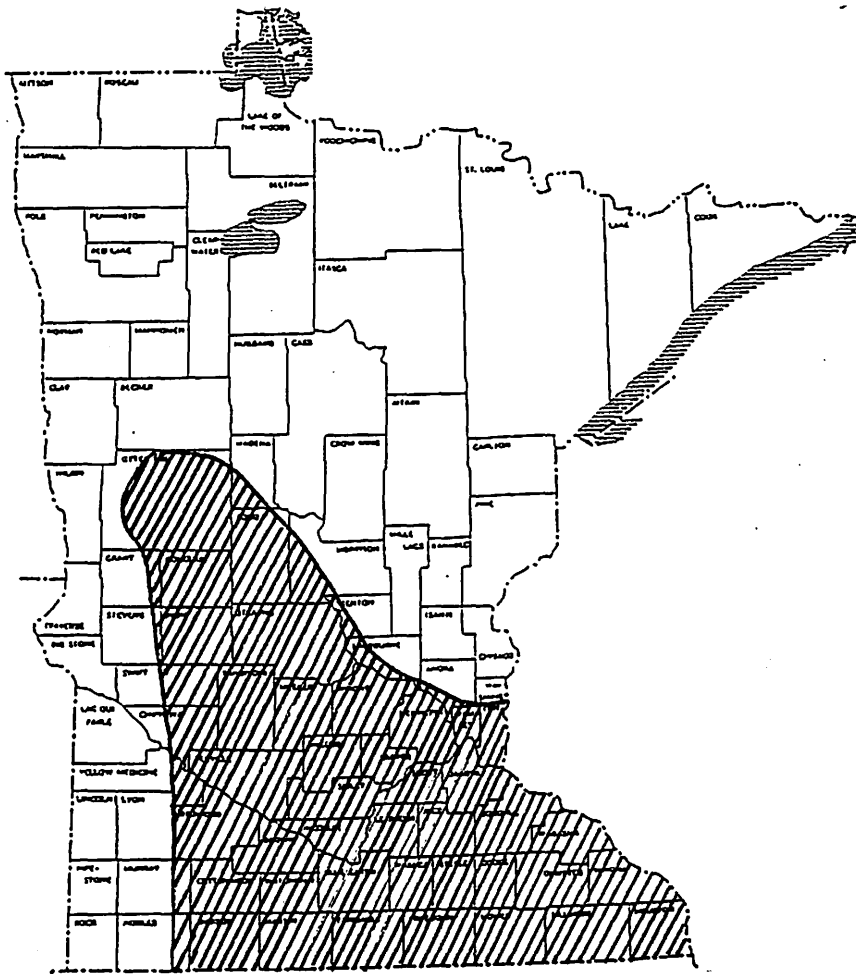


Historic Context:

EARLY AGRICULTURE AND
RIVER SETTLEMENT

(1840 - 1870)



CONTEXT LIMITS

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HISTORIC CONTEXT: EARLY AGRICULTURE AND RIVER SETTLEMENT

Temporal Limits

1840-1870

The overall temporal limits for this context range from 1840, which is the date of the first farm near Afton (cited in Jarchow (1949)), to 1870, when it is judged that the agricultural area of the state is penetrated by a rail network connected to the national rail network, based on the 1870 rail network map in Rails to the North Star.

GEOGRAPHICAL LIMITS: see map

Geographic limits are based on the 1870 population map and statistical data in Robinson (1915).

Context Narrative

Southern Minnesota was the setting for the early development of one of Minnesota's prime industries, agriculture. The 1837 Treaty with the Ojibwa opened the lands east of the Mississippi River for settlement. Treaties with the Dakota in 1851 and 1855 allowed settlement by Euro-Americans in certain areas west of the Mississippi. The Pre-emption Act of 1854, and the Homestead Act of 1862, all fostered the influx of settlers from the eastern states and Europe who hoped to acquire their own piece of cheap, fertile land. Speculators and settlers came by the steamboat-load following the major rivers and their tributaries -- the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers.

The establishment of the Minnesota Territory in 1849 and statehood in 1858, the Panic of 1857, and the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 all affected the flow and ebb of settlement.

Agriculture in this period was primarily subsistence level farming, although farmers began growing wheat as a cash crop.

Individual speculators, townsite companies, and groups with a particular ethnic or social homogeneity quickly developed townsites. Towns focused on rivers as sources of transportation and water power. More highly-planned townsites often had linear town-plats oriented to the river. Many of the towns became centers for agricultural product processing facilities, such as flour and sorghum mills and breweries, typically small operations that catered to a local market. Loosely organized rural communities were often centered on a country store or a church, and sometimes represented a concentration of ethnic settlement.

CONTEXT DESCRIPTION

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A series of episodes detail the evolution of settlement in this context.

1. Presettlement Landscape (1837 east of Mississippi, 1851 west of Mississippi).

existing vegetation and topography
roads and trails
existing Indian settlements, military posts, trading posts, missions,

2. Initial Settlement (east of Miss: 1837 - 1849, west of Miss. 1851 - ca 1862)

initial claims and farms
waterpower sites
quarries, mines, other extractive enterprises
initiation of local/ folk production and barter exchange

3. Development of Settlement Pattern

continued settlement and clearing of land
mechanization of farming
river towns and landings
inland commercial centers
government organization and services (schools, town halls, post offices)

4. Penetration by Railroads (1865-1870)

reorientation of settlement pattern

EXAMPLES OF PROPERTY TYPES ASSOCIATED WITH THE EARLY
AGRICULTURE AND RIVER SETTLEMENT HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Property Types

Farmsteads

"claim shacks", dugouts, soddies
farm steads (farm building types)

Building Materials manufacturing

Sawmills, sashworks
Quarries
Brickyards
Lime Kilns

Overland Transportation Routes

government roads (evaluation criteria)
stage roads "
 - stage stops "
other roads "
ox-cart trails "
ferries

River Transportation

sunken steamboats

Town sites

River towns
levees
warehouses
landings

Inland towns and river towns

Ag. processing facilities

grist mills
flax mills
sorghum mills
woolen mills
windmills
Cheese factories, creameries?
breweries
warehouses

Government Administration

Town Halls
County Courthouses
Post Offices
Survey and Land offices

Commercial Enterprises

Retail - general stores
- hardware
- drugstores
Hotels and Rooming Houses
Brothels
Livery
Opera Houses
Bars and Restaurants
Blacksmith shops - mechanics
Manufacturing
ag. equipment

Social Facilities

Schools
churches

Rural Facilities

Rural Churches
Rural schools
rural township halls

Colleges and Seminaries

SELECTED EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL REGISTER SITES THAT RELATE
TO THE EARLY AGRICULTURE AND RIVER SETTLEMENT CONTEXT

George Stoppel Farm (Rochester Township, Olmsted County)
Sterling Congregational Church (Sterling Township, Blue Earth County)
Pickwick Mill (Homer Township, Winona County)
Alexander Faribault House (Faribault, Rice County)
Nicollet House (St. Peter, Nicollet County)
Dodge County Courthouse (in Mantorville Historic District)
Mantorville Historic District (Dodge County)
Hastings Foundry-Star Iron Works (Hastings, Dakota County)
Jefferson Steamboat Warehouse (Jefferson Township, Houston County)
Bernhardson Cabin (Holy Cross Township, Clay County)
Turner Hall (New Ulm, Brown County)
Good Templars' Hall (Nininger Township, Dakota County)
Wasioja Seminary Ruins (Wasioja Township, Dodge County)
Kirch/Latch Building (Winona, Winona County)
Harrison Miller Farm House (Stanton Township, Goodhue County)

CONTEXT NRHP PROPERTIES

MN SHPO
Preserving Minnesota

Early Agriculture and River Settlement, 1840-1870

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GOALS AND PRIORITIES WORKSHEET

Date: 6/13/90

HISTORIC CONTEXT:

Early Agriculture and River Settlement

1840 - 1870

PROPERTY TYPE (if applicable):

Various

Ranking key:

A = High priority

0 - 2 years

B = Medium priority

3 - 5 years

C = Low priority

IDENTIFICATION

EVALUATION

REGISTRATION:

Time-table for
Completion

Priority
Ranking

* Develop MPDF for Staging Industry in MN; conduct survey, & nominate eligible road fragments and stage stops	done	
* Conduct survey and develop evaluation criteria for settlement period houses in MN Valley Trails State Park	meet with DNR advertise RFP	A
* Develop MPDF for Steamboat and River Transportation in MN 1823-1870 (possible joint project with NPS Miss River and Rec Corridor)	FY91 RFP	A
* Conduct survey of Goodhue County farmsteads or Minnesota River Valley	FY91 cooperative agreement	A
* Develop MPDF and survey pre-railroad towns		B
* Get Frame's mills inventory from Archives and integrate into SHPO files	in-house	A
* Evaluate town of Read's Landing	combine with Steamboat/River	A
* Re-evaluate Grimm farmstead (NRHP)	in-house; Chaska brick study FY91	A
* Update Steamboat Warehouse nomination from Houston County and complete registration process	link with steam- boat/river proj	A
* Evaluate Lake Superior shipping industry within/ this context in completion of LCMR historic shipwrecks project	FY90-93	A

CONTEXT GOALS & PRIORITIES

MN SHPO
Preserving Minnesota

Early Agriculture and River Settlement cont.

TREATMENT:

* Conduct seminar on stabilization of ruins -- pre 1870 mills	plan in FY91; conduct in 92	A
* plan proactive outreach to City of Mankato regarding establishment of local ordinance and the CLG program	in-house	B