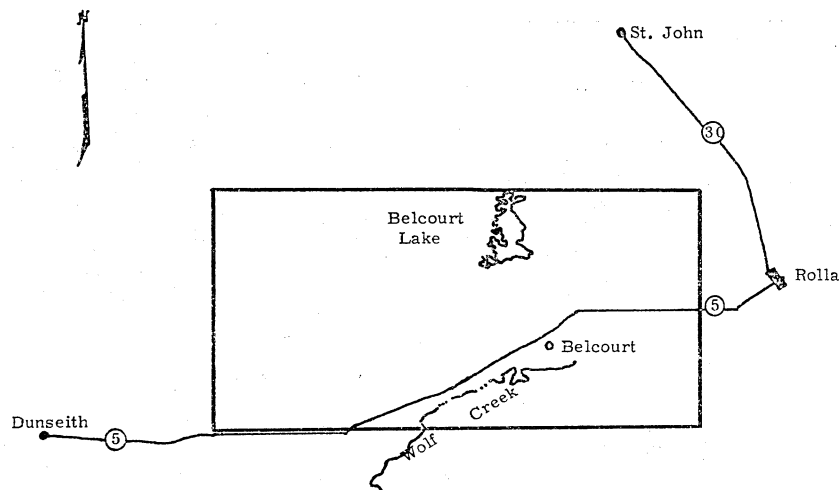




TURTLE MOUNTAIN RESERVATION, NORTH DAKOTA

F. WHITE EARTH RESERVATION

The Ojibwa or Chippewa Indians of Minnesota reside on seven reservations in the northern half of the State. Six of these are "open" reservations (open to white settlement). One is "closed" (Indian settlement only). The six "open" reservations, including White Earth, are organized as the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe under the Indian Re-Organization Act; the single "closed" reservation, Red Lake, constitutes a separate autonomous band. White Earth Reservation is located in the northwestern portion of Minnesota, about 250 miles northwest of Minneapolis. It is on the southwestern edge of the great forest which extends far to the north into Canada but lies partly in the prairie bordering on the Valley of the Red River of the North.

1. *Historical and Cultural Background*.¹⁰

Evidence of historical linguistics indicates that the northern and central Algonquians, the former including the Ojibwa, had spread through the northeastern United States and much of Ontario and Quebec about 1500 years ago. The Ojibwa and their closest cultural relatives, the Ottawa and Cree, were then restricted to what is now western Quebec and Ontario. They were hunters and gatherers, with social organization adapted to the exploitation of game and other resources of limited quantity. Density of population among the Ojibwa was low, and the size of the social group limited by the natural resources. Linguistic evidence indicates that the social group was small, with cross-cousin marriage providing for the alliance and cooperation of bands over generations. This form of organization persists in northern Ontario and other areas, somewhat modified as a consequence of contact with Europeans, particularly through participation in the fur trade.

The 16th Century voyages of discovery led to the establishment of New France and the domain of the Hudson Bay Company, with a primary economic interest in fur obtained by barter from the Indians. Items of European manufacture were desired by the latter for their efficiency, value, or interest, and included muskets, metal traps, iron pots, tea, sugar, beads and whiskey. To the demand for fur can be attributed, in part at least, the westward movement of the Ojibwa, the first

¹⁰ This section is intended to provide background for an understanding of historical factors which have continuing relevance in the present situation of the Ojibwa of White Earth Reservation. It does not purport to provide a comprehensive history. It highlights social and cultural changes that have characterized the Ojibwa, and notes the degree to which important socio-cultural features pertinent to CAP operations have continued.