

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF
OLD STINNET BRIDGE, NAMEKAGON RIVER
ST. CROIX NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAY



BURNETT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF
OLD STINNET BRIDGE, NAMEKAGON RIVER
ST. CROIX NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAY

by

Allen P. Van Dyke

and

Edgar S. Oerichbauer

Burnett County Historical Society
Webster, Wisconsin

October 1986

ABSTRACT

The National Park Service plans to remove the Old Stinnet Bridge on the Namekagon River on the St. Croix Scenic Riverway, in Section 35, T41N, R10W, Washburn County, Wisconsin. In 1977, Commonwealth and Associates reported a logging camp site, 14-164-1, in the area adjacent to the bridge. Therefore, the National Park Service requested an intensive archaeological survey of the area surrounding the bridge.

In September of 1986, archaeologists from the Burnett County Historical Society conducted this survey. Utilizing extensive literature search, informant interviews, pedestrian survey and shovel testing techniques, the area of the reported logging camp was investigated.

While the literature available and the informants who were interviewed provided a great deal of information on activities in and near the project area, no evidence was found to substantiate the location of site No. 14-164-1. Based on the information gained during this investigation, we recommend that the bridge removal project be allowed to proceed, providing all removal activities are confined to the existing roadways.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
List of Figures.	iii
Introduction	1
Historical Background and Research	1
Field Investigation.	13
A Reconstructed Scenario For The Old Stinnet Bridge Area.	17
Recommendations.	18
References Cited	20
List of Informants	21

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Number		Page
1	National Park Service Map of Project Area . . .	2
2	Photograph of Old Stinnet Bridge.	3
3	Portion of McClure's 1879 Map of St. Croix River and Tributaries, Showing Location of Dams.	5
4	1880 Atlas Showing "Stewarts"	6
5	Photograph of Log Pilings in Namekagon River. .	7
6	1915 Standard Atlas of Washburn County.	9
7	Map of Washburn County, Wisconsin, 1896	10
8	Map of Washburn County, Wisconsin, 1909	11
9	Project Area Divide Into Four Quadrants	14
10	Area Northeast of Old Stinnet Bridge.	16

INTRODUCTION

The National Park Service plans to remove the Old Stinnet Bridge on the Namekagon River at St. Croix Scenic Riverway (letter from Mark J. Lynott to Edgar S. Oerichbauer). An archaeological site referred to as the Stinnet Logging Camp (14-164-1) had been reported by Commonwealth and Associates to be located west of the Old Stinnet Bridge in Section 35, T41N, R10W (Fitting et. al. 1977:49 - 51) (Figure 1). Therefore the National Park Service Midwest Archaeological Center, Lincoln, Nebraska, requested an intensive archaeological survey of the Old Stinnet Bridge area.

On September 19-21, Burnett County Historical Society archaeologists conducted interviews and an archaeological survey of the Old Stinnet Bridge area, Washburn County, Wisconsin (Figure 2). This report describes the methods and findings of research and survey conducted under purchase order PX-6115-6-0187 and makes recommendations regarding the Old Stinnet Bridge area.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH

Fitting (1977:49) reported the Stinnet Logging Camp and Dam site, No. 14-164-1. The Commonwealth and Associates crew apparently found no physical evidence of a logging camp, but reported it on the strength of an interview with Mrs. Virginia Buckman, then a resident on the suspected logging camp site. Fitting states,

This is the site of the former Stinnet Logging Camp and Dam site on the Chicago-St. Paul Minneapolis and Omaha Railroad in 1901. McClure's map of 1879 shows a dam located here, Hanscom Dam, probably built by the St. Croix Dam and Boom Company after 1870. The 1881 Atlas shows the town of Stewart located in T41N, R10W, Section 35 on the railroad line. Stewart and Barker were partners in the St. Croix Dam and Boom Company after 1872 (1977:49).

Many of the documents referred to in the above quote are not included in the

Attachment 1: Survey
Area, Old Stinnett
Bridge





FIGURE 2: PHOTOGRAPH OF OLD STINNET BRIDGE

bibliography of Fitting's report.

As far as we can determine there never was a logging operation known as the Stinnet Logging Camp and Dam site per se, nor does the date of 1901 stand out as significant in any of our research. McClure's 1879 map, which we have found (Figure 3) does show Hanscom dam on the Namekagon River in approximately Section 35. Henry Hanscomb built the dam on the Namekagon River at Stinnet, one of the first dams on that river (Ingebretson, 1888 in Winton and Winton 1980). The Memoirs of Byron Crane, 1894 (Winton and Winton 1980) state that Hanscom built the dam in 1875. Our research does not suggest that Hanscom(b) was affiliated with the St. Croix Dam and Boom Company. We did find that a Stewart had a camp or dam or both upriver from Hanscom(b)'s dam. A page from an 1880 atlas (Figure 4), loaned to us by Elden Marple of Hayward, Wisconsin, shows "Stewarts" written across Sections 1 and 2, T40N, R10W. It does not, however, show the town of Stewart in Section 35, T41N, R10W that Fitting (1977) refers to.

Mrs. Virginia Buckman informed the Commonwealth archaeologists (in 1976) that there was once a logging camp on the site of her house. Mrs. Buckman recalled "the camp from 50 - 60 years ago, when her father worked at the lumber camp" (1977:50). That would have been 1916 or 1926 or so. We did not discover any record of a logging camp in that area during that time. In fact, two local residents, Louie and Alvin Meier, both remember pasturing cattle on the property in question.

Finally, Fitting reports "The remains of the dam, (Hanscom?) consisting of log pilings, are located 100 yards east of the camp in the Namekagon River" (1977:50).

Mr. Eldon Marple of Hayward, Wisconsin has done considerable research on the subject and feels the pilings (Figure 5) are actually the remains of a trestle built by the Hines Lumber Company of Hayward, Wisconsin, to capture

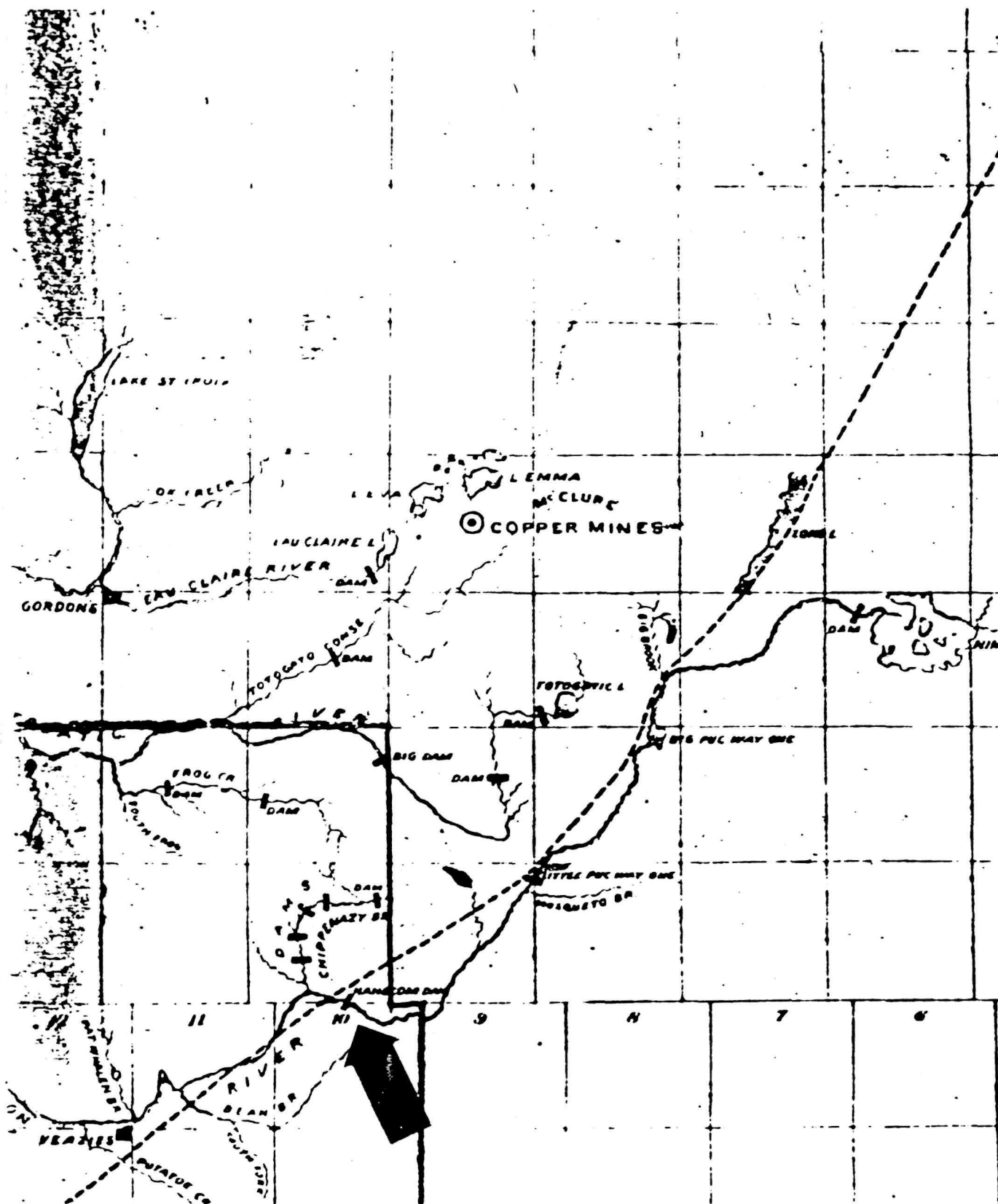


FIGURE 3: PORTION OF McCLURE'S 1879 MAP OF ST. CROIX RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES, SHOWING LOCATION OF DAMS

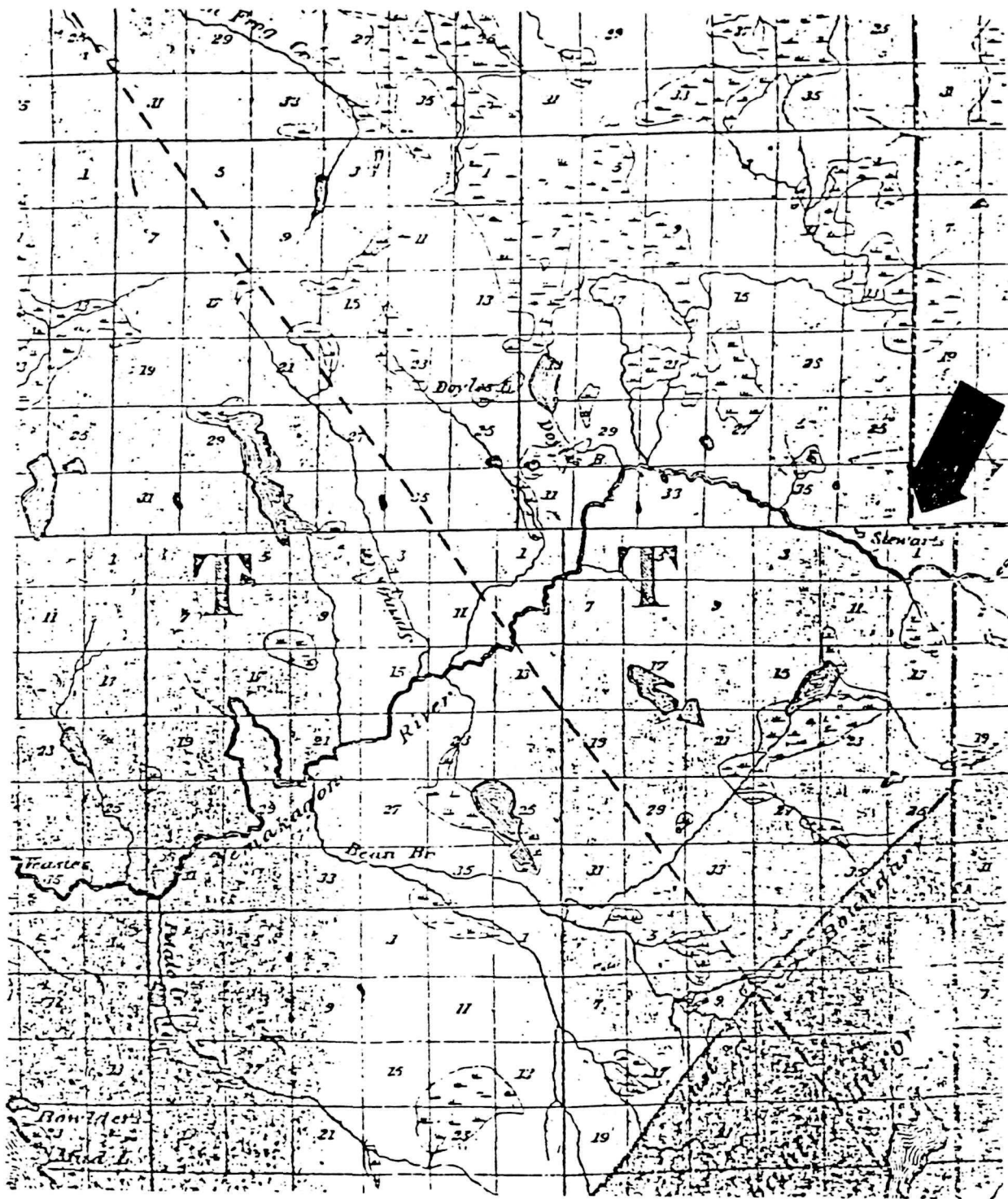


FIGURE 4: 1880 ATLAS SHOWING "STEWARTS"



FIGURE 5: PHOTOGRAPH OF LOG PILINGS IN THE NAMEKAGON RIVER

and reclaim logs that rushed downriver in 1907 when the Hayward dam washed out. The company sent men to old Hanscom dam at Stinnet to prevent the logs from being lost downriver. Mr. Marple's research indicates that a jammer was set up to load logs onto rail cars for shipment back to Hayward. Louie and Alvin Meier, who were born in 1903 and 1911 respectively, said they had heard of the incident. The pilings then appear to be remnants of the 1907 trestle and not Henry Hanscom's dam from the 1870's.

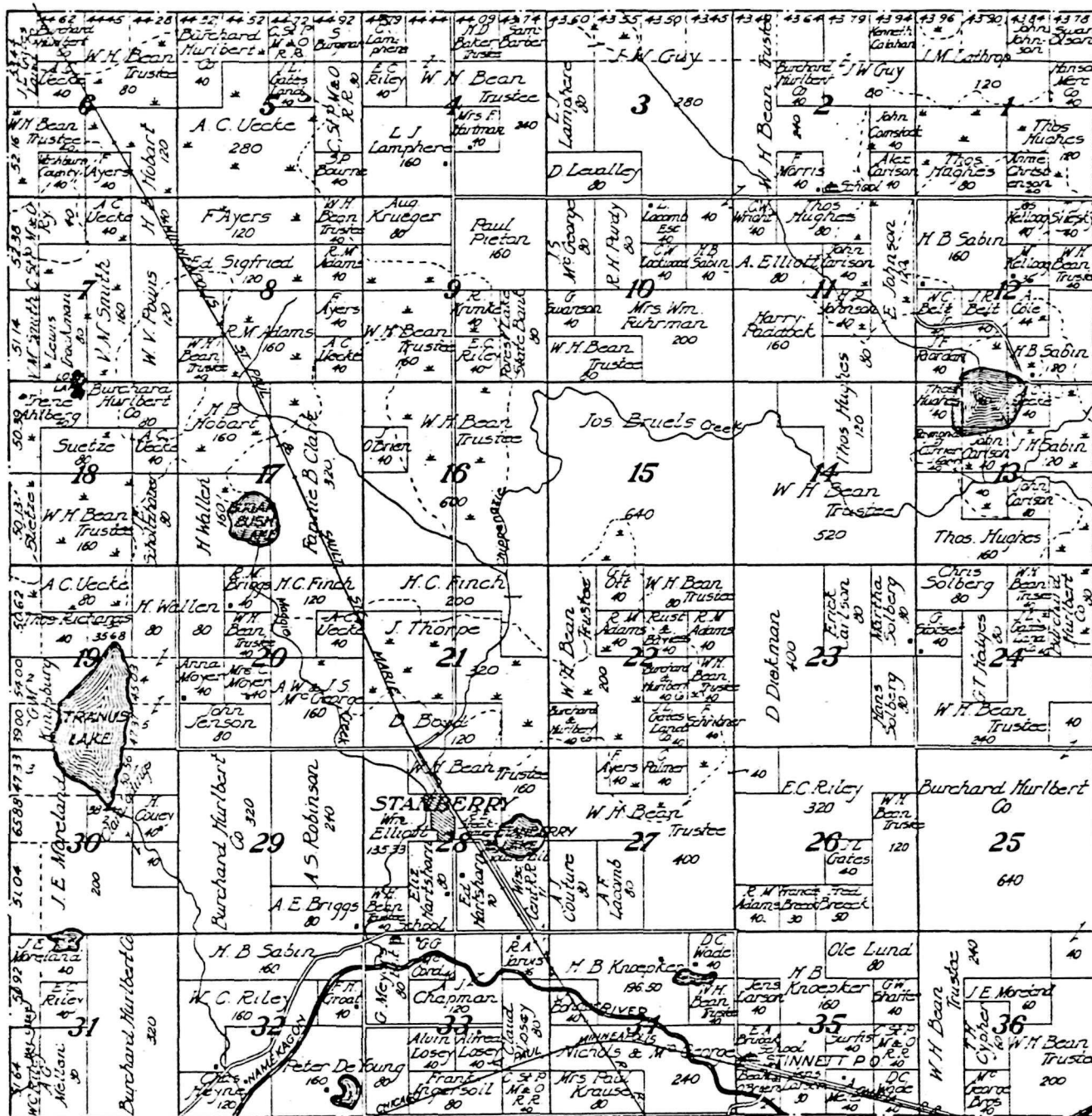
The 1880 atlas page (Figure 4) and the 1915 (Figure 6) and subsequent plats of T41N, R10W show the Namekagon River following quite a different course than the 1896 and 1909 update of the 1896 atlas (Figures 7 and 8). They also show a dam in Section 34, not in Section 35. The different river course is presumably due to a flowage created by the dam.

Between 1875, the year that Henry Hanscom is thought to have built his dam, and 1906, the approximate date of the last drive on the Namekagon River, a large flowage existed to the east or upriver side of the dam. Hanscom's dam had a head of eleven feet and raised the water level in the flowage about eleven feet (Winton and Winton 1980:354, footnote 8, Memoir of Emma Ingebretson Larson).

This dam across the Namekagon at Stinnet made a big flowage. The logs during the winter were piled on a landing near this flowage four or five tiers high. When the ice went out the logs were dumped into the river and covered the whole flowage (Memoir of George Genson, 1889 in Winton and Winton 1980:346).

The last drive ever made on the Namekagon was made around 1902 or 1903 (Memoir of Byron Crane 1894: Winton and Winton 1980:542) or around 1905 or 1906 (Memoir of Jens Ingebretson 1888: Winton and Winton 1980:343). The 1915 plat of T41N, R10W (Figure 6) shows the course of the river reverted back to its 1880 form. This suggests the flowage no longer existed by 1915.

A number of logging camps are reported to have been associated with the



9

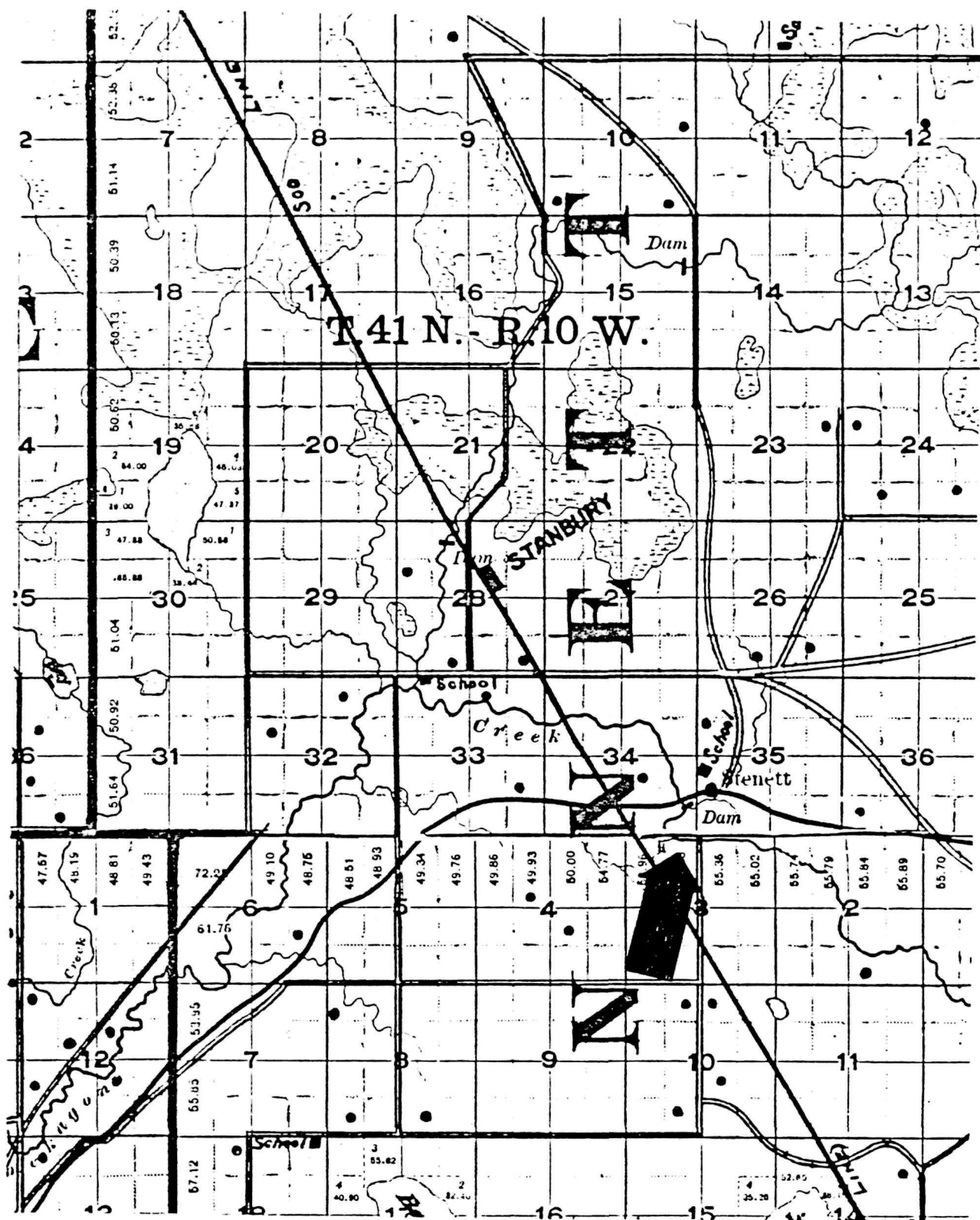


FIGURE 7: MAP OF WASHBURN COUNTY,
BUSCH AND HARMON, SPOONER, WISCONSIN, 1896

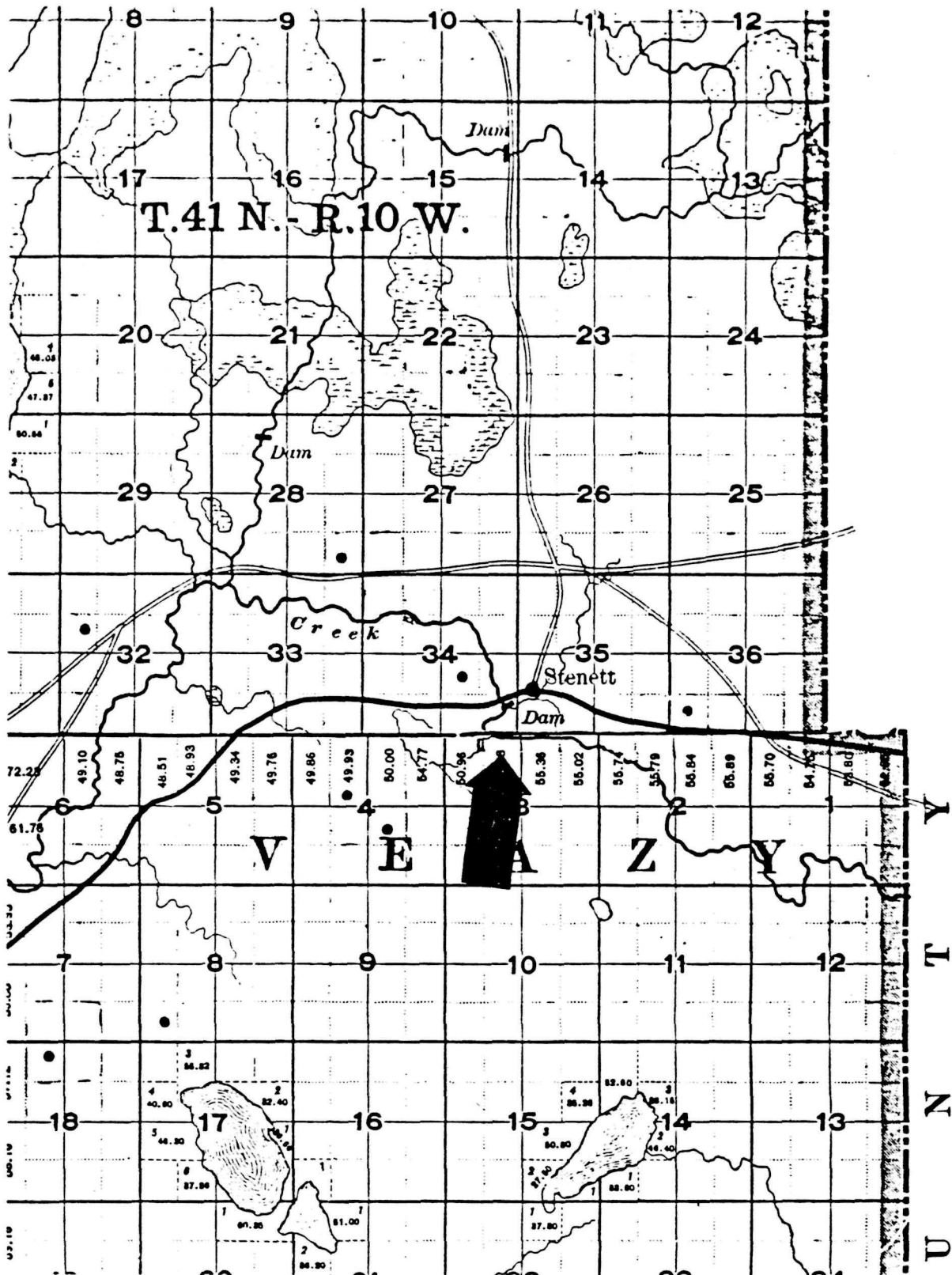


FIGURE 8: MAP OF WASHBURN COUNTY, WISCONSIN
BUSCH AND HARMON, SPOONER, WISCONSIN 1909

river drives. Jens Ingebretson's memoir of 1888 (Winton and Winton 1980: 344) states that Bill MacEvoy was "living near Stinnet, between the Stinnet platform on the railroad and the old Hanscomb dam on the River". (The distance between the former Stinnet platform and the Namekagon River is about 300 meters). The same memoir also reported that John O'Brien had a camp northwest of Stinnet in 1889, one mile from the Namekagon River, and that he used the "old Hanscomb dam" as well as the Veazie dam to the southwest for driving logs.

In 1893 a large logging camp was on the north shore of the Namekagon River, "a bit west of this [Hanscom] dam" (Memoir of Byron Crane 1894 in Winton and Winton 1980:562). The camp was operated by a man named MacEvoy and his son-in-law Angus Morrison. This is the closest we came to locating a logging camp in the area. Unfortunately we do not know how far "a bit west" is. The MacEvoy camp was still going strong in 1895 when Mr. and Mrs. Knoepke settled in the valley (Chapelle and Elliot 1966). According to Byron Crane's memoir of 1894 (Winton and Winton 1980:563) "The MacEvoy family and the helpers at their camp stayed as long as the logging lasted".

An O'Brien camp at Stinnet is also mentioned in the memoir of George Genson, 1889. O'Brien had a number of camps in the region and one was on the Namekagon near Stinnet. According to Genson's memoir, loggers walked eight miles from O'Brien's Bean Brook camp near the old Sullivan dam, "sluiced logs all day at Stinnet and walked back at night to the camp at Sullivans [dam]. They were helping the boys at O'Brien's camp at Stinnet" (Winton and Winton 1980:347).

Jens Ingebretson's memoir of 1888 reports an 1894 O'Brien drive, part of which started above Hanscom dam at Stinnet. The Hanscomb dam backed water almost to Hayward, and logs from all over were loaded into the flowage. John O'Brien was thought to own the dam at the time (Winton and Winton 1980:542).

"The Diaries of Albert C. Stuntz 1858, 1863-65, 1867-69, 1882" (copy on file at Burnett County Historical Society) contain references to many camps in the Namekagon country, but do not precisely locate one in the project area.

FIELD INVESTIGATION

On September 19-21 we walked over the entire project area on both sides of the Namekagon River and interviewed the present tenant, who has been residing on the property for the past two years since Mrs. Buckman moved out. The present tenants have looked but never found an artifact on their property. They would not allow us to shovel test their property, the land north and west of the Old Stinnet Bridge. Our field work then was limited to pedestrian survey and visual examination in that area. Shovel probing was conducted around the boat landing. In other areas the technique was not necessary since they were either disturbed or filled. The project area is arbitrarily divided into four quadrants (Figure 9) for convenience and the results of our field investigations are discussed by quadrants.

Southwest of Old Stinnet Bridge

This area is residential now and high above the river. The old road across the Old Stinnet Bridge runs through this area.

Our surface investigation of this area did not reveal anything of historical significance.

Southeast of Old Stinnet Bridge

In this area we located a road grade coming directly off the pilings in the river and going south up the river bank. The grade is too steep to have been a railroad grade and must have been a wagon road. Mr. Eldon Marple suggested that a railroad may have run along the river on that side after the

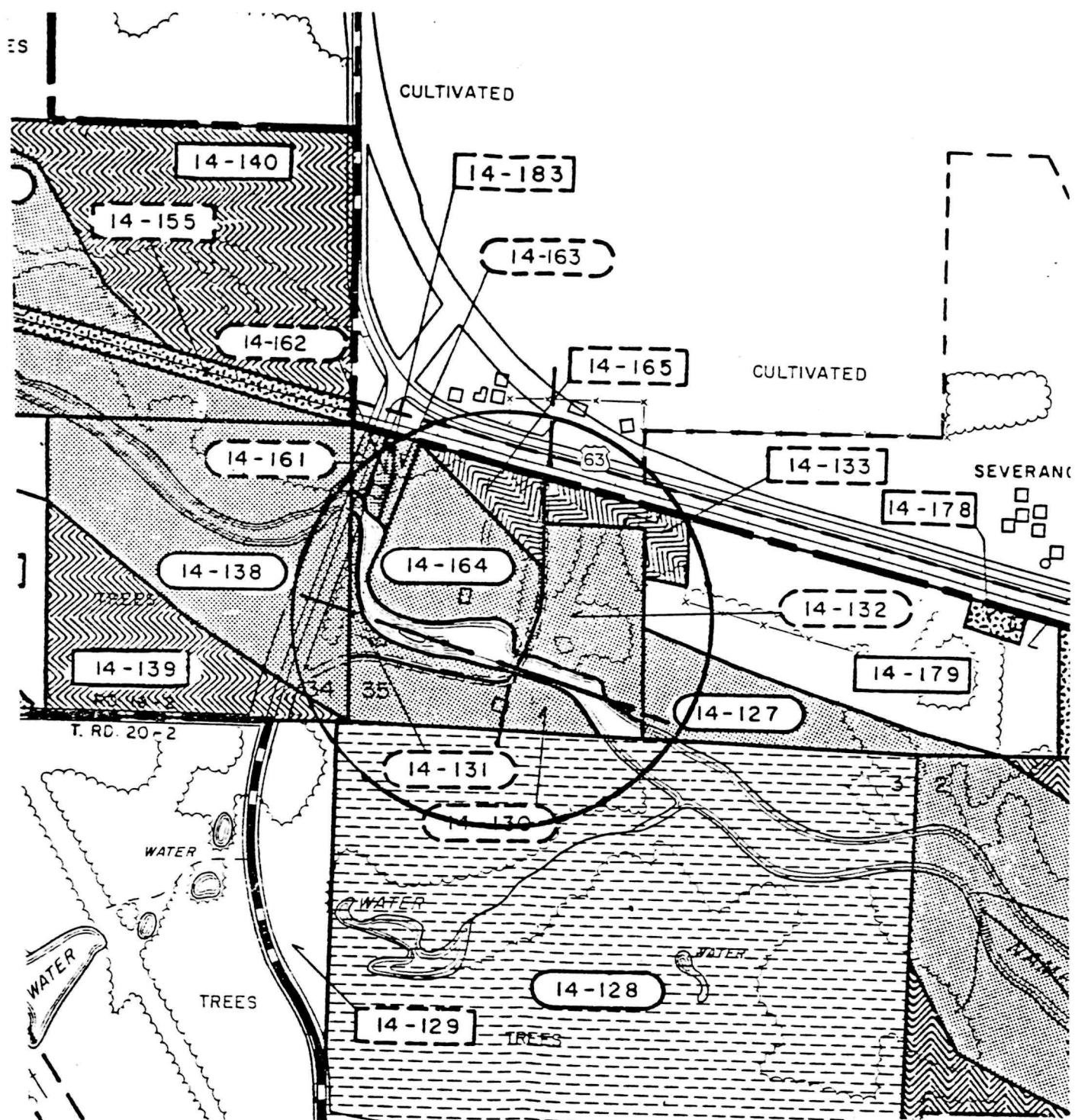


FIGURE 9: PROJECT AREA DIVIDED INTO FOUR QUADRANTS

Hayward dam broke in 1907. He said the Hines Company probably had a track there to haul the logs back to Hayward. We did not find any evidence of a railroad there. It seems more likely that since a railroad already existed on the north side of the river, it would have been used to send logs back to Hayward.

Our surface examination of the area did not reveal anything of historical significance.

Northwest of Old Stinnet Bridge

Mrs. Virginia Buckman told Commonwealth investigators that her house site was once a logging camp site. She remembers when her father worked in the camp. Two brothers, Louie and Alvin Meier, recalled pasturing their cattle there at the time and were certain that there was not a camp there in their lifetime. Louie would have been about four years old in 1907 and might not have remembered the 1907 Hayward dam incident.

Louie's brother Alvin said he heard that there was a sawmill on the island in the river there. Old wooden frames on the island were all he ever saw and apparently the sawmill was local oral history. Perhaps the sawmill is what Mrs. Buckman was referring to regarding her father's occupation. Eldon Marple had not heard of a sawmill there. Louie Meier, Alvin's older brother and senior by eight years, did not remember a sawmill.

Our surface examination of the area did not reveal anything of historical significance.

Northeast of Old Stinnet Bridge

During our pedestrian survey of this area we discovered two road grades and a large excavation. The first road, #1 on Figure 10, extends to the northeast at a direction of 45° and terminates where it joins higher ground. Adjacent to that is a large excavation, possibly a borrow area for

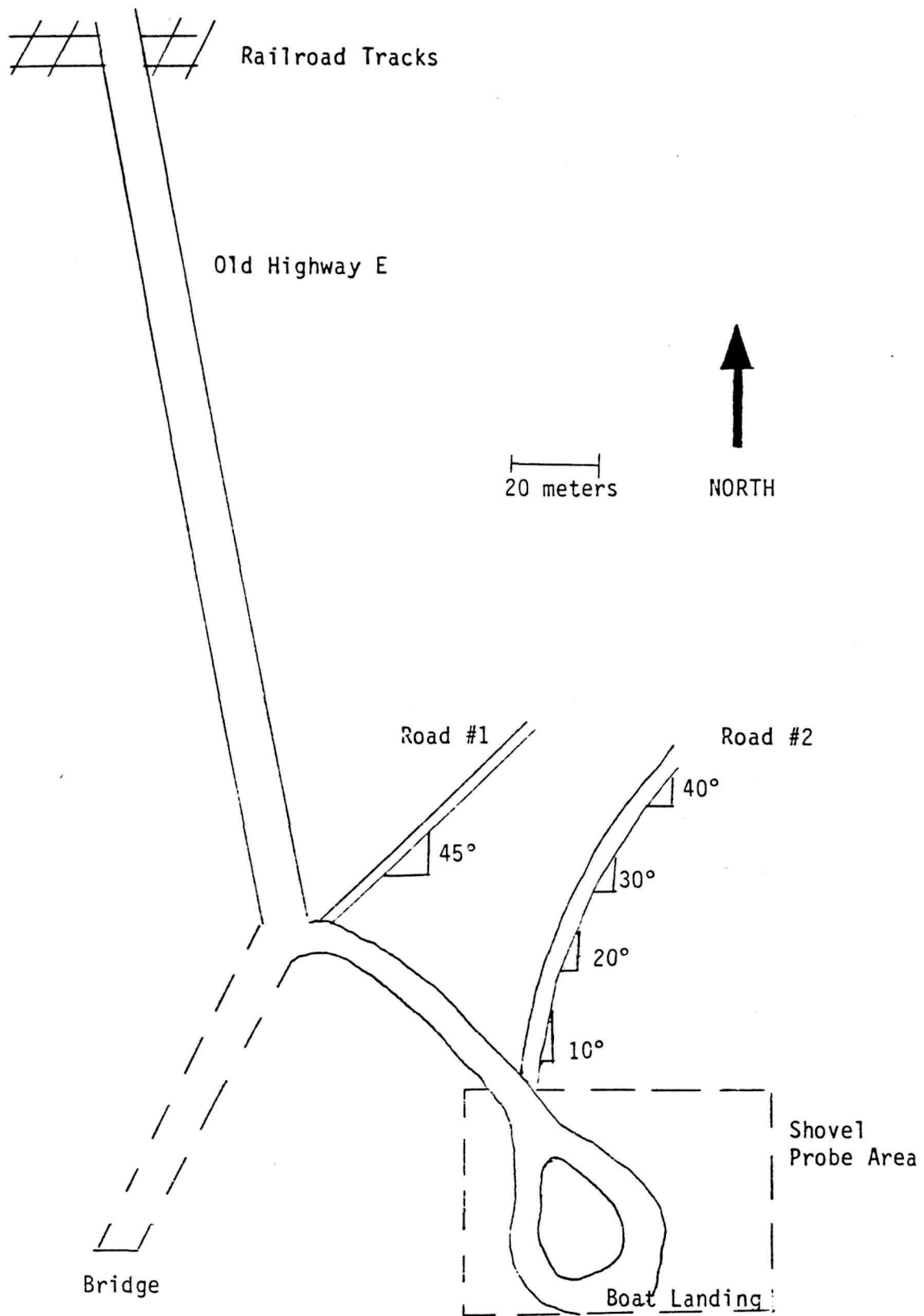


FIGURE 10: AREA NORTHEAST OF OLD STINNET BRIDGE

the road bed. The 1.5 meter high road bed is about 3 meters wide at the top near its south end, where it is truncated by the present boat landing road. The road lines up fairly well with the present Old Stinnet Bridge.

The second road, #2 on Figure 10, curves toward the northeast and may be a former railroad spur. This grade lines up fairly well with the pilings in the river that are thought to be remains of the 1907 railroad trestle. Small borrow areas one to two meters in length parallel both sides of the road, and a few contained rusted tin cans. The cans are probably condensed milk cans with the small solder bead on one end. These were in common use by the late 19th century, but they are not necessarily associated with the road bed.

The National Park Service has noted another archaeological site in the area (14-132), however, we have no documentation for the site.

No additional items of historical significance were located by our examination.

A RECONSTRUCTED SCENARIO FOR THE OLD STINNET BRIDGE AREA

Sometime around 1875 Henry Hanscom(b) built a logging camp in Section 35, T41N, R10W and used it to sluice logs down the Namekagon River. By 1888 Bill MacEvoy lived near the dam and by 1893 was logging in the area, possibly using Hanscom's dam. MacEvoy also had a camp on the north side of the river "a bit west of" Hanscom's dam. In 1889 the O'Brien brothers were also logging the area and had a camp 1 mile northwest of the River at Stinnet. In that year, O'Brien's men used Hanscom's dam to sluice logs. In 1894, one of the O'Brien drives used the Hanscom dam again.

After 1895 settlers started coming to the valley and by 1904 the area was fairly heavily settled (Winton and Winton 1980). The last log drive occurred sometime between 1902 and 1906. The Old Stinnet Bridge area was the

scene of railroad logging activity in 1907 when the Hayward dam broke. The Hines Lumber Company, Hayward built a trestle across the river just upriver of the present Old Stinnet Bridge, possibly positioning a jammer on the trestle to recover logs from the river. Sometime after 1909 but prior to 1915 (Washburn Atlases) a bridge was built, probably on the site of Hanscom's dam.

Historical documents, memoirs, maps, atlases, photographs, county tax roles, corporate records, deeds and interviews do not pinpoint the location of a logging camp in the area. The references are vague but it is possible that there was camp of some sort located in the project area before 1907. It is equally possible that there was no a camp there before 1907, however.

In 1907 when the dam broke the area was probably a bustle of activity for a short time, but not necessarily a camp per se. Loggers could have rode trains out from Hayward during the salvage activity and back to Hayward at night. Some of the loggers may also have been Stinnet residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We are uncertain what the limits of the logging camp site are since we are not certain that a logging camp site ever existed in the project area. Therefore the relationship of the site to the Old Stinnet Bridge remains uncertain.

The present bridge and road leading up to it are probably post 1909 constructions. If the bridge is built on Hanscom's dam, the dam was probably destroyed or buried by road fill from the present road. It seems probable that the present bridge could be disassembled or hoisted without damage to nearby surroundings by confining bridge removal activity to existing roads on either side of the river.

The areas on either side of the road north of the river are probably

the scene of past logging activities. Henry Hanscom's 1875 dam, MacEvoy's 1888 residence, MacEvoy's 1893 logging camp, O'Brien's 1894 logging camp, a sawmill and a 1907 railroad trestle were all reported to be in the area. We have been unable to confirm the exact location of any of the historical constructions.

Shovel testing and surface reconnaissance are limiting techniques and "hit or miss" at best. No technique short of a large scale sampling excavation of the entire area could substantiate the historical record. Furthermore, Stinnet itself was a town of several buildings including, at various times, a fur trading post operated by Tom Pratt (1882), a section house built by the early railroad to house it's section crews, the first school house in the county and other documented buildings whose precise locations seem to be as vague as the logging camp locations. Any large scale excavation program would have to take these into account as well. Therefore, unless the Park Service is prepared to initiate such a program, we recommend that bridge removal activities be confined to within the present roadway.

REFERENCES CITED

- Atlas of Unknown Title
1880 1 page showing Stinnet. Eldon Marple, Hayward, Wisconsin. Copy on file Burnett County Historical Society.
- Busch and Harmon Surveyors
1896 Map of Washburn County, Wisconsin. Copy on file, Burnett County Historical Society.
- Chappelle, Ethel Elliott and Erna Elliott
1969 The Early History of the Town of Stinnet. In Winton and Winton, ed., Historical Collections of Washburn County and the Surrounding Indianhead Country. Volume II:561-565. Washburn County Historical Society.
- Fitting, James E., Principal Investigator
1977 An Archaeological Survey of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway: Phase I Report. Gilbert/Commonwealth, in Cooperation with Woolworth Research Associates. Report submitted to U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Midwest Archaeological Center, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Harmon, George W.
1909 Revised edition of 1896 Map of Washburn County, Wisconsin. Revised 12/1/1909. Copy on file at Burnett County Historical Society.
- McClure, E.W.
1879 Township Map of the St. Croix and Tributaries Showing Locations of Dams. Copy on file, Burnett County Historical Society.
- Ogle, George and Company
1915 Standard Atlas of Washburn County. Reprinted March, 1979, Washburn County Historical Society.
- Stuntz, Albert C.
1858-1882 Diaries. Manuscript on file, Burnett County Historical Society.
- Winton, Ward E. and Kay Brown Winton, ed.
1980 Historical Collections of Washburn County and the Surrounding Indianhead Country. Volume II. Washburn County Historical Society.

LIST OF INFORMANTS

Buckman, Mrs. Virginia	Hayward, Wisconsin
Frizen, Mrs. Allen	on-site resident at Old Stinnet Bridge
Marple, Eldon	Hayward, Wisconsin
Meier, Alvin	Across HWY 53 from Old Stinnet
Meier, Louie	Earl, Wisconsin
Wasko, Mrs.	Old Railroad Section House at Stinnet