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The Historical Geography of Selected Farms in the Larimore, North Dakota Area

Louis M. Wangberg

THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF SELECTED FARMS IN THE LARIMORE, NORTH DAKOTA AREA

by

Louis M. Wangberg

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This thesis submitted by Louis M. Wangberg in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in the University of North Dakota, is hereby approved by the Committee under whom the work has been done.

Bernt L. Wills
Chairman

Duane L. Younggren

Henry J. Tomasek

Christopher J. Hamre
Dean of the Graduate School

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Louis M. Wangberg

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope of Study

This thesis is a geographic study of an American agricultural community set in historic perspective. This study is not meant to represent the typical in American agricultural communities, but it is intended to show the geographic aspects of the Larimore, North Dakota area in the early days of the white man's occupance there.

This study was prompted by the author's exposure to the region in a field methods course, and the subsequent knowledge that little specific study had dealt with the region involved. The author felt an added motivation because of the fact that those who had been intimately exposed to the historic factors of this study were rapidly disappearing.

This study will attempt to bring into consideration: (1) the geographic basis for the development of the subject farms, (2) the historical developments which resulted in conditions favorable to the existence of these farms, (3) the men who made the farms possible, (4) the operations of the farms themselves, and (5) the impact and nature of geographic influences upon the historic developments.

Methods Employed in the Study

Several different methods of research were used extensively to obtain the necessary information for the writing of this thesis, The methods used include: (1) library research, (2) maps, (3) interviews with the operators of several of these farms, (4) interviews with several older citizens of the area, and (5) personal observations.

The most vital source for this study was the North Dakota Room in the Chester Fritz Library at the University of North Dakota. It was there that the author was able to prove or disprove many of the rumors and stories collected by personal interviews with citizens of the Larimore area. Of almost indispensible use to this study were those personally saved bits of memoriabilia which older residents of Larimore generously offered to the author for his research. These items in the form of pamphlets, bulletins, circulars, and old books, were in many cases the only one of their kind, and they gave the author many clues about the farms investigated.

Trends in American Agriculture

American agriculture is beyond the halfway mark in its second major technological revolution. During the first of these upheavals on the rural landscape, between 1850 and 1910, the Indians of the Great Plains were confined to reservations, Negro slavery was abolished, and the total number of farms increased from 1.4 million to 6.4 million, most of them owned and operated by a single family.[1] These changes

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[1] United States, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1962), p. 607.

occured during the revolution of the mule and the horse, when animal power on a mass scale was harnessed to a marvelous assortment of tillage implements, and men in the United States were released from the hoe, the sickle, and the fear of hunger. Now agriculture is undergoing a second period of change--the revolution of science, mechanics, and heavy capital investment.

In 1935 the number of American farm units reached an all-time peak of 6.8 million. Since then there has been a precipitous drop in numbers. By 1961 there were only 3.7 million left. Within another decade or two this figure will very likely be cut back to 1.4 million.[1] Since this was the starting point in 1850, the cycle will, in a sense, be complete. Eventually when the story of how this nation grew and changed is written, the era of the small family-homestead may appear brief. With its demise, any influence which widespread security in land ownership may have had on the American way of thinking will cease to exist. A hundred years ago, when there were only 32 million people in the United States, about 65 percent of them lived on farms. By 1980, probably less than five percent of the people will live and work on the soil.[2] Although most of the last will continue to be devoted to husbandry, the newer ways of life will bear little resemblance to those of the past.

In 1800, during the time of the sickle, an average of 56 hours of labor were required to produce an acre of wheat. By 1880, when the horse-drawn reaper was widely employed, it took 20 man-hours

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

to grow and harvest an acre of wheat. Today on the Great Plains less than two hours of labor will do the job and do it better.[1] Now one can go into the country on a July day and see one man bale and load ten tons of hay in an hour. Twenty years ago, two men working with pitchforks could not have done that much in an entire afternoon.[2] By 1910, when horse-drawn implements had taken over a substantial part of corn production, 147 man-hours were required to raise 100 bushels. This was quite an improvement over the 344 man-hours needed in the hand-hoe days of 1800, but today a few exceptional farmers in the corn-belt raise 100 bushels of corn with less than four hours of labor.[3] Better seeds, pesticides, and more fertilizers, as well as improved machinery, have made this progress possible. The improved efficiency of modern agriculture is as fabulous as the conquest of outer space, and is far more significant for the welfare of mankind.

The number of horses and mules on American farms reached a peak of almost 27 million in 1917. By 1960 the total had dropped to three million.[4] In the same span of time the number of tractors increased from 51,000 to nearly five million.[5] Now aircraft are considered to be the most efficient spreaders of fertilizers and

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[1] United States, Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the United States--Colonial Times to 1957, (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 278.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

pesticides where large acreages require quick, uniform, treatment.

And what does all of this indicate? It indicates that agriculture is historically a field of great change and innovation. And that is what this study indicates. It is a study of a minute portion of that dynamic changing enterprise of agriculture. For a time the farms included in this thesis were considered to be the ideal answer to the development of the Larimore, North Dakota region. It is that period that this thesis hopes to set down, as it happened in its geographical context.

CHAPTER II

THE PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY OF THE NORTH

Geologic Formation

Less than ten thousand years ago, the last Pliestocene ice-sheet on the North American continent retreated for the last time. As it left, it formed glacial Lake Agassiz. Although this lake lasted only a geologically short 1,000 years or so, it has been responsible for providing one of the most important factors conducive to the development of the farms this paper is concerned with. This is the land. With its immense weight and shifting movements, the glacier remade the shape of the land as it advanced and retreated over the surface of the country. However, the last glacier which covered this area did far more than simply recarve the surface of the earth. The last glacier left a vast lake larger than the combined area of the Great Lakes. Beneath the surface of this large body of water, fine grains of dust and soil were slowly deposited on the lake floor. This in addition to the decay of many layers of prairie grass over many millenia left a rich soil on the former lake bottom. This resulted in some of the richest naturally found soil on the face of the earth. In addition, as the lake receded it left as many as thirty-one distinct beaches of sandy material. As a parting shot it formed deltas largely from the glacial outwash of its rapidly receding front. Since this large

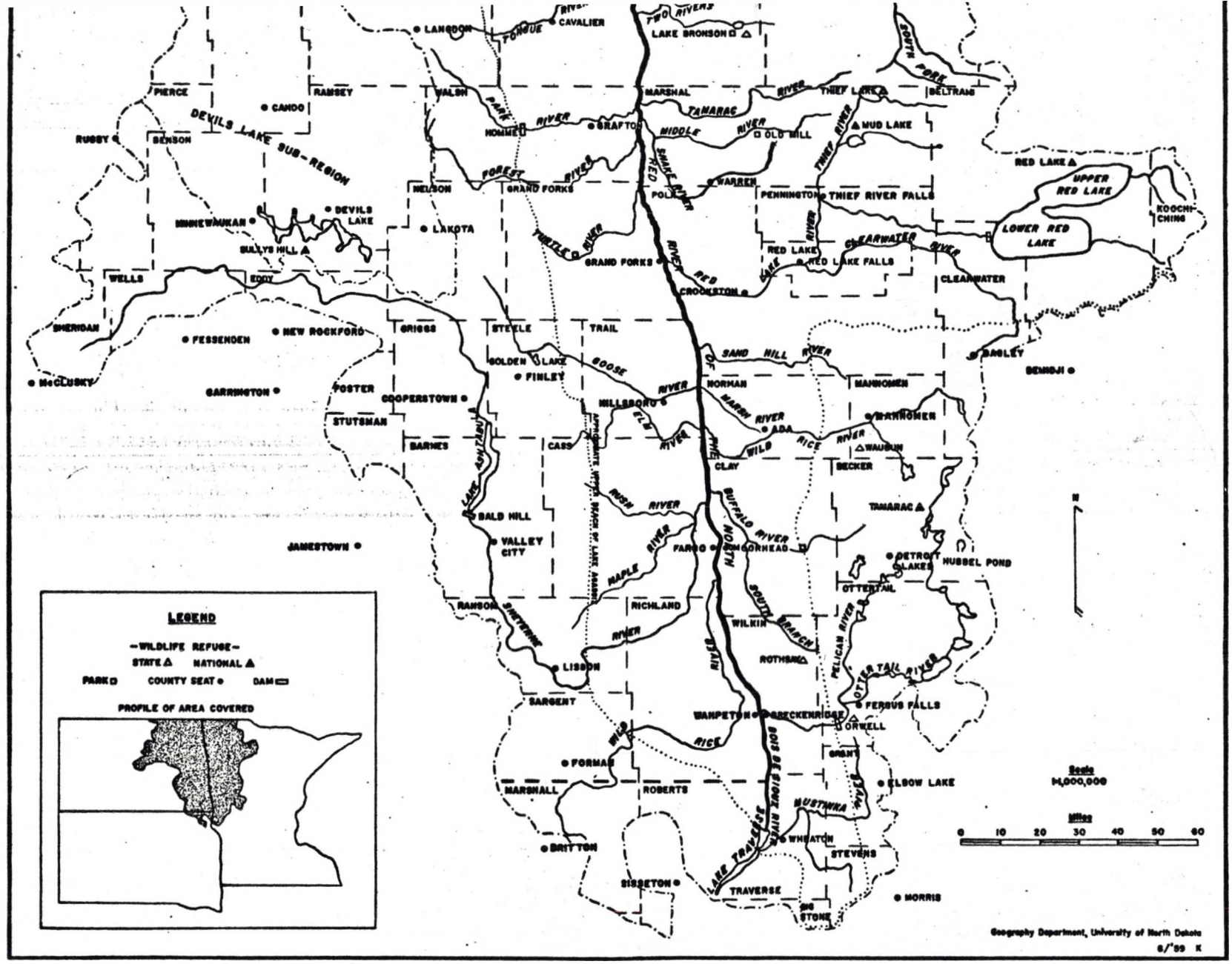

Fig. 1--Red River of the North Drainage Basin (within the U. S.). The small dotted line indicates the furthest extent of Lake Agassiz. (The Geography Department, University of North Dakota).

lake is so significant for this subject, and subject area, its evolution is indicated.

It is important to note that of all the geologic work done on this particular area, probably none has exceeded in quality that done by Warren Upham. Although the work Upham did was done long ago and seems sketchy in certain aspects, it is only because of the mammoth work involved in relation to the time spent doing this task. However, his coverage of this particular subject area was quite extensive, and is considered to be the primary geologic reference for the Red River Valley of the North.

Extending from northwest to southeast across the Larimore, North Dakota area are the visible remnants of the beaches of that vast glacial lake. The immense lake which filled the basin of the present Red River Valley of the North from Lake Traverse north to the Saskatchewan and Nelson Rivers of Canada was nearly 700 miles long at its greatest extent. The lake was of vast areal extent, encompassing approximately 110,000 square miles, or an area roughly equal to that of the state of Nevada. Only about 21,000 square miles of this was in present day United States, about 15,000 square miles in Minnesota, and 6,800 square miles in North Dakota.[1]

The lake was named "Lake Agassiz" in honor of Professor Louis Agassiz (1807-1879), the first prominent advocate of the theory that the drift was produced by land ice. His observations of the Swiss

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[1]Wilson M. Laird, The Geology and Ground Water Resources of the Emerado Quadrangle, North Dakota Geological Survey, Bulletin No. 17 (Grand Forks, 1944), p. 3.

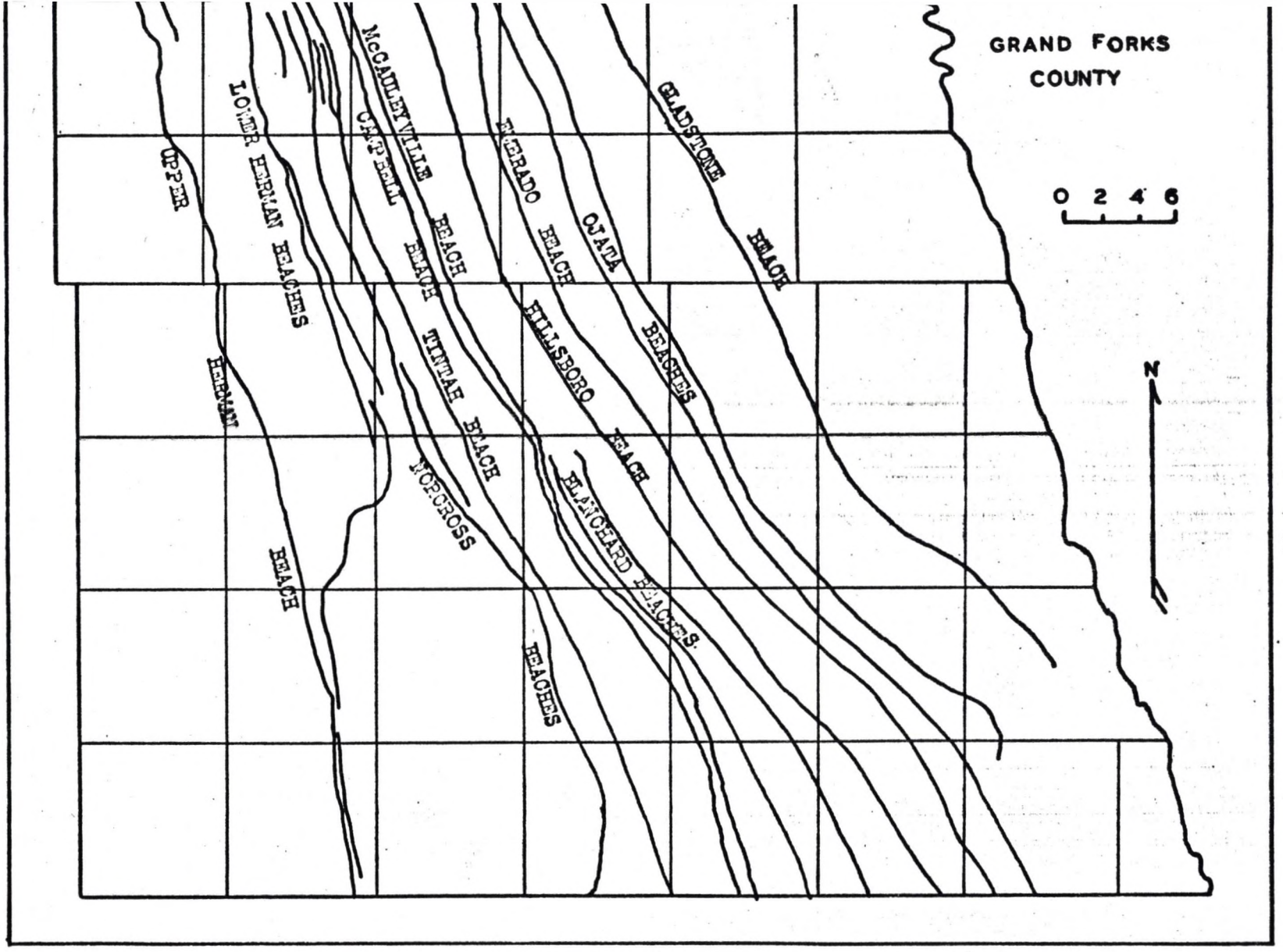

Fig. 2--Location of the Lake Agassiz Beaches in Grand Forks County, North Dakota (Adapted from Warren Upham, The Glacial Lake Agassiz, Plate XXIV).

Beaches Formed While Lake Agassiz Flowed South.	Beaches Formed While Lake Agassiz Flowed Northeast.
1. Herman # 1	18. Blanchard # 1
2. Herman # 2	19. Blanchard # 2
3. Herman # 3	20. Blanchard # 3
4. Herman # 4	21. Hillsboro
5. Herman # 5	22. Emerado # 1
6. Herman # 6	23. Emerado # 2
7. Herman # 7	24. Ojata # 1
8. Norcross # 1	25. Ojata # 2
9. Norcross # 2	26. Gladstone
10. Tintah # 1	27. Burnside
11. Tintah # 2	28. Ossowa
12. Campbell # 1	29. Stonewall
13. Campbell # 2	30. Niverville # 1
14. Campbell # 3	31. Niverville # 2
15. McCauleyville # 1	
16. McCauleyville # 2	
17. McCauleyville # 3	

Table 1.--The beaches of Glacial Lake Agassiz in order of formation. (Adapted from Warren Upham, The Glacial Lake Agassiz, pp. XXII-XXIII).

glaciers and his principal writings concerning them and the glacial origin of the drift were during the years 1836-1846 just previous to his coming to America where he spent the rest of his life.[1]

Lake Agassiz and her sister glacial lakes have not existed within historical time. The vast ice-sheet which dammed the north-sloping Red River Valley is estimated to have disappeared six to ten thousand years ago. It was at the end of this Pleistocene time that Lake Agassiz covered the Red River Valley. In all, it is calculated to have existed no more than 1000-1500 years, or about half of the time that it took the North American ice-sheet to disappear.[2] At its higher levels Lake Agassiz flowed south through Lake Traverse and Big Stone Lake to the Minnesota River Valley which was first described in 1863 by G. K. Warren in connection with a survey of the Minnesota Valley. As a tribute to Warren for his important scientific work here, Upham gave the outlet of Lake Agassiz the name River Warren.[3]

As a normal result of wave action and because of fierce wind storms which lapped the waves of Lake Agassiz against the shore at successively lower levels as it continued to disappear, numerous beaches were left as visible evidence of this lake. Depending upon how carefully one analyzes these beaches, he gets any variation of

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[1]Warren Upham, The Glacial Lake Agassiz, U. S. Geological Survey Monographs, Vol. XXV (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1895), p. 5.

[2]Ibid., pp. 238-240.

[3]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

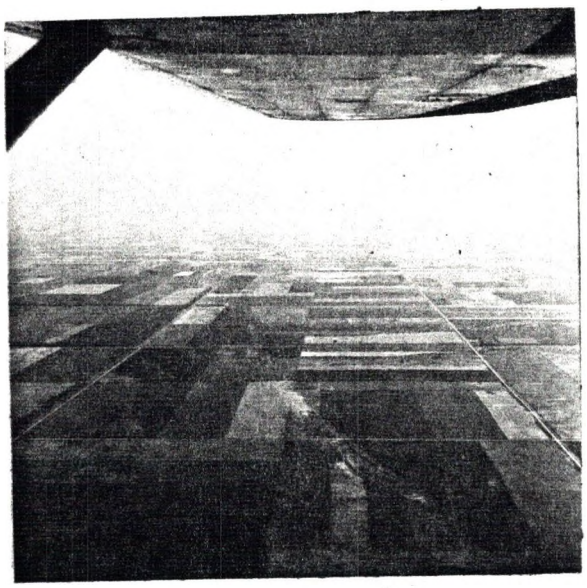

Fig. 3—Aerial view of Upper Herman Beach, three miles west of Larimore.

Fig. 4—Aerial view of Campbell and McCauleyville Beaches east of Arvilla.

breakdown from the most complete as given by Upham to the more general.[1] The further north one goes, the more numerous the beaches become. There has been considerable argument about the exact time when each of these beaches was formed. The greatest argument centers around the dividing line between the time when the lake ceased to flow southward and began to be a lake with a primarily northern orientation. Leverett in a later work argued against the contention of Upham that the lake flowed south while the McCauleyville beaches were formed. He felt that this was impossible, and his work is later and based on much extensive and specialized research.[2]

In the subject area of this thesis, which is roughly Grand Forks County, a number of beaches are involved. In Grand Forks County there are the Herman, Lower Herman, Norcross, Tintah, Campbell, McCauleyville, Blanchard, Hillsboro, Emerado, Ojata, and Gladstone beaches.[3] These are sandy ridges built from five to fifteen feet high by the waves of old Lake Agassiz. On the landward side they appear to have a gradual slope. Their consistency varies from coarse gravel to very fine sandy-loam. Today the frequently found gravel excavations of the Red River Valley are located on these beaches and are the surest indication to a novice that he is near or on one of the beaches.

Along the edges of Lake Agassiz may be found areas with underlying beds consisting largely of fine sandy material. These are the

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[1] Upham, pp. XXII-XXIII.

[2] Frank Leverett, Quaternary Geology of Minnesota and Parts of Adjacent States, U. S. Geological Survey, Professional Paper No. 161 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1932), p. 126.

[3] Upham, p. 335.

Sheyenne, Buffalo, Sandhill, Pembina, Assiniboine, and Elk Valley deltas. The Elk Valley Delta is one most pertinent to this study since most of the farms of the study lie on its fertile soils. As Leverett notes, it is a question whether the name delta should be applied to this area or not, since rivers appear to have had a minor position in the formation of the Elk Valley Delta, with the bulk of the deposition coming from glacial outwash.[1] All of these deltas are of considerable size. The Elk Valley Delta runs south from McCanna past Larimore for thirty-five miles to Portland. It is about six to twelve miles in width and covers a total area of approximately 300 square miles. At Larimore it is about sixty feet thick. Generally, however, it will be found to be from thirty to forty feet thick. This fine sandy and loam soil is somewhat better for agriculture than the alluvial clay found lower in the valley.[2]

Mother Nature is an imperfect craftsman at her best, and she seldom follows the perfect plans a human engineer would lay out for building or destruction. However, in the case of the formation of the Red River Valley of the North as a nearly perfect agricultural area, it is doubtful if even the most complete set of blue-prints that an engineer could design would have produced a much better result.

Soils

Since the farms under study are found primarily in the western half of Grand Forks County, this treatment of soils is limited to that region.

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[1] Leverett, p. 127.

[2] Upham, pp. 333-336.

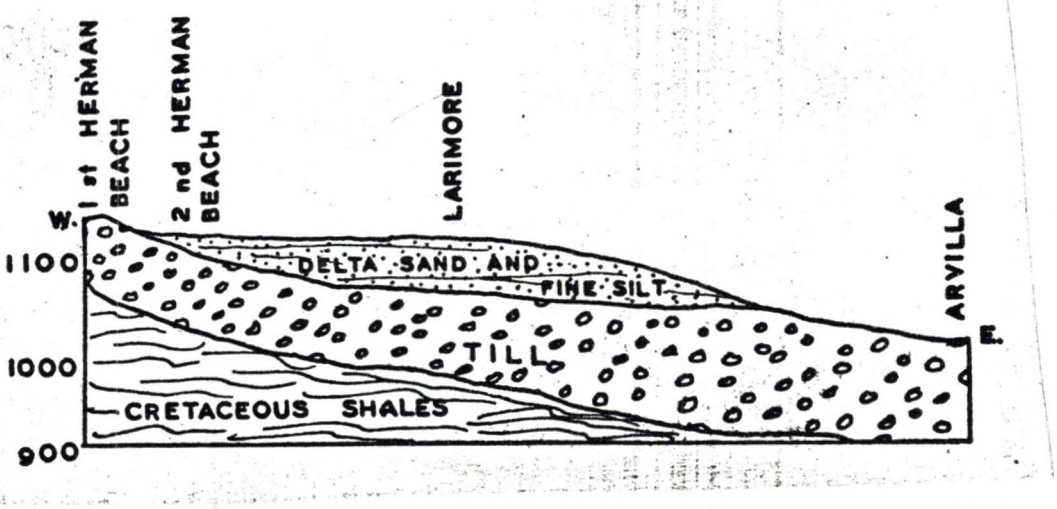

Fig. 5--Section across the delta of the Elk Valley. Horizontal scale, 3 miles to an inch. (Adapted from Warren Upham, The Glacial Lake Agassiz, Fig. 14.).

The soils of this region belong to the extensive Chernozem group which are developed in temperate subhumid grassland regions of our world. They are among the most fertile and productive of all soils. In this study area they are of glacial origin. The extensive, nearly level to gently undulating areas of soils are derived from silt, clay, and sandy materials which were reworked by water and wind and then deposited as lake or stream alluvium in terraces. The principal soils found in this region are of the Barnes-Hamerly, Hamerly-Svea-Vallers, Glyndon-Gardena, Ulen-Embden-Hecla, and Silz-Ops-Antler associations extending from west to east and deposited in a generally northwest to southeast direction.[1]

In this part of the county they are separated and joined by six beaches of old Lake Agassiz which contain sandy and gravely soils. The first, or highest beach line, is located approximately

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[1]Otto Sanderson, "Western Grand Forks County Soil Conservation District. Program of Work and Plan of Action," (unpublished report, Soil Conservation Service, 1962), pp. 2-4.

three miles west of Larimore. This is the Upper Herman Beach. The second beach line, which is the Lower Herman Beach, passes through the east side of Larimore and extends northwest joining the third beach line which contains the Norcross and Tintah beaches. This junction occurs one mile west of Orr, and the beaches extend southeast across a line two miles west of Arvilla. East of Arvilla three other beaches occur; they are the Campbell-McCauleyville-Blanchard groups of beaches, the Hillsboro Beach, and the Emerado Beach.[1] Farming on these beach lands is more of a challenge, since moisture tends to be inadequate in all but the more moist years.

On the western side of the Upper Herman Beach are either Barnes-Hamerly or Hamerly-Svea-Vallers soil associations. The Barnes-Hamerly soils are deep, moderately well drained loamy soils on the rolling glacial till uplands. Similarly, the Hamerly-Svea-Vallers association soils are deep, loamy soils on the gently undulating glacial till uplands. Both soils are limy and are of a medium texture. In addition there are some soils of the Buse-Zell-Fairdale association. This group is a thin, loamy soil on the rolling to steep slopes and channeled bottomland of the North Branch of the Turtle River.[2]

From the Norcross-Tintah beaches west to the Upper Herman Beach a strip of soils includes the Glyndon-Gardena association and the Ulen-Embden-Hecla association. The soils of the Glyndon-Gardena association are deep, moderately well drained loam and silt

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[1] Ibid.

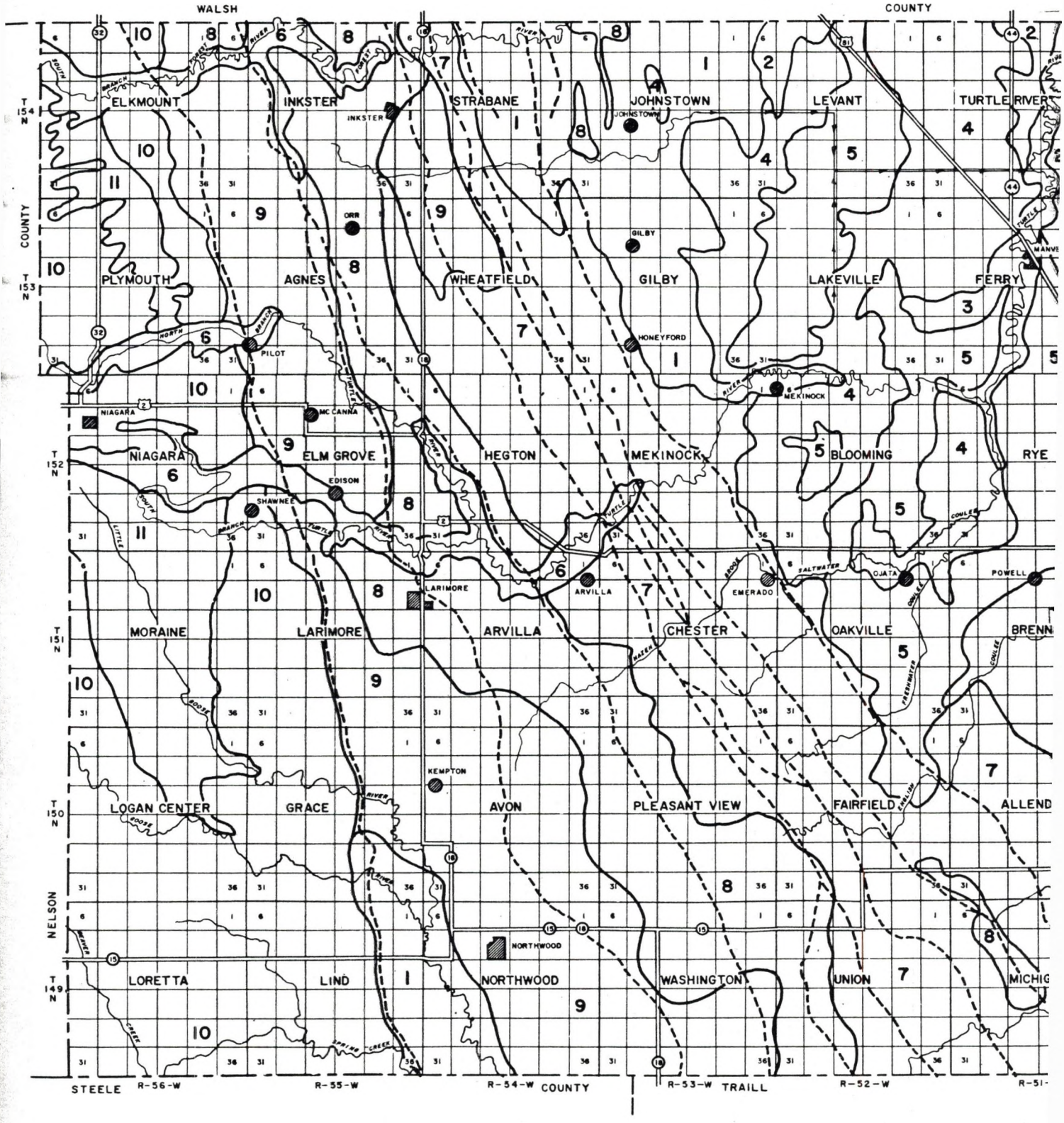
[2] Ibid.

Fig. 6—General Soil Map, Grand Forks County, North Dakota (United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service).

ED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

GENERAL SOIL MAP

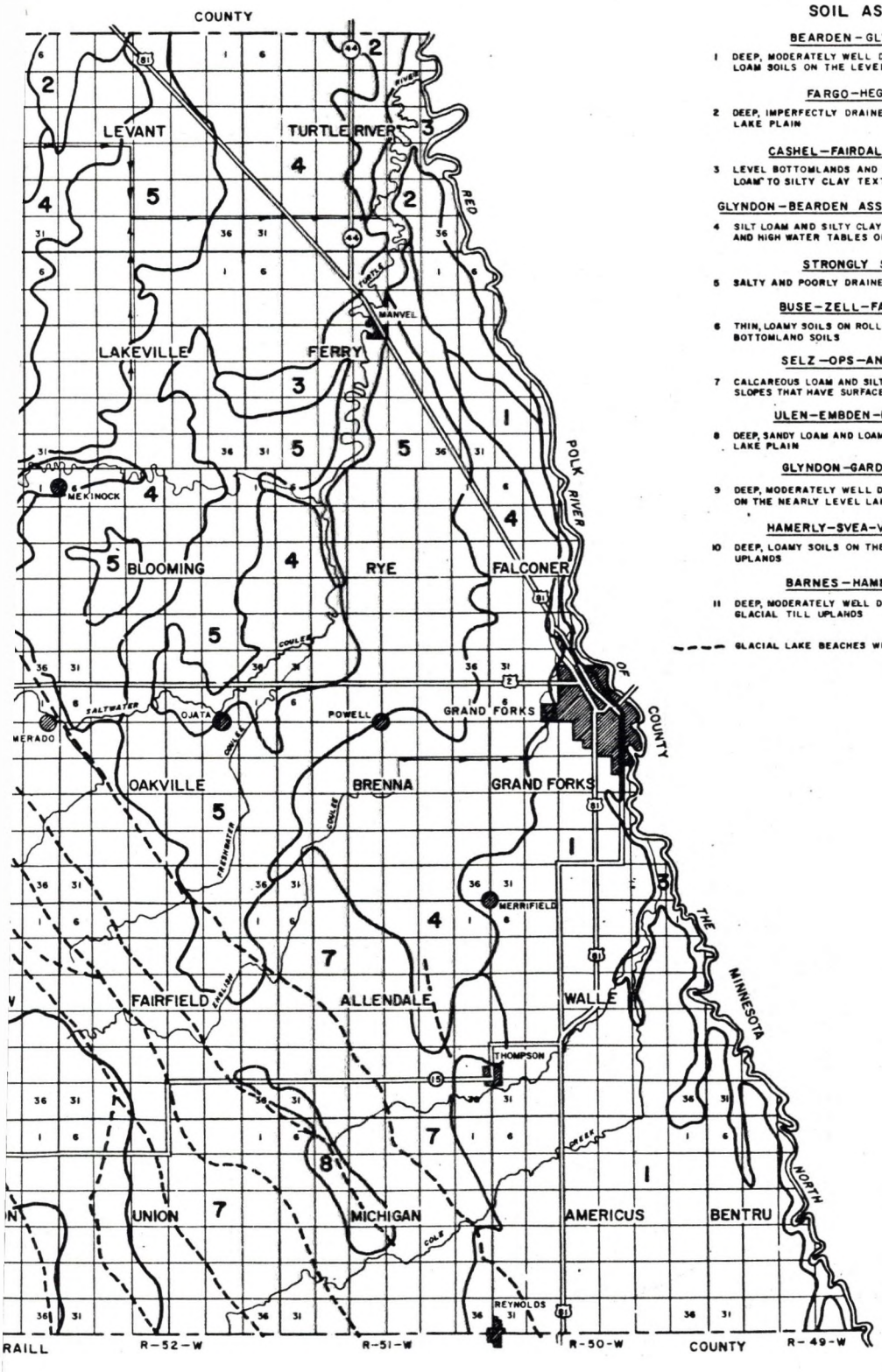
GRAND FORKS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA



SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE

RAL SOIL MAP

KS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA



LEGEND

SOIL ASSOCIATIONS

BEARDEN – GLYNDON ASSOCIATION

1 DEEP, MODERATELY WELL DRAINED SILT LOAM AND SILTY CLAY LOAM SOILS ON THE LEVEL LAKE PLAIN

FARGO – HEGNE ASSOCIATION

2 DEEP, IMPERFECTLY DRAINED SILTY CLAY SOILS ON THE LEVEL LAKE PLAIN

CASHEL – FAIRDALE – ZELL ASSOCIATION

3 LEVEL BOTTOMLANDS AND SLOPING CHANNEL BANK SOILS WITH LOAM TO SILTY CLAY TEXTURES

GLYNDON – BEARDEN ASSOCIATION (MODERATELY SALINE)

4 SILT LOAM AND SILTY CLAY LOAM SOILS WITH MODERATE SALINITY AND HIGH WATER TABLES ON NEARLY LEVEL LAKE PLAIN SLOPES

STRONGLY SALINE SOILS

5 SALTY AND POORLY DRAINED SOILS ON NEARLY LEVEL SLOPES

BUSE – ZELL – FAIRDALE ASSOCIATION

6 THIN, LOAMY SOILS ON ROLLING TO STEEP SLOPES AND CHANNELED BOTTOMLAND SOILS

SELZ – OPS – ANTLER ASSOCIATION

7 CALCAREOUS LOAM AND SILTY CLAY LOAM SOILS ON NEARLY LEVEL SLOPES THAT HAVE SURFACE DRAINAGE AND STONE PROBLEMS

ULEN – EMBDEN – HECLA ASSOCIATION

8 DEEP, SANDY LOAM AND LOAMY SAND SOILS ON THE NEARLY LEVEL LAKE PLAIN

GLYNDON – GARDENA ASSOCIATION

9 DEEP, MODERATELY WELL DRAINED LOAM AND SILT LOAM SOILS ON THE NEARLY LEVEL LAKE PLAIN

HAMERLY – SVEA – VALLERS ASSOCIATION

10 DEEP, LOAMY SOILS ON THE GENTLY UNDULATING GLACIAL TILL UPLANDS

BARNES – HAMERLY ASSOCIATION

11 DEEP, MODERATELY WELL DRAINED LOAMY SOILS ON THE ROLLING GLACIAL TILL UPLANDS

– – – GLACIAL LAKE BEACHES WITH DEEP, SANDY AND THIN GRAVELLY SOILS

5,P-18,941

loam soils on the nearly level lake plain. Those of the Ulen-Embden-Hecla association are deep, sandy loam and loamy sand soils on the nearly level lake plain. Both of these groups are silty and of medium texture. Also included in this strip are some of the Buse-Zell-Fairdale association soils, again along the Turtle River.[1]

The rest of the area is between the Campbell-McCauleyville-Blanchard groups of beaches west to the Norcross-Tintah beaches. In this region the soils are of the Silz-Ops-Antler association. They are calcereous loam and silty clay loam soils on the nearly level slopes that have surface drainage and stone problems. Generally they are of a sandy texture. Again in this region there are some of the Buse-Zell-Fairdale association soils along the Turtle River.[2]

Rather generally, these are the soils of the region where most of the farms this paper is concerned with are found. They are rich, productive, and especially excellent for the extensive small grain crops which are grown in this region so successfully.

Climate

Climate is one of the greatest natural resources of North Dakota, and particularly of the Red River Valley of the North. Climate is a natural resource that cannot be exhausted by exploitation as is the case with most natural resources, such as soils, forests, and mines. Since this resource is so valuable, and since climate has such a direct bearing on the development of this subject, it will be examined in some detail.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

The Red River Valley of the North is located just east of the geographical center of the North American continent. Because of this, the area has a continental climate. The region generally receives about twenty inches of precipitation per year,[1] so it is regarded as being in somewhat of a transition zone with the more moist humid continental climate to the east, and the drier steppe climate further west. The area may be described typically as having cold, snowy winters, warm summer days, and cool summer nights. The stifling hot, humid summer day common to some parts of the nation are rare in the Red River Valley.

Data from the Larimore station is used whenever available or wherever applicable. However, in many cases data from the Grand Forks station is used since it is more readily available and in many cases more reliable.[2] Also since they are approximately in the same latitude and only twenty miles apart, the figures are often interchangeable.

Precipitation

More than three-fourths of the 20.37 inches of average annual precipitation received in Larimore falls during the all-important growing season.[3] With from 2.50 to 3.50 average inches of precipitation falling each month from May to August, moisture is provided

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[1]Frank J. Bavendick, Climate and Weather in North Dakota (Bismarck: U. S. Weather and North Dakota State Water Conservation Commission, 1952), p. 62.

[2]United States, Weather Bureau, Climatological Data: North Dakota, Vols. LVII-LXX (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1948-1960).

[3]Sanderson, p. 68.

TABLE 2

PRECIPITATION AT GRAND FORKS DURING THE YEARS INDICATED[a]

STATION: GRAND FORKS

LONGITUDE: 97° 05' ELEVATION: 830' LATITUDE: 47° 55'

	TOTAL PRECIPITATION												GREATEST RAINFALL			GROWING SEASON
YEAR	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	ANNUAL	AMT.	DATE	RAINFALL
1960	0.64	0.53	0.27	1.58	1.59	2.98	3.77	3.74	1.33	1.70	0.60	0.65	19.38	1.58	6- 7	13.41
1959	0.25	0.62	0.09	0.23	2.96	3.73	3.51	2.94	1.14	3.18	1.08	0.26	19.99	2.36	9-11	14.28
1958	0.09	0.19	0.18	0.75	1.31	2.85	5.09	1.32	1.24	1.23	3.16	0.41	17.82	1.72	6-14	11.81
1957	0.30	0.51	0.78	0.98	3.21	3.78	2.20	4.04	7.54	1.94	0.93	0.11	25.67	3.03	9- 2	21.75
1956	1.10	0.41	1.33	0.34	3.05	2.99	1.41	5.19	0.33	1.45	1.40	0.63	19.63	1.16	8-31	13.31
1955	0.45	0.96	0.97	0.99	3.19	4.37	5.02	1.99	1.19	0.92	1.12	0.36	21.53	1.92	6- 3	16.75
1954	0.83	0.14	0.78	1.96	2.08	2.31	2.94	2.78	1.99	0.60	0.69	0.27	17.37	1.77	7- 6	14.06
1953	0.39	0.42	0.37	2.32	3.42	4.39	2.37	0.79	1.72	1.13	0.55	0.57	18.64	1.28	6-20	15.21
1952	0.79	0.54	0.28	0.16	0.34	3.43	7.89	1.92	0.48	0.90	1.55	0.30	17.77	2.35	7- 2	14.22
1951	0.60	0.43	0.68	0.65	0.16	2.68	1.54	7.98	1.35	0.34	0.91	1.16	18.48	3.85	8-30	14.35
1950	1.17	0.05	2.21	2.05	4.88	3.66	1.63	1.11	5.56	1.05	0.49	0.52	24.38	2.52	9-10	18.89
1949	1.53	----	0.94	0.07	4.61	2.49	3.86	3.54	0.69	3.08	0.70	1.28	23.45	2.00	8-15	15.26
1948	0.37	1.17	0.90	1.89	0.79	7.64	4.80	4.17	0.71	0.66	0.93	1.05	25.08	2.23	6- 2	20.00
1947	0.51	0.40	0.29	2.34	1.45	5.97	2.13	3.15	1.77	1.05	2.08	0.55	21.69	2.55	6-10	16.81
1946	0.43	0.73	0.29	0.43	2.03	4.60	0.78	4.90	3.31	1.62	0.60	0.45	21.17	2.37	8-25	16.05

[a]United States, Weather Bureau, Climatological Data: North Dakota.

TABLE 3

PRECIPITATION AT LARIMORE DURING THE YEARS INDICATED[a]

STATION: LARIMORE

LONGITUDE: 97° 38' ELEVATION: 1134' LATITUDE: 47° 55'

	TOTAL PRECIPITATION													GREATEST RAINFALL		GROWING SEASON
YEAR	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	ANNUAL	AMT.	DATE	RAINFALL
1960	0.60	0.55	0.30	1.60	1.62	3.01	3.75	3.60	1.35	1.62	0.70	0.63	19.41	1.65	6- 4	13.33
1959	0.30	0.60	0.20	0.25	2.90	3.68	3.25	2.98	1.33	3.08	0.96	0.51	19.21	1.91	6-12	14.14
1958	0.15	0.30	0.25	0.82	1.46	3.01	4.82	1.61	1.57	1.36	2.89	0.62	18.04	1.82	8-31	12.51
1957	----	0.33	0.06	0.53	2.56	3.52	3.44	4.29	11.69	1.36	1.19	0.10	27.54	7.41	9- 2	26.03
1956	1.14	----	1.56	0.23	2.13	3.39	1.23	4.39	0.31	1.52	1.45	0.90	18.63	1.70	8-30	11.73
1955	0.35	0.87	0.64	0.59	3.68	5.30	3.07	2.13	2.25	0.42	1.40	0.60	21.31	1.50	9-21	17.03
1954	0.89	0.06	0.38	1.97	3.20	2.57	2.31	2.73	1.97	0.32	0.41	0.10	16.91	1.31	5-28	14.75
1953	0.24	0.14	0.33	2.30	3.03	6.97	1.27	1.23	1.39	0.98	0.72	0.90	19.50	1.75	6-20	16.19
1952	0.40	----	0.50	0.36	0.51	2.70	4.28	2.99	0.66	0.02	1.66	0.06	14.53	1.40	7- 2	11.50
1951	----	----	0.38	----	0.50	1.93	1.92	7.05	1.75	0.47	0.28	0.42	----	1.98	8-30	----
1950	1.64	0.20	----	1.79	----	2.57	2.94	0.61	4.69	----	----	----	----	2.87	9-10	----
1949	1.13	0.93	0.62	0.00	2171	1.83	2.88	2.22	0.56	3.50	----	0.81	----	2.17	10-10	10.20
1948	0.30	----	1.01	2.29	0000	3.76	3.97	1.93	0.84	0.72	1.15	0.34	18.61	1.50	6-22	----
1947	0.21	0.34	0.13	1.33	1.25	3.25	2.16	3.56	2.40	1.69	1.31	0.40	18.03	1.24	6-10	12.70
1946	T	0.77	0.48	0.25	1.56	7.32	0.16	1.77	2.96	1.44	0.26	0.27	17.24	3.81	6-29	14.02

[a]United States, Weather Bureau, Climatological Data: North Dakota.

exactly when it is needed. Some times things go to extremes, however, and when they do disaster can result. When it's dry, as in 1910 and 1936, and less than ten inches of precipitation are received the area begins to resemble a desert. Dust storms become common and the little crop harvested is hardly worth the effort and expense involved. On the other hand, too much precipitation can be equally disastrous as it was in Grand Forks in 1925 when 9.52 inches of rain fell in the month of June. If this rain had fallen in some other month as it did in August, 1944, when 12.16 inches fell, the situation would not have been nearly as bad since some of the crop has already matured and been harvested.[1]

It is the interaction of the warm, moist air masses from the Gulf of Mexico with the colder Canadian Polar air masses which "results in a cyclonic activity which produces much of the precipitation in the area."[2] Thermal convection, resulting in the formation of large cumulus clouds, also results in added precipitation during the summer months.[3] This is often coupled with violent thunderstorms and lightening during the summer.

Spring and summer precipitation in the Red River Valley usually has little to do with flooding except in isolated areas. Most of the flooding caused here is a result of heavy, wet spring snows

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[1]United States Weather Bureau. Climatological Summary: Grand Forks, North Dakota (Weather Bureau State Climatologists for North Dakota, 1961), p. 3.

[2]Melvin E. Kazeek, North Dakota: A Human and Economic Geography (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1956), p. 45.

[3]Ibid.

which thaw rapidly and cannot escape north because of the ice-clogged rivers. History has recorded some very serious floods in the valley, such as the flood of 1897 during which the Red River overflowed its banks for 125 miles to a width which reached thirty miles in places. Part of the reason for the flooding is the very slight north-south gradient of the Red River--only 1.4 feet per mile--preventing rapid run-off from this geologically youthful area.[1] Fortunately the floods generally occur before man begins to till the land in the spring so little damage occurs to his crops.

During the course of an average winter an aggregate total of 34.5 inches of snow will fall. Here, too, there can be extremes such as the month of December 1918, when 27.6 inches fell, or such as November 18, 1958 when 12.0 inches fell on a single day.[2]

Temperature

Because North Dakota is located so far north and in the center of a large continent, the area may enjoy what George Cressey refers to as "continentality at the fiercest."[3] Grand Forks at forty-seven degrees and fifty-five minutes north latitude can expect some very low winter temperatures. The mean January temperature for Grand Forks is 4.3 degrees. February with 8.4 and December with 11.2 degrees can scarcely be regarded as being much warmer. Over the year the average is 39.2 degrees. Balancing off the cold winters,

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[1]United States, Weather Bureau, Climatological Summary . . . p. 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]George B. Cressey, Asia's Lands and Peoples (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), p. 29.

TABLE 4

TEMPERATURE AT GRAND FORKS DURING THE YEARS INDICATED[a]

STATION: GRAND FORKS

LONGITUDE: 97° 05' ELEVATION: 830' LATITUDE: 47° 55'

	AVERAGE TEMPERATURE													EXTREME TEMPERATURES			
YEAR	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	AN-NUAL	HIGH-EST	DATE	LOW-EST	DATE
1960	7.1	9.5	16.0	41.3	56.1	63.5	70.6	70.2	60.0	47.2	28.7	8.8	39.9	96	7-10	-22	1-16
1959	-0.7	4.9	27.8	42.6	53.5	66.7	70.6	70.7	58.1	39.7	19.6	23.7	39.8	97	6-20	-30	2-10
1958	15.1	10.3	28.6	43.8	57.3	59.4	66.5	67.8	59.3	47.3	27.3	6.3	40.8	102	8-12	-26	2-14
1957	0.7	10.2	26.0	41.4	55.8	60.8	73.2	66.9	53.5	44.2	26.2	18.3	39.8	96	7-10	-30	1-29
1956	4.4	3.3	16.4	33.0	53.1	70.4	66.4	66.7	53.7	49.9	29.7	13.4	38.4	96	6-10	-28	2.17
1955	6.9	5.5	13.2	50.3	59.7	64.3	72.8	71.4	57.1	47.0	17.2	3.1	29.0	98	8- 4	-30	12-19
1954	-3.2	26.4	25.4	40.5	50.8	64.1	70.1	65.7	56.7	44.8	33.9	19.2	41.2	95	7-11	-32	1-21
1953	9.9	16.1	27.6	39.0	55.1	64.7	69.1	71.7	57.8	53.8	34.6	15.0	42.9	97	8-26	-22	12-16
1952	-0.2	17.8	22.6	49.6	55.8	65.1	69.6	66.4	61.5	42.1	31.2	18.8	41.7	100	8-14	-33	1-29
1951	0.9	11.4	17.4	39.7	58.6	60.1	68.0	64.1	54.4	42.3	19.6	5.8	36.8	97	7-26	-34	1-29
1950	-11.3	3.7	17.9	30.3	49.7	63.3	66.8	63.7	58.4	46.9	21.9	6.0	34.8	97	6- 6	-33	1-18
1949	1.4	----	18.4	44.9	55.3	64.5	68.8	70.8	55.2	43.7	33.6	17.6	38.6	101	8- 8	-29	1-21
1948	1.8	3.0	14.7	40.2	55.4	62.8	69.8	69.2	62.2	47.0	28.2	8.3	38.6	97	7- 8	-38	3-10
1947	12.6	7.0	23.0	39.7	49.8	61.4	70.8	70.5	55.2	51.6	21.0	9.0	39.3	102	8- 4	-29	12-31
1946	5.0	4.0	33.6	47.0	52.0	64.0	71.8	66.6	55.4	43.1	24.6	9.1	39.8	101	8- 2	-29	2- 2

[a]United States, Weather Bureau, Climatological Data: North Dakota.

TABLE 5

TEMPERATURE AT LARIMORE DURING THE YEARS INDICATED[a]

STATION: LARIMORE

LONGITUDE: 97° 38' ELEVATION: 1134' LATITUDE: 47° 55'

	AVERAGE TEMPERATURE													EXTREME TEMPERATURES			
YEAR	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	AN-NUAL	HIGH-EST	DATE	LOW-EST	DATE
1960	2.8	8.6	17.1	42.3	57.4	62.2	71.0	70.3	58.2	46.2	25.6	10.1	40.2	97	7-10	-28	1-16
1959	5.0	7.9	15.9	46.1	58.2	66.3	68.1	66.4	57.6	50.0	29.0	14.2	38.2	98	6-20	-28	1-10
1958	12.2	9.8	27.8	42.5	58.1	62.4	65.5	69.0	58.6	48.0	26.4	7.1	40.3	100	8-12	-25	2-13
1957	2.2	5.9	26.8	41.6	55.4	62.2	72.1	68.1	55.5	44.7	29.0	20.4	40.9	100	7-10	-29	1-29
1956	5.5	12.0	17.5	33.4	53.5	69.2	67.2	66.4	53.6	50.0	30.2	14.2	38.9	94	6-10	-30	2-17
1955	7.6	5.6	14.3	50.1	58.8	64.2	73.0	72.3	57.6	47.3	17.2	4.0	39.3	99	7-21	-31	2-24
1954	-3.3	27.8	24.3	39.8	50.2	62.8	70.3	66.4	56.4	44.7	34.1	20.0	41.1	95	7-11	-32	1-21
1953	10.3	17.1	27.2	37.9	53.8	63.3	68.1	70.66	57.9	52.7	35.0	16.7	42.6	1100	8-31	-20	12-16
1952	2.8	18.6	22.3	48.8	55.7	66.3	68.8	67.0	60.5	43.0	31.3	18.0	41.9	99	8-14	-27	1-23
1951	1.3	10.5	16.8	----	58.2	60.3	69.0	63.6	53.8	42.6	20.6	7.5	----	98	7-28	-34	1-29
1950	-10.8	6.4	19.1	30.3	----	64.1	----	65.8	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----
1949	2.5	0.8	19.5	46.1	56.1	65.1	69.6	71.3	65.4	44.5	----	9.1	----	101	8- 8	-27	1-21
1948	3.4	----	15.9	37.2	54.8	63.3	69.0	69.3	63.7	47.5	28.2	9.3	38.9	95	5-19	-34	1-23
1947	14.8	7.9	22.8	39.2	50.2	59.8	70.0	70.6	55.8	52.2	21.4	10.6	39.6	102	8- 4	-22	1- 3
1946	5.0	3.2	31.6	44.8	51.6	62.4	68.5	65.2	55.8	41.2	25.6	11.2	38.8	100	8- 2	-29	2- 2

[a]United States, Weather Bureau, Climatological Data: North Dakota.

Grand Forks reports a mean for July of 69.0 degrees, closely followed by August with 66.9 and June with 63.5 degrees. On an average one can expect the thermometer to read below zero on fifty-nine days out of the year, pleasantly interspersed with periods of winter thaw. An example of this continentality at its fiercest would be the year 1936 when the high temperature was 109 degrees and the lowest temperature was -42 degrees, a spread of 151 degrees.[1]

The farmer must constantly be conscious of the weather. One of his prime concerns in early spring and late fall is killing frost. If a sudden killing frost occurs at either time, his crop may be damaged or even destroyed. The average period without killing frosts at Grand Forks extends from May 16 to September 25; and at Larimore, it extends from May 21 to September 20. Therefore, the average growing seasons of Grand Forks and Larimore are 132 and 122 days, respectively.[2] Even though this might seem like a relatively short period in which to grow the crops, this season is enhanced by long daylight hours which occur during the summer months. On June 21, Grand Forks receives 16 hours of daylight. This peak ranges from 15½ hours on May 21 and July 21. Even on August 21 there are still 14 hours of daylight.[3]

These then are the basic elements which make up the climate of the Red River Valley and in particular Grand Forks County. To be sure every time a farmer plants a seed, he gambles in this region

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[1]United States, Weather Bureau, Climatological Summary . . . p. 1.

[2]Frank J. Bavendick, "Climate of North Dakota," Climate and Man: The Yearbook of Agriculture, 1941 (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1941), p. 1045.

[3]Bavendick, Climate and Weather in North Dakota, p. 78.

as he gambles wherever he may farm; however, in the Red River Valley conditions generally tend to work together so that the climate may be regarded as nearly ideal for the raising of small grains and root crops.

CHAPTER III

THE HUMAN GEOGRAPHY OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY OF THE NORTH

Early Settlement

The human history of the Red River Valley of the North goes back many more years than its citizens normally realize. There were settlers in the Red River Valley of the North before people had begun to settle in Minnesota. A trading post was established in 1797-98 by Charles Jean Baptiste Chaboillez on what is today the site of Pembina.[1] Although the Red River Valley of the North had white residents at that early date, little happened to expand settlement beyond the hunters and traders until after the Civil War. Up until this time there was little to attract settlers to the rugged life, and much to keep them away, such as fear of the Indians. Part of this fear was based upon periodic Indian uprisings which culminated with the Sioux uprising of 1862. Because of that serious uprising most of the settlers who had come to the Red River Valley up to that time vacated their homes for one or more years, and many never returned.[2] There were never very many Indians in the Red River Valley,

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[1]Lewis F. Crawford, History of North Dakota (Chicago and New York: The American Historical Society, Inc., 1931), I, 68-69.

[2]Hiram M. Drache, "The Day of the Bonanza: A History of Bonanza Farming in the Red River Valley of the North" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Dept. of History, University of North Dakota, 1963), p. 59.

although they did recognize the value of the soil. They raised excellent crops of potatoes, maize, and squash. Their number in the valley area is estimated to never have exceeded 5,000. This was because they did not consider the hunting and fishing to be good, and they preferred the open ranges further west.[1]

Transportation is the key to the development of this region. A study of early transportation would in effect be a study of the development and early settlement of the Red River Valley of the North. Generally, transportation in this region took the form of cart, wagon, steamship, and train.

Red River Carts

The Red River Carts are an interesting study in themselves. They were two-wheeled carts first mentioned in history by Alexander Henry who gave their proportions as being about four feet high, with wheels having only four spokes. They were made entirely of wood, unpainted and weather stained. The creaking of their wheels could be heard a mile or more. They were drawn by one ox or possibly an ox and a cow.[2] Their number has been estimated at about 6,000 by 1858. Each cart carried an average of up to 800 pounds, and they normally traveled in trains. These trains often included hundreds of carts and over a thousand people. The cargo which was normally carried to St. Paul consisted of buffalo robes, buffalo tongues,

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[1] Warren Upham, "The Settlement and Development of the Red River Valley," Minnesota Historical Society, Collections, VIII (1898), 11, 17.

[2] Clement A. Lounsberry, North Dakota, History and People (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1917), I, 144.

pemmican, dressed skins, moccasins, and furs, while the return load carried supplies of coffee, tea, alcoholic beverages, sugar, tobacco, clothing, glasses and hardware.[1] These Red River Carts were a unique and interesting part of the history of settlement; however, all that they really did was establish enough transportation and communications to provide a lure to those who were to follow later.

Steamboating

Another interesting phase of the settlement of the Red River Valley of the North is the steamboat era. Although this business never proved to be particularly profitable for its owners, it nevertheless was an important element in the early settlement of the area. The first steamboat built for operation on the Red River was the Anson Northrup, named for its builder. It would carry from fifty to seventy-five tons. It was brought overland in dismantled form from St. Paul and operated only one season, in 1858. It was then taken over by the Hudson's Bay Company who used its machinery in a saw mill.[2] The second attempt at operation of a Red River Steamboat came in 1860 when an unsuccessful attempt was made to transfer the Freighter from the Minnesota River to the Red River. The Hudson's Bay Company salvaged the machinery and built the International which was operated for many years by that company. Other steamers which operated on the Red River were the Selkirk, Dakota, Alpha, and Cheyenne, all owned by James J. Hill of the Great Northern Railroad Company. The

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[1]Drache, p. 30.

[2]Lounsberry, pp. 150-151.

Manitoba and Minnesota were owned by competitors from Winnipeg. The Grandin bonanza farm operated its own line of steamboats plus four barges. Included were the large J. L. Grandin, the Fluck, and Alsop.[1] Generally little traffic was carried after the early 1880's since the new railroads offered faster and cheaper forms of transportation.

J. B. Power, who Hiram Drache[2] calls the father of North Dakota agriculture, stated that "men, capital and energy . . . rapidly converted the raw prairie into a great field of waving grain."[3] The men came slowly at first, but as communications and transportation improved they came in ever increasing numbers until the trickle turned intoa massive flood of humanity. With them they brought the energy. They brought the adventurous spirit, that caused them to leave the "old" country, with them as they moved west into this strange new land. They brought along their faith, and a ceaseless devotion to their Divine Provider. The capital came by rail. That is to say, it was the railroads and their immense financial structures which made the other things pay off in the beginning. The "Dakota boom," as it is often called, really started in earnest about 1875 after the effects of the Wall Street crash of 1873 had begun to wear off. The main impetus came from the railroad constructed by James J. Hill [as well as from the Northern Pacific], and from the great demand for the high quality wheat raised in the valley. Additional impetus came from the

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Drache, p. 149.

[3] J. B. Power, "The First Wheat Farm," The Northwestern Farmer and North Dakota (May, 1905), p. 4.

the "(1) rise of eastern land values, (2) the fertility of the soil as dramatized by the bonanza farms, (3) the immigration of many Norwegians to the Dakotas, (4) the manufacture of new machinery conducive to large scale farming, (5) the absence of drought and locusts [particularly in the early period of settlement], both familiar to the Dakotas, and (6) a revival of the speculative and adventurous spirit of the citizens, causing a nationwide boom and a movement to the frontier."[1] These basic elements all worked together to produce a boom in settlement, railroad building, population, towns and villages, and the economy in general.

The Railroads

In the same way that every log jam has one key log which must be found and moved before the logs can proceed on their way down the river, so the Dakota boom has its key log, or that event which was necessary to allow everything else to follow. In this case it was the generous land grant given to the Northern Pacific Railroad Company. It was the famous Jay Cooke and Company banking firm which attempted the financing. Unfortunately, the management of the company turned out to be reckless spenders. In spite of the immense fiscal base of Jay Cooke and Company, they were unable to sell Northern Pacific securities as fast as the management spent the money. Consequently, Jay Cooke and Company closed their doors on September 18, 1873, touching off the financial panic of 1873.[2]

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[1] Drache, pp. 68-69.

[2] Ibid., p. 76.

The government of the United States was particularly interested in promoting the settlement of the west. The greatest interest came after the Civil War. To promote extension of civilization into the remote areas it was necessary to have the railroads there. To aid this the government adopted the practice of giving land grants to the railroads whever they built. The Northern Pacific Railroad Company, which was chartered July 2, 1864, to build a railroad to the west coast by the northern route, was no exception.[1] The only difference was that their land grant was double in acreage any previous railroad land grant. The chartering act granted "every alternate section of public land, . . . designated by odd numbers, to the amount of twenty alternate sections per mile, on each side of said railroad line, . . . through the territories of the United States, . . . ten alternate sections of land per mile of said railroad whenever it passes through any state."[2] It may easily be deducted that this was a considerable amount of land. As already mentioned, Jay Cooke and Company were involved in the financial aspects of the Northern Pacific. Cooke was at first reluctant to become involved, but when he finally consented he poured the full power of his company into the effort and it brought bankruptcy. In all, the Northern Pacific Railroad received 25,600 acres of land for each mile of railroad it constructed from the Red River of the North to the Pacific Coast. Something had to be done with this great amount of land. At this point James B. Power entered the scene.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 76-77.

[2] United States, Statutes at Large, XIII, 367.

He was land commissioner for the Northern Pacific and he undertook to restore public confidence in the land assets of the Northern Pacific on a spectacular scale. He did this by first interesting two stockholders of the Northern Pacific into exchanging some of their nearly worthless securities for railroad lands located near what is today Casselton. The two men were George W. Cass and Benjamin P. Cheney. Their initial holdings amounted to 12,000 acres.[1] This amount in itself was not so great since many of the western cattle ranches of that time were a good deal larger, but the concept of engaging in a strictly agricultural operation under one management was a completely new idea. Hence was born the concept of "bonanza farming."[2]

Bonanza Farming

What was a bonanza farm? Drache[3] indicates that there has never been an established lower limit at which a farm could be called a bonanza. In his work he relates that various authors have used figures ranging from 1,000 acres up to 7,000 acres as the minimum size for being included in this category. Drache himself picked 3,000 acres as the most appropriate minimum. At this level,

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[1] Crawford, p. 470.

[2] Ibid.

[3] To date, the best and most comprehensive study done on the bonanza farm was done by Hiram Drache, Professor of History at Concordia College, when he wrote his doctoral dissertation at the University of North Dakota. In his thesis he completely explores all aspects of the bonanza concept, with particular emphasis given to the first bonanzas near Fargo.

he says, there would have been ninety-one [possibly more] bonanzas in the Red River Valley of the North. If 1,000 acres is used, there would have been well over 300,[1] and this becomes an impossible figure to work with, since they would then have been quite commonplace.[2] These large farms were part of a grand image which J. B. Power created and was able to sell to the people who came out to settle. It offered an easy way to tempt people to come out to North Dakota. This is partly because the stories which were spread concerning bonanza farming went out of control, and people began to think of this region as a virtual Garden of Paradise.[3]

Cass-Cheney-Dalrymple bonanza

The first bonanza was the Cass-Cheney bonanza mentioned earlier. It was purchased in 1874. In the spring of 1875 Oliver Dalrymple was employed to manage this first of the bonanzas. He spent the first summer gathering his crew and equipment. That fall they prepared two sections for the spring planting. Thus the first crop was harvested in 1876. Oliver Dalrymple himself had gained a reputation for being an excellent wheat farmer in southern Minnesota. His contract with Cass and Cheney called for his gradual acquisition of the land; however, it wasn't until after 1900 that he finally acquired the last of the land from Cass and Cheney. His name has so overshadowed the names of the first owners that the farm has most

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[1]Crawford, p. 470.

[2]It is only fair to note at this time that this paper is not only a study of bonanza farms, although some bonanzas are involved, it is rather a study of certain select farms in a particular area. Many of the farms dealt with in Chapter IV are considerably below the 3,000 acre mark, but are interesting to this study for other unique reasons which shall be examined later.

[3]Drache, p. 132.

commonly been referred to as the Dalrymple bonanza. Oliver Dalrymple wasn't the only Dalrymple involved in North Dakota farming, since many relatives eventually became associated with the large operation. Drache believes that all of the Dalrymple operations may have extended to over 100,000 acres; however, it is unlikely that Oliver Dalrymple ever controlled over 35,000-40,000 acres of cultivated land himself. Over the years finances reduced the over-all operation so that today the descendants of Oliver Dalrymple probably control an area less than half the original operation.[1]

Grandin Brothers bonanza

The second great bonanza was that owned by the Grandin Brothers of Tidioute, Pennsylvania. When Jay Cooke went bankrupt, the Grandins were left holding what appeared to be a large quantity of worthless securities. The only way that they could make up their loss and break even was to take land in the Red River Valley of the North. In the spring of 1875 John L. Grandin came out and took a look at the land. He quickly realized the great potential involved. The Grandin brothers got their farm going in 1876, and at its greatest extent it included over 100 sections of choice land making it the largest of the bonanzas. It was organized in four separate farms. One near the village of Grandin, another northwest of Mayville, and a third west of Hillsboro in North Dakota. A final farm was secured near Halstad, Minnesota. Drache credits them with owning 75,535.24 acres in all. The last of this immense operation was disposed of by the Grandin family in 1946.[2]

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[1] Ibid., pp. 133-134.

[2] Ibid., pp. 134-135.

Other Bonanzas

The Amenia and Sharon Land Company was slightly different as a bonanza since it went beyond the confines of farming to engage in elevator, livestock, and finance companies, as well as in owning over thirty subsidiary farms. Its management was excellent, and it was one of the most efficient and profitable of the bonanzas. It was operated by the Chaffee family, who still own large parts of the original bonanza.[1]

J. B. Power had a bonanza for himself. He called it Helendale. Of course, he was a very wealthy man and could easily have secured a large farm similar to the others mentioned here, but he chose to install a livestock operation where he could graze cattle and sheep. Consequently, he selected the sandy soil of the sand hills region. Power owned land in many counties of North Dakota and Minnesota. His land holdings were so diverse that it has been impossible to tabulate an accurate count of the exact acreage. Power is important to North Dakota in a far larger sense, because he was interested in diversification from the one crop of wheat to many crops and products. He experimented widely in livestock of all kinds, feedlot feeding, legumes and grasses, soil conservation, windmills, barbed wire fences, and many other modern innovations of that time. He proved that North Dakota could compete with the diversified farms of the East. He contributed widely to the cultural aspects of North Dakota as well. After he left the Northern Pacific he went to work for the Great

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[1] Ibid.

Northern for a short period and finally settled in North Dakota permanently for health reasons. His public life was crowned when he became president of the agricultural college in Fargo.[1]

The list of bonanzas is long and impressive. Many of the towns, villages, counties, and townships of North Dakota have been named for either the farm itself, or for its owner. As such each bonanza name tells the story of North Dakota settlement in its name and location.[2] A complete study of bonanzas is impossible since the records of many bonanzas have been lost or destroyed. Also there are many farms near to the 3,000 acre mark which are extremely interesting and important which are not included in the bonanza category.

Bonanza Management

The intricacies of managing and running a bonanza were great. Drache describes the general operations with great insight:

> The bonanzas provide some of the great drama in American agricultural history. The first factory farms, they were operated like great business enterprises, using professional management in charge of a large labor force. The owners needed good managers to protect their large investment and, if possible to produce a profit.
>
> The manager had to start from scratch, breaking the sod, establishing a farmstead, and determining the best system of operation. Thorough accounting methods were necessary to keep the large enterprise under control. Whenever weaknesses in the operation appeared, a quick remedy had to be found for, unlike the family farm, the bonanza could continue to exist only if it showed a profit.
>
> The bonanzas succeeded only because they could effectively use a large labor force by adopting large-scale, efficient

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[1] Ibid., pp. 149-151.

[2] See Appendix A.

> machinery. The labor force was transient, but the supply was apparently adequate until the 1890's. Labor was not required to be skilled in agriculture as suprevisory help did all the technical work. Large machinery not only gave the bonanzas an advantage in low cost of production over the family farm, but the great parades of machines provided much drama to that phase of agriculture. The great farmsteads with many buildings were also the source of many legends.[1]

Managers were the key to success. Drache names James B. Power, Oliver Dalrymple, and H. F. Chaffee as the finest of dozens of managers.[2] These men had to be superb managers, who understood the importance of modern innovations and the value of record keeping. Each was vastly different from the others, but each left his firm imprint upon the development of the bonanza, and more important, upon North Dakota.

The Rise and Decline of the Bonanza

From the time that the first bonanza was established until the end of the nineteenth century this type of farming reigned supreme. Then within a few short years almost all of them were gone, replaced by the smaller family farm. What happened?

> No one factor can be attributed as the cause for the rise and decline of the bonanzas. There were a combination of factors. Cheap land, which was the chief cause for the creation of the bonanza, rose quickly in value and became a major reason for dissolution. The demand for wheat in the 1870's and 1880's caused high prices, reversed itself in the 1890's causing lower prices while production costs rose. The weather cycle, so favorable in the late 1870's and virtually "dried out" some of the bonanzas. Technological improvements, so important in giving the bonanzas an edge in

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[1] Drache, p. 158.

[2] Ibid., p. 160.

efficiency in the early days, lost their importance as other farmers adopted machinery to their operations. Rising land taxes, coporation taxes after World War I, inability to get adequate labor, varied family interests, and social opposition all played their part in dissolution of the big farms.

The bonanzas served their intended purpose. They were created by the Northern Pacific to open the land and attract people to the region. This they did well. Today a few scattered large holdings and many legends are all that remain of this great phase of American agriculture.[1]

The End of Settlement

When man first arrived on the barren prairie, there was little promise of what we know today. Then the people flooded in by cart, wagon, steamboat, train, and even some by foot. They came, every type, the rich, the poor, the sick, the healthy, the honest, and the dishonest. They built towns and turned the grassy prairie to expose the fertile earth for the first time. They organized small farms and mighty bonanzas. By the time that the nineteenth century ended, and the twentieth began, there was, in place of the barren and lonely prairie, a rich, productive, peopled state with hope and potential for greatness.

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[1] Ibid., p. 319.

CHAPTER IV

LARIMORE, NORTH DAKOTA AND AREA

The Settling of Grand Forks County

Little activity can be associated with Grand Forks County prior to 1870. Most of the settlement in Dakota Territory up until that time was centered in the towns. Grand Forks existed at the junction of the Red Lake River and the Red River of the North, but few people had yet settled in the hinterland.[1]

When Dakota Territory was originally formed it extended from the western boundary of the state of Minnesota west to the Rocky Mountain divide. President Buchanan signed the act of Congress creating the new territory on March 2, 1861, only two days before Lincoln became president. President Lincoln appointed William Jaynes, of Illinois, governor of the territory.[2]

The territorial legislature in 1862 created four counties in what is today North Dakota. They were Kittson, Chippeway (which included what is today Grand Forks County), Stevens and Sheyenne. These counties were revised in 1867, and one large county called Pembina was created. It was not until 1872 that Grand Forks County finally made its first official appearance.[3]

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[1] H. V. Arnold, et. al., History of the Red River Valley (Chicago: C. F. Cooper & Company, 1919), II, 581.

[2] Ibid., p. 586.

[3] Ibid., p. 587.

When the United States census for 1860 was taken, there were no white inhabitants in the area now comprised in Grand Forks County. In 1870 there were about fifty at the settlement made that year at Grand Forks. The population in 1875 was something over 2,000. The census of 1880 gave Grand Forks County a population of 6,248 inhabitants, but probably about 1,000 of these were located in the southern half of Walsh County, then a part of Grand Forks County. There was a territorial census taken in 1885; this gave the county with present boundaries 20,454 inhabitants. The census of 1890 showed that the population then was 18,321.[1]

Early in the pioneer period the way to get to the Grand Forks County area was down the Red River, first from McCauleyville by steamer, stage, or flatboat, and a little later from Moorhead and Fargo in the same way. After 1877, many came in by way of Crookston and Fisher's Landing, or by railroad to the latter point, thence by stage, steamer or other means to Grand Forks. Many others teamed through from distant points. In those days Grand Forks was the common gateway to the county.[2]

The timber settlers found the greater portion of the prairie land in the county vacant and as open to the taking by one class of man as by another, yet, being the first settlers west of the Red River and having a free choice of location, they preferred to make their homes along the streams among the trees. They squatted or

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[1]United States, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States: 1910, Population, Vol. III, pp. 348-356.

[2]Arnold, p. 593.

filed upon quarter-sections on which there was some timber, though their claims often included a considerable acreage of the adjoining prairie land. Claims wholly of prairie land were really more valuable in the long run and in after years many of these men no doubt realized that they had made a mistake in their choice of location.[1]

A survey for a wagon route between Fort Totten and Grand Forks was made by the military authorities about the year 1877, but the route was not actually utilized until October, 1879, when the first of the caravans or wagon trains that came to Grand Forks left for Fort Totten. During that fall, W. N. Roach, in later years United States senator for North Dakota, was residing in Grand Forks, having arrived in September, 1879. Viets & McKelvey, of Grand Forks, had a contract at that time to deliver supplies to the fort, and this circumstance, together with the starting of the railroad from Fisher's Landing to Grand Forks, appears to have led to the establishment of a mail route between Grand Forks and Fort Totten. An organization called the Overland Mail & Transportation Company, with headquarters in Washington, D. C., was the original contractor with the government for a large number of mail routes in the west. After some dispute about the Fort Totten sub-contract, it was awarded to Mr. W. N. Roach. He opened his line, and the mail was to be carried both ways once a week.[2]

Roach started out on his first trip early in October, 1879, and had as his companion a newcomer from New York, General James H.

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[1]Thomas C. Oliver, Settlement of the Red River Valley (New York: A. D. Miller and Company, 1906), pp. 238-244.

[2]Ibid.

Mathews. After they left Grand Forks County, they saw no white people until they reached Fort Totten.

For his mail wagon, Roach drove a good team of roadsters of a light two-seated design. Only an ordinary mail-bag was required. As the trail developed, a few local trails were developed as branch routes to Forest River and Bachelor's Grove. At the time that the main trail began to be forced along the section lines because of the occupation and breaking of the land the trail began to develop into a well beaten road. With the westward advance of the railroad, the route was discontinued in 1882, and the Fort Totten trail, which was the first continuous link with man and the Larimore area, ceased.[1]

The Establishment of Larimore, North Dakota

In 1879 the taking up of land for actual settlement had not extended very far west from Grand Forks. There were no railroads in the county and in general its agricultural development had to await their construction. There was grading that year, followed by track-laying, between Fisher and the Red River opposite Grand Forks. Then in October the grading force was put to work on a stretch of grade extending eleven miles west from the Red River. A large number of newcomers into the country were then located in Grand Forks, reinforced by new arrivals coming in by railroad and quite generally these were waiting to see what prospects the immediate future would develop for the country. Grand Forks was then a village of perhaps four to five hundred inhabitants. The United

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[1] Ibid.

Fig. 7—Aerial view of the city of Larimore from the west.

Fig. 8—Aerial view of Arvilla from the south, with the Turtle River in the upper middle part of the picture.

States Land Office for the district was then located at Fargo, but filings on land could be made at Grand Forks through an attorney. Influenced by the grading of the railroad west from Grand Forks, the land as far as the line of range 55 west and for several miles north and south of the proposed railroad, was quite generally filed upon by the prospective settlers in October 1879, yet no attempts were made to occupy these until the following spring. West of range 54, on the Elk Valley tract, the townships had not then been subdivided, and so the filings stopped at the town line that now runs north and south through Larimore.[1]

Toward the end of May, 1880, E. C. Arnold, his brother H. V., and son H. F. Arnold, arrived at the Elk Valley after teaming through with oxen from Houston County, Minnesota, and established themselves two miles west of the site of Larimore. Mrs. Arnold and two daughters arrived early in September, and these became the first settlers in Larimore township. They broke 155 acres of the prairie land that season. H. F. Arnold spent the winter following in Grand Forks, in the office of clerk of court, but the others remained in their cabin homes. In the same spring of 1880 settlers began occupying, breaking and building upon their claims in Arvilla and Avon townships, all supplies being teamed from Grand Forks. Albert F. Clark of Clayton County, Iowa, had rented a place that season on the Turtle River, and having selected a claim on the border of range 55, where Larimore now stands, he broke twenty acres on it. Clark did not build upon his claim that year, but about opposite its southeastern

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[1]H. V. Arnold, Forty Years in North Dakota (Larimore: H. V. Arnold, 1921), pp. 27-42.

corner there were two claim shacks and a strip of broken land owned by Gunder Anderson and A. B. Holt, both just across the town line in what is now Arvilla township. The same summer the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Company ironed their short piece of grade west from Grand Forks as far as Ojata. During the same season and fall, a party of government surveyors in charge of James E. Dyke of Pembina County, subdivided a number of townships in ranges 55 and 56. The surveying contract, however, was held by George G. Beardsley, who was a native of Ohio, and he had other survey parties in the field that season.[1]

Toward the end of winter a heavy snowfall accumulated in the country and lasted unbroken by thaw until about the middle of April, and then disappeared suddenly with much flooding of the land. This opened the spring of 1881. Prospective settlers had appeared the previous fall and put up claim-shacks in what are now Larimore, Avon, and Elm Grove townships, but none of them attempted to pass the winter on their claims. In the spring they again appeared, improved their buildings, and as soon as the proper season opened they began breaking the prairie sod. In some cases they brought their families with them. In May the plats of the subdivided townships were returned and accordingly the settlers made their filings, a United States land office having been established at Grand Forks, in April, 1880. It was during this period of springtime occupation of lands in the townships mentioned that a beginning was made by several St. Louis grain commission men in establishing the now extensive Elk Valley Farm,

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[1] Ibid., pp. 43-54.

just south of the townsite of Larimore. A large frame house, barns and sheds, and blacksmith shop were erected that season and extensive breaking operations were begun on the company land by their agent Colonel Oscar M. Towner. All supplies that season had to be teamed from Ojata and Grand Forks, and much of the heavier portion of it was done in March while the snow afforded good sledding. During the same month A. F. Clark built a small frame house, the first framed building on the townsite.[1]

Two general merchandise stores were opened in the vicinity during the summer. Stevens Brothers established one on section 10, Arvilla township, on a claim owned by F. D. Hughes and subsequently incorporated into what became known as the Hersey Farm. The other store was erected by Lucius P. Goodhue, who in August, 1881, teamed his lumber and goods from Ojata, then the nearest railroad point. About that time Currier and Clark, the former a builder employed by the Elk Valley Farming Company, established a small lumber yard on Clark's premises, to supply local demand. In August, 1881, Larimore Township was organized with the inclusion of Moraine township (until 1884) and named for John W. and Newell Greene Larimore of the Elk Valley Farming Company. In the fall considerable threshing was done on their farm with horsepower machine, for the steam thresher wasn't seen here until the next season.[2]

For an area without town or railroad, the spring, summer and fall of 1881 was one of general activity, stimulated by the alluring

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[1] Ibid., pp. 55-70.

[2] Ibid.

prospects of the country and its productiveness; moreover, the railroad surveyor was in the field. As early as June the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Company located a line west from Ojata as far as Moraine township, which survey was subsequently altered in places; the Northern Pacific Company, which was then building a branch line north from Casselton, also extended a survey north from Mayville through this section, and north from the townsite the other company made a counter survey. Grading was done the same year along portions of all these surveys, particularly between Ojata and the site of Larimore.[1]

In October, 1881, Alexander Oldham, then the county surveyor, was employed by the Elk Valley Farming Company to lay out a town near where the grades of the railroad corporations crossed one another, and upon the quarter-section in Larimore township, which they had purchased about that time from A. F. Clark, together with several adjoining quarters. Later a part of the Anderson claim was likewise surveyed in blocks and lots.[2] While the townsite survey was in progress, Nicholas S. Nelson, of Grand Forks, erected a building for a general merchandise store, where the Elk Valley Bank now stands, and this was the first building for mercantile purposes put up on the townsite. It was followed by a number of hastily erected structures for various business purposes. The railroad company ironed grade that fall between Ojata and Larimore, and the track reached

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Virginia George, Oscar M. Towner, Entrepreneur and North Dakota Real Estate Promoter (Bismarck: Conrad Publishing Co., 1961), p. 8.

Larimore on the afternoon of November 22, 1882.[1] At that time only a few buildings had been completed while several were under construction. For over a week the only traffic on the railroad was the construction gangs. Then after installation and completion of a side track, turntable, depot, engine-house, and section-house, the road was opened to business on December 1, 1881.[2]

The first half of the winter following was comparatively mild and open and facilitated building. In December, Stevens Brothers moved their store to the townsite and L. P. Goodhue, who had been appointed postmaster of the place also moved in his store before the end of the same month. Two papers were started before spring. They were the Larimore Pioneer, with W. M. Scott as editor on February 21, 1882, and the Larimore Leader, with A. W. Dunn as editor on March 2, 1882. It was understood that the Pioneer was established as a protege of the Grand Forks Herald, which printed its first editions. The Leader was supposed to have been established as a protege of the Grand Forks Plaindealer. With a railroad terminus at Larimore, all the common mercantile establishments and trade concerns normally found in a small town were rapidly established.[3]

The year 1882 was a great year for settlement. With the railroads open, and allure of the rich land, settlers poured in by the train load all through the spring and summer of 1882. Colonel O. M.

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[1] Larimore Pioneer, February 21, 1882.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Arnold, pp. 71-90.

Towner, a natural townsite boomer, was entrusted for a while with the sale of lots, and was astoundingly successful.[1]

Much of the earlier building operations were based upon mistaken expectations. In a published plat Larimore was represented as being quite a railroad center with the prospective depot and roundhouse of the Casselton branch line being located there. The country west to Devils Lake was now being over-run with settlers to a considerable extent and so long as Larimore remained the railroad terminus, its business prospects were fairly good. A great amount of teaming of lumber and merchandise, household goods, farm machinery, etc., was in progress in that direction and travel to Stump and Devils Lakes was being accommodated by a stage line. The month of June found conditions as described, when a report that the Casselton branch line on which some further grading had meanwhile been done, had been traded or sold to the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Company, checked further progressive operations. The boom that was in progress collapsed at once, and business men began to think more of development upon such natural advantages as were inherent to the country around them, and less upon uncertain expectations.[2]

Early on the morning of June 29, 1882, the town experienced a disasterous fire, mainly confined, however, to parts of both sides of Towner Avenue, which has always been the main business street of Larimore. Some fifteen or more business places were destroyed, including three hotel buildings. Two unknown persons perished in the fire. The loss was estimated at $55,000. The

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

burned area was, in the main, soon rebuilt, but in most cases, the buildings weren't as good as those that were destroyed.[1]

Farming Near Larimore, North Dakota

The remainder of this chapter is taken up with a historical analysis of a number of specific farms in the Larimore, North Dakota, area. Each of the farms discussed has either been selected for its contribution to the growth and development of this region, for its uniqueness, or for both reasons. Not all of the farms considered here are "bonanzas," although each is quite large for the period in which it existed.

The Elk Valley Farm

Few adjectives have been devised which would be truly descriptive of the Elk Valley Farm. The Elk Valley Farm is the largest of the farms included in this study. At its greatest extent it totaled approximately 15,000 acres.[2] The term "Elk Valley" was first coined by Postmaster D. McDonald and a group of explorers when they first viewed the area in 1877. They found many elk, deer, and other animals grazing there.[3] The area at that time must have resembled somewhat of a paradise since it had numerous small springs, acres of oak and elm trees along the rivers, as well as wild berries. This is also the origin of the term Elk Valley Delta.[4]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] The Record, Vol. I, No. 9, (February and March 1896), p. 5.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

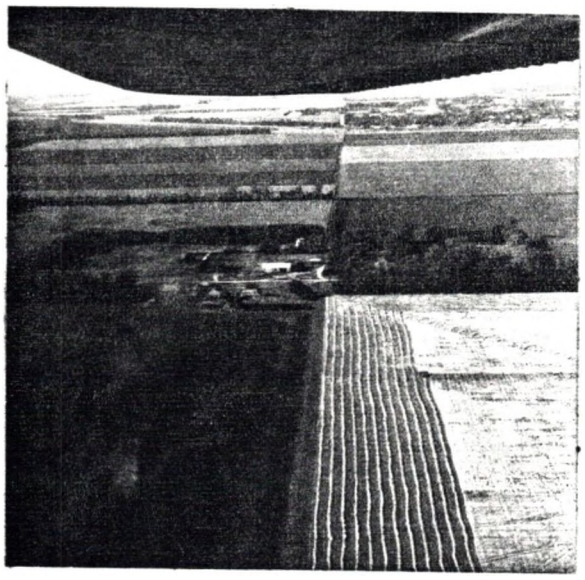

Fig. 9--Aerial view of the Elk Valley Farm from the south, with Larimore in the upper right corner.

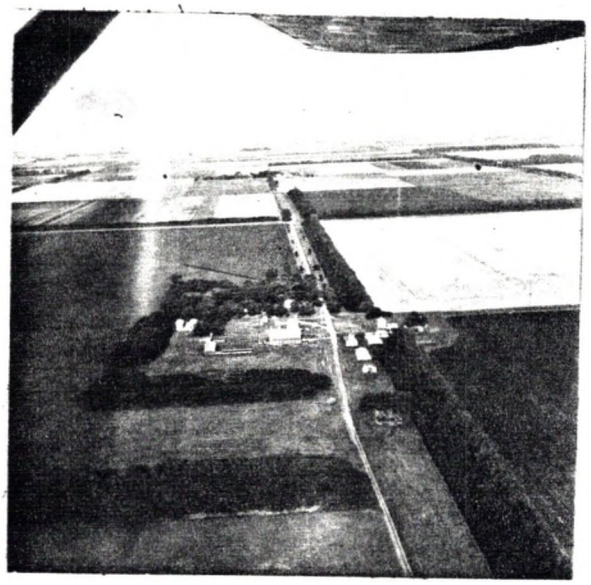

Fig. 10--Aerial view of the Elk Valley Farm from the west.

The news of the tremendous profits of the Grandin Brothers and Cass-Cheney-Dalrymple bonanzas spread rapidly. In St. Louis, Missouri, a group of business men with alert ears picked up this news. They were the Booth Brothers, John N. and Thomas Booth. They in turn interested their associates the Larimore Brothers, John W. and Newell Greene Larimore, in supplying one-third or $5,000 of a $15,000 fund to be used in securing land in the Red River Valley of the North. Originally there were twelve capitalists involved in the Elk Valley Farming Syndicate with the Booths and Larimores predominating. The author was unable to determine the identity of the other members of the syndicate, although it is known that they resided in St. Louis, St. Paul, and Larimore.[1]

Large tracts of land in the southern and central portion of the Red River Valley of the North had been taken up in the late 1870's. The land in the Elk Valley area had been surveyed only in 1878, and was not opened to settlement until 1879.[2] A young bookkeeper employed by the Booths named Colonel Oscar M. Towner was selected to go to the Red River Valley of the North and secure tracts of land for a large farm operation. The Booth Brothers had implicit faith in this young man, and so the company was incorporated under the laws of Missouri. They presupposed that their capital would buy about 5,000 acres of the very best farm land. Towner, the young bookkeeper, was elected secretary of the new corporation and given the authority

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[1]William B. Hennessy, History of North Dakota (Bismarck: Bismarck Tribune Company, 1910), pp. 259-260.

[2]Arnold, pp. 43-54.

to draw drafts and sign the company name. Towner showed good sense when he selected the fertile lands of the Elk Valley. Towner arrived in Dakota Territory in either the fall of 1879[1] or 1880[2], although the majority of sources indicate the latter which sounds more logical. In September of 1880, Towner built two claim shacks where the farm was to be located. He spent the remainder of the winter buying land for himself and for the company. Some of the land was purchased from other settlers, and some of it acquired from the government. The land cost ranged anywhere from three to fifteen dollars per acre.[3] George in her work on O. M. Towner indicates that "In December 1880, Towner sold about 8,820 acres to the Elk Valley Farm Company for $12,131.65 by Warranty Deed. The record of this land sale was not recorded until February 16, 1884."[4]

In the initial stages the Booth Brothers and the Larimore Brothers were well pleased with their agent, since the reports they received were glowing ones and it appeared that their money had been wisely and profitably invested. Although the bank drafts received in St. Louis were frequent and for large sums, they were promptly paid. Finally, however, the drafts began to come with such frequency and for such large amounts, that one of the Booth Brothers was selected to come north and investigate. The announced purpose of his trip was to view for himself the "large wheat ranch." His unannounced purpose was to sneak a look at the books of the company to see exactly what

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[1] The Record, Vol. I, No. 10, (April, 1896), p. 5.

[2] George, p. 4.

[3] Grand Forks Herald, March 25, 1882, p. 4.

[4] George, p. 4.

the true situation was. A man by the name of W. N. Roach[1] was the company bookkeeper. It was discovered that Towner had purchased tracts of land all the way from Fargo to Winnipeg, much of which he had never seen, and had borrowed thousands of dollars, all of which the company had to pay. The bookkeeper, Roach, was guiltless and retained; however, Towner discreetly tendered his resignation, which, needless to say, was accepted without delay.[2]

Just previous to his resignation on August 10, 1882, Towner had created much excitement when he went to Macon, Missouri, in March 1882 and bought back thirty-two negroes who were to work the Elk Valley Farm Lands. Apparently the negroes didn't fully understand what they were involved in, because while on the train from Missouri to Dakota Territory, they told a reporter for the St. Paul Pioneer Press, that they were going to Dakota to homestead. As a result Towner was accused by the St. Louis merchants and by many Dakota people of land grabbing and trying to obtain a monopoly on all the good lands for the Larimore Elk Valley Farm Company. The Grand Forks Herald said the negroes came to buy land and sell it back to Towner.[3] The St. Paul Pioneer Press accused the company of

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[1]Roach had come to Dakota Territory in 1879 when he established a mail route from Grand Forks to Fort Totten. At the same time he took a homestead south of the Elk Valley Farm. He then began as a bookkeeper for the company. He was placed in charge of the company's townsite interests, since Larimore was located on Elk Valley farm land. Roach was one of the most popular men in the territory. In 1885 he was the only Democrat in the legislature. In 1892 he was elected United States Senator for North Dakota. He was employed by the Elk Valley Farming Company up until that time. He also served as the first mayor of Larimore.

[2]Hennessy, pp. 259-260.

[3]Grand Forks Herald, March 23, 1882, p. 3.

using the negroes as a preliminary step "towards a gigantic land grab."[1] Towner and the company denied the charge. They said that when the Elk Valley Farming Company wanted more land it would pay for it outright, buying it from the settlers. In any event, enough controversy had been created so that within one week nearly all of the negroes had been sent home.[2] Even today a chance mention of the Elk Valley Farm to an older citizen of Larimore will bring up this time twisted and vastly expanded rumor to which there is little substance beyond what is stated here.

Towner himself owned more than 4,000 acres just south of the Elk Valley Farm, which he wished to sell in order to move on to other things. The Elk Valley Farmining Company Syndicate refused to allow him to sell at first until he agreed to pay the syndicate a bonus from the sale.[3]

Colonel Oscar M. Towner is in large part responsible for Larimore, North Dakota, the Elk Valley Farm, and the character of the region studied here. He was also instrumental in the development of much of the rest of Dakota Territory and North Dakota. Oscar Mandeville Towner was born in Missouri in 1842, the son of Milnor Mandeville Towner and Ann Shekells Towner. His father was Circuit Court Judge in St. Louis and became prominent in railroading and politics. The earliest record of Oscar M. Towner's adult life shows that he worked in St. Louis as a salesman of boots and saddles

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[1] St. Paul Pioneer Press, March 16, 1882, p. 3.

[2] Grand Forks Herald, April 19, 1882, p. 3.

[3] George, p. 8.

in 1873. Towner was a natural born "boomer," and his tendency to be slightly "full of sir" resulted in some great promotions for North Dakota. After the booming and building of Larimore and the Elk Valley Farm, he served in the Dakota Territorial Legislature, and became a boomer for locating the territorial capitol at Odess near Devils Lake. He lost, and the capitol was moved to Bismarck. He then took up ranching in the Mouse River area of Dakota, and was instrumental in organizing McHenry County. In 1887 he left ranching and took up mining in Montana. Over the years he devised schemes which are too numerous to mention, but they included such a far-sighted innovation as pre-fabricated houses. When Towner died, the main street of Larimore carried his name as well as Towner County and the city of Towner, all in northern North Dakota. Towner finally died a broken man with few of his dreams a reality to him, although they remain to this day as monuments to his energy. Death came after a stroke in 1897, and he was buried in Larimore, and for some time the grave lacked a headstone.[1]

After Towner left the Elk Valley Farm, Mr. Newell Greene Larimore sent his son Clay, who was just out of college, to look after the interests of the company in Dakota Territory.[2] From this point on the author has been unable to find any further mention of the Elk Valley Farm Syndicate of twelve. Apparently N. G. Larimore managed to buy out the other members of the syndicate, since from the fall of 1882 they become so conspicuously absent from the affairs of the farm.

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[1]George, pp. 3-50.

[2]Hennessy, pp. 259-260.

The one man most responsible for making it all possible, Newell Greene Larimore was born in Kentucky, on a farm in Bourbon County on August 29, 1835. His parents were Wilson L. and Harriett Berry Larimore and his grandparents were Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Larimore and Mr. and Mrs. James Berry. The Larimore family is French Huguenot by descent. Their ancestors fled to American and settled on the eastern shore of Maryland in the first half of the seventeenth century. The Berry family had ancestors who came from England to America on the Mayflower. Both sides of the family fought in the Revolutionary War.[1]

Wilson Larimore was a close friend of Henry Clay, the Great Commoner. It was also Wilson Larimore who devised the patent for the sweeping scythe as a replacement for the hand sickle, and it was Henry Clay who took the patent to Washington, D. C. for him.[2]

N. G. Larimore was raised on a farm in St. Louis County, Missouri. He later attended Wymans High School in St. Louis. On September 2, 1855, when he was twenty years old he married Miss Susan Ashbrook. Two sons were born to this marriage. The first was Walter L. and the second was Clay, who was believed to have been named for his father's close friend Henry Clay.[3] One of the old timers from the Larimore area, Mr. James McCabe (age 95) indicated that Clay was an adopted son;[4] however, the author was unable to find further evidence to substantiate this fact. His wife Susan

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Interview with James McCabe, pioneer citizen and life-resident of Larimore, February 13, 1964.

died on July 1, 1862. Mr. Larimore was married again in 1867 to Miss Mollie E. Jameson, a niece of the first wife. One son, Jameson, and one daughter, Cora, were born to them.[1]

At the close of the Civil War, N. G. Larimore and his brother John W. Larimore organized the St. Louis Warehouse Company, which covered an entire block. On its completion, the warehouse was donated for two months to the ladies of St. Louis to hold the Southern Relief Fair, through which about $60,000 was realized and turned over to the proper authorities for the relief of those made destitute by the war. In 1870, the Central Elevator Company was organized by N. G. Larimore and his brother John. Because of this large business, the Larimores became quite wealthy, and were for years leaders on the St. Louis Board of Trade. While a resident of St. Louis N. G. Larimore was elected to the city council for one term to fight the corruption which was very prevalent in the city at that time. In St. Louis he also served as president of the Iron Mountain Bank. It is interesting to note that the first telephone in St. Louis was put up to connect the elevators of the Central Elevator Company with the main office. It was because of the association on the St. Louis Board of Trade that the Booth Brothers approached the Larimores about the possibility of joining in a syndicate to invest land in the newly opened Dakotas. Finally in the late 1880's the Central Elevator Company was dissolved and N. G. Larimore moved to North Dakota where he devoted the rest of his life to his farming operations.[2]

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[1]Hennessy, pp. 259-260.

[2]Larimore Pioneer, November 20, 1913, p. 2.

The contributions of N. G. Larimore to North Dakota outside of the farming field were great. He served as president of the North Dakota Chautauqua Assocation for many years. He was a prominent and active Democrat who was offered the opportunity to run for Governor in 1893, which he declined. He was extremely prominent in higher education in North Dakota. Larimore served as a regent of the Methodist University at Wahpeton, North Dakota. In 1895 he became a trustee of Wesley College at the University of North Dakota. Shortly before his death he had provided the funds to build Larimore Hall and Corwin Hall at Wesley College. He also served as president of the University of North Dakota Board of Trustees under Governor Shortridge (who was lured to North Dakota from Missouri by the success of Larimore's Elk Valley Farm). He also was a trustee of the Red River Valley University.[1] The list of achievements is long. It is readily apparent that he was a very religious man, and a very active Methodist. On the day he died the final plans were being formulated for the dedication of the Larimore Methodist Church for which he had provided one-third of the funds. On dedication day a special memorial service was conducted for Mr. Larimore. Newell Greene Larimore died in St. Louis, Missouri on November 13, 1913.[2]

Clay Larimore became superintendent of the Elk Valley Farm in 1882. In the late 1880's he became president of the corporation with his father remaining as chairman of the board of directors. He remained as president until his death in 1937. Clay Larimore never

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

married, but rather seemed to dedicate his life to the Larimore enterprises. He was widely respected for his knowledge of farming and banking. In his later years he used to winter away from Larimore; however, it was his genius which really resulted in the success of the Elk Valley Farm, and in the fact that most of the original property is still intact. Clay generally looked after the business end of the farm management while his brothers Walter and Jameson managed the on-farm operations.[1]

Walter L. Larimore married Elizabeth (Lizzie) Mathews, the daughter of General James Mathews the founder and operator of another "big farm," the New York Farm which is discussed later in this chapter. Walter was considered to be quite frivilous, and a bit of a playboy, consequently it is easily understood why Clay Larimore was considered the most important of the brothers. Walter L. Larimore died in 1923, and his wife Lizzie died in January of 1964. They had no children.[2]

In 1885 Jameson Larimore, younger half-brother of Walter and Clay, joined in the management of the farming operations. In January 1904 Jameson Larimore I was married to Mrs. Thomas E. Edison, a widow. She had two children who lived with them, they were Hazel and Gladys Edison (The Edisons were cousins of the inventory Thomas Alva Edison). They had one child of their onw, Jameson II. Jameson Larimore I, who was known and respected as a horseman and hunter, died in November 1947. Jameson II, after completing his education returned to Larimore

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[1] Souvenir Book, Larimore, North Dakota Diamond Jubilee, July 5, 6, 7, 1956, pp. 9-10.

[2] Ibid.

in 1930 to take over management of the Elk Valley Farm Company. Jameson II married Alice Ball of Connecticut in 1938, and they have four children, Jameson III, Sally, Mary Alice, and Robert Clay.[1]

The operation of the Elk Valley Farm was unique and expansive. Although it may not have been as some of its claimants said, "the largest farm in the world,"[2] it was nevertheless about as big as any singly managed wheat farm of the late nineteenth century could efficiently become. The legends of the bonanza are many and often they are stories far out of proportion to the truth. In the case of the Elk Valley Farm you can read many accounts of how it was possible to start at Larimore and plow a straight furrow south for six miles to Kempton and then turn around and plow six miles back. Actually this was physically impossible since county roads cut the farm at nearly every mile, fencing the land off into sections of 640 acres.

The Record, published by Col. Clement Lounsberry, vividly and accurately recorded the history and development of North Dakota. One of its reporters made a call on the Elk Valley Farm in 1902 during the harvest season, and his description of the scene he saw is our best source of information on the Elk Valley Farm operations:

> North Dakota has within its borders the largest grain farm in the world. A harvest scene on this farm is indeed a novel sight. About one mile distant from the city of Larimore recently the writer beheld coming down the road a great cavalcade of men and teams, and found it convenient to "side track" his conveyance while the procession was passing, for the cavalcade had use for just about all of

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[1] Interview with Jameson Larimore II, April 30, 1964.

[2] The Record, Vol. 8, No. 2, (Oct., Nov., Dec., 1902), pp. 8-9.

the highway for a distance of a mile or more. It was a harvesting crew on the famous Elk Valley Farm en route from one portion of the big farm to another "field," or rather another portion of the same harvest field, for there are no fences or other divisions in sight, except the pasture fences in the distance. The public highways at intervals of one mile, and the railroad which runs through the farm, are the only separating lines to be seen in either direction. While waiting the passage of the harvesters we have an opportunity to make some observations of the pageant. We notice that the motive power consists altogether of mules, instead of horses. Here come the self-binding harvesters, each drawn by three mules, and we count 47 of the machines in the parade. Then there are three hayracks filled with jolly harvest hands, laughing and joking each other, or perhaps singing, as they are borne to the new scene of labor. Then there is a wagon carrying water for the men. Here comes the foreman and two experts with repair equipments, each with rigs of their own. And now we proceed, without waiting to argue, to give the harvesters a little more road, for here comes a cloud of dust, and we discover it is the flying ponies and rig of Mr. James [Jameson] Larimore, one of the managers of the farm, who has waited to see the finish of the last field, and then starts his fleet ponies out at a pace which takes them past the long line of harvesters before the leading one reaches the new lot, and is there to see them started right in the half-section "patch," which is just in the condition to be "tackled" today. Surely here is a subject for a picture which will be of interest to the army of Record readers, who have never seen a harvesting scene on a scale of such magnitude as this. Now if we could only get the harvesters in a line so that we could have all the 47 harvesters included in the view! Mr. Larimore is very accommodating and kindly renders such assistance as he can in getting some pictures. "But you will have to excuse us from stopping and lining the teams up at close range, as you saw them in the picture taken when the World's Fair commissioners were here in 1893. The half hour's time it would take would cost $25, and, as such pictures have already cost us several hundred dollars, we have had to draw the line, and must be excused this time." . . . and we succeeded in getting them all in range of the camera lens only by improving the opportunity which he had assured us would come when they came to this point to "oil up." Otherwise they would be "strung out" all around the half-section patch, a distance of three miles . . . it is remarked that although the utmost expedition was used in getting the picture, and the camera was set up close to the nearest machine, yet before the view could be caught the nearest machine was 500 feet distant, and most of the machines had made their last round and were on their way to another field. Forty-seven binders cut a swath over 300 feet in width, and the entire half-section of standing grain has been laid low in exactly 4 hours and 15 minutes. The company had a stretch of standing grain in a solid body about 6 miles in length, and a portion of it 3 miles in width. It might have been possible to "tackle" the big field all at once, but it does not all ripen evenly, and the section line divisions make it convenient to harvest the different portions in succession when they are in just the right condition for cutting.

The company has now under cultivation 11,000 acres in grain, largely wheat, but including large fields of oats, barley, flax, corn and other crops. Mr. Larimore also informed the writer that he expects to have a carload of very choice popcorn to ship as a result of a little experiment in that direction this season. This great farm, which is owned by a stock company, has, under the management of Hon. N. G. Larimore and his sons, Clay and James [Jameson] steadily paid large dividends, even at the present valuation of the stock. It is farmed under the most perfect system, which secures a minimum of expense, with the largest profits. There is very little waste, and every acre of land is made to do its best, consistent with economical management. Weeds are almost unknown here, and the buildings, stock and machinery are kept in the best of condition.

The company owns 3 threshing rigs, which are operated with picked crews, each in charge of one of the managers. There are several large public elevators on the farm where the grain can be hauled directly from the machines for storage and sold at the world's best market price less freight. The greatest difficulty the management finds is in securing competent men in the number required in a farm of this size. Comparatively few are needed during the winter months, and thus in order to secure them when required large wages must be paid, and for men who are at best but transient farm hands. In this particular the owner of the small farm has a very decided advantage, and it is this fact which has led to the breaking up of many of the farms in this vicinity. The owners of this farm have, however, not yet found any other place for the investment of their capital with probabilities of better dividends that the average of 15 percent they have been getting for years on a valuation of $25 an acre.

While at the Elk Valley Farm the writer met Mr. James Russell, who made the first twine binder for the Deering Company, a quarter of a century ago, and who has, in fact, been making them ever since, still having charge of this department of the factory, which has grown from a small enterprise to one of the largest manufacturing concerns in the world. Mr. Russell was at Larimore and set up the 43 Deering binders which astonished the World's Fair commissioners on their visit here. His trip this year was for the purpose of watching the operation of 3 new experimental machines. He started out with them in April in California, and from there proceeded to Texas and thence to other harvest fields in Oklahoma, Kansas, Iowa, and South Dakota, in order to see the machines at work under varying conditions. Mr. Russell says that the exhibition of the machines to the World's Fair commissioners in the Elk Valley harvest field was the greatest stroke of business that ever happened. The foreign trade of the company was up to that time only nominal, but as a result of the investigations started by representatives from various foreign nations, who were here at the time, there was almost immediately a remarkable increase in their foreign trade, until at the present time 300 men are employed by the Deering Company in packing machinery for their foreign trade. Not only so but the same investigations have resulted in a wonderful stimulus to other lines of American machinery and other manufactured goods.[1]

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[1]The Record, Vol., 8, No. 2 (Oct., Nov., Dec., 1902), pp. 8-9.

It may be readily seen that operations on the Elk Valley Farm were indeed impressive.

Before leaving the Elk Valley Farm, some further elaboration is needed on the visit of the World's Fair commissioners in 1893. When the commissioners arrived in late August, the harvest was well under way. Forty-three Deering binders were at work in a single field, cutting down the grain at a rate of 640 acres per day. Even at this rate it required three weeks to complete the harvest. They were using 164 head of mules to do the work at the time of the visit. That particular year they had 8,000 acres of wheat which yielded twenty-four and one-half bushels per acre. The commissioners spent four days in North Dakota and according to the press of that day, they seemed dutifully impressed with what they had seen. There were over 300 dignitaries in the party which viewed first the grinding of wheat in Minneapolis, and then went to North Dakota to see how the grain was raised.[1] The Minneapolis Tribune carried this story:

> The exhibition at the Elk Valley Farm yesterday was a scene fit to be witnessed by all the world, and the world was there. The commissioners from all quarters of the globe showed a great interest in the most distinctively representative scene of American industry yet witnessed. Between their questioning concerning this revelation in agriculture, they commented on the contrast with their own lands. The thoughtful Japanese said that he had never seen anything like it. Mr. A. Grinevesky of St. Petersburgh [Russia] expressed surprise when told of the wages paid American harvest laborers. This was the culminating scene of the commissioners, and they acknowledged that Americans excell all nations in the ways of raising and marketing wheat for the world. The foreigners could not sufficiently express their enthusiasm.

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[1] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), pp. 5-6.

> Throughout the four days' trip just completed, it has been noticeable how thoroughly the foreign guests have entered into the spirit of all the receptions and greetings. The reports they will spread through reports to their government and in newspapers and private correspondence, will be most favorable. Their excursion through the Northwest has been the most distinctive trip ever taken through this agricultural section. The German representative frankly admitted that their country had nothing to compare to what they had seen here, and indulged in candid praise.[1]

Since the profit motive was the sole reason for the existence of this large farm, it would be well to examine briefly just exactly what the financial situation really was. When the machinery, men, and energy of the Elk Valley Farm itself were used, they normally calculated expenses to run about $4 per acre. Assuming that they received twenty bushels per acre for an average crop, which they claimed they did, and that wheat sold for fifty cents per bushel, which it usually did at that time, their profit would have been $8.25 per acre. If they had to hire neighboring farmers, which they frequently had to, it would have cost: plowing, $1.00; seed, 75 cents; seeding, 50 cents; twine, 20 cents; harvesting, $1.00; threshing and marketing, $2.45; for a total of $5.90. At that figure the profit would have been $6.34 per acre. At these figures for profit per acre, it is easy to see why a farm which, had it been one mile wide would have extended for nineteen miles, or formed a solid block of flat fertile land five miles by four miles, was worth retaining.[2]

In 1914 the pressures of manpower, taxes, and management caught up with the Larimores, and they reorganized the land and let

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[1] Minneapolis Tribune, August 30, 1893, p. 3.

[2] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10, (April, 1896), pp. 5-6.

it out to tenants. It is still run in this manner today, although the acreage is very near the original figure.[1]

The Hersey Farm (Crystal Springs Farm)

In Arvilla Township, Grand Forks County, North Dakota, there is located one of the most fascinating farms that it has ever been the author's privilege to see. The name of the farm is the Crystal Springs Farm. Today nothing remains but the decaying ruins of some of the barns, and an old watertower. However, at one time this was a farmstead of such grandeur and beauty that the memories of it still leave a feeling of awe in the minds of those who can remember it. What are the who, what, when, where, and why of such a place? A close examination reveals an extremely unique and interesting footnote to the history of North Dakota.

Originally the farm was referred to as the Hersey Farm. It was named for its founder, Dudley Hall Hersey. Dudley Hersey was the second son of Samuel Freeman Hersey of Bango, Maine. The elder Hersey was a well-to-do businessman who had extensive interests in many enterprises including the lumber business. He was born in Sumner, Maine, in 1812. At a very early age he moved to Bangor and invested in timber land along the Penobscot where land was cheap. The increase in value on his investments made him a wealthy man. He was a banker, merchant, and lumberman. In 1842-57-65-67 and 1869 he was in the Maine state legislature. When he died February 3, 1875, he was serving his second term as representative in Congress from Maine.

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[1]Interview with Jameson Larimore II, April 30, 1964.

Although he was never a citizen of Minnesota, in 1851 he became a member of the firm of Hersey, Staples & Co., of Stillwater, Minnesota. He contributed to the growth of the Stillwater area by giving liberally for the erection of the Universalist Church and its library. In addition he aided the building of two railroads in Minnesota. He was married three times, and had a family of four sons by his second wife. The sons were Roscoe Freeman Hersey, Dudley Hall Hersey, Eugene M. Hersey, and Edward Lewis Hersey.[1]

The oldest son Roscoe (Rock)[2] Freeman Hersey was somewhat involved in the Hersey Farm in North Dakota, since he spent a great deal of time there. He was born July 18, 1841, in Milford, Maine. He was educated in Bangor and clerked in his father's store in Bangor, Maine until 1862 when he entered the Civil War. On May 19, 1864, he was severely wounded at the battle of Spottsylvania Court House, and discharged a Colonel. After spending two years in New Orleans in the shipping and commission business he came in 1867 to Stillwater and then to Lake City, Minnesota where he managed the branch of Hersey, Staples & Co. for five years. In 1872 he returned to Stillwater and entered the firm of Hersey, Brown, and Bean, dealers in lands, lumber, and merchandise. In 1877 he was elected state senator for one term. He was married to Ella C. Wardwell of Bangor, Maine in 1864.[3]

Eugene M. Hersey was born in 1850, and was active in the lumber business in Stillwater as was the youngest brother Edward Lewis Hersey.[4]

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[1] W. H. C. Folsum, Fifty Years in the Northwest (St. Paul: Pioneer Press Company, 1888), pp. 415-416.

[2] Interview with James McCabe, pioneer citizen of Larimore who was employed by Dudley Hersey in his youth. Mr. McCabe is 95 years old. February 13, 1964.

[3] Folsum, pp. 415-416.

[4] Ibid.

However, it is Dudley Hall Hersey, the second son with whom this study is concerned. He was born in Bangor, Maine, in 1845. He was educated in the public schools of Bangor, and in Westbrook Seminary. He came to Minnesota in the early 1860's and in 1864 he was married to Miss Arvilla Estelle Wardwell, of Bangor, Maine. The wedding took place in Lake City, Minnesota. He entered the employ of Staples (for whom the city of Staples, is named) and Bean, a lumber firm in Stillwater, and after that he was a partner in the firm of Hersey, Bean and Brown. For twenty-five years prior to his death he was a member of the firm, Hersey and Bean and was very well known in the lumber business, since this firm was one of the largest in the northwest.[1] Because of this business, he became quite wealthy. It was at that time the custom for the wealthy to own a fashionable ranch or estate in the West to be used for the summer leisure of both friend and family. Dudley Hersey proved to be no exception. For him, the then newly opened farming area in the fertile Red River Valley of the North seemed to be the most enticing. When Hersey arrived he found that the land he wanted had settlers on it. Two stores had been opened along the Turtle River. They were the Stevens Brothers Store, and a store opened by Lucius P. Goodhue. After Larimore was established these two stores were moved there, and Hersey began to establish his farm.[2]

The farm itself was located halfway between Larimore on the west, and Arvilla (named for Mrs. Hersey) on the east. Most of the

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Arnold, pp. 27-42.

farm was in Arvilla (also named for Mrs. Hersey) Township, although some of it was located further north in Hegton Township.[1] The original farm contained 2,560 acres, of which about 300 acres were in river timber and approximately 600 acres of which were usually devoted to prairie pasture. The main crop was wheat, which usually accounted for about 1,500 acres each year with the remainder of the farm being devoted variously to oats, barley, corn, and forage crops. In addition the farm had a large, productive and very beautiful garden. The crops used to average about twenty bushels to the acre and the expenses were normally about five dollars per acre. Consequently profits were quite good.[2]

The livestock operation was quite extensive. Hersey kept about one-hundred and twenty head of grade Clydesdales and one imported stallion. This group of large work horses comprised one of the finest herds in the United States at that time.[3] He also kept a full stable of fine quality driving horses, a pair of which he acquired from Minnesota's United States Senator at that time, William Drew Washburn. There were fifty of the best Jerseys in American, about one-hundred hogs, and several hundred Plymouth Rock laying hens as well as some other fowl.[4]

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[1] Advertising circular circulated by Larimore, Mathews, and Stonehouse Land Company about 1910 describing this property for sale.

[2] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 9.

[3] The use of draft-horses for farm work is in contrast to the much larger Elk Valley Farm of Larimore--15,000 acres--which used mules for farm work.

[4] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 9.

The farming operation that went on here needed a rather substantial physical plant. It had it! In all there were thirty-two buildings on the farm. Included were:

Buildings[1]	L	W	H
Horse Barn	44 x	80 x	24
addition	24 x	80 x	17
Cattle Barn	43 x	82 x	14
Auto House (in later years)	27 x	45 x	12
Grainary	16 x	24 x	9
addition	16 x	20 x	9
Wagon Shed	16 x	54 x	10
Poultry House	14 x	50 x	8
Stallion Barn	16 x	24 x	10
Stable	16 x	52 x	12
Paint Shop	10 x	12 x	8
Harness Shop	12 x	16 x	9
Repair Shop	24 x	36 x	10
Wagon House	24 x	56 x	10
Grainary and Feedhouse	12 x	16 x	8
Cow Barn	25 x	122 x	17
Cow Barn	25 x	100 x	17
Sheep Barn	18 x	80 x	10
Cattle Barn	18 x	110 x	10
Ice House	33 x	25 x	12
Machine House	24 x	122 x	12
addition	14 x	14 x	12
Grainary & Feedmill	27 x	40 x	12
Grainary	12 x	19 x	6
Grainary	12 x	19 x	8
Hog House	24 x	162 x	16
Well House	8 x	14 x	8
Well House	8 x	8 x	8
Well House	8 x	8 x	8
Steel Water Tank with Tower			

Included in this seemingly never ending list were a modern creamery, a slaughter house, and a root cellar. The 300 ton ice house was considered quite large, and the slaughter house came equipped with a modern Stevens cooler. The grainaries were adequate to hold the entire year's crop from the farm. The hog house contained one of the most

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[1]Advertising circular circulated by Larimore, Mathews, and Stonehouse Land Company about 1910 describing the property for sale.

modern innovations of that day, a dipping plant. Each barn came equipped with its own manager and his own private office. Also the farm was equipped with more than 2,000 feet of underground water pipe. One more barn must be mentioned. That is the most glamorous barn of all. It was the private barn of the Hersey family. Located about one-hundred feet from the main house it was 34 x 101 x 17. The lower story of it was furnished in natural fir, and was kept well oiled to preserve the beauty. In this barn were a carriage room, office, carriage washroom, stable for twelve horses, and four box stalls.[1]

Henry Lavayea was foreman of the farm starting in about 1890. He came to the Larimore area in 1881, from Cleveland, Ohio, for reasons of health. He managed to acquire over 1,200 acres of his own and was considered to be very wealthy in his own right. His farm was called the Grace Farm, which is discussed later in this chapter. He supervised about ninety or more men. The men and servants had their own entrance to the farm, and were forbidden to come near the main house unless requested to do so. They lived and worked in the river bottom below. They were housed in a mens dormitory 25 x 42 x 18 which had an addition of 17 x 37 x 10. In this building there were three rooms on the first floor and eight rooms on the second floor. There was also the boarding house which was 26 x 28 x 20 with an addition of 16 x 144 x 10 and another addition of 16 x 28 x 10. This house had eight rooms on the first floor and four rooms on the second. Wonder of wonders, this house in the middle of North Dakota's prairie had steam heat.[2]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

Needless to say, the crowning glory of this wonderous farm was the main house itself. It sat on a crest about one-hundred feet above the Turtle River. It was well above all of the other buildings on the farm, and was truly more like a park than a farmhouse. The main house proper was 34 x 47 with 24 foot posts. An addition of 20 x 25 with 22 foot posts, a portico 17 x 24 x 12, and veranda 8 x 20 completed the house. On the front of this immense two-story mansion there were two large bay windows common to the architecture of that day. On the first floor there were two parlors, a bedroom, dining room, kitchen, laundry, bath, pantries, closets, servants' rooms, etc. In all, the house had a grant total of 42 rooms. The house was equipped all over with hot and cold running water out of elaborate fixtures. The bath tub of procelain was probably among the first North Dakota had ever seen. Across the lawn a short distance there was an "annex" of 20 x 20 x 10 with four rooms. There was also a "lodge" of 17 x 37 x 10 with three rooms. These buildings were used to house guests. Located around the mansion was a lovely park with a shooting range, archery set, tennis set, croquet set, and several other grounds. Freely strewn around all of the park were some of the luxuries of that period including yard tents and hammocks.[1]

The Herseys lived on the farm only during the summer when they entertained their wealthy eastern friends at lavish parties. During the rest of the year they could be found traveling to Europe, Mexico, Florida, the Pacific Coast, and any of the other fashionable resorts of that day.[2]

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[1] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 9.

[2] Ibid.

Although Dudley Hersey spent little actual time in North Dakota, he certainly left his mark in many ways. One of his charitable acts was to take the Arvilla Hotel which he built in 1882 and present it to the county about 1892 to be used as a county hospital along with 135 acres of land near Arvilla which was to be used as the county poor farm.[1]

Dudley Hersey had only one son, Samuel Freeman. His son died quite suddenly at the age of 15. Whe he died he was said to be worth one and a quarter million dollars himself, so one can gain some perspective on the wealth of the Herseys.[2]

After a long and lingering illness Dudley Hall Hersey died on September 24, 1900, in St. Paul at the age of 55.[3] Today the crumbling ruins of several of the old barns are all that remain to mark the genius and wealth of this man.

After the death of Hersey, the land was sold to the J. B. Streeter Land Company. Streeter operated the farm himself for several years, and used the buildings for his summer residence.[4] Then in 1903 or 1904 the land was apparently sold to John O. Fadden who died shortly and the farm reverted to Streeter. Streeter had renamed the farm the Crystal Springs Farm, and he made an attempt to bottle and sell the water which was regarded as being exceptionally clear and pure.[5]

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[1] Larimore Pioneer, September 28, 1900.

[2] Interview with James McCabe, February 13, 1964.

[3] Larimore Pioneer, September 28, 1900.

[4] The Record, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Jan., Feb., Mar., 1903), p. 15.

[5] Interview with James McCabe, February 13, 1964.

John O. Fadden named the farm the Riverside Stock Farm. While he had the farm he raised some of the finest livestock in the northwest.[1] James McCabe believed that Streeter and Fadden were "in cahoots," and that the whole operation was intended to swindle the people out of more money. Whether it was or not, will never be known. When Streeter declared bankruptcy in 1907, the land came under the control of Larimore, Mathews, and Stonehouse Land Company.[2] From this point on, the history of the farm is one of constantly changing ownership, and different sets of renters. Two World Wars, a major depression, rising taxes, rising farm costs, and poor management eventually brought the farm to abandonment and ruin. Today the majority of the land is owned by John McDonald who has taken some of the old buildings from the farm for his farmstead which is about a quarter of a mile west of the original site. He calls his farm the Crystal Springs Farm, although this is not entirely accurate. The buildings, or what remain of them, are owned by a farmer from north of Larimore. Today the ruins of the hog-barn, a grainary, a cow barn, a horse barn, several newer buildings, the well tower, visible from the county road, and a part of the old stone bridge are to be found. Also there remain the foundations of numerous buildings including the main house. The author found it interesting to note that although badly overgrown you can still see some of the beautiful landscaping around the mansion foundation and grounds. The best of the barns is still in use on a farm about one mile east of the original Hersey Farm. It has been split into two buildings and the remaining half is still an impressive structure.

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[1] Grand Forks Herald, Special Silver Anniversary Edition, June 26, 1904, p. 37.

[2] Larimore Pioneer, Summer editions, 1907.

The New York Farm

James Henry Mathews, the founder of the New York Farm, was born on October 10, 1846, at Woodgrange, County Down, Ireland. He came to the city of New York with his parents when he was about a year old. His father was Hugh Henry Mathews, a carpenter, and his mother was Jane Sturgeon a lineal descendant of the old Scotch Montgomery family. His grandfather served under the Duke of Wellington and was wounded in the Battle of Waterloo. His father served in the Civil War, as did his son. However, when James Mathews first tried to enlist he was only fifteen years old, so his father stopped him. A second try at enlistment brought a similar rejection by his father. Finally after his father had himself left to serve, young James Mathews got his chance.[1]

In 1867 he formed a partnership with J. A. Snead and engaged in the wholesale butcher business under the firm name of Mathews and Snead. In 1870 he sold his business interests and moved to West Point where he contracted for two years to supply the government with supplies for the troops. It was also in 1870 that he married Mary Elizabeth Taylor at Cornwall, New York.[2]

In 1872 he returned to Newburgh, New York and formed a partnership with Edgar C. Barnes to engage in the wholesale meat and provision business. This business was carried on until 1883 when Mathews sold his interest and moved west permanently.[3]

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[1] Herald Printing Company, History of the Red River Valley (Chicago: F. Cooper & Company, 1909), II, 1055-1056.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

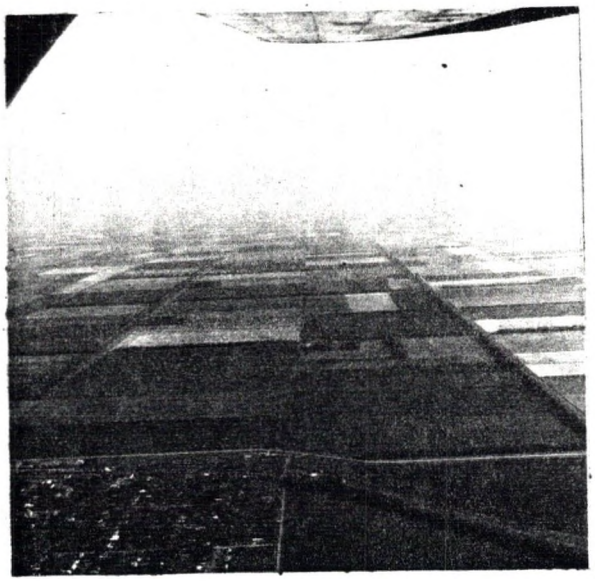

Fig. 11—Aerial view of the Elk Valley Farm lands from the north, with Larimore in the lower left corner, and the Elk Valley Farm in the center of the picture.

Fig. 12—Aerial view of the Hersey Farm (Crystal Springs Farm) from the west, also showing the Turtle River.

In September, 1878, after reading the eastern press reports about the Red River Valley area he came to Grand Forks where he became interested in real estate and farm lands. From that time on he spent a part of every year in Dakota Territory until 1883 when he sold his business interests in the east and moved his family to Dakota.[1]

The Mathews had five children. The first was Lizzie Jane, who married Walter Larimore. She died in January 1964. The other children were Maud Inez, Josephine Coldwell, Edgar Carlisle, and Sadie P. Josephine died when she was about eight months old, and Edgar died at the age of eight in 1888 by being kicked in the head by a horse.[2] Sadie died about 1910 when she took a load of cream cans to Larimore and the train frightened the horses so that they tipped the wagon over on her.[3]

When Mathews arrived in Dakota Territory the nearest railroad point to what would eventually become Larimore was located either 40 miles east at Fisher's Landing or 73 miles south at Casselton. In the fall of 1878 Mathews and others including Thomas Eastgate had gone into the Larimore region to select plats of land to be filed on when the land was opened to settlement. The land was opened to settlement on October 8, 1879, the same day that Mathews and W. N. Roach headed west toward Fort Totten with the mail. Mathews discovered that the land he had intended to file on had been taken; however, he was still able to secure two choice quarters in Arvilla Township.[4]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Interview with James McCabe, February 13, 1964.

[4] Herald Printing Company, History of the Red River Valley (Chicago: F. Cooper & Company, 1909).

The first crop taken off the New York Farm was in 1880 when 171 acres of wheat, and twenty acres of oats were harvested. The cost of breaking and backsetting was about five dollars, and the other expenses also about five dollars, which were high prices then. The wheat yielded 28 bushels per acre and the oats 62½, the latter weighing 42½ pounds per bushel. The price at that time for oats was 75 cents for 32 pound oats. In all the products from the farm sold for over $9,000, while the total cost was less than $2,000, leaving a handsome profit of over $7,000. For the first five years Mathews managed to coach yields of 28, 33¾, 30¼, 28, and 22 bushels per acre. With the market price remaining at about $1.25 per bushel, it is easy to see why James Mathews became a wealthy man. Generally his expenses continued to fall over the years as his quantity of land cultivated rose.[1]

Mathews not only found grain growing very profitable, but also engaged in the breeding of standard trotters and draft horses. Each year he raised about fifty colts. In 1892 he sold 107 horses at an average price of $200. He also raised pure blood Holstein cattle and Poland China hogs.[2]

The land holdings of James Mathews at one time reached as high as 12,000 acres. Mathews was somewhat different, however, since shortly after the turn of the century he began to dispose of his land one piece at a time. Generally he sold the land for from $20 to $30 per acre.[3] His efforts along this line brought in large numbers of

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[1] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 8.

[2] Ibid.

[3] The Record, Vol. 8, No. 1 (February, 1902), p. 13.

settlers from Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. He was also vice-president of the Elk Valley Land and Colonization Company, which settled forty Danish families on 10,000 acres near Larimore.[1]

For the most part, Mathews was a promoter and a real-estate man more than he was a farmer. He was involved in several land companies, and other promotional efforts, such as the Elk Valley Land & Colonization Company, Larimore, Mathews, & Stonehouse, and J. H. Pifer & Co. He also was promoting settlement in Canada, where he owned a coal mine. After he disposed of his New York Farm, he opened a real estate office in Larimore and St. Paul.[2]

The Grace Farm

The Grace Farm was named for Grace Lavayea, the only daughter of Henry Lavayea. Henry Lavayea was the son of Joseph E. Lavayea, and Angeline P. Foote Lavayea of Cleveland, Ohio. Joseph E, Lavayea was a native of Canada, and of French descent, while his wife was of New England and Puritan descent. Joseph Lavayea was a shipbuilder by trade, and consequently he taught his young son the trade. After Henry Lavayea finished his public school education in Cleveland, Ohio, he went to work in the editorial and composing rooms of the Cleveland Leader. He then spent two and one-half years at the Kentucky University at Lexington, Kentucky. After his education was finished, he returned to Cleveland and worked in harbor construction for ten years.[3]

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[1]Grand Forks Herald, Special Silver Anniversary Edition, June 26, 1904, p. 39.

[2]Herald Printing Company, History of the Red River Valley (Chicago: F. Cooper & Company, 1909).

[3]George A. Ogle, Compendium of History and Biography of North Dakota (Chicago: George A. Ogle & Co., 1900), p. 1109.

In December, 1879, Lavayea visited North Dakota. He liked what he saw, and he returned again in 1880 and again in 1881 when he secured 1,400 acres of land six miles south and three miles west of Larimore. Then in 1882 he moved his family to Dakota Territory to make his permanent home.[1]

Lavayea organized his holdings in such a way as to make him well known as a progressive and scientific farmer. He used systematic accounting and administration procedures, and managed to build quite an impressive farmstead as well.[2]

In March, 1889, Lavayea was approached by Dudley Hersey who was in need of a manager for his large farm by Arvilla. Lavayea took over the management and for the next twelve years, he and his wife Mary White Lavayea lived in the Hersey mansion between Arvilla and Larimore. The Hersey farm specialized in the raising of Clydesdale horses and Jersey cattle.[3] James McCabe who worked on the Hersey farm under Lavayea said that it was surprising to notice that every spring when Hersey came back to Dakota, he would be told about how some of his very finest horses, or very best cattle had suddenly and tragically died over the long winter. McCabe then indicated that it was interesting to notice that Lavayea's herds on his Grace Farm kept becoming finer and larger.[4]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Interview with James McCabe, February 13, 1964.

McCabe also recalled how Lavayea was quite an imposing figure with a tall silk hat which he wore all of the time.[1] In many ways Henry E. Lavayea did cut an imposing figure, for he was certainly important to the people of his legislative district who elected him to the state senate, and to other positions of prominence in the state.[2]

Not too long after Dudley Hersey died and Lavayea lost control of that farm, he sold his own farm to the J. B. Streeter Company so that he could devote the rest of his time to his numerous business and political interests.[3]

The McCanna Farm

Nine miles northwest of Larimore, in the central western part of Grand Forks County is the village of McCanna named for S. A. McCanna, one of the pioneer settlers of this region.[4]

S. A. McCanna was a native of Minnesota, and came to Dakota Territory from Moore County, Minnesota, in 1881. He took up government land and was successful enough to continue to add to his holdings until his farm reached 3,600 acres. In addition, he had 1,100 acres near Cando, in Towner County. His farm was intensely profitable, and as an example, in 1892 over 100,000 bushels of grain were raised on the McCanna Farm. Normally he employed from twenty to thirty men during the spring, summer and fall. It took over one hundred horses and mules to do the work on this farm. They used twelve gang plows

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[1] Ibid.

[2] George A. Ogle, Compendium of History and Biography of North Dakota, (Chicago: F. Cooper & Company, 1909).

[3] The Record, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Jan., Feb., Mar., 1903), p. 16.

[4] Grand Forks Herald, Special Silver Anniversary Edition, June 26, 1904, p. 106.

with four horses to each plow, ten grain drills, and fifteen harvesters. In addition, two machines were used in the threshing operation.[1]

McCanna grew his own horses and mules, and generally speaking, they were of very high quality. Also he raised Polled Angus cattle, which were somewhat of a novelty at that time.[2]

The Emery Farm

The village of Emerado is named for Lewis Emery, the founder and long time owner of the Emery Farm by Emerado. Lewis Emery, Jr. was from Bradford, Pennsylvania. He acquired the Emery Farm from Senator Mitchell of Pennsylvania, his close friend, who sold the land to him. At its greatest extent the farm encompassed nearly seven square miles, or 4,480 acres of choice land, almost all of which was tillable.[3]

Although Emery never made his home in Emerado, he nevertheless built an imposing residence there. He owned most of Emerado, which was built in and around the farm buildings. Most of Lewis Emery's time and energy was taken up in Pennsylvania where he was a prominent oil capitalist. In addition, he owned great quantities of real estate in the east and gold mining properties in the west. He had extensive oil interests in Texas and owned property and mining interests in California, Arizona, New Mexico, and South America. In Bradford, Pennsylvania, he owned two pipelines which ran to Philadelphia. Emery himself achieved a considerable amount of notoriety from his court battles with the Standard Oil Company over oil rights just after

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 17.

the turn of the century. In spite of all of the property and interests he had, he considered his investment in North Dakota to be one of the most profitable he had for the amount of capital involved. In any event, it was important enough to bring him to North Dakota once or twice a year to check on his investment.[1]

A survey of the farm in 1895 showed:

Wheat	1,900 acres	44,300 bushels
Oats	300 acres	8,000 bushels
Barley	320 acres	7,000 bushels
Flax	100 acres	1,400 bushels[2]

In addition to this there were 160 acres of corn, 40 acres of potatoes, 200 acres of millet, 50 acres of timothy and 640 acres of pasture, with the remainder in summer-fallow.[3]

The equipment used on the Emery Farm included 134 head of horses, 16 binders, 7 drills, 5 spring tooth harrows, 5 gang plows, 6 sulky and 22 walking plows, a steam thresher, wagons, carriages, etc. There were two elevators on the farm, one which held 50,000 bushels, and another which held 35,000 bushels.[4]

Generally the farm would have about 50 cattle of the milking Holstein variety, 70 to 80 hogs, of the Berkshire or Yorkshire variety, and about 15 brood mares. In 1895 they also had one thoroughbred sire and one French coach stallion. Along with these there were usually about 300 Plymouth Rock laying hens.[5]

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[1] Grand Forks Herald, Special Silver Anniversary Edition, June 26, 1904, p. 114.

[2] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 17.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

All of the farms mentioned in this study were relatively large, and as such were investments rather than a way of life such as found on the smaller farm. For that reason exact accounting procedures were a vital necessity. The Emery Farm was no exception. Because of this exactness they are able to tell us down to the penny that in 1895 the Emery Farm spent $10,007.98. This figure of course did not include improvements or interest on investment.[1]

In the first sixteen years of existence the Emery Farm did not have a crop failure, and over that period of time the average yield was twenty bushels per acre. In some years it had gone as high as thirty-five bushels per acre. Oats had gone as high as seventy-five bushels per acre, and the other crops had also produced quite heavily from time to time. Corn was then raised for fodder only.[2]

Emery followed the pattern of other farm investers of that period who were unable to spend any time there themselves by hiring a successful neighboring farmer to run his land for him. J. K. Buttery, who came to Grand Forks County from Peterborough, Ontario, Canada in 1879, located near Emerado in 1881. He was a highly responsible and successful man in his own right.[3] Buttery gave the following estimates for the per acre cost involved in raising twenty-four bushel per acre wheat in 1895.

Plowing, per acre	$1.00
Seed	.65
Harvesting and Seeding	.80
Twine	.15
Harvesting	1.25
Threshing and Marketing	2.40
Total	$6.25[4]

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

Fig. 13—Aerial view of the New York Farm.

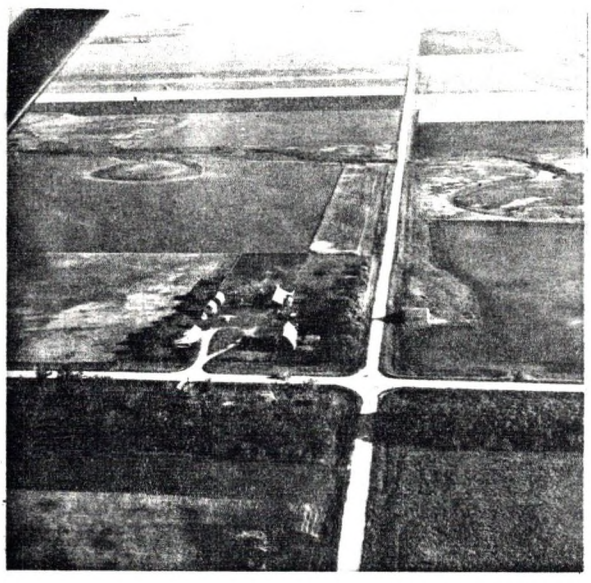

Fig. 14—Aerial view of the Grace Farm.

The Arnold Farm

The Arnold Farm west of Larimore has a great deal of historical interest to recommend it for study. That is because it was the first farm settled in Larimore Township. Originally, in the end of May, 1880, Ellery C. Arnold, his brother Henry V. Arnold, and Horace F. Arnold, the son of E. C. Arnold, arrive in what is now Larimore Township to homestead. E. C. Arnold was born near Manville, Rhode Island, July 4, 1828. His ancestry was from New England. From 1851 to 1854 he had been in the California gold fields with his father Amos Arnold. Then in the early 1860's some land had been acquired in Houston County, Minnesota, and the family moved there. Then in the late 1870's, several poor crops, and some high mortgages forced many of the county's population to seek new lives. Such was the case with the Arnold family. Consequently all of the belongings were packed into wagons pulled by oxen and they started out for the new lands in Dakota Territory. They embarded, and on the trail they passed through St. Cloud, Fergus Falls, Fargo, and Casselton. From there they turned north, where they did not see another town along their journey. They finally stopped in what eventually became Larimore Township and began to break the land. In the census of 1880 they were the only three residents of that area. They broke 155. acres of the prairie land that summer. That fall H. F. Arnold spent the winter in Grand Forks working in the office of the clerk of court, but the rest remained on the land.[1]

At its greatest extent the Arnold Farm totaled 2,840 acres. It was acquired by the then existing homestead, pre-emption, and tree-claim

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[1]Arnold, pp. 5-26.

laws which were repealed in 1891. Each area was accumulated variously by the two brothers, son, wives, and daughters. The main farm of 1,700 acres was owned in the main by E. C. Arnold and his son H. F. Arnold. On their farm 1,000 acres was usually devoted to wheat, 700 acres to forage crops, and 300 acres to pasture. They raised an average of 50 head of horses, 20 head of cattle, and 200 hogs and pigs, with Poland China being the favorite breed. The cattle were usually Shorthorns and Holstein, and the horses were Norman and Shire.[1]

In 1895 their wheat yielded 24 bushels per acre, and the average for previous years had been 20 bushels per acre. A successful and a profitable farm, it generally offered the owners a profit of about five dollars per acre over the years, even when the prices were low.[2]

H. F. Arnold served the area as a state Senator for many years. He was also the editor and publisher of the Larimore Pioneer for many years. His uncle H. V. Arnold is one of North Dakota's truly valuable men, for he was a prolific writer and publisher about the history he knew and saw going on around him. If it had not been for his on the spot histories, most of the knowledge about early day Larimore would have been irretrievably lost.[3]

The Eastgate Farm

Thomas Eastgate was born on July 15, 1856 into a family of cabinet-makers and mill owners who lived at a town which was located where Kennedy International Airport is located in New York. On October 3, 1879 he arrived at Fisher's Landing in Minnesota. Eastgate had decided

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[1]The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 33.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

to take Horace Greeley's advice and "go west." That fall he went by horseback to scout the land. He was impressed by the good grass and earth he saw. At that time there were no buildings or trees on the prairie, only space, and the marks of the survey crews. He returned to Grand Forks and spent the winter there where he worked on the Skidmore Farms. The next year he settled on Township 151, Range 53-54. He called his home Chester which was to be a town located along the Turtle River. Needless to say, this, like another proposed town of Orange along the Turtle River, never got going, because the railroads bypassed them. Over the winter of 1879-80 men had to go into the woods in Minnesota and cut timber, bring it across the river, and haul it out onto the prairie, since the only timber in Dakota was the limited amount along the Turtle River.[1]

In his private diary, Eastgate recorded the progress of the railroad as it penetrated into the land he made his home. On January 14, 1880, "the first cars were bunked across the bridge to Grand Forks, they were loaded with stones for the roadbeds." On January 20, 1880, he records, "the railroad engine came across with two cars." Then on Tuesday, March 16, 1880, he noted "before the train came across the Red River all travel was by stage, oxcart, or horseback."[2] After that the railroad made rapid progress, reaching Ojata or Stickney in the spring of 1880, then to Larimore in November. In 1882 the rails extended to Lakota, and in 1883 to Devils Lake.[3]

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[1]Interview with Mrs. Emma Nelson, daughter of Thomas Eastgate on June 22, 1964.

[2]From the private diary of Thomas Eastgate.

[3]Ibid.

Eastgate noted also that on December 23, 1879 he went to Fort Totten with W. N. Roach by dogsled with the mail. It was 28 degrees below zero. He also noted in his diary in April, 1880, that they encountered many difficulties in going out to settle their claims. The first day of their travels they made eight miles, to about where Bert Larivee now lives, just south of the new municipal airport. During that day they were entirely stuck twice, and had to completely unpack and reload. When they reached the low spot which is today a short distance east of the new United States Airbase, they had to go one mile north and swim the horses in order to cross.[1] Times were indeed difficult, compared with the twenty minute journey now involved.

Eastgate developed and ran a model farm. A rather articulate gentleman, he did considerable writing for many agricultural journals of that time. He sold his farming interests in 1905, and died of stomach cancer on August 1, 1907.[2]

The Michigan Farm

The Michigan Farm was originally organized by General V. M. Babcock, a veteran of the Civil War, and an ex-railroad contractor. He settled a homestead and tree claim and later purchased 1,000 acres of the then cheap land near him. The farm which was about four and one-half miles from Larimore comprised 1,452 acres at its largest.[3]

On the farm he erected a dwelling house, a dormitory for the men, cow barn, grainary, machine house, wagon barn, blacksmith and repair

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Larimore Pioneer, August 8, 1907, p. 1.

[3] The Record, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Jan., Feb., Mar., 1903), p. 18.

shop, chicken house, elaborate pig pens, scales, windmill, and a water system. In addition there was a small cottage for the foreman.[1]

Babcock was quite a hog raiser, and took great pride in telling of how in two years he had raised 133 hogs, weighing an average of 300 pounds each, from a single sow. Babcock also obtained some of the highest wheat yields in the Elk Valley at that time, running up around 40 bushels per acre. He was quite successful, and when he died, J. B. Streeter Land Company acquired his land, as they did the land of so many others.[2]

The Kentucky Farm

The Kentucky Farm was established south of the Elk Valley Farm by Chauncey Owen who came from Covington, Kentucky, in 1885. He built many expensive buildings, and the farm was an ideal retreat for a gentleman. The farm never totaled more than about 1,280 acres.[3]

Owen's mother was Mrs. William Ashbrook, the mother of N. G. Larimore's first wife. This made Owen an uncle of Clay and Walter who urged him to come to Dakota Territory and start his own farm. His mother and sisters spent their summers on the Kentucky Farm up until 1895 when they made it their full time residence. A half-brother Owen Ashbrook opened a farm in the same vicinity.[4]

The Nebraska Group

In the fall of 1905, ten families came up to the Larimore area from Sarpy County, Nebraska. The families were: Dick armes, Frank

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Souvenir Book, Larimore, North Dakota, Diamond Jubilee, July 5, 6, 7, 1955, pp. 18-19.

[4] Ibid.

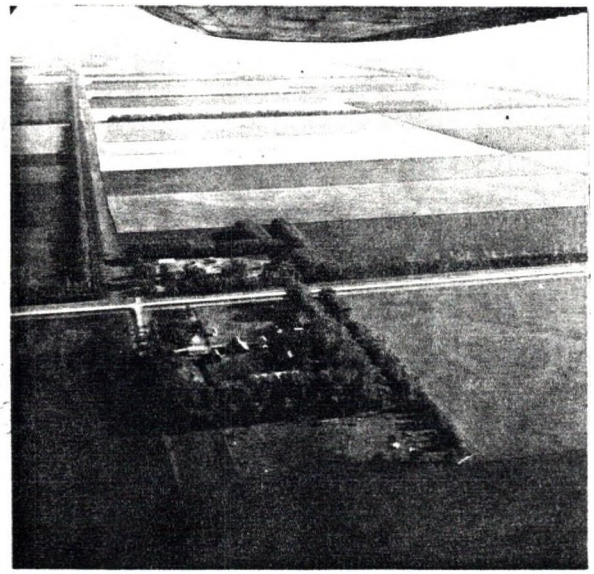

Fig. 15—Aerial view of the Arnold Farm.

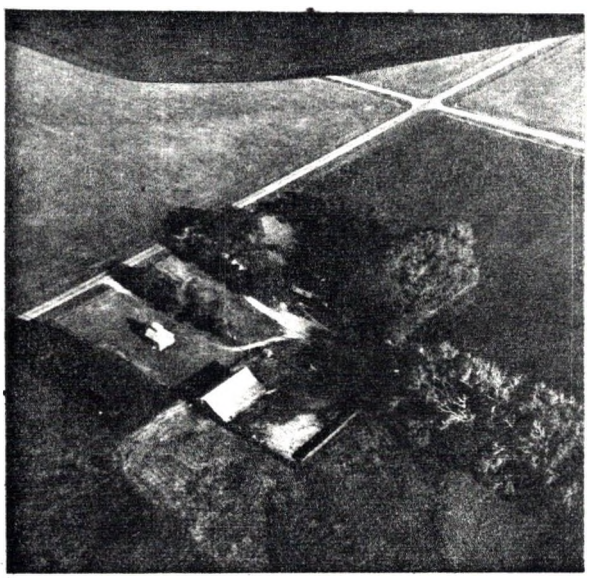

Fig. 16—Aerial view of the Kentucky Farm.

Armes, Swan Ackerson, A. L. Jarman, Henry Leader, George Leader, Charles Rishling, Bud Virden, the Hoag and Tannahill families. Although this group was organized later, it involved quite an expanse of land, and many of today's Larimore residents are descendants of this group.[1]

The Edison Farm

Thomas S. Edison, who was a cousin of the inventor Thomas Alva Edison, owned and operated a 3,100 acre farm with his own elevator on the Hannah branch of the Great Northern Railroad. The farm was located four miles north and one and one-half miles west of Larimore. Edison was one of the early farmers in the Larimore area, having come from Canada about 1882. After he passed away on July 9, 1900, the property was managed as the Edison Farms Estate by the Elk Valley Farming Company, under the Larimores, until the past few years, when the land was broken up and sold.[2]

Other Farms

It is difficult to draw the line and say a farm has significance historically to the development of an industry in an area, or that it does not. In the case of the Larimore area, however, every farm and every man of major importance to the agricultural development of the region has been included. There were other farms of size whose names would periodically appear in the author's research, such as the 2,000 acre farm of James Magoris, who was a fast living, hard drinking big farmer west of Larimore, or Rull and Ramsdahl who farmed 1,280 acres.

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Ibid.

The name of the Schrump Farm near the Grace and Kentucky Farms was another. Other farms were large, but were only names, such as the farms of O. L. Graber and Hiram Spade.[1]

These were the farms, the men, and the methods which made the first foundations for America's greatest industry in the Larimore, North Dakota area.

The Land Companies

In the case of the Dakota land, it was inevitable that the land company should develop. They were always there, even from the first day of settlement; however, their growth never was very great until some of the bigger farms began to be sold and broken up. With the release of large amounts of land, there were tremendous profits to be made.

J. B. Streeter, Jr. Land Company

J. B. Streeter Jr. was born in Allegan, Michigan, of New England and English parents, on June 29, 1866. He attended school in Allegan and graduated with honors. From there he went to Chicago where he took a course in commercial law and expert bookkeeping at Bryant and Stratton's Commercial College. After that he went into business with his father for a short period before coming to Larimore, North Dakota in the fall of 1890, where he took charge of the First National Bank as cashier and manager. His banking experience had begun at the age of twelve when he first went to work in a bank. Streeter immediately became interested in real estate, and began to buy up inferior areas and sell them

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[1]Arnold, pp. 122-123.

profitably. Soon after his arrival he organized the J. B. Streeter Real Estate Company with N. G. Larimore as vice-president, Clay Larimore as secretary, and his brother Hiram C. Streeter as treasurer. He gained quite a reputation when he carried the Larimore bank and the Michigan bank both through the panic of 1893 without damage.[1]

In 1899, J. B. Streeter, Jr. incorporated, since his holdings and real estate interests had become so great. He then built a building in Larimore which would be fitting for a king to read the descriptions in The Record. They stated that Streeter had a capital surplus and undivided profits of over $250,000. Most of the land that Streeter controlled was sold at $20 to $50 per acre, depending upon where it was located. He had a branch office located in Towner, so his land operations were quite spread out. There could be no question about it, J. B. Streeter was the biggest real estate man in North Dakota. His company farmed over 30,000 acres itself, while waiting to sell its various properties. It was his practice to buy a piece of land and then farm it himself until he could sell it for a profit. He owned at one time the Hersey Farm, Grace Farm, Michigan Farm, Magoris Farm, Schrump Farm, and many others.[2]

Then suddenly, almost as if lightening had struck, in 1907 he went broke. The summer editions of the Larimore Pioneer carry the public notice of the proceedings.[3] James McCabe who had dealings with Streeter in his younger days, didn't mince words, he called him "nothing

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[1] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 15.

[2] The Record, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Jan., Feb., Mar., 1903), p. 22-24.

[3] Larimore Pioneer, summer, 1907.

but a cheap crook."[1] Mrs. Emma Nelson recalls that after he left Larimore in 1907 he went to Chicago, and then in a few years they heard that he had become involved in some shady deals and wound up in prison.[2] Although not particularly loved, he did manage to participate in the advertising of North Dakota, and in the break-up of the big farms.

Other Land Companies

James Mathews was variously involved in several land companies. One was the Elk Valley Land & Colonization Company which was attempting to bring new settlers to the Larimore Area on a massive scale. He was also a member of the real estate firm of J. H. Pifer & Co. Then along with Anthony Stonehouse and J. E. Burchard he had interests in 15,000 acres of land in the Saskatchewan Valley of Canada. Then, most importantly he was a member of Larimore, Mathews, & Stonehouse Land Company,[3] which for all practical purposes took over where Streeter left off. Eventually this amalgamation of interests dissolved, and Anthony Stonehouse was left in sole control. His control lasted until up into the 1920's when he also went bankrupt.

The story of the land companies is an entire study in itself; however, it is presented here in brief form so that the reader may have some understanding of how the big farms disappeared. Few if any of these land companies were ultimately successful, and for those who were intimately involved, it was often disastrous.

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[1] James McCabe, interview, February 13, 1964.

[2] Mrs. Emma Nelson, interview, June 22, 1964.

[3] George A. Ogle, History of the Red River Valley (Chicago: F. Cooper & Company, 1909).

CHAPTER V

THE IMPACT AND NATURE OF GEOGRAPHIC INFLUENCES UPON THE HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Every area or region is distinctly different from every other area or region. There are innumerable reasons for the diversity which exists, and many of these reasons could be explained only after great study. However, in this paper it is necessary to note those factors of geographic diversity which existed at the time the subject farms were established. Many of these factors have been mentioned or intimated in the previous chapters. Nevertheless, it is well to separate and examine the geographic influences mentioned previously as well as some not mentioned. This is done in order that the reader may gain a true perspective of those factors of geographic interrelationship found in the historic period during which these farms were first established and operated.

Weather

Any area which is considered to be located in a marginal precipitation zone can have serious problems. Larimore is located in such a zone, where normally about twenty inches of precipitation will fall in a year.[1] The record shows that as total average precipitation

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[1]Frank J. Bavendick, Climate and Weather in North Dakota (Bismarck: United States, Weather Bureau and North Dakota State Water Conservation Commission, 1952), p. 62.

decreases, variability increases. At the twenty inch level a certain amount of variation is to be expected. This variation may show itself from year to year, but a precipitation cycle (if cycles really exist) which extended over a decade or more would not be uncommon.

In the early 1870's North Dakota was not a pleasant place in which to live. The year 1872 was particularly bad. Scarcely any rain fell from May until late in the fall. Vegetation dried up and turned brown early in August. Early in September prairie fires raged all over the valley, and left the surface of the ground blackened and desolate. It was indeed little wonder that General Hazen, who was sent out by the governor that summer to investigate the resources of the country through which the Northern Pacific railway passed reported that it was a "barren waste, fit only for Indians and buffalo."[1]

From 1874 until 1876 it really didn't make any difference what the climate was like, since heavy grasshopper infestations ate everything that grew anyway. The weather was good enough to have produced some good crops; however, the crops never had a chance.[2]

By the late 1870's the weather again behaved normally. During this period speculators established the first bonanza farms. Still, few people had settled. Then came the winter of 1880-81. Most of the winter was open; however, in the spring a succession of blizzards, came each containing heavy wet snow. These were followed by a period of rapid melting, which raised the water table and generally left the

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[1] J. H. Shepard, et. al., History of the Red River Valley (Chicago: C. F. Cooper & Company, 1909), pp. 194-212.

[2] Ibid., pp. 212-246.

soils of the area in excellent condition for the sowing of grain. The blizzards no doubt discouraged many people from settling near Larimore. However, lakes, ponds, and general wetness which were present the following spring more than made up for the blizzards.[1]

The weather of the early 1880's was generally favorable for the rapid development of small grain agriculture. The cool, dry climate was conducive to the development of a wheat monoculture, and the hard, red, spring variety raised in the valley at that time was highly in demand by the eastern millers.[2]

Then rather abruptly the late 1880's changed to a period of limited moisture. It was dry enough for several years to cause some of the bonanzas to go out of business. Near Larimore this period of drought was never as serious as it became further south in the valley, since wheat yields never fell below the thirteen to fifteen bushel per acre level.[3]

Hail then, as now, was a constant threat. Further south on the Grandin bonanza, eight sections were lost to hail in 1899.[4] This was probably one of the larger hail losses encountered in this area. The author was unable to find any information which referred to large or even moderate losses due to hail in the Larimore area, and so it is unlikely that this was considered much of a problem to Larimore farmers.

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[1] Ibid., pp. 194-212.

[2] Ibid., pp. 212-246.

[3] The Record, Vol. 8, No. 1 (February, 1902), p. 13.

[4] Drache, p. 329.

Topography

The topography of the Larimore area during the pioneer period posed certain problems. The area was astonishingly flat. Between Grand Forks and Larimore, a distance of approximately thirty miles, the elevation increases about three hundred feet above the river level, or an approximate average of ten feet per mile. Also, most of this rise was taken up by the beaches of old Lake Agassiz which run through this region, with the land between the beaches being quite flat. Because of this relative flatness, drainage problems were a constant concern. Today the area is heavily ditched and drained; unfortunately, in the early 1880's no machinery or spare time existed to do the extensive draining necessary. The result was that every shallow depression, slough, or pothole would hold water during wet seasons, causing considerable crop loss in the areas affected.

Vegetation

When man first crossed the Red River of the North he beheld a great sea of grass, characteristic of the fourteen to twenty-two-inch mean precipitation areas of the world. The eastern part of North Dakota was part of the humid, tall grass country. The grass was commonly from three to six feet tall. Wills indicates that the "area has been called one of Needle-Grass and Slender-Wheat-Grass association. Among other types are found bluestem, Indian grass, switch grass and dropseed."[1]

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[1]Bernt L. Wills, North Dakota, the Northern Prairie State (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1963), pp. 77-79.

A problem that the earliest settlers lived with was the grass-fire. Toward fall after the green grass had dried and turned brown, the prairie was covered with a virtual sea of tinder. One careless fire, and hundreds of acres would rapidly burn over. The grass with its deep root system was seldom hurt for long. However, before the roads, ditches, and cultivation limited the spread of grass-fires, many early shanties and crops were destroyed.[1]

One of the largest expenses the Larimore pioneers found was breaking the sod. In the spring the land would be plowed, and then again in the fall it would be cross-plowed, or back-set. Usually it would cost about $3.50 to complete the process of "breaking the sod," an amount frequently in excess of the land value. Breaking was a slow process, yet, with the great amount of machinery found on the bonanzas, it was normally done with surprising speed.[2]

Thomas Eastgate recorded in his diary that there were absolutely no trees on the prairie when he arrived in North Dakota. The only timber found was along the rivers, and even that was quite sparse in many places. This necessitated hauling building lumber all the way from Minnesota, a costly process.[3] Man quickly planted trees. The earliest settlers appear to have preferred the rapid growing box-elder and cottonwood which fill the North Dakota landscape today. Near Larimore, the Elk Valley Farming Company undertook a massive tree planting venture in about 1930. Because of this, every section of

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Drache, pp. 164-166.

[3] From the private diary of Thomas Eastgate.

their land is ringed with beautiful shelterbelts. A drive through this heavily tree planted area today makes it difficult to imagine the treeless sight which greeted the earliest settlers.

Animal Life

The Elk Valley derives its name from the observations of Postmaster D. McDonald and a group of explorers who in 1877 stopped in what would eventually become the Larimore area. While there they observed numerous small animals such as gophers, mice, and numerous wild fowl. In addition they observed deer, and the elk who inspired the name Elk Valley.[1]

As the settlers moved into the region and established themselves on the land and in the villages, the wildlife was limited in its habitation. The free roaming buffalo were the first to go, followed by the elk. The deer remained, but they took to the woods near the rivers.

In the place of the wildlife, man substituted his mules, horses, and cattle. Fences went up and the area ceased to be a natural habit for the free roaming prairie wildlife.

Crops and Livestock

At the time that the Dakota boom was in full force, the settlers came for one primary purpose, to raise wheat. At that time the hard red spring wheat of the Red River Valley was in great demand because of its milling qualities. Along with this, prices were good, about $1.25 per bushel, and the small farmer competition was limited.

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[1] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 5.

All of these factors combined makes it easy to understand why a wheat monoculture developed. The large Larimore farms began as immense wheat farms and never did diversify to any great extent. Wheat usually accounted for ninety percent or better of the farm production. Oats was usually raised for the horses, along with fodder for the cattle, and some other experimental crops; however, wheat reigned supreme. As the years passed, many of the more alert managers began to realize that diversification would be necessary; however, by the time that they would have chosen to do this themselves, other factors had forced the large farmer to either sell out or rent out his land.[1]

Many large herds of livestock existed on the various farms, but for the most part they accounted for a minor part of the saleable profit. They were basically the horses which provided the necessary animated energy. Numerous experiments were carried on by big farmers, as was the case of the Hersey Farm, which raised some of the very finest livestock. However, even then the livestock yielded only a small profit.[2] Wheat was king, and that is why the farms existed. When wheat ceased to be king, the large farms rapidly dissolved into smaller units.

Resources and Industry

Aside from the land, the people who came to the Red River Valley of the North to establish their gigantic wheat farms found few natural resources. They found no coal, no metallic minerals, no oil (unimportant

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[1] Drache, pp. 216-223.

[2] The Record, Vol. 1, No. 10 (April, 1896), p. 9.

at that time anyway), no forests, and no water power. About the only natural resource of the Larimore area were the large deposits of sand and gravel found in the ancient beaches of Lake Agassiz. It didn't take them long to begin to exploit this resource for building, and for road construction. Even so, this resource never became of major importance until after the turn of the century when a distinct need for improved roads came into existence. Little of it was used in the construction of buildings, since most structures were then made of wood.

Little can be said of the industry which the pioneer wheat farmers developed, since with no resource base, no industry could be developed. This of course does not include the agricultural processing industries which grew up on a limited scale in Larimore. Today after more than eighty years, even agricultural processing is of minor importance.

Transportation

Transportation was the key to the development of the Larimore area. Before transportation was developed, there was relatively little, but after it came, development was rapid. At the time that the first big farm settlers came to take up a claim, the railroad ended at either Fisher's Landing, about twelve miles out of Grand Forks, or at Casselton far to the south. (The section in Chapter IV which refers to the Eastgate Farm outlines the establishment of the railroads).

The first settlers came by wagon. The wagons were generally pulled by either horses or oxen, more commonly by oxen. Even before the wagon teams there had been a period of history during which Red River Valley movement was done in carts, two wheeled vehicles pulled

by oxen; however, few people if any of those who settled near Larimore came in this manner.

The reason that settlement near Larimore was so dependent on the railroads is easily understood. Since the great bulk of the land near Larimore was taken up by large bonanza or near bonanza size farms, great quantities of large machinery was needed. This machinery was quite heavy, and the only efficient means of transport in the Red River Valley was by train. Consequently, until the establishment of rail service to Larimore in 1882, little development occurred. Also, it is important to note that many of these farms produced an annual yield in excess of 50,000 bushels. This large volume of grain from a limited number of farms needed the cheap efficient transportation that the rails provided to get the grain to market and yet realize a profit.

Cultural Aspects

The city of Larimore had scarcely been established when the churches began to settle down and minister to the needs of the people. In September, 1881, the first Catholic service was held in Larimore. This was before there were many buildings in Larimore, since most of the first ones were erected in the winter of 1881-82. Then in April 1882 the Presbyterians established a church, quickly followed by the Methodists in July 1882. Other churches were established as the years passed until there were eight.

Because there were fewer people in the hinterland, and because the churches needed financial support, the owners of the large farms were expected to contribute according to their wealth. A prime example of this is N. G. Larimore of the Elk Valley Farm, who contributed one-third of the funds for the erection of the Methodist church in 1913.

The settlers of Larimore had many obstacles to overcome when they first planted their roots in Dakota Territory. It would seem that with the pressure of providing food, clothing and shelter, little time would be left to think of the educational needs of their children. Yet as early as June of 1882 the first school had begun to function. A formal school board was finally organized in July of 1882, and the first regular public school began to function that fall. In the case of the children of the large land owners, the large amounts of money available allowed them to send their children away to school.

The early settlers were not without their cultural influences as well. The social circle of the big farm high society was frequently noted in the pages of the Larimore Pioneer for their frequent card parties.[1] The lesser folks were entertained by folk-dancing and similar activities. Larimore has long been noted for its annual Play-Day. This was a county-wide function initiated by Miss Beatrice M. Johnstone.[2] Larimore adapted the day for itself, and it became a social highlight of the year in Larimore. For the most part the culture and recreation of the pioneer was a home-made sort of thing. His diversions were few, but his hunger and energy for any type of culture or recreation was great.

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[1] Larimore Pioneer.

[2] Souvenir Book, Larimore, North Dakota Diamond Jubilee, July 5, 6, 7, 1956.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX I

The following are a list of bonanza farms found in North Dakota:[a]

Tower bonanza	Barnes County line
Spiritwood bonanza	Stutsman County
Steele farm	Near Steele
Troy farm	"
Clarke farm	Burleigh County
Betz farm	North of Bismarck
Sykes-Hughes farm	Wells County, near Sykeston
Carrington and Casey farm	Foster County, near Carrington
Griggs and Foster farm	Griggs and Foster County
Cooper Brothers farm	Near Cooperstown
Fair view (Adams) farm	Richland County
Downing or Mooreton farm	Near Mooreton
Keystone farm	Richland County
Antelope farm	Near Mooreton
Woodruff farm	"
Dwight farm	Richland and Steele Counties
Baldwin farms	Ellendale area
Watson farm	Cass county
Buttz bonanza	Ransom county
Leech farm	Cass County
Raymond farm	North of Fargo
Blanchard farm	Trail County
Belleprairie (Cloverlea) farm	"
Buxton farm	Near Buxton in Trail County
Hillsboro farm	Trail County
Dunlop farm	Near Mapleton
Mosher farm	"
Scofield farm	Cass County
Wright farm	"
Chapin farm	"
Morrow farm	"
Brooks and McKnight farm	"
J. S. Bryse and Smith farm	"
Green (Williams) farm	"
Rand and Brown (Brown and Preston)	Trail County
Hadwin farm	Near Wheatland
Back farm	Richland County
Davenport farm	Near Jamestown
Hunt farm	Near Blanchard
Emerson farm	"
Gradner-Mairs-Howe farm	Near Buffalo
Cleveland farm	Richland County
Fingal Enger farm	Near Hatton
Garnet Brothers farm	St. Thomas
Glover farms (Samuel Glover & Sons)	Ellendale and Oakes

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[a]Adapted from Drache, pp. 136-148.

Gunderson farm	Aneta
Johnson Land and Cattle Company	Oakes
Jones and Brinker farm	Blanchard
Patterson Land Company	Burleigh County
Elk Valley farm	Larimore
Richardson farms	Wahpeton
Craig farm	North of Spiritwood
Clifford farm (may be same as Keystone)	Richland County

The following are a list of bonanza farms found in Minnesota:[b]

Kilrenny and Argyle farms	Euclid
Bolman farm	Georgetown
Elwood S. Corser farm	Polk County
Donaldson-Ryan farm	Donaldson
Hancock farm	Hancock
Humboldt farm, J. J. Hill, owner	Kittson County
Northcote farm, J. J. Hill, owner	Northcote
Oakfield and Riverside farms	Marshall County
Keystone farms	Marshall County
Lockhardt farm	Marshall County
Woodward farm	Warren
G. S. Barnes (Barnes and Tenney)	Glyndon

[b]Adapted from Drache, pp. 136-148.