

**MINNESOTA, ITS PLACE AMONG THE
STATES: BEING THE FIRST ANNUAL
REPORT OF THE COMMISSIONER OF
STATISTICS, FOR THE YEAR ENDING
JANUARY 1ST, 1860**

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Minnesota, Its Place among the States: Being the First Annual Report of the Commissioner of Statistics, for the Year Ending January 1st, 1860 by Various

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VARIOUS

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Presented by the Minnesota Hist Soc

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BEING

THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Minnesota

Commissioner of Statistics,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING JANUARY 1st, 1860.

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF LAW.

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1860.



PREFACE.

There were many reasons why the first annual publication of the Bureau of Statistics should have been delayed to embrace the results of the census of 1860; and not the least among these, was the fact that the month of February, 1860, was already advanced when the office was instituted, that several months must necessarily elapse before the correspondence of the office, embracing a new and diversified field of inquiry, could be efficiently organized and its results digested and published, and that in the meantime there was some risk that the materials, obtained with so much labor, might be left by the rapid current of events behind the time.

On the other hand, the census will of itself afford materials for a bulky volume, to the exclusion of topics which, though not within the purview of the census, lie at the foundation of statistics and especially concern the objects for which this office was instituted. The physical capabilities and geographical relations of states, afford, with the primary conditions of social development, the fundamental data of statistics. Agriculture, commerce, manufactures, and, after these, society, with its complex movements and relations, repose on these postulates of nature.

It happened, too, that the year 1856, which, in fact, completed the first decade of the political existence of Minnesota, was fruitful of events which furnished a felicitous commentary on the physical elements and topical conditions of its growth. The opening of a broad field of commercial activity to the citizens of Minnesota, in the north-west, the large advances of agriculture, the sudden and lavish overflow of production which, for the first time, brought our farmers into triumphant competition with the agriculture of the world in its central marts, the quiet but decisive return of prosperity upon conditions which seem to ensure its permanence are among the characteristics of the year which commences our annual series. Upon the foundation thus laid in the physics of the state, the census of 1860, whose results I hope to report to the Legislature before the close of its next session, will develop a superstructure of social detail in the natural and logical order of the series.

I should omit a public duty if I failed to express my appreciation of the promptness and cheerfulness with which my inquiries were responded to by a large majority of the public officers of whom information was sought. This is the more due to them, as the nominal compensation which the law allows them is in most cases entirely disproportionate to the services performed. The labor of examining the records for the transactions of a series of years will not, however, have to be repeated hereafter. It is not surprising that, upon instituting an unusual and somewhat laborious inquiry into the public records, requiring the cooperation of nearly the whole body of public servants, there should be some who would fail to comprehend its objects, or be unwilling to advance them. Although the delinquent respondents to my circulars are not numerous, they are sufficiently so to give a character of incompleteness to the data under the several heads, which has been only partially remedied in the general results by laborious computations of averages.

I have been largely indebted to the courtesy of gentlemen connected with various branches of the Federal service, and to numerous private correspondents, for valuable favors, often involving a great deal of labor. The insufficiency of the sum appro-

printed for the purpose, has been the occasion of over two months' delay in the publication of this volume, and, in fact, made it impossible to procure its publication in the form desired. Its cost, in its present shape, has so far exceeded the means at my disposal, that I have been compelled to exclude a large amount of matter prepared for this volume. Among the articles excluded, I regret exceedingly to be obliged to postpone to my next report, a valuable paper by Dr. C. L. Anderson, on the "Botany of Minnesota," with a very extensive catalogue of our native plants. Also a series of elaborate "Tables of Distances" prepared with great care, by Mr. A. J. Hill, of St. Paul; a list of Post Offices in Minnesota, with the statistics of each, obtained through Hon. H. M. Rice, at the department; a table of Mail Routes and distances thereon, by A. J. Hill; a Calendar of Minnesota, by A. W. Adams, of Shakopee; a full Official Directory of the state; a Statistical Directory of the churches, and a valuable series of tables prepared in illustration of the text, including the table of agricultural products in the different counties, which alone involved the labor of three months in its preparation. These tables, however, are omitted with less regret, as their general results are given in the text. The Calendar and Directories will form a permanent feature of future volumes.

Minnesota enjoys an enviable reputation for the healthfulness of its climate, and for its entire exemption from diseases which are the peculiar scourge of other western states. It is to be regretted that no means exist for registering the results of common experience in this regard. The positive testimony of statistics is only wanting to give its legitimate influence to this attractive feature of the climate. The Legislature will promote an important public interest by providing for the registration of births, marriages and deaths, on the simple and economical plan of Vermont.

In this book there is, for obvious reasons, no attempt at strictly scientific classification. Its humbler but perhaps more practical purpose will have been served if it shall help to make Minnesota better known abroad and at home. J. A. W.

STATISTICS OF MINNESOTA.

CHAPTER I

THE COMMANDING GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF MINNESOTA.

I. ITS POSITION IN THE PHYSICAL SYSTEM OF THE CONTINENT.

MINNESOTA, lying between the parallels of $43\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ and 49° of north latitude, and $89^{\circ} 29'$ and $97^{\circ} 5'$ of west longitude, occupies the actual center of the North American continent.

In ancient maps, compiled by the geographers of the middle ages, Jerusalem was placed in the center of the world, as the point to which every other object was to be referred, and the earth was made a circle surrounded by the ocean, the shores of which were represented as nearly equidistant from that spiritual capital.

Without imitating the pious extravagance of Sanudo, the position of Minnesota in the physical system of this continent may be described as the western counterpart, upon the inland waters of America, of the Asiatic summit of the Mediterranean basin; the *omphalos* of the new, as Jerusalem of the old world.

Excluding exceptional irregularities of outline, the mass of North America may be described as contained in an ellipse resting on the concentric arcs of the frigid and torrid zones, whose transverse axis, extending through fifty degrees of latitude north and south, and conjugate diameter crossing fifty degrees of longitude east and west, intersect at the heart of Minnesota. The point thus fixed as central to the external configuration and climatic extremes of the continent, is lifted to the summit of geographical significance by its central and commanding relations to the whole interior physical system of the continent.

For the geographical center of North America, at the heart of Minnesota, is also the pinnacles of its great water shed, the central source of those majestic rivers whose broad basins determine the physical contour, the climates, the commercial movements, the vocations, and the political destinies of two-fifths of the continent.

All the grand features of the continent, moulded and adjusted by the supreme sway and pressure of the primeval waters whose Ararat was here, are harmoniously grouped by the sublime gravitation of nature around this central summit.

Minnesota lies midway between the Arctic and Tropic circles; midway between the East and West coasts of the continent; midway between Hudson's bay and the gulf of Mexico; midway between the Appalachian and Rocky Mountain Chains, and midway between the northern and southern limits of the arable districts of the continent.

The elements of the geographical position of Minnesota may be described as embracing its relations to the physical structure of the continent, to its hydrographical system, to its climates, and to the movements of continental development.

2. THE GREAT INTERIOR PLAIN OF NORTH AMERICA.

In the generalizations of Physical Geography, the adjacent valleys of the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, and the Winnipeg may be regarded as forming one vast integral and homogenous plain, throughout which every diversity of soil and vegetation covers a uniform geology of the secondary or sedimentary rocks, with an interior dip from the primary upheavals of the Atlantic and Pacific slopes towards the beds of these mighty streams.

The outlines of this great basin correspond precisely with the simple external configuration of the continent—a huge triangle, expanding northward from the delta of the Mississippi with the fan-like reaches of its tributaries, its eastern and western sides following respectively the summits of the Appalachian and Rocky Mountain chains, and its northern base coinciding with the Arctic water shed, its angles embracing the summit of north-western navigation on the Saskatchewan and the southern and eastern outlets of the continental system of waters at Quebec and New Orleans.

This great trilateral plain has an area of 2,200,000 square miles; or to carry its north-western angle to the limits of wheat culture at the forks of the McKenzie, and include the submontane gulf-region of the Mississippi, the area of the interior North American plain may be stated at 2,500,000 square miles, one-third of the whole area of the continent; equal to two-thirds of that of Europe, and four-fifths of the American Union. Three-fifths of the whole mass lie within the national domain of the United States, of which it absorbs more than one-half, taking in seventeen states or parts of states, and five territories or parts of territories. Two-fifths lie in British America, including both the Canadas and all the agricultural region west of Lake Winnipeg.

It contains an American population of fifteen millions, more than half the population of the Union; and a British colonial population of over two millions, comprising within the Canadas and Rupert's Land nearly all the civilized inhabitants of British America.

3. ITS REMARKABLE ADAPTATION TO AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL PURSUITS.

One-half the whole of that portion of the continent within the climatic limits of successful agriculture is occupied by this great alluvial basin. A vast plain, formed at the same geological epoch, by the same causes, operating equally upon homogenous materials, covered throughout its whole extent with a uniform calcareous mould of inexhaustible fertility, zoned in the harmonious transitions of nature with the characteristic flora of all climates, and producing in spontaneous abundance the staples of each; underlaid by inexhaustible beds of coal and precious minerals, and clothed with alternating belts of forest timber and pastoral plain; watered throughout its whole extent by noble rivers and seas, and flanked on either hand by the commercial seaboard of the east and west coasts, and the hungry millions of the old world—all the circumstances of its position and structure indicate it as the imperial domain of agriculture in its highest development, of an agriculture reposing on the most perfect conditions; no longer isolated and rustic, but elevated to the rank of a glorious art by the appliances of science and mechanism; the genius of a civilization in which commerce shall be slave instead of mistress, to carry the affluence and culture of cities through the ramifications of its natural and artificial highways, to all the homes of a people at once rural in their virtues and metropolitan in their refinements.

To this agricultural region the Atlantic seaboard bears the relation of a counter, across which the interior producer transacts his exchanges with the markets of Europe; and the northern chain of lakes and rivers, penetrating to the heart of the grain and wool region and reaching through the windings of the Saskatchewan to the limits of wheat culture on the continent, affords to the farthest settler of the north-western frontier a cheaper access to the markets of Europe than is had by the Russian peasant upon the fertile banks of the Volga.

The parallels of 60° and 30° north latitude mark the northern and southern limits of this central plain. The interval between these extremes exhibits in soft and almost insensible transitions, from one thermal elevation to another,

the whole range of vegetable diversities from tropic to arctic flora. The cotton, sugar, rice, and fruits of the south, merge by gentle gradations into the cereals, the hardy roots, the nutritious grasses, the flocks and herds of the north. Every parallel in the ascending scale is deficient in what its neighbor abounds, or is affluent in what its neighbor needs.

Nature, which has thus laid the foundations of an active commercial interchange in the physical diversities of this interior western world, has also supplied the means of commercial intercommunication on a scale commensurate with the grandeur and beneficence of her schemes. The Mississippi, the Red and Saskatchewan rivers form a chain of navigation, 5,000 miles in length, from New Orleans to Fort Edmonton, interrupted only by a narrow portage across the levels of Western Minnesota.

4. INFLUENCE OF THE GREAT BASIN ON THE FORMS OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION.

The position and configuration of the central plain of North America, intermediate between two worlds, exerts a supreme influence in the development of American civilization.

In Europe and Asia, rugged and icy mountain chains, crossing the continents in all directions, isolate the valleys and place eternal barriers between the nations which inhabit their slopes. Hence the heterogenous peoples, languages and political systems of those continents. Africa and South America are similarly split into incoherent geographical fragments, to which their nationalities and political systems conform. North America is the antithesis of the old world in geography, and accordingly of society.* To use the illustration of Gilpin, "the interior of North America presents toward heaven an expanded bowl to receive and fuse into harmony whatsoever enters into its rim. So each of the other continents presenting a bowl reversed, scatter everything from a central apex into radiant distraction."

Conformably to these emphatic geographical facts, which have governed all empires in all ages, diversity and incoherence, which mean War, characterize the societies and institutions of the old world; unity, which means Peace, is the law of American civilization. Accordingly, the history of this continent is a continued illustration of the dominating influence of the simple and grand forms of its physical structure upon the development of American nationality.

Within the last half century the Mississippi Basin has gathered within its vast solitudes a population five times as great as the whole of the united colonies at the epoch of the revolution, collected from every nation and race under the sun—their differences obliterated in a single generation—and fused into one harmonious people. We have thus presented to us within this central theatre of colonization, for all the world, the sublime spectacle of the pre-destined affiliation of mankind—its diverse tribes moulded over into one eclectic and representative nationality, enriched with the blended blood, and endowed with the historical attributes of all nations—"a people one and indivisible—identical in manners, customs, language, religion and laws."

5. PHYSICAL PREPONDERANCE OF THE GREAT INTERIOR PLAIN.

The preponderance of the great interior basin in the physical system of the continent, will be illustrated by the following table:—

The area of the North American Basin, as compared with the Exterior Slopes of the Continent.

Territory.	Area in Square Miles.	Great Plain.	Area in Square Miles.
Pacific Slope,	1,600,000	Mississippi Basin,	1,217,562
Atlantic Slope proper,	620,000	Western Gulf Region,	250,000
Hudson Bay and Arctic		St. Lawrence Basin,	475,000
Declivity, .	2,575,700	Winnipeg Basin, .	400,000
	4,695,700	Peace River Valley,	100,000
			2,442,562

* Col. Gilpin.

The area thus drained by the three rivers which centre in Minnesota, is equal to the combined basins of the Nile, the Euphrates, the Indus, the Ganges, and all other rivers of India, and of all the rivers of Western Europe, and more than twice the area drained by all the European rivers which empty into the Mediterranean.

Subtracting the Arctic and Hudson Bay slopes from the habitable areas of the continent, the Great Interior Basin is shown to embrace more than half the region which lies within the climatic limits of Agriculture.

Area of Great Plain in square miles,	2,442,562
Area of the habitable remainder,	2,126,000

6. FACILITIES OF INTERNAL COMMERCE.

The extent of navigable waters which permeate this vast region, is its most remarkable feature, and exhibits a facility of inter-communication possessed by no equal area in the world.

The Shore Line of the Great American Basin, including both banks.

Shore Line of Mississippi and tributaries, (Col. Abert's authority),	35,644
Of Northern Lakes and St. Lawrence, do.	7,749
Of Red river, Lake Winnipeg and Saskatchewan, (estimated),	6,188

Total Shore Line of Great Basin, 49,581

The total navigable shore line of the Great Basin exceeds the coast line of the Atlantic and Pacific, and is nearly three times the navigable shore line of all Europe.

A comparison of the ratios of areas of different regions of the globe to their respective amounts of shore line, will exhibit the vast advantage possessed by the Great American Basin, over every other.

Region.	Ratio of surface to one mile of coast.	Region.	Ratio of surface to one mile of coast.
Europe,	158	Africa,	623
North America,	228	Asia,	459
United States,	241	Great American Basin,	49
South America,	378		

The result shows for the Great Basin three times as much navigation in proportion to surface, as Europe, four times as much as the continent in general, and five times as much as the whole United States.

7. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PREPONDERANCE OF THE GREAT PLAIN.

The following table, showing the comparative progress of population in different geographical divisions of the continent under Anglo-American rule, will exhibit the rapid advance of the great plain, to the social and political supremacy of the continent.

Comparative increase of population on the maritime and Interior Slopes.

	1790.	1810.	1830.	1850.
Maritime Slopes,	3,793,116	5,874,708	7,844,532	11,174,464
Interior Plain,	221,711	1,685,106	5,568,288	13,715,408

The comparative ratios of increase per cent. for periods of 20 years, being as follows:—

	1790 to 1810.	1830.	1850.
Maritime Slopes,	42	33	58
Interior Plain,	648	239	142

Starting in 1790 with *one seventeenth* of the population of the continent, the Spanish American states being excluded, the population of the great plain in 1850 exceeded that of the coast by 2,500,000, and was advancing with an impetus which promises, in fifty years more, to give it double the population of the Atlantic and Pacific states combined.