

March 2015

The Post Office Comes To Minnesota's Northwest Angle

The Northwest Angle of Minnesota, located by the Angle Inlet of Lake of the Woods, is an unusual part of the lower 48 states in that it is geographically connected to Canada and not the United States. This exclave resulted from [poor maps being used in the Treaty of Paris](#), which ended the Revolutionary War. Connecting small rural communities like this, even when they are geographically connected to the mainland, is an important yet challenging task.

Long before the internet, television, radio, telegraphs, or even railroads; the United State set up an information distribution system that [marveled many of its time...the Post Office](#). Newspapers and magazines were cheaply distributed across the nation, helping to unite the expanding frontier with the established cities of the east. Important business deals were negotiated through the mail, and citizens could communicate with friends and family in far off lands. However, as the nation grew, the Post Office needed to identify how to best serve the ever changing population centers of the nation. Having enough people to justify establishing a post office is an important moment in a community's history. Records of one such fledgling post office, located in Minnesota's Northwest Angle, can be found in National Archives Microfilm Publication M1126, *Post Office Department Reports of Site Locations 1837-1950*.

Before 1837 the Post Office Department had no official mapmaker and purchased its maps from commercial firms or private individuals. On March 13, 1837, Henry A. Burr was appointed the first Topographer of the Post Office. He began preparing maps for the use of postal officials. In 1862 Postmaster General Montgomery Blair directed the Topographer to prepare a comprehensive set of postal maps for sale to the public. Maps of States, or groups of States, were to be continually updated by the Topographer's Office. Later, similar maps were prepared for territories and possessions. This continued until the 1950's when the Postmaster General ordered the end of sales of postal route maps and eliminated the need to accumulate reports on post office site locations.

In 1936 a new post office was proposed in Angle Inlet, MN to better serve the inhabitants of the area known simply as the "Angle." The sparse nature of the region comes out in the form, which notes that the nearest post office was five miles away, with "road" crossed out and replaced with "lake," and the next nearest post office being listed as "none."

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The National Archives at Chicago is located at:

**7358 S. Pulaski Road
Chicago, IL 60629-5898
773-948-9001
chicago.archives@nara.gov**

The National Archives at Chicago research rooms are open to the public Monday through Friday, and the second Saturday of every month, from 8:00 AM to 4:15 PM.



ESTABLISHMENT
LOCATION OF PROPOSED POST OFFICE

DIVISION OF POSTMASTERS
Post Office Department
FIRST ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL
Washington

IN REPLY PLEASE
MENTION INITIALS AND DATE

FIRST ASST. P. M. OFFICIAL
RECEIVED
MAR 23 1936
DIVISION OF POSTMASTERS

Sm: With reference to the proposed establishment of a post office at the point named below, and in order that the office, if established, may be accurately represented upon the post-route maps, it is requested that you furnish accurately the information called for below and prepare a sketch according to instructions on opposite side of paper, which should be returned to the First Assistant Postmaster General, Division of Postmasters, as soon as possible.

Respectfully,
FIRST ASSISTANT POSTMASTER GENERAL.

Angle Inlet
Proposed post office, **Angle Inlet** **Lake of the Woods Minn.**
(Name) (State)

If the town, village, or site of the post office be known by another name than that of the post office, state that other name here: **Pine Creek**

The post office would be situated in the **N.W.** quarter of section No. **22**, in Township **166 N.** Range **34 W.** of the **5th** principal meridian, County of **Lake of the Woods** State of **Minnesota**

The name of the nearest river is **Pine** and the post-office building would be at a distance of **three hundred feet** on the **east** side of it.

The name of the nearest creek is **Mill Creek** and the post-office building would be at a distance of **one mile** on the **east** side of it.

The name of the nearest office on the same route as this proposed post office is **Penasse** and its distance is **five** miles, by the **stage road**, in a **east** direction from the site of this proposed office.

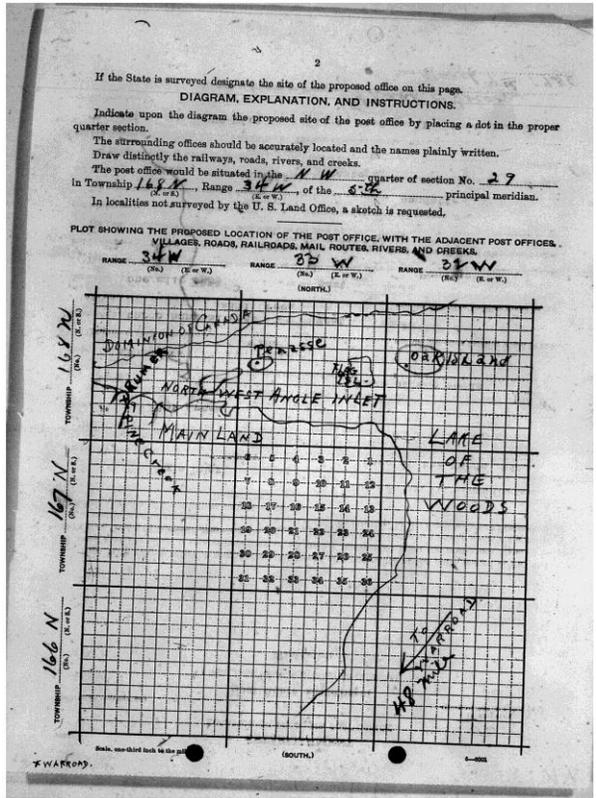
The name of the nearest office on the same route, on the other side, is **None** and its distance is **None** miles, in a **None** direction from the site of this proposed office.

The name of the nearest office not on the same route as this proposed post office is **Sanctifica** and its distance is **sixty** miles, by the **stage road**, in a **west** direction from the site of this proposed office.

The post-office building would be on the **east** side of the **None** Railroad, and at a distance of **None** from the track. The railroad station name is **None**.

The post office would be **one mile** **south** from the nearest point of my county boundary.

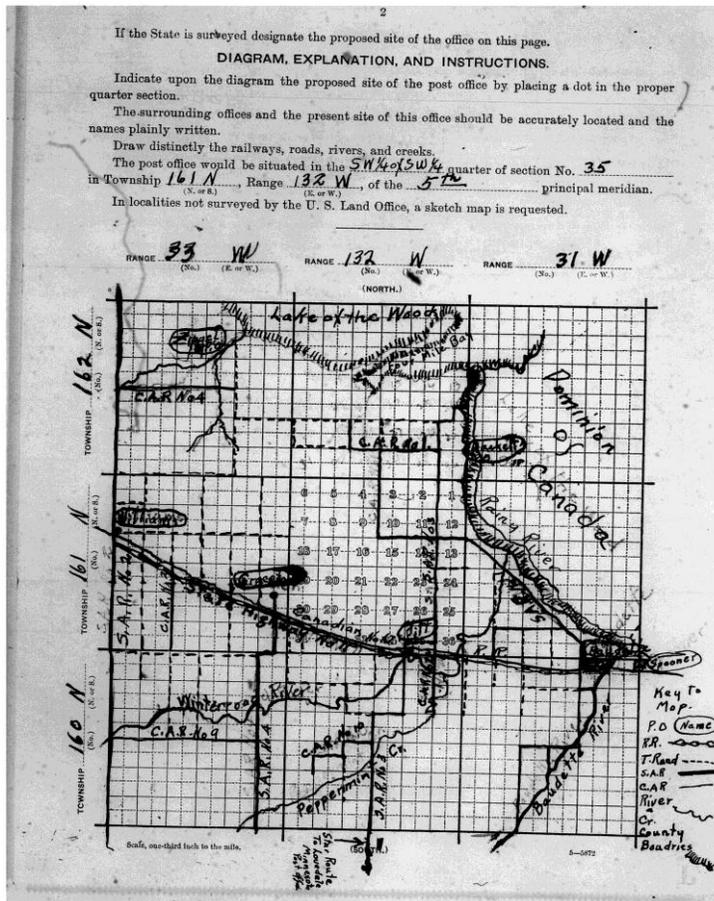
Signature of Applicant for Postmaster: **Frank L. Colson**
Date: **March 24 1936**



The 1936 proposal for a post office at Angle Inlet in Minnesota's Northwest Angle found in National Archives microfilm publication M1126

These records found in M1126 are chiefly forms on which postmasters furnished data that were used by the Topographer to determine the location of post offices in relation to nearby post offices and transportation routes and facilities. The reports do not show the exact locations of post offices (except for some in the 1940's, which gave street addresses), nor do they include information about the buildings in which post offices were housed or operated. The reports, however, constituted an important part of the procedure for establishing new post offices. Generally the Appointment Division of the First Assistant Postmaster General's Office sent a site-location report form to the postmaster nearest the proposed post office for completion. During the latter part of the 19th century, reports on prospective post offices employed forms that included more items of information than appeared on the forms used for reporting changes of site. Sometimes this first site location report shows the names proposed by local citizens for that post office.

As the Topographer's requirements for geographical information became more sophisticated, the report form was altered to request additional data. Although, over the years, site location reports changed in format, most requested the following information about a post office: (1) county and State (or Territory); (2) land description used by the Federal survey system (range, township, and section), if applicable; (3) mail route number and distance from the post office to the nearest mail route; and (4) the closest rivers, creeks, canals, roads, and railroads. Most reports also include a diagram or sketch map compiled by the postmaster or a printed map annotated by him to show the location of the post office. Some reports also give the name of the contractor for the mail route.



The Post Office's reports of site locations have been reproduced in National Archives Microfilm Publication M-1126, *Post Office Department Reports of Site Locations, 1837-1950*. The National Archives at Chicago has portions of this 683 roll publication for the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. A full set is available at Archives I in Washington DC, and portions covering other states can be found in other National Archives field offices across the nation. Searching online library catalogs such as Worldcat may find libraries that have purchased copies of this microfilm publication, as well.



Modern photograph of the Angle Inlet Post Office from www.lakesnwoods.com.

The National Archives at Chicago Announces Workshops for 2015

Ancestry Presents Ancestry

Saturday, May 9, 9:30 – 11:00 AM

It's a family affair! Loretto "Lou" Szucs and her daughter Juliana Smith will provide an overview and strategies for searching the world's largest online family history resource.

BAMM! Business, Agriculture, Manufacturing, and Mortality Census Schedules

Saturday, June 13, 9:30 – 11:00 AM

BAMM! Add “explosive” details to your genealogy by utilizing non-population Census schedules of Business, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Mortality. Authorized by Congress, these records cover very specific time periods and locations during the 19th and 20th centuries and provide unique insights into the communities where our ancestors lived and worked. Kris Maldre Jarosik, Education Specialist at NARA-Chicago, will help you learn about these records.

Sign Up!

Each workshop is free and will be held at our facility near Ford City Mall at 7358 South Pulaski Road, Chicago, Illinois. Space is limited, so please RSVP to save a seat by sending an e-mail to kristina.jarosik@nara.gov. Please indicate in your e-mail which workshop you are interested in attending.

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