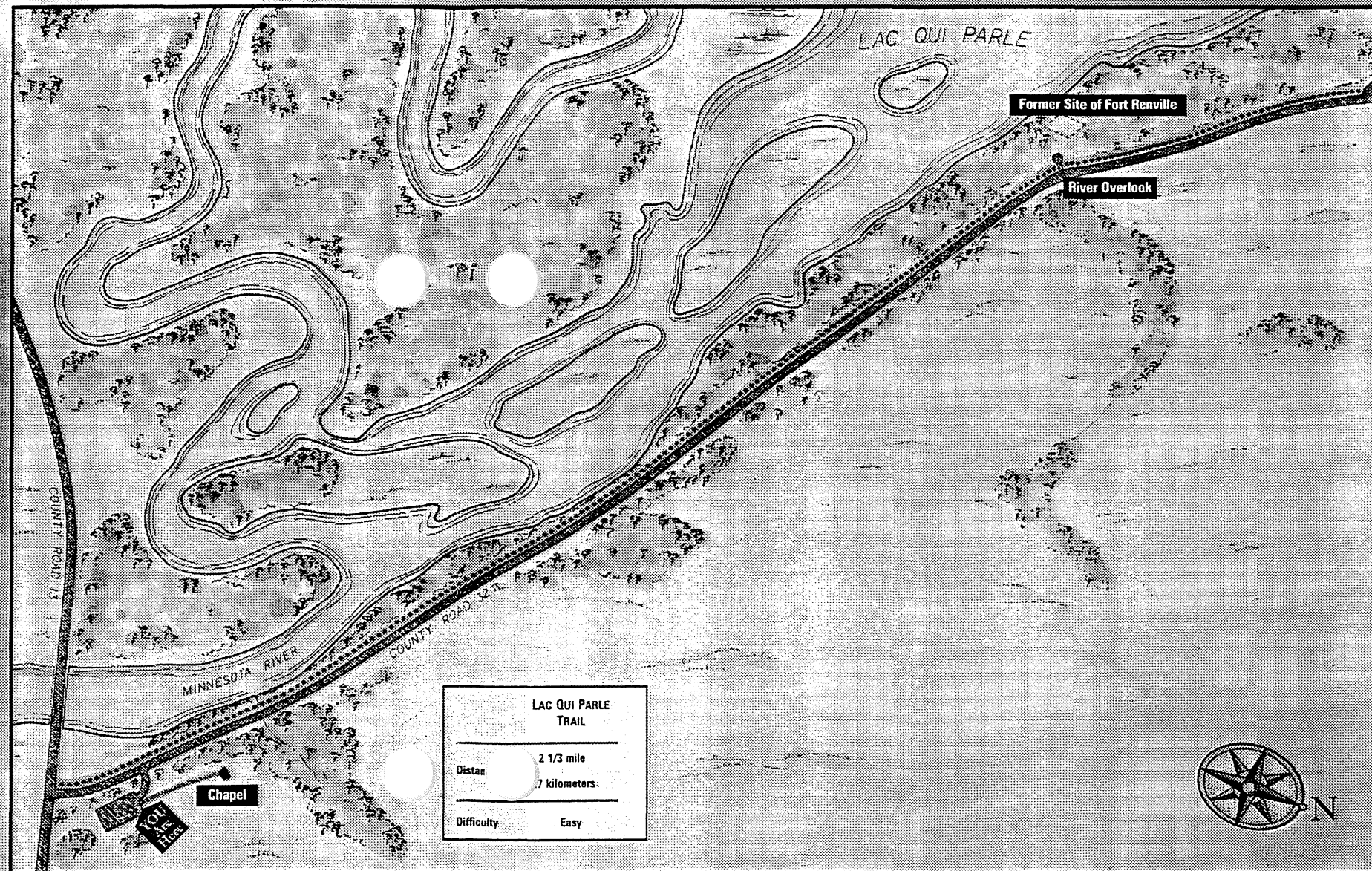





# LAC QUI PARLE MISSION & FORT RENVILLE

Lac qui Parle Mission was established in 1835. Here Christian missionaries founded one of the earliest churches and schools in Minnesota. You can visit a replica of the chapel built with the help of Dakota people in 1841, and you can see the foundations of other buildings. A trail with markers leads along the Minnesota River past the site of Fort Renville, a major fur post in the 1820s and 1830s.

*Funding provided by  
the State of Minnesota*



 MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

LAC QUI PARLE MISSION

# MISSION TO THE DAKOTA

Dr. Thomas Williamson and four other missionaries came here in 1835 to start a church and school for the Dakota.

Because they had their own language and spiritual beliefs, the Dakota were reluctant to learn English and accept Christianity. When the influential trader Joseph Renville died in 1846, opposition to the missionaries intensified. The mission was abandoned in 1854. This building, completed in the 1940s, was meant to be a replica of the original 1841 chapel.

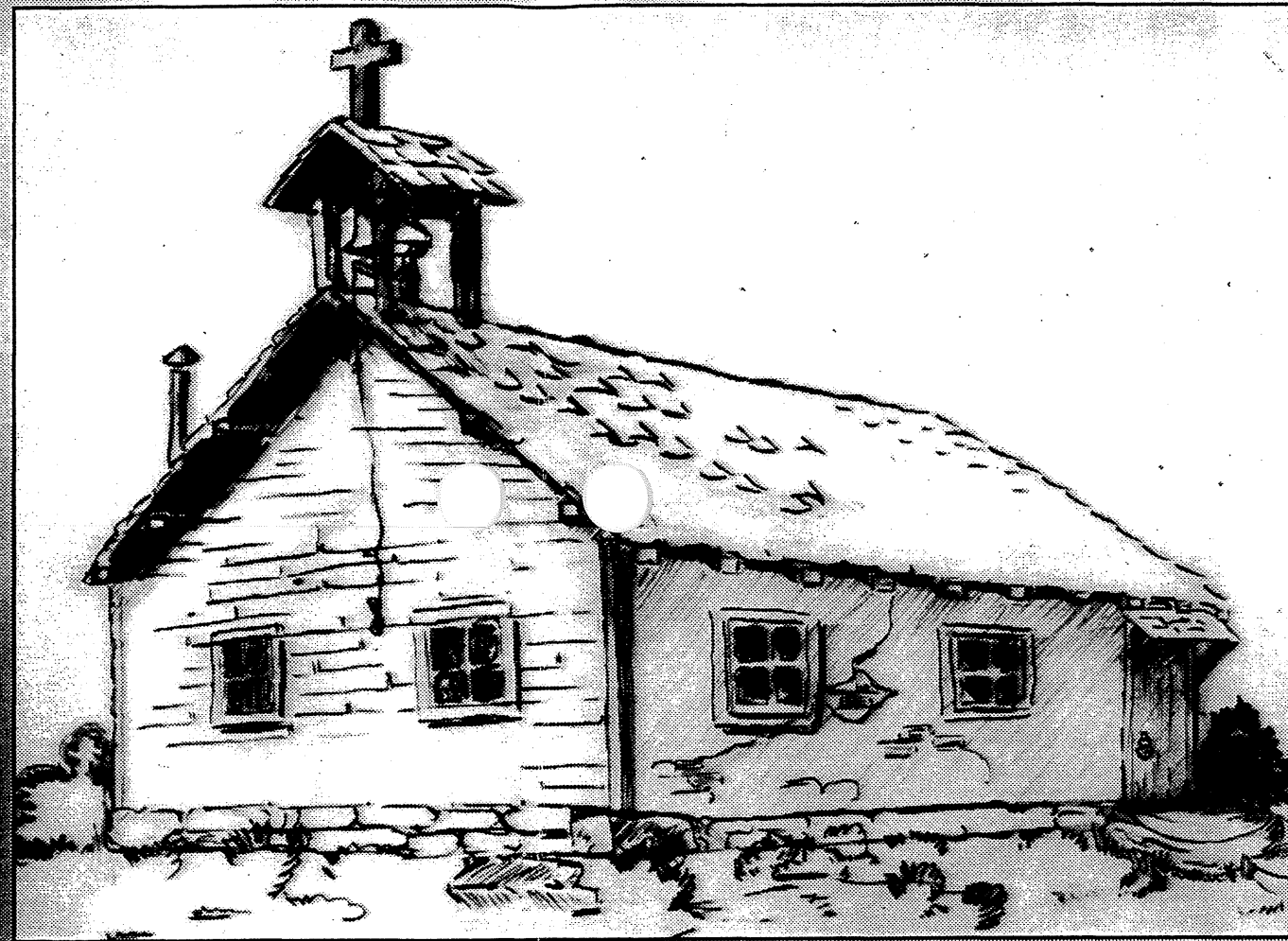
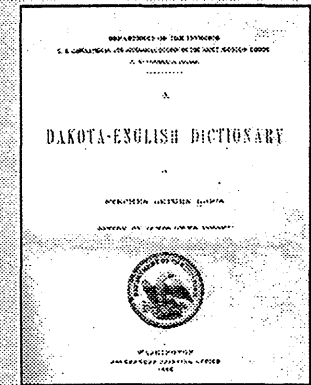


Illustration: Jan Willard, 1964



Dakota-English Dictionary, Stephen Riggs, 1890

## Translators

Lac qui Parle missionaries were students of the Dakota language, devising an alphabet for writing the language and later publishing a grammar and dictionary, a hymnal, and a primer. Their most ambitious work, a translation of the Bible, was truly a collaborative effort. A missionary would read a passage in French to trader Joseph Renville, who would then translate it into Dakota, while other missionaries wrote down what he said.

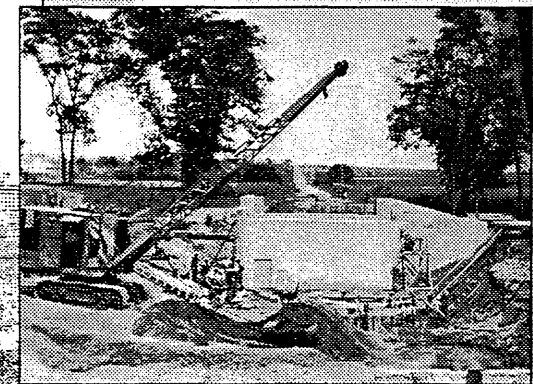
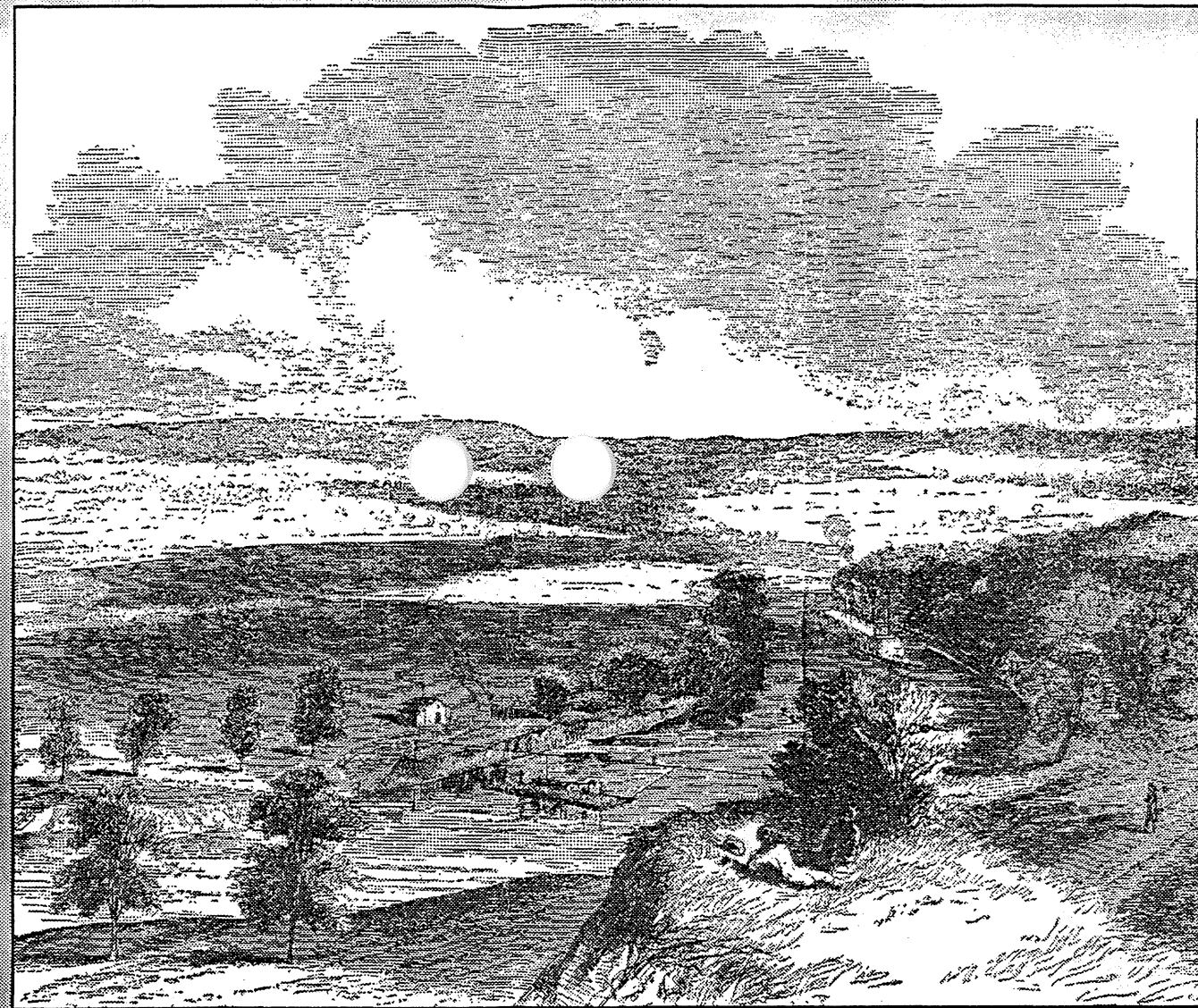
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LAC QUI PARLE MISSION

# FERRY CROSSING

A ferry crossed the river in this vicinity until the 1880s.

Before bridges were built across the Minnesota, ferries provided the only means of crossing the river. A colorful character named John Bushman operated the ferry in this area during the 1860s and 1870s. Legend has it that Bushman was so bad-tempered that settlers built a bridge across the river just to avoid using his ferry.



## WPA Dam

The dam in front of you was built in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration (WPA). One of many federal programs to put America back to work during the Great Depression, the WPA built public works across the country. This dam was part of a larger program aimed at decreasing flooding on the Minnesota River by holding water back and enlarging lakes like Lac qui Parle.

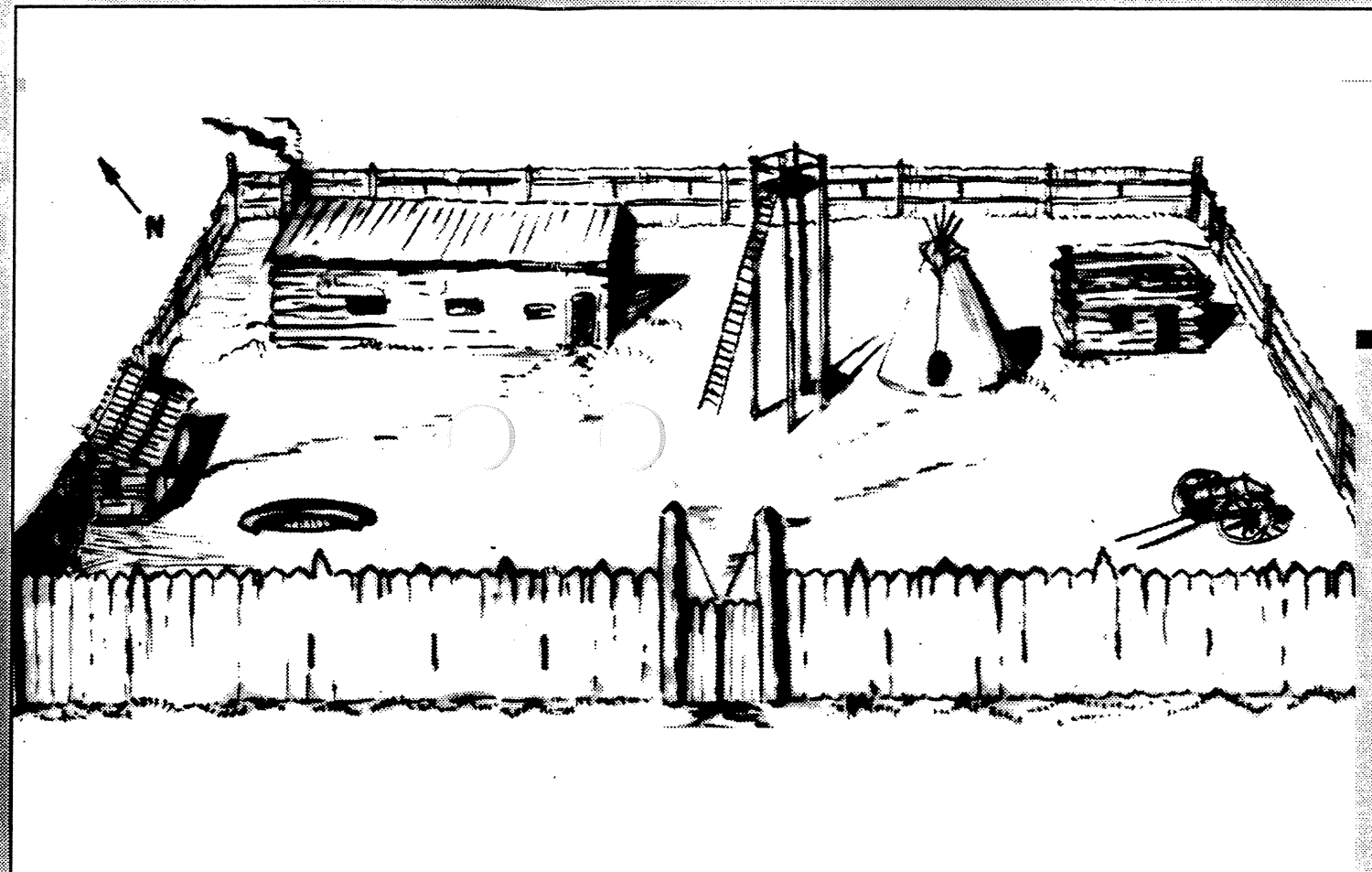
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LAC QUI PARLE MISSION

# FORT RENVILLE

Fort Renville, the headquarters of the fur trade in this area during the 1820s and 1830s, was located at the bottom of this hill.

Joseph Renville, son of a French trader and a Dakota woman, began trading for furs at Lac qui Parle in 1826. One of the founders of the American Fur Company, which dominated trade in the upper Midwest, Renville wielded great influence in the Lac qui Parle area and played an essential role in establishing the mission here.



## History in the Ground

In 1940 archaeologists located the foundations of buildings at Lac qui Parle Mission and the site of Fort Renville. A later study of the fur post identified the location of the trader's house, a cabin used by the missionary Thomas Williamson, and a storehouse. The archaeologists also found evidence of a wooden stockade that must have given Renville's fur post the look of a small fort.

Illustration: Jim Willard, 1964

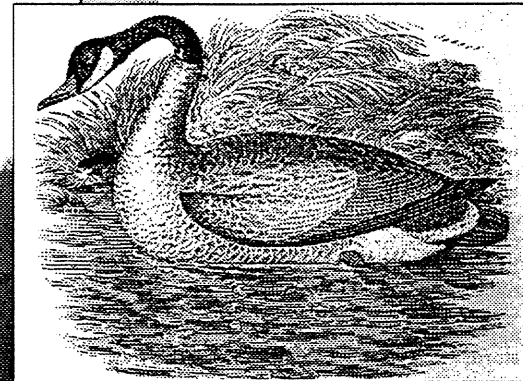
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# WILDLIFE ALONG THE RIVER

The river, the wooded bottomlands, and the prairie provided a wealth of game and furs for the Dakota.

The Dakota fished in the river and hunted small game in the forests along its banks. They trapped beaver and muskrat for their furs. And they hunted the bison that roamed the prairie for their meat, for bones to make into tools, and for skins to make into robes.



Illustration, *The Animal Kingdom*,  
Rev. William Bingley, 1877

## Birdland

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has managed lands along the Minnesota River since the 1950s to provide good habitats for birds and other wildlife. Bird watchers come here to see eagles, pelicans, and dozens of other birds that fly above the river. This area is a particular favorite of Canada geese. For several weeks in the fall, as many as 150,000 geese may be in residence at Lac qui Parle.

Photo MHS, 1918

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