The Pacific Railroad Acts of 1862 chose a central route for the first transcontinental railroad between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean. The Minnesota delegation and Isaac Stevens had lobbied hard but unsuccessfully for the northern route that would go through Griggs County.

The Fisk Expedition of 186x was the next large group to go through Griggs County. It could be looked at as a continuation of Minnesota's efforts to get funding for a railroad or at least a good wagon road between St. Paul and the Puget Sound area.