

1848

Memorial of Citizens of the United States, Residing within the Limits of the Territory of Minnisota

United States Congress and Senate

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MEMORIAL
OF
CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES,

Residing within the limits of the Territory of Minnesota as defined in the bill before Congress at the last session, in relation to the boundary of that Territory.

MARCH 28, 1848.

Referred to the Committee on Territories, and ordered to be printed.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

The memorial of the undersigned, citizens of the United States, residing within the limits of the Territory of Minnesota as defined in the bill brought before your honorable bodies at the last session of Congress,

REPRESENTS MOST RESPECTFULLY :

That they have learned with surprise and anxiety that the constitutional convention of Wisconsin have passed a resolution, urging upon your honorable bodies a change of the northern boundary of the State as fixed by Congress, so as to include a large portion of country lying north of that line, and in fact as far as the mouth of Rum river, a distance of nearly sixty miles above the St. Croix. Your petitioners being intimately concerned in the decision of this question, beg leave respectfully to protest against this contemplated change, and believe that the dimensions of the new State should rather be curtailed than enlarged, for the following reasons, to wit :

First. Wisconsin, according to the bill for its admission, will make one of the largest States of the Union. Your memorialists believe that your honorable bodies are committed against the policy of admitting new States into the confederacy which have more than a reasonable extent of territory. This was the case with Iowa, from whose northern limit, as proposed by the convention of that State, more than a degree and a half of latitude were cut off by Congress.

Secondly. Your memorialists conceive it to be the intention of your honorable bodies so to divide the present Territory of Wisconsin as to form two States nearly equal in size, as well as other respects. A line drawn due south from Shagwamigan bay, on lake Superior, to the inter-

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section of the main Chippewa river, and from thence down the middle of said stream to its debouchure into the Mississippi, would seem to your memorialists a very proper and equitable division; which, while it would secure to Wisconsin a portion of the lake Superior shore, would also afford to Minnisota some countervailing advantages.

But if the northern line should be changed as suggested by the convention, Minnisota would not have a single point on the Mississippi below the falls of St. Anthony, which is the limit of steamboat navigation. This alone, to the apprehension of your memorialists, would be a good and sufficient reason why the mouth of Rum river should not be the boundary, as that stream pours its waters into the Mississippi nearly twenty miles above the falls. Besides this, the Chippewa and St. Croix valleys are closely connected in geographical position with the upper Mississippi, while they are widely separated from the settled parts of Wisconsin, not only by hundreds of miles of mostly waste and barren lands, which must remain uncultivated for ages, but equally so by a diversity of interests and character in the population. The seat of government of Wisconsin is nearly four hundred miles distant from the St. Croix, and it is evident that the inhabitants of the latter, should it be annexed to Wisconsin, from their isolated position, would be subject to heavy taxation without receiving any corresponding benefit. The county of St. Croix contains more than four thousand souls, and is rapidly increasing in population. If included within the Territory of Minnisota, it may reasonably be expected that the number will be quadrupled within five years; but if, unfortunately for your memorialists, your honorable bodies should accede to the proposition of the convention, and incorporate it with Wisconsin, a severe check would be given to the prosperity of the whole upper country, and the prospects of Minnisota would be forlorn indeed.

Finally, your memorialists have full confidence that your honorable bodies will consult the wishes of those who are most interested in the solution of this question, and will not do so much violence to the feelings of the people of this region as to place them within the limits of Wisconsin, in utter disregard of their prayers and remonstrances. Your memorialists sincerely believe that there are not ten men in the whole upper country who are not opposed to its incorporation with the State of Wisconsin. Your memorialists, in conclusion, pray your honorable bodies to pass a law for the organization of the Territory of Minnisota, and for extending its limits to the line designated in this their memorial.

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

Henry H. Sibley

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A. J. Hewitt

P. K. Johnson

James W. Boal

F. Oliver

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 Matthew Tuisey
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 M. S. Wilkinson
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