

GEORGE BONGA'S 1872 LETTER TO HENRY RICE

Hon. H. M. Rice
Respected Sir

Leech Lake Dec 1872

...As to My self, I was born, somewhere near where Duluth now is... pretty near 90 Years ago, at that time there was a great rivalry, between the 2 fur Companys the old North west & the Hudson Bay Co. My father was in the employ of the former there head quarters was a Fort William Lake Superior. I left there when I was a little boy, as I have no recollection, of the place & went to School in Montreal, as there was no one, to take any particular interest about me. I did not get as good an education, as I might have had.... I have always been sorry, that I did not ask my father while living, if he knew where he immigrate from. I am now inclined to think, that they must have come, from the new State of Missouri, as he did not Speak any thing but french. I presume at that time, Very few inhabited that out Skirts State, Iowa, Illinois, & Michigan except those connected with the fur trade. the North west company had, what was Styled, the South west Division that division had its head quarters at Mac Kinac. My grand father & his family of 5 or 6 children, might have been taken Prisoner by the Inds & Sold to the Indⁿ traders. that is the only way I can guess at it. I understood my father to say, that all his fathers family came to Mac Kinac, this I am certain of, for I had one Uncle & 2 Aunts, who went to Montreal with the Ind traders. My father came to Lake Superior with a Chippewa trader, it must be upwards of 100 years ago. at that time I believe there was, no traders in the interior. the North west Co. had there a trading Post at a place between, were Duluth now is & Superior City...

With Sentiments of the Most Sincere respect Yours &c
Hon. H. M. Rice

G. Bonga

P.S. Our horses are all laid up, with the disease is the reason, that the rice does not reach you