

18. CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- About 1000 A.D.: A channel of the Mississippi River runs along the base of the Minnesota bluff from the present site of Minnesota City toward Homer.
- About 1500 A.D.: Sediments from Rollingsstone Creek, Gilmore Creek and Burns Valley Creek have slowly formed deltas across the old river channel at three points, thus segmenting it to form Lake Winona and Boller Lake.
- 1680: The first white man, Father Louis Hennepin, visits the Winona area.
- 1680-1803: French are active in the region, primarily as fur traders.
- 1804: Zebulon Pike and party pass through Winona area in search of the source of the Mississippi River.
- 1823: The first steamboat (The "Virginia") passes the site of Winona.
- 1851: Captain Orrin Smith, owner of the steamboat "Nominee", founds the first settlement at Winona.
- 1854: Winona County is created by the legislature of the Territory of Minnesota.
- 1854: The first crop of wheat is grown in Winona County.
- 1855: The first sawmill opens in Winona.
- 1857: Winona is incorporated as a city.
- 1860: Early farmers plow vast areas of land and plant it to wheat. Soil erosion becomes severe.
- 1862: The railroad from Winona to Rochester is completed.
- 1879: Chinch bugs, grubs, rust and soil exhaustion end intensive wheat farming in Winona area. Wheat farming moves farther west.
- 1880: Farmers in Winona area begin diversified farming which includes raising of cattle, horses, pigs, sheep and poultry. Hillside plowing and grazing intensifies soil erosion.
- 1885: Gilmore Creek is diverted from Boller Lake into Lake Winona.
- 1887: June. A heavy 24-hour rain washes much of the top soil from Gilmore Valley into Lake Winona.

- 1899: Many fish are winter-killed in Lake Winona. In April, 8 men work for two days to pick them up. Local residents are surprised to learn that the lake has so many fish in it.
- 1899: June 10. A severe flood causes Rollingstone Creek to radically change its meandering path so that it flows directly into Crooked Slough.
- 1900: Garvin Brook is redirected away from Lake Winona so that it flows toward the river north of Minnesota City.
- 1902: Gilmore Creek, swollen to a width of a mile, covers the flat area below Gilmore Valley, leaving 2-4 feet of mud everywhere. Much of the mud and debris washes into Lake Winona.
- 1907: Lake Winona has become so filled with agricultural soil that it is only a marsh.
- 1908: The creek which drains Boller Lake marsh into Crooked Slough is channelized and is designated County Ditch No. 3.
- 1909: Lumbermen James L. Norton and Mathew G. Norton each give the city \$25,000 to develop Lake Park between Huff and Franklin Streets.
- 1910-13: Lake Winona is dredged for the first time by the LaCrosse Dredging Co.
- 1928: The channel of Gilmore Creek is improved and levees are built from the old Highway 14 bridge to Lake Winona. This channel is also named County Ditch No. 3.
- 1929: County Ditch No. 4 is constructed from Lake Winona (at Mankato Avenue) to the Mississippi River.
- 1934: The U.S. Department of Agriculture establishes Minnesota Project No. 1 - the Gilmore Creek Erosion Control Demonstration Area.
- 1940: Hybrid corn becomes popular in Winona area.
- 1944: The Minnesota Department of Highways and the City of Winona agree to share costs in a Gilmore Creek Diversion Project. Gilmore Creek is diverted into Boller Lake and then into Lake Winona so that Boller Lake acts as a sediment trap and flood storage reservoir.

- 1950: Lake Winona has again filled with agricultural soil from Gilmore Creek and from the watershed which drains through the cemetery.
- 1950-53: Lake Winona is dredged at a cost of \$485,900.
- 1951: July 1. A cloud burst causes Gilmore Creek to reach a record flow of 5,300 cubic feet per second (as compared with the Mississippi's minimum flow in 1933 of 2,250 c.f.s.).
- 1957-58: Lake Winona is dredged along shore to provide safer swimming areas.
- 1965: Lake Winona suffers a severe winter fish kill due to a lack of oxygen. In spring, the lake is stocked with northern pike, walleyes and bullheads. Buffalo fish spawn successfully in the lake.
- 1969: Lake Winona suffers another severe winter fish kill. Most game fish are killed. Carp, buffalo and bullheads survive to dominate the lake. All fish are stunted. Repeated winter kills seem inevitable.
- 1972: The Lake Winona Committee is formed.
- 1972: August 21. The Winona City Council agrees to pay maintenance costs once aeration equipment and electric weir have been installed.
- 1973: April 5. Save Lake Winona Committee approves articles of incorporation and receives tax exempt status. Citizens contribute enough money to buy aerators and electric weir.
- 1973: May 7. Winona Council takes bids for electric weir.
- 1973: August 28. Aerators are installed by volunteers.
- 1973: September 17. Rotenone chemical treatment of Lake Winona is begun to kill all fish.
- 1973: September 17. Rotenone is applied to all City storm sewers draining into Lake Winona.
- 1973: September 18. Storm sewers are treated for the second time-including 500 catch basins and 23 miles of sewer. Boller Lake and County Ditch No. 3 are treated.

- 1973: September 19. Lake Winona is treated with rotenone applied by helicopter.
- 1973: September 20. Lake Winona receives another rotenone treatment as do storm sewers and farm ponds within Lake Winona's Watershed.
- 1973: September 21. A netting survey is made in Lake Winona to make certain all fish have been killed.
- 1973: September 22-October 5. Pick up is begun of fish killed by rotenone. Ultimately, 250,000 lb. of dead fish are removed from Lake Winona by volunteers and city crews.
- 1973: October 12. 6,000 bass and 10,000 bluegills are stocked in to the Lake by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.
- 1974: May 30. 50,000 catfish Fry stocked into the lake by the Minnesota DNR.
- 1974: July 30. DNR electro-fishes the lake to determine growth rates. Growth rates of fish are very high.
- 1974: September 8. Fishing reported very good for sunfish along the Mankato Avenue outlet and Huff Street.
- 1975: March 13. Aeration of Lake Winona is begun because oxygen levels are dropping.
- 1975: September 15. Minnesota DNR stocks 75 lb. of muskies into Lake Winona. The muskies weigh about 1/4 lb. each.
- 1975: By-pass constructed by City of Winona at Boller Lake to run Gilmore Creek directly into County Ditch No. 3 in case it became necessary to kill rough fish in Boller Lake.
- 1976: March. Huff Street fishing pier (financed mainly by Winona Exchange Club) installed by Lake Winona Committee, P. Earl Schwab Co. and area volunteers.
- 1976: June. Curly-leafed pondweed becomes a severe problem, covering all areas of the lake which are less than 16 feet deep.
- 1977: Bicycle path bridge (purchased by School District 861) constructed across lake inlet.

- 1979: April: Accidental spill of 7,400 gallons of No. 6 fuel oil by Winona State University into Lake Winona.
- 1979: Bicycle-jogging path completed around Lake Winona.
- 1981: Stunting of Lake Winona bluegills becomes obvious. Average size has dropped to 0.19 lb.
- 1982: East End Fishing Pier (financed by Ray Bambenek) constructed by Lake Winona Committee.
- 1982: August. Weed cutter-harvester purchased by Lake Winona Committee and deeded to City of Winona. Financed by contributions from Winona area citizens and businesses.
- 1982: Flathead catfish fingerlings stocked into Lake Winona to serve as predators on bluegills.
- 1985: Adult bowfin stocked into Lake Winona to serve as predators on bluegills.