

Cedar River, Austin, Minn., looking north.

# The History of the Cedar River Southeast Minnesota

Mr. Wolff  
Project E<sup>3</sup>

# What *do you know* about the Cedar River?

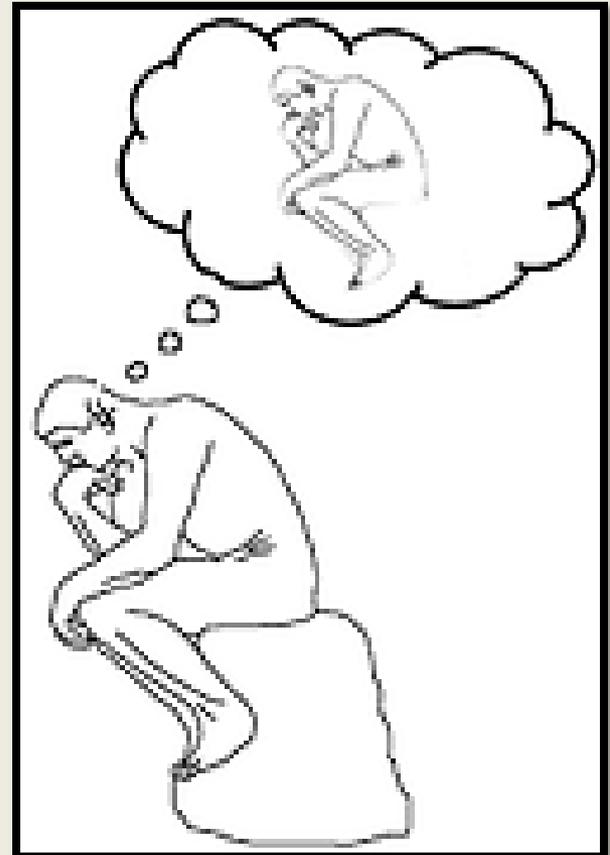
1. The Cedar River is part of the Mississippi River.  
2. People used to be able to raise clams in the Cedar River.  
3. Gold was once found in banks of the Cedar River.  
4. The Roosevelt Bridge was built by President Obama's program.  

# Listening to Your Inner Voice

Write down any thoughts that you think of in your Jeffers Journal while I share facts about the Cedar River.

Your thoughts could start with:

- I wonder...
- I predict...
- This reminds me of...
- I am confused by...
- I just learned...
- I am picturing...
- I am feeling...

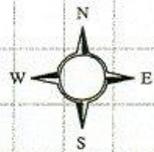


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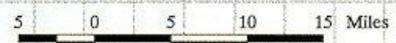
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# SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA ELEVEN COUNTY GRID MAP

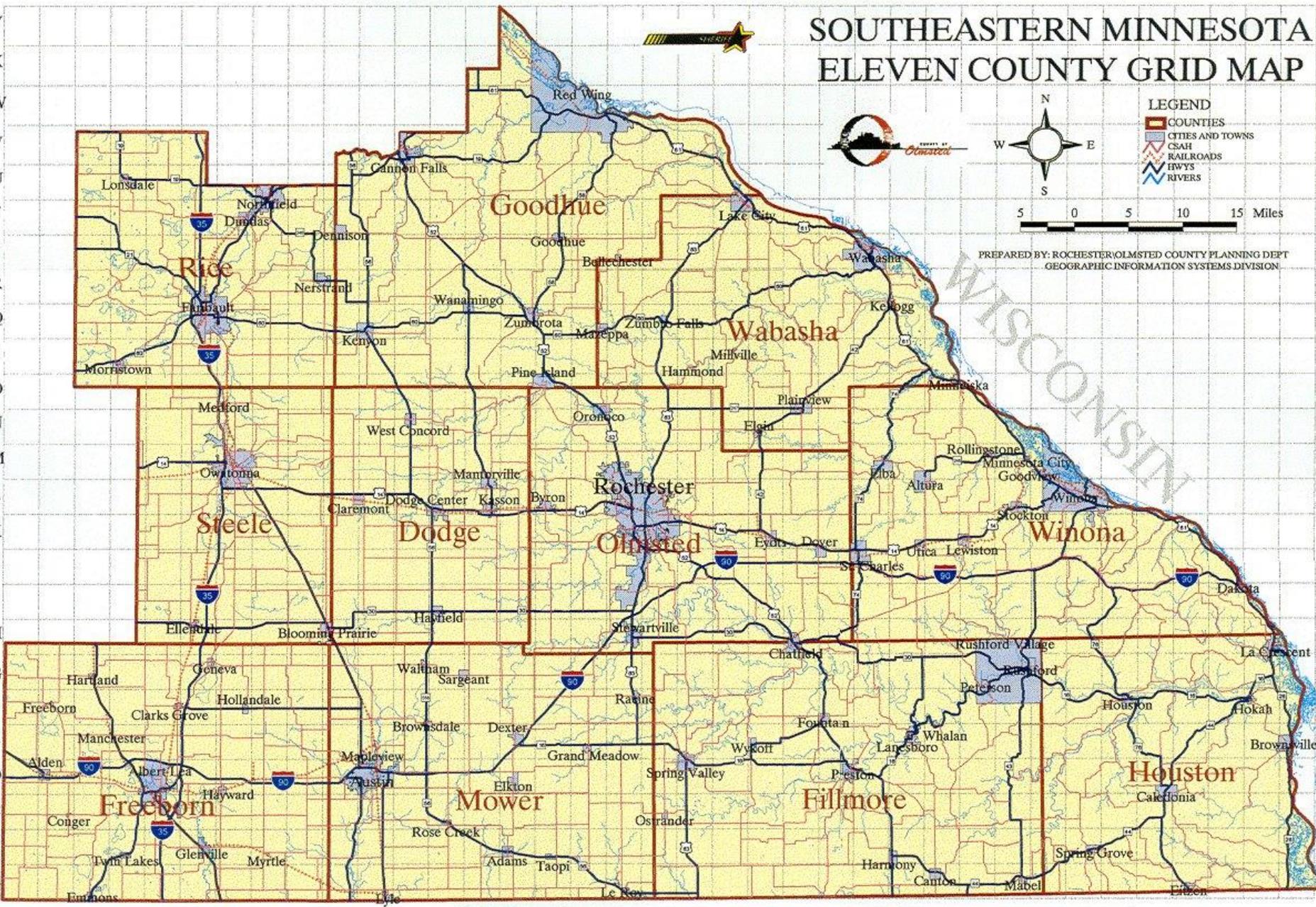


- LEGEND**
- COUNTIES
  - CITIES AND TOWNS
  - CSAH
  - RAILROADS
  - HWYS
  - RIVERS



PREPARED BY: ROCHESTER/OLMSTED COUNTY PLANNING DEPT  
GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS DIVISION

WISCONSIN





• Rose, Dobbins, & Turtle Creeks

Flows into

• Cedar River

Flows into

• Iowa River

Flows into

• Mississippi River

Flows into

• Gulf of Mexico

# **THE CEDAR RIVER**

# Early Settlers in Minnesota

Settled near the Cedar River

- Good spot to build mills [example flour or saw]
- Easy access to drinking water



# Cedar River Dam from late 1800's



*DAM, CEDAR RIVER, AUSTIN, MINN.*

Today – this mill is the Old Mill Restaurant!

**1861 – PEARL CITY**

# Finding Pearls

In 1861 pearls were found in clams in the Cedar River.



Pearl pickers waded in the creeks and rivers to hunt for clams.

Pearl experts liked freshwater pearls because divers didn't have to dive in the deep oceans to harvest the clams.

# Selling Pearls

Pearl Pickers would sell pearls to buyers like Tiffany's in New York for \$200 up to \$900 each



# Selling Shells

Pearl Pickers then would sell the shells to John Boepple, a German button maker.

Used bones, turtle shells, and salt water clams to make buttons.

Boepple moved to USA and used freshwater clams to make buttons.





# Consequences

No concern for water pollution.

No concern for harvesting all clams and running out of clams.

- From 1912 to 1941 over 66 tons of clams were harvested out of the Mississippi River alone!

Buttons were replaced by zippers.

**1916 – GOLD RUSH**

# Cedar River in Horace Austin State Park – early 1900's



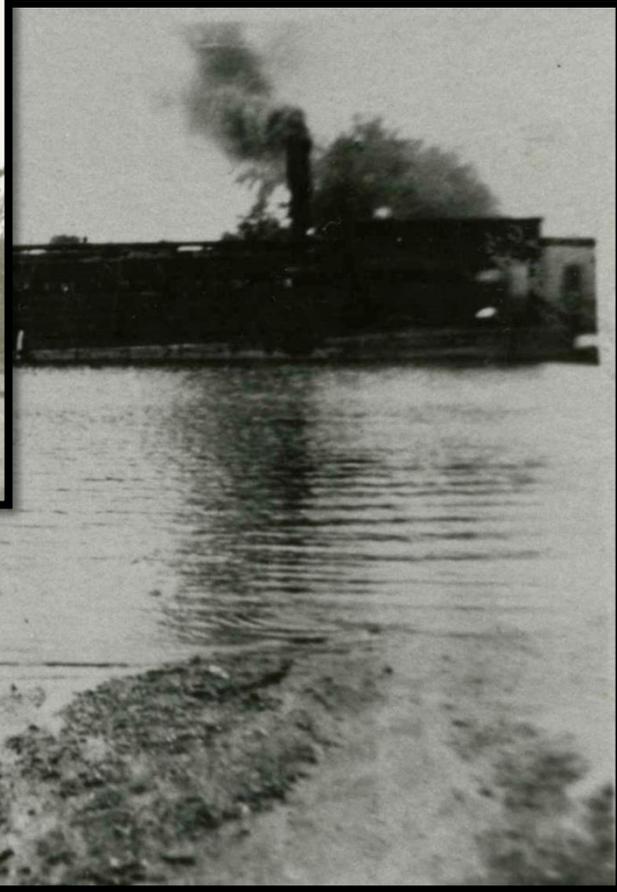
# Gold Rush

Horace Austin State Park was north of Main Street in Austin [where the pool and Mill Pond is] was just a swamp.

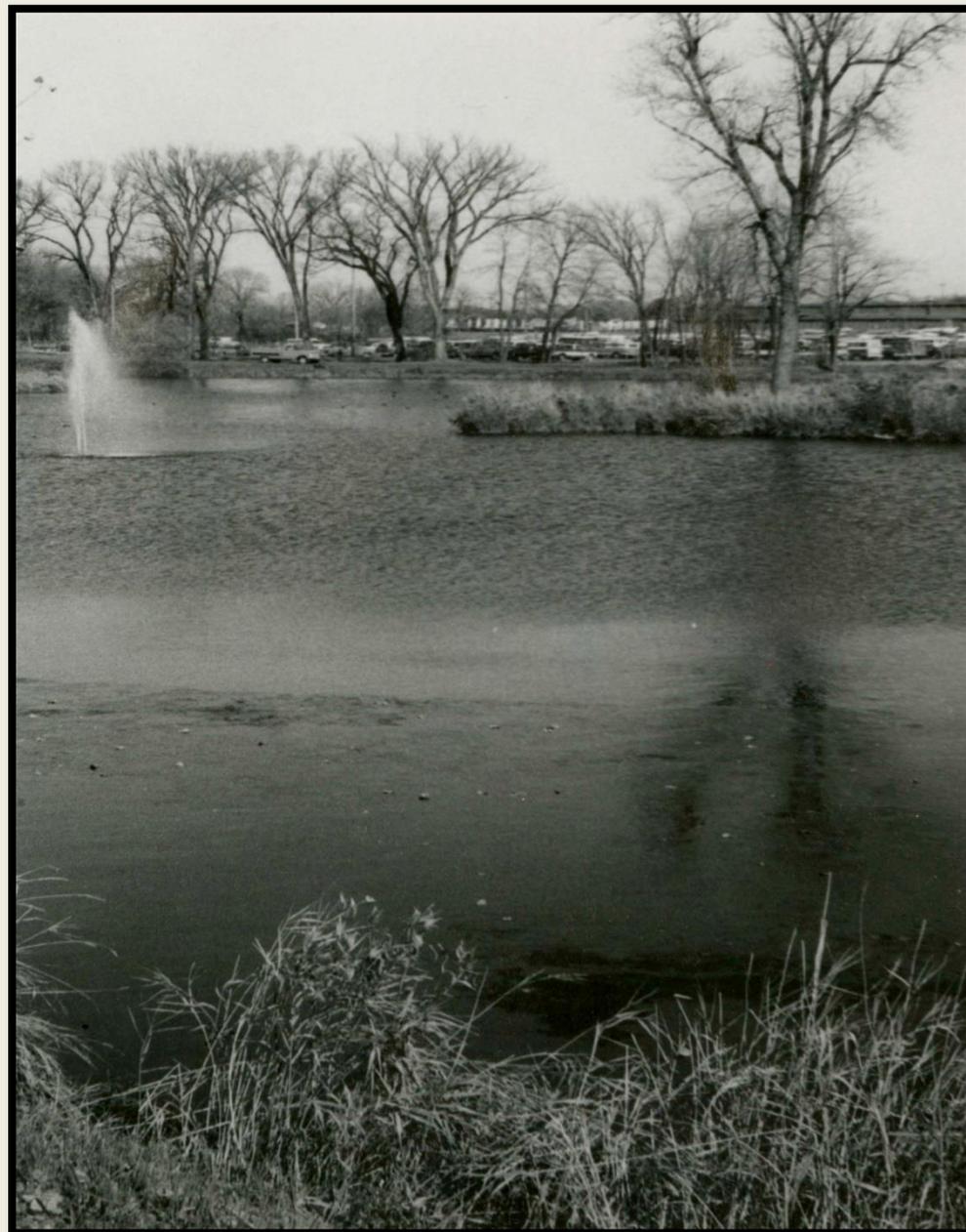
The State of Minnesota dredged [cleaned] it up taking out all the dead trees, bushes, and grass.

Used gravel to build up the road and created the island in the pond.

# Dredging the Cedar River



# Fountain and island in Mill Pond



# Gold Rush

When piles of the dirt dried, flecks of gold shimmered in the sun!

Many came to Austin to find gold for themselves...little was found.

Park [Mill Pond Park] was a popular picnic area, swimming beach, and even zoo!

# Mill Pond Beach

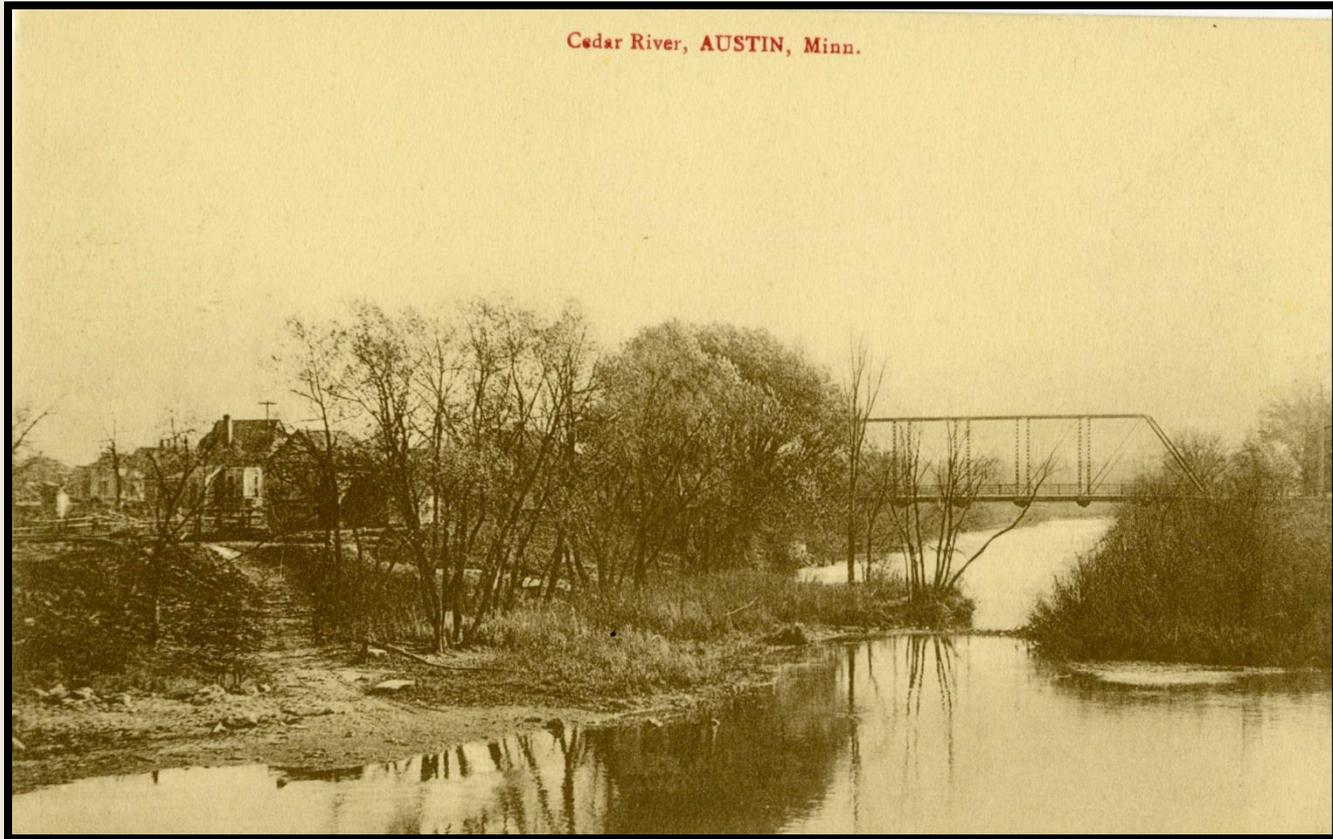


BATHING BEACH, AUSTIN, MISS

# **1930'S – THE GREAT DEPRESSION**

# A New Bridge

“Old South Bridge” was part of River Street [from Woodson to Library] and was part of the Red Ball Highway

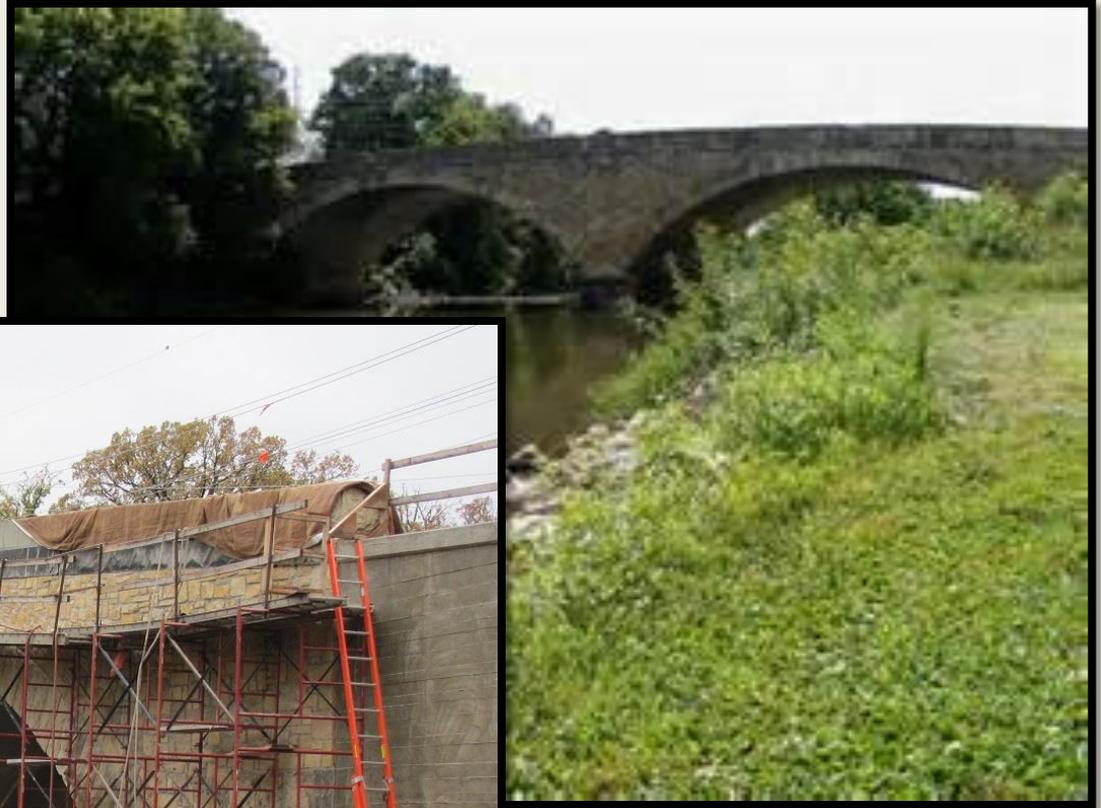


# A New Bridge

During the Great Depression, President Roosevelt created a government work program to build and replace bridges – they rebuilt the “Old South Bridge” with the “Roosevelt Bridge”



# Roosevelt Bridge was made from rocks near Grand Meadow



Current photos of the Roosevelt Bridge

# 1923 Essay by a Student

The Red Cedar River which runs through Austin is a branch of the Mississippi River. From it we get **power to run our flour mill**, which manufactures a great deal of flour daily. The Red Cedar River is **noted for the large ice crop** it yields each year. In winter it is used for skating; in summer rowing of boats takes place upon its waters, and it is **used for swimming**. It curves in and out on the land making it more lovely. **The sewer waste of the city is taken to the country and there drained in the Cedar River.**

# Water Street [4<sup>th</sup> Ave.] Bridge

Cedar River, Austin, Minn., looking north.



R48781



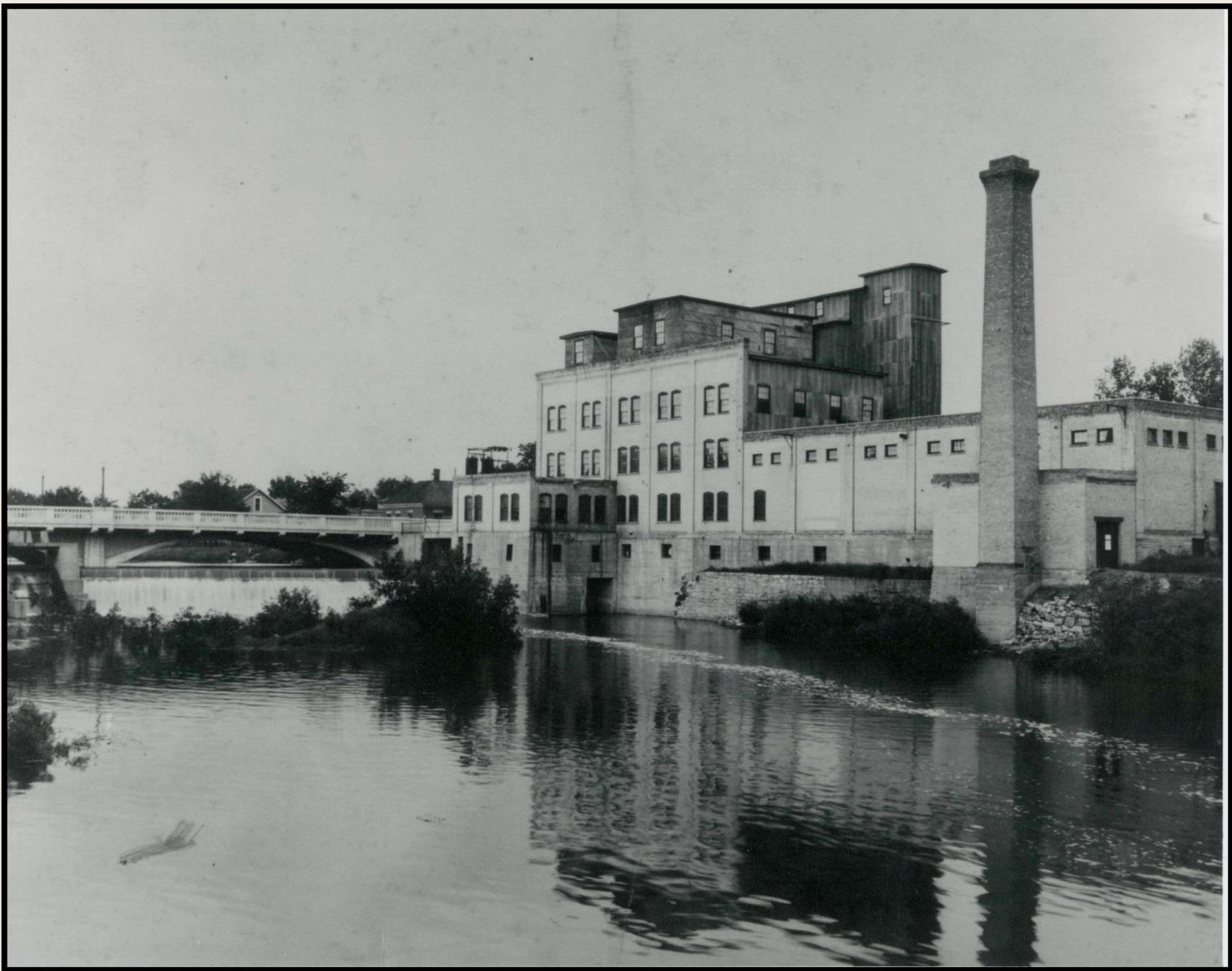
# Hormel Flour Mill & Water Street Bridge [4<sup>th</sup> Ave.]





KINSMAN GREENHOUSES

HORMEL  
MILLING CO.  
Austin, Minn.





**2000'S**

# Current Problems

Poor flood management – too many floods increase pollution



Old  
Pizza  
Hut

Old  
SPAM  
Museum

# Current Problems

Run off from agricultural land – many fertilizers have high levels of chemicals including nitrates



# Current Problems

Snow pile storage – the snow dumped near the river has a lot of road salt, car fluids, etc.



# **JEFFERS JOURNAL**

# In your Jeffers Journal...

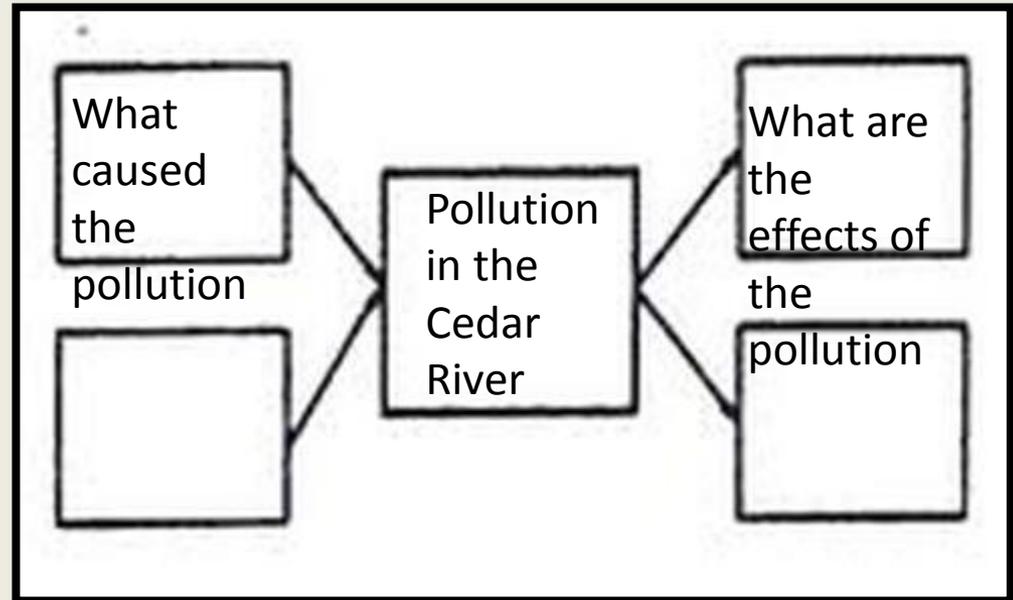
**Describe the history of the Cedar River in your own words.**

Write anything about the Cedar River you learned

Cedar River

A circular graphic organizer consisting of a large outer circle and a smaller inner circle. The text "Write anything about the Cedar River you learned" is positioned between the two circles. The text "Cedar River" is centered within the inner circle.

**What are reasons why the Cedar River is polluted? What are the consequences?**



# What *did you learn* about the Cedar River?

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