

**Excerpts from Dana Frear's  
manuscript about the History of Minnetonka  
Illustrated with photos and maps  
from the City of Minnetonka Historical Society archives**



Dana and Anne Frear in their living room 1963

# Minnetonka Town

1851 to 1956 (extended to ~1971)

by Dana W. Frear

(copy #3)

Property of  
Minnetonka Historical Society

## Minnetonka Mpls. Ill. 7-28-64 History Lies Unpublished

A century and a half of history and 30 years of painstaking spare time research lie compressed in the 400-page history of "Minnetonka Town" written by historian Dana W. Frear.

It's the only history of Minnetonka that could ever be written, claims its author, because most of the sources of first-hand information are now dead or scattered across the country.

But there's only one copy, its typewritten pages bound in a blue notebook and kept in Frear's home at 13212 McGinty Road, Minnetonka.

Frear, 80, has sought unsuccessfully for over a year for the publication of the manuscript he finished in 1963. It took at least 10,000 hours of his own time and several hundred dollars of his personal funds to gather and write, according to Frear, and now he's financially unable to publish his book himself.

Frear's history begins in 1803, when the present Minnetonka village was a miniscule portion of the Louisiana purchase. The history ends with the incorporation of Minnetonka Township as a village in 1956.

"If the material is not put into print Minnetonka will never have a suitable history," Frear said in an interview. "Most of the people I got my best information from are dead and gone."

To gather the historical information, Frear traveled since 1933 anywhere in the country where he could find original Minnetonka settlers and their immediate descendants. Along with remembrances and anecdotes, he collected more than 300 pictures of persons and Minne-

tonka scenes to illustrate his book.

Frear, who retired as state agronomist in 1954, is himself a walking history of Minnetonka, having witnessed many of the events and trends of which he wrote.

Born in 1884 in the two-story frame house where he still resides, Frear is one of the oldest native born residents of Minnetonka Mills. His mother settled in the area in 1854, four years before it became a township, and his father was one of the early township clerks.

Frear went to the township board and later the village council for financial help in compiling his history. He received sums ranging from \$250 to \$500 per year for nearly ten years.

The funds were cut off in 1962 because the council could not appropriate them "for something from which we receive no services or benefits," a village official explained to a resident who interceded in Frear's behalf.

At one point the council asked Frear to turn over his manuscript to the council or to the Hennepin County Historical Society.

"The manuscript is my personal property," Frear insisted. He said the council could not claim his work because the funds were given to help him as a private historian.

The historical society, of which he is historian and past president, does not have the means to publish the manuscript, he said.

If the manuscript is not printed Frear said, it will be put into escrow after his death and remain until interested parties finance its publication.





- MINNETONKA TOWN
- CONTENTS

- 

• Title page	I	
• Dedication page	II	
• Preface		III, IV
• Table of Contents	V	
• Illustrations	VI	
• Prologue		VII
• Chapters		
• I Minnetonka Town, Origin, Background		1-3
• II Lake Minnetonka		4-7
• III Names Minnetonka and Minnetonka mills	18-23	
• IV The Dam and Sawmill		24-28
• V The Furniture Factory		29-34
• VI First Settlers		35-37
• VII Acquiring Government Land		38-47
• VIII Buying the Land		48-52
• IX Early Population		53-63
• X Mills of Minnetonka	64 – 86	
• XI The Steamboat Arrived		87-89
• XII Post Offices; William S. Chowen		90-10
• XIII Early Buildings and Businesses		101-118
• XIV Frears General Store		119-126
• XV Two Pioneers		127-134
• XVI Churches		138-144

XVII Travel, Trails, Roads	148-157
XVIII Creeks and lakes	158-160
XIX Minnehaha Creek and Second Dam	164-169
XX Minnetonka school, Dist. 52	170-192
XXI Groveland School, Dist. 53	193-202
XXII Clear Springs, Shady Oak, Glen Lake, McGinty, Oak Knoll Schools	203-216
XXIII Wayzata	217-244
XXIV Hopkins	245-288
XXV Town Organization, Government Affairs	289-295
XXVI Town Politics	296-304
XXVII Amusements, Recreation, Spelling Bees	305-311
XXVIII Railroads	312-323
XXIX First Minnetonka Village	324-338
XXV Deephaven and Woodland Villages	339-351
Epilogue	352-354
<i>Appendix A. Minnetonka Legislators</i>	<i>356-361</i>
<i>Appendix B. Land Preemptions</i>	377-380
<i>Appendix C. Town Offices</i>	
<i>Index</i>	





DANA W. CLARA FREAR AURLINE

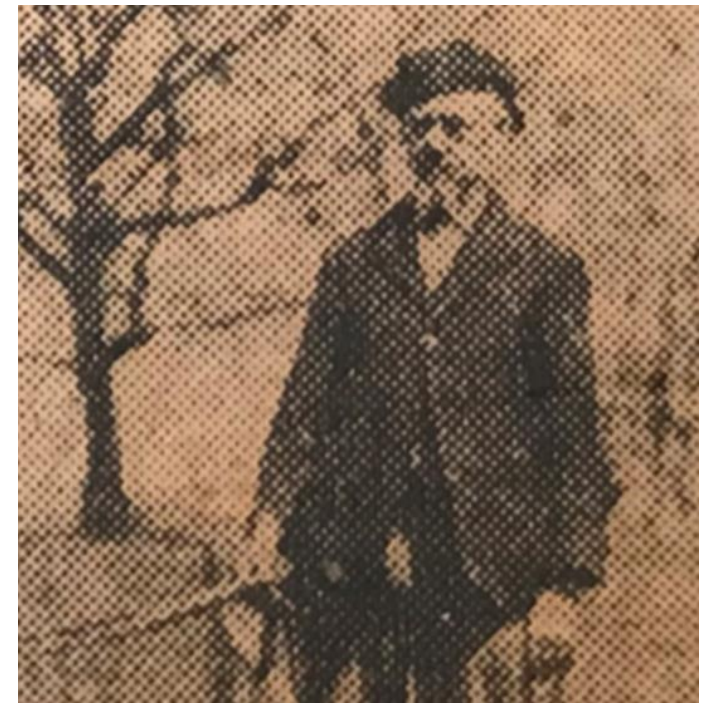


MY DAD

1896  
GRANDMOTHER

AUNT

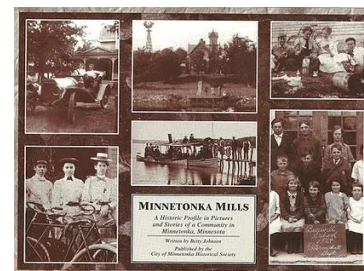
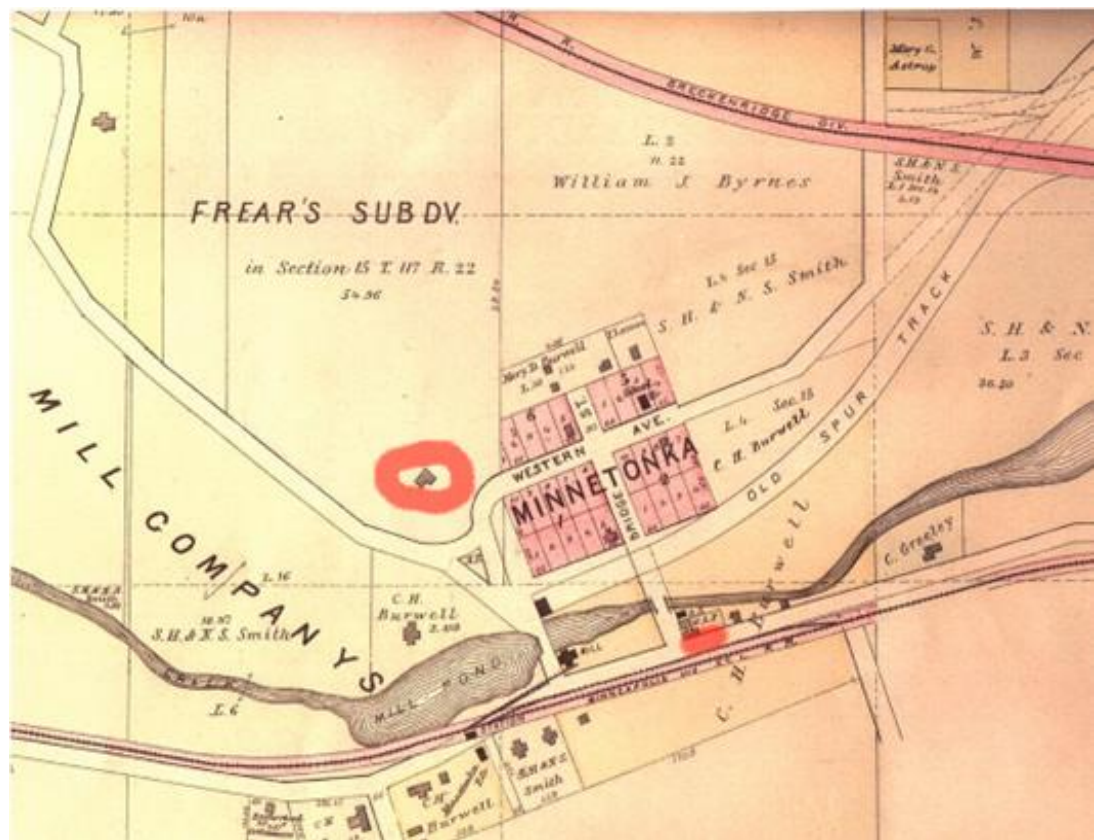
TO MY MOTHER  
CLARA ELIZABETH CHASE FREAR  
  
PIONEER  
CRUSADER  
POET  
WRITER







Frear Home Minnetonka Mills 1879-1943



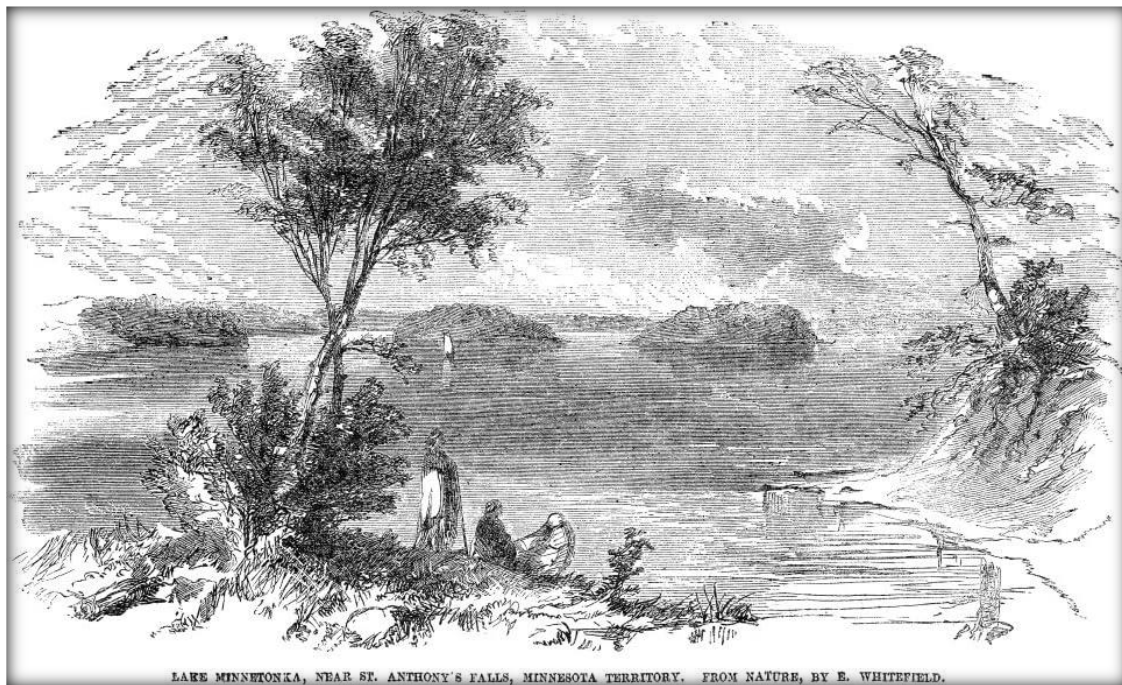




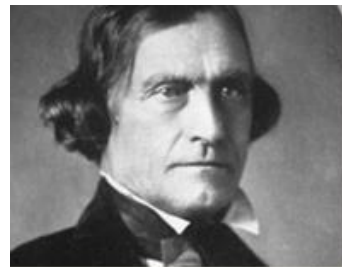
MISS LOUISE BURWELL AND D. W. FREAR



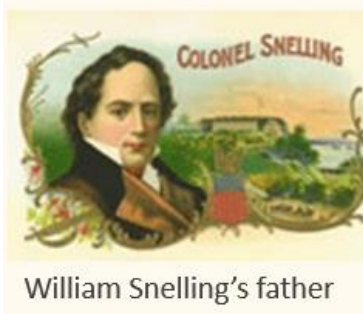




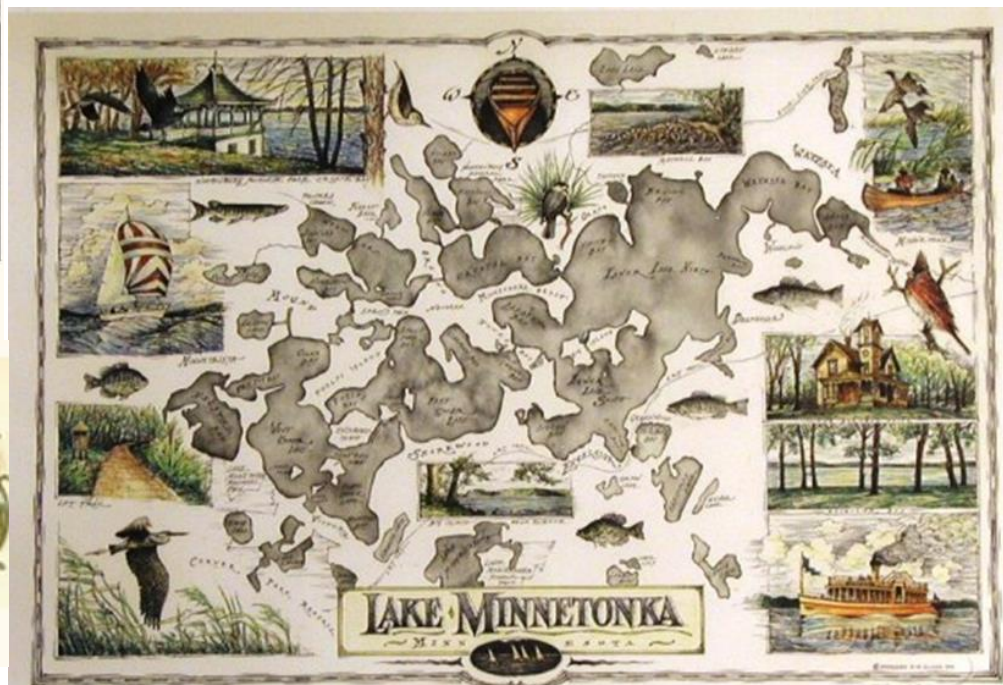
LAKE MINNETONKA, NEAR ST. ANTHONY'S FALLS, MINNESOTA TERRITORY. FROM NATURE, BY E. WHITEFIELD.



Joseph Brown

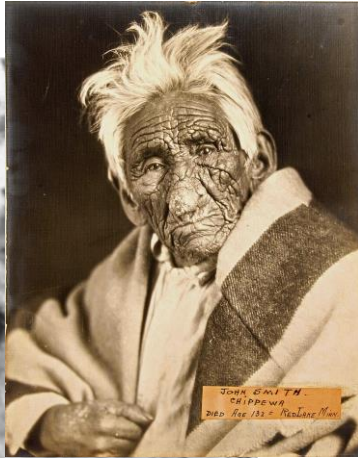


William Snelling's father

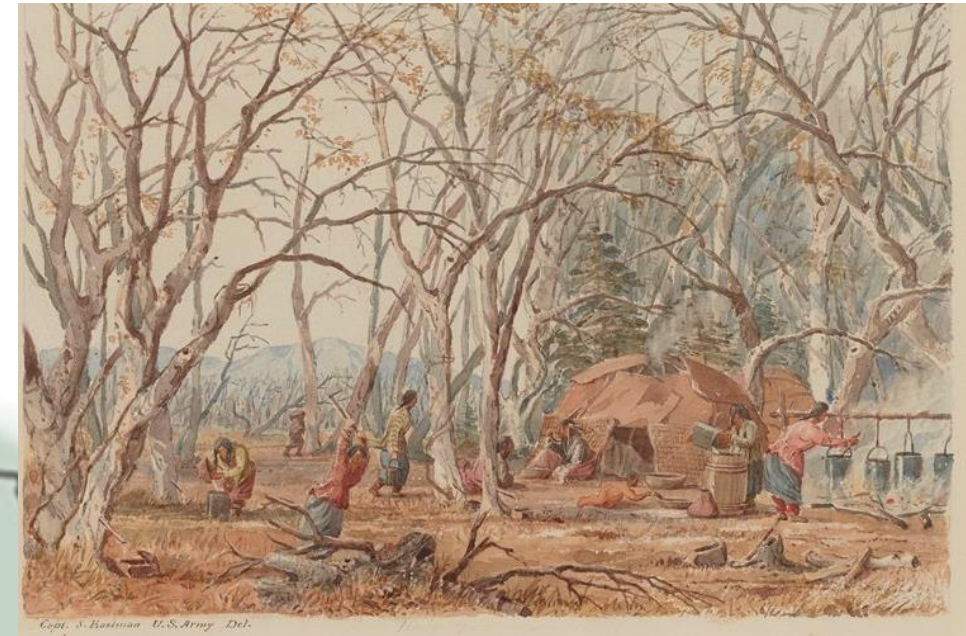
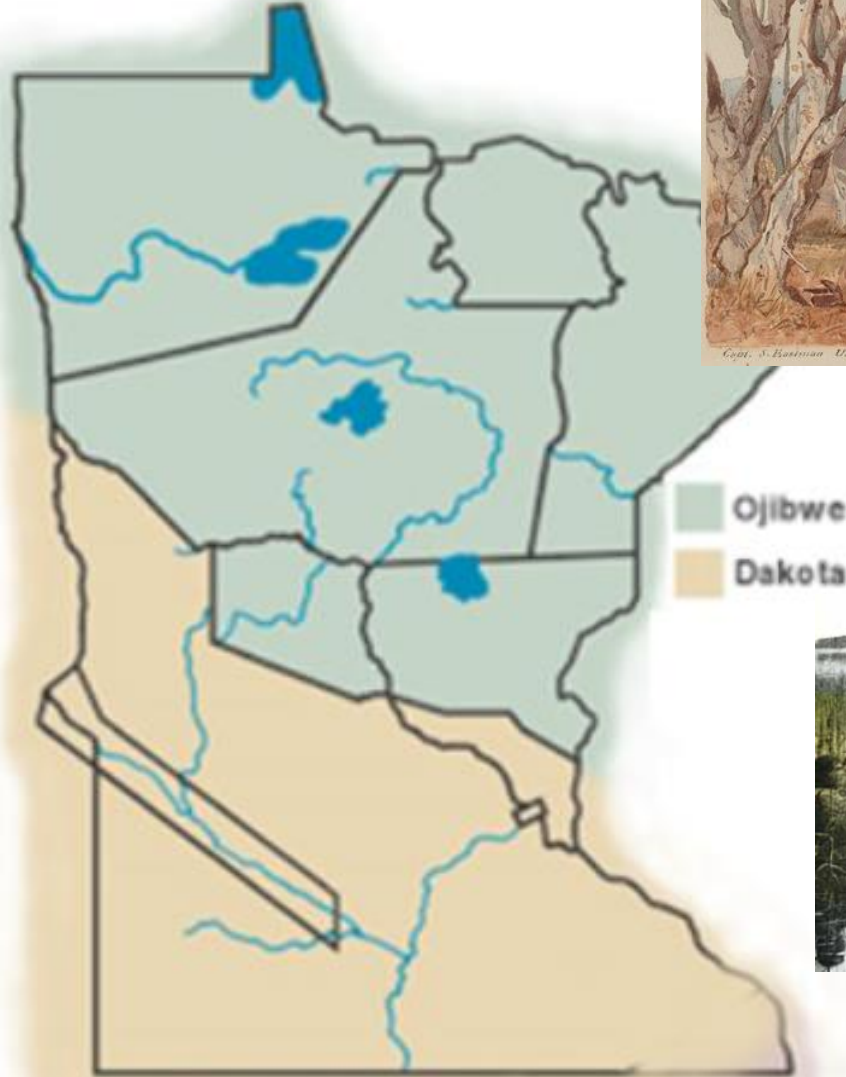




# Ojibwe Nation



**Kahbe-nagw-wens**  
**'A Man Who Lived in Three Centuries'**  
**Ojibwe Chief in Walker MN museum**  
**1784 -1922**

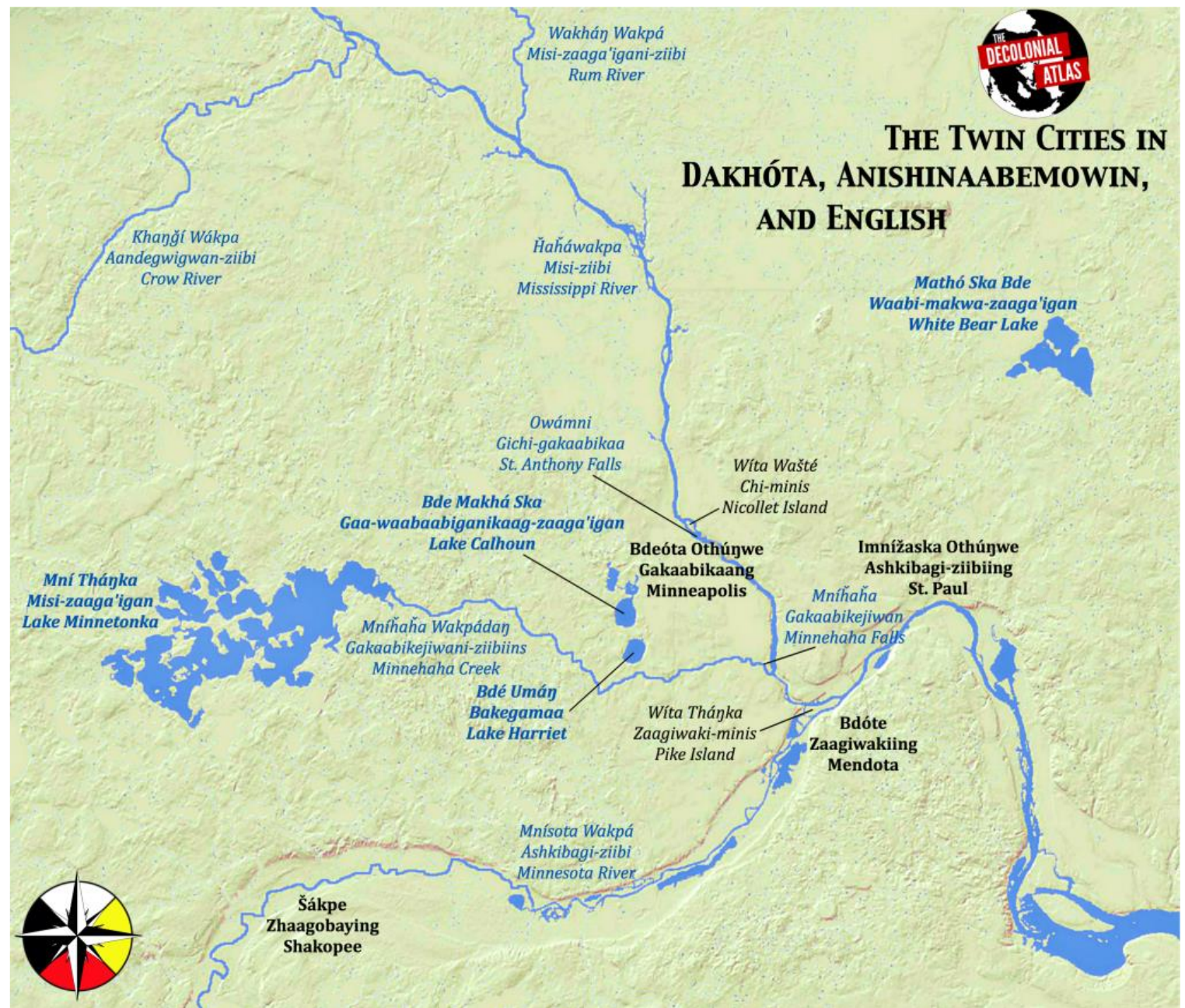
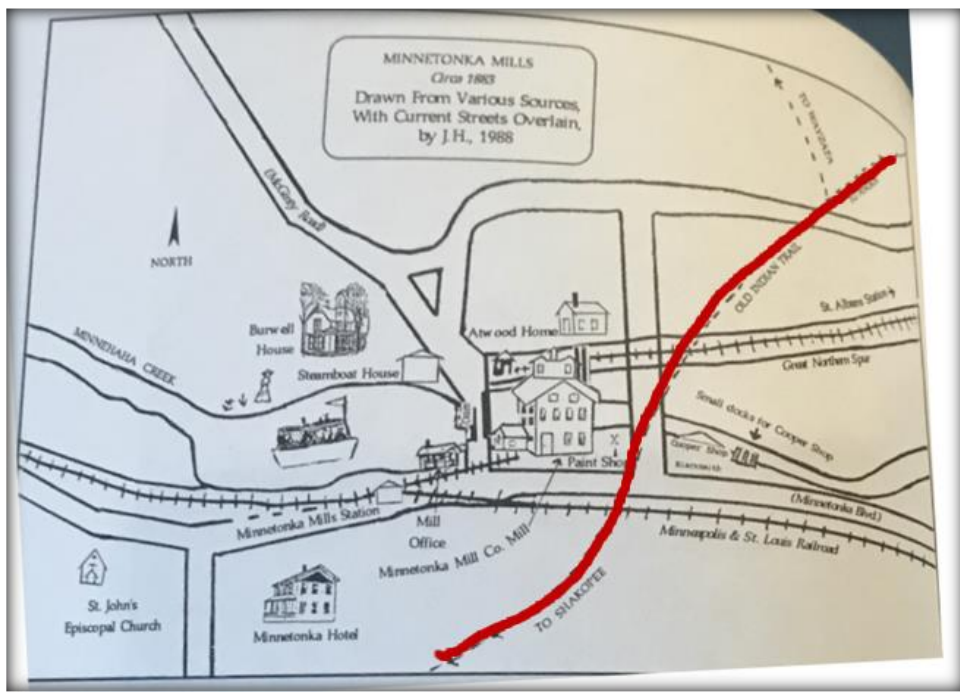
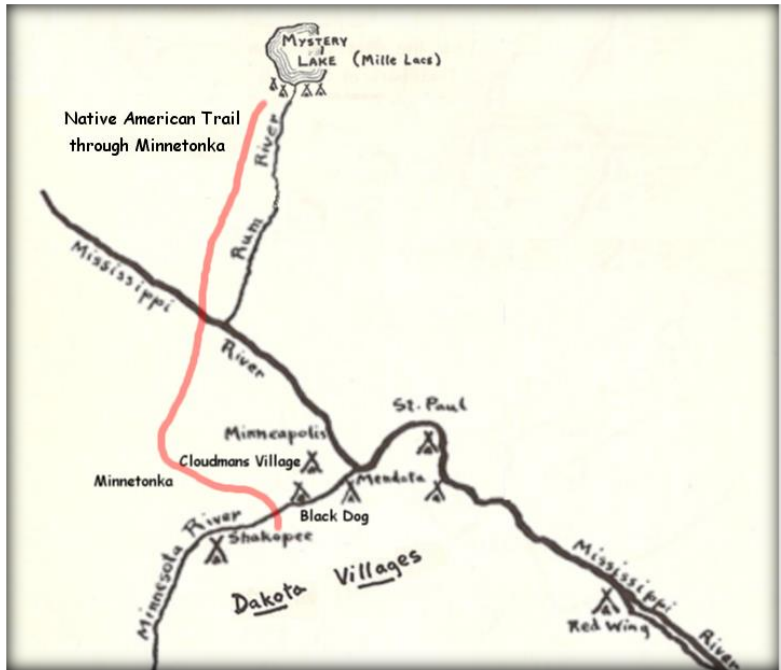


**Ojibwe sugar camp**  
**by Seth Eastman 1851**



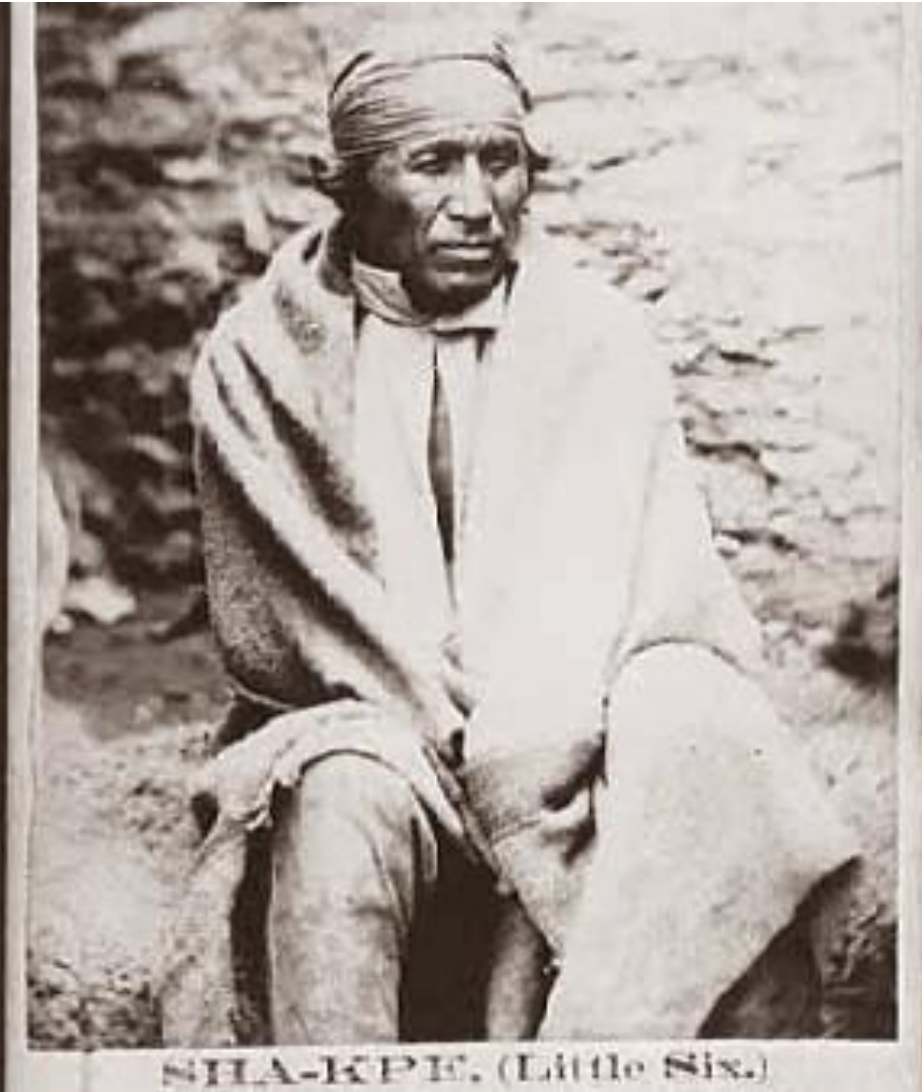
**Ojibwe wild rice harvesters in canoes**







# Dakota Nation

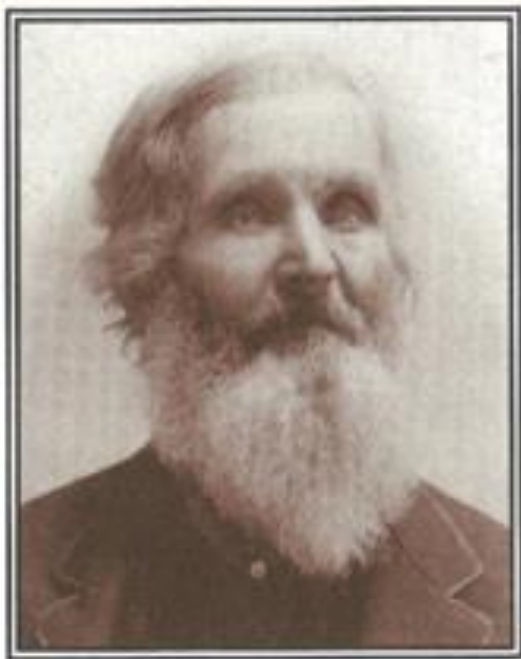


*Wán-ee-ton, Dakota Chief 1832*

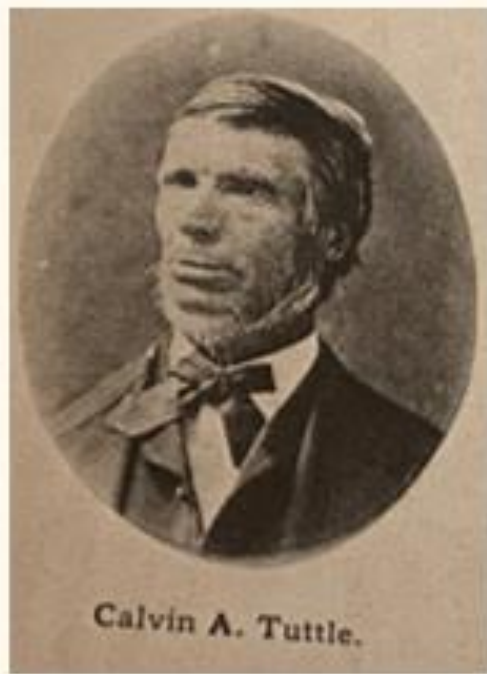


A Dakota Village both by Seth Eastman





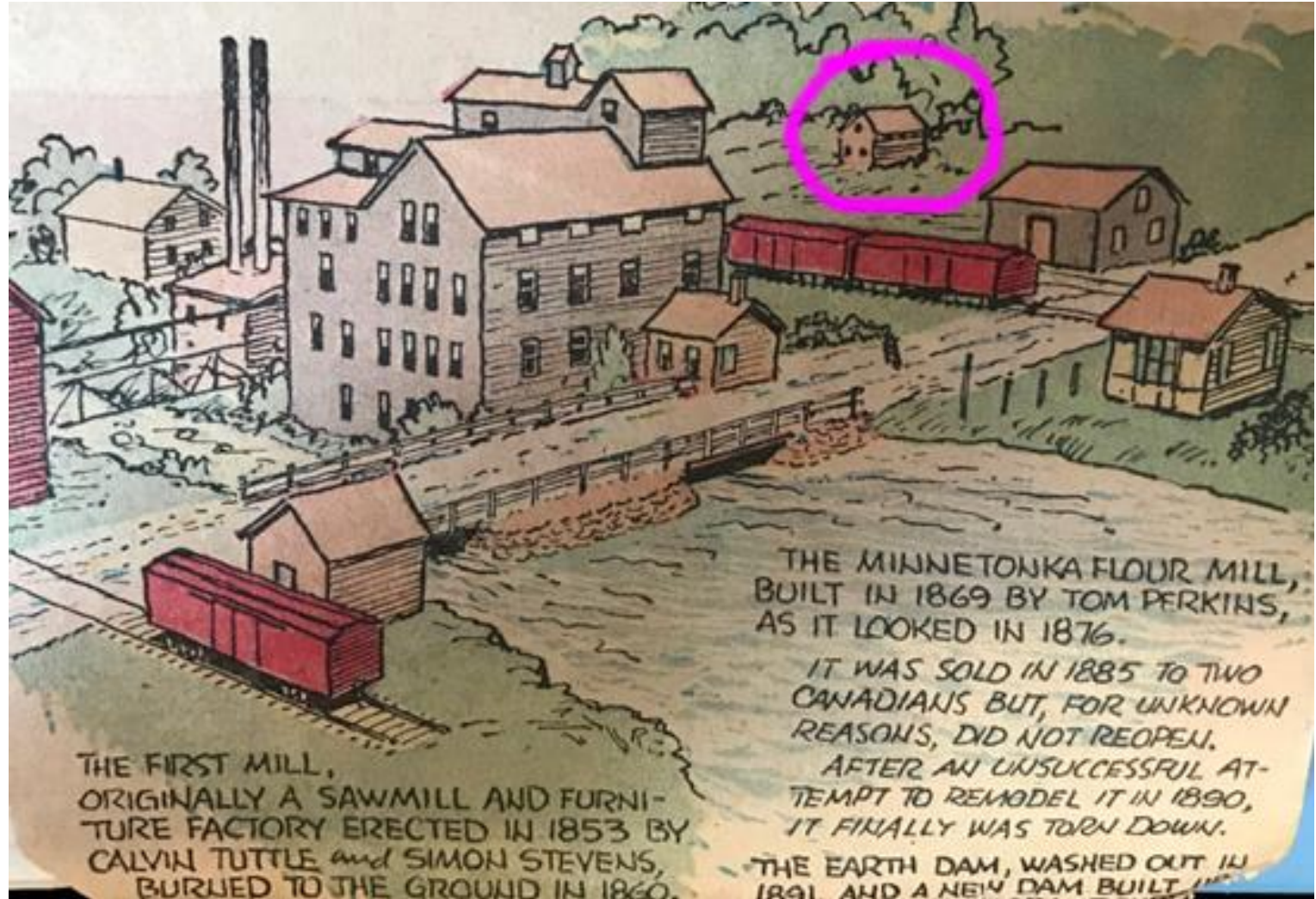
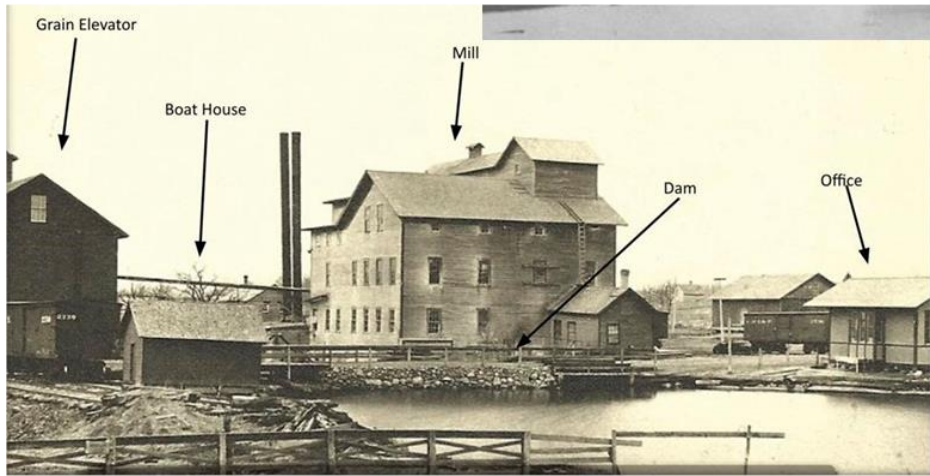
Simon Stevens



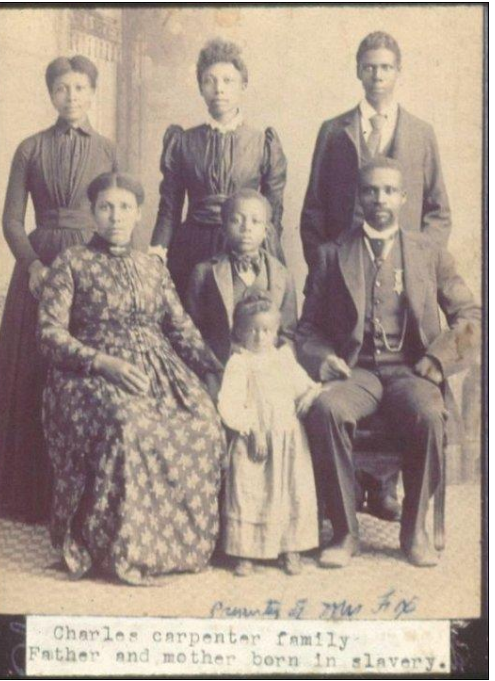
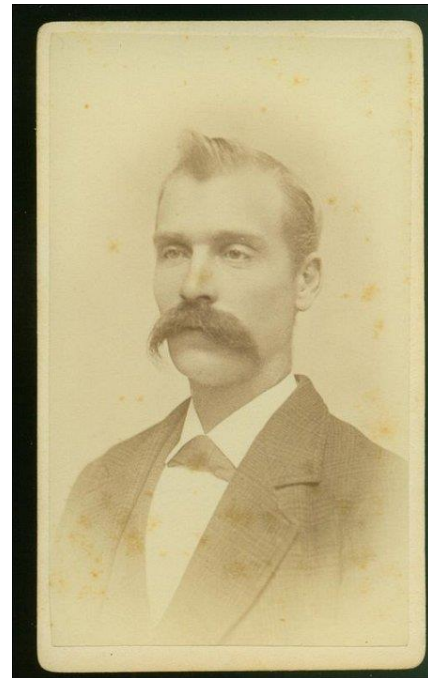
Calvin Tuttle











Remains of Mr. Fox  
Charles Carpenter family  
Father and mother born in slavery.



Kate  
McGinty

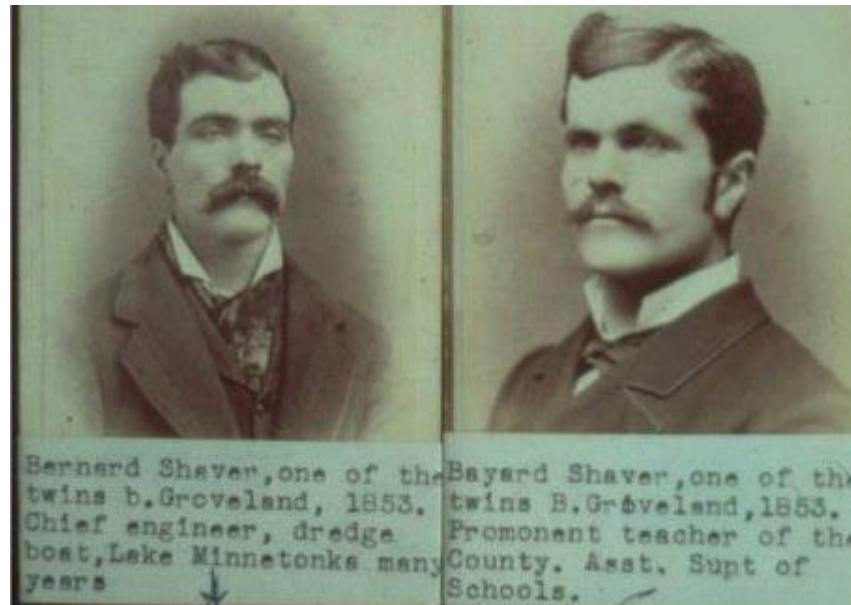




# James and Sarah Chownen Shaver



James Shaver  
First settler in Minnetonka  
Built sawmill in 1852



Bernard Shaver, one of the twins b. Groveland, 1853. Chief engineer, dredge boat, Lake Minnetonka many years.  
Bayard Shaver, one of the twins B. Groveland, 1853. Prominent teacher of the County. Asst. Supt of Schools.



# Hezekial and Abby Tuttle Atwood

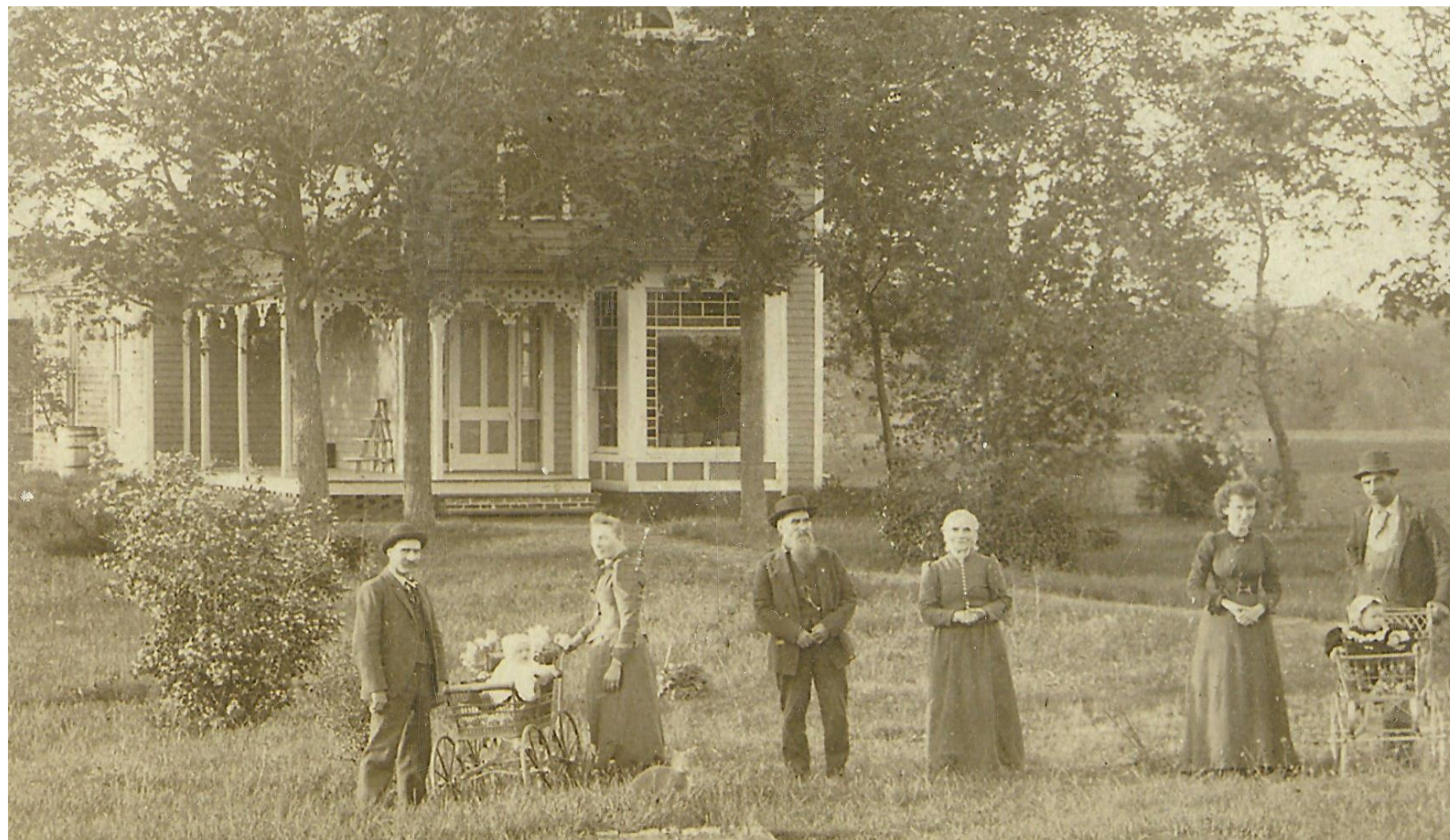
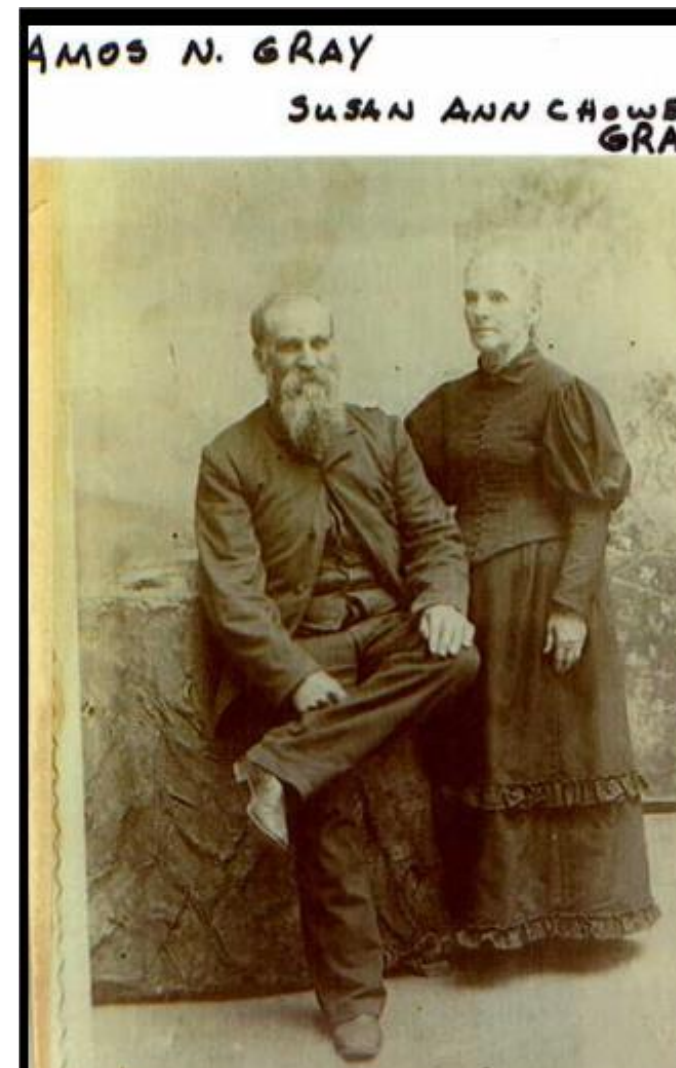


Mrs. Emma Gilmore, 92 and Mrs. Jennie Pratt, 98, daughters of Hezekiah Atwood, who came to Minnetonka, 1854 as one of the builders of the furniture factory. (Henn Co. Hist. Society meeting at Minnetonka, June 21, 1945. Note historical exhibit.)



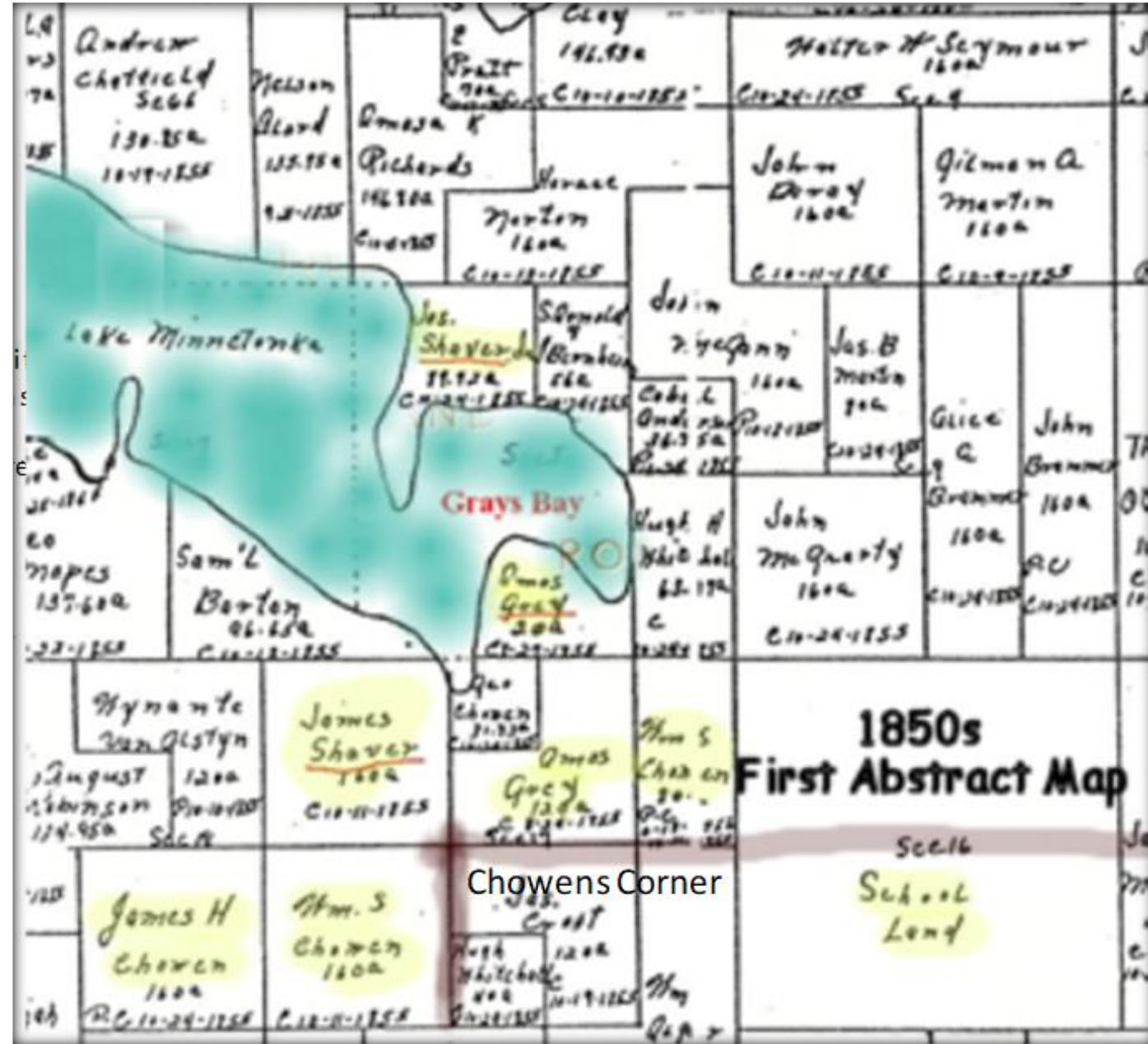
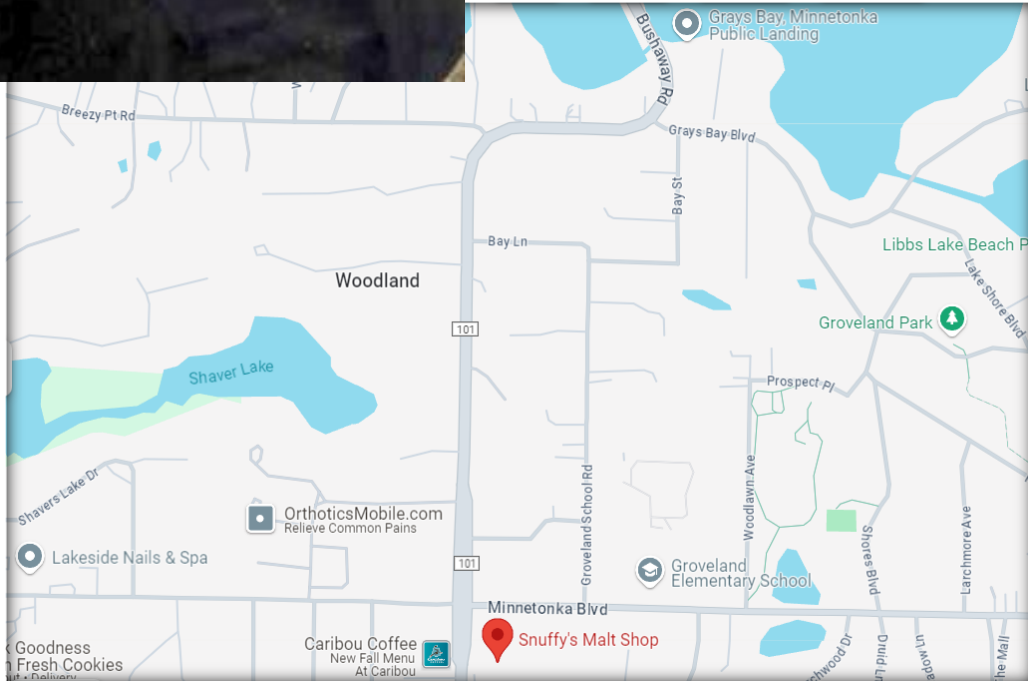


# Amos and Susan Chowen Gray



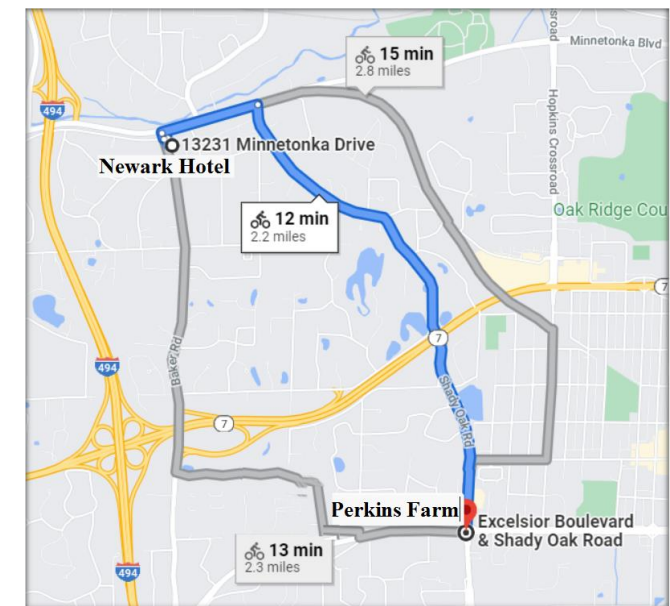
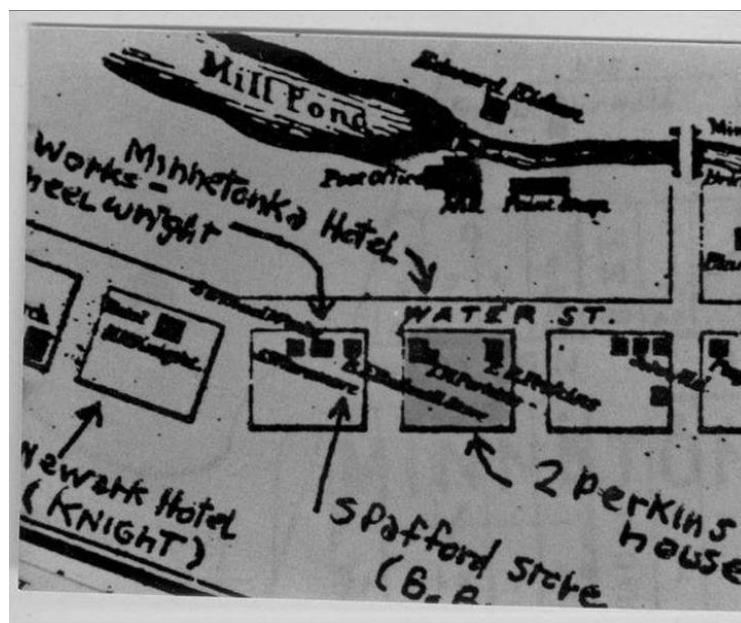
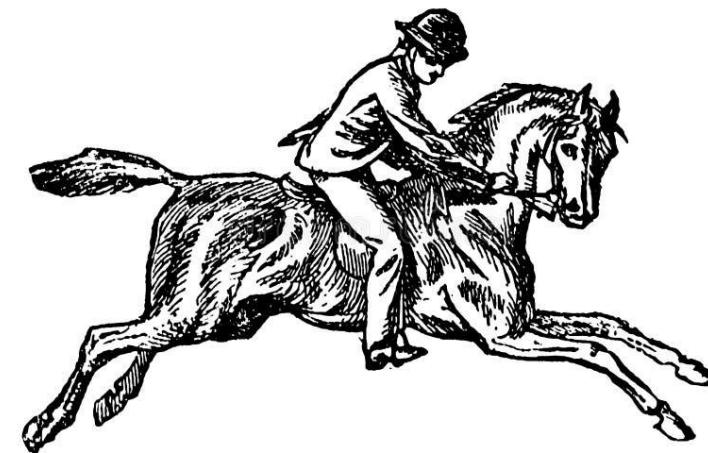


## A portrait of a man with dark, wavy hair, a full beard, and a mustache. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt and a patterned bow tie. The portrait is set against a light background and is framed by a dark border.





# Walter and Clara Chase Frear



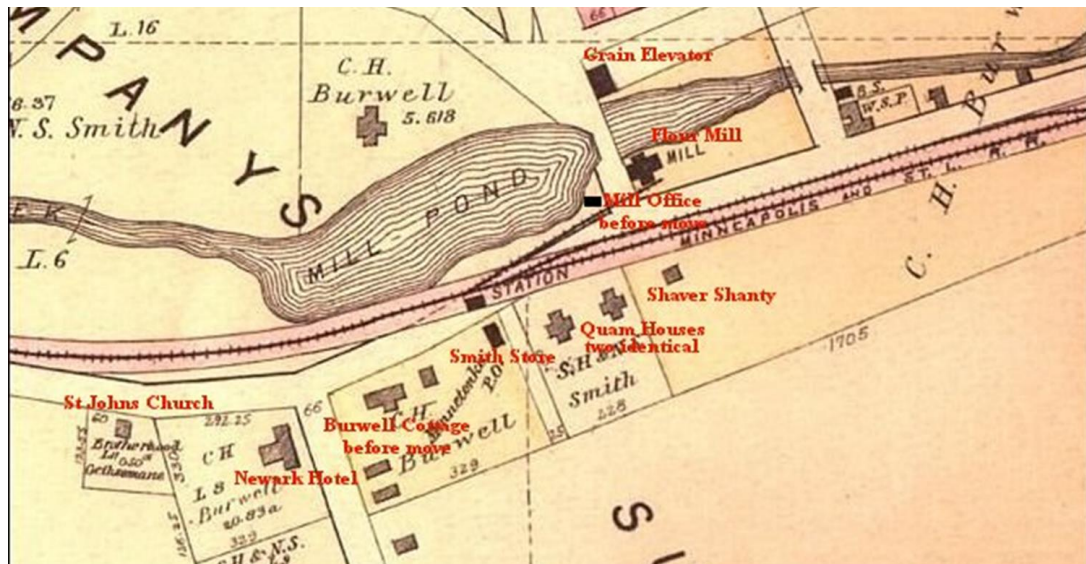




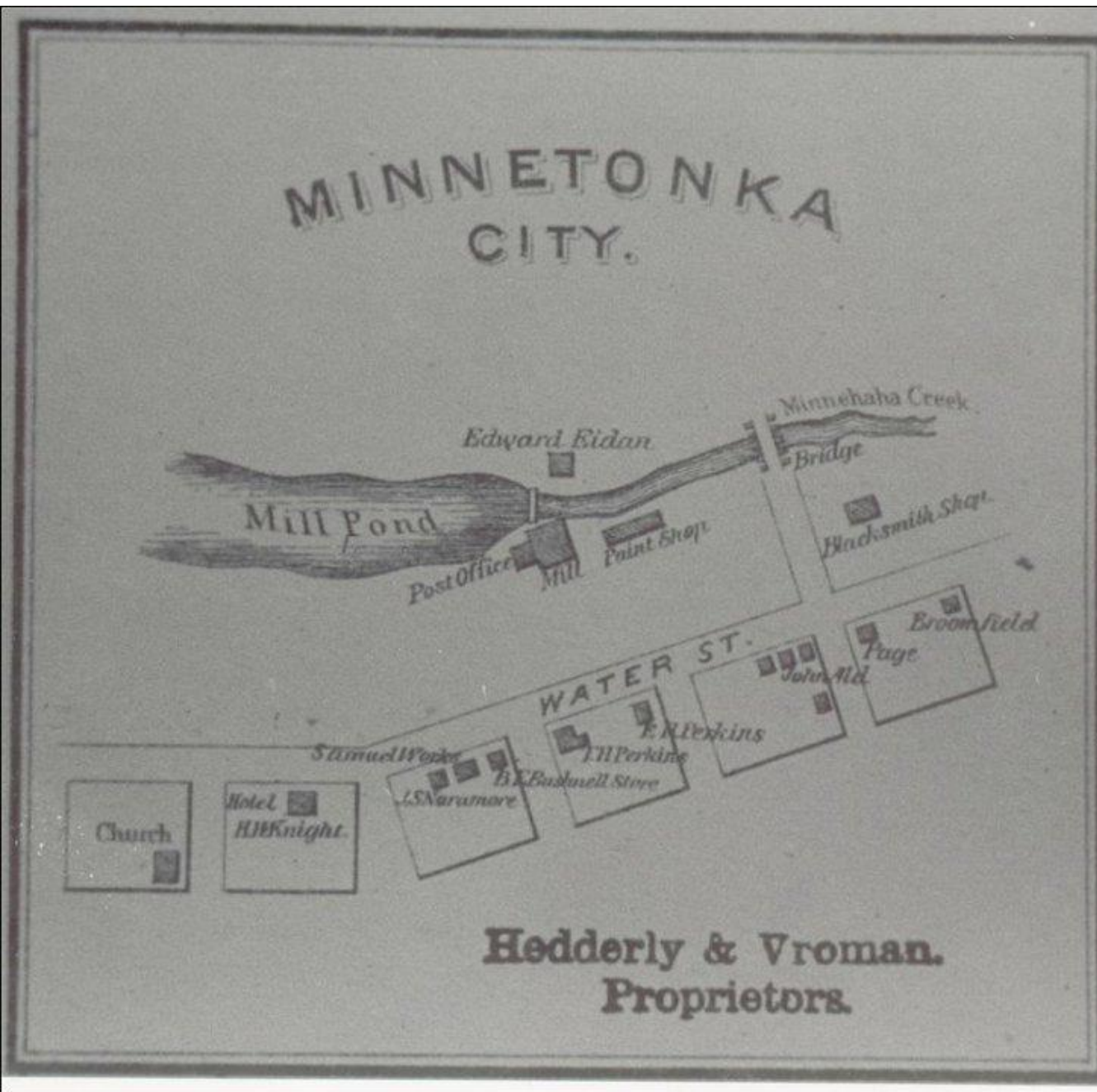
St. John's Chapel, Minnetonka Mills  
1858-1918



First comes Mr. Knight, who keeps the village inn,  
When a good square meal you want, you'll do well to visit him;  
And there is also his better half - we do not mean to mock her,  
But all of the women in the town, she is the fastest talker;  
Mr. Narramore lives next door - he runs the blacksmith shop,  
He can mend a pillow or make a rod  
And to him the farmers flock  
When they want their horses shod;  
Next comes Mr. Works, the wheelwright of the town,  
To him the folks their wagons take when're they do break down;  
Mr. Bushnell keeps the store - he keeps a splendid stock  
Of drygoods and hardware, drugs, groceries and whatnots;  
Also a fine assortment of candies, cheap and sweet,  
But a pocketful of cash you'll need when you go there to treat;  
Next comes Mr. Perkins, the landlord of the town,  
He owns the mill, a mile square of land, and all the houses 'round,  
And upon financial matters his mind is very sound;  
And there is Frank, the old man's son,  
Of all the boys, he sure is one;  
He loves to fish and hunt the deer,  
And play the violin,  
And dance the light fantastic  
'Til the midnight hours grow dim;





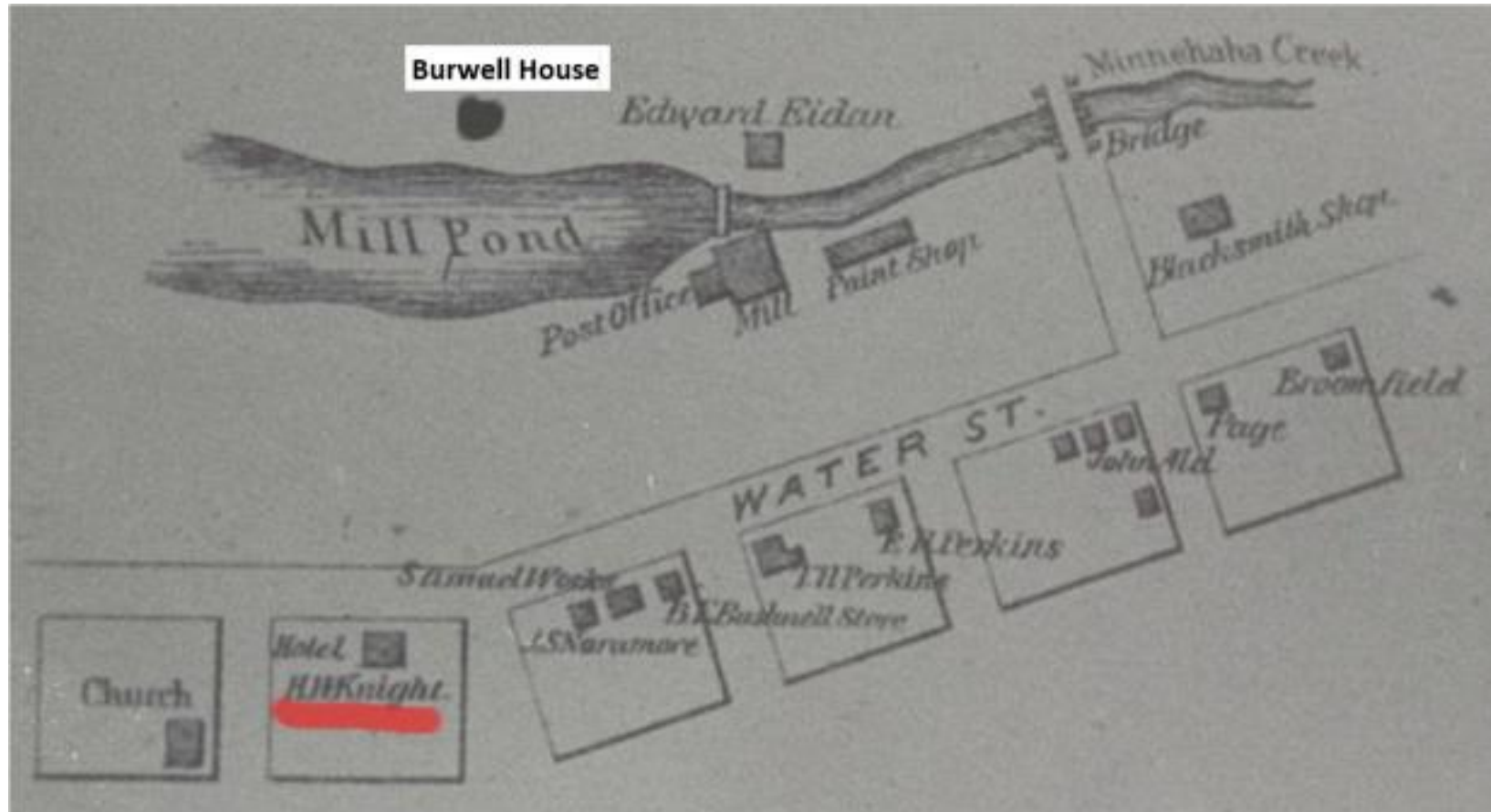


Up on the hill lives Dr. Ed,  
If it wasn't for him we might all be dead;  
Long may he love and in practice thrive  
And be the means of saving many lives;  
Vel Edgerly lives a little way below,  
What his occupation is we really do not know,  
But think it is to reap and sow;  
Away down below, Ed Eidam lives, a cooper good, they say,  
We know that on the violin, he many tunes can play;  
All day long with the shop, you'll hear his hammer's sound,  
At night he fiddles for the hops they have around the town;  
Two millers live across the creek, the farmers' wheat they grind,  
Two better millers than they are, you'd hunt awhile to find.  
Now this completes the number that puts this village on the rush -  
No, there is Mr. Baker, who lives out in the brush,  
Just back a little ways and to go there is a treat,  
Or will be when he gets to making sugar from the beet."

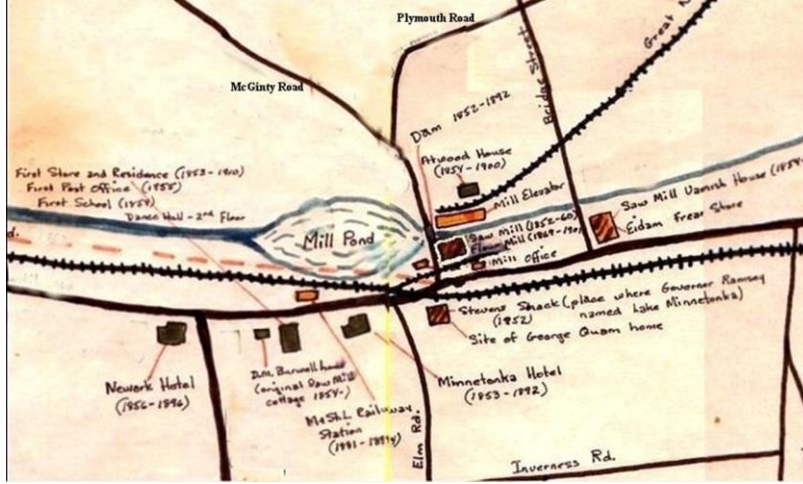
Minnetonka City 1871



**Mr. Knight, who keeps the village inn,  
When a good square meal you want, you'll do well to visit him;  
And there is also his better half - we do not mean to mock her,  
But of all the women in the town, she is the fastest talker;**

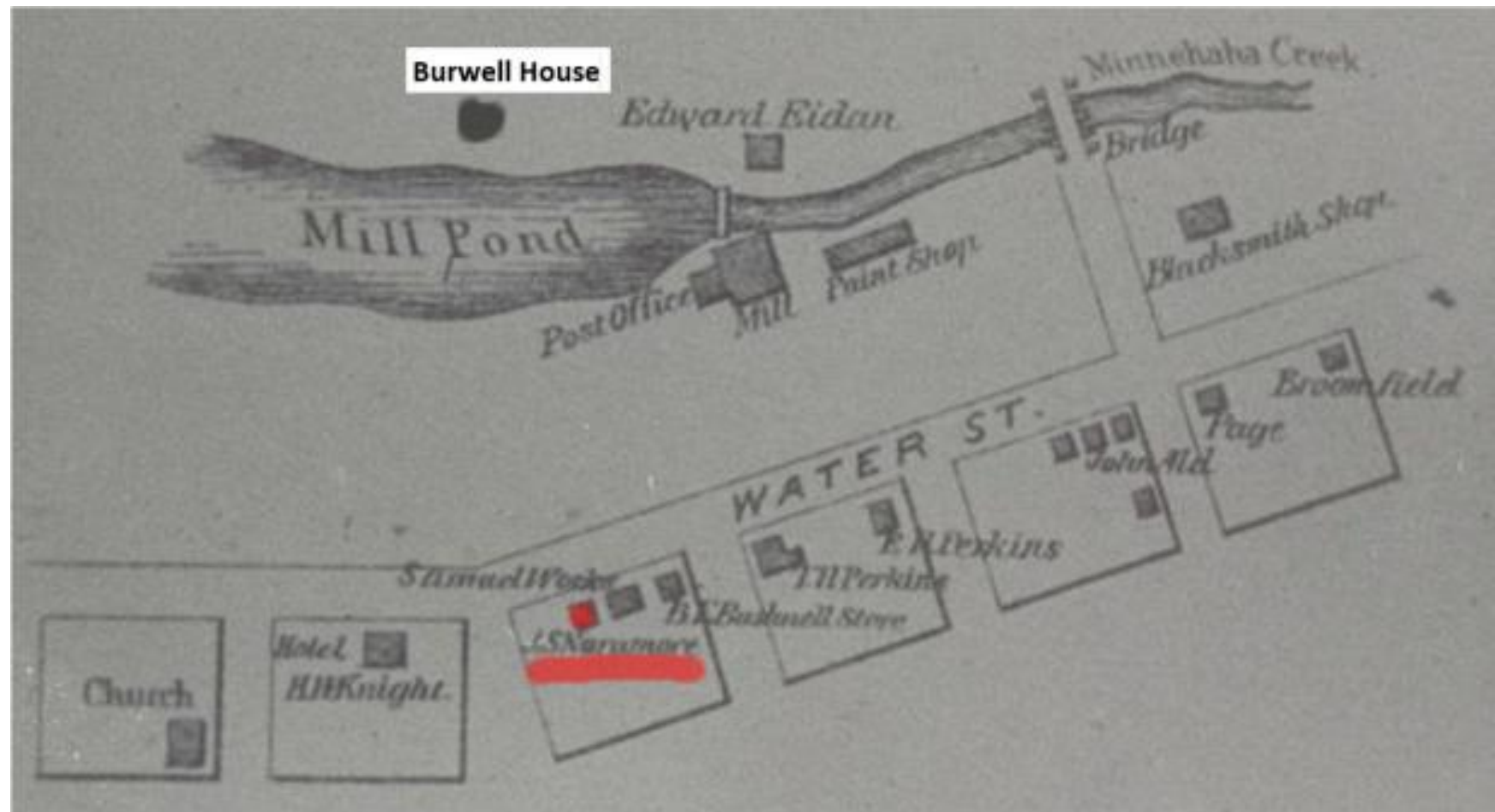








**Mr. Narramore lives next door – he runs the blacksmith shop,  
He can mend a pillow or make a rod  
And to him the farmers flock  
When they want their horses shod;**

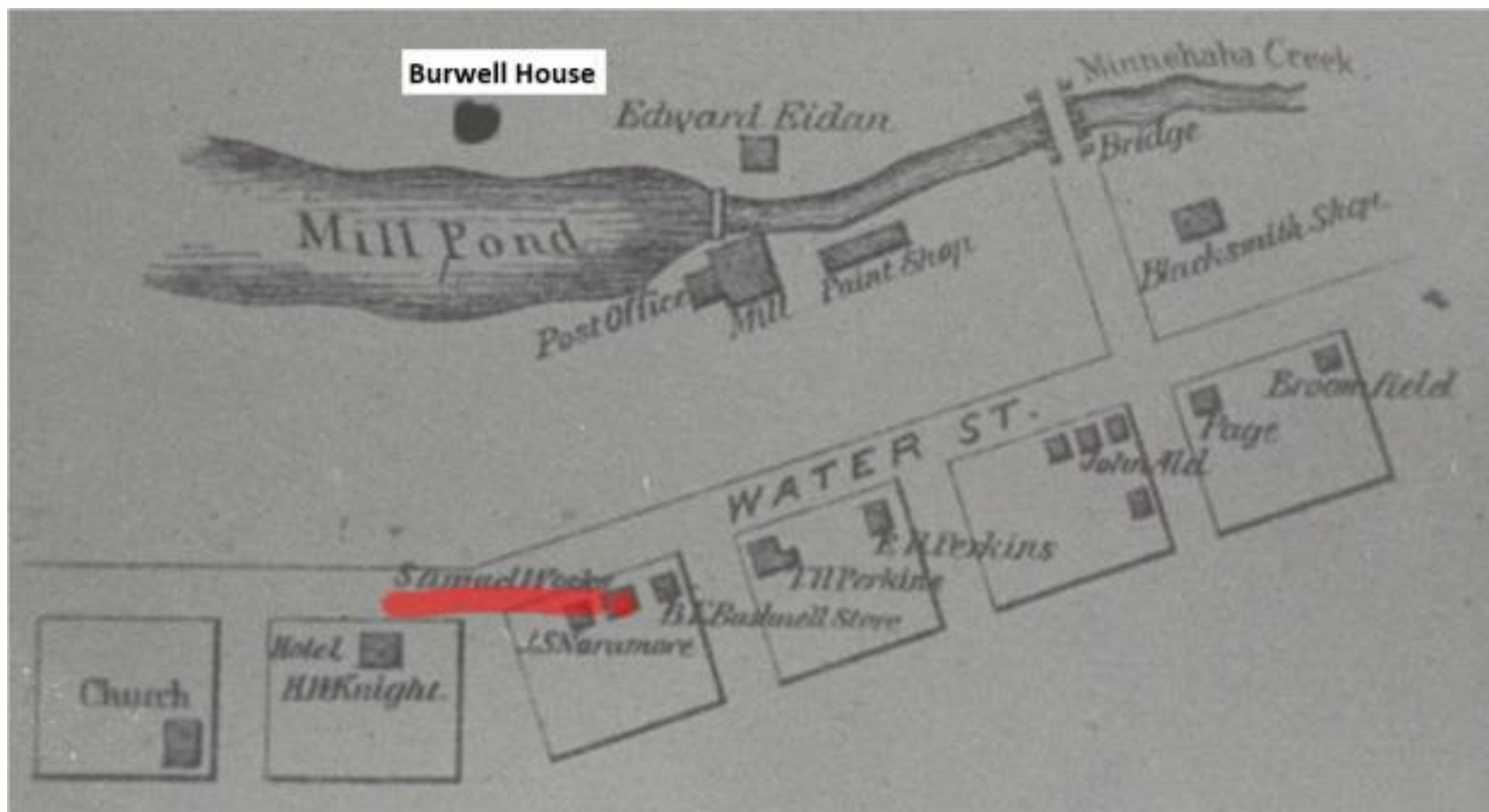








**Next comes Mr. Works, the wheelwright of the town,  
To him the folks their wagons take when're they do break down;**

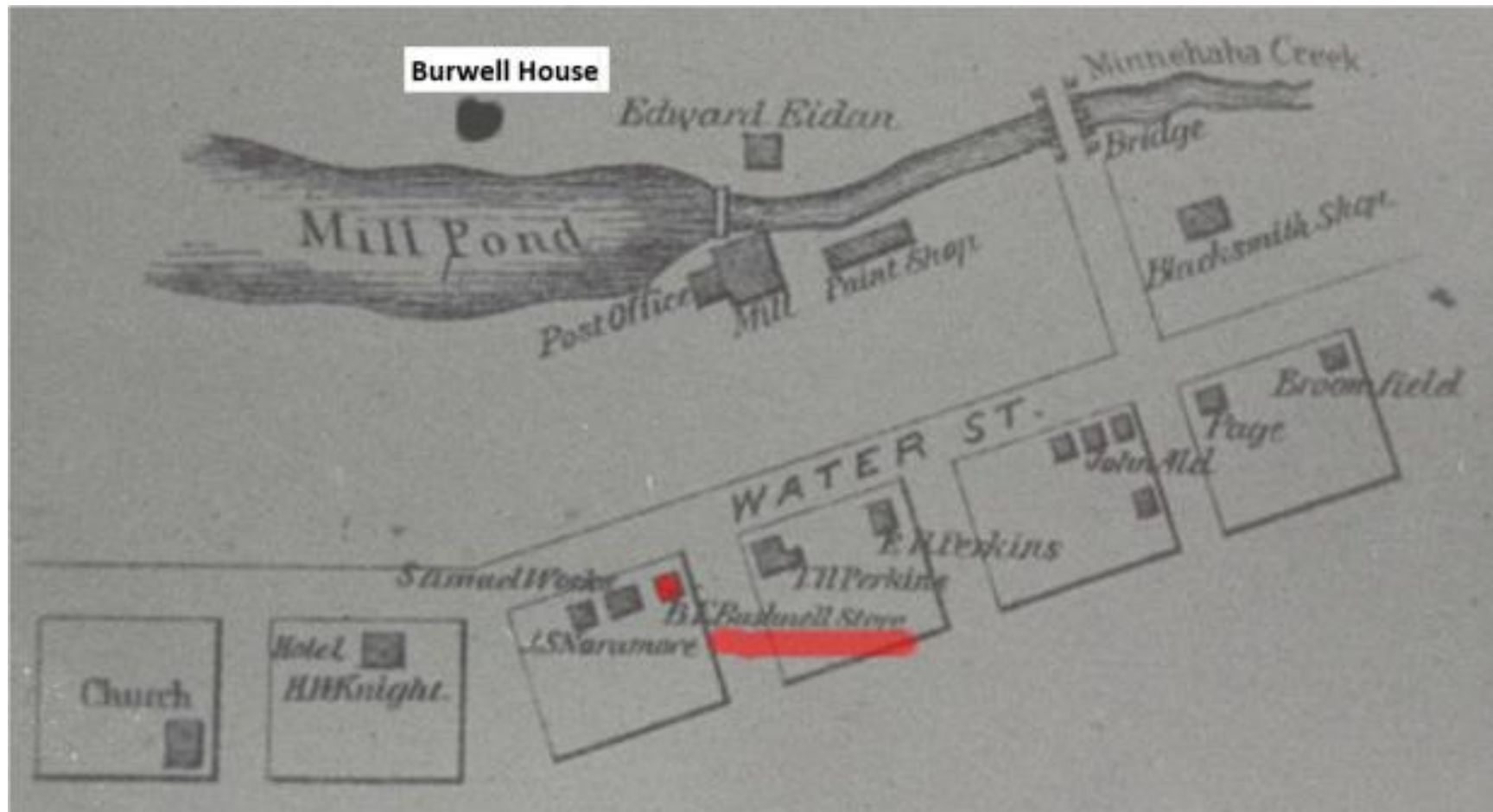








**Mr. Bushnell keeps the store - he keeps a splendid stock  
Of drygoods and hardware, drugs, groceries and whatnots;  
Also a fine assortment of candies, cheap and sweet,  
But a pocketful of cash you'll need when you go there to treat**





4 190

STATEMENT.

Minnetonka, Minn., 190

M

IN ACCT WITH

**W. S. FREAR & SON**

DEALERS IN

Groceries, Hardware, Dry Goods, Drugs, Flour and Feed.

W. S. FREAR & SON  
General Store at FREAR'S Corner  
DEERHAVEN  
Deerhaven, Minn. 55005  
P. O. DEERHAVEN, R. 1, D.

Get

Sold to

Address

**USE PILLSBURY'S BEST FLOUR**  
MAKES MORE BREAD MAKES BETTER BREAD

Amount Brought Forward

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	

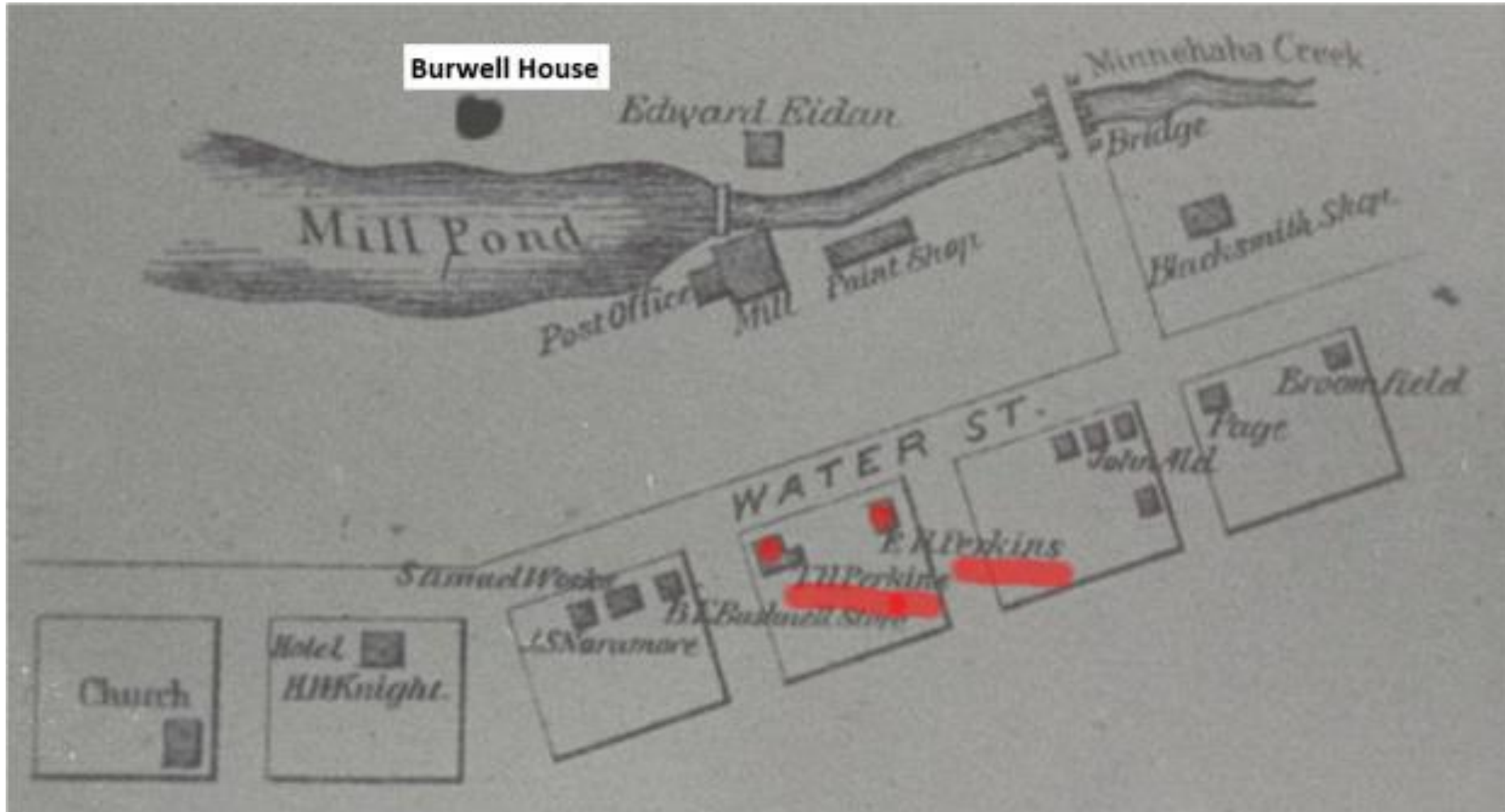


Store at Deerhaven

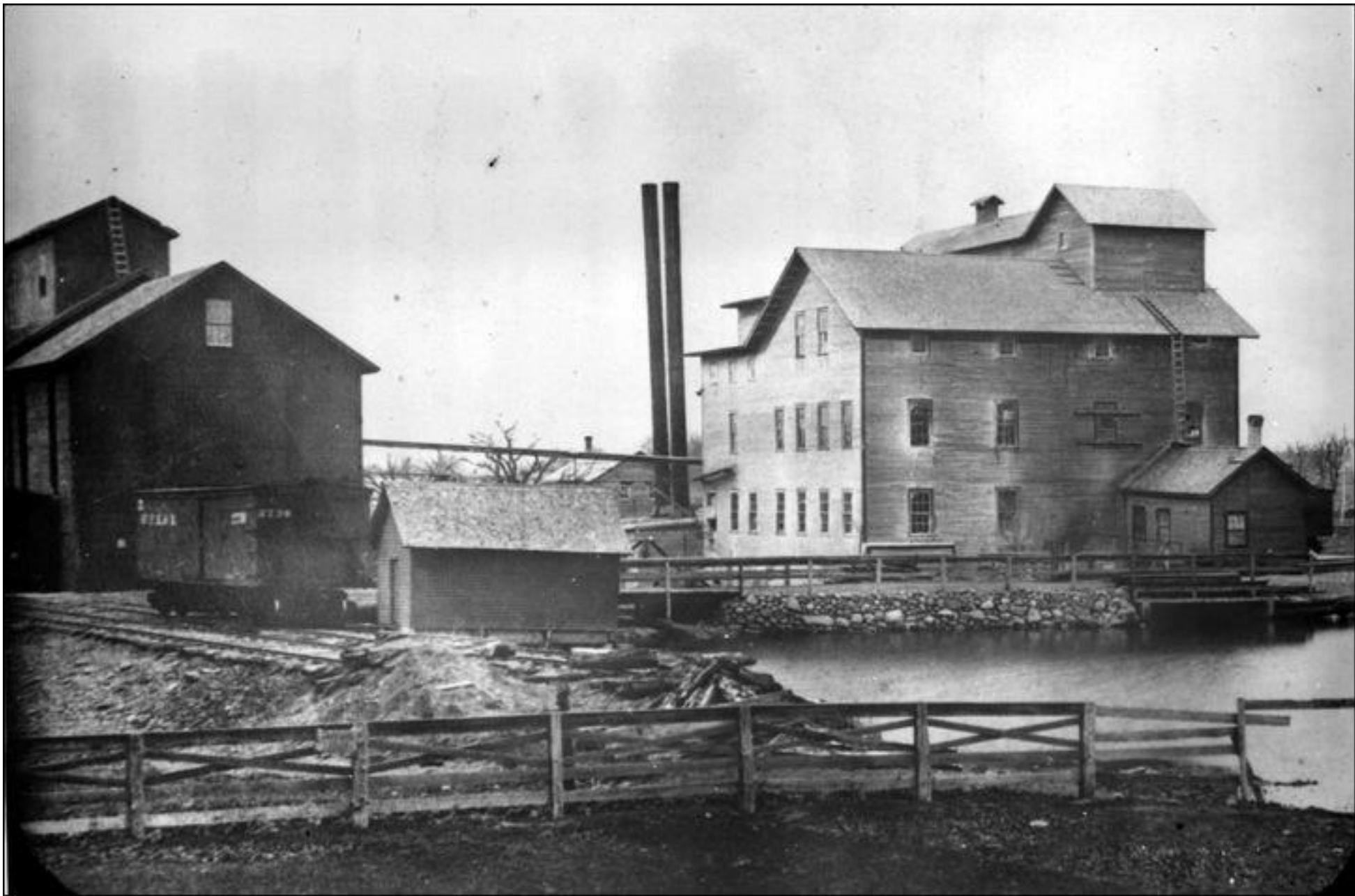




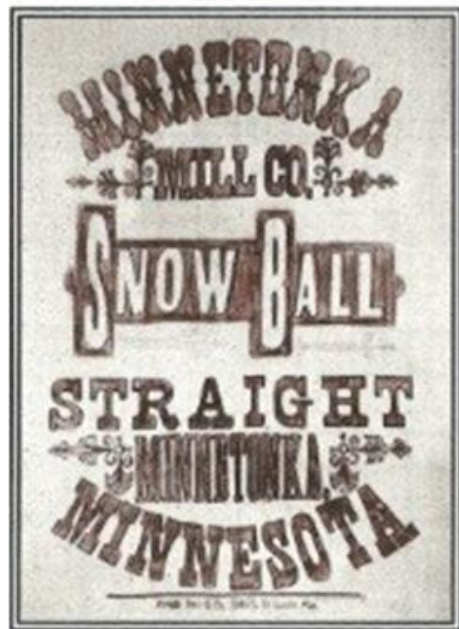
**Next comes Mr. Perkins, the landlord of the town,  
He owns the mill, a mile square of land, and all the houses 'round,  
And upon financial matters his mind is very sound;**







Thomas Perkins









# PUNCH'S ALMANACK FOR 1874.



**SHOCKING !**

*Dr. Jolliboy (who had been called away from a social Meeting at his Club). "THIRTEEN, FOURTEEN, F'FTEEN-TWO, F'FTEEN-FOUR, F'FTEEN-SIX—PAIR EIGHT—NOB'SH NINE——" (Drops off.) ["We draw a Veil," &c., &c.]*



MATTHEWS-HORN LONDON





HARVEST IN FINISTÈRE.

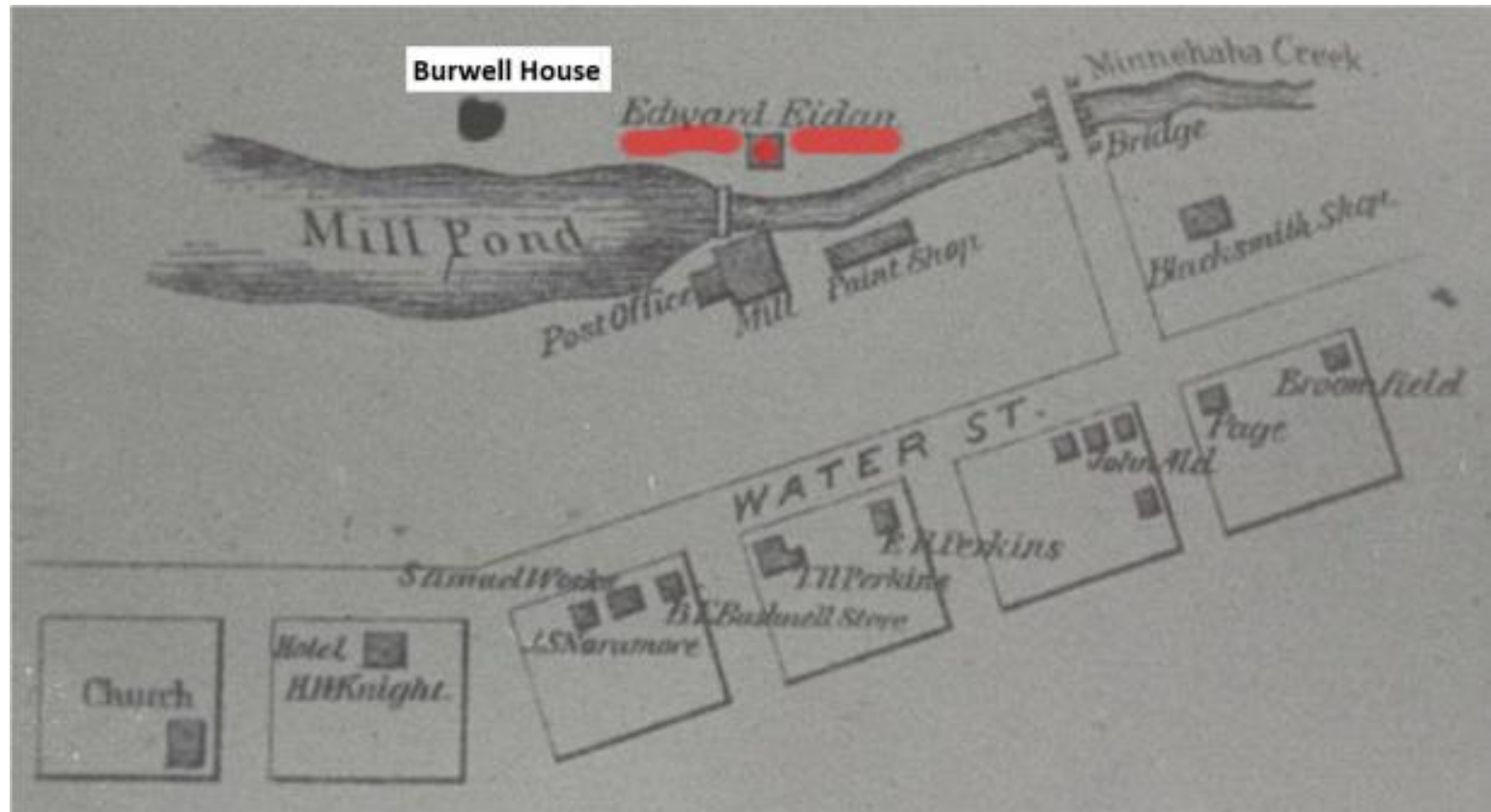


SOD HOUSE—EXTERIOR.

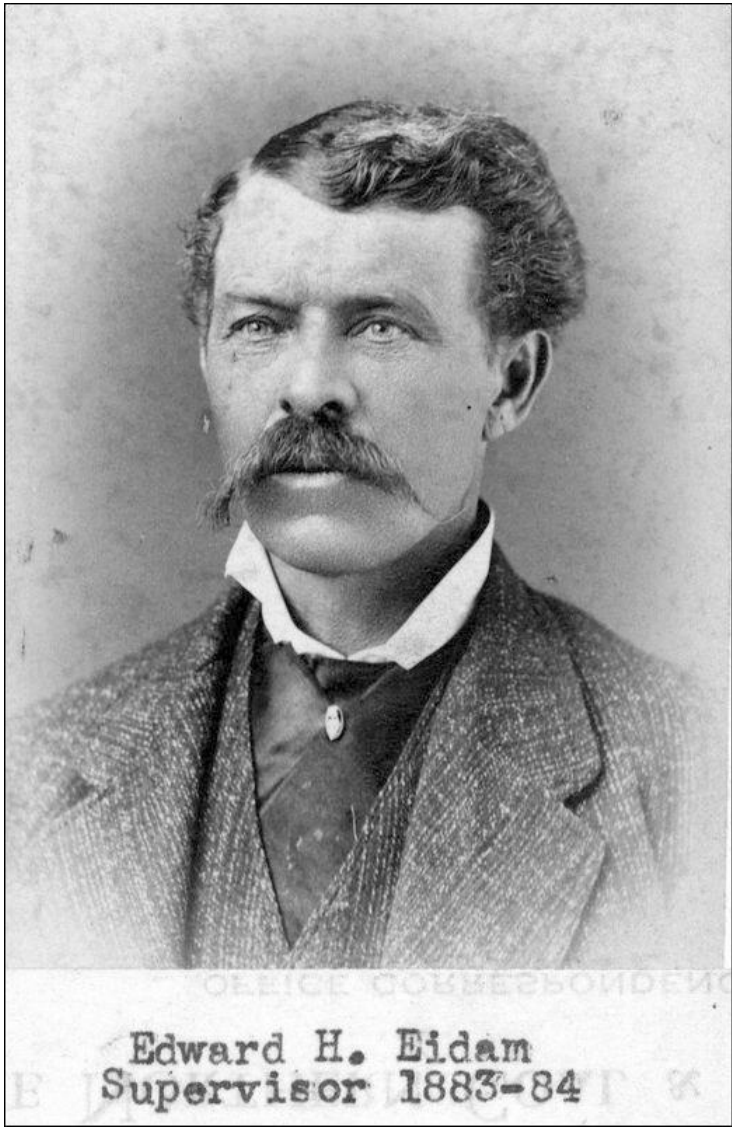




**Away down below, Ed Eidam lives, a cooper good, they say,  
We know that on the violin, he many tunes can play;  
All day long with the shop, you'll hear his hammer's sound,  
At night he fiddles for the hops they have around the town;**

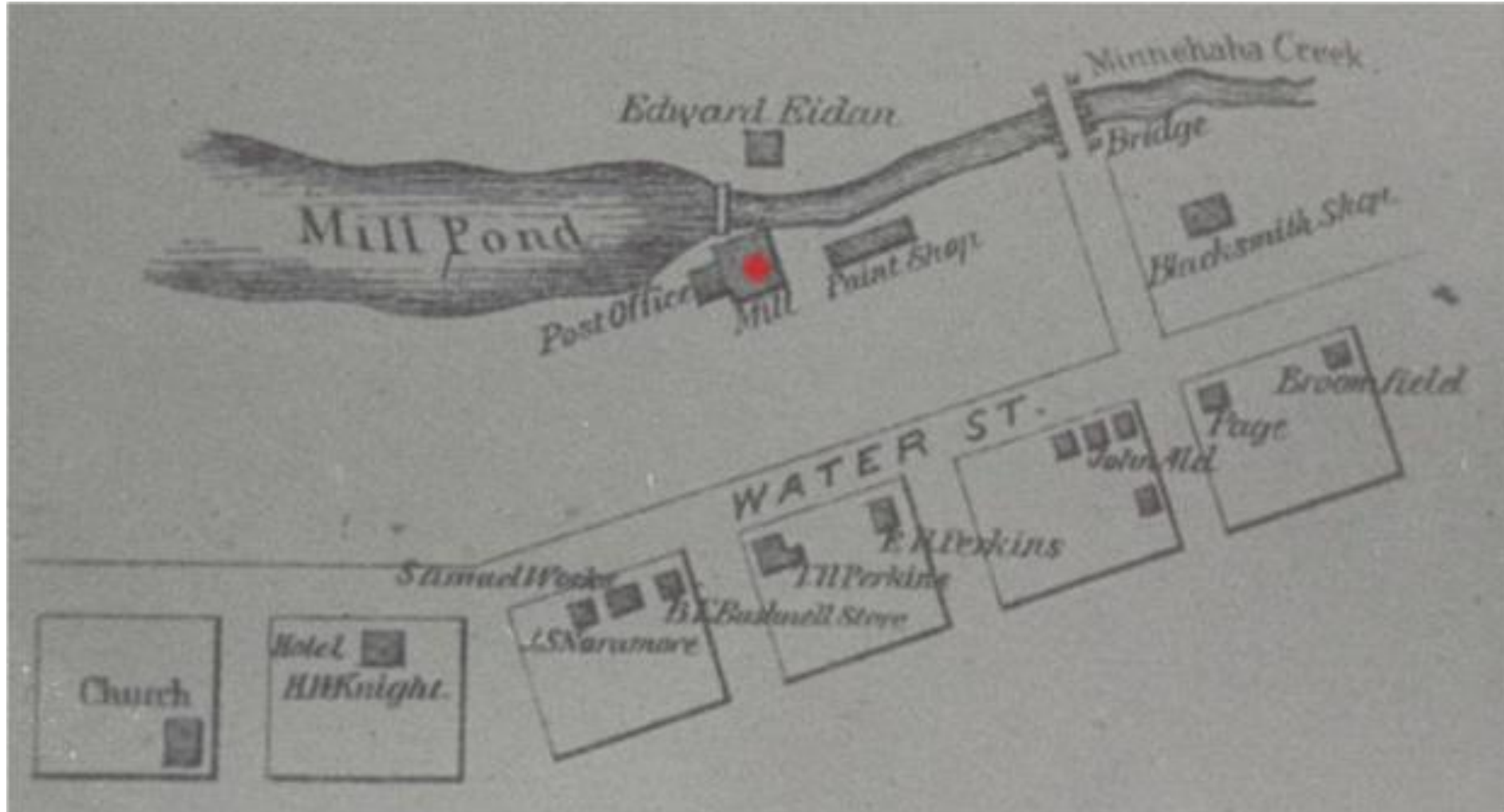




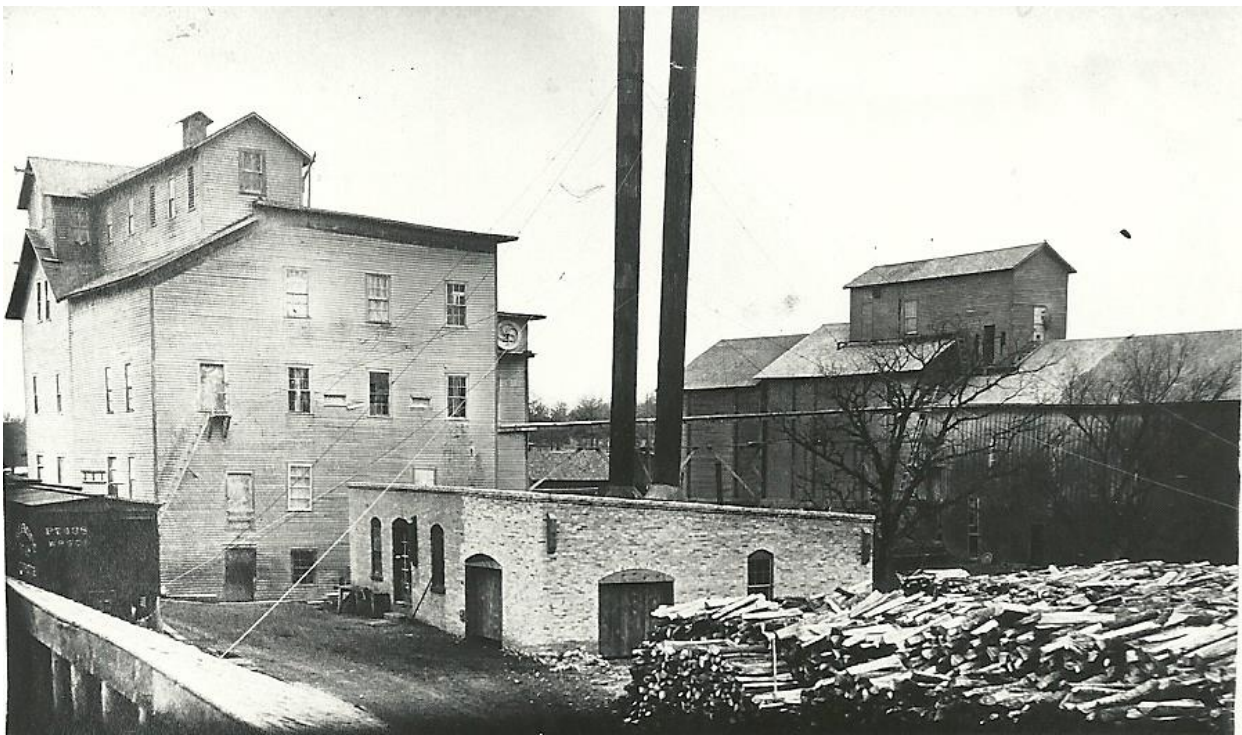




**Two millers live across the creek, the farmers' wheat they grind,  
Two better millers than they are, you'd hunt awhile to find.**





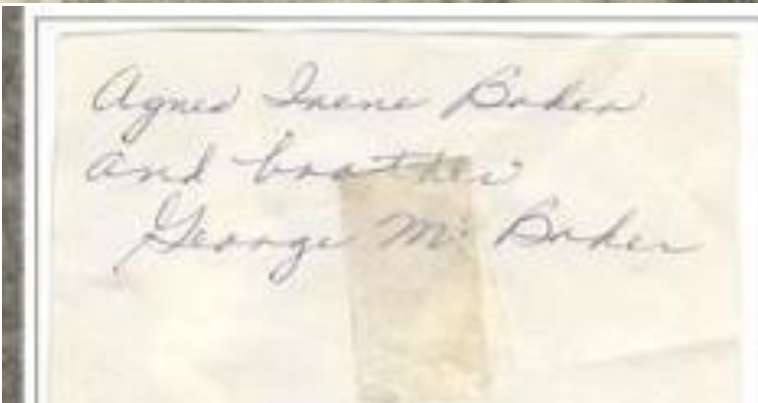
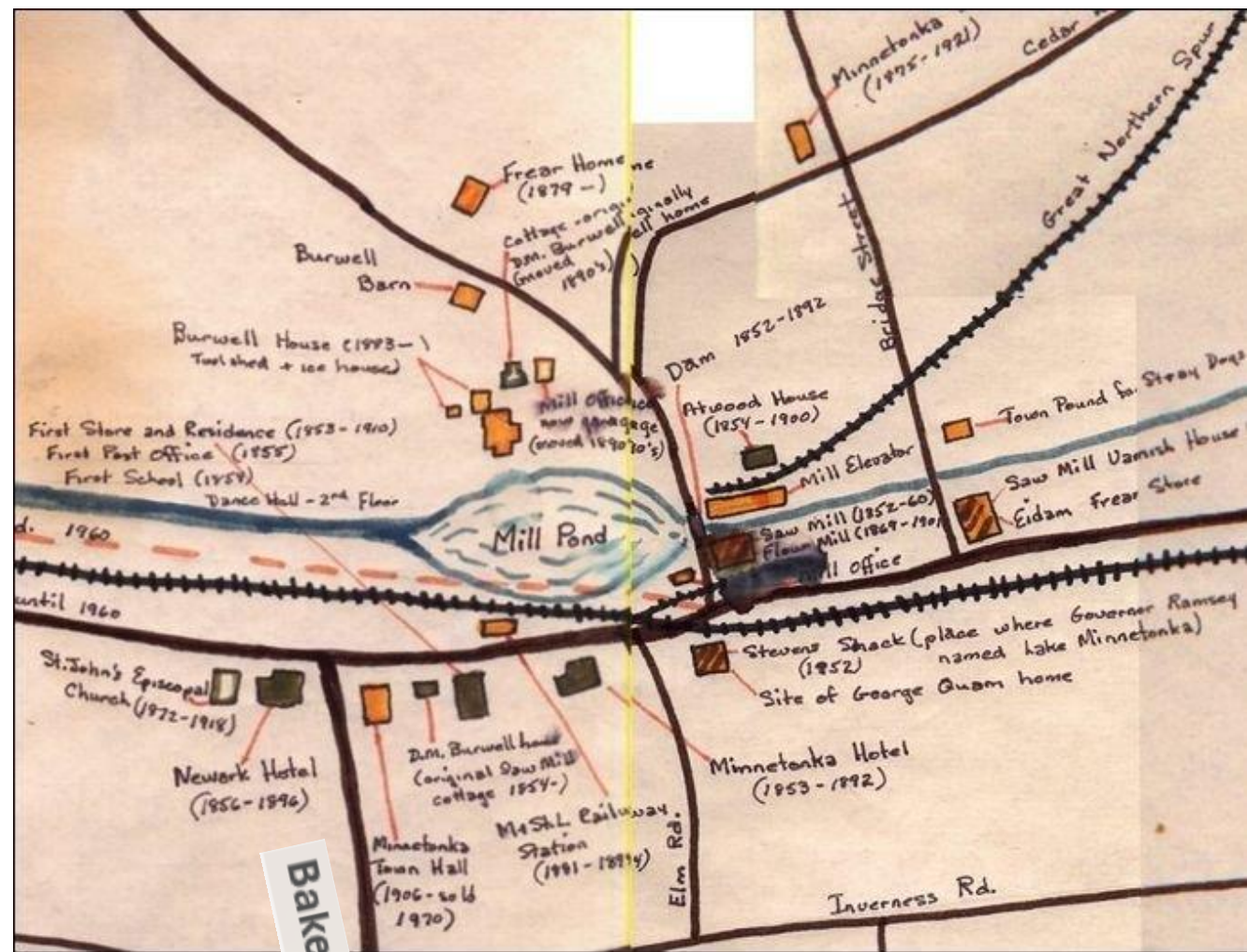




**Now this completes the number that puts this village on the rush  
No, there is Mr. Baker, who lives out in the brush,  
Just back a little ways and to go there is a treat,  
Or will be when he gets to making sugar from the beet."**







**Baker Road is named for the Baker family that owned a large farm by where West Junior High School is today.**





**Looking east at the Burwell House from Minnehaha Creek . On the right are the businesses mentioned in the poem.**

**THE END**