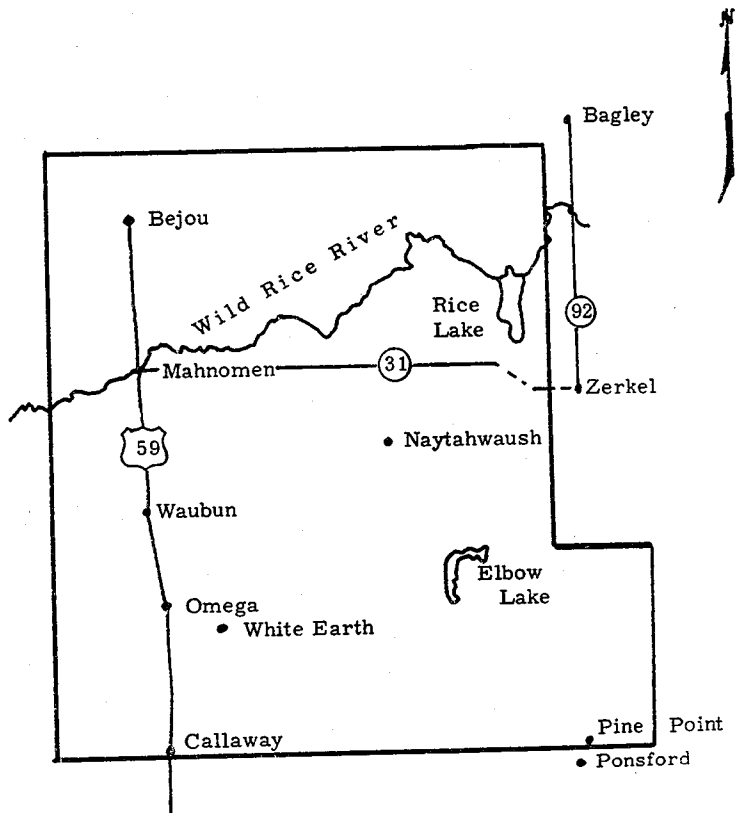




WHITE EARTH RESERVATION, MINNESOTA

IV. SYNTHESIS OF PROJECT FINDINGS

A. INTRODUCTION

The long conquest of American Indian nations and tribes, and the eventual confinement of Indian activities to reserved areas, have together produced a variety of ethnic group poverty that is unique in this country. Members of other ethnic groupings in America, including Negroes, are, for the most part, seeking their full participation in the American economy as individuals. However, Indian tribes have formed genuine culturally distinct groups with viable social systems, from the beginning, and still do so today. Despite the travails of the past three hundred years and modification from tribal to reservation cultures, recognizable social systems still exist.

The reservations are now governed by elected tribal councils operating on the basis of constitutions that were written under the charter of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act. The religions of these tribes have also been altered, through the partial acceptance of Christianity and the development of pan-Indian religious movements. The traditional religious practices were in many instances suppressed by force. Severe dislocations and major alterations in the economic base of Indian activities have been the general rule.

Some of the massive changes in Indian political, religious, and economic life have occurred in the relatively recent past. Suppressions of Indian communities by force occurred in the last quarter of the 19th Century (e.g., the Battle of Wounded Knee at Pine Ridge, South Dakota). The Indian Reorganization Act