

Immigrants traveled to Minnesota Territory on steamboats, hoping to find a land of wealth and opportunity.



1787

Northwest Ordinance establishes a procedure for lands in the Northwest Territory, including part of Minnesota, to become territories and states.

1820

U.S. government offers land to settlers for \$1.25 an acre with minimum purchase of 80 acres.

1823

The *Virginia* is the first steamboat to make the trip up the Mississippi River to Minnesota.

1825

U.S. government arranges a treaty with Dakota, Ojibwe, and other American Indian nations. This sets tribal boundaries in the region, making

1837

John Deere invents the steel plow, making it easier for farmers to break the tough prairie sod. Samuel Morse invents the

1846

The Mexican War begins between the United States and Mexico. Elias Howe invents the sewing machine.

1847

Harriet Bishop arrives in St. Paul to become the first public-school teacher in Minnesota.

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MINNESOTA'S NEWCOMERS

Life in Minnesota changed drastically as a result of land treaties in the 1850s. During that decade, the population shifted from being mostly American Indian to being mostly European American. Hear the stories of St. Paul's first public-school teacher and an early Swedish immigrant, which show some of the ways immigrants influenced the region during Minnesota's territorial years.

LOOK FOR

- How did the population change?
- Describe the first formal classroom in St. Paul.
- What are the three branches of the U.S. and Minnesota governments?
- How did the treaties in 1854 and 1855 impact the Ojibwe?
- How did the newcomers who arrived in the 1850s affect Minnesota?
- What are advantages to statehood?

KEY TERMS

- steamboat
- U.S. Congress
- governor
- state
- immigrant
- recruiter
- constitution
- federalism

1848

Sixty-one men meet in Stillwater to begin the process of forming Minnesota Territory.

Armed conflicts and crop failures in Europe cause many to emigrate.

1849

Minnesota becomes a territory. Alexander Ramsey is appointed territorial governor.

Minnesota Historical Society is organized.

1851

Two major treaties between the Dakota and the U.S. government are signed, opening up southwestern Minnesota for American settlement.

1853

Swedish immigrant Hans Mattson arrives in Minnesota.

1854-1855

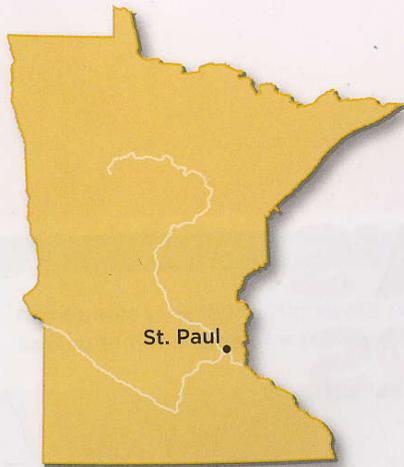
Minneapolis is established in 1855. The Ojibwe sign a treaty in which they cede land in northern Minnesota to the U.S. government.

1858

Minnesota becomes the thirty-second state in the Union. Henry Sibley becomes the state's first governor.

1860

Abraham Lincoln is elected president of the United States.



steamboat: a boat powered by a steam engine. Steamboats were the main mode of travel for newcomers moving to Minnesota during the territorial period.

UNTIL ABOUT 1850, most of the people living in Minnesota were Dakota and Ojibwe. By the 1860s, though, European American settlers were in the majority. They took over the land of the Dakota and the Ojibwe with incredible speed. Before the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota were signed in 1851, about 6,000 European Americans were living in Minnesota. By 1854 their number had increased to 30,000. By 1857 their population topped 150,000. Between 1849 and 1858, Minnesota was the fastest growing place in the United States. It had become one of the most popular destinations in a great migration of people from east to west known as westward expansion.

When Minnesota Territory was created, its American Indian population was far greater than that of the European American newcomers. It didn't stay that way for long, though. A government official, the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, kept population records of native people. According to these records, there were more than 31,000 American Indian people living in and around Minnesota Territory in the early 1850s. Settlers were arriving so fast that by 1855 they outnumbered the native people who lived there.

As more and more people arrived, Minnesota changed in countless ways. Life was becoming very different for all the people who lived in this place—not only for the Dakota and Ojibwe who had been here for centuries, but also for the newcomers who were arriving by the **steamboat** load.

Transportation in Early Minnesota

Before the 1800s, there had been two main ways to travel through Minnesota—by foot or by canoe. By the 1850s, people had a few more choices.

In 1847, steamboats started making regular stops at the village of St. Paul. The boats carried people and supplies. Great numbers of immigrants took trains from the East Coast to Mississippi River towns, such as Galena, Illinois, and then boarded steamboats bound for Minnesota. The boats could run only from April to November, when the river was clear of ice.

Those who wanted to travel to Minnesota during the winter could take a horse-drawn stagecoach from Galena, but it would be a longer trip. The journey could take up to six days—compared to two days for the steamboat. Snowstorms often made travel impossible and forced passengers and their drivers to find lodging in the cabins of friendly strangers.

The oxcart was another common form of transportation by the 1840s. It was used mainly by the Métis

people of the Red River valley in northern Minnesota and Canada. The Métis used the ox carts to transport furs, buffalo skins, and other goods from the Red River Valley to St. Paul. A train of ox carts could make the trip in 30 to 40 days.





◀ The main mode of travel for immigrants was steamboats, which carried cargo as well as people. The four steamboats shown here are docked in St. Paul in 1859.

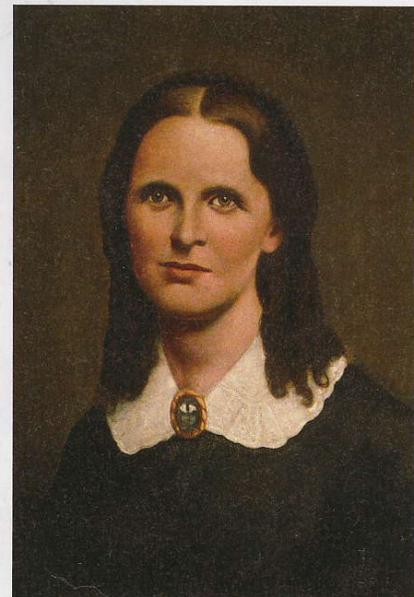
THE NEW ENGLAND SCHOOLTEACHER

In July 1847, a young woman named Harriet Bishop stepped off the steamboat *Argo* and onto the landing at the small settlement of St. Paul along the Mississippi River. Several children were there to greet her when she arrived. She had come to be their new teacher—their *first* school teacher.

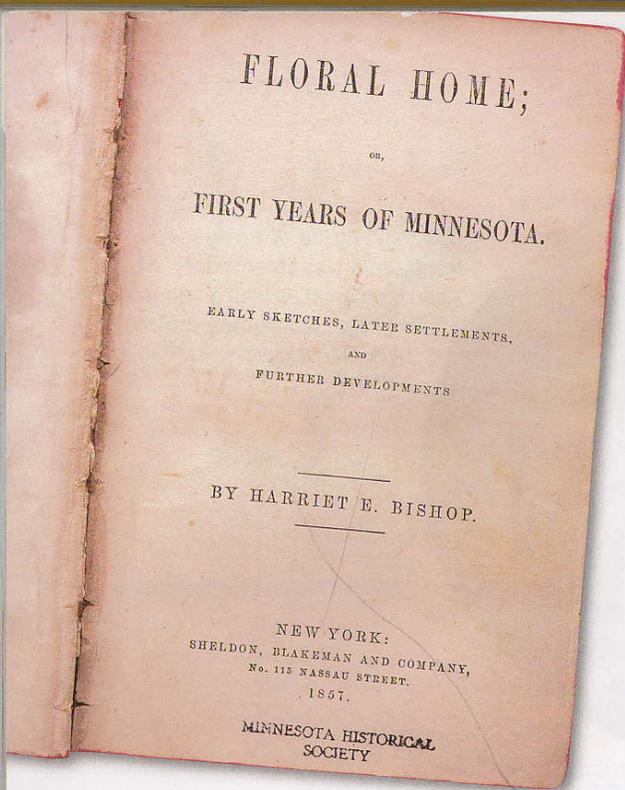
Bishop had grown up in Vermont and had trained to become a teacher, one of the few careers open to women at that time. Teaching jobs were hard for women to find on the East Coast, but an organization called the National Board of Popular Education was looking for women to start schools in newly settled lands to the west. Bishop jumped at the chance. Her assignment was to teach the children of St. Paul, which had no school.

St. Paul was hardly even a town in 1847. The buildings were mostly just log huts. The streets were bumpy and muddy. A few hundred people lived there, and most of them were men. Only a dozen or so families with school-aged children lived in the area. About half of the parents had never learned to read.

Harriet Bishop knew that teaching children under these circumstances would not be easy, but she seemed to relish the challenge. “Here was a field to be cultivated,” she later recalled, “a garden of untrained flowers to be tended, and the heart raised a thank-offering to heaven and cheerfully entered upon its work.”



▲ More than 150 years later, Harriet Bishop is still remembered for her role in the development of St. Paul.



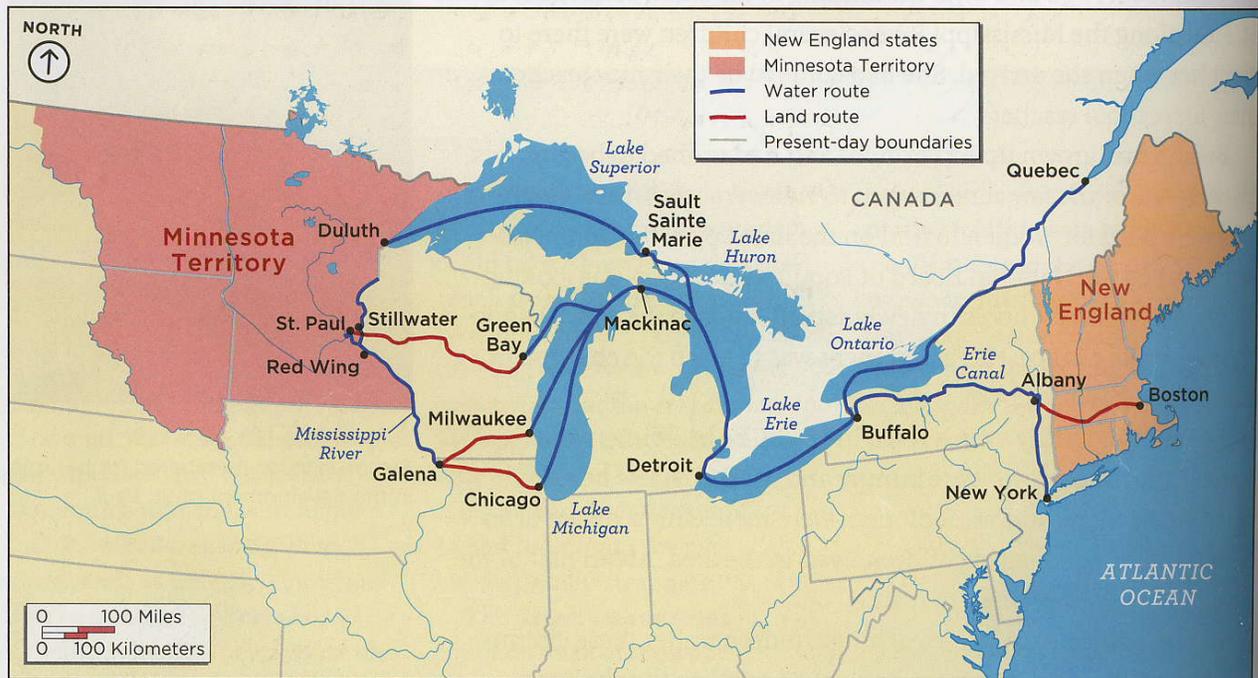
▲ Harriet Bishop's book *Floral Home*, published in 1857, describes her early experiences in St. Paul.

A School for St. Paul

Bishop's new school was an abandoned blacksmith's shop. Mud plaster held the log walls together. Small, dirty windows let in hardly any sunlight. Rats and snakes lurked in the corners. She got to work. She cleaned up her schoolroom as best she could and decorated the walls with evergreen branches. Bishop seemed to enjoy her new surroundings. "Why should I pine for halls of science and literature, when such glorious privileges are mine," she wrote. "There was not a spot in earth's broad domain that could have tempted me to an exchange."

Three days after arriving in St. Paul, Bishop opened her little schoolhouse. Her first class had nine students, though only two of them spoke English. The others spoke a variety of languages, including French, Dakota, German, and Ojibwe. One of Bishop's students spoke three languages and became her interpreter.

Routes to Minnesota from the East Coast During the 1850s



▲ People traveled far to get to their new home in Minnesota. For many, the journey began in Europe. Getting to the United States involved sailing across the Atlantic Ocean, which could take months. After arriving in New England, travelers used both land and water routes to journey west. To get a sense for how long such trips may have taken, look at the route from Galena to St. Paul. That part alone may have required anywhere from two to six days.

Strong Feelings

In addition to teaching, Harriet Bishop was involved in her community in many other ways. She established St. Paul's first Sunday school. She helped organize a group whose members believed that drinking alcohol was harmful and should be illegal. She also led several women's organizations that raised money for community projects. Bishop believed that all these efforts would help "civilize" the people of Minnesota.

Harriet Bishop was just one of a growing number of New Englanders (people from the far northeastern states) who were moving to Minnesota. Many of these newcomers had worked in the lumber industry in Maine and New Hampshire, and they were now

So What?

People Are People

When you read about Harriet Bishop, who lived more than 150 years ago, you might think, "So what?" You might be surprised to learn that people today still have strong feelings about her. Some appreciate the positive things Bishop did to improve the community of St. Paul. Others have a negative opinion of her, because she said hurtful things about the Dakota people who lived nearby.

Harriet Bishop, like all people, was complicated. Both the positive and the negative reactions to her deeds make sense if we view them from different perspectives.

She Helped Her Community

In the 1850s, when St. Paul was just getting started by European American settlers, Bishop was a leader who helped shape this new community. She loved her chosen home and once said, "If Earth has a paradise, it is here." Bishop devoted most of her life to finding

ways to make it better. To her, this meant creating opportunities for women. It also meant promoting certain values and beliefs. She participated in at least eight organizations, including the St. Paul Circle of Industry, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Minnesota Woman Suffrage Association. Many people benefited from Bishop's care and hard work.

She Said Hurtful Things about Dakota People

In Chapter 9, you are going to learn about a war. The U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 was a painful time in our state's history. It still has an impact on Minnesotans today, and it had a powerful effect on the people who lived through it, including Harriet Bishop. Like most people who see war firsthand, Bishop ended up having very strong feelings about it. In 1863, she wrote a book called

Dakota War Whoop, Or, Indian Massacres and War in Minnesota. In it, she called Dakota soldiers names like "savage," "inhuman monster," and "heartless wretch." Bishop's words were influenced by the fear and anger she felt as a result of living in a place that experienced the violence of war.

Today, though, some believe words like hers contributed to misunderstandings of what really happened in this war. At the time, people were divided over this issue, and that divide still exists today.

People Are People

Harriet Bishop did things that affected some people positively and some negatively. In this way, she is like most people, who are more complicated than they might seem.

Can you think of a leader today who can be described as both helpful and hurtful?

looking to make their fortunes off the vast timberlands of Wisconsin and Minnesota. Like Bishop, these New Englanders often had strong feelings about American democracy, culture, education, and religion. They had plans for Minnesota's future. Many of these New Englanders became leaders in the towns that were developing along Minnesota's rivers. Because there were so many newcomers from this region of the United States, Minnesota was often called the New England of the West.



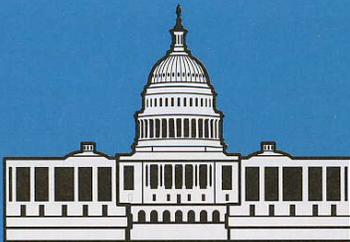
The Three Branches of Government

The federal, or national, government of the United States has its powers divided among three branches. They are called the legislative, executive, and judicial. Each branch has a specific role, and all

three must work together to keep the government running. When Minnesota became a territory in 1849, two of the branches played a role in its establishment.

Read on to find out the roles different branches of the federal government played in creating the Minnesota Territory.

Three Branches of Government FEDERAL LEVEL

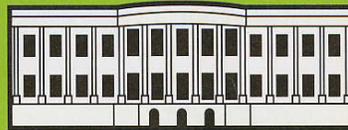
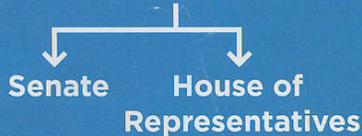


The U.S. Capitol

LEGISLATIVE
(Makes Laws)



Congress



The White House

EXECUTIVE
(Enforces Laws)



President



The U.S. Supreme Court

JUDICIAL
(Interprets Laws)



Supreme Court



MINNESOTA BECOMES A TERRITORY

In 1848, 61 men met in the growing lumber town of Stillwater, along the St. Croix River. (Women were not yet allowed to vote.) The men agreed to send a delegate, or representative, to Washington, D.C. Successful fur trader Henry Sibley, from Mendota, was chosen. He would go to the **U.S. Congress** and request a new territory called Minnesota be created. If approved, a **governor** would be appointed to lead the territory. The citizens would be able to elect representatives to a territorial legislature that would make laws for Minnesota. They would also be allowed to create their own judicial courts that would decide whether people had broken those laws. Becoming a territory was the first step to becoming a **state**.

The settlers had to wait about six months for Congress to answer their request. Members of Congress argued about where to draw the boundaries for the new territory. Finally, in the spring of 1849, Congress passed a law establishing Minnesota as a U.S. territory. Now the citizens could send an elected delegate to Congress. Again, Minnesotans chose Henry Sibley. The territory's other important officer was a governor, but Minnesotans didn't get to choose him. The president of the United States did that. President Zachary Taylor appointed Alexander Ramsey. He lived in Pennsylvania, but he soon moved to Minnesota to serve as territorial governor.

U.S. Congress: the group of people who make laws for the United States. It has elected representatives from all states and territories. It is divided into two groups, the Senate and the House of Representatives.

governor: the head of the executive branch in a state or territory

state: a geographic area with boundaries, residents, and a government with a constitution and laws. The United States has 50 states, and they share some governing power with the federal government.



Requirements for Becoming a U.S. Territory

In 1787, a federal law called the Northwest Ordinance set the process by which new public lands in the Northwest Territory would become territories and states.

Federal Requirement	Meeting the Requirement in Minnesota
Must have a population of 5,000 adults.	Minnesota had 4,535 adults in 1849.
A group of people living in the region must elect a nonvoting representative to the U.S. Congress and members to serve in a territorial legislature.	Sixty-one men met in Stillwater in 1848 to elect Henry Sibley to represent them in Congress. These men also elected a territorial legislature.
The U.S. Congress must pass a law creating the territory.	An act of Congress created Minnesota Territory on March 3, 1849.

Both Ramsey and Sibley played important roles in Minnesota's development over the following years. One of their first goals was to get the Dakota to give up their lands in southern Minnesota. They achieved that goal in 1851 with the signing of the treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota.

TURNING POINT

The 1851 treaties marked the beginning of a dramatic change in Minnesota's population. By 1852, European American settlers were starting to pour into the territory, even though the treaties said they were supposed to stay away until 1854. They began claiming land that they hoped to buy from the U.S. government when it became legal to do so. The government allowed settlers to move onto the land early because it was eager for Minnesota to have enough people to become a state. By trespassing on land that was still in the possession of native people, both the government and the settlers were violating treaty obligations.

Treaties for Land in Northern Minnesota

In the previous chapter you learned about two important treaties between the Dakota and the U.S. government in 1851, one at Traverse des Sioux and the other at Mendota. These treaties opened up much of southern Minnesota for settlement. Americans were also eager to move into northern Minnesota, which was Ojibwe land.

For this to happen, major land treaties would need to be signed by the U.S. government and the Ojibwe. In 1854, the Ojibwe ceded, or turned over, much of northeastern Minnesota to the U.S. government. The next year, 1855, the government also purchased a large chunk of north-central Minnesota. Lands in northwestern Minnesota

remained in Ojibwe control until the 1860s, but thousands of acres were eventually ceded in that region as well.

In return for the land, the Ojibwe negotiated for reservations and annuity payments, just as the Dakota had done. Both groups saw that the world they lived in was changing. They did their best to secure a deal they believed would benefit them.

These decisions were not easy for any American Indian nation to make. Allowing others to settle on and change the landscape their ancestors had lived on for generations was painful. It was all the more difficult when they realized the government sometimes acted in a dishonest way.

In 1858, Ojibwe leader Flat Mouth, or Eshkibagikoozhe (Ayshke-bah-ke-ko-zhay), said, "When the treaty was written, I thought it was for the good of my people. You have explained it, and we understand it, but it has not been fulfilled . . ." Flat Mouth was upset because the U.S. government had paid fur traders, not the Ojibwe, the amount of money promised in the signed treaty.

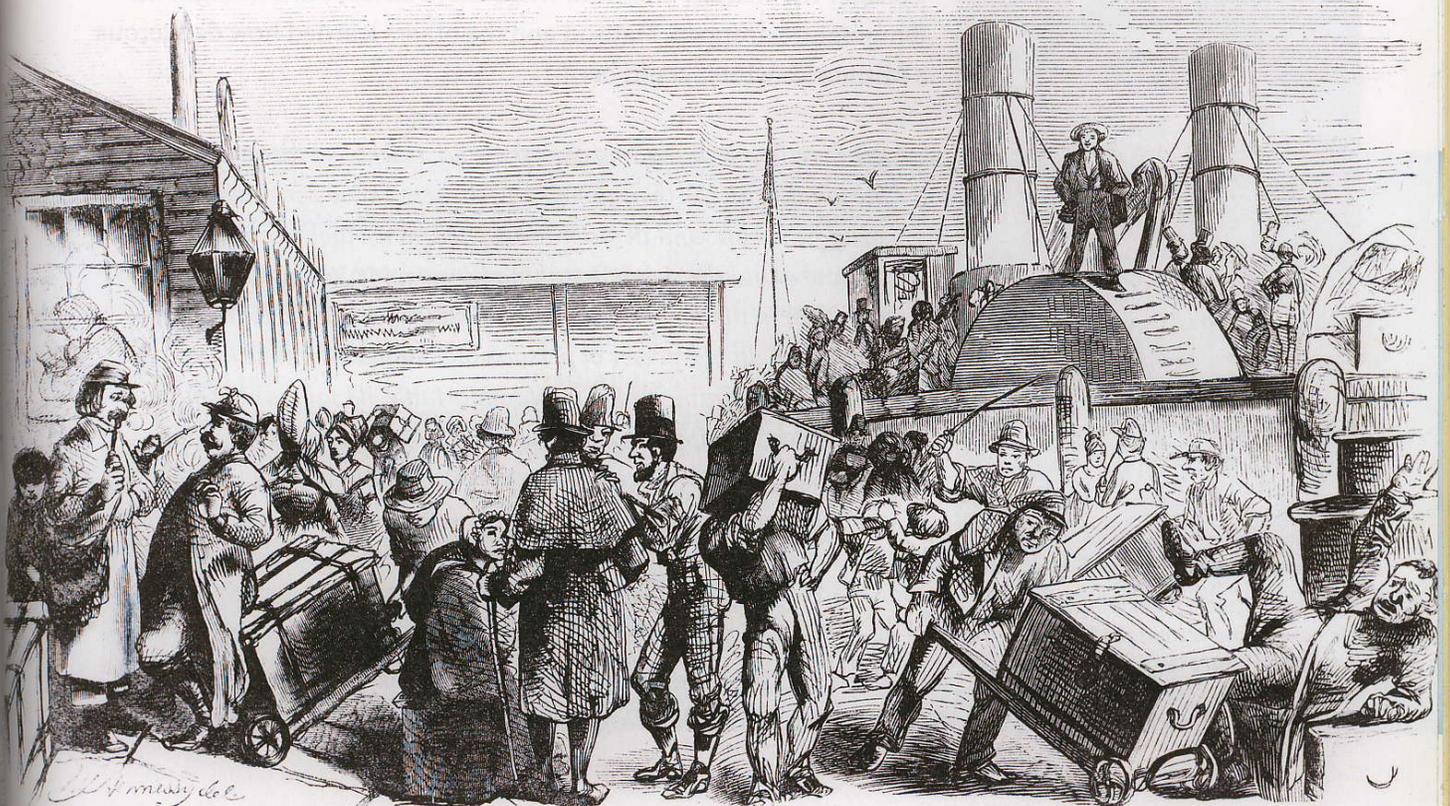
There have been disagreements about the treaties over the years. Even so, many of the Ojibwe reservations created by the treaties of 1854 and 1855 still exist today. They include Grand Portage, Fond du Lac, Leech Lake, and White Earth.

These new arrivals—both men and women—came with high hopes and with plans to build lives in this new place. For many, their goal was owning their own land and being their own boss. The vast majority of them were from Europe and New England, where land ownership was associated with wealth and high status in society. Many of them had never before had such a good opportunity. They saw Minnesota as a place where people like themselves could finally become landowners.

ONE SWEDISH IMMIGRANT

Hans Mattson arrived in Minnesota in the fall of 1853. His journey to the young territory had been a long one. Mattson had grown up on a small farm in southern Sweden. His life was good there, but he yearned for adventure. Mattson had heard stories about the United States—how huge stretches of fertile land were opening to settlers, many of whom came from Europe. He decided to become one of those settlers.

▼ New immigrants arrived in busy eastern port cities such as New York before making their way to Minnesota. As people set off for the West, they traveled by wagon, train, steamboat, or foot toward their new lives.



immigrant: a person who comes into a country to live there

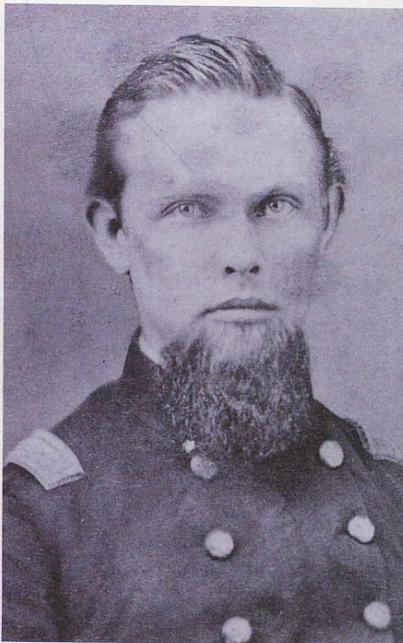
In 1850, at age 17, Hans Mattson boarded a ship and crossed the Atlantic Ocean. During the next two years, he lived on the East Coast, working at various jobs and saving up enough money to buy his own land out west. He wrote letters to his family and even to newspapers in Sweden, urging others to join him. At age 20, Mattson led a group of fellow Swedish **immigrants**—including his parents, his sister, and his brother-in-law—to find a new home, in Minnesota.

The land they claimed was about 12 miles west of Red Wing. “The first four miles we followed the territorial road,” Mattson wrote. “After that, we had nothing but Indian trails to guide us.” After establishing a settlement in this place, they later named it Vasa, after a Swedish king.

The First Winter in Minnesota

Mattson worked most of the winter in Red Wing, chopping firewood to fuel the stoves and engines of steamboats on the Mississippi River. In January 1854, he and his brother-in-law, S. I. Willard, decided to travel to the land they had claimed. They wanted to chop down some trees there so they would have enough logs to build a house in the spring. They set out with two other men and a team of horses pulling a sleigh. The weather was mild when they started, but overnight the temperature dropped. Mattson and the others learned how dangerous a Minnesota winter could be:

We soon found that going over the wild, trackless prairie against the wind, with the thermometer 40 degrees below zero was a struggle for life, and in order to keep warm we took turns to walk or run behind the sleigh. In taking his turn Mr. Willard suddenly sat down in the snow and would not stir. We returned to him, and it required all our power of persuasion to make him take his seat in the sleigh again. He felt very comfortable, he said, and would soon catch up with us again if we only would have left him alone. If we had followed his advice, he never would have left his cold seat again.



▲ Hans Mattson quickly adapted to his new home. When the Civil War started in 1861, Mattson volunteered. He served as an officer in the Third Minnesota Regiment.

Building a Home

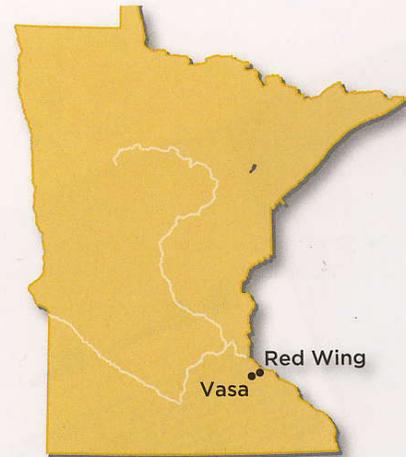
Mattson and the others survived their scary experience and chopped down enough trees for a log house. In March, the small group of

Swedish immigrants bought as many supplies as they could afford from the stores in Red Wing and set out to build their new homes:

Hundreds of thousands of immigrants have had the same experience, and can realize how we felt on that fine March morning, starting from Red Wing with a wagon loaded with some boards on the bottom of a cook stove and utensils, doors, windows, a keg of nails, a few trunks, and a little box containing our spotted pig... all of us full of hope, strength and determination to overcome all obstacles and conquer the wildness.

Mattson and his family quickly built a small log cabin. Their first few weeks in their new home were difficult. The weather was bad, and their supplies were running out. They could have gone back to Red Wing, but things weren't much better there. The town's store shelves were nearly empty after the long winter.

In April, the ice finally broke up on the Mississippi River, and steamboats began arriving with fresh supplies. Mattson went to town, stocked up on smoked ham, flour, molasses, coffee, salt, and sugar, and carried the merchandise back to the little cabin. He and his fellow Swedes had survived their first winter in Minnesota.



recruiter: somebody who encourages new people to join a group or take action

Attracting Newcomers

The immigrants who came to Minnesota could have settled in any number of places. Why did they choose this place?

For one thing, they had heard good things about it. Many of the first newcomers to settle in Minnesota wrote letters to their friends and relatives back home. The letters often described Minnesota in glowing terms. A German immigrant named Wenzel Petran

sent a series of such letters to his aunt and uncle. Minnesota “has a very healthy climate,” he wrote, “beautiful country and natural scenery, and with its clean, fresh air it reminds me strongly of the northern part of Germany.”

Politicians, newspaper editors, and land speculators all spread the word about Minnesota. These and other **recruiters** worked to get new people to move to Minnesota.

Often recruiters exaggerated the territory's good points. Sometimes they outright lied. One of their unbelievable claims was that disease was almost unheard of in Minnesota—thanks, they said, to the chilly climate. However, anyone who had battled colds and flu symptoms during Minnesota's long winters knew that such claims were questionable.

A COMMUNITY GROWS

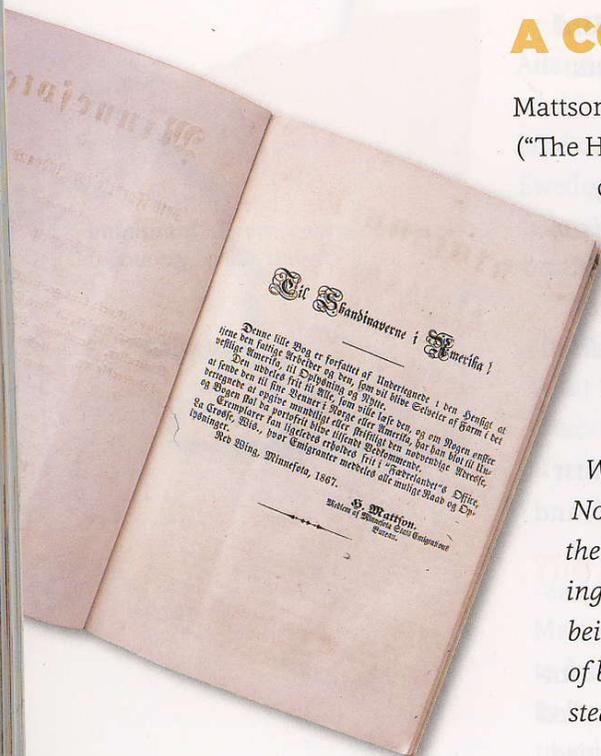
Mattson began writing a series of letters that appeared in *Hemlandet* (“The Homeland”), a Swedish-language newspaper published in Chicago. The letters described life in Minnesota and urged other Swedes to come. Many did just that. In the summer of 1855, the growing group of Swedes who lived in Mattson’s settlement officially formed the township of Vasa.

The Swedes weren’t the only immigrants arriving in Minnesota at this time. Hans Mattson recalled what it was like:

While the Swedes were pouring into our place... our friends, the Norwegians, had started a prosperous settlement a few miles to the south, many of them coming overland from Wisconsin, bringing cattle, implements and other valuables of which the Swedes, being mostly poor newcomers, were destitute. Many immigrants of both nationalities came as deck passengers on the Mississippi steamers [steamboats] to Red Wing.

▲ Hans Mattson wrote many articles, letters, and speeches to encourage settlers to come to Minnesota.

Thousands of new settlers arrived in Minnesota each year, seeking a better life. Many of the Norwegians had left Norway because land



Immigrant Communities in Minnesota and Their Homelands (mid 1800s)



▲ When settlers arrived, they built towns and named them to honor the homelands they’d left behind. **Which European countries do the towns on the map of Minnesota represent?**

and jobs were scarce there. Families from southern Ireland had come to escape the terrible famines that left people starving in their homeland. The biggest immigrant group during the 1850s was the Germans, many of whom had fled wars back home. Newcomers from New England and other parts of the East continued to arrive, too.

Boatload after boatload of immigrants landed in the towns along the rivers and spread out into the country beyond. Soon there were whole communities where people continued to speak their native languages and few spoke English. The names of some of these places told where people had come from. Besides Vasa, there were New Ulm, New Prague, St. Patrick, Scandia, Heidelberg, and many other names that called to mind homelands far away. Before long, Minnesota was not only the New England of the West, but also the New Sweden, the New Norway, and the New Germany.

STATEHOOD FOR MINNESOTA

With its population exploding, Minnesotans launched a drive for statehood. There were many advantages to being a state rather than a territory. States are more independent than territories, because the federal government has less control over states than it does over territories. As a state, Minnesota would be able to control its own finances



Requirements for Becoming a State

In 1856, a group of Minnesotans decided they were ready for statehood. They petitioned, or formally requested, that Congress admit Minnesota as a state.

Federal Requirement

Congress must pass a law allowing the territory to proceed toward becoming a state.

A group of residents must write the state constitution.

Voters must approve the constitution and elect government officials.

Congress must pass a law admitting the state into the Union.

Meeting the Requirement in Minnesota

In 1857, Congress passed a law allowing Minnesota to begin the process of achieving statehood.

Minnesota's constitution was approved at a meeting in St. Paul in 1857.

Minnesotans approved the constitution by a vote of 30,055 to 571. They elected Henry Sibley as the first state governor.

Congress admitted Minnesota into the Union as the thirty-second state on May 11, 1858.



So What?

Same Name, Different Powers

Does this book sometimes remind you of studying American history last year? Most likely you remember learning about the U.S. Constitution. It is, after all, one of the most famous legal documents in the world. The U.S. Constitution explains how our national government is set up. The Constitution is important because it influences what government is allowed to do—and not do—throughout the United States.

Even though the U.S. Constitution gets most of the attention, each state has its own constitution, too. Minnesota's constitution also describes a government's powers.

Unlike the U.S. one, though, ours applies only to our state.

Political parties argued about creating Minnesota's constitution. They knew it would have an effect on life in the state, well into the future. (Yes, this document affects your life today. Imagine not having state boundaries. How would you know when you're here, and when you're in Wisconsin?) Then and now, every law passed in Minnesota must follow the rules set up in the state constitution.

The constitution Minnesotans approved in October of 1857 set up the state's government. Among other things, it:

- Set the state's boundaries
- Granted the right to vote to "free white male citizens" (later changes gave voting rights to African Americans, women, American Indians, and other people)
- Divided state power among three branches:
 - Legislative, headed by a state legislature consisting of a House of Representatives and a Senate
 - Executive, headed by a governor
 - Judicial, headed by the state Supreme Court

constitution: a written document outlining how the government of a state or country is organized

and create its own budget. It would have more independence to deal with private companies such as the railroad companies that were laying tracks to the west. It would also have more representatives in the U.S. Congress and, therefore, more influence in national affairs.

Before Minnesota could become a state, however, it needed a **constitution** that set the rules for how the state government would operate. In the summer of 1857, more than 100 delegates from around the territory gathered in St. Paul for a constitutional convention. The meeting did not go well. It quickly broke into two separate conventions—one for each of the two major political parties, the Democrats and the Republicans. Each convention produced its own constitution and refused to accept the other side's version.

For a while it looked like the drive for statehood would fail. Finally, after more than a month of arguing, the two parties resolved their differences and agreed to a single document. Minnesota voters approved the new constitution in October of 1857.

On May 11, 1858, the U.S. Congress passed a law making Minnesota the thirty-second state in the Union. In a speech to the legislature, the state's first governor—Henry Sibley—described Minnesota as the newest member of the American family:

She extends a friendly hand to all her sisters, north and south, and gives them assurance that she joins their ranks—not to provoke sectional discord or to engender strife... but to promote harmony and good will, and to lend her aid, on all occasions, in maintaining the integrity of the Union.

Sibley, and most other Minnesotans, feared that the family they had just joined was about to break apart. They were correct. The Civil War would erupt in 1861 and last four long years.

federalism: a system of government in which power is divided between a federal, or national, government and various state governments



Understanding Federalism

Federalism, or a federal system of government, is one in which power is divided so that no one level has complete control. Certain powers—like the power to declare war on another country—are held by the national government.

Many other powers—such as how schools are funded—belong to state governments. States allow local governments to oversee laws that affect smaller regions and communities.

In the United States, the federal

government controls territories. States occupy their own level. This means a state has much more control over its affairs than a territory does. The power held by states was appealing to leaders who wanted Minnesota to become a state.

Levels of Government

