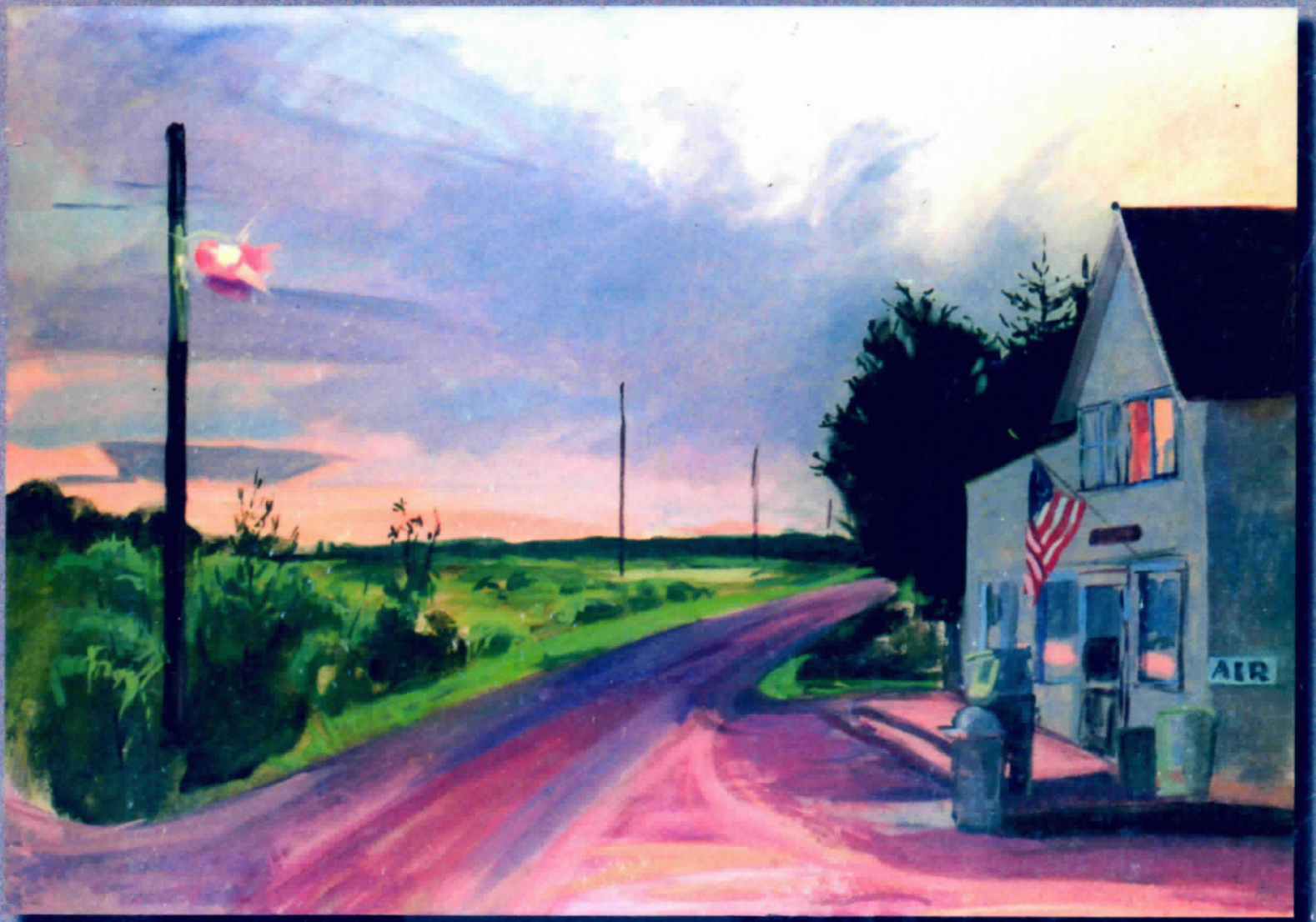


Roots in the Past- Seeds for the Future

The Heritage & History of Clover Valley,
French River & Surrounding Communities



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French River & Surrounding Communities

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Illustrations by Carl Gawboy

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North Shore Elementary School

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Dedication

For all the people who have made this community
and this land their home for the last 10,000 years.

The Clover Valley/French River Community History Committee

The on-going mission of this committee is to preserve our local history while information is available, to recognize the ordinary people preceding us who persevered with very limited resources and exceedingly hard work, and to gain an understanding of why our families are here today.

It is our hope that this effort will encourage present and future generations to appreciate the ideals and efforts of those who came before and to value our current life and the advantages it gives us.

We hope those who follow will have an attitude of responsibility to protect our environment, a willingness to participate in guiding local development, and a diligence in promoting the visions which will continue to build community pride and personal satisfaction.

We possess a strong sense of community only because of the earnest effort and forethought of generations past that will continue with equal zeal into tomorrow only through the efforts of our children of today.

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Preface

I'm convinced by the experiences I have had over the years that there exists a fundamental human need for community. We are always more than individuals; we are persons and personhood requires nurturing family and community ties. I believe a decline in the presence of meaningful community life accounts for a good many of the problems facing us today. At the same time, the absence of a community sense makes solving many of our problems difficult.

By community I don't mean just social, economic, political or religious institutions. These institutions are, of course, vitally necessary, but I think people need to have feelings of community that are more visceral or deeply felt. Sometimes the word *communitas* is used to denote this deeper sense of community. You could also call it a need for spiritual community, which is what Kathleen Norris does in her sometimes humorous, yet deeply moving book, *Dakota, A Spiritual Geography*.

For there to be *communitas*, there has to exist a sense of place. Being a part of a place means knowing and being a part of a community of people. It also means knowing and being a part of a larger natural community in which the social community is embedded. It means experiencing this natural community not so much in an academic way—but in the intimate way that arises through firsthand experience. The Athapaskan people of northern Canada, with whom I lived for three years, referred to themselves using expressions which disclose what I mean by having a sense of place. For instance, some of my friends would say they were *Hajeri-twi-desse-otine*. This expression translates: "People of the Buffalo Lake River." They were born in this region, grew up to hunt, fish and trap in this drainage system, and came to know the area in astonishingly intimate and intricate detail. They were also connected with this region's past through the stories their elders told. Incidentally, the "people of" part of the expression they use (*otine*) is to be taken literally, as they see themselves to be inextricably *of* this place—not just *from* it.

Having a sense of community means having a sense of connection with that community's past. Formal history is important, but true *communitas* develops from listening to the stories an older generation shares with a younger generation. Stories bind the generations together in a way nothing else can. Storytelling is a universal human custom, and stories were once the way all children attained most of life's practical and moral knowledge. There is something irreplaceable about storytelling. It can be an extraordinarily rich experience. While modern, technologically complex life requires formal, institutionalized education, something deeply meaningful is absent if

children do not hear stories about the history of their place and its people. An Athapaskan elder put it to me this way: "If the old people can't tell their stories, or if the young people won't listen, then there won't be any Indians any more."

Clover Valley over the years has had a surprisingly strong sense of community, and there are many good stories to be told about it. It is a place that exists in the minds and hearts of residents as much as it exists as a geographic locale. In fact, specifying the boundaries of Clover Valley is impossible. However, starting with the earliest White settlement, a community sense has existed. Mostly immigrants from Finland or Sweden (but also including a variety of people of other national backgrounds), they came to America because they were poor, and America promised them an opportunity to improve their lot in life. A central part of their dream was to own some land. The first settlers in Clover Valley found that they were still poor and faced extreme isolation and a daunting amount of back-breaking work just to get by. But there was the opportunity to vastly improve their lives such as there never would have been in the old country. Even more important, they saw that it was possible for their children to have the chance to live economically secure and happy lives.

In order to be successful, they had to cooperate with each other and develop a community *esprit*. This they did with a remarkable effectiveness. I remember once asking a Clover Valley elder (I think it was Mrs. Margarite Blaisdell), "Wasn't it difficult for them to cooperate since they knew little or no English and did not speak each other's native languages?" To which came the response, "Well, you don't have to know much about somebody's language to invite them in for a cup of coffee." As difficult as it may have sometimes been, they knew they had to be hospitable and cooperate. When it came to the problems they faced as a community, they spoke the same language without necessarily knowing each others' languages. Real communities involve differences of opinion and a certain amount of conflict. (According to the late Paul Saari, the French River or Nolte Store, which was started by Finnish residents as a coop, soon was run by his father because the people concerned found they could not cooperate very well!)

The early Clover Valley community involved important organizations such as the Homestead Farmers' Club, an organization which was concerned with more than just agriculture in making the region a good place to live. It was this club, for instance, that saw to it that poles were cut and line strung for the first telephones, having made arrangements with the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad to connect with their line. But it was the schools, more than anything else, which were the hubs around which community revolved. Parents were deeply concerned that their

children learn to speak, read and write English and have the other skills which would give them the chance to have fulfilling lives in this new land. Education was, as it remains, a central community value. The schools were also extremely important for community meetings and for recreational activities. The opening of the Clover Valley High School brought a great sense of community pride, and its closing engendered a profound sense of loss. According to some people, even the advent of television does not rival the social atomization caused by the closing of the Clover Valley High School. While not occupied as a high school for years, its recent burning only added to the sense of loss a good many people have felt. Evidently, its physical presence continued to symbolize community identity.

But the North Shore Elementary School, which replaced the older Bloomingdale School that served the community for 40 years, has remained a powerful focus of people's interest and a vital locus for community activities. In spite of all the many forces in modern life that cause community to wither away, the North Shore Elementary School still serves to unify the Clover Valley community. If the school were to close, I think it will be a social disaster of incalculable proportions. Closing the school could spell the end of community and the end of something humanly very important.

The project of which this book is a part, illustrates how important a community school can be in giving people a sense of personhood, a sense of *communitas*, a sense of place. For this project has connected students, teachers, parents, senior citizens, newer residents and long-term residents, giving them all a better sense of who they are. It is a project that familiarizes the children and adults with their bioregion and with their community's past.

The times being what they are, and our way of life being what it now is, most of the students of North Shore Elementary School will move away from the community when they are adults. But we can hope they will take with them a deeper sense of what it means to be a person and to belong to a community. As the good citizens they will have become—one can hope partly because parents, teachers, senior citizens and others cared and willingly participated in this project, they will be able to help create sustaining and sustainable communities in whatever part of the world they find themselves.

So I congratulate the people of this community and of North Shore Elementary School. In however small a way, you are making the world a better place.

David Smith, Professor of Anthropology
UMD

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Our History

In the mid-1980s, I became involved in a project that, at the time, was gathering research into the history and development of farming in Clover Valley. We were primarily interested in studying the time period from 1890 (the beginning of homesteading) through what was then current day—a nearly century-long period of agricultural activity. The project had a somewhat scholarly title, “The Clover Valley Ethnohistory Project.” It was directed by Professor David Smith of the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Assisting him with the study were Jan Cohen, Mark Helmer and myself. Professor Smith resided in Lakewood Township, but the rest of us were residents of the French River/Clover Valley area.

Dr. Smith (“Dave” to just about everyone) taught, still teaches in fact, anthropology at UMD, and the project was developed under his leadership. It was designed to study the historical reasons for the emergence of agriculture in Clover Valley, the eventual decline it suffered, and the possibilities for future redevelopment. It soon became clear, however, that to understand farming, one had to understand the development of the larger community of Clover Valley as well. As we began reviewing oral histories we had collected, it became obvious that much of the information we were gathering went well beyond the scope of what grain to plant, the difficulties of growing crops in clay soil, or what breed of dairy cow produced the most milk. Stories on favorite swimming holes, the importance of sauna night, the terror felt during the fire of 1918, the practice of bartering potatoes for fish, and the fun (usually) of skiing to school in winter, as well as other accounts, began to emerge, soon filling the transcripts. Because of the unexpected wealth of information coming forth, a decision was made to expand the project beyond just an agricultural history. Early township records needed to be researched, documents detailing the early development of the area uncovered, photographs collected and archived, memoirs reviewed, and oral histories—already proven so valuable—continued. Ultimately, we even talked of it all ending up in a book.

Additional funding was sought to expand the work, but the University system was in a period of cost cuts and monies for the project were refused. Deeply disappointed, but with no clear options, the project came to an end as the initial funds ran out. Dave continued his teaching and funneled his energy to other projects. Jan moved to town and began a small business, yet retained land in Clover Valley and kept ties to the area. Mark, as most avid cross-country skiers of the area know, began his work with Charlie Banks to reopen “Charlie’s Trails,” the ten kilometers of community ski trails now known as the Korkki Nordic Ski Area.

As my children were born, grew and eventually began attending North Shore Elementary, much of my time began to focus there. One day while at school, I was approached about getting involved in a new project they had started. Parents and staff, working together, had applied for a "Center for School Change" grant. The primary focus of the grant was a desire to begin a foreign language curriculum at the school. As a requirement for funding they needed a community component written into the grant, and they were having trouble coming up with one. Could I help out? Thus, from a very simple beginning, was born the "Clover Valley/French River Community History Project." For nearly three years now, Jeannine Engelson, Helen Hendrickson, Bobbi Keener, Duane Madison, Robbie Tietge and myself—the "history committee"—have met monthly, continuing the research, the oral histories and the reproduction of photographs that had been suspended over a decade ago. And, yes, after all these years, here is the book as well.

We have no illusions that this is an all-inclusive, final work. We know it is not. What we have attempted is to be as accurate as possible with the information that has been gathered and to blend that information together into a story that covers 10,000 years—the time that people have called this area their home. No doubt things have been left out or mistakes made with dates or names. After all, one could go on forever researching and gathering and never have enough time to put it all together. At some point, we simply had to write it down. When errors are found, new conversations will be spurred and a chance for gathering new information created.

It would be impossible in this short space to list everyone who has helped with this project. It is necessary though to mention one—Carl Gawboy, retired professor of American Indian Studies at the College of St. Scholastica. Carl contributed the illustrations for this section of the book, provided overall background information, and wrote Chapter Two. To him and everyone else who contributed their time and effort, we give our thanks.

A final note. One of the difficulties we found when we began researching the history of our community is that there is no name to clearly describe it. The area covered in this book has no defined political boundaries. The closest alignment historically would be the area that, prior to consolidation in 1974, was considered the Clover Valley School District. In general, that was an area of land starting at the coast and running inland, bounded on the west by the Talmadge River watershed and on the east by the West Knife River watershed. It is this larger area of land to which we are referring whenever the term "our community" is used in the text. The term "settlement," on the other hand, refers to the idea of community in a much more limited way and is used in reference to specific geographic sites such as Palmers, French River or Clifton.

One last point needing clarification concerns the use of the name "Duluth," the legal description of one of our local townships, but most commonly used in reference to the largest city in the area. To differentiate between them, the terms "City of Duluth" and "Township of Duluth" are used whenever confusion between the two could be made.

Rich Sill
May 1, 2000

EARLY PEOPLES

He had been following the wounded animal for more than three days. As he came over a small rise in the land, he realized there was another larger ridge that he would have to climb before he could get a full view of the area and a better idea of where his prey may have wandered. Exhausted and cold, he carefully leaned his upturned spear against a boulder and then knelt down to adjust the ripped and tattered coverings on his feet. When he finished, he looked up and considered the climb that lay before him. The caribou was still out there, and no matter how tired he was, he could not stop now. Back on his feet, he rubbed his arms and calves and shook himself in an attempt to bring warmth into his body. Then grabbing his spear, he walked up the back of the ridge. It was a long and difficult climb, and he had to be careful to avoid the loose rocks and unstable boulders that made the ascent dangerous.

When he finally reached the crest of the ridge and looked east, a great unending body of water stretched out before him. A land covered mostly with rock and lichen and isolated patches of small shrublike plants lay about him in all other directions. There were only a few scattered spruce trees on the entire horizon, allowing him to see unhindered miles in any direction. It didn't take him long to locate the animal. It was lying motionless several hundred feet below him near a small

circle of water. Tonight there would be meat for him and for his small family band. He looked again at that great body of water, then once more at the barren land that seemed to flow out from beneath him until it touched the water's edge. Then stepping forward, he began his descent into the valley.

When we think of our community, rarely do our minds travel back to the day when the first human being viewed this piece of earth we have grown to call "home." Of course, the scene depicted above is only a hypothetical one. We do not know if that first person was actually hunting caribou. He may have been hunting muskox or even the now extinct woolly mammoth. For that matter, we do not know whether it was a single person on a hunt who wandered here, a small group of people seeking temporary shelter, or possibly someone in search of roots and wild edibles. Any of these scenarios is possible but would have occurred long ago, and no written records exist to tell us of those times. However, we do know some things about these people and their culture.

Archaeological evidence throughout northeast Minnesota suggests that by approximately 10,000bp (before present, or in other words, 'years ago'), the first wandering groups of hunter-gatherer people began occupying parts of northern Minnesota. These people, known as Paleo-Indians, most likely moved into our area from the south and east as the glaciers retreated



Paleo-Indian family

northward and land became ice-free and habitable. The ice age had been a long one, lasting over two million years. During that extended time of global cold, great sheets of ice are believed to have covered much of North America. These sheets expanded and retreated in four major stages. The last stage, known as the Wisconsin phase of glaciation, began about 100,000 years ago and ended just before those first people arrived.

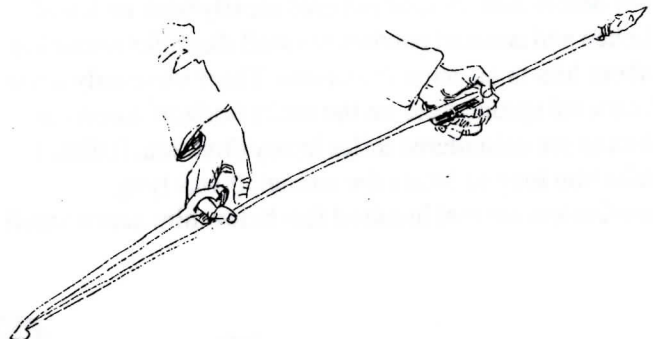
Toward the end of this final glacial period, most of today's North Shore was covered by what was known as the Superior Lobe of Wisconsin glaciation. (Several other distinct glacial lobes covered much of the rest of Minnesota during this phase.) This lobe, or "finger" of ice, advanced and retreated several times—covering, uncovering, and then covering again—most of present day Lake Superior and its Minnesota shoreline. At times, the thickness of this ice grew to several thousand feet, and as it advanced and retreated, it carved and shaped the land. It is to this Superior Lobe that we owe many of the features and topography of our community.

Paleo-Indians did not enter a land of towering white pine and crystal clear streams. Instead, a tundra like barrenness greeted them. Lava flows that had poured out of the earth 1.1 billion years before had been scraped clean and exposed by the grinding movement of the giant ice sheets. Glacial till, dropped from ice as it melted and varying in size from small sand grains to gigantic house-sized boulders, lay scattered over the ground. Much of the landscape during those times would have resembled the rocky, windswept openness we encounter today at Stoney Point. Grasses, small plant life and scattered shrubs were just beginning to take root. An immense body of water, which geologists refer to as Glacial Lake Duluth (the predecessor to our Lake Superior), covered much of the area. At its peak, the level of this lake was over 500 feet higher than today, stretching up to four miles further inland than our present shoreline. Most of what we now know as Clover Valley was underwater. The beachline of that early lake can still be found on sections of Abrahamson Hill, the "big hill" of Korkki Nordic ski area and Molde ("fire tower") Hill. The lake, clouded with suspended glacial sediment, probably held little or no fish at this time due to the waters' murkiness and lack of nutrients.

Exactly when these first people arrived in our locality is difficult to determine. There are no recognized archaeological excavations from that era within our present community's borders. If an established site

were to be found, it could yield clues and provide us materials such as stone tools and charcoal from fire pits that would help in determining when such an event occurred. However, we can learn much of these peoples' way of life from several nearby archaeological excavations which date to Paleo times. The Fish Lake/ Island Lake Reservoir area just north of Duluth is rich in artifacts. Excavations over the last several years have uncovered stone tools and projectile points dating back at least 8,000 years. A second important site known as "Misiano," located on McDougal Lake near Isabella, shows evidence of occupation as early as 8,000 to 9,000bp.

Using this information, an assumption can be made that Paleo-Indians probably came through our community in search of food within the same time frame—at least 7,000 to 9,000 years ago. It is believed that these people did not have permanent settlements but wandered nomadically, hunting herd animals and gathering wild plants to supplement their diets. These classic "big game hunters" used spears tipped with stone as weapons. The stones were quarried and then worked until a sharpened point was achieved.



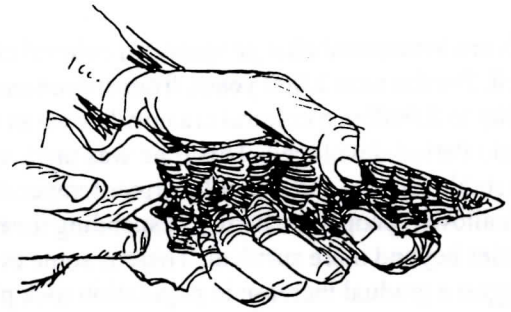
Spear throwing with an atlatl

Some spears were designed to be used with an atlatl, an ingenious device that appeared during Paleo times. The atlatl, so named after the Aztec word for spear thrower, was in its simplest form a throwing stick. Approximately two feet long, the atlatl acted as an extension of the hunter's arm. The butt end of the spear which was to be thrown rested in a notch in one end of the atlatl, with the opposite end of the atlatl gripped by the hunter. A straight forward thrusting throw propelled the spear off the atlatl with a greater force and accuracy than a spear thrown by arm power alone. For a people whose existence depended almost exclusively on a successful hunt, the atlatl proved both a very effective weapon and a valued addition to their arsenal.



Stone scraper (above)

Clovis style spear point (right)



*Flint knapping (above)
Forming spear points from stone*

In the 3,000 years that Paleo-Indians inhabited this area, significant changes in land, lake and environment occurred. From 12,000bp to 9,500bp, the glacial retreat continued further northward, and the level of Glacial Lake Duluth dropped from its high point of approximately 1,150 feet above sea level to its lowest point, over 200 feet below today's surface waters. This means the shoreline or beach area, which at one point reached near Abrahamson Hill, had receded far beyond today's coastline out into the present lakebed. Thought of in another way, today's French River Fish Hatchery, if in existence then, would not have been located on the lake shore but a considerable distance upstream from it.

This period also was the time of great stream building. The Talmadge, French, Sucker and Knife Rivers, born initially in glacial meltwater, were in the process of cutting their stream beds deeper and deeper into the ancient bedrock. The waters that flowed in these streams continued to become clearer. In turn, the lake, which had dropped much of its excessive sediment, saw a fish population emerge. A continued warming trend in the overall climate also had a dramatic effect on the landscape. Birch, oak, willow and spruce trees were now becoming dominant, transforming the open tundra into a more lush boreal forest.

About 7,000 years ago, this era of rapid environmental change was beginning to stabilize, and a climatic period slightly warmer and drier than today's was settling upon the land. The surface water of Glacial Lake Duluth had reversed itself and was then rising, approaching our present level of 602 feet above sea level by 5,000bp, fluctuating little thereafter. Lake trout and whitefish were establishing themselves, and brook trout probably inhabited most North Shore streams up to the first

barrier rapids. The woolly mammoth was gone, extinct for over 2,000 years. The muskox had migrated north to stay in the tundra environment it preferred, but the caribou remained and continued to be hunted. An increase in bear, small game and waterfowl diversified the food supply. Red and white pine were increasing in numbers and were now in competition with spruce as the dominant forest type.



Spruce bog

The Archaic Period

This environmental change spurred a cultural change as well. For the next 5,000 years, from approximately 7,000bp to 2,000bp, a cultural era now known as the Archaic Period developed. This time was marked by a more stable climate and overall warmer temperatures, which allowed people the luxury of spending time in activities beyond mere survival. There is some evidence to suggest a gradual increase in population took place about midway through this period, when seasonal campsites focusing on more intensive food collection were replacing the fully nomadic wanderings of earlier people. However, the most significant feature of this period is probably the Archaic peoples' use of copper.

Copper allowed for the development of more durable tools, which in turn created a significant altering in lifestyle from the earlier Paleo times. Copper deposits are found within our community, but it is doubtful if Archaic people mined copper locally due to the limited quantities of the mineral and problems of inaccessibility. Significant mining from the Archaic period is evident, however, on Isle Royale and the Keweenaw Peninsula. Nearly pure copper deposits were located near the surface in these areas and thousands of pits, some as deep as 30 feet, have been found. Copper is a pliable metal and once it was removed, the Archaic people heated, pounded and shaped it into many useful forms, including tools such as adzes and axes, spearpoints for hunting, jewelry and ornamental beads, as well as other utilitarian items such as awls and knives. Insights into the lifestyle of Archaic people can also be inferred by the presence of copper fish hooks, gaff hooks and harpoons (as well as fish nets made of nettle and other plant material), which would suggest a major shift to fishing as a means of sustenance. Copper was also a useful trade item and was probably bartered extensively across much of North America.

The Woodland Period

Following the Archaic Period and preceding the arrival of the Ojibwe, a cultural period known as the Woodland existed. This cultural period, which began approximately 2,200bp and ended only about 400 years ago, is further divided into Initial Woodland and Terminal Woodland Phases, each of which covers about a 1,000-year period. A slight overall cooling was occurring over the land at this time, bringing in climatic conditions and temperatures very similar to our current

averages. White pine continued its spread northward becoming the dominant tree in much of the area. A fairly dramatic increase in population is evidenced during the Woodland Period which, in turn, created the need for a more systematic means of harvesting food. Seasonal camps may have centered on such food resources as fish harvesting, berry gathering and maple sugar collection. Wild rice, while probably used as a resource for centuries, became a much more important staple crop during this period with harvesting being a major fall activity.

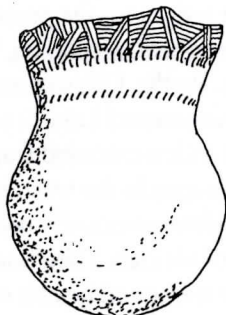


Berry gathering

Several innovations in tools and new uses of resources aided in these endeavors. Though the evidence of copper use actually showed some decrease from the extensive role it had during the Archaic Period, a refining in copper and stone tools did take place during the Woodland Period. Copper use also began a shift from primarily functional to more decorative uses. Increases in fiber production and woodworking are also seen during this time, related possibly to the wider range of tools being developed. The origins of the birch bark canoe are lost to history, but almost certainly its use came into prominence at this time. Whereas copper transformed the life of Archaic people, two new cultural innovations mark the Woodland people—pottery and mound building.

Pottery first appeared during the Initial Woodland Period and was a significant cultural innovation. Pots could be used in cooking and food preparation, for the carrying of water, and very importantly, for the storage and transportation of food. Made simply of readily

available materials, the pots were constructed by coiling long ropes of a clay/crushed stone mixture one on top of another until a desired rough shape was created. The coils were then worked into each other and the surfaces smoothed using rock and wood tools. The base of these pots were conical, with simple decorations limited to only the top few inches of the rim. This style of pottery is referred to as Laurel, and the society that produced it is known as the Laurel Culture.

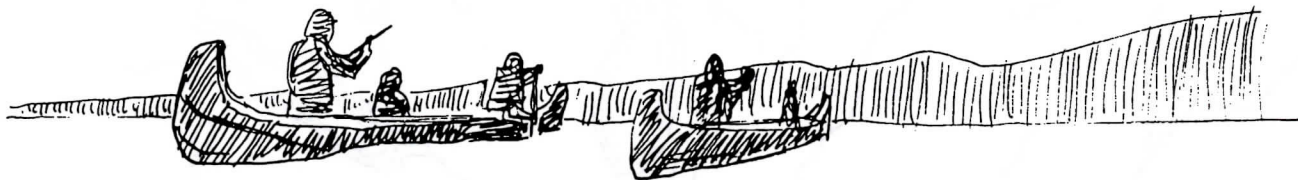


Terminal Woodland pottery

Mound building was another essential element of this time. Although there have been some reports of possible burial mounds in our community, the most concentrated area of confirmed mounds is along the border country from Lake of The Woods eastward to the Lake Vermilion area. The largest mound in the state is located here on the shore of the Rainy River. Known as Grand Mound, it covers an area the size of a basketball court and stands over 25 feet in height. Excavations on Laurel Mounds seem to confirm that not all members of this society are buried within them, suggesting that a distinction was made between certain peoples or classes of peoples, with some members of society assuming privileges and treatment not granted to all. This may suggest that the Laurel People recognized levels of religious or political status within their society.

The Terminal Woodland Period began about 1,300 years ago and is distinguished from the Initial Woodland in several ways. Pottery-making became more refined; a rounded base to the objects replaced the earlier conical style, and decorations on the pot itself became more varied. Fiber use continued to increase, evident in both the manufacture of fabric and in the production of gill nets for fishing. One significant cultural innovation that made its appearance at this time was the bow and arrow. As population increased and cultural traits became more refined during the Terminal Woodland Period, distinct cultural groups began to emerge throughout northeast Minnesota. Archeologists recognize three cultures that formed during this period and named them according to the style of pottery they developed—Selkirk, Sandy Lake and Black Duck. There is some evidence to suggest that these three cultural groups may be linked to several tribes recognized during more modern times—tribes such as the Dakota and Cree.

The Terminal Woodland Period, which lasted until about the mid-1600s, was a very important time in our region's history; it served as a transition linking past to present. It was a turning point when cultures we had known previously only through the pottery they made or the spearpoints they used, became more clearly focused to us as distinct peoples. As European exploration moved westward, these peoples, especially the Ojibwe people, became an integral part of the trade and communication that evolved as East met West. That meeting occurred here along our shores sometime in the early 1600s when two French explorers, Pierre Esprit Radisson and his brother-in-law Medart Chouart, Sieur de Groseilliers, paddling Lake Superior in search of furs, became the first known Europeans to lay eyes on the rugged coastline that we today know as Minnesota's North Shore.



Canoeing the North Shore

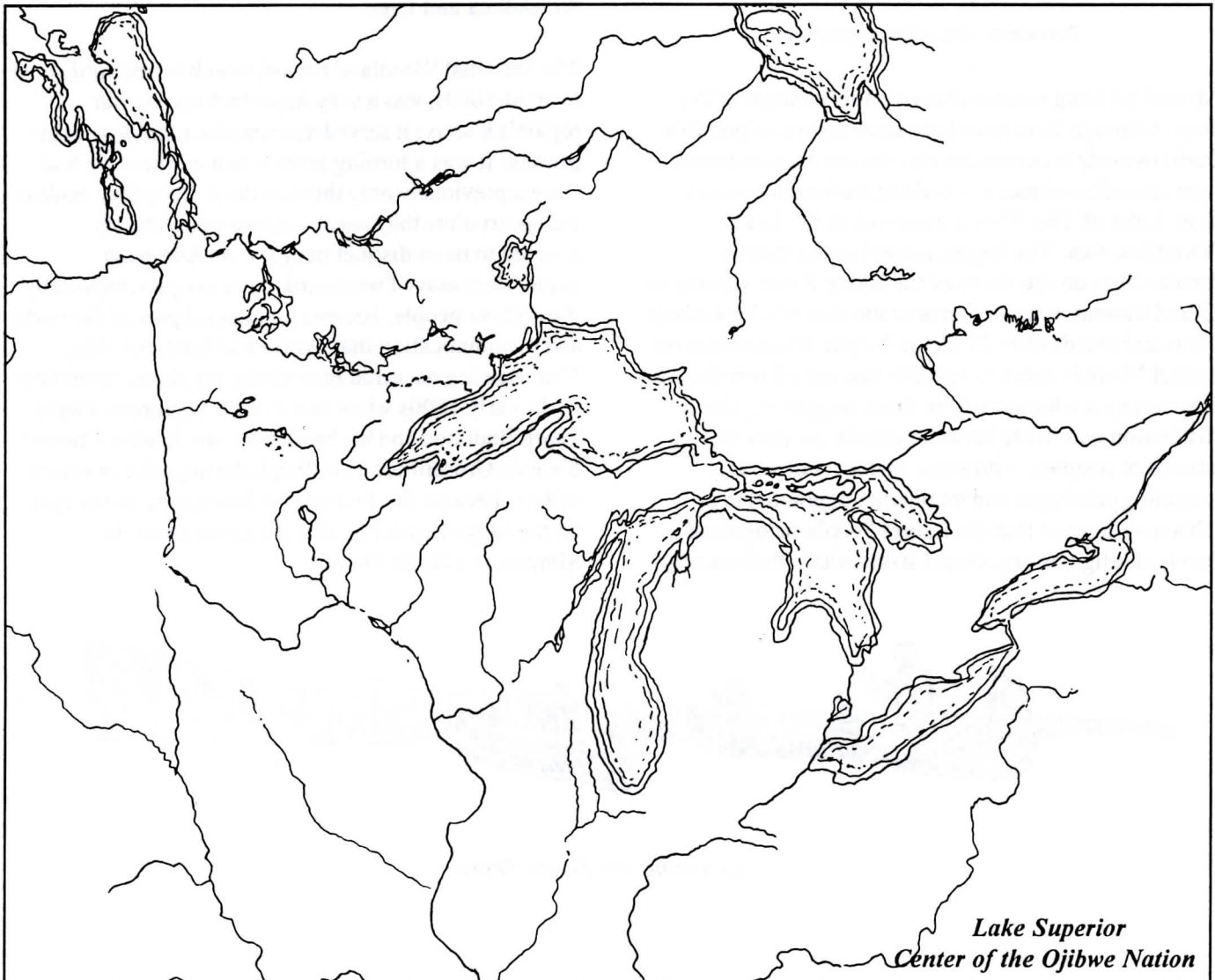
**ANISHINAABE-ONIIGAMING:
THE OJIBWE'S LAKE**

The White people speak of the country as a 'wilderness,' as though it was an empty tract without human interest or history. To us Indians it was as clearly marked then as it is today; we knew the boundaries of tribal lands, those of our friends and those of our foes; we were familiar with every stream, the contour of every hill, and each particular feature of our history and we loved it as our country.

Francis Laflesche
The Middle Five

Like the Ancient Hebrews, the Ojibwe have a myth of migration, undertaken for the same reason Abraham began his wanderings; God told them to go.

This holy migration began on the eastern seaboard, following a great mystical shell that rose from the waters, glowing with an ethereal light. Each time it arose it beckoned the People further to the west. Each place the shell stopped, the People would establish a settlement and erect lodges for the practice of the Midewewin, their great healing religion. The migration west took 500 years. By the 17th century, the Ojibwe had established themselves around Lake Superior, the center of their nation. That nation extended from Lake Huron in the east to Lake Winnipeg in the west, an area the size of Scandinavia. The Ojibwe eventually became the largest Indian nation north of Mexico. Their homeland was vast, and it included the streams and forests of our community.





Skywoman of the Ojibwe Creation Story

This Ojibwe nation was not an isolated backwater wilderness; rather it was a mainline route for trade and travel, the center of a great hub of river and water systems. From Lake Superior, a canoe can be paddled to the Arctic Ocean (Pigeon River, boundary lakes, Rainy Lake, Lake Winnipeg, MacKenzie-Athabaska River route); the Gulf of Mexico (St. Louis River, Savannah Portage, Sandy Lake and Mississippi River route); or to Hudson Bay (the Nelson River out of Lake Winnipeg). To get to the Atlantic Ocean, one travels the Ojibwe migration route in reverse, the route today of the St. Lawrence Seaway.

The Ojibwe were a water-borne people, and their mastery of canoe skills and the waterways enabled them to prosper. Their birch bark canoe was easily portaged between lakes or around dangerous rapids, floated high on shallow streams, and handled even the rough waves of big lakes. With the canoe, the Ojibwe hunted, fished, gathered wild rice and ferried families to blueberry cliffs or beaver meadows in fleets that dotted the lakes.

The Ojibwe have been described as living close to nature. In these days of ecological awareness, the Ojibwe themselves receive this as a compliment. The Ojibwe lived close to nature because of a strict social code that limited wealth, monitored resources and controlled population growth. The Ojibwe were an egalitarian society and were far better off than most Europeans. They did not have to support a non-productive clergy, standing army or a noble class. They worked to support themselves about 40 hours a week, leaving time for ceremonies, sports and the arts.

“Their chiefs are the poorest among them,” wrote a Jesuit missionary, “for instead of taking from the people, as among Christians, they are obliged to give to the (people).” “Chiefs” were not autocratic leaders, but spokesmen for kin groups called clans. Ojibwe inherited clan membership from their fathers; clans gave everyone a place and purpose in life. Basil Johnston, Ojibwe educator, lists the 20 clans, each named after an animal that shared the Ojibwe world. Each clan had special characteristics and had a certain role in society. Thus, a member of the wolf clan should exhibit perseverance and guardianship, and his duties would include defense. Communities were free; there was no central government. What united the Ojibwe peoples was the clan system.



Snowshoe dance

Within Ojibwe society, there was little tension between the sexes. The men’s world of hunting and ceremonies contrasted with the women’s world of home and hearth, but one was not ranked over the other. Both spheres were deemed equally necessary for survival. Women owned their houses, could divorce their husbands without rancor or legal harassment, and many women became influential in government or religious affairs. Women limited births and were scornful of or pitied immigrant wives who were ignorant of birth control methods.

The Ojibwe shared an environmental paradigm perceiving man as the weakest of God’s creation, and

his weakness required harvesting a part of nature to feed, clothe and shelter himself. Each season was significant to the Ojibwe people, and camps were moved depending on the time of year. (See map on page 29 for locations of seasonal camps within our community.) In summer, groups gathered together in large fishing camps. This was also the time to gather berries and to plant gardens of corn, squash and pumpkins. Wild rice harvesting took place in the fall. As winter approached, the Ojibwe dispersed into smaller groups and headed to winter hunting grounds where they would trap and hunt. Thawing weather meant spring and a move to the sugar bush and the annual tapping of trees. Hunts and harvests were conducted with ceremony and restraint. Abuse and waste meant, in the future, the earth would withhold her gifts.



Ojibwe winter camp

The Ojibwe enjoyed freedom of mobility; a family could move to another village or tribe for several weeks, a year or forever. Intermarriages with other tribes and, later, Europeans was encouraged. This created a system of relationships that extended over a vast area, culturally and geographically.

In Ojibwe law, petty social infractions were reprimanded through ridicule. Serious violations were punished by exile. Crimes considered serious were actions that threatened community survival, such as breaking into a winter cache or disobeying the rules of the rice harvest. The majority of these serious crimes were perceived as “crimes against the environment,” violations of codes and taboo that ensured a plentiful food supply. The Ojibwe were very conscious of their interdependency; exile into solitude could easily mean death for an individual. The environment was the means of community survival, and the community protected the individual from the terrors of unbuffered nature. This relationship is true for every society, but not always well recognized.

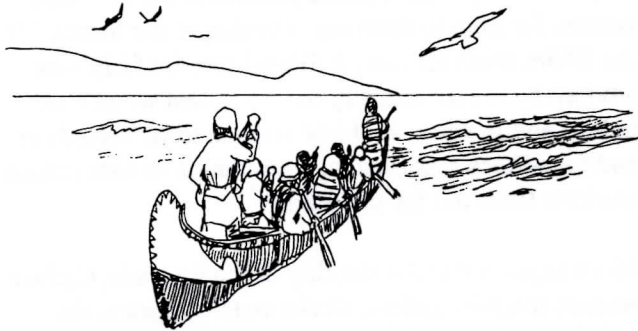
Human nature was viewed as imperfect. The Ojibwe respected its mysteries and understood that it was giver, taker and jokester. Nature had the ability to humiliate even the most skillful and the most proud.

The Fur Trade

In the spring of 1679, French explorer Daniel Greysolon, Sieur du Lhut (or Duluth, as he is more commonly known), traveled west by canoe across Lake Superior. When he reached the sandy finger of land we know today as Minnesota Point, he held a council. In attendance were representatives of the Assiniboin, Dakota, Cree and Ojibwe nations. Duluth's purpose was to secure a peace agreement among the various Indian nations that would allow the expansion of the fur trade into the Lake Superior region. Peace was made and from that point forward for nearly 200 years, the fur trade era became the dominant focus of life in all the north country.

A number of companies played dominant roles in this fur trade. The Hudson Bay Company chartered in 1670 under the leadership of Radisson and Groseilliers, the two adventurers who had paddled along our North Shore ten years earlier, centered its operations in the Hudson Bay drainage. New France sponsored independent fur companies that were active in the Lake Superior region for much of the 1700s, until their defeat by the British in the French and Indian War. The signing of the Treaty

of 1763, which officially ended the war, removed all French claims in North America east of the Mississippi River. In 1783, a new company was established to compete for the beaver and other furs of the area. Known as the North West Company, it was formed by Scots based out of Montreal. It is this, the North West Company, that brings to mind images of voyageurs, winterers and rendezvous sites.



Montreal canoe on Lake Superior

Between 1650 and 1850, over 250 fur posts were built in what is now Minnesota. These were built on lakes and rivers where Indians lived. Many were located along the boundary lakes. Vermilion Lake had several, as well as LaCroix, Crane, Basswood and Rainy Lakes.

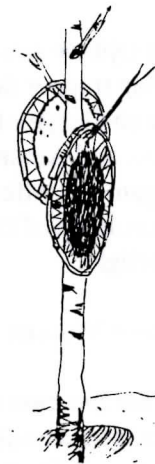
Lake Superior was the center of this great transport system, and it was the scene of several rendezvous posts—Grand Portage being the most famous example. Here, brigades bringing Indian furs converged every July from as far away as Lake Athabaska on the edge of the Northwest Territories to exchange their furs for trade goods. After only a short rest and celebration, these brigades beat their way back to wintering posts in the interior, while the bigger lake canoes, laden with furs, set out on Lake Superior's cold blue void towards Montreal. Other important rendezvous posts were located at La Pointe (today's Madeline Island) and in the present town site of Superior, Wisconsin, where the North West Company built a great depot.

After the Revolutionary War, the Hudson Bay and North West Companies, which were under British and Canadian rule, operated as long as they could before American authorities asserted their claims to the region and forced their operations north of the border. Replacing them was the American Fur Company headed by John Jacob Astor, a wealthy New York investor. In our region, the major American Fur Company post was established in 1816 at Fond du Lac.

This post was located at the foot of the St. Louis River rapids at the eastern edge of what is now Jay Cooke State Park. It was an area rich in fish and was the traditional site of seasonal fishing camps.

The American Fur Company's primary objective was furs, but seeing possible profits in the rich Lake Superior fishery, the company began extensive commercial fishing operations as well. For a period of about ten years beginning in 1835, the American Fur Company established fishing stations at several locations on Lake Superior, including Isle Royale, Grand Portage, Encampment Island, Fond du Lac and La Pointe. Voyageurs and Indians were employed to catch and transport the fish, some of which was used at local fur posts, while other shipments were sold as far east as New York and as far south as New Orleans. The descendants of many of these early fishermen continued in the trade, eventually forming the basis for the Indian commercial fishery which still exists today at Grand Portage on Minnesota's North Shore and at Red Cliff in the Apostle Islands area of Wisconsin.

Possibly no other nation became so important to the success of the fur trade as did the Ojibwe, who often played the role of middlemen in the exchange of furs and trade goods. Europeans became dependent on the Ojibwe for providing the raw furs of the trade. Fur companies depended on Indian people not only for the animals they provided, but for labor, technology, Indian foods and clothing, and the wood skills Indian people possessed. The companies understood that it was not in their interest to weaken Indian culture or erode its land base. Strong viable societies meant a steady supply of pelts to the warehouse.



Beaver skin hung in tree for drying



Beaver felt hat

Trapping, as anyone knows who has ever tried it, is hard work. There are dangers in the woods at the time of year fur is prime. Freeze-up, thaws and blizzards challenge the trapper. Animals simply don't blunder into traps; it takes a skillful hunter to harvest beaver, mink, muskrat, lynx, fox and wolf. After harvesting, Indian women would flesh the pelts and pack the hides into bales. They were then taken to inland posts or to seacoasts by voyageurs, and finally on to Europe where they were made into fancy clothes and felt hats for the aristocracy. In trade, Indians received goods from Europe's new textile and iron industries—bright woolen blankets and guns from England, ribbon and fibers from France, glass beads from Czechoslovakia and Venice. For two important Indian foods, maple sugar and wild rice, large iron kettles became "traditional." These kettles, often of English manufacture, were prized and kept in Ojibwe families for generations. Arthur Woodward, in his book, *Denominators of the Fur Trade*, points out the trade goods listed on trading post inventories changed little from 1750 to 1950, indicating that Indians were selective in their choices and placed limits on their imports of European technology.

During the fur trade, the Ojibwe saw their most prosperous era. The Indian trapper thought of himself as a free man facing the challenge of the hunt, dressed in his Hudson Bay Capote and Assumption sash cradling his Northwest gun. His wife cooked venison and wild rice in an iron cauldron of British make, her beads sparkling in the firelight.

Ojibwe Women

As the fur trade could not function without the skills and capabilities of Indian men, a trading post could not function without a labor force of Indian women. Alexander McKenzie once tried to run a post without

them. "I have no one at the fort that can make rackets (snowshoes)," he wrote to his cousin. "See what it's like to have no wives ... Try and get rackets, there is no stirring without them."

Excerpts from another trader's journal covering more than a year's span include these entries: "Women continue to cut up meat and make tallow;" "women all busy stitching hides to make pemmican bags;" "sent women for gum to daub the covering of the house." In the 1920s, mink rancher, William Martell of Ely, was advised by the fur industry to hire Indian women as pelters and fleshers. He hired women from Vermilion and found they deserved their reputation as industrious workers from the fur trade era.

More important to the stability of the fur trade, Ojibwe women married traders, clerks and voyageurs. As Sylvia Van Kirk in her book, *Many Tender Ties*, pointed out, most fur trade marriages were permanent and long-lasting. The Ojibwe arranged marriage between their daughters and fur traders in order to establish trading privileges and kin obligations, as they preferred doing business with a relative rather than a stranger. The woman became an important cultural link, teaching her husband the language and customs of the country, and bringing his people and her people together for social events.

Fur trade marriages gave rise to dynasties like the Cadottes. William Warren in his book, *History of the Ojibway People*, written in 1853 states:

The Cadottes were descendants of Mon. Cadeu, who, it is stated come to the Ojibway country in 1671 ... His son, John Baptiste Cadotte (as the name was subsequently spelled) became a trader among the Ojibways and was engaged for a time with Alexander Henry who in his works mentions him frequently ... His Ojibway wife appears to have been a woman of great energy and force of character for the influence she held over her relations ... the principal chiefs of the tribe; and the hardy fearless manner in which, accompanied by Canadian "Coureur de Bois" to propel her canoes, she made long journeys to distant villages of her people to further the interests of her husband ... She bore him two sons, both J.B. and Michael Cadotte married Ojibway women ... their descendants are quite numerous and scattered throughout the Northwest.



Sweat lodge

Today Cadotte is a common family name in Indian communities; Conner, Boushey, Roy, Isham and Perrault are all names from the rosters of fur companies. Pierre Bonga, the legendary black voyager, married an Ojibwe woman and his descendants live on Leech Lake.

Warren continues:

The American Fur Trader did not consider their dignity lessened by forming marital alliance with the tribe, and the Ojibwe women were so much of service to their husbands they easily assimilated themselves into their modes of life and their affections were so strong ... that these alliances ... became cemented by the strongest ties of mutual affection. They kindly cherished their Indian wives and for their sakes and for the children whom they begat, these traders eventually induced to pass their lifetime in the Ojibwe country. They soon forgot the money-making mania ... and gradually imbibing the generous and hospitable qualities of the Indians, lived only to enjoy the present.

It is in a fact worthy of notice, that the Anglo-Saxon race has mingled its blood with the Ojibways to much greater extent than with any other tribe of redmen ...

It tends greatly to prove the common saying that they are far ahead of other tribes in social qualities and general intelligence and morality. Many of the Ojibwe mixed bloods are men of good education and high standing within their respective communities.

Children of the first marriages between fur traders and Ojibwe women were usually incorporated into Ojibwe society. By the late 1700s, their descendants had grown in number,

formed communities of their own, and began thinking of themselves as a separate people. They called themselves Metis. Metis people who continued to work in the fur trade became a sizable force both in numbers and political power by the mid-1800s, eventually concentrating their community along the Red River of western Minnesota and Manitoba.

As Times Changed

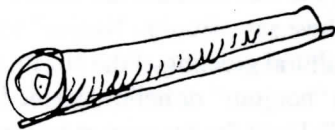
In the 20th century, Ojibwe society has continued to incorporate outsiders. Finns, Slovenians, Swedes and Norwegians have married into the tribe, reflecting the cultural synthesis that the north is known for. While the fur trade was diminished, it did not die, and we can yet glimpse visions of it today. At pow-wows, dazzling costumes of bead work, jingle dresses, pendleton blankets, sashes and ribbon shirts are artistic legacies of the era. The Ojibwe say "Boujou Neejee" to each other, the intercultural greeting of the North. (Boujou, is from the French "bonjour" or hello; Neejee from the Ojibwe "friend.") Until the fur market collapse of the 1970s, fur trade was still a way of life for many in our region as trappers set out for the woods in search of beaver, mink and muskrat. As late as the mid-1980s, ads still appeared in local papers advertising Hudson Bay Company representatives seeking "raw fur skins."



Maple sugar processing camp



Wigwam, traditional Ojibwe house



Even today, Hudson Bay Company still employs the largest number of Indians of any firm in Canada, a lasting legacy of the fur trade era.

For the Ojibwe, logging camps that appeared in their midst at the turn of the century served the same function as the fur trading posts. At the camp store, Ojibwe traded wild rice and moose meat for wool clothing, tools, tea and tobacco. Some of the men were drawn to the camps and worked as loggers or bateamen on the river and lake drives. Ojibwe men from Nett Lake accompanied the last log drive in Minnesota, which took place on the Littlefork River in 1939.

Because of the logging culture, Ojibwe and European dressed alike; all the woodsmen wore mackinaw coats, stag pants and wool plaid caps. Many Ojibwe stayed in the forest products industry, where they could live on the land, work out-of-doors and make a living off the forests as they had always done. They lived as gypos, or independent loggers, moving their little bunkhouses, called gypo shacks, from sale to sale. A generation of Ojibwe children grew up peeling pulpwood in the summers, amidst the roar of chain saws and skidders.

The End of an Era

For a period of nearly 200 years, the fur trade had played a dominant role in both the history of our region and in the lives of Ojibwe people. Fur traders, in all

likelihood, would have preferred to have stayed fur traders forever. They knew that Indian trappers could maintain a balance in their animal populations and still stay in business. But the government of the United States had different plans for the country—plans in which neither the Indians nor the fur traders were a part. As the wealth and value of furs were replaced by the desire for minerals, lumber and land, traders, no longer interested in maintaining the cultural balance that had made the fur trade successful, were reduced to conniving for cuts of Indian treaty payments. The great era of the fur trade drew to a close.

By the early 1850s, along the shore from Superior and Fond du Lac to Grand Portage, pressure was increasing on the Ojibwe to give up their lands and their way of life. The American government viewed the riches of this country much differently than the Ojibwe. To politicians, this was an area to be cut and mined and exploited. To the Ojibwe, it was their homeland. For them, every North Shore cove or beach saw fishing camps during the appropriate season, every maple was someone's sugar bush, every stream had Ojibwe trap lines. Every hillside, swamp and forest belonged to some Ojibwe hunter; every patch of blueberries, labrador tea and sweetgrass belonged to some Ojibwe woman.

"It was our home, the scene of our history and we loved it as our country."

COPPER FEVER

On an early September morning in 1854, two men slid their canoe into the waters of Lake Superior somewhere along the sandy finger of land we know today as Minnesota Point and began paddling. They probably had packed fairly lightly for they had planned on being out on the water only a few days. When they reached the area where the lift bridge now stands, they passed a camp of Ojibwe. Those in the camp inquired as to their plans and destination. The two said they were just heading out for some “fishing.” After being reminded that the area along the North Shore was still Ojibwe territory and technically off-limits to whites, the two men, R.B. McLean and John Parry, were allowed to pass.

Over the next few days, they spent time at nearly every river and small stream along the North Shore within 20 miles of Minnesota Point. They did not turn around until they had reached about as far as the present day townsite of Knife River. Without doubt, the fishing should have been very good back then. The streams were filled with brookies, and McLean and Parry would have had little competition for the catching of them. Strangely though, when they arrived back in Superior, Wisconsin, what they cautiously reported to their friends was something much different than the best fishing spots they had uncovered. It was, in fact, something else they found on their outing that most intrigued them and their friends. It was that “something else” McLean and Parry, in truth, had all along been secretly searching for. It wasn't fish they had gone to find, and it wasn't fish they talked about on their return. It was copper.

The fact that copper existed in many areas adjacent to Lake Superior was not a new “discovery.” The presence of large quantities of mineable copper deposits had been known for over 5,000 years. Early peoples of the “Copper Culture” period mined areas on the Keweenaw Peninsula and Isle Royale, and evidence suggests, other areas in the Lake Superior basin as well. Archaeological findings tend to support the belief that mining which occurred prior to European arrival was extensive. Several thousand mining sites have been uncovered on the Keweenaw Peninsula alone dating back between 3,000 to 5,000 years ago.

Most of these sites were pits or caves dug into the ground to remove copper located on or close to the surface. Some of the pits were dug to a depth of 30 feet or greater in an attempt to uncover copper boulders weighing several tons. Scattered around these sites were rock mauls or “hammerstones” used in the process of chipping pieces of the nearly pure copper from the larger deposits. Literally thousands of these hammerstones have been found, weighing from one to over 30 pounds. Many were notched to allow the attachment of a handle, and some were so large as to suggest they required two people to be used. The number of sites and the extent of hammerstones and other tools found near them is almost staggering to imagine today. There are some estimates from the amount of material uncovered that these early mining operations spanned about 2,000 years and involved, at any one time, hundreds of miners.



Notched hammerstone

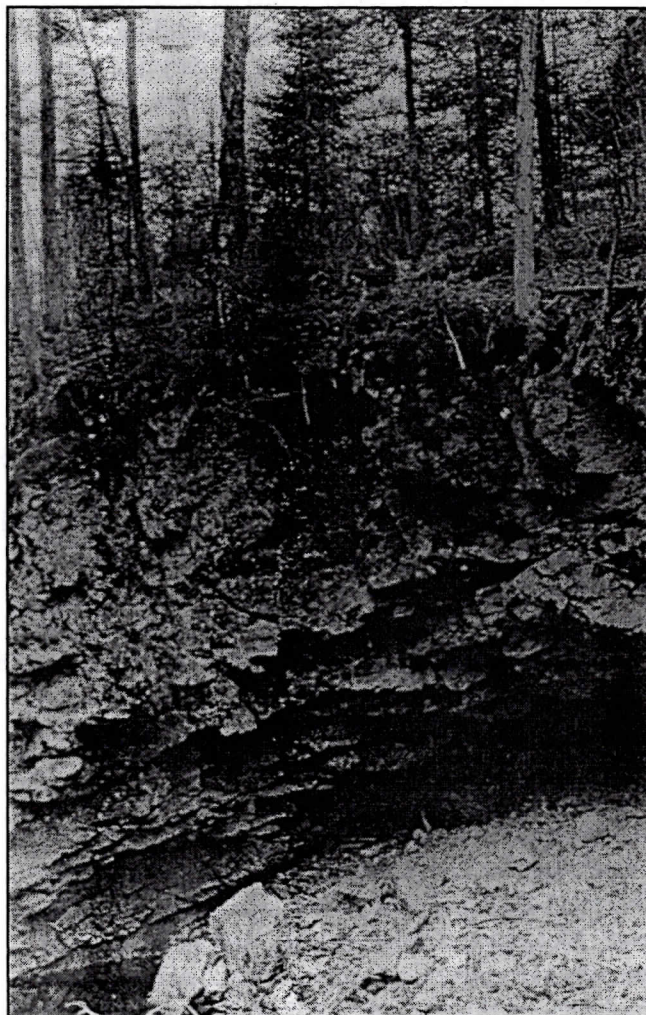
What happened to these people has always been a point of controversy. There is little evidence to suggest that permanent year-round villages were ever constructed near the mining sites. It was clear that the copper which was mined was traded widely throughout North America, but whether the trading was conducted exclusively by local people trading through a network, or if the mined area was worked by a wide variety of peoples traveling to Lake Superior from afar, is still unknown. When the first European explorers came into contact with native people from the area, it was obvious these people also used copper for such things as jewelry, tools and knives. Rocks and pieces of copper were considered sacred to them, and the location of large boulders of copper were often kept secret. Yet, there is little evidence to suggest these people actively mined copper or had memories dating back to the period when the pits were dug and copper, in huge quantities, removed. Whether this is actually true or the people were simply hesitant to pass that information on to the Europeans will probably never be fully known.

By the mid 1600s, reports from early European explorers as well as from Jesuit priests who had travelled through the Lake Superior area, began to contain stories of great riches of gold, copper, silver and precious stones that could be found. Influenced by these tales, Europeans began looking at the area for more than just the wealth of its animals and furs. In 1771, one of the first serious modern day attempts at mining occurred when a company chartered by the British government and led by Alexander Henry began operations near the present day site of Victoria in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. One of the mineral specimens Henry examined was a mass of nearly solid copper weighing several thousand pounds. Henry attempted to either move the huge rock or chisel from it a sizable piece, but failed in both his efforts. After spending somewhat less than two years exploring for copper, he gave up on his mining venture and left the area.

Starting in 1819, several new expeditions were begun, this time led by the American government. Undertaken in an effort to survey the area and determine its mineral potential, their findings and subsequent reports inspired little excitement. It wasn't until 1840 that interest in the copper-bearing potential of the area finally caught the attention of the public. It was in that year that Douglas Houghton, a Detroit physician and amateur geologist, presented a report to the state legislature of Michigan detailing the abundant copper resources of the area. Within three years of the publication of his report, copper fever had descended on the Upper Peninsula. Boomtowns sprang up overnight transforming the remote and isolated area into a scene of unending activity. Hillsides were blasted in a search for ore, deep mine shafts dug, and every potential site unearthed. Alexander Henry had been wrong. The area was overflowing in copper.

Soon miners began to wonder, if the Keweenaw contained so much copper, what would other areas around Lake Superior be like? Speculation soon rose that the seams of copper which emerged in the Keweenaw in all likelihood must run under Lake Superior and resurface at other places as well. An 1826 treaty between the government and the Ojibwe people had given limited access to the United States to search and explore the area north of Lake Superior for minerals. Geological surveys conducted along the North Shore in 1846 and again in 1852 did not mention any ancient mining pits or caves, but were promising in their reports on the existence of copper in the area. Valued

highly for its resistance to corrosion, copper was used widely at the time for a variety of purposes, from military armaments to cooking utensils and roofs. Just the possibility of copper being present created widespread interest in an area and increased pressure for further search and exploration.



Early copper diggings along the French River

The Treaty of La Pointe

By 1855, the Soo Locks were opened at the eastern end of Lake Superior allowing boats access around the rapids of the St. Mary's River. For the first time, an all-water route between Lake Superior and the Lower Lakes was now possible. Increased trade, immigration and the dreams of rich copper finds put added pressure on long simmering attempts to officially open the area north of Lake Superior to full scale exploration and settlement. Superior, Wisconsin, which had been

founded in 1854 by a group of investors who viewed its location at the western end of Lake Superior as the key to future east-west shipping, soon became filled with land speculators, prospectors and miners eagerly eyeing the hills that lay across the bay. By the fall of 1854, pressure was increasing on the Ojibwe to sign a treaty with the United States government. On September 30 of that year, the two parties met at Madeline Island, Wisconsin, and the details of an agreement between the two sovereign nations was worked out. Known as the Treaty of La Pointe, the agreement guaranteed certain rights held by the Ojibwe people. Specifically, some of those rights included: the freedom to hunt, fish and gather; payments of money and provisions from the United States government; and the retaining of three homeland areas. These homeland areas are today's Grand Portage, Fond du Lac and Bois Forte reservations. In exchange, the Ojibwe ceded most of the land area of northeast Minnesota to the United States. The Treaty of La Pointe was much different from the treaty of 1826 and broader in its implications. Commonly referred to at the time as a "miners' treaty," it not only opened up the territory for full-scale mining operations, but for the first time also allowed permanent settlement and development of the area by whites.

As word reached Superior that the signing had occurred, a small flurry of activity erupted. Prospectors, speculators and others, ready and awaiting the news, headed out across the water. Few, if any, were concerned that Congress wouldn't formally ratify the treaty until the following year. The news of the signing was enough. Nearly overnight, just about every North Shore stream or river that showed signs of promise found someone camped along it, eager to claim the land as theirs. Later in his life, R.B. McLean in writing his memoirs recounted a second canoe trip he took along the shore only a month or so after his initial "fishing" adventure. The area, which in September prior to the signing of the Treaty of La Pointe had shown no signs of white settlement, now had changed quite dramatically. All the way to Grand Marais, he encountered scattered pockets of people hurriedly erecting shelters to serve as a means of securing claim, as well as providing some form of protection for the winter that was fast approaching. In our community, McLean witnessed three areas where new signs of settlement were evident. Two families, the Blairs and the Landrys, had settled at French River, erected "good houses" and were planning on staying the winter. Further up at the mouth of the Sucker River, five men

including Vose Palmer, had taken possession of the area and were in the process of erecting cabins. At Knife River, McLean encountered his old fishing buddy John Parry, who along with four others including John Gatherer, John Scott and a married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Alex McIntire, had created a camp and were intending to spend the winter exploring for copper.

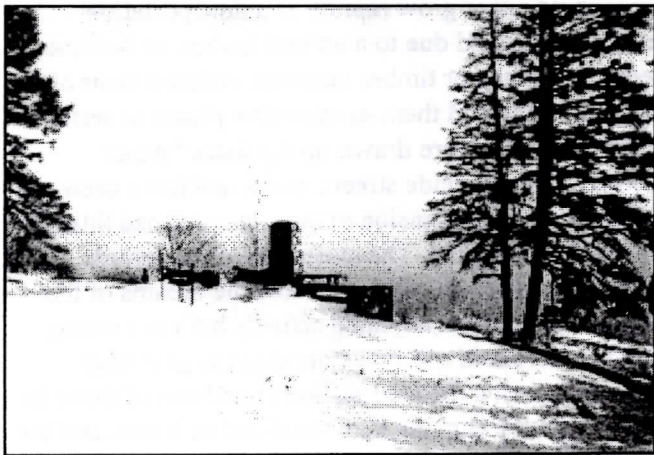
In January 1855, Congress formally ratified the Treaty of La Pointe. In the year that followed, interest in the newly opened territory continued to grow. An increasing flow of people to the shore, some interested in settlement, but many looking for a fast way to quick fortune, encouraged speculation into areas beyond only copper exploration. As early as 1856, townsites began to be platted along the shore. The platting of townsites was a common occurrence of the time and appeared whenever new land was opened to immigration and settlement. Land speculators gambling that a certain area would either grow rapidly as a transportation center, be favored due to a natural harbor, or become a center of mining or timber interests, claimed areas of land and promoted them as attractive places to settle. Elaborate plans were drawn up for these "paper towns," showing wide streets, parks and town centers. Oftentimes, the dimension of the town plan had little or no bearing on reality. The avenues and boulevards which were laid out often reflected the dreams of the designers more than anything actually built or existing. If the gamble paid off, investors stood to gain huge profits by selling the land at prices hundreds of times its original cost. If not, the land remained as it was, and the speculators as well as investors who had gambled and lost on the scheme would have to try their luck elsewhere.

Townsites are Platted

Along the shoreline of our community, the rumors of possible copper deposits led to a heightened interest in the area. By 1856, the platting of three townsites had been completed, and the dream of a copper bonanza was running at fever pitch. The first townsite to be platted was Clifton near the mouth of the Talmadge River. It was designed by J.S. Watrous to be a "future metropolis" with residential and commercial sections, wide avenues, streets laid out in block patterns, and yes, a protected harbor. It is interesting to note that at exactly the same site as today's proposed "safe harbor," a similar plan had been devised nearly a century and a half ago. Drawings of the time show two breakwaters extending far into the lake providing

protection from wind and waves. Watrous' dream, though, probably was not one of kayaks being launched or fishing boats seeking anchorage. Instead, he envisioned a harbor filled with much larger vessels bringing in supplies from the east and carrying out copper riches of the area. Of course, the piers and protected harbor, like the rest of the town, were never built, and the closest they ever came to existence remained only in a few people's dreams.

Montezuma at the mouth of the Sucker River was the second townsite to be platted. On early maps, Montezuma, similar to Clifton, shows a highly developed area with roads and avenues encompassing a large section of land extending inland from the shore. But also like Clifton, nearly all the "development" in Montezuma appeared only on paper, and the "town" never became home to more than a handful of inhabitants.



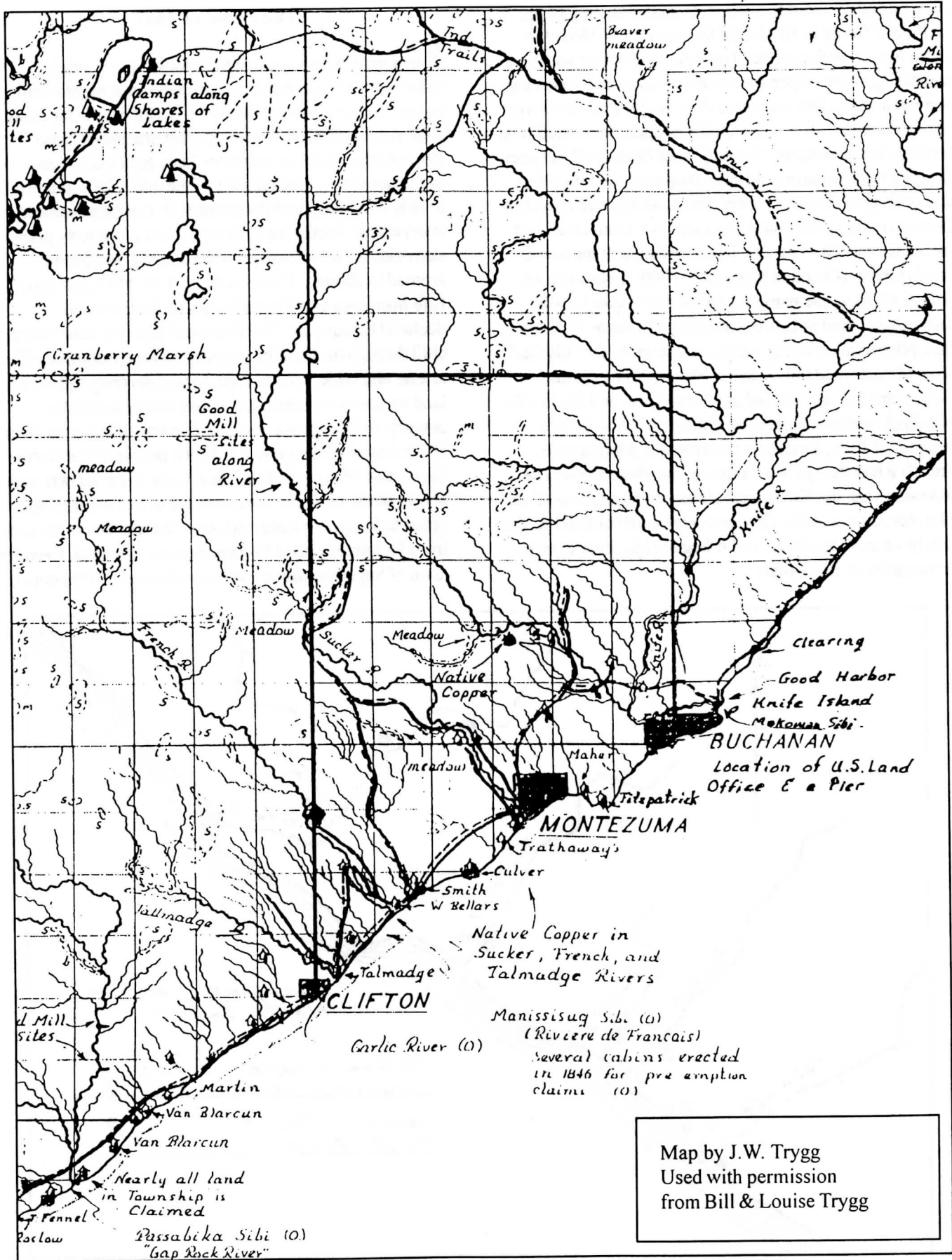
Buchanan Wayside marking site of early settlement

Buchanan, the last of the three town sites, was, in fact, the only one to develop past this "paper" stage and actually show signs of moderate growth. Named in honor of President James Buchanan, the townsite was platted in October of 1856 by W.G. Cowles. Its location was along the shoreline of Lake Superior approximately one mile southwest of the mouth of Knife River. (The site is marked today by a historic plaque and a small wayside.) By September 1857, Buchanan had been selected as the site for the new U.S. Land Office for the Northeast Section of the Territory of Minnesota. Yet, even with the added prestige of that designation, Buchanan was still no metropolis when agents Sam Clark and John Whipple arrived intent on opening the land office for official business.

Cleared out of the dense woods, the town probably appeared to Clark and Whipple to be little more than a cluster of buildings and shacks perched along the rocky shoreline. Upon closer examination though, it became clear that five buildings on the site were larger and slightly more substantial than the others. Made of logs which had been cut and hewn from the surrounding woods, each stood two stories high. Three of these structures were serving as boarding houses to accommodate miners, prospectors and others drawn to the area in search of riches a copper strike would bring. The last two buildings had been set aside as offices and accommodations for the new agents. Clark, who had been appointed registrar, and Whipple, who held the position of receiver, moved in.

It was soon clear to the two agents that it would be more than a few days before any official business could actually be undertaken. In the first place, the buildings were virtually bare, and even though they might be some of the best built structures in all of the new territory, to Clark, who had come from Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Whipple, who had last lived in Rome, New York, the new office was not what they had expected. Almost immediately, they sent off a letter to Washington, D.C. requesting furniture, specifically a desk, table and letter case all to be made of "black walnut," plus four office chairs. Of even greater concern to them was the fact that no plat or record books had yet arrived, making it nearly impossible for legal business to take place.

Given no choice but to begin a search for them, Whipple departed Buchanan on October 13 in pursuit of the lost books. For the next six weeks, he embarked on an adventure taking him initially to Chicago by steamer, then to Dubuque, Iowa, up the Mississippi River to St. Paul, and back to Dubuque before heading north once again, and eventually ending in Taylors Falls, Wisconsin. It was there Whipple finally located, not only the lost books, but over 1,000 pounds of backlogged mail. Having the books finally in hand and taking the mail with him, he hired a team of horses and set out for Superior on what he later described as the "worst road I ever experienced." Walking most of the way through mud that, at times, was knee deep, he arrived in Superior a week later "bruised and bleeding." Eventually, both he and the books made it to Buchanan, and on December 1, 1857, the land office, at long last, was ready for business.

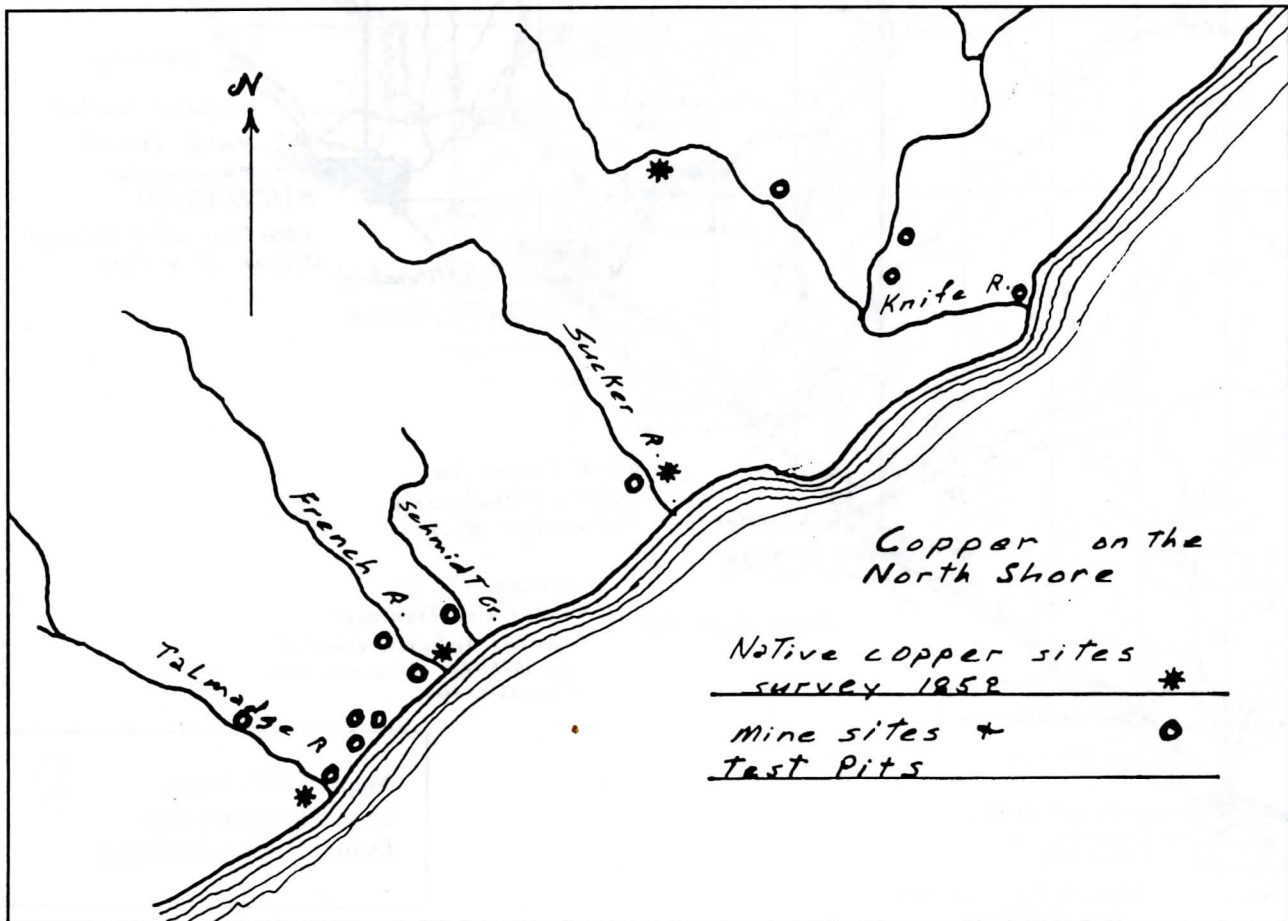


Map by J.W. Trygg
Used with permission
from Bill & Louise Trygg

For a period of about five years, from the signing of the La Pointe Treaty in 1854 until the summer of 1859, the shore was an active place. The new land office was busy registering claims. Speculation, exploration and surveying were at a peak. Test pits were dug, shafts sunk and river beds excavated, all in a search for copper. Scheduled boat service on the steamer "Seneca" was developed between Superior and Buchanan, and more people were immigrating and settling in the area. Henry Smith, along with two other German immigrants, placed a claim on a small creek just east of the mouth of French River, giving to it his name, Smith Creek. (On most maps after 1900, it is shown as Schmidt Creek, the name we know it as today.) Josiah Talmadge settled at Clifton and gave his name to the river that, prior to his coming, had been known as the "Garlic." John Mayher made his home at Stoney Point, Samuel Palmer and his wife settled at Montezuma, and the family of John Morrison claimed land at Knife River. By the summer of 1856, a monthly mail route had begun with French River designated as one of the shore stops. The following year, the *North Shore Advocate* began publication. The *Advocate* was the first newspaper established in the newly-opened territory, and it began right here in our community at Buchanan.

The Panic of 1857

For a time, things seemed to be looking very bright, optimism ran high, and it appeared the area might fulfill the promises many had predicted for it. But events far away soon put a cloud over the hopes and dreams of those struggling to make an existence here. Speculation and optimism were common traits of the mid-1850s, not just locally but throughout the country. Boom times seemed everywhere. Banks freely issued money, property prices skyrocketed, new business were opened, and growth seemed to abound. Then, on August 24, 1857, the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Co. closed its doors and declared bankruptcy. The closing of this one bank sent a chill through the banking industry and had a domino effect felt far and wide. Money lending was severely tightened, land values plummeted, and banks closed across the country. In Minnesota alone, only a few of the more than 30 territorial banks survived. To the people of the North Shore, the "Panic of 1857," as it came to be known, was a severe blow. Over the next year, more and more people opted to leave and head back east. Nearly the entire area from Duluth to Grand Portage became deserted. Even the town of Superior, which had grown to over 2,000 people,



lost nearly three-quarters of its population. Within our community, only a couple of isolated pockets of settlement held on. In the Montezuma and Stoney Point areas, a few inhabitants rode out the hard times, and in French River, Joe Landry and Joe Blair remained along with their families.

By 1859, it was clear that the copper boom had become a bust. The forces that had created Buchanan were now about to cause its demise. With the shore nearly deserted and the dreams of copper fortunes all but faded, Buchanan's remote location became more and more an obvious drawback. In May of that year, a decision was made to move the land office to Duluth. Its removal was a crushing blow to Buchanan and one from which the small town never recovered. The community that Leonidas Merritt had once called the "Emporium of the North Shore" became a ghost town, and within a few years all traces of its existence were erased in a forest fire.

The next several years saw little change for our area. The effects of the Panic of 1857 lingered, and the threat of civil war dampened any chance for renewed optimism in the country. Copper prices plummeted and the dreams of a copper bonanza here in our community faded. It wasn't until 1863 that the flickering hope of a copper revival was rekindled. The war between North and South was now a reality, and because of that fact, copper was suddenly back in high demand. Its price tripled, and once again exploration for it seemed a wise business venture. As early as 1854, a group of investors from Cleveland formed an association known as the R.B. Carlton Co. Several of these investors had ties to this area and included such men as J.S. Watrous and Josiah Talmadge. For the next several years following the formation of the association, the R.B. Carlton Co. acquired title to several parcels of land along the shore primarily for the purpose of mineral exploration. In August 1863, encouraged by the turnaround in the copper market, the association decided to form two companies to begin mining operations on some of the most promising land they had acquired. One of the companies was known as the French River Mining Co.; the other was incorporated as the North Shore Mining Co.

The French River Mining Co. began their drilling in the southwest quarter of S17, T51, R12. This is a triangular shaped piece of land approximately 100 acres in size located at the mouth of the French River. Extensive mineral exploration occurred over a period of several years at this site. Test pits were dug and reports stated that at least two deep shafts were completed. Exploration for copper extended further upriver and onto other

streams in the area as well. A reported tunnel over 1,000 feet long is said to have been dug on a small stream between the Talmadge and French Rivers. Upon examination today, the tunnel ends only a short distance from the opening. Whether the stories of its length were greatly exaggerated or a collapse in the tunnel has occurred over the years is difficult to say, but clearly the evidence of extensive mineral exploration by the company can be seen at the site and in several other locations from the Talmadge River to Schmidt Creek.



Claude Midlam exploring mouth of old copper mine

The second mining venture, the North Shore Mining Co., set up operations further east claiming land in the southeast quarter of S25, T52, R12. This property was located along the Knife River a few miles upstream from the river's mouth. Within the first year, a shaft was sunk at this site to a depth of 20 feet, and first reports of its copper potential seemed very promising. Exploratory caves were carved into river banks and pits dug in an attempt to locate the much sought after veins. For a time, the activity at both sites must have been quite high, yet for all the exploratory work that was done, little copper was ever brought to the surface by either the French River or North Shore Mining Cos. All in all, about only a ton of ore was ever produced between the two mines, and when it was clear that continued operations would not produce a profit, both companies eventually ceased operations.

The Last Hope for a Bonanza

For more than a half century, nearly all serious exploration for copper ended, though the interest and intrigue of copper were never completely erased from people's minds. Periodically, reports of settlers striking veins while digging

basements or in the process of drilling wells were made, raising excitement and occasionally spurring short-lived mining interest. Local papers kept a spotlight on copper reporting quite regularly on any new "discovery". On occasion, interest did turn to action. In 1910, an 80-foot shaft was dug within the boundaries of the town of Knife River, but again marketable amounts of copper were not found. One final attempt to fulfill the dream of a copper bonanza was made in the late 1920s when the Mining Corp. of Canada sank several test holes along the Little Knife River in a location only a half a mile west of the original North Shore Mining claim. A shaft eight feet square at the opening and over 100 feet deep was dynamited. A steam-powered bucket was dropped into the hole to clear the broken rock, and several drifts or tunnels constructed off the shaft in an attempt to locate the elusive copper.

Melvin Johnson, who as a young boy served as cook's helper to his father at the mine, remembered there were about two dozen men hired to work at the site, most of them coming down from the Ely area. Melvin also recounted how, after blasting, the mine was determined to be free of poisonous gases and safe to re-enter. A flame or lantern was lowered on a bucket to the bottom of the shaft and then raised back to the surface. If the flame was still burning, there was oxygen in

the mine, and it was safe to send men down. Dick James, whose family farm was just down the road, told of the secrecy the mining company worked under. Dick remembered a day when, as just a young boy of 7 or 8, he encountered an official of the company who was taking core samples from a test hole. As soon as Dick neared the man, he closed his case of equipment and covered the samples to prevent Dick, even at his young age, from seeing any of his "findings."

Whatever the man was hiding obviously did not result in any great discovery. Although copper was found at different levels, once again, not enough of the mineral was uncovered to warrant continued mining operations. In 1930, the last and best hope for a copper boom ended when the company decided to pull its equipment and close the mine. Today we can still see the evidence of the time when copper fever ran high. Nearly every stream and river in our community are marked by signs of copper exploration. Abandoned shafts, caves, artesian flows and shallow test pits now overgrown with trees, but marked unmistakably by nearby waste piles, lie scattered throughout the area. Walking the woods, anglers, hikers and hunters still encounter these reminders of a time long past, of a time when the fever of copper seemed to control our destiny and molded the dreams of a whole generation of our people.



Mouth of Knife River

COMMERCIAL FISHING AND THE SHORE

The earliest evidence of commercial fishing along the North Shore dates to the fur trade era when the first exchange of fish for trade goods took place. The Ojibwe provided the fish, and the Europeans provided the trade goods. This system of barter worked well for both parties, but it was probably handled on only a relatively small and local scale due to the limitations of storage and transportation problems. A second, more intensive phase of commercial fishing emerged as the fur trade's importance declined. This period occurred from 1835 to 1841 and was directly connected with the American Fur Company's expansion into the fish business. Both of these ventures are detailed earlier in this book. In this chapter, we will concentrate primarily on what could be termed the third phase of North Shore commercial fishing, which began shortly after the area was opened to white settlement and continues in limited form even to the present day.

As early as the 1840s, a decade or more before statehood, politicians of the Territory of Minnesota considered Lake Superior and its vast fishery to be a means of drawing immigrants and settlers to the area. In fact, there is some evidence to suggest the potential fishing industry played nearly as significant a role in the United States' desire to acquire this land from the Ojibwe people as did its perceived mineral wealth. Territorial Governor Alexander Ramsey, in a speech given in 1849, emphasized the importance of the lake's "abundant fisheries." He then added that with "proper development," Lake Superior could provide "additional rich sources of revenue to the Territory." Government reports, published journals and simple word of mouth promoted the area for its fish potential as well as a favorable place for settlement.

The stories told obviously were intended to attract interest as well as immigration, and because of that, may have seemed too good to be true. In reality though, it was hard to exaggerate either the quantity or quality of fish contained in the waters off the North Shore. *Lake Superior teemed with a seemingly inexhaustible supply of trout, whitefish, siskowet and herring.* Some reports referred to the area as the "new Mediterranean;" others compared the fishery to that of Canada's

Atlantic Coast. Though nearly all the tales had a basis of truth to them, no amount of promotion could overcome the fact this was still a remote area with a climate that could be harsh and unforgiving. Even the signing of the Treaty of La Pointe in 1854 allowing white settlement of the area did not bring the rush of permanent immigrants eager to fish its waters that many had predicted. In fact, for the next 40 years, fishing struggled to find its place as the scattered inhabitants of the area rode out a roller coaster of good and bad economic times.

The first commercial fishing occurring after 1854 was probably associated fairly closely with the intense copper exploration going on in the area. For a short time, the area between Duluth and Knife River was a very busy place. The miners, land investors and homesteaders who came to the area needed to eat, and those who fished its waters could quickly and readily provide these newcomers with a reliable source of food. But over the next several years, the combined effects of hard times and dwindling hopes of a copper bonanza were felt by all residents, and permanent, long-term settlement was slow to take hold. The United States Census of 1860 showed only 44 people living in the area described in the report as "French River." Even a renewed interest in copper exploration in the 1860s due to the demands of the Civil War did not greatly increase commercial fishing operations. Only towards the end of the decade do we have clear signs that fishing was becoming more firmly established in our area. During the spring and summer of 1869, the *Duluth Weekly Minnesotian*, one of Duluth's first newspapers, made several comments about the fishing going on "down the shore" in the vicinity of the French River area. A few months later, in an article from the same paper dated November 27, 1869, the following report was made: "Lake fishing (for) whitefish, trout and siskowet has opened briskly ... in the vicinity of Sucker River, 20 miles from Duluth. The Palmers and Robert McLean have several gill nets set and have met with good success so far. The latter, we hear, took 800 fish in one haul."

About this same time, the country, having had a few years to recover from the horror and destruction of the Civil War, was showing signs of rebound. A time of optimism and growth was emerging, and once again, the focus of national attention shifted back to westward expansion. The good times and prosperity affecting the country as a whole were experienced in our region as



Nordley Landing at Knife River (Note the pointed skiff, fish boxes and boat ramp.)

well. Duluth's population was growing rapidly, and by the 1870 census, more than 3,000 people lived within the city. The Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad, begun three years earlier in 1867, had just been completed linking Duluth and St. Paul. Now for the first time, a reliable year-round means of transportation was established between the Lake Superior region and expanding settlements to its south and west.

Overnight, the market for Lake Superior fish increased dramatically, and rail shipments of whitefish and lake trout began heading to places as widespread as Chicago, Omaha, Minneapolis and the many smaller settlements scattered throughout central and southern Minnesota. Once again, interest focused on Lake Superior's rocky coast, and this time commercial fishing was not secondary in importance to copper, but truly the center of attention. As demand for fish continued to grow, a period of increased settlement began along the shore north of Duluth. Land was purchased, or in some cases acquired through "squatters" rights, as fishermen began making claims to parcels of shoreline. The equipment needed to get established in fishing was, for the most part, simple, inexpensive and easily available

through several fish companies in both Duluth and Superior. For those fishermen who couldn't afford to buy the equipment, fish "dealers" would supply the necessary nets, hooks, twine and even wood for boat building in exchange for a portion of the year's catch. This relatively informal agreement would last until the debt was erased, which may have taken no more than one season if fish harvests were very good.

The North Shore, with its miles of unprotected coastline and limited harbors, favored small scale fishing operations. Large commercial fishing companies with their bigger boats and larger crews would have had few places to hide in a storm or high winds, and therefore in most cases, avoided the rugged coastline. But for the individual fisherman with his small boat or "skiff," the lack of protective harbors was not of great concern. When storms threatened, his equipment could be stored beyond the reach of waves, and the skiff itself pulled far up on shore. The advantage of deep water along most of the coastline also meant much of the fishing took place within the relative safety of nearby land. In most cases, nets were set no more than a mile or two off shore with consistent and successful results.

Population figures for 1880 indicate 160 people were living in the township, most of them on or near the shore. This was twice what the population had been 15 years earlier. Included in those numbers were Smith Croft and Charles Campbell, the only two residents listing their occupation as “fisherman” (though many more were probably involved part-time). The Croft’s were one of the first fishing families that came to the area and stayed to make it their permanent home. Originally from England, they first settled near the mouth of the Talmadge River in 1876. Later, they would pack their belongings up once again and move by boat to Stoney Point, where they purchased 227 acres of land. There they were joined by Henry and Matilda Kirk, Larkin and Carrie McDonald (who with their families had settled near the mouth of the Sucker River), and the Mindestrom family, who made their home near the abandoned townsite of Buchanan.

The First “Road”

As people began to move into the area, further signs of development were becoming evident. In 1870, a Mr. N. Decker was contracted to lay out the first road through the township. This “engineered” road was obviously not the first overland means of transportation in our community. Indian trails had linked the area for centuries. In fact, in many places this new road may have been no more than a widening of a route known as the “North Shore Indian Trail,” an established pathway which had run up and down the shore for years. Even with its additional improvements and widening, this new road was hardly a highway. It was often muddy and impassable, and those who attempted to travel it in carriages and wagons during the warmer months soon discovered that water travel was still the preferred method to reach destinations up and down the shore. However, the new road *was* a welcome alternative in winter when lake traffic often ceased and frozen ground and snow cover gave a solid base to the road providing a relatively comfortable ride by sleigh. Simple and limited as it was, the development of this road was very significant, for it represented the first inland attempt to link the newly developing fishing communities along the shore.

It is also interesting to learn that this road, which eventually was completed from Duluth to the border, cut through our township, not along the coastline as one might assume, but a mile or more inland. Most of its historic location follows the route of today’s

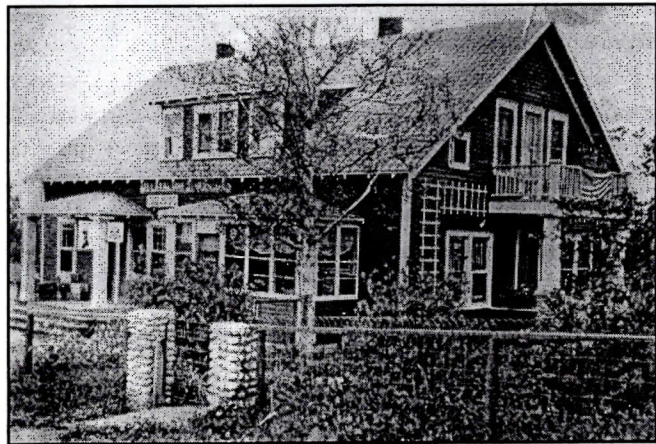
Old North Shore Road and can still be traveled nearly in its entirety, except where it has been bisected by the development of the expressway. With the completion in 1886 of the Duluth & Iron Range Railroad connecting Two Harbors to Duluth, an additional means of reliable transportation was added. Unlike the roadway, which wandered inland away from the shore, the rail line ran nearly parallel to the lake and within sight of it throughout most of its course. The layout of this route would prove fortunate, for it was the railroad that provided fishing families with the most reliable means of transportation and shipping. These developments, combined with the boat and tug service which had been in existence along the shore for over three decades, provided three varied means of transportation to our community—road, rail and water—by the late 1880s.



Palmers Station House along D&IR tracks

As transportation improved, activity along the shore increased greatly. Starting around 1890 and continuing for a quarter century, the shore became the destination and new home for many immigrant families. Although Norwegians dominated the fishing industry north of Two Harbors, a wider mix of nationalities was evident among the fishing families of our community. The state census conducted in 1895 lists 177 fishermen along Minnesota’s North Shore, 29 of whom lived in Duluth Township. The ethnic make-up of those 29 families included those of Swedish, Finnish, English and Norwegian heritage. Since the total population of the township at the time was only 185 people, it seems clear that fishing had become an extremely important part of life in the community with nearly one of every six residents involved in it.

Until just before 1900, most of the township's development had occurred along a narrow band that extended only a mile or so in from shore. As pressure increased to settle inland, an era of road building began. These roads were designed to open up areas for those who were now seeking to homestead further away from the lake, in what was thought of as "farm" country. In 1894, work began on the Homestead Road, the first road to be cut directly north away from the coastline. This was followed in a few years by the completion of the Ryan Road, two miles to the west of the Homestead, and the comparatively short Alseth Road a mile to its east. The Alseth Road ran inland from the Stoney Point area and was named for Robert Alseth and his family, who had settled in the area in 1897. It took several more years until 1912, for work to begin on the Bergquist Road. Named for the Charles Bergquist family, whose farm fronted it, its development opened up additional land for settlement in the area between Schmidt Creek (also known as Smith Creek) and the Sucker River. Finally in 1914, the McQuade Road, designated to honor Samuel McQuade—one of the community's first permanent residents—was opened along the western edge of the township line.



Matt Jackson's Store, post office and train stop

Palmers, French River and Clifton

The primary purpose for these routes was obviously to provide access inland. But as roads came into existence, it became clear their development would have effects on those living along the shore as well. Each of these new roads at some point intersected with the Old North Shore Road and/or with the D&IR rail line. These intersections or crossroads were designed as access and drop-off sites for those heading inland and meeting points of rail with wagon, horse and foot

traffic. As more people were drawn to the area, activity at these crossroads increased, making them not only important points for those heading inland, but centers of identity for shore people as well. In time, three identifiable areas emerged, each associated with the crossing located nearest them. These three areas were Palmers, French River and Clifton.

Palmers, named for Vose Palmer, an early copper prospector and land speculator, developed at the intersection of the Homestead Road and the rail line. It not only provided an access area for those heading inland via the Homestead, it also was the center of activity for shore people from Stoney Point to the present day Shorecrest Restaurant area. At its location, a railroad section house, school, boarding house and store existed. French River was the small community named after the river that flowed through it. Located where Ryan Road crosses the rail line, it contained a railroad section house and log boarding house. In 1911, a more modern frame structure was built which housed the local post office. Matt Jackson, who had the building constructed, served as the local postmaster and store keeper, as well as railroad ticket agent. This location was the jumping off spot for those heading up the Ryan Road and the focal point for shore people living in the area, marked today on the east by the Scenic Cafe and on the west by the Corner Cupboard gift shop.

At the far western township line was Clifton, a name held over from the early days of copper exploration. Located at the intersection of the McQuade Road and the D&IR tracks, Clifton contained a siding area, section house and a "wait station"—a small structure designed to hold people *waiting* for the train. Though not as developed as Palmers or French River, it was important as a location to those settlers heading inland to the community of Normanna. It was also the closest rail access to those living along the shore in the vicinity of the Talmadge River, where today the Lakeview Castle and Beachway Resort are located.

The first decade of the 1900s brought several more fishing families to the shore. Up until this time, census records seem to suggest that most of the people who had come to the area prior to 1900 did not stay long, often moving on within a few years. But around the turn of the century, a change seemed to occur, and permanent long-term settlement became more common. In 1902, the family of John Sandberg Sr. settled just west of Sucker Bay in the area known



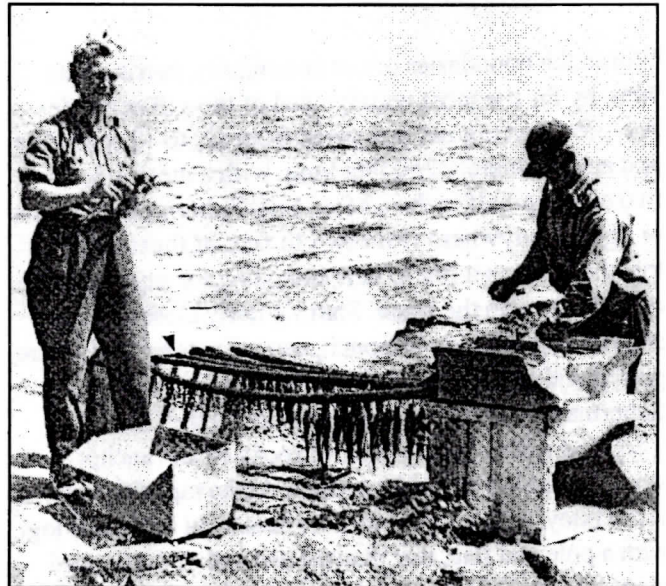
Sundstrom/Johnson fishing "hamlet" across from present-day Corner Cupboard gift shop

today as Bluebird Landing. About this same time, a mile or so to their west, Carl and Anna Nordling homesteaded. In 1906, Louis Mattson came by sailboat to settle at the mouth of a small creek near French River, to be followed shortly by the rest of his family who arrived by train. Probably the first hamlet of fishing families to form was located in the present day Pine Tree Road area. It was there, between 1905 and 1910, that the families of John Gustafson and Lee Johnson, as well as the brothers John and Victor Sundstrom, settled. Other fishermen would follow, such as Alphonse Anderson, Alex Norgren and Einar Bloomquist, who all fished in the present day vicinity of the Shorecrest Restaurant. On Stoney Point, John Myrdal, Walfred Johnson and Olaf Gunderson settled, and to their east, the brothers Art and Herman Hanson set their nets. Though certainly not a complete list, it was these men and their families along with the earlier arrivals, the Crofts and Mindestroms, who formed the core of the long-term fishing families living along the shore from Talmadge River to the Lake County line.

For most of these families, fishing was a tradition whose roots ran deep, a heritage dating back to the old country. A largely unspoken agreement allowed each arriving family the fishing rights to an area of the lake directly adjacent to their homestead. The size of this area would vary, but would usually include a section of shoreline with fishing rights extending two miles into the lake. The skills required to fish these waters came naturally, handed down from generation to generation. Some skills learned in the old country were refined to meet the conditions and environment their new home on the North Shore presented. For most, it was the only

life they knew, and they faced the dangers and difficulties without hesitation and without second thoughts. Homes needed to be constructed, garden plots created, boats built and nets readied for the season. When this was done, it was time to go out on the water and learn the lessons only the lake could teach.

Though several methods of catching fish commercially had been tried throughout the Great Lakes, only three were used to any extent locally—hookline, pound netting and gill netting. Hookline, also called set line, was a method using a submerged main line stretched horizontally through the water at a depth of up to six fathoms, or 36 feet. This line, which could extend anywhere from 1,000 to 3,000 feet or longer, was anchored to the bottom at each end. Attached along this line at various intervals were weighted drop lines, known as "snell" lines. At the end of each snell line was attached a hook baited with a piece of herring. Adjusting the length of the snell line and the depth of the main line allowed fishing to take place from near the surface to approximately 200 feet deep. Normally used as a method of catching trout in spring and summer, its use was limited locally, as it was a more difficult and time consuming operation usually requiring two fishermen.



Gert and Alfonse Anderson baiting set lines

Pound netting involved a method of securing a series of nets to poles driven into the lake bottom. Typically, pound nets were set very close to shore and were designed to direct or "lead" schooling fish into a net

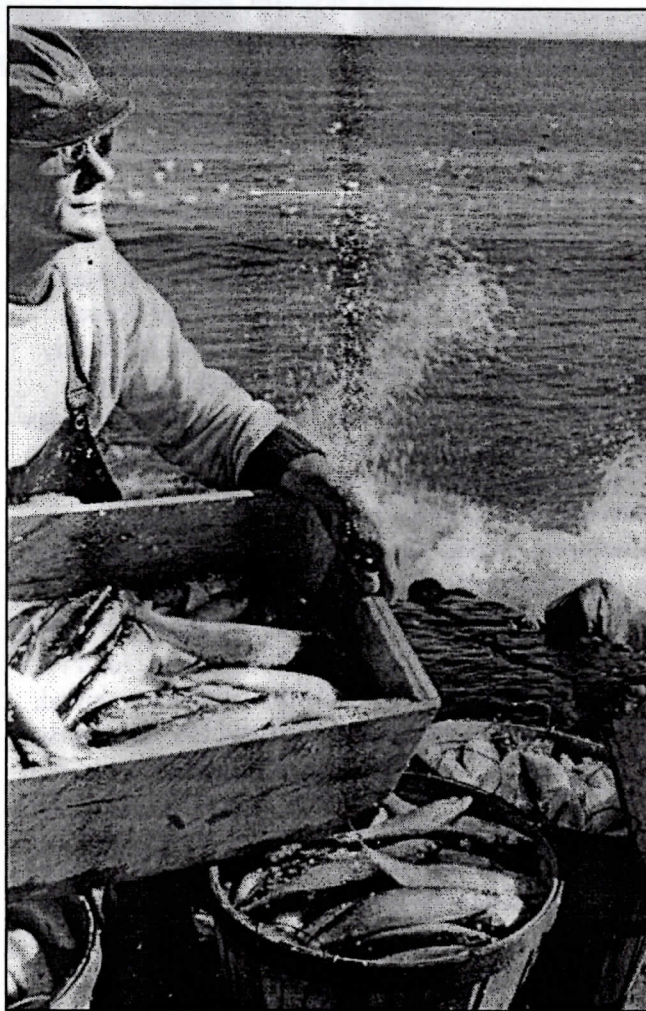
enclosure. Once in this enclosure, known as the “pot,” fish became confused and eventually entrapped. Requiring areas of shallow water with gravel or silty bottoms, pound nets were commonly used in sections of the St. Louis River basin, but limited in our locality to only Sucker Bay, the area just west of Stoney Point near the mouth of the Sucker River. But even in Sucker Bay, where high clay banks and shallow water provided favorable conditions, pound nets were still not a common sight as they were expensive to purchase, time consuming to set up, and easily damaged or destroyed by high winds and wave action.

Gillnetting, the last of the three methods used, was by far the most common technique for harvesting fish and the one employed almost exclusively by local fishermen. Gill nets were, in many ways, simply a refinement of natural fiber nets which had been in use for several centuries, dating back to the late Archaic Period. Machine-made of cotton or linen since the 1850s, the idea behind gill nets was simple. Fish would swim into the meshes of the net, which were large enough to permit the fish’s head to enter but not large enough for him to pass through entirely. The harder he thrashes forward, the more entrapped he becomes. If the fish attempts to move backwards, his gills become entangled. With nowhere to go, he is stuck in the net until it is pulled and picked.

Within the boundaries of our community, herring nets were by far the most widely used of the gill net styles. A typical herring net measured from six to 12 feet wide and approximately 250 feet long, with a mesh size of two and one-half inches. Most skiff fishermen would tie or “gang” anywhere from two to five of these nets together to form a line of nets extending for a quarter mile or more through the water. Starting fairly close to shore and running straight out from it, herring nets typically were placed within two miles of the coastline. To set a net, a fisherman would drop an anchor line in the lake weighted with a gunny sack of rocks or an “anchor stone” weighing up to 300 pounds. At the top of this line was a buoy, usually nothing more than a cut section of log with a pole and flag, that marked one end of the net and identified the fisherman. Submerged below the surface attached to the anchor line, the herring net was stretched.

Along the top of the herring net, at approximately six-foot intervals, cedar or cork floats were spaced. Directly below these floats along the bottom of the net were lead weights. This float and weight arrangement

stretched the submerged net up and down in a vertical position. At approximately every 30 to 35 feet along the top of the net, a line was attached to a larger float on the surface. The length of this line determined at what depth the net was positioned in the water. Since herring were predominantly surface feeders, the nets were normally set fairly close to the surface at a depth of 30 feet or less. When the desired number of nets were finally all in the water, a second anchor and buoy were dropped, and the task of setting the nets was complete.



Arvid Johnson with his day's catch

It should be noted at this point that herring were not the prized catch of the lake. In fact, prior to 1900 they were rarely harvested. Of the 32 species of fish native to Lake Superior waters, commercial fishing concentrated on only a handful. Of those, whitefish, lake trout and bluefin were probably the most favored. After all, a single lake trout could reach in excess of 50 pounds, with a large whitefish going ten or more.

Bluefin, a fish somewhat larger than herring, was considered a delicacy—one of the finest eating fish in the lake. Herring, on the other hand, were only about a half-pound in weight, and for most of the last half of the 1800s, were considered no more than a waste fish. But by the first decade of the 1900s, a major shift in the fishery was becoming evident. Lake trout and whitefish harvests, which had peaked in the 1880s, were in a steep decline, and bluefin had all but disappeared from catches. Gradually, the lowly but very abundant herring was elevated to a position it had never before known. By 1908, total herring catches were topping all others, and for the next half century, herring remained the number one harvested fish in Minnesota waters.

This increased popularity of herring was fortunate for the fishing families of our community. Of all the fish available locally, herring was by far the most prevalent. Herring, a plankton-eating fish, spawns in the fall, and it is during this time that harvests were highest. Typically, a run began in October, peaked in November, and lasted through the winter until ice or bad weather forced a halt in fishing. (In seasons of severe cold and little wind, Lake Superior occasionally froze solid, allowing fishing to resume by the setting of nets through holes chopped in the ice's surface.)

Fish were picked every day weather allowed. Starting off early in the morning, a fisherman would row to a marker buoy and raise the submerged net up over the end of his skiff. The net was then pulled over one side or "gunwale," picked free of fish, and dropped back into the water on the other side. This procedure, sometimes described as "skimming," allowed the net to be worked by one person pulling his way along it, picking and resetting the net in one motion. Herring entrapped in the net were squeezed or forced headfirst through the mesh in a maneuver that earned the fisherman the title, "herring choker." Fish too large to be choked were "backed out," a slightly more time consuming alternative. Upon reaching the far buoy, the net was clean of fish, back in the water, and ready to be picked again the next day. To protect them against the elements, fishermen often wore a pair of hand-knit wool mitts as they picked the nets. As the mitts became frozen, a dry pair was put on, or the wet pair "exchanged" for a frozen pair previously tossed in a bucket of water to thaw. Almost always, a thoroughly dry pair was saved for the row back to shore.

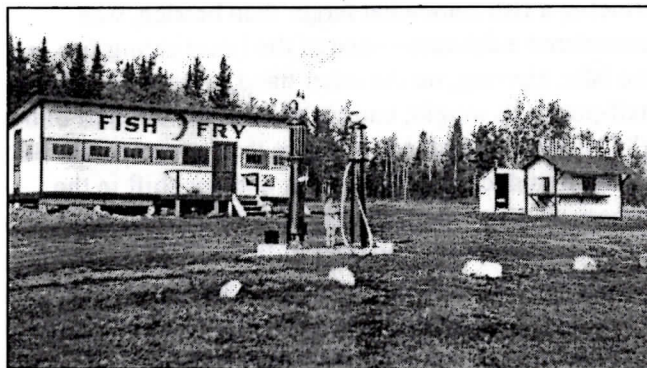
A Family Affair

Fishing was a family affair for the most part. Though the vast majority of picking was done by the men of the family (sons often learned the trade by 8 or 9 and were in their own skiffs by 15), it was not unknown for wives and daughters to occasionally accompany them as well. In fact, if stories can be believed, more than one baby's first experience on the lake came as an infant wrapped snugly in a fish box while nets were being picked over its head. Though the most hazardous part of the job was undoubtedly time spent on the lake, the varied tasks revolving around the fishing life were certainly not limited to choking herring. Once the fisherman had rowed back to shore, the skiff had to be pulled up and secured, the catch unloaded into the fish house, and the fish cleaned. They were then packed, salted in barrels or placed on ice in fish boxes, and prepared for shipment.

It was not uncommon to see boxes of fish stacked at the end of long driveways awaiting pickup. Wholesale fish companies such as Christiansen's, Sam Johnson's or Booth Fisheries, made daily truck runs up and down the shore hauling fish to Duluth while dropping off empty boxes on the return. Fish prices fluctuated daily, and for all the work involved, fishermen never became rich. A good price for herring was three to four cents per pound, but there were times when only a penny or less was paid. Rail shipment was also an alternative, albeit a riskier one. Fishermen could ship directly to places like Chicago or New York City by express rail, but they always took a chance on the market price at the destination being favorable. Profits could be higher shipping direct, but it was also possible to lose money on such an arrangement. More than once, a fisherman received a *bill* instead of a payment when freight costs exceeded the market prize.

Yet for all the risks and dangers involved in it, fishing continued to expand. By the second decade of the 1900s, it was becoming clear that a vital part of the area economy revolved around the fishing industry. If fishing was to remain healthy and viable, a means of assuring acceptable harvest levels needed to be developed. In 1913, the legislature of the State of Minnesota provided that assistance by passing legislation directing the Game and Fish Commission to "locate and establish" a state fish hatchery along the North Shore and to "equip, develop and maintain" it. After a period of time, a suitable site for the hatchery was chosen at the mouth of the French River, and in 1918, the French River State Hatchery was opened with Robert Gale as its first superintendent.

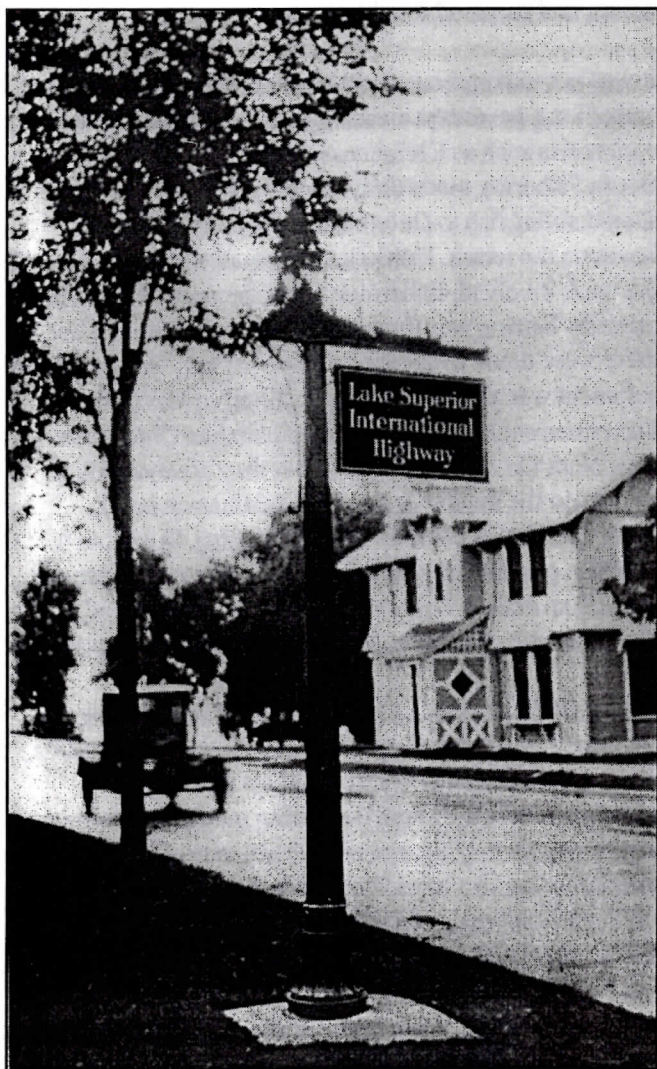
Built as a much smaller facility than the one in existence today, the French River Hatchery had a capacity of 100 million eggs, which were raised in three outdoor ponds. Originally designed to raise fish native to the area, it concentrated its stocking effort on lake trout, whitefish, cisco and herring, which were planted in the lake, and brook trout, which were trucked in milk cans to be released in inland streams. Commercial fishermen viewed the completion of the hatchery as a welcome addition to the shore. Some fishermen found part-time jobs working at the hatchery and donated many hours, free of charge, to assist in the collection of eggs during the fall spawning run. No longer an isolated way of life for fishing families scattered along the shore, the harvesting of Lake Superior's waters was developing into a major North Shore industry.



Original Fish Fry with smoked fish stand and gas pumps

In 1924, a significant change occurred along the shore with the completion of a new road, the North Shore Scenic Drive. Unlike the earlier "shore" road built in 1870, the Scenic Drive, except for the bump of coastline in the Stoney Point area, was built directly along the lake's edge. For the first time, the shore was no longer the sole domain of the fishermen. The road, which was developed in part to provide "a view of the lake" from Duluth to the border, eliminated the seclusion fishing families were accustomed to and brought a new group of people with new demands to the area. Tourists and weekend sightseers came in carloads to view and enjoy the lake and its rugged coastline. Gradually, local residents adapted to this new reality, and cabins, shops, stores and gas stations began to dot the landscape. Fishermen changed with the times as well, putting up small roadside fish stands which sold both fresh and smoked fish to travelers. Over the next two decades the opening of such places as the Fish Fry, Wonderland, The Pines, Carlson Cabins, Forrest Inn, the Clifton Fish Shop, Shorecrest Restaurant, the Flagship Cafe at Bluebird Landing and the original Lakeview Castle transformed the area from a quiet coastline of fishing families to a major tourist destination.

The quarter century following the construction of the Scenic Drive was a time of great change along the shore and a time of change in the fishing industry as well. Skiffs which originally were pointed both front and back for easy rowing were now squared off in the stern to accommodate outboard motors. Cedar and cork floats were gradually replaced by plastic. Probably most importantly, nylon nets, which many felt were more than two to three times as effective in entrapping fish as cotton or linen, came into regular use. Whether or not these changes made differences in catches is difficult to say, but there is no question these were



North Shore Scenic Drive at Lester Park Completed along the shore in 1924

times of fantastic fish harvests. In 1929, a record 9.2 million pounds of herring were harvested in Minnesota waters, and annual average yields between four and eight million pounds were seen through all of the 1930s and '40s.

By the late 1930s, fishing was reaching its peak. In 1936 alone, over 400 commercial fishing licenses were issued along the 159 miles of North Shore coast. With harvests so high, individual fishermen often did not have time to process the fish, but simply shipped them to Duluth whole, or in "round," a term used to describe fish that had not yet been cleaned. Fish were arriving in such numbers that Duluth papers reported fish houses in Duluth having tugs and trucks lined up waiting to unload their cargo of fresh herring, while processing plants were finding it difficult to hire enough workers to keep up with the demand. In fact, oversupply could become a real problem, and it was not unknown during these times for a fisherman, dissatisfied with prices, to plow catches under as fertilizer or to unload excess fish to local mink farmers who used the herring as animal feed.

In the spring of 1940, one of the more unique commercial fishing operations along the shore came into existence when Tim and Evelyn Lukkonen opened Bluebird Landing. Starting originally with only two boats, the "Anna S" and "Evvvy," Bluebird Landing eventually grew into a complex with rental boats, charter "deep sea" fishing, and a commercial fishing operation that included the fishing tug "Blue Jay." At 35 feet, the "Blue Jay" rivaled some of the largest commercial fishing boats in the area and required a crew of at least two to operate it. Whereas most individual fishermen in their skiffs of 20 feet or less harvested a few hundred pounds of herring on an average day (Walter Lee Johnson's best day was 1,200 pounds, for example), the Blue Jay's harvests could easily exceed several tons. But as well known as Bluebird Landing was for its fishing operation, it was "The Flagship," a converted streetcar-cafe, that will probably be remembered by many as the best place to get a piece of pie anywhere along the shore.



A busy day at Bluebird Landing and the Flagship Cafe at the waterfront

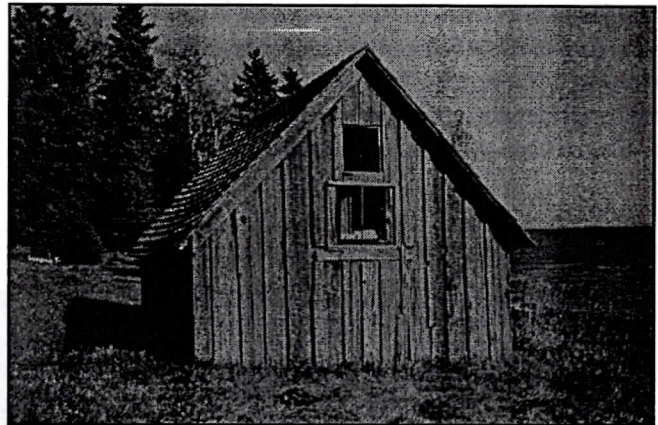
A Dark Cloud on the Horizon

By the mid-1940s, the future of the fishing industry appeared bright; the war was over, harvests were good, and prices were up. It was a time of overall optimism and because of that, it was difficult to see the dark cloud looming on the horizon. In April 1946, Stanley Sivertson, a commercial fisherman from Duluth who also fished the waters of Isle Royale, was off the mouth of the French River when a single smelt showed up in his net. This event seemed rather unimportant, considering smelt rarely grow beyond eight inches in length. But Sivertson had caught the first reported smelt in Minnesota's waters, and he realized immediately the seriousness of his find. Smelt, a non-native fish, had been introduced accidentally to Lake Michigan in 1912. By 1930, they reached Lake Superior, where they gradually spread westward. By 1946, it was clear they had spread to the North Shore. Sivertson knew historically, where smelt invade, herring decline. Smelt are voracious eaters, and commercial fishermen had always feared that once they invaded an area, their numbers would explode, severely affecting game fish populations.

Their predictions proved true. By the late 1950s, smelt were so prevalent they literally fouled nets that had traditionally caught herring. In turn, the herring populations plummeted, decimated by smelt who foraged on their larvae. By 1964, herring harvests in Minnesota waters dropped to just over a million pounds, only about a tenth of the record harvests of 1929. The herring fishery was crippled, and a way of life began to fade from along our shores.

The tragedy was made worse by the fact it was not just herring that were suffering. A series of calamities were hitting the fishing industry all at once that would take a proud and profitable way of life and bring it to the edge of extinction. In the same year smelt were first seen on Minnesota's North Shore, another invader reached Lake Superior's waters—the parasitic sea lamprey. Originally found only in salt water, the lamprey made its way up the Welland Canal into the lower Great Lakes, eventually becoming established in Lake Michigan and finally Lake Superior. Whereas smelt severely affected the herring population, lamprey hit hardest on trout. Commercial lake trout harvests, which routinely topped 300,000 pounds from 1921 to 1947, fell to only 11,000 pounds by 1960. By 1962, commercial harvesting of lake trout was halted.

Many fishermen felt the final blow came to the industry with the opening of Reserve Mining plant in Silver Bay in the mid-1950s. Hjalmer Mattson, who began fishing as a boy with his father Louis, first noticed the advance of "green water" as early as 1956. The green water was caused by taconite tailings deposited in the lake from Reserve's processing plant. Soon these tailings began showing up on nets as a fine silt. Many felt this same silt was being deposited on the lake bottom covering spawning beds and adversely affecting fish reproduction. Mattson was so sure of this he sent a sample of the silt near his French River home to a laboratory for analysis. According to Mattson, the report came back confirming his belief that the silt was taconite tailings.



Walfred Johnson's fish house on Stoney Point

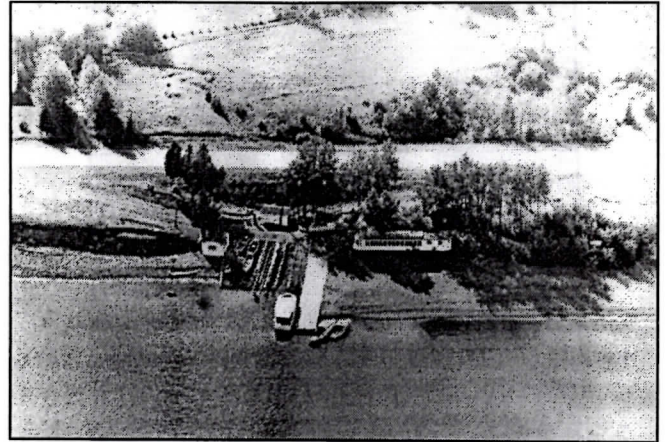
Whether or not the tailings caused any real effect on fishing is difficult to say. In fact, commercial fishermen may have been able to more successfully ride out any of the individual disasters that hit if they hadn't all come at once. But come at once they did, and these changes were too great and too sudden. The combined effects of record harvests, predation by smelt and lamprey, as well as the possible adverse effects of tailing deposits, dramatically changed the only way of life most fishermen along the shore had ever known. For all too many, it ended their livelihood completely.

Some fishermen tried to adapt to the changes in the lake. Hjalmer Mattson, who probably more than anyone understood the changes as much as he hated them, put his efforts into designing a dual motor, propeller-driven catamaran dubbed the "smelt boat." An ingenious inventor all his life (one of his creations—the "sea sled"—traveled on water or ice), Mattson believed smelt could be harvested more productively if they

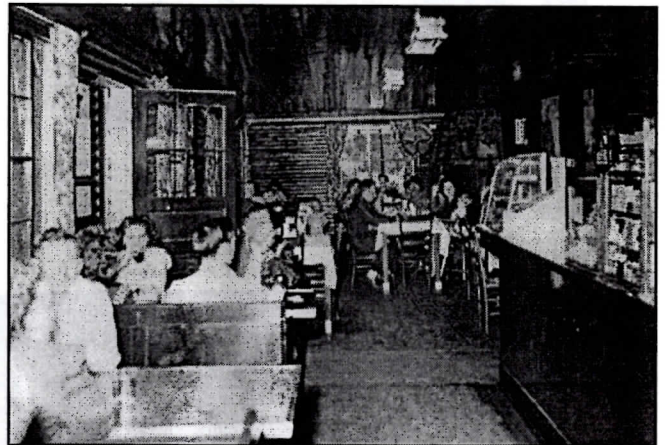
were scooped up in front of the boat instead of netted behind it, where the noise of the motor would make them scatter. The smelt boat incorporated a concave screen attached to the bow, which was lowered into the water as the boat moved forward, and then lifted out of the water for harvesting. Whether or not it would have worked was never known. The state refused to grant him a permit for it, and it was never used.

One by one, from the 1950s through the early '70s, fishermen pulled their nets for the last time. Driving along the shoreline today, it is hard to imagine what this area looked like a half century or more ago. It was a time when fish shacks and drying nets dotted the landscape, and skiffs filled with herring were being rowed back to shore. There are still a few spots remaining where one can imagine what those days may have been like. Walfred Johnson's fish house has weathered the ages on Stoney Point. The dock at Bluebird Landing is gone, washed away a section at a time over the last few years, but the foundation that held "The Flagship Cafe" still is evident. Hjalmer Mattson died in December 1998, but his complex of ramps, docks and cranes remains to remind us of his ingenuity. Most of the rest of the shacks and fish-cleaning houses have been swept away over the years by Nor'easters or fallen to the consequences of time and disuse. But if one looks closely, broken and twisted remnants of concrete foundations and ramps marking their spots can still be found.

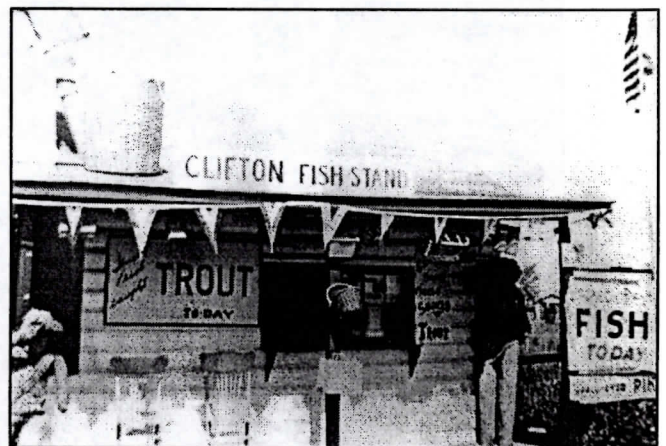
Of the 27 commercial fishing licenses presently issued along the North Shore, five are held by people from our community: Clarence Swensen, Jerry Jackson, Steve Dahl, and the brothers Jim and Ken Hanson. Commercial fishing still hangs on here, not only as a way of life for those few who still pull the nets, but as a reminder to us all of the importance commercial fishing held in our community's history. If one sits for a time along the shore looking out over that vast body of water, it is not hard to understand what brought those first families here to fish more than a century ago—the rocky coastline, the beauty of the lake, the opportunity to start a new life. These features are what still draw people today. Look closely as you sit, and if you're fortunate, you may see a couple markers waving on the water. Stretched between them suspended by floats and anchored by weights, hangs a herring net. This remnant of the past persists as a living part of our history.



Aerial view of Bluebird Landing



Interior of expanded Fish Fry Lodge and Restaurant



Clifton Fish and Basket Stand



*Commercial fisherman Walter Lee
and his father, Lee Johnson*



*Boat builder Rueben Hill of Larsmont
working on the "Bluebird"*



"Blue Jay" docked at Kyto's Landing on the mouth of Little Sucker River

THE LAND IS LOGGED

Among all the historical eras that contributed to the formation and development of our community, the logging era was probably the shortest, yet none left so dramatic a change on our land. As early as 1854, shortly after the first copper explorers began staking claims, trees were being felled. For the next several years, sporadic logging occurred along the coastline and up into the more easily accessible creeks and rivers flowing into Lake Superior. Yet for the next four decades, most of the inland areas remained untouched due to the rough terrain and rocky conditions. In fact, it wasn't until the last few years of the 19th century that the vast majority of our land would bear witness to the type of extensive logging which literally leveled our forests and changed our horizon line. But once that real cutting began, seldom did the trees stop falling.

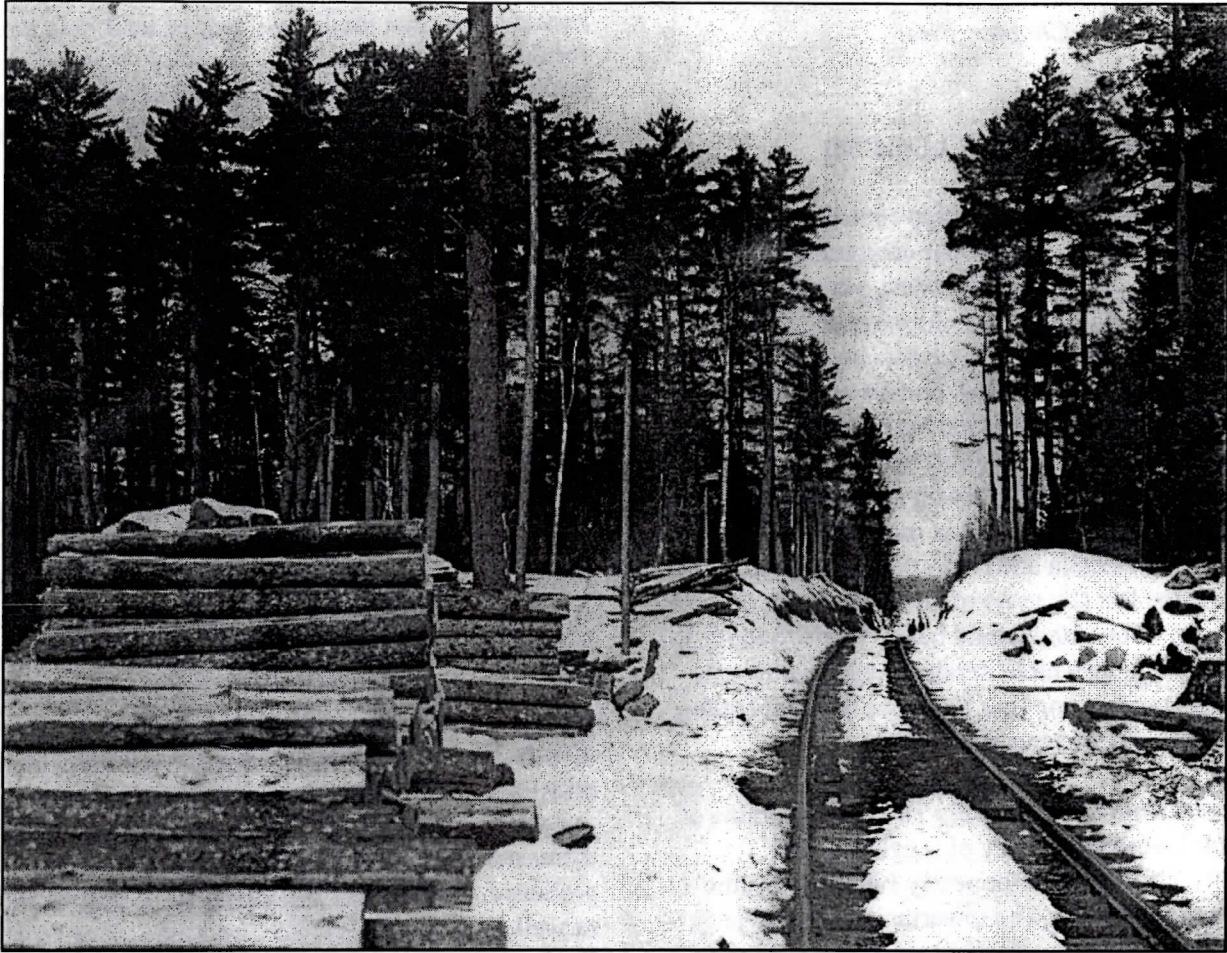
The 20 years from approximately 1898 until the time of World War I were the heyday of logging in our community. Up until then for nearly 10,000 years, the land had been evolving. The towering pines so eagerly sought were only the most recent stage in a succession of many varied landscapes. From the times of barren tundra through the thousands of years of change that followed, people made this land their "home." For millennia, they had used its evolving resources continuously, yet with little noticeable or long lasting impact. This new logging era was different. Logging did not leave the land so untouched. It transformed this place, changing it from deep forests to vast openness, altering both the look of our land and our relationship to it.

The great thirst for timber that felled the trees did not begin here. Its origins were on the far eastern coasts of our continent with the beginnings of first European settlements. Europeans' view toward land and their use of it differed significantly from that of the people they encountered upon arrival. Europeans, familiar and comfortable with a continent which for centuries had been cleared and planted, viewed the vast forests they faced in North America fearfully, as a major obstacle standing between them and the success of their venture. Cleared land meant crops, livestock and production, and trees covering this new land were soon cut and burned. But as new arrivals made their way across the ocean, it

became clear that lumber, as well as land, was needed for the continued growth they desired. New settlements brought increased demand for building materials, and attention refocused on the forests. No longer viewed as just a barrier to expansion, trees gradually were considered a valuable resource in their own right.

The process of making lumber from logs was not an easy task to people who had to rely primarily on muscle instead of machines for power. One of the earliest methods of lumbermaking was the pit saw. Pit saws (also known as whipsaws) cut logs into boards one at a time by hand power alone. This technique required a pit (or in some cases a scaffolding system built above ground to cradle the log), a long saw and two people. One person standing on the log from above grasped the saw in their hands, while a second person in the "pit" (soon to be covered in sawdust) pulled the saw from below. This method of cutting, which produced only a single board at a time, was obviously laborious and time consuming and only yielded a minimal amount of lumber. By the mid-1600s, a new era in milling began with the establishment, in Maine, of the first water-powered mills. These new sawmills dramatically increased the volume of lumber which could be produced. For the next 200 years, the forests of Maine, as well as those of New York and the rest of New England, were harvested and milled in an attempt to feed the colonies', and later the country's, ever-increasing appetite for lumber. During that time period, the number of sawmills along the eastern coast grew rapidly from only a scattered few to over 30,000. The effects of this volume of cutting were dramatic. By the mid-1850s, most of the eastern forests had been cut and attention was turning westward.

From the earliest days of lumbering, there was no tree more highly-prized than the white pine. It was, without question, the dominant tree of the forests from Maine to Minnesota. Strong, durable, easy to work and large (growing to over 200 feet in height and two axe lengths wide), it was valued as a building material, in furniture making and for flooring. So it was natural that once the lumbermen in their journey west had cleared the forests of Pennsylvania, they eagerly descended on the next state—Michigan (with an estimated 150 billion board feet of white pine). As early as 1870, Michigan was leading the nation in lumber production. So great was its supply of timber that for nearly the next three decades, Michigan produced more lumber than any other state in the nation.



Towering white and red pine along the Brooks Scanlon Line

But in the end, even the vast pine forests of Michigan were no match for the lumberman's axe. Eventually, it too was forced to relinquish its national lead in lumber production to another state lying still further west—Wisconsin. Wisconsin's pineries were not nearly as extensive as Michigan's and were mixed occasionally with maple, oak and other hardwood trees common to Wisconsin's more southern regions. In fact, it could be argued that the heart of Wisconsin's best white pine stands lay along the far western boundary of the state. In the valley of the St. Croix River, an area Wisconsin shared with Minnesota, some of the prime white pine of the Midwest was found on a river system seemingly designed for logging.

Rivers had always played a vital role in the logging industry. Mills were built near them, logs were floated down them and towns constructed along them. The St. Croix proved no exception. It too soon showed signs of development. Lumbermen had eyed the St. Croix Valley from the early 1800s, but it wasn't until the

treaty of 1837 with the Ojibwe people, that the valley legally became available for cutting. Within two years, the first mill was opened at Marine on St. Croix, and trees began to be felled, floated and cut into boards. Before long, enormous quantities of lumber were heading south down the St. Croix and Mississippi Rivers and west on the Minnesota River, providing materials to help settle the prairies and build the towns and farm communities of a country expanding ever westward.

As the lower reaches of the St. Croix Valley were cleared, pressure on the remaining forested lands was felt. Cutting moved further and further upriver, and eyes eventually turned to the last area of white pines still standing between Maine and the western prairies—the forests north and west of Lake Superior. The first production of lumber in what we today know as northeast Minnesota probably occurred in the early 1840s on a simple pit saw that had been constructed in the small Ojibwe settlement at Fond du Lac. The

limited number of boards cut at this site was the total production of the entire region until 1854, the year in which the Treaty of La Pointe was signed. In this treaty, the Ojibwe people, in exchange for a variety of treaty rights, ceded large portions of northeast Minnesota to the United States government. Now, for the first time, white settlement and development of the area legally began. Almost immediately, the area from Duluth to the border witnessed the arrival of settlers, miners, explorers, and of course, the lumbermen.

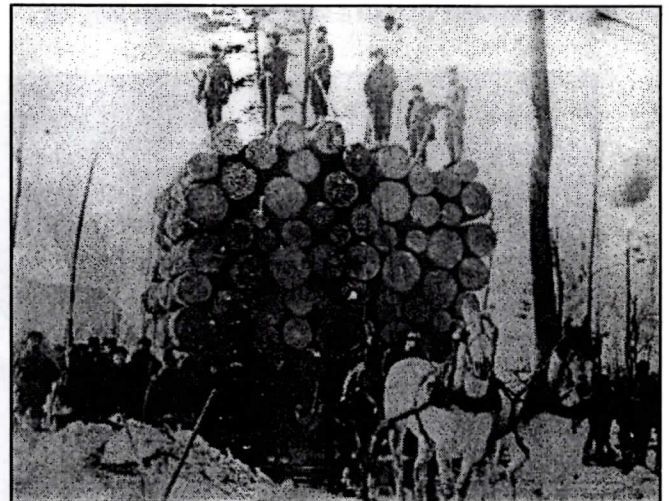
By the end of the 1850s, steam mills had been built in Duluth as well as Two Harbors, and a water-powered mill was producing lumber in Beaver Bay. These first mills sawed relatively modest amounts of logs and primarily were dependent on material harvested in the general vicinity of the mills themselves—more accessible areas along Lake Superior and the surrounding hills close to Duluth. Over the next two decades, logging operations slowly expanded further and further up the shore, yet they were still concentrated in areas along the coastline. It took until the 1880s for lumber demand, which had been slow for several years due to poor economic times nationwide, to rebound sufficiently and finally focus attention on the heavily forested and relatively untouched lands stretching inland along Lake Superior from Duluth to the Canadian border.

Unfavorable economic conditions and slow demand were not the only reasons why most of Lake Superior's North Shore region had escaped intensive cutting in the 1860s and '70s. Two other factors played a role—the quality of the trees and the terrain in which they grew. The forests of the area were impressive, but lumbermen were always looking for the best tree. The forests of northeast Minnesota contained high volumes of pine but did not produce the size or quality of tree found in Michigan or the St. Croix Valley. Given options, lumbermen chose to overlook the area and to concentrate their efforts on the prime white pine that grew elsewhere. Secondly, and of even greater importance to keeping the area uncut, was terrain. The land north of Duluth differed significantly from what was familiar to eastern lumbermen. In most of the areas previously cut, logging operations had depended on and been centered around rivers, especially large and expansive rivers used to transport logs to downstream mills. Northeast Minnesota had few large rivers, and no matter what size, nearly all rivers flowing into Lake Superior had gradients or drops that were too steep to allow drives to safely or practically take place.

Adding to the difficulty was a landscape that was rough, rocky and cut with numerous deep stream beds. Clearly, if the heavily forested lands inland from Lake Superior were to be harvested, the traditional method for transporting logs to mill needed to change.

Sleigh Logging and Ice Roads

By the mid-1800s, lumbermen turned to sleigh logging. Limited access to the inland forests combined with difficulty of hauling cut logs back to areas accessible to water were the major obstacles that had always faced loggers searching for a way to harvest the area north of Lake Superior. Trees along the coast could be cut and practically dropped into the lake, gathered in large rafts and floated to mills for sawing. However, trees inland had to somehow be transported to the shore. Since rivers didn't work as a means of moving them, the second best method had to be roads. Sleigh logging depended on a special kind of road, one that was only used in winter, a road made of ice.



Four-horse team hauling a big load

Ice roads provided access inland allowing large tracts of land to be harvested for the first time. Ice roads were laid out with great care. Routes were picked to provide the most gradual descent from the harvested areas to the lake shore. Loaded sleighs often weighed 25 tons or more. If the drop was too steep, loads of logs went out of control, overran the pulling horses, and caused disastrous results. Starting in early fall, a road from the landing area to the area to be harvested was cleared. Once the weather turned cold enough, water was laid over this cleared path using a special sleigh loaded with a water tank that had holes cut in the

bottom. It was important the ice road be solid and thick, and because of that, water was applied many times and allowed to freeze to a depth of several inches. To keep sleighs on the path and in control, grooves were cut into the finished road bed with a special "rut cutter" and then iced again. These grooves were usually set a little over seven feet apart and guided the runners under the loaded sleigh, keeping it on track and within the center of the road. Once harvesting season began, nearly all "ice" work done on the roads was completed during the night, allowing limited daylight hours to be devoted solely to hauling.

Drivers of the teams of horses (oxen in some cases) that pulled these sleighs were known as "teamsters." Most teamsters began with a team of two horses and then graduated to a "four horse team," which required a greater skill level. Teamsters took great pride in their job and in their ability to handle their teams. A good teamster was valuable to any logging operation and was usually paid a step or two above general laborers. "Road monkeys" were laborers, but the job they performed was also vital to a successful sleigh logging

operation. It was their responsibility to constantly check the quality and conditions of the ice and to remove the ever-present manure from the road bed. They were most highly-prized for their ability to brake a sleigh descending a hill by dropping just the right amount of hay under the runners, thereby slowing the sleigh. Skill lay in controlling the amount of braking so to descend the grade without overworking or overrunning the team.

In our community, there were several sleigh logging operations, the largest of which was probably the Lesure Logging Co. (Other forms of the company's name include LeSuer and LeSuere.) Lesure Logging developed a sawmill in Duluth by the mid-1890s, and many of the logs feeding it were cut along and near the French River. An extensive ice road system was constructed, beginning at a landing built along the lake shore just east of Schmidt Creek. Here huge volumes of logs cut inland were stacked and stored, waiting for spring rafts to take them to mills. From the landing area, the ice road extended inland a short distance before turning westward, where it followed the French River watershed for several miles into the present-day



Early logging camp (Photo from Mace family album)

Township of Normanna. One of Lesure's main logging camps was located there, just east of today's Lakewood and Pioneer Roads intersection. Trees harvested lay along this entire corridor in the area primarily north and east of the French River. Isabelle Mace, who settled along the French River in 1910, recalled in her 1967 memoirs that she picked up discarded oxen shoes on her property. Over the years, harness straps and sleigh chains were also found, probably right where they were dropped more than a century ago.

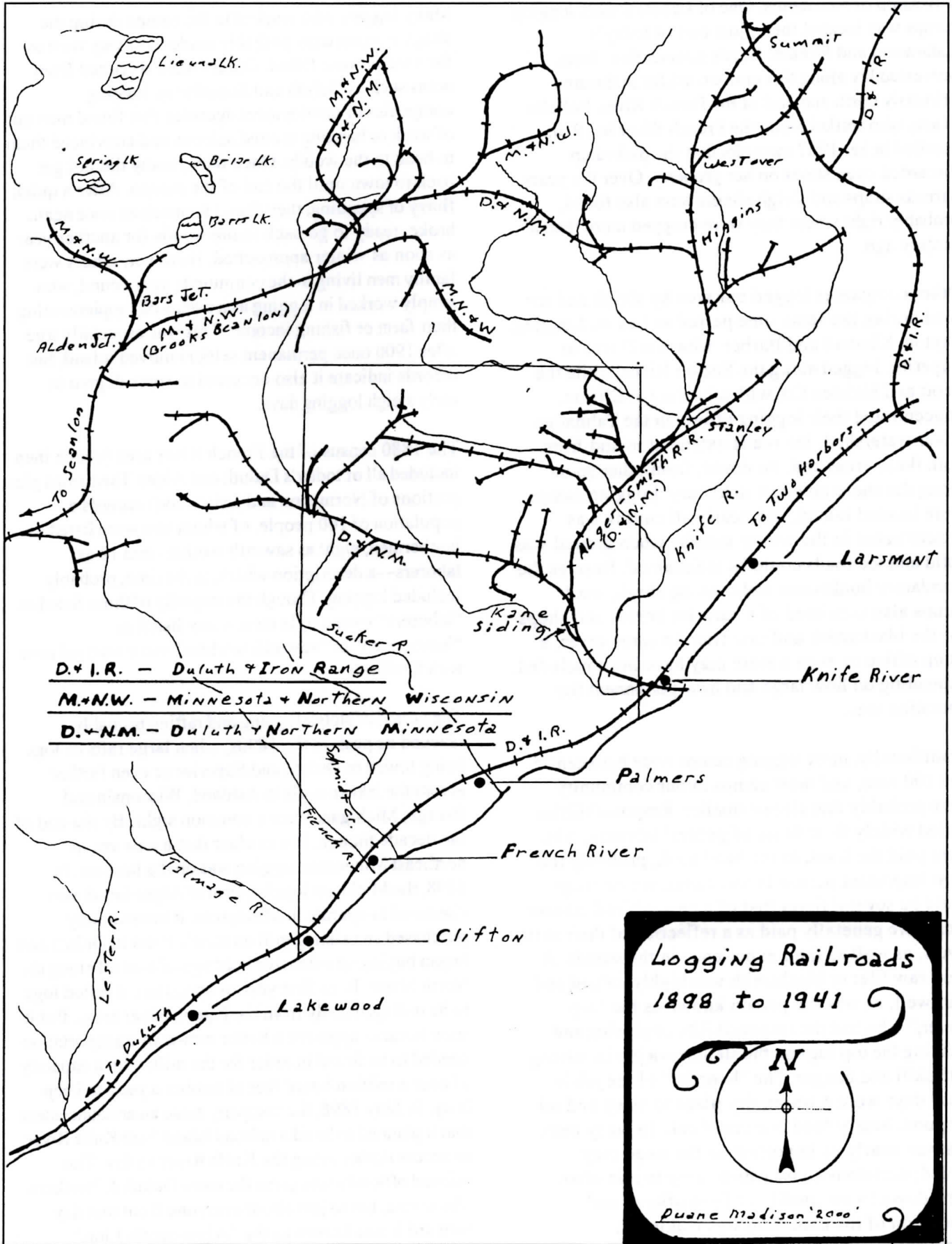
Other companies logged our area by sleigh and ice road during the same time period as Lesure Logging. Payton, Kimball and Barber, whose mill was in Superior, logged along the Sucker River, while the Scott and Holsten Co. with a landing at Clifton, concentrated their logging efforts in the Talmadge River watershed. Ice roads extended inland from both these areas and, no doubt, from other spots along the shore now lost to history. Logging camps were located inland, and nearly all cutting was concentrated in the winter months when ground was solid and ice roads could be maintained. Besides the mandatory bunkhouse and cooking shack, most camps also consisted of a barn for horses and shops for the blacksmith and saw filer. In some cases, a camp office or even a store may have been included, depending on how large and how permanent the operation was.

Traditionally, most logging camps were between 75 and 100 men, and most camps in our community were probably that size or smaller. Responsibilities varied widely from those of general laborers, who were paid the least, to the head cook, probably the most important person in any camp, whose wage could be several times that of a newly-hired laborer. Men were generally paid as a reflection of their skill levels, as well as their experience in the woods. A good saw filer or blacksmith was highly valued and paid well, as was the person known as the "top loader," who had the responsibility of placing and securing the top logs on the sleighs—a job involving both skill and danger. The "benefits" of the job in those days were a warm, dry place to sleep and all the good, hearty food one could eat. To many men, this was nearly as important as the wage they earned; decisions about which camp to join often came down to the quality of food offered and reputation of the cook who was making it.

Many loggers who worked in the camps during the sleigh logging days probably made their way west as the forests were felled. Others were recruited from areas such as Duluth and Superior by logging companies or employment agencies that found men out of work or hanging around saloons and convinced them to head to the woods. Once there, many did not get back to town until the end of the season. After a quick flurry of spending, they found themselves once again broke, ready to go back to the woods for another year as soon as winter approached. However, others were family men living in the community year-round, who simply worked in logging as a means of supplementing their farm or fishing income. This was especially true after 1900 once permanent settlers moved inland, but records indicate it also occurred to some degree in early sleigh logging days.

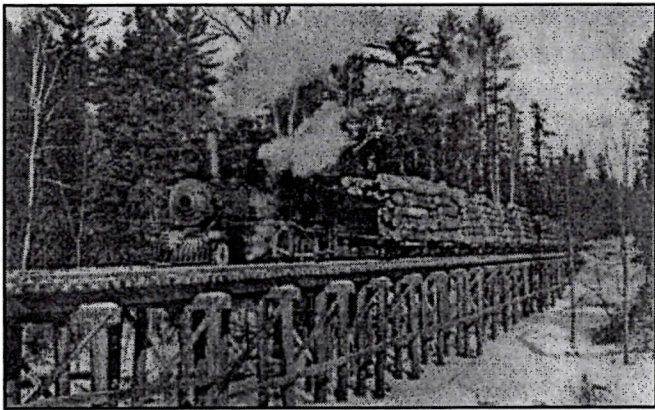
The 1880 census of the French River area (which then included all of today's Duluth and Alden Townships plus portions of Normanna and Lakewood) records a population of 160 people, of whom two were listed as lumbermen, eight as sawmill workers and 12 as laborers—a description which, at the time, probably included logging. Though the majority of those listed as "laborers" were single men, many listed as "lumbermen" or "sawmill workers" were married men with families.

The period of sleigh logging and rafting probably reached its peak in the 1890s, when large rafts of logs being towed to Duluth and Superior or even further across the lake to mills in Ashland, Wisconsin and Baraga, Michigan, were a common sight. By the end of the decade though, it was clear that a new era in northeast Minnesota logging was on the horizon. In 1898, the Michigan logging firm of Alger-Smith was chartered to operate in Minnesota. It immediately purchased an existing mill on Rice's Point in Duluth and began buying up extensive holdings of land all along the North Shore. In its first year of operation, it rafted logs to its mill (primarily from the Pigeon River area). But it soon became apparent a better means of transportation needed to be found in order for the mill, with a capacity of over a million board feet of lumber a year, to keep busy. In May 1898, the company made an announcement that it planned to build a railroad inland from Knife River to access timber along the Knife River valley. The railroad officially was given the name Duluth & Northern Minnesota, but to just about everyone from that day forward it was known as the "Alger-Smith Line."



The Alger-Smith Line

Twelve years earlier, the Duluth & Iron Range Railroad had been completed between Two Harbors and Duluth. The D&IR tracks went right through the tiny community of Knife River, and this made an ideal connection point for the Alger-Smith Line. Within its first year, the Alger line was extended over seven miles inland, and cut logs were hauled to Knife River and then on to Duluth by logging car. The climb out of Knife River was steep with the grade heading generally west rising over 200 feet in the first two miles. The tracks crossed from Lake into St. Louis County, entering Duluth Township along the eastern stretch of today's Shilhon Road. The main line then continued west for about a mile before veering north along the eastern edge of the Little Knife River, and extended for about another three miles within the boundaries of Duluth Township before heading northeasterly and eventually back into Lake County.

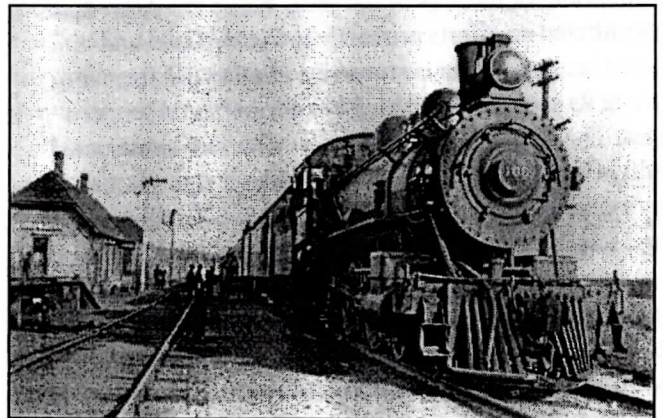


Trainload of logs on Alger-Smith Line, 1899

Off of this main line, several spurs were developed. In Section 23, a spur line known as the "Mile Three Line" was constructed west to harvest the prime pine in the area north of the present day Korkki Road. This line, also known as the "Mud Branch Line" (parts of it ran through some very wet areas where mud was squeezed up on the track whenever a train passed), continued north and west into the Abrahamson Hill area, eventually crossing the Sucker River before entering Normanna Township. Other spurs ran off the main line, cutting pockets of pine throughout the community. One spur harvested the area near the present day Clover Valley High School building, and it is believed another short line known as the "Higgin's Spur" left the main line and harvested trees in the Alden area.

The Alger-Smith Logging Co. not only built the railroad, but constructed the camps and hired the crew. There were probably many camps set up throughout the area usually in the vicinity of each spur. Trees were cut and horse or oxen-drawn sleighs hauled the logs to a loading station along the rail line. Here the logs were loaded and transported by rail to Knife River. At the height of rail activity, Alger-Smith's lines extended all along the North Shore as far as the present-day Boundary Waters Canoe Area country. Its main line reached a distance of 99 miles, with spur and branch lines bringing to over 400 the total miles of track laid. At its peak, it ran as many as 13 locomotives and had over 500 cars carrying logs. Serving as a common carrier, it also hauled logs for other logging operations and provided passenger service along its route.

Today, when one views the relatively quiet hamlet of Knife River, it is hard to imagine the flurry of activity that centered around this community a century ago. As the headquarters for Alger-Smith's operations, Knife River evolved into a major railroad and shipping hub by the first decade of the 1900s. As many as fifteen train loads of logs arrived in the community each day. In addition to the pine it transported by rail to Duluth, it also shipped large quantities of pulp wood to eastern paper mills. The pulp wood was loaded onto boats off a large concrete dock that extended into Lake Superior at the mouth of the river. The dock was constructed to permit trains direct access to the boats, allowing ease both in loading wood to be shipped east and unloading raw materials, such as coal, being delivered for local use.



D&IR train at Knife River depot



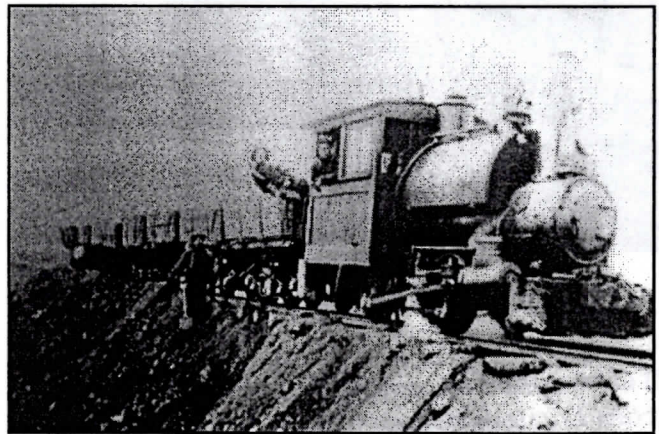
"Donkey" steam engine used for hoisting logs along the Alger-Smith Line

The Brooks Scanlon Line

As busy as the Alger-Smith Co. was, it was not without competition for the logs of the area. While the Alger Line concentrated its efforts primarily in the southern and eastern sections of our community, another rail line was making its presence felt along the northern and western edges. The Brooks Scanlon Lumber Co. had constructed a mill in 1901 along the St. Louis River. It was a large, very modern mill that could produce over 100 million board feet of lumber a year. Originally depending on logs driven down the Cloquet River, it soon realized, as did the Alger-Smith Co., that to keep its mill running at full capacity, a more dependable and reliable harvesting system needed to be found. They turned to rail logging, and soon work began on the Minnesota & Northern Wisconsin Railroad, also known as the "Brooks Scanlon Line." From its beginnings at the mill site (today's

community of Scanlon), the Brooks Scanlon Line extended generally northeastward for a total of 56 miles. Its track passed through the Townships of Rice Lake and Gnesen before entering our community in Normanna Township near the headwaters of the French River.

Several small spurs were constructed at that point before the main line continued northeastward, generally following the route today marked by the Fox Farm Road. The headwaters of both the Knife and Sucker Rivers are located in this area, and extensive logging occurred here. A spur continued north into the Alden and Barr's Lake area with the main line ending near the present-day App, Hart, Fox Farm and Two Harbors Roads intersection. Portions of the present day Rossinni Road were built along sections of rail line that once carried logs for Brooks Scanlon. It is interesting to note in Section 35 of Township 53N, Range 13W, an area now along the Fox Farm Road and originally adjacent to the Brooks Scanlon Line, a state record 33 million board feet of logs were harvested. No other single section of land throughout the entire state of Minnesota produced more lumber than this section, right on the northern edge of our community.



*Ten-ton tank engine
Style used in the Hart and Paradise Lake areas*

Whereas the Alger-Smith Co. controlled most of its logging operations from first cutting to final milling, Brooks Scanlon, after constructing their rail line, depended primarily on independent operators to do the harvesting. A second noticeable difference in the practices of the two companies centered around the fact that areas along the Brooks Scanlon Line, unlike areas to the south cut by Alger-Smith, employed the use of water to some degree. The only river of any size in the area which allowed for use of log drives was the

Cloquet River, and because of its distance from even the most northern fringes of our community, few, if any, of our logs were floated down it. Loggers working along the Brooks Scanlon Line, however, did make use of several small lakes and lowland areas that dotted the northern edges of both Normanna and Alden. The largest of these areas was probably located at the headwaters of the French River, where in 1905, the Colbrath Logging Co. constructed a dam backing up the flow of the river to create a reservoir out of what until then had been a natural meadow. This “lake” was one of several in the area which acted as holding ponds where logs could be stored or “watered” until the time they were transported to the mill at Scanlon by logging car. The reservoir on the French River later became a popular destination for schools in the area to celebrate end-of-the-year picnics.



Fishing at French River Reservoir, 1914



Erickson shingle mill on French River

Although it was clear much of the best pine land was in the hands of large logging companies, many smaller logging operations certainly did exist within the community during this time. In fact, early township records indicate a number of transactions where logging companies either changed hands, were foreclosed on, or after having cut all the trees they wanted, went out of business and sold their remaining assets to a family settling in the area. In most cases, these companies were relatively small, but often their assets were listed in great detail. It was not unusual to see a document drawn with entries like the number of mattresses to be sold, every blacksmith tool listed individually, or horses specifically identified in the transaction—as in “one brown mare named ‘Dolly’ and one bay horse named ‘Gib.’”

Speciality mills also existed locally, with nearly every small stream and river having at least one. A June 10, 1898, township recording lists a contract given to C.T. Plummer to provide shingles from his mill to be transported with a “team of gray horses.” Another recording, from December 12 of the following year, cites an agreement between the Township of Duluth and P.M. Agnew to “erect and maintain” a sawmill (steam-powered), whose purpose was to employ locals and provide materials for township bridges and roads. Other mills in the area included Grunstrom’s Mill on the Sucker River, Joe Erickson’s shingle mill on the French River and the Heimbach Mill on the lower Talmadge River, which specialized in making broom handles.

The End of the Big Pine Era

It would seem to us today that it should have taken several decades to cut the extensive forests which covered our land, especially considering that hand saws and axes were the only tools used. With that in mind, it is hard to believe that within only ten years, the peak of lumber production was already reached and passed. The rate at which mills cut logs into lumber during the first five years of 1900 was staggering. At its peak, the Alger-Smith Co. produced over 600,000 board feet a day in its two mills and employed 600 people. In the ten years between 1897 and 1906, Duluth alone shipped over 3.5 billion board feet of lumber from its mills, primarily to points east. Clearly, that level of harvesting could not go on forever. By 1908, lumber production for the area had already dropped severely, and the days of the big mills were slowly coming to an end. The large logging companies which had come here to cut white



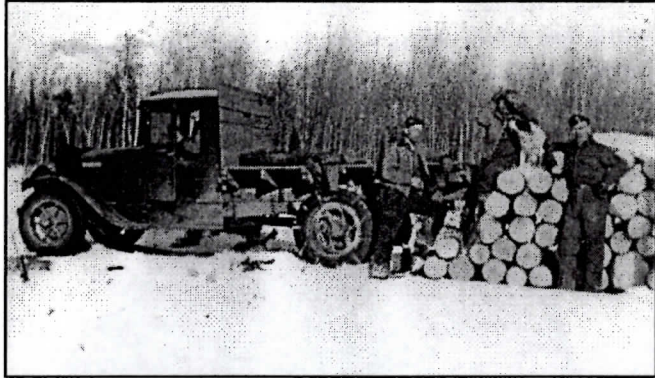
Einar "Big Duke" Elickson at his sawmill

pine began to look elsewhere as soon as the big trees were gone. As the larger companies left heading for the uncut lands of Oregon and Washington, smaller, independent loggers moved in and began removing what timber still remained.

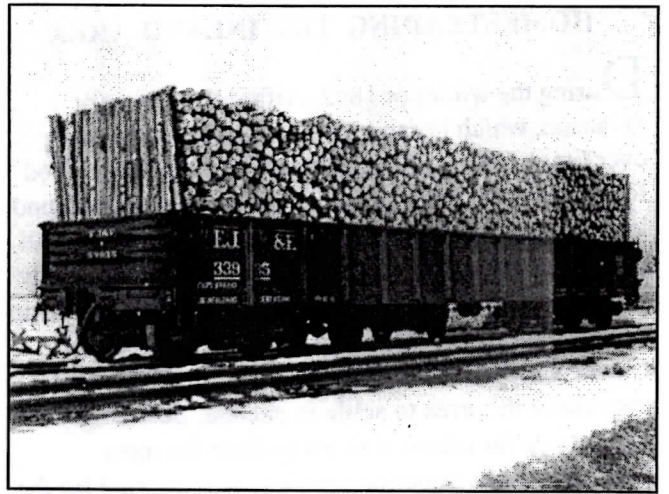
These loggers were sometimes known as "piece makers," since their pay was solely dependent on the amount of logs they produced (in contrast to set monthly salaries which most larger companies employed). They concentrated on cedar, balsam, spruce, birch, tamarack and other "second rate" trees the big companies had little time for. Piece makers were primarily small individual operators or newly arrived settlers hoping to make a little money selling what they cut as material for rail ties, firewood, fenceposts or as pulp to the paper manufacturers. By then, most of the prime white pine in our community had probably been cut, and early rail lines laid down during the first years of the Alger Line's growth were gone. As spur areas were harvested and cleared, the tracks, which had outgrown their reason for existence, were pulled and reused elsewhere. By 1912, the Alger-Smith Co. was cutting as far north as the Manitou and Temperance River areas, and some of the track used to move logs from those sites had probably been used earlier to haul logs to Knife River from our community. Some of the abandoned rail beds found new life as cartpaths and roads giving additional access for settlers coming into the community. However, many other routes simply fell into disuse and became overgrown. Not all were forgotten though, as many early settlers tell of these abandoned grades being prime berry picking areas or providing an access route into a favorite brook trout hole.

There is no exact date that can be set when the last of the big trees were cut, and the prime era of logging came to an end in our community. In fact, the legacy of logging, like commercial fishing, carries on to the present. We do know, however, that by 1919, Alger-Smith ended its cutting operations, and within a year from that date, all harvested trees had been transported to Knife River. For another year, it ran a limited number of trains as a passenger service only, bringing newly established homesteaders inland. By then it was clear the days of large-scale logging were over. On July 15, 1921, the Duluth & Northern Minnesota, the "Alger-Smith Line," was given permission from the Interstate Commerce Commission to close its rail operations. The next two years saw the disappearance of nearly 500 miles of mainline and spurs which had once crisscrossed the Lake

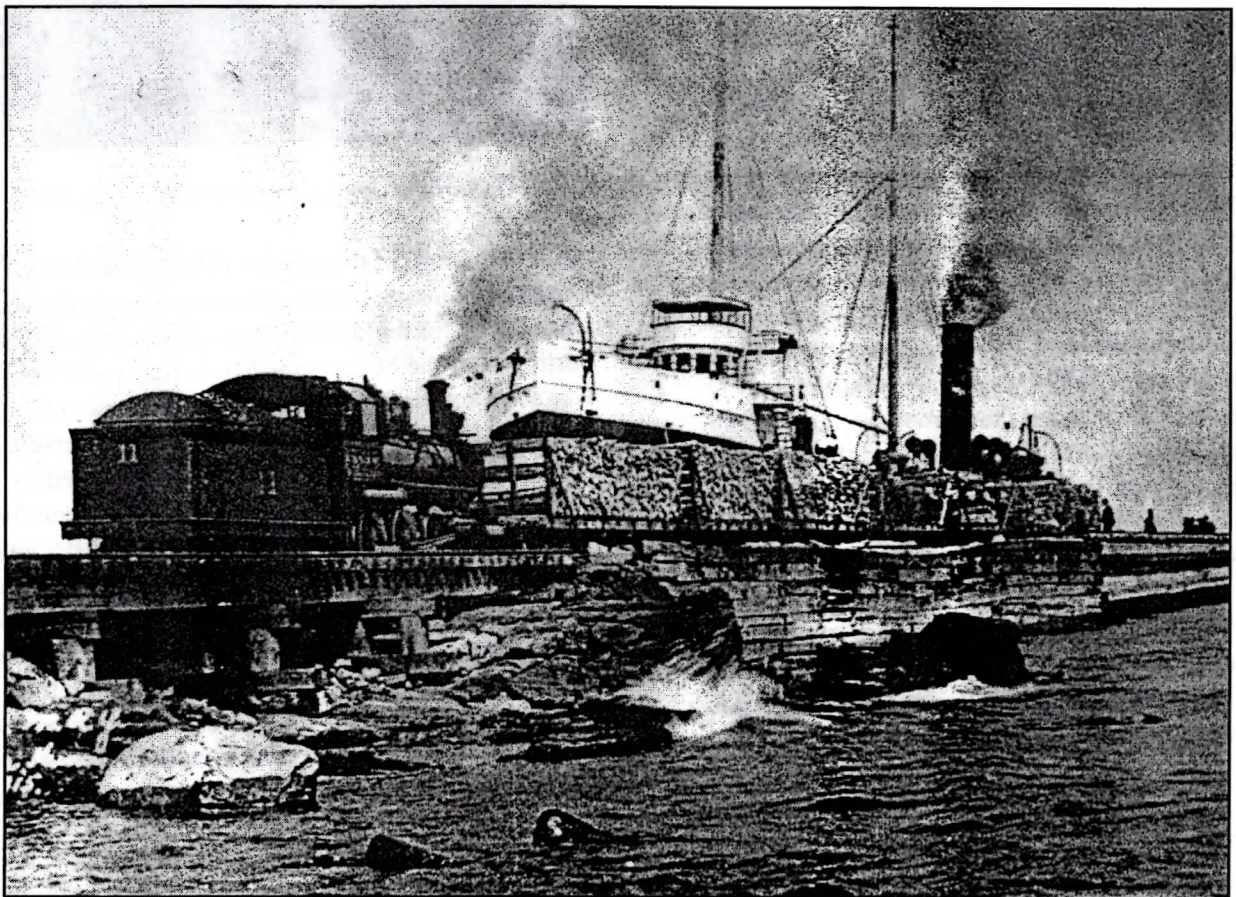
Superior region from our community virtually to the Canadian border. An influx of settlers began arriving, attracted by the newly-cleared land, bringing with them hopes and dreams much different than those of the loggers who had opened the area for them. The heyday of logging had ended. The land that for thousands of years had been held together by the tight intermingling of tree roots would now be planted in crops.



Hauling pulpwood to Palmers Siding, 1946



Carload of pulpwood waiting to be hauled away at Palmers Siding



Loading pulpwood onto ships at Knife River dock

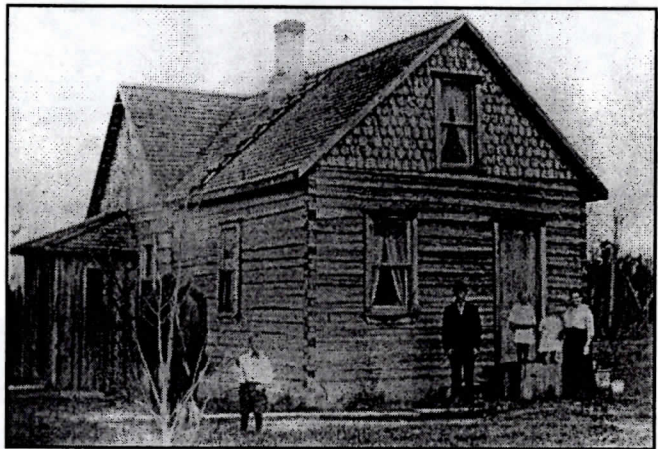
HOMESTEADING THE INLAND AREA

During the winter of 1892, Alfred Svensson (or Swanson, which became the more common spelling over time), Charles Rosen and Martin Martinson filed for homestead status on three adjoining parcels of land located approximately six miles northwest of the small fishing community of Knife River. The properties they selected for settlement were in Section 10 of Township 52N, Range 12W in the vicinity of the present-day Clover Valley General Store (now closed). Why the men chose this area to settle is unclear. Selecting property so far inland well away from the more developed Lake Superior coastline was unusual for the time. Whatever their reasonings, all three families made their way from Knife River to their property by foot, horse or ox-drawn wagon to begin the long, hard task of clearing the land, constructing buildings and making for themselves a new home.

The first few years were difficult but the families persisted, enduring backbreaking work, harsh winters, and in the summer, hordes of mosquitoes. Within a year or two, it was clear that a new road providing more direct access to the shore area was needed. A petition was drawn up and presented to the newly formed Duluth Town Board Supervisors, the governmental body presiding over the area which today generally covers the four Townships of Duluth, Normanna, Lakewood and Alden. The Town Board considered the petition and in July 1894, passed a resolution that "ordered and determined that a road be ... established" between the Old North Shore Trail and the small settlement of families who had made their homes inland. Unlike the old access route that wound its way in from the Town of Knife River, this new road was wide, made use of corduroyed logs for crossing low areas, bridged larger streams, and ran straight as an arrow north to south. The road was designated officially as the "Homestead" but soon became known, because of its absolute straightness, as the "Stiff Line."

In June 1898, four years after the initial construction of the road was completed, the Town Board of Duluth voted to extend the Homestead Road to the D&IR rail line, located approximately one-fourth mile south of the Old North Shore Road. The land

necessary to complete this extension was purchased for \$100 per acre from the estate of Vose Palmer, who had died a year earlier. Additional settlers seeking to homestead areas inland, now for the first time, had the convenience of both suitable rail and road access. The small hamlet that began as three pioneering families soon grew, and with that growth the emergence of the first distinct inland settlement took place. The area soon came to be known as Molde. "Molde," as one may guess, is not an English word, but a Norwegian one (correctly pronounced Mold-a with a soft 'a'), and the origin of the community's name should probably be explained.



Gustafson family homestead, circa 1913

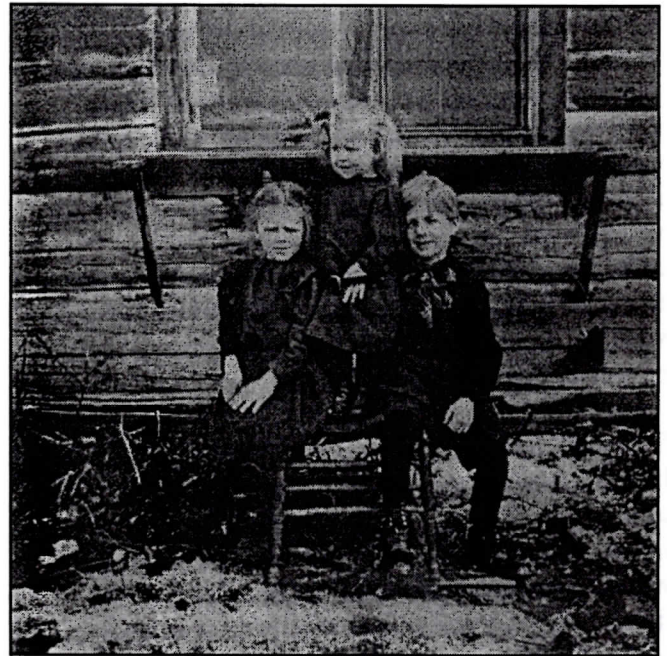
Around the turn of the century (1900), the Post Office Department determined a separate postal designation was needed for the small but growing community at the north end of the Homestead Road. Halver Halversen was soon appointed postmaster for the area and given the task of naming the new post office. Halversen, who had emigrated from Molde, Norway, decided to choose a name familiar to him, as well as one that reminded him of home. Molde, therefore, became the name of the post office and, subsequently, that of the settlement too. "Molde" has gradually fallen out of use over the years in favor of the more frequently-used term "Clover Valley." (The reason for the name change to Clover Valley will be explained later.) But it is still heard occasionally, especially in reference to Molde Hill—the high rise of land that runs just north of the area.

Although Molde was the first settlement in our area that formed inland, it was by no means the only interior settlement to emerge during that time period. In fact,

from the early 1890s through the first two decades of the 1900s, three other distinct communities were in the process of forming—Normanna, French River and Alden. Settlement activity began in the Township of Normanna on Christmas Day 1892, when John Ronning and his family moved into their newly-constructed home. They were soon joined by the families of Jens Solem and Anton Hjelm. (Mr. Hjelm had actually explored the area as early 1890, but did not move to the land he had chosen to homestead until 1893.) At the time, Normanna was an area still covered in thick stands of white pine well away from the main centers of activity along the shore. Access to Normanna began at the end of the streetcar line in the Woodland section of the City of Duluth. At that point, groceries and supplies were loaded into packs for the rest of the journey home by foot. That journey included a hike of several miles along the Old Vermilion Road followed by an additional walk easterly along a smaller trail that eventually led to the families' homesites. Within a short time, other immigrant settlers began moving to the area, and work was undertaken to upgrade the foot trail to tote road status. The tote road provided a much-improved access route, and along with increasing acres of available cleared land (extensive logging operations had now begun in the area), Normanna's growth and development was assured.

In 1904, a few years after Molde and Normanna became established, the inland settlement of French River emerged. Some of the first families to homestead the area were the Saaris (1904), the Lundquists (1905) and the Abrahamsons (1908). French River was centered around the crossroads of today's Shilhon and Bergquist Roads (where the now-closed French River Store stands). Like most rural settlements, there was no concentrated core. Settlers spread out in all directions, usually a quarter mile or more apart, with families along the Shilhon, Pioneer, Ryan and Bergquist Roads all identifying themselves as belonging to the community. It is somewhat confusing to us today why this settlement became known as French River. Obviously, it was not called that because of its proximity to the river of the same name. In truth, the closest river to the settlement is the Sucker River, which flows through the area just a half mile or so south of the French River Store. In fact, the name "French River" eventually came about because mail for residents of the area arrived from the post office located at the coastal village of French River, an area established several years earlier. Access to the interior also

started at the French River depot, where the train dropped off people who were heading inland along the Ryan Road. The affiliation between the *inland* French River and the *coastal* French River was therefore fairly strong, and both settlements, as well as the Ryan Road corridor which connected them, came to share the common identity.



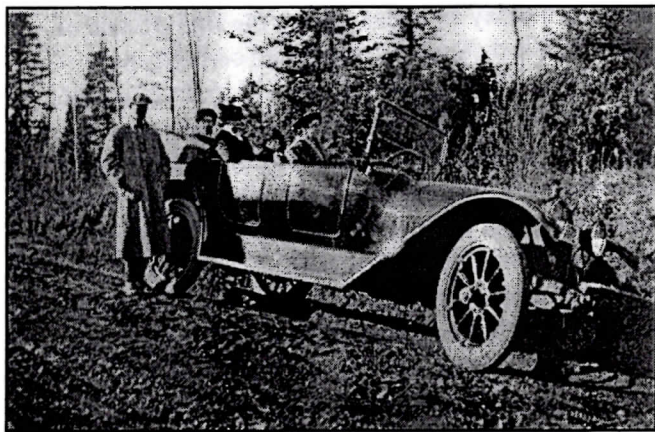
Ellen, Karlie and Lud Solem, circa 1914

The last community to emerge was Alden. Even though it is very likely that a few people may have lived in the area known today as Alden during the first decade of the 1900s, it is difficult to verify with certainty any permanent settlement before about 1915. In fact, prior to September 8, 1920, when Alden citizens voted to separate from Duluth Township and form their own governing body, little in the way of official records exist. What can be said with some confidence through the recollections of early settlers is the population of the area increased quite substantially immediately following World War I. The first official census for Alden was not until 1930. In that year, the number of residents in the township totaled 138. Since it is believed that Alden's population hit a peak in the mid-1920s and then stabilized, it is probably safe to assume Alden averaged somewhere between 100 to 150 residents from 1918 until 1930. Alden's primary access to the shore was along the Two Harbors Road (County Road 41), which according to township records, was laid out in the summer of 1903. Because of this fact, Alden's link with

the community of Two Harbors, approximately seven miles distant, is probably stronger than ties which other inland settlements developed.

When we look at a map today, it is hard to understand how four areas only a few miles apart could have developed in such relative isolation from each other. Yet, there are a few things we must keep in mind. First, it is important to remember that from 1890 to 1915, only a limited number of roads existed, and those that had been constructed were not only unpaved, but rarely even gravel covered. Due to changing weather conditions, travel could quickly become questionable and, during certain seasons, virtually impossible. Summer downpours, winter blizzards and spring breakup (known affectionately as "mud vacation" by children unable to attend school) could put a halt to travel for up to a week or more. Trips were undertaken only out of necessity during these times.

Secondly, access between inland communities was limited. Roads usually began at rail stops (or in the case of Normanna, a street car line) and extended inland no farther than the specific settlement for which they were providing access. Crossroads linking inland communities did not exist in most cases. Someone in Normanna wishing to visit a friend or relative in Molde, a distance of ten miles today, would have faced a trip almost four times that length in 1900.



*Mace family along muddy Old North Shore Road
October 2, 1916*

Thirdly, transportation was limited to walking, riding or horse-drawn wagon. Although those forms of travel may appeal to us today as romantic, we must

remember those were the *only* means of travel between settlements, greatly lengthening any trip time. Until 1915, when Richard Abrahamson drove his newly purchased (be it used) Model T up the Ryan Road to his home, no car had been seen anywhere away from the lake. Two years later, Alfred Swanson purchased his first automobile, drove it up the Homestead Road, and caused a sensation there as well. In fact, it took several more years until the mid-1920s before motor vehicle use became commonplace.

Lastly, every community was fairly self-contained and, therefore, independent of the need to communicate with others. All four settlements had their own school or in some cases even more than one, which allowed children opportunities for education within walking distance (considered at the time to be generally two miles or less). Although nowhere throughout the area was there anything even vaguely resembling a full business district, numerous individual stores provided the essentials of daily life. Three stores existed in the French River area within little more than a half mile of each other. Along the Homestead Road between the shore and the settlement of Molde, at least five stores were in operation during the early part of the 1900s. Since most people raised or grew much of their own food, the need for travel beyond the confines of their individual communities was rather limited.

Yet, as distinct and isolated as each settlement was, it is safe to say the traits they shared were more dominant than those that made them unique. The most striking feature may be the incredible similarity of the settlers who made up each inland community. Nearly all were very recent immigrants from Europe, having arrived in this country within two years or less of their eventual settlement in our area. The second factor that stands out is nationality. Even though the mixture of those who settled was somewhat diverse including people of Irish, Scottish, Italian, German and Norwegian heritage, the vast majority were from only two countries, Sweden and Finland. Combined with the small-but-distinct group of settlers who identified themselves as Swede-Finns (people who had lived on Finnish soil in the old country but continued to maintain the language and heritage of Sweden), the total percentage of immigrants with either Swedish or Finnish heritage who settled inland exceeded 85%.



Ada and Noah Rawn with daughter Evelyn

Why Did They Settle Here?

There were several reasons that contributed to the emigration of these people from Sweden and Finland and their eventual settlement here. By 1900, when the influx of settlers really began in our area, both Sweden and Finland were already feeling the results of years of population increases. Poverty was on the rise in both countries, jobs were hard to find, cities were becoming crowded, and farm land was nearly impossible to obtain. Even for those lucky enough to inherit land, the acreage was often so small (usually 20 acres or less) that it became nearly impossible to make a living from agriculture alone. The appeal of America, the land of seemingly endless opportunity, was too great an attraction for many to resist.

Why Minnesota became the destination of so many emigrants from Sweden and Finland probably has more to do with timing, opportunity, the availability of cheap land and the prospect of jobs, than the often-told explanation that the land reminded the immigrants of “home.” Whatever the reasons, however, they surely did come. No other state attracted more immigrant Swedes than

Minnesota, and only Michigan became the eventual home of more Finns. Duluth, which was a terminus for both steamship and rail lines, became a hub of immigrant activity. Many of those arriving were en route to other areas—some heading west to farm the plains, others going north to the Range hoping to find work in the mines. But for some, Duluth itself was their destination.

The important role the City of Duluth played in the immigrant settlement of our inland area is clearly revealed in the life stories of our first settlers. Of those families who eventually settled in our area, few, if any, did so without first spending several months, if not a year or more, in Duluth. The city served as an important stopover, a setting for a period of transition between life in the old country and the new life they were about to begin. In some cases, new arrivals arranged to stay with family or friends who had already established themselves in the city. If that was not possible, rooms were rented in any one of the many tenement and boarding houses that dotted Duluth streets, many of which catered specifically to newly arriving immigrant. Most of the Finns lived in boarding houses located on South First Avenue East, while Garfield Avenue attracted most of the Swedish immigrants.

Though a much higher percentage of single immigrants were men, it was not unknown for girls as young as 16, occasionally even alone, to make the trip in search of a new life. For them, work in a hotel as a domestic or in a garment mill often provided a means of income. Most men, on the other hand, found jobs in the many saw mills scattered about the city. It was during this time in Duluth that friendships were formed with other Swedish and Finnish immigrants. Marriages sometimes occurred, and talk of the future took place. For many, that talk turned to land and their ultimate goal of owning it. Not only did land mean opportunity, but to many, especially the men, it signified a chance for freedom and independence that had been only a dream in their European homeland. Money was set aside a little at a time, and when enough had finally been saved, land was purchased—sometimes through a friend or family member, but more often than not from a land company.

Once the decision was made and a piece of land purchased, the transition from city to country life took place. For those homesteading inland in our area, mechanized transportation got them out of the city, but in nearly all cases, it didn't go as far as they needed to go. Whether it was the streetcar to Woodland or the train to any one of several stops along the shore, at some point, the "rest of the way" had to be faced. Tales are told of early settlers making trip after trip carrying everything from pots and pans to stove pieces, window panes and rolls of tarpaper miles inland to their new home. For some who were "lucky" enough to have kept a cow or pig while living in Duluth (it was not uncommon at the time to have farm animals within the city limits), the trek from the city became an even greater adventure.

Ernie Jacobson told of the milk cow his father owned while living in Duluth on South First Avenue East and the difficulty his father had in getting it out to their new homestead at the north end of the Bergquist Road. Having no choice but to walk the 20 miles, Ernie's father Matt led the cow down Superior Street and out of the city along the Old North Shore Road. When they reached the bridge over the Talmadge River at Clifton, the cow, apparently fearful of crossing, stopped dead in her tracks refusing to go any farther. Try as he might, Matt could not convince the cow to move another step. Finally, a passerby came along, and together they managed to chase the frightened cow across the bridge and on to its final home in the country.

The Jacobson farm was a 40-acre parcel of land. Most farms throughout our area averaged about that size. There were a few as small as 20 acres, considered the minimum size to be workable and to provide both food and a decent means of living for the new settler family. Eighty acres, on the other hand, was considered large, and only a few immigrant farmers started out with parcels of that size. Much of the land purchased was cutover, but in many places there were stands of trees, especially "second rate" trees—balsam, birch, aspen, and cedar—that the large logging companies left uncut in their single-handed quest to harvest only the best pine.



Ernie Jacobson in front of his family home

The first task undertaken by settlers was construction of a suitable shelter. Any available timber found on the property (on occasion even railroad ties from abandoned logging operations) was used. Oftentimes, a log structure was built incorporating hand-hewn timbers with dovetailed or fitted corners, giving the appearance of a straight-walled, square-cornered building. (As years went by, these homes were often covered by wood siding to give a more modern appearance.) At other times, depending on the availability of a nearby mill and finished lumber, a frame structure was erected. In either case, these first buildings, referred to as "Finlanders' homes" by Ernie Mattson in a 1987 interview, were almost always small—often only 12x16 feet and seldom larger than 20x20. On rare occasions, as families grew and space became tight, a second larger house was built, and the first structure saw new life as a sauna or outbuilding. More often than not, however, this first shelter simply grew as the family grew with additions, dormers, porches and lean-tos creating, over the span of many years, a house much larger than and often unrecognizable from the initial structure.



Finnish sauna

As settlers cut what trees remained on their land, timber not needed for building purposes or saved for use in the wood or cook stove was sometimes sold to provide a small income for the family. In 1901, the Duluth Log Co. was paying up to \$2 per cord for maple and was offering five cents each for cedar posts. Occasionally, homesteaders purchased tracts of land that had escaped the axe altogether and were still heavily forested. In most cases when this occurred, the standing timber was sold to logging companies that paid “stumpage” rights to the settler for the opportunity to harvest the trees. The small payment received for the timber was, without doubt, put to good use, but more importantly, the new settlers were glad to have the trees cut and removed. Cleared land meant crops, grazing for their animals and the opportunity to expand their farm.

But for a land that had been covered in trees for thousands of years, getting it ready to plow was a slow and difficult process. In many cases, stumps as large as three feet in diameter covered the landscape. Most settlers had little or no money to purchase explosives, and lack of any mechanization meant stumps were pulled by back power and horse power alone. Often only an acre of land could be cleared each year, and many times grain crops were simply sown around the stumps. However, since harvesting in those early days was usually done by hand scythe alone, maneuvering around the obstacles as one walked and cut the fields was not as great a disadvantage as it might seem today.

Homesteading and clearing land, more accustomed to “growing” rocks and trees than crops and vegetables, was not an easy task. Nearly all the work, not only clearing stumps and sowing grain, had to be done by hand. Small vegetable plots that fed the family were dug, turned and planted with only a grub hoe. Wells (some as deep as 30 feet or more) were hand dug and cribbed with rock. Hay was cut, raked and carried to the barn. Rocks that lay scattered over the fields were picked and thrown onto wagons or “stone boats” (flat-bottomed sleds used for hauling) only to be unloaded again by hand at the edge of the field. Yet, for all the hardships, most immigrant settlers hung on. For every day of disappointment, there were days of satisfaction as well—a newborn calf, enough hay in the mow for winter, a good garden crop. Like the commercial fishing families of the shore, these inland counterparts faced life with little complaint and much hope. After all, this was a place that offered opportunity, a second chance, a new life. The trees had been cut, and now the land was being cleared and prepared. The struggle to survive, the desire to make a home from this land, was being won. Now, finally, there was time to look forward.



Men using stationary hay baler on Mace farm, 1916

FARMING AND COMMUNITY LIFE

In a land of rocks and hills, steep river beds and frigid cold, in a land known more for the wealth of its natural resources, its enormous pines and huge freshwater lake at its edge, it is ironic the historical era most closely associated with our recent heritage is that of farming. After all, farming hardly seems like a natural fit for our area, at least not in the obvious way that fishing does. Yet for every fishing family that made this community their home, there were countless more families who farmed. Looking back, one is tempted to say that farming emerged as the inland counterpart to the rich fishing heritage that had already been established. Along the shore, life was centered around the freshwater sea, and commercial fishing families provided the anchor of strength and stability for that life. In the inland area, the same strength and stability emerged in the family farm—a life, not of the sea, but one firmly rooted in the soil.

By the end of the second decade of the 1900s, the influx of immigrant homesteaders began to slow. A time of transition was taking place. Many families, having had several years to establish themselves, were no longer struggling to simply survive, but now had time to concentrate more fully on producing incomes from their small farming operations. In 1913, two events occurred which played significant roles in the promotion and expansion of agriculture in our area. The first event was the opening of the Northeast Minnesota Experiment Farm. In 1911, the Minnesota Legislature earmarked money for a farm experiment station to be established in northeast Minnesota. Over 250 acres of land were purchased along the Jean Duluth Road, and on April 1, 1913, the station opened under the leadership of Superintendent Mark Thompson. Its mission was to study and develop sound agricultural practices centered around the regional needs of our area. In essence, it was to be a field laboratory of crops and soils.

Today we may wonder why a place such as northeastern Minnesota was selected for a program concentrating on agriculture. Part of the reason, probably to no one's great surprise, was based on political more than practical reasoning. Farmsteads, after all, provided local economies with a stable base

and a reliable market. Quite simply, the establishment and growth of a farming economy in the area made good business sense. Realizing this, the City of Duluth's business community intensely lobbied the legislature, and a compromise was struck. Duluth was granted a northern Minnesota Farm Experiment Station if a second site, in southern Minnesota, would also be funded. Waseca, located 25 miles east of Mankato in the heart of true farm country, was chosen for the second site and the deal was done.



Haying time at the Elickson farm, 1935

While politics may have played a part in the decision, it alone did not win the station for our area. Agricultural possibilities were discussed in regards to northeast Minnesota early in the history of white settlement. In an article that appeared in the May 22, 1869, *Duluth Minnesotian*, Nicolas Decker, in reply to an inquiry on the prospects of farming, wrote, "I have farmed hereabouts for thirteen years. I raised winter wheat, rye, barley, oats, peas; and they did as well as I have seen them do anywhere ... I can raise any vegetables here I ever saw raised anywhere in the temperate regions—they grow quickly and are sweet and good." Even though Mr. Decker may have been exaggerating slightly in his praise of the area in terms of agricultural promise, there is no denying the fact that prospects of successful farming drew a number of people here. In fact, between 1910 and 1920, no region in the United States saw a greater gain in family farms than the area of Minnesota north and east of the Mississippi River. By 1920, St. Louis County alone was home to over 4,000 farms. Odd as it may seem today, our region was referred to in promotional brochures of the time as the "New Iowa," where "crop failures are unknown ... and it is possible to pay for a 'Forty' with the proceeds from one acre of potatoes."



Horse and haywagon on Mace farm, 1916

The Homestead Farmers Co-operative Association

It may not be surprising then, considering the hype and enthusiasm of the time, that the second significant event taking place in 1913 occurred right here in our own backyard just over a month after the opening of the Experiment Farm. That event was the formation of the Homestead Farmers Co-operative Association. Comprised of farmers and community members living primarily in the settlements of Palmers and Molde, the Association's main function was to promote and encourage development of local agriculture. Article One of its bylaws specifically cites the following as purposes for the group's formation: the manufacturing, buying, and selling of milk and food products; the raising, buying, and selling of cattle, sheep, and hogs; the buying and selling of machinery and merchandise; the mortgaging and leasing of property; and, the buying and selling of rural telephone lines.

As important as these purposes were, one of the Association's first actions actually had nothing to do with either legal business or agriculture. Faced with the fact that the name "Molde" (in Norwegian the

'e' is pronounced as a soft 'a') had been transformed in common English to "Mold-ee" (taking on the same meaning as bread that had gone bad), members of the Homestead Farmers Co-op Association, or "Farmers Club" as it came to be called, determined to change the name of the settlement. Several alternatives were offered including Meadow Grove, Plain View and Cloverdale. The choice that received the most votes, however, was Clover Valley. Exactly how the name Clover Valley came about has been lost to history, but one story tells that the decision was made based on the vast fields of clover visible looking lakeward from the top of Molde Hill. Of course this "valley of clover" was simply crops grown tall enough to hide the many stumps still covering the area. But no matter, even though fall harvesting and the first killing frost would transform the landscape back again to a cutover field, the name was chosen and it stuck. Although over time, the term "Clover Valley" has come to mean most of the farming area inland, it should be emphasized that originally it applied only to the specific area at the northern end of Homestead Road first settled in 1892.

A second early action of the Farmers Club did fall under their official duties. By November 1913, inquiries were made into the possibility of erecting a telephone line between Palmers and the settlement of Clover Valley (Molde). By then, about 30 families had joined the club, and establishment of phone service seemed to many a good idea. Membership dues (set at a rate of ten cents a month) provided participation in the co-operative but clearly could not generate enough money to pay for the construction of a new phone line. It was determined, therefore, that each family desiring to be hooked up to the Clover Valley Telephone Co., as it came to be called, purchase seven telephone poles at the cost of \$1 each and be responsible for having them set into the ground. By late summer of 1914, the setting of poles had been nearly completed. On August 22, the Farmers Club at their monthly meeting passed a motion to order the necessary wire and insulators needed to complete the hookup. The actual stringing of the lines was contracted to John and William Creighton, who were paid for their labor a rate of "\$3.00 a day each and one dollar a day for (their) horse."

Telephone service initially was limited to just the Homestead Road area, linking over 20 families from Palmers north to Clover Valley. (There is some evidence to suggest the line also may have extended along a short section of West Knife River Road.) A connection could be made to the railroad phone line at Palmers allowing calls to Two Harbors or Duluth, but since this service was an extra charge, it was used primarily in emergency situations only. Every family had to buy their own phone—a wall-mounted style operated by a hand crank. When you heard your ring ("two long - one short," for example), you knew a call had come in for you. However, the service was an open line, meaning anyone with a phone could listen in on any conversation taking place. Rudy Gustafson remembers how much the new service meant to his mother, providing the opportunity to break up the isolation of farm life in spending a part of each day on the phone talking to neighbors. This new "leap" in technology must have brought quite a change to the families of the area. No longer did the distance between farms seem so far. The ability to communicate with each other was now simply a telephone call away.

The Fire of 1918

Within only a few years of the installation of the phone line, an event occurred which clearly focused how important instant communication among neighbors could be. Beginning in 1916, a period of abnormally dry

weather settled over most of northeastern Minnesota. The following year, 1917, dry conditions continued, and the threat of fire became an increasing problem. In our area, at least one significant blaze did occur that summer, burning over 40 acres on the Heino farm near French River. By 1918, following a third dry summer in a row, conditions reached a critical stage. Several small fires had been burning in Carlton County throughout much of that fall. By Saturday morning, October 12, one of these fires, located just west of Brookston along the Great Northern rail line, was reported out of control. Fueled by slash left by timber companies and fanned by low humidity and winds of over 60 mph, the fire spread rapidly. By afternoon, it had grown to massive proportions and extended as far eastward as Grand Lake and Twig. Within a few more hours, it was approaching the northern edges of the City of Duluth.



*The Gatlin and Englund cousins
(Note the clearing in background is result of 1918 fire.)*

The families that lived in Normanna were the first in our area to realize the extent of the danger. A Fall Fair was being held at the local John A. Johnson School when word came that the fire was west of the school and moving toward them. Many of the men went to an area near the George Cooke homestead in an attempt to hold the fire at that point. It was soon clear, however, that no amount of work could stop the spreading flames, and they all headed back to their own homes. Families were already scrambling to put what they could into wagons, getting ready to leave the area. By then, the fire was nearly on them, and with trees burning all around, they fled in the only direction they could—eastward. Some families drove their cattle as far as the safety of the William Johnson farm before

stopping. Located in a valley, the farm provided some protection from the flames and wind. Other families continued east travelling over ten miles before finding shelter at the Van Wagen farm near the settlement of Palmers. Many were caught in the firestorm and simply sought shelter in creeks or ditches as the fire roared past. Several families recount wrapping themselves in blankets wetted in tubs of water or seeking refuge in bogs and lowlands. A few who had waited too long to escape simply lay in the road as the flames swirled around them.

By evening, the fire reached near the inland settlement of French River. Only a sudden windshift spared the community itself from the path of the flames. Instead, the fire swept down the Ryan Road where much of the land was burned, a shingle mill destroyed, and several homes and barns suffered heavy damage. Areas to the west in the Township of Lakewood were burned to the shoreline. Families along the coast from Clifton eastward took to their fishing skiffs seeking protection in the lake. Walter Lee Johnson, who was a young child at the time, remembers watching the red sky of flames work its way closer and closer. Only when they had rowed back to shore did his family realize their home had escaped destruction. The intensity of the wind propelled ash and burning embers miles forward, causing smaller fires to flare up in many places. On the eastern edge of our community, the flames reached as far as Molde Hill before the wind died down, and the fire threat finally lessened. As families tried to regroup, frantic searches ensued to find those who were missing or who had become separated in the panic. Several local men who were in the City of Duluth when the fire began, either picking up supplies or working and unable to get back to their homes, did not find out for a day or more whether their wives and children had survived.

When it was all over, the extent of the disaster became apparent. As serious as it was locally, the rest of the region suffered even more. An area of over 1,500 square miles was destroyed. Entire communities such as Cloquet, Moose Lake and Brookston were wiped out. Over 4,000 homes and nearly 6,400 barns were burned to the ground, and most tragically, over 450 people lost their lives. In our area, the worst hit sections were on our western edge. Many families in the Townships of Lakewood and Normanna lost everything. Even those who were fortunate enough to have had the fire spare their homesteads were faced with the aftermath of rebuilding their community. Roads had been damaged and many

bridges destroyed in the fire. The Red Cross and other relief agencies provided clothing and food, and for those who lost their homes—the lumber, supplies and materials to rebuild.

For many, the tragedy of the fire was followed by weeks of sickness. Some felt the conditions they endured of heat and smoke sapped their strength. Then, as if things could get no worse, flu struck the area. The epidemic of influenza which swept through Europe before arriving in America was, by late fall, taking victims here as well. Before it was over, more than 20 million people died worldwide, and the flu eventually caused the death of more people in our community than did the fire. However, as tragic as the circumstances of the fall of 1918 were, few, if any, families decided to call it quits. Before winter set in, many of those who were burned out of their homes had already rebuilt, moved back in, and once again were preparing for a new season of planting.



Einar Hendrickson on horse mower

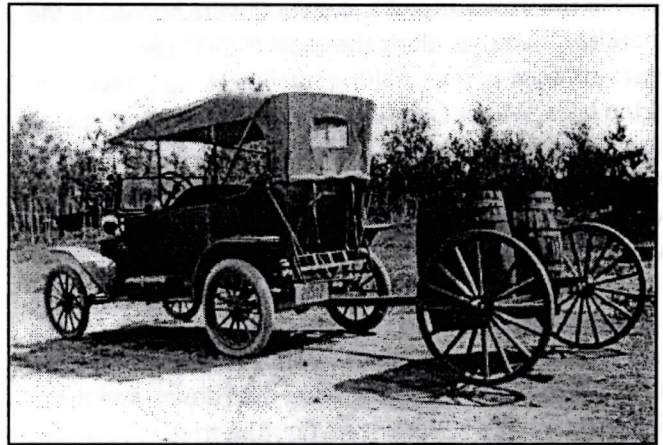
Blasting The Land Clean

For most immigrant farmers, sowing and harvesting crops were tedious and time consuming processes. Much of the land still lay covered in stumps, which limited the use of machines or horses in either planting or gathering. By 1920, even after several years of work, most farmsteads still had only a few acres sufficiently cleaned of roots and rocks to allow for plowing. But in 1921, a new program was created which changed that situation dramatically. Called the "Cleared Acre Program," it set a goal of clearing for production five acres of land a year—five times the average farmers had been able to accomplish up until that point. The program, authorized by the University of Minnesota Board of Regents and implemented in our area by the Northeast Experiment Farm, was based on a method of land clearing that up until that time had been too costly for most farmers to employ—explosives. No longer would stumps have to be pried and pulled from the ground; now they were blasted free.

When World War I ended, the United States government found itself with an unused arsenal of explosives on its hands. These explosives, originally produced in huge quantities for the war effort in Europe, were suddenly no longer needed. Anxious to reduce their stockpiles, the government decided to offer surplus explosives to farmers to aid them in their land clearing efforts. By the fall of 1921, 34 carloads of picric acid (an industrial chemical with an explosive charge similar to dynamite) was delivered by train to farmers in northern Minnesota. Land clearing demonstrations sponsored by the Experiment Farm were held throughout the area. One such event took place on September 15, 1921, at the rail siding in Palmers. It included a demonstration on the proper handling of picric acid, described ways to determine the amount of explosives needed (the larger and "greener" the stump, the greater the charge), and detailed how to safely set off the explosives. According to the poster describing the event, it also offered a "standard tillage and implement exhibit for beginners on timber farms."

The availability of explosives rapidly altered the rate at which land could be cleared, planted in crops or readied for livestock. The Northeast Experiment Farm worked closely with farmers, actively promoting several grain and root crops for trial in the area. Nearly all local farmers raised potatoes and rutabagas. Both root crops initially seemed to do well in the newly turned ground,

and extra cash was earned by selling any surplus in town. Yields, at times, were quite dramatic. As early as the 1920s, John Tuominen was boasting of a crop of over 1,000 bushels of potatoes from his land on the Bergquist Road. Rutabagas also produced big yields. It may seem odd to be talking about rutabagas as a cash crop, since today it is a vegetable that is rarely grown. Therefore, it is interesting to realize that during the first half of the 1900s, rutabagas were not only a popular vegetable, but northeast Minnesota for a time boasted of leading the nation in their production. Several grain crops also were used in trials. Oats, used primarily as a feed supplement for horses, were grown through much of the area. Other grains promoted for use included barley, wheat and, of course, the forage crop, clover, which was grown and used as livestock feed.



Hauling water for livestock from Lake Superior to Palmers Stock Farm

The Farmers Club worked closely with the Experiment Farm promoting agriculture locally, especially the expansion of dairy farming. Nearly every family who lived inland owned a few dairy cows. Most herds were small, six or seven animals on average, with a few families milking up to a dozen. One of the larger herds may have been on the Richard Abrahamson farm, where at one time 27 head of Guernseys were kept. It was also reported that up to 35 head of dairy cows made up the herd at Palmers Stock Farm, but these big numbers were probably more the exception than the rule.

On most smaller farms, the primary objective of having cows was to provide milk for the family, but nearly every farmer, no matter what size the farm, sold butter or excess cream as a means of cash income. In the early days, one to three pound crocks of butter were taken into town in a packsack and sold or bartered for

groceries. Milk was kept by storing cans on ropes dropped into wells or in spring boxes, where continuously flowing water kept the cans cool. Once or twice a week, these cans were taken to the closest rail landing where the milk was transported into town by train. As time went on, the production of milk and cream became great enough to warrant a local milk route. "Frisco" Hill, who lived on the Ryan Road just north of the Sucker River bridge, was one of the first to start a route. Some time later, Wes Laine took over making his daily run by truck, stopping at over 60 farms to pick up milk and cream before delivering it to either the Bridgeman Russell or Blue Valley Creameries, both of which were located in the City of Duluth. His route took him through the Townships of Alden, Duluth and Lakewood. Although many of the farms he stopped at were small with only limited production capabilities, a handful of larger dairy operations were also on the route, making it feasible for year-round transporting to take place.

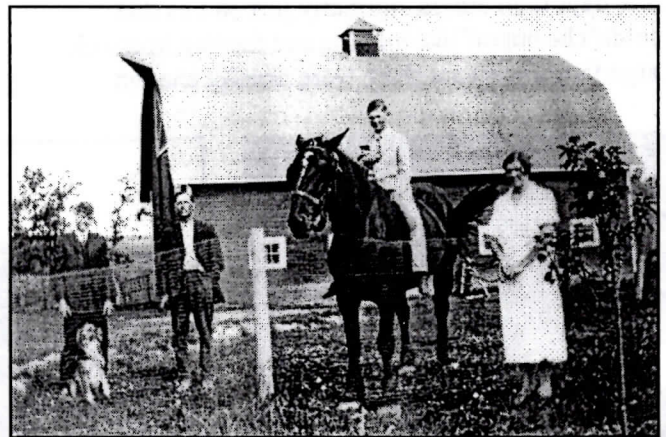
Family Life

There was always plenty of work to do on the farm. The more hands there were to help, the less work any one person had to do. Farm families, therefore, were often large. Five or six children were the norm, and families with ten or more children were nearly as common as those having only one or two. There were no local doctors to call, so when a prospective mother knew her time had come, a local midwife, a woman who assisted in the birth, was summoned. There was more than one midwife who served the area. Mrs. Liljander was called occasionally; she was probably the closest thing the community had to someone who was thought of as a "doctor." Part medical person, part chiropractor, part fortune teller—Mrs. Liljander, who almost always had a corn cob pipe in her mouth, was an unforgettable person to nearly everyone in the area.

As a true midwife, nobody was better known than Hilda Maria Lundquist, affectionately known to almost everyone as "Mor" (Swedish for "mother"). Hilda knew what it was like to give birth; she had borne ten children herself. She also knew the sorrow of losing a child—only six survived infancy. So when she was called, even in later life when it became increasing difficult for her to leave home, she would go. Often she would stay days beyond the delivery, taking care of house and family until the new mother regained her strength. Some stories say she delivered as many as 90 children in our community. Whatever the number, there

is little doubt that people like Mrs. Liljander and "Mor" Lundquist delivered as much in strength and comfort to the families of this area as they did babies.

That women played major roles in much of the activity surrounding farm life should come as no surprise. In truth, it was fairly common, especially among the Finnish families in our community, for the wife or mother to quite literally run the farm. One particular area that was the domain of many women was the barn. The fields may have belonged to the men, but for a number of women, the barn was their pride. This may have been part of tradition carried over from the old country, but it probably also had something to do with the reality of the time. Farming to nearly everyone inland was a way of life, but that was not the same as saying it was the sole means of making a living. There is no question that almost all of the immigrant families who settled in the interior away from the coast, were involved in farming to one degree or another. But it is also a fact that very few made *all* their living from farming, and supplementing family income with an outside job became the chosen option for many families.



Peter and Anna Hendrickson with sons, Salvin and Verner, in front of new barn

There were limits on what work could be found locally. There were a few businesses scattered around, shingle mills, saw mills and several small stores primarily, but nearly all were single family operations. Occasionally, work was found graveling or repairing township roads, but this was usually not a steady job. Other than the Lundquist brothers, Hjalmer and Victor, who on occasion hired help at their mill and lumber business or in their small manufacturing plant where they made skis and fish boxes, there were few places to find a salaried

job. "Working out," the term used to describe the practice many men had of working during the week at jobs in Two Harbors or Duluth, became the accepted way of life for many families who farmed. Women stayed at home, took care of the children and ran the farm; men, from Monday through Friday, found lodging at boarding houses and worked on the docks, in the mills or on the railroad. By week's end, tired and occasionally having celebrated a little too much in town before leaving, they caught the "midnight highball"—the last train of the night to go up the shore—got off at their designated stop, and began the long walk home (giving a whole new slant and meaning to the term "Stiff Line" for those who lived along the Homestead Road).

Sauna night was a weekly event for most families and close to a ritual for the Finnish. For those who did not have a sauna of their own, a walk through the woods or a wagon ride would quickly bring them to a neighbor willing to share theirs. After a good steam, participants moved to the house where conversation continued into the night, accompanied by the light of kerosene lamps and the smell of the woodstove. Sunday afternoons were reserved for visiting. Less work was done on these days than others, normally just chores that couldn't be put off like milking and feeding livestock. Large families meant there were usually enough

children to play with. As adults talked, sipped coffee and played cards, youngsters gathered together for games or headed outside for activities. This was an era before television, and for most children in the area, a time before radio became part of their lives as well. Spare time was spent outdoors. Warm weather meant trips to the favorite swimming hole, picnics, berry picking and brookie fishing. Winter was full of skating, sleigh rides, cross-country skiing and, for those in the French River settlement, the chance to see how fast your toboggan could go down Eli Johnson's hill.



Skiing along French River, circa 1920



Bob and Steve Jones playing in the Sucker River Rapids, 1920s



Heading to the Winter Frolic Hazel Englund and "Grandpa"



Ethel Englund and Marie Engelson Outing to Barr's Lake

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 2435036

TO BE GIVEN TO THE PERSON NATURALIZED.

CERTIFICATE OF NATURALIZATION



Petition, Volume: 30 Number 7386

Description of holder: Age, 48 years; height, 5 feet, 6 inches; color, White; complexion, Fair; color of eyes, Blue; color of hair, Black-Grey; visible distinguishing marks, Deformed index finger left hand; previous residences and places of residence of parents, _____

(NOTE:—AFTER SEPTEMBER 22, 1922, HUSBAND'S NATURALIZATION DOES NOT MAKE WIFE A CITIZEN.)

Names, ages, and places of residence of minor children, Conrad 20 years and Svea 17 years, Reside with parents.

ORIGINAL

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF ST. LOUIS

Best remembered that Walfred Odellus Hendrickson residing at number R. F. D. #1, Box 24 town of French River county of Minnesota who previous to his naturalization was a subject of Gustavus V King of Sweden having applied to be admitted as a citizen of the United States of America pursuant to law and a Special term of the District court of St. Louis County held at Duluth, Minn. on the 22nd day of June in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and 27 the court having found that the petitioner intends to reside permanently in the United States and that he had in all respects complied with the Naturalization Laws of the United States, and that he was entitled to be so admitted, it was thereupon ordered by the said court that he be admitted as a citizen of the United States of America.

(SEAL) In testimony whereof the seal of said court is hereunto affixed on the 22nd day of June in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and twenty-seven Independence, the one hundred and fiftieth.

Clerk of District Court
(Official character of attestation)

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

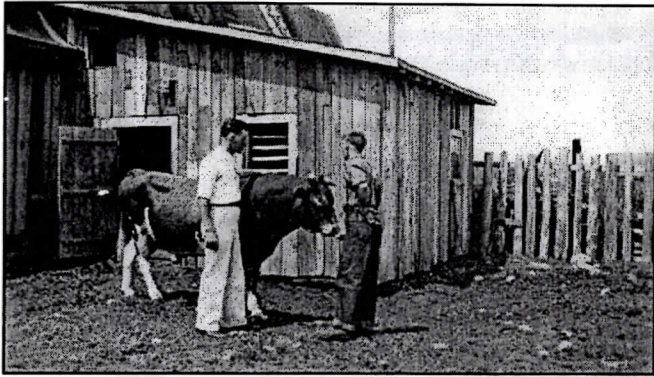
Walfred Hendrickson's "Certificate of Naturalization" dated June 22, 1927

Evenings for many meant studying. This was true not only for the children attending the many small schools scattered throughout the area, but for the adults of the community as well. Many of the immigrant settlers could neither speak nor read and write in English. Yet they needed these skills to attain their dream of American citizenship. Americanization classes were held at local schools. History, civics and English language classes were part of the coursework. Command of the English language and an in-depth understanding of American government were required before citizenship papers were granted. Long hours and, for some, many years of study were required before the rigorous exam was passed. Yet the pride and satisfaction apparent upon its achievement made it clear the effort had all been worth it.

Community Life

By the mid 1920s, life was taking on at least a sense of routine for most families in the area.

Finally, there were occasional times when work was actually finished, times for relaxation and gathering together to celebrate as a community of people. This is not to say that community or cooperative efforts had not taken place beforehand. Possibly the best example of that early cooperation was the Homestead Farmers Association. But there were numerous other times when people joined together for the common good as well. Such efforts resulted in the building of roads, barn raisings, the creation of co-operative stores and in sharing equipment. One of the more unusual examples of cooperation was the Bull Ring Association. This association or club was formed by a group of farmers who realized the necessity of having a purebred bull in the area, but who individually could not afford one. Pooling their resources, the club raised enough money to purchase the animal, which was then rotated every few years to different farms in the area.



*Bull "Golden Prince of Clover Glenn"
on Nick Smith's farm, circa 1930s*

Primarily, however, these early cooperative movements were what could be thought of as "efforts of necessity." This type of community participation was based on need, which once accomplished helped make life a little easier: the completed bridge that made the creek easier to cross, the co-operative store that provided the essentials of daily life, the establishment of a post office. The difference between these efforts and what began to emerge in the 1920s and 1930s can probably be summed up in one word—fun. Community efforts no longer had to concentrate on making life less difficult, instead the direction moved towards making life a little more fun.

In 1923, the French River Community Club first opened its doors. Its inaugural event was a wedding shower for Paul Saari and Elsie Oberg. For the next 15 years, this small, lap-sided building located southeast of the Ryan Road-Lismore Road crossing hosted scores of community events. This type of community club became the core of nearly every small rural settlement throughout St. Louis County. By 1928, over 50 clubs had been established, a number that eventually would exceed 150. Some were based strictly on agricultural programs; others, like the French River Club, covered a wider range of activities including dramatic arts, speech, music and athletics. The club involved about 30 active families, but events often drew people from all across the area. Membership for the most part was comprised of local farming families, but the club was fortunate to have a core of people whose talents and resources reached far beyond the immediate area.

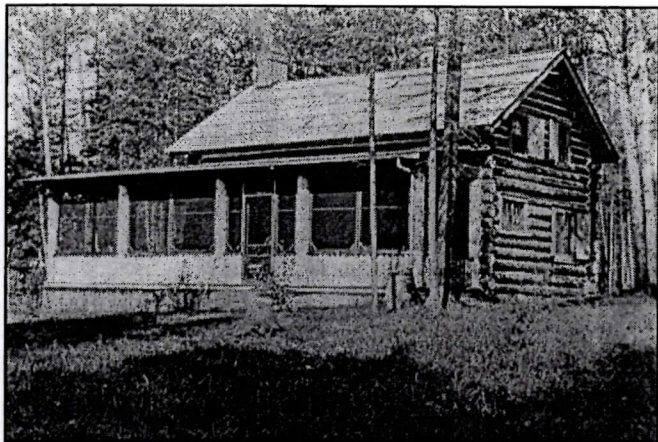
Robert Mace was a purchasing agent for the Oliver Mining Co., who along with his wife Clara, son Harry and three daughters, Belle, Edith, and Callie, resided in the City of Duluth on East Third Street. In 1909, Mr. Mace purchased a quarter section of land along the French River and proceeded to have a cabin constructed to serve

as a trout fishing retreat. Early records from the cabin's guest book hint that the Mace family differed in many ways from typical farming and commercial fishing families of the area. Prominent and well-known citizens spent time at the cabin; entries from a single Fourth of July get-together list guests from St. Paul, Washington, D.C., New York City and London in attendance.

After Clara's death in 1920 and Robert's in 1924, the three daughters, all now in their 40s, added a large addition to the cabin and moved permanently to the area. Dividing time between developing their farming operation and local cultural activities (none of the three ever married), they soon became active in the French River Club playing violin and piano and singing in its Glee Club section. The Mace home was filled with books and art work, and it was there they often entertained members of the Community Club, providing for many in the area an opportunity to know a way of life much different from their own.



*All dressed up
Saturday night at the French River Community Club*



Mace family cabin on French River

Others who also helped make the French River Club a success included Robert and Mary Gale, who did much of the musical direction. Mr. Gale was the superintendent of the Fish Hatchery, but both he and Mary had backgrounds in music. Both were concert pianists, had studied music in college (he at Harvard and Cambridge), and had taught musical instruction in Minneapolis before severe eye strain forced a switch in careers for Mr. Gale and the move to French River. Soon the sounds of Wagner, Tchaikovsky and other composers began filling the air of the little French River Club. Eventually contests were scheduled, pitting the numerous community clubs of the area against each other, not only for musical prominence, but in the areas of speech and drama as well. Speech and drama were a part of the Dramatic Arts group of the Community Club. Numerous plays were produced over the years, many under the direction of Frances Hoffman, who later helped found the Duluth Children's Theatre. Yet, as important as it was to provide an environment for cultural exposure and growth, many activities were simply entertaining and fun. Saturday night at the club was just such a time. After all, Saturday ... meant dancing.

Dance Night

It is almost impossible these days to appreciate the important role that dance played in people's lives during the middle part of the 20th century. It is safe to say not a weekend went by without a dance scheduled somewhere in our community. Every local township hall sponsored their share, but many other locations were used as well.

Along the shore, dances took place at favorite night spots such as the Shorecrest and Fish Fry. Inland, it was usually more informal. It seemed as if every other person played a musical instrument of some sort, and most any occasion seemed reason to call a dance. All it took, Wes Laine once recalled, was for someone to get itchy feet and say, "Let's have a dance." Dances commemorated barn raisings, celebrated marriage unions, were held at seasonal festivals such as Midsummer, and were organized on many occasions solely to gather and socialize.

Although dances took place in just about any setting large enough for a band, two locations seem to stand out in most people's memories as favorite dance spots—Molde Hall and "Dans Lava." Molde Hall was located in Alden Township at the crossroads of the App, Two Harbors and Fox Farm Roads. Dances at the hall peaked in popularity during the days of prohibition, when often as much activity took place outside the dance hall as occurred inside on the dance floor. Moonshine liquor was readily available either in the woods out back of the hall or for those a little bolder, simply out of the trunks of many cars lining both sides of the road. Dance nights could get quite wild. People from far and wide came to see if the hall's reputation was true, buy a little "moon," and maybe even occasionally dance. Few other dance halls had reputations that matched Molde's.



Molde Hall on dance night



*Normanna Garden Flower Society (above)
Local music group "Ruralaires," 1949 (right)*



French River baseball team, 1929

Dans Lava was a popular spot that gained its notoriety not so much for the varied activities that took place during the dances, but for the uniqueness of its setting. Dans Lava was an unusual dance site. It was built atop Abrahamson Hill near the Ryan Road-Pioneer Road crossing. In truth, it wasn't really a dance hall at all, but more of an outdoor pavilion—no walls, no roof, just a big dance platform where one could kick loose and dance under the stars. ("Lava" in Finnish means stage or platform.) Located on the Nestor Mattson property and built by him with the help of friends, Dans Lava was the place to go in summer. When one became too tired to dance, many benches built along the platform's edge provided needed spots to rest. When it was finally time to go, parents simply gathered up the kids (who occasionally fell asleep in the maze of crawl spaces under the dance floor) and headed home, already looking forward to the next week's dance.

Although dances got just about everyone involved in community life, many other activities held people's interest as well. Along with social clubs such as Scouting, the French River Pleasure Club, the Normanna Garden



Girl Scouts hiking along the shore, circa 1950s

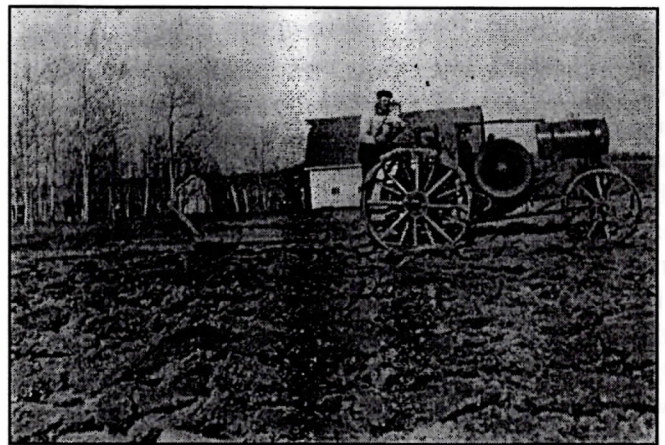
Flower Society or the Women's Auxiliary, there were active agricultural organizations including 4-H, the Farm Bureau and the Future Farmers of America. Groups centering around sports and physical activity were also popular. One of the more closely followed team sports was the local baseball league, which began playing in the early 1920s. Nearly every settlement able to field enough players, formed a team to compete for the local title. Normanna, French River, Greysolon Farms, Adolph and Clover Valley all participated. Practices took place in the evenings after the completion of work or chores, with most games played on Saturday or Sunday afternoons. Baseball diamonds were often no more than converted farm fields. The French River team played on a field located along the Shilhon Road, a mile and a half west of the Homestead Road. The three-acre site was purchased for \$300 and made into a respectable baseball diamond with many hours of volunteer labor. With construction of Clover Valley High School in 1929 and the subsequent introduction of intramural sports, interest in the baseball league faded. By the late 1930s, it no longer existed and high school sports took center stage.

Farming Begins to Specialize

By the mid-1930s, the Northeast Minnesota Experiment Farm had greatly expanded its services. Dairy barns, sheep barns, orchards, auxiliary buildings, a hall, cafeteria, houses for its permanent staff and dormitories for those attending workshops filled the grounds. Its annual spring conference, a four-day affair officially known as the "Farm and Home Management Institute," drew on average over 3,000 attendees filling the 800-seat auditorium several times over each day. Conference seminars covered a variety of topics—a clinic on potato disease might have followed a demonstration on proper rope tying or a talk on the value of crop rotation. A discussion on "how to pick a sound horse" might have competed with "tips for domesticating wild flowers" or a workshop previewing new apple varieties. Farmers learned many lessons through the close ties developed with the Experiment Farm over the past quarter century. Potatoes were no longer grown to the extent they once were, though rutabagas were still popular. Trials of grain and forage crops continued, but many were now being conducted through the joint cooperation of the Experiment Farm and local high school agriculture classes. Such was the case at Clover Valley High, where testing of soils for acidity and of dairy herds for the production of butterfat were routinely conducted in the mid-1930s. Other experiments at the school included the introduction of fruit trees, raising of bees, and the use of lime on acid-rich soils. Dairy farming continued to play an important role, but several new speciality areas of agriculture gained popularity.

For years the Experiment Farm conducted trials on fruit varieties adaptable to the area. Several types of apples and pears were grown, and small orchards had been started on a number of farms. Strawberries and plums were also tried on experimental plots, but the fruit with the most promise for this climate was unquestionably the raspberry. Strongly promoted by the Experiment Farm as a crop with endless demand, many area farmers began planting a portion of their land in raspberry canes. Varieties like the traditional Latham, as well as newer stock such as the Madawaska, Ottawa, and Rideau varieties, were grown. By 1936, 200 farms were in raspberry production, most located within a 50-mile radius of the City of Duluth. By 1939, that number had nearly doubled. The raspberry growers, by now organized into a co-operative, constructed a refrigerated warehouse in West Duluth

and shipped a railcar of freshly-picked berries to Chicago each week. Several farmers in our community became involved in this new speciality crop as well. Ethel Dahlgren remembers the large raspberry patch on the farm of her relatives, the Lundquists, and the fact that many of the berries grown there were eaten in some of Chicago's finest restaurants within 24 hours of being picked. Considering fresh fish were also being shipped from our community during this same period, it is intriguing to think some patron in a restaurant 500 miles away might, in one evening, have dined both on a meal caught from our waters and a dessert grown from our soil.

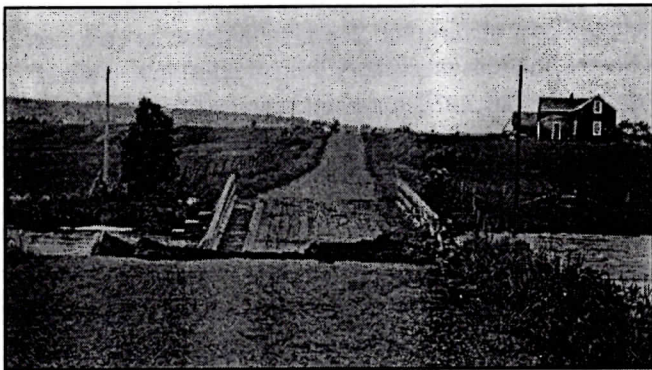


Plowing fields with mechanization, 1936

By the mid-1930s, mechanization was becoming an accepted part of farming. Tractors became as common as horses, modern machinery helped eliminate some of the tasks that, up until that point, required mostly the work of hands and back. Yet, one form of modernization had still not reached our community—the introduction of electricity. For the first three decades of the 1900s, electrical service was an option primarily for those living in urban areas. Across the country, only about one of every ten farms was electrified, and in our community, virtually no electrical service was available. Around 1935, a group of local citizens formed a committee to explore the options available for bringing electrical power to the area. The committee decided to contact Minnesota Power & Light (now Minnesota Power) about extending their service in our direction. They agreed, but a deposit was required from everyone desiring hookup, and many local people felt the cost was too high. Coincidentally about this same time, a group from the Two Harbors area was trying to get rural electricity organized in their area. The United States Congress had just passed legislation establishing

the Rural Electrification Association, or REA. The REA was an agency of the Department of Agriculture designed to help bring electricity to remote and isolated rural areas of the countryside. The Two Harbors group formed a co-operative, received backing of the REA, and began extending a line west toward the areas of Alden and Clover Valley. Because of the REA loan, membership and electrical rates in the co-operative were considered reasonable, and nearly everyone signed up for the new service.

A problem arose, however. Minnesota Power & Light had already begun extending lines into the community and claimed rights to establish their service as far east as the Bergquist Road. The co-operative began setting poles as fast as they could. Thor Borgen, who worked on the line from Two Harbors, recounted in a 1987 interview that it was required of each worker to average four holes a day to keep his job. With each hole hand dug to a depth of six feet, the work was not easy, but the pace had to be maintained. Electricity was now reaching the community from two directions. By 1938, most of the work to electrify the area between the City of Duluth and Two Harbors was completed. To this day however, over 60 years after the original lines were stretched, the community still remains divided in its electrical service—the western half being served by Minnesota Power and the eastern half by Cooperative Light & Power.



*Looking north on Bergquist Road after 1942 flood
(Note the power poles.)*

The introduction of electricity modernized the farm home. Thor's first purchase was a freezer. Lights and refrigeration were probably some of the greatest benefits the new service provided. Electric lights, after all, extended work or play further into the evening by simply turning a switch, while refrigeration added a great convenience in food storage and preservation.

But electricity also brought one more thing—radio. Radios prior to this time were limited to battery-operated units, often unreliable and with which it was difficult to receive clear signals. Suddenly with electricity, immediate access to events throughout the world reached into nearly every family's farmhouse. No longer did the world seem so large and distant, nor was our community so unaffected by the events taking place in it.

World War II and the Change It Brought

In the fall of 1939, Germany attacked Poland. Within months, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, Norway and Denmark were all under German rule—World War II had begun. The war's effect on our community was both great and long-lasting. The stability and security of rural life in this area, up until then, was suddenly shattered. By the time the United States officially entered the war on December 7, 1941, following the attack on Pearl Harbor, lives of nearly all in the area had changed. Men were either leaving to fight in the war or working jobs here at home—on the docks, at the shipyards, or in industries—producing materials and armaments for the war effort. Women as well provided support, working alongside men in plants and factories of the area or joining the women's branches of the Armed Services. In the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, their work as cooks, clerks and mechanics freed up more men for combat duty.

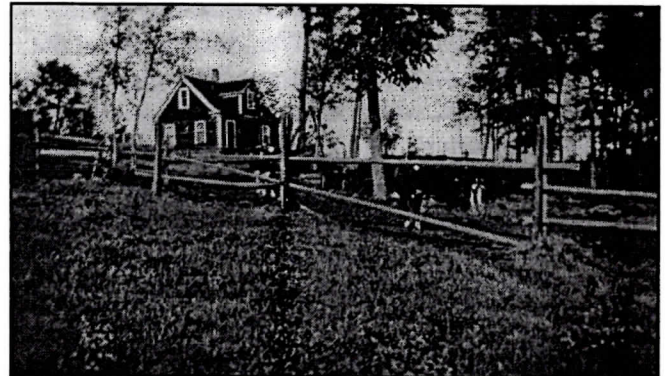
Fear of sabotage caused precautions to be taken even here, at home. The war effort depended heavily on raw materials being supplied by the iron mines of the region. Since much of that iron ore was shipped along the Duluth Missabe & Iron Range Railroad, extra efforts were taken to ensure the safety of the shipments. Every bridge along the rail line between the City of Duluth and Two Harbors was protected by an armed watchman, including several sites within our community. As consumer goods and materials vital to the war effort became scarce, the government imposed rationing in an effort to assure fair distribution. Since most people of the area grew much of their own food, rationing of certain items like meat and butter was not as critically felt as the restrictions imposed on the purchases of imported items, such as coffee and sugar. Rationing of tires and gasoline was probably most severely felt by the community. Trips to town were limited, and excursions simply for entertainment were all but eliminated.

By the time the war ended in 1945, changes to our community were evident. In most people's minds, no other event had such an impact on changing us as did World War II. Farming, a way of life for nearly everyone before 1945, was suddenly in competition with many high-paying, steady jobs created by the war. It became clear to most workers there were far less difficult ways to make a living, jobs with both more security and fewer hours, than milking dairy cows or raising raspberries. After all, as one interviewee said, it was tough to get someone who had just fought and won a war to pick berries "for 5 cents a pint." In truth however, the war was probably only the most obvious of many reasons that farming declined in the decade after World War II.

Farming, as was the case with commercial fishing, could probably have survived and adjusted to any one critical setback. But like fishing, changes farming faced from the late 1940s on came quickly and from many directions. The war altered more than our community; it changed the nation as a whole. Markets once local were now regional and national. We began importing oranges, pineapples and grapefruit in much larger quantities than we were exporting rutabagas and raspberries. Wider markets also meant more competition. Idaho potatoes could be shipped and sold here almost cheaper than they could be grown locally. Of critical importance was the fact that individual grocery markets and small local chains, which had purchased the bulk of area produce, were bought out by large national organizations with little allegiance to local farmers. Farming itself was becoming big. The small family farm gave way to corporate agriculture with rules, regulations and sanitation guidelines beyond what a small family farmer could afford. Lastly was the condition of the soil itself. After years of plowing and planting, it had become baked and hardened. Never deep in rich topsoil to begin with, it was simply losing nutrients and humus faster than they were being replaced. By the mid 1950s, farming, which for over a half century had played so important a role in our community, was struggling to survive.

Gradually, more and more farmers sold their livestock, stopped planting their fields, and drove their tractors into barns for the last time. By 1959, the total number of farms in St. Louis County, which at one point had exceeded 8,000, had dropped nearly

75% to only 2,153. By the early 1960s, the number of people actively farming in our community was dropping rapidly as well. Farming as a way of life was all but over. Mark Thompson, who was superintendent of the Farm Experiment Station for 40 years, reflected in his 1973 memoirs that in the rush to put a "farm on every forty," too much marginal land had probably been cleared—land that should have stayed forest was cut, and areas that were not meant for a plow were too often planted.



Cows grazing on the Burk farm

With that in mind, it is all the more remarkable that farming did make it here, and that, in its own way, it was successful. What this land ultimately produced was a reflection of the effort and ingenuity of the people who transformed a small section of earth from a land of forests to a land of farms. Though faded, it is a way of life that need not be forgotten. It can still be sensed as one explores the back roads and the back forties of our community. The open pastures, remains of old barns, relics of stone fence rows and abandoned farm machinery all take our thoughts back to a different time. Viewing these scenes, one is reminded of the sweat poured out in an effort to clear and plant these fields, the toil of horses, and the multitude of hands that worked this soil so many years ago. Yet at the same time, one should also remember the music that was played, the feet that danced, the voices that sang, and the laughter of children for whom this land was home.

Chapter Eight

BACK TO THE LAND

This concluding chapter tells the story of our most recent history and covers the time from 1960 up to and including the present. This was a time of change within our society, as well as within our community. On a national level, civil rights, women's rights and Vietnam dominated the early days of this period. Internationally, the era witnessed the end of the Cold War, dismantling of the Berlin Wall, and the birth of many modern-day nations. The Industrial Age, which not too long ago had pushed aside the Agricultural Age, began itself to move aside making way for the new Age of Information. Technological advances, the Internet, e-mail, at-home shopping and cell phones made even the remotest rural areas only a click or a button away from anywhere in the world.

Here at home, several significant events were observed. We mourned the closing of Clover Valley High School. We watched North Shore Elementary being built and then watched again as Bloomingdale School was torn down. We observed fields which had so painstakingly been cleared and planted in grains slowly return back to trees. The Bomarc Missile Base was decommissioned after only a few years of operation and its missile bays emptied and shuttered for the last time. The Fish Fry, Forrest Inn, and Wonderland also closed their doors, although their lives had been much longer and, some may say, more intricately tied to the community. The Old North Shore Road and the Scenic Drive gave way to the new expressway as the main route of travel between Duluth and Two Harbors. The Molde Hill Fire Tower felt the footsteps of its last ranger. Lester River Dairy closed, and with it ended the last runs of home-delivered bottled milk. The DM&IR tracks began carrying tourists eating pizza instead of rail cars hauling ore. Matt Jackson's store was torn down, and the French River Store and Clover Valley Store both served their last customers.

Issues of zoning and development, coastal management, road maintenance, and a safe harbor at times divided the community, but other issues in like fashion united it. Over the years, keeping North Shore Elementary open as a community school and opposition to a proposed landfill have rallied local citizens and received widespread support.

In the years since 1960, population Duluth, Alden and Normanna Townships has grown considerably. New arrivals making up that increase have settled here for many reasons. The land itself was still a big draw, as was the natural beauty of the area. But reasons were as varied as the people who arrived. The volatile 60s left many people exhausted and looking for a simpler life. Vacant farmland became attractive to "hippies," environmentalists, and those seeking an alternative and less chaotic lifestyle. Still others were drawn here by the opening of the EPA lab, expansion of educational opportunities, and growth of medical facilities in the surrounding area. Some came seeking a reclusive lifestyle, while others sought the companionship and support of a strong religious community. Some felt a deep inner drive to recapture some of the traditions inherent to the area (small scale farming, for instance), others were attracted to the area as a convenient bedroom community close to jobs in Duluth or Two Harbors.

Someone once described "community" as the ability of people with differing beliefs and backgrounds to "rub up against each other" while still getting along. As our community has changed and continues to change, this idea of "getting along" becomes more and more important. A major focus of the Clover Valley/French River Project is to emphasize to our children that differences need not divide people. As we transition now into a new millennium, it will be the children of our community who form and create our as yet unwritten history. Because of that fact, this last chapter has been completed by them, the youngest members of our community.

In the fall of 1999, North Shore Elementary offered a writers workshop to all students in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. Their task was to carry on the recording of our history, to pass on to others the stories of some of the people who over the last 30 years have made this community their home. The following ten articles are the result of that work. These stories are only a snapshot of the many stories that make-up our community. Each of us has one and as we put them all together, they become "our story"—our history. This is not a final chapter. The book is still being written.

JODY ANDERSON

Jody Anderson is a woman who loves to work with her hands. Besides repairing violins, rehairing bows or making mountain dulcimers, she would love to be a boat builder.

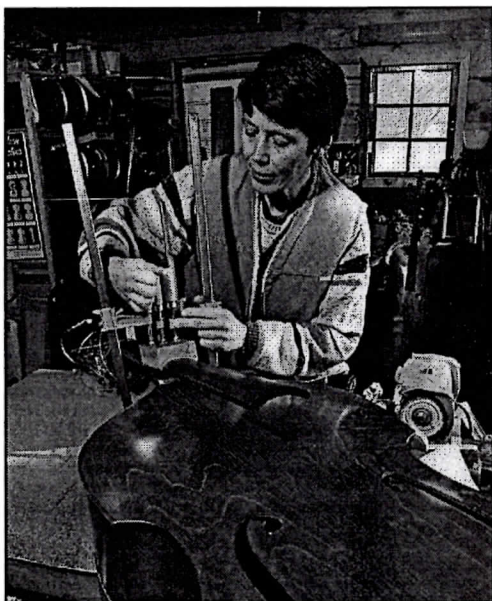


Photo by Charles Curtis / Duluth News-Tribune

Jody moved here in 1976. She had lived with her parents in Duluth and thought it was time to get her own home. The land she bought was originally owned by the Culas family. There were 40 acres, but Jody could only afford ten. She said it was an easy decision to make.

The first time she saw the property, the hay in the field was eye level. She walked around the land and thought, "This place is going to fit me just fine."

She decided to build her house in a clearing in the middle of a small grove of trees. After a few years, she built another building which she now uses as her shop. Inside, instruments hang from every wall and cover her workbench. Most of her days center around fixing them. She uses maple and spruce wood in her repairs. When she has time, Jody also likes to play her violin. Whenever she is not working on instruments or playing them, she likes to be outside chopping wood, running, gardening or playing with her cat, Lucy.

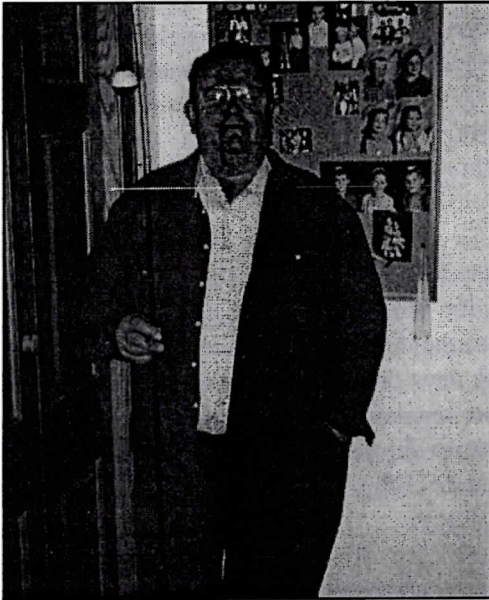
Jody feels fortunate to be a part of our community. She enjoys singing to the Homesteaders (a group of elders who get together once a month), reading to the kindergartners at school, and helping occasionally with Girl Scouts and 4-H. She feels she could do even more and hopes to become more active in other community events in the future.

Jody is a person who followed her dreams and hopes that other girls will see her life as an inspiration and follow their dreams too!

*Kali Hamp-Sill
Grade 6*

DALE BRUCKELMYER

My Grandpa Dale is a person who loves to cook. He would cook day and night if he could. He usually cooks a Thanksgiving feast that all our relatives who live here go to, but last Thanksgiving there wasn't room for everyone. When I walked into my cousins' house, I could smell the Thanksgiving feast being baked, and I could see tables everywhere.



When he was 32 years old, Grandpa moved to Duluth from Minneapolis, Minnesota. He had a hard time moving with his wife and six kids because he had to move a lot of stuff, and he traveled by car. He and Grandma have 15 kids and 56 grandkids. Their kids are Ed, Dennis, Steve, Gina, Bonnie, Cindy, Marie, Bob, Lance, Sarah, Matt, Amy, Joe, Pat and Sue. Two other children, twins, died at birth.

In Minneapolis, Grandpa's job was working in a hotel. Now, he is as a chef at UMD. He moved north because of his job. He is glad he moved because he has such nice grandkids.

When his family moved to their farm in 1974, they had milk cows, horses, pigs, chickens, ducks, dogs, steers and cats. Grandpa sold eggs and milk to his neighbors. He raised his steers for beef and kept it for his family. He also raised ducks and pigs to eat. My cousins and I loved the farm. When we went there, we would go out the barn and swing from a big swing attached to a rafter. We sat on the swing and jumped off of the window sill. The swing dropped down and we could swing in the hay loft. Sometimes we'd pile up the hay and swing right into the haystack. Grandpa and Grandma moved from the farm just last year. Now they live on Wildwood Road.

In the past, my grandpa says he cooked, cooked, cooked and got married. He also stopped smoking, which was smart and hard. It's great to have such a nice grandpa.

*Jessica Sundberg
Grade 5*

GEORGANNE HUNTER

Georganne Hunter likes fresh air, music and living in the country. Georganne grew up in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota and then lived in Denver before moving to Duluth. She didn't like Denver because her son couldn't be alone in the schoolyard or the park.



About 20 years ago, Georganne came up to Duluth to play the harp for the Renaissance Fair. She did not know anything about this area, but she fell in love with Duluth. She decided Duluth would be a great place to raise children. When Georganne moved to Duluth in 1981, the economy was extremely depressed, and there weren't many jobs.

Georganne moved to the Clover Valley area in 1989 when she married Stephen Dahl. Stephen built a little cabin up on the hill, and they lived there for awhile and later added on to it. Stephen likes to make harps, and Georganne likes to play the harp.

Music is a big part of Georganne's life. Besides teaching piano, hammered dulcimer and harp, she also plays with a musical group called Willowgreen. Willowgreen came about when she met Sue Spencer at a performance. Willowgreen has traveled to

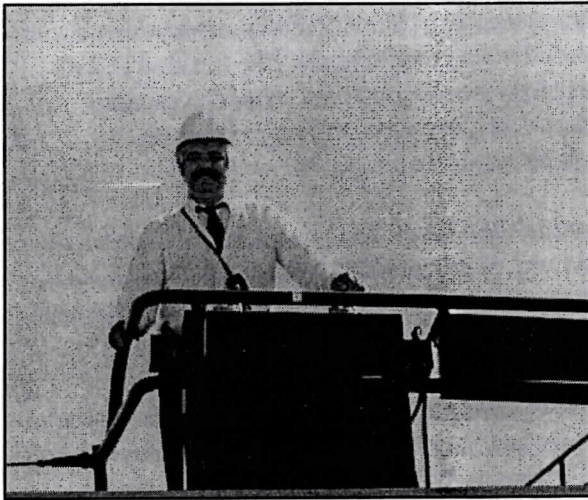
many places including New Foundland, Canada. Their music is primarily Celtic. Willowgreen has made about four CDs.

Georganne enjoys the different seasons here. When the weather is nice, she loves to sit on her porch and play her harp for the trees and animals. She also enjoys gardening. She actually likes to swim in Lake Superior. (Brrrr!) Georganne loves dog sledding and skiing. She likes pine forests. She loves the lake and being able to go run with her dog. Georganne likes this area better than all the other places she used to live.

*Cyndi Driscoll
Grade 6*

FRED JEFFERY

My dad, Fred Jeffery, has a job as a pilot on the ore boat Roger Blough. A pilot reads maps and tells the wheelsman, the man who steers the boat, which direction to go. He also supervises the loading and unloading of iron ore.



My dad has been doing this work for almost 30 years, ever since he was 17. He decided to work on the boats because his father did. Dad has worked many jobs on the boat, so he knows a lot about each one.

Fred Jeffrey was born in Duluth and lived there until he was 8 years old. Then he moved to the Carlton area, about an hour away. Later he moved back to Duluth, and then moved to the French River area. He married my mom, Jean, and they have three children: Madeline, William and me, Gwen. Dad has lived in the area for 15 and a half years.

Since my dad works on the boats, we don't get to see him very much, and he misses us. Two years ago he took us on a boat trip for six days. It was fun, and the food was really good! We had things like turkey, bacon and eggs. There were times I saw land, and there were times I only saw water. On that trip, we sailed to Gary, Indiana and back. Dad's boat takes iron ore to the mills in Gary to turn it into steel.

My dad moved to this area to be out in the country and to be close to his work. His boat goes either to the Duluth Harbor or the Two Harbors ore docks. Both are close to where we live. My dad's work is dangerous at times, and he always has to wear a hard hat on the deck of the boat. My dad's work is very interesting and important, and I am very proud of him.

Gwen Jeffery
Grade 4

JUDY JOHNSON

Judy Johnson and her husband Russ moved from Duluth to the Normanna area in 1979. The land, which Judy inherited, was owned at one time by her great-grandparents, Johann and Ulricka Hagberg. When Judy's grandmother, Mrs. Ada Rawn, died, she left land to her son Howard. Later, he left some to his daughters, Judy and Linda. Judy's family decided to build on their seven acres because it was so very beautiful. The land was next to the Sucker River, and it held some memories of picnics, raspberry picking, swimming in the river with grandmothers, and riding a hay wagon. It seemed like a really good idea for Judy and Russ to raise their two children in this peaceful place.



“Before building our house, we planted 150 raspberry bushes because we knew the ground was good for growing them. It was raining the day we put them in, and we were pretty muddy. We thought probably we had planted too many! It was a real education to build a new road and put in a well and a septic system when we were used to city everything,” Judy said. “We love the outdoors and love where we live. We plant a little less now that our children are grown, but we still like to be outside.”

Judy thinks that we all could take care of the world better than we do now. She thinks that nature is a great teacher too, and she loves to take her classes outside. She loves to watch kids learn and succeed.

Judy first taught at Merritt Elementary School from 1965 to 1969. She then took some years off to raise her children and returned to teach in the Lake Superior School District in 1979. Judy has been teaching for about 21 years now, and she is my teacher this year. She loves North Shore Elementary and thinks it's probably the best school in the whole world. It is small, the children are great, the parents are great, and everyone works together to give the children the very best education. The staff works very hard and is very dedicated to teaching children.

In addition to their children, Julie and Jason, Judy and Russ's family includes a grandson Mac, who is 5 years old. Judy's hobbies are reading, traveling and listening to music. Her husband retired this year, and Judy is trying to decide if she is ready to do that too.

*Andrea Bruckelmyer
Grade 4*

CINDY LIEFFRING

Even though my mother, Cindy Lieffring, likes living in Duluth Township now, she wasn't quite sure when she moved here from Duluth in 1969 when she was just 6 years old. That was because there wasn't any kindergarten in the area. She was disappointed because she had to



wait till first grade to go to North Shore Elementary. She was also excited to move to the country, though, because of her family's new big house. In town they had a tiny house. Her family came to Duluth Township because her father, who had grown up on a farm, didn't like living in town very much.

Cindy says that she mostly likes it here now. One of the reasons is her big back yard. When she goes out there, there is no one else there. One of the things that she doesn't like is that the area is getting more populated. If she were given the chance to move back to town, she wouldn't take it. She said that it's

too populated, and that she would rather raise her kids in the country.

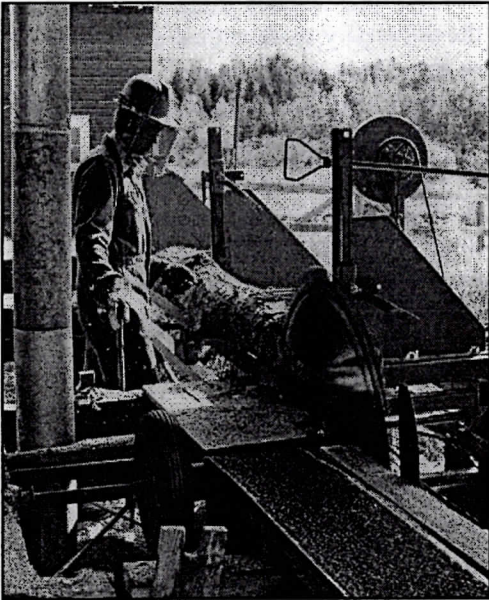
She has a husband named Dan and two daughters, Staci and Sheri. She is currently working as a church organist at Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Duluth. Cindy has an organ and piano at home. When she practices, you can hear, throughout the house, church hymns being played softly on the organ or the piano.

In all, she really likes living here.

*Staci Lieffring
Grade 6*

DON MOUNT

Don Mount is one of the first people we should thank when we think about Lake Superior's clean water. He played a big role in getting one of the taconite mines to quit dumping their waste into Lake Superior. The waste has asbestos in it. Asbestos causes cancer when it enters your body.



Don moved from Ohio to Duluth in 1967 because he wanted to work as the director of the EPA (the Environmental Protection Agency) Laboratory. When he moved to Duluth, he thought he would stay here for five years at most, and then he would move back to Ohio. In 1972, he decided to buy land out in the country outside of Duluth. He bought his farm from the Nordlunds. He bought 40 acres very, very cheaply. The 40 acres had a house and a barn on it. Right after he moved to the land, he found Mrs. Nordlund's cane tracks in the snow going out to the outbuildings. Old Mrs. Nordlund was still taking saunas.

Don has lots of hobbies. One of them is tapping maple trees to make syrup. He started out with 13 trees to show his children how it worked. When he got the hang of it, he tried more and more until he reached the number he does now—3,000 trees. Here is another thing Don got the hang of—raising raspberries. His daughter Marty decided one year to raise strawberries and raspberries. She raised them until she went to college. After she went to college, Don took over raising raspberries up until 1999.

Marty also liked horses, and she owned one until she went to college. Then Don's son Dave started to make cedar shingles to raise money for college. To help with this, they once again got a horse to haul the cedar logs out of the woods. Don had cattle, but the horses chased the cattle around until the cattle went lame. Don felt it had to be one or the other, so he got rid of the cattle. Don had turkeys for awhile until the eggs got a disease and would not hatch. Don logs trees from his land and saws them into lumber with his sawmill. Then he sells it to the community. He also generates some of his electricity with the windmill behind his house.

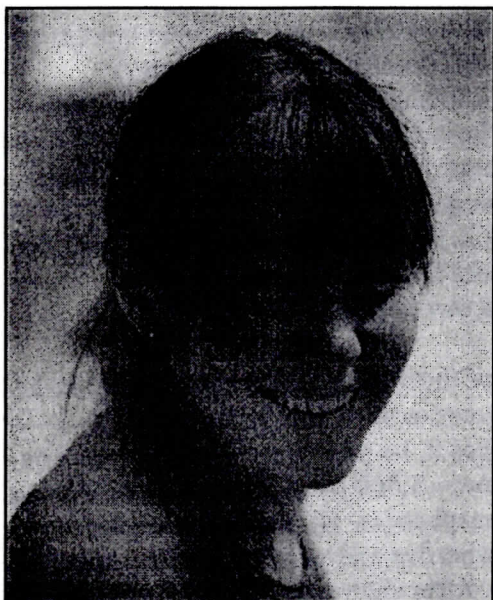
My family bought our house from Don. He is my neighbor. He has lived in Clover Valley for 28 years. When Don retired from the EPA Laboratory, he was a world-famous environmental biologist. Don is 68 years old right now.

I think Don is really cool. I hope you do too, now that I have told you a little bit about him.

*Hannah Johnson
Grade 6*

DEBORAH SHUBAT

Have you ever seen a seven-foot tomato plant with tomatoes the size of baseballs in late fall or winter? One place you can see them is in Deb Shubat's greenhouse at her home on Johnson Road.



Deb Shubat works at the University of Minnesota-Duluth. Deb is in charge of the greenhouse at UMD and also teaches some classes. She grows all the plants needed for the university science classes. At her house, Deb has an orchard where she grows apples, pears, cherries, plums and cherry-plums (which is a cross between cherries and plums). In her orchards, I found something unusual. On some supports for the trees are little wooden boxes with holes drilled in them. Deb says these are nesting boxes for native bees. Because the bees are native, they come earlier in the spring to pollinate than other bees. She also has two very large gardens. She sells some of her vegetables, and she keeps some to eat. She also grows flowers and sells them. A lot of her flowers are sold for weddings.

Deb Shubat grew up in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. Her family was originally from Hibbing. Her parents were tree farmers, and her dad worked as a teacher. Deb first learned about Duluth when she attended college here. She got a degree in horticulture. Horticulture is the art and science of growing things like vegetables, flowers, herbal medicine, tea and many other uncommon plants. She thought Duluth was perfect and that she would stay here forever, but she didn't. She moved to Ely,

where she worked as an environmental educator.

When all the nature people were laid off in the 1980s, she moved back to the Duluth area. Deb came here because she liked living on the lake shore, and she didn't like traffic jams. Before she moved into the house she is living in now, she lived in a teepee on a friend's property. At that time, Deb worked at the fish hatchery by the French River. She says that she would never even consider moving back to the Twin Cities.

Deb says she lives in growing "zone four." That means her place is within one mile of Lake Superior. (North Shore Elementary is in "zone three" since it is farther inland and cooler.) She feels "zone four" is the best growing zone even though there is clay in the soil.

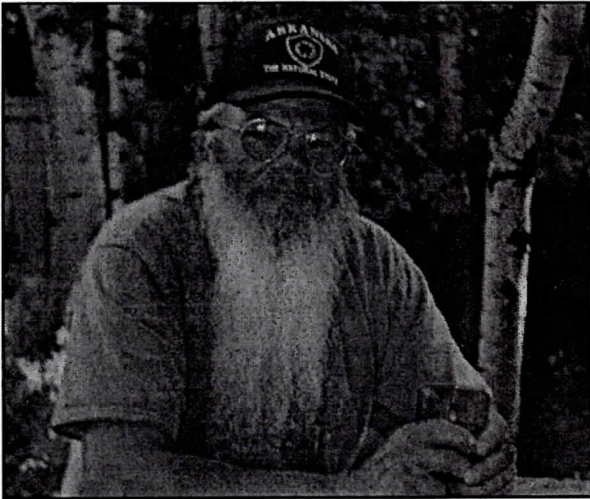
She likes to spend her free time writing, playing with her border collie Sally, and singing. Deb has written and published one book called *Rare Plants of Minnesota's Arrowhead*.

Deb says she thinks that she is fortunate to be living on land like hers. She is happy with her way of life and respects the land. All her gardening is done organically. I think Deb Shubat is a wonderful and amazing person!

Renee Igo
Grade 5

RICH SILL

Are you interested in history? Rich Sill is. He is especially interested in Clover Valley and North Shore history. Rich works on the History Committee at North Shore School. He and other committee members are writing a book called *Roots in the Past, Seeds for the Future*.



Rich came from Minneapolis where he had worked with children with disabilities. He had always wanted to live in the country, and he had loved the North Shore since he was a little kid. He and his wife Terry Hamp had certain criteria for the land they wanted, and when they finally found the right place, it had everything they wanted plus a river. They thought it looked great, so they bought the land and moved to the area in 1979. Rich and Terry built their house mostly on their own, although they had help from their friends. After all these years of work, they have it almost finished.

When Rich came north, he worked for 15 years for Residential Service, Inc., a group home for people with physical and mental disabilities. His most recent job has been working in the school district's School-to-Work program. Rich helps high school students prepare for the types of work they want to have after graduation. During the last six years, Rich has chosen to work part-time while helping to raise his two children, Kali and Caleb. Some of Rich's favorite activities are working with wood in his shop, reading books when he can find time, and spending time at his favorite place—his cabin in Canada.

Rich has felt very comfortable here, he said, because it is a wonderful community. He stays involved in the community by working a lot with elders and volunteering at the school. In the future, he hopes there will be a senior residence for elders of this community so—when they can't take care of their home or farms—they can go there and still be close to home. That way people can continue to be part of the community and won't have to move to Two Harbors or Duluth.

I think Rich has been a big part of the North Shore community.

Lecey Babeu
Grade 6

DAVID YUNGNER

Have you ever met a potter? Well, I have, and I would like you to meet him too. His name is Dave Yungner, and he is a really neat guy. He says he sometimes doesn't leave his house with his car or truck as transportation for two weeks at a time. He makes a lot of decorative pottery.

In fact, he makes more decorative pottery than anything else. Dave emphasizes, "I work hard." It is a challenge to make a living as an artist by just selling pottery.



Dave thinks the North Shore is very beautiful. (I agree with him.) He likes to wake up and look at the sunrises from his bedroom window. He is very fond of the sunsets too. He also likes it here because it is so quiet. Dave does not like fishing or swimming as much as just being by the lake or watching wildlife in the area. He often goes down to the lake to take a break from his work.

Dave came here in 1989. He says when he moved here, he only knew one person from high school who was living here. When he moved, he had only been to Duluth three times before! He considered Bemidji as another place to live, but ended up choosing the North Shore because it was cheaper and also near a lake. He bought his house and small studio on the spur of the moment from a blacksmith who was leaving Minnesota.

One of the questions I asked David was why did you come here? He answered, "I came here because it is a beautiful place to live, and I can work in my studio and look out at expansive horizons. Being a potter, I can live anywhere I want, so I might as well pick a place I like to live. I like a lot of the other artists here, and it is a good arts community." Dave travels to shows around the country to sell his pottery, but sells some at his home on the shore too.

Dave often leaves some small pots out on the beach. He does this for visitors to the beach to find and as a little something to give back to the land for the agates he takes. I'm one of the people who has walked along the beach and has been thrilled to find a couple of his gifts! They remind me of my special neighbor, the potter.

*Scott Igo
Grade 5*

Our Schools

Education has always played a vital role in the life of our community. From the earliest times, when a Paleo-Indian child learned how to successfully throw an atlatl or was taught the important properties of various roots and herbs, to the modern, technology-rich North Shore Elementary of today, the handing down of wisdom from generation to generation has continued. It is hard to imagine and impossible to list all the settings where lessons can be learned, skills can be taught and knowledge can be passed on within a society. Learning, after all, is a life-long, continuous process. In the following pages, we will attempt to cover only one form of learning, albeit a very important one—our schools.

It is hard to over-emphasize the importance of schools in the life of our community. From the early 1890s until the present day, at least 18 schools have provided educational opportunities to the children of our area. Over that time, these schools have not only been a center of learning, but have also served as the focus of community activity and a force for community identity. Indeed, it was to a great extent *because* of the schools that bonds of friendship and a sense of place (those things that give us our “roots”) developed. Initially, there were many schools and, therefore, many small enclaves or in essence “little communities”—Palmer, French River, Alden. But over time as small schools closed and larger ones were formed, this sense of place enlarged. The construction of the Bloomingdale School in 1924 merged most of the communities’ one-room schoolhouses, bringing students from a wide geographic area together under one roof. This development was followed in 1929 by the opening of the newly constructed Clover Valley High School. Serving students all the way through twelfth grade, it marked the first time that children in the area could complete the last two years of their education without having to leave their community and graduate from schools in Duluth or Two Harbors.

The creation of a “community” high school was a source of tremendous pride for local residents. For over 40 years, the high school was the center of educational as well as community life. It was a very sad day when, in 1974, due to the pressures of consolidation, the doors of Clover Valley High were closed for the last time. Dr. David Smith, anthropology professor at the University of Minnesota-Duluth who in the mid-1980s researched the history of agriculture in Clover Valley, concluded that the closing of Clover Valley High School “engendered a profound sense of loss” to the community with effects felt far beyond simply the educational field. It is a tribute to the people of the area that a quarter century after the high school’s closing, a strong sense of community still remains. Today, North Shore Elementary School, built in 1961, has replaced Clover Valley High School as the center of community focus and the force behind community identity. It is probably no coincidence that the geographic area covered in this book almost exactly overlaps both the original geographic boundaries for students attending Clover Valley High School, as well as for children currently attending North Shore Elementary. This fact only reinforces the strong ties that have historically linked our community and our schools. The following pages will focus on some of these individual schools and the roles they played, both in our educational system and in the formation of our community.

Note: The following articles first appeared in *The Landmarks*, a periodic publication containing news, community events and historical information, published locally between 1969 and 1987. A series of articles on schools of the area first appeared in the periodical beginning with the April 1969 issue. Additional articles were published over the next several years. They are reprinted here with permission.

THE NORMANNA SCHOOLS

This is the first of a series of articles on schools in *The Landmarks* area. Many schools in this area have been involved in consolidation, just as we presently are, and we hope to be able to trace the path of each one starting with a tiny, pre-20th century log schoolhouse.

The year is 1890. Scores of immigrant families, settled along Garfield Avenue in Duluth, found times not too favorable. There was turmoil, unemployment and general unrest. No doubt, this was leading to the Panic of 1893. Each nationality found itself clustered together, due to the fact that they knew only their native tongue, and their mode of living was comparable.

In one Norwegian group, Anton Hjelm, then 43, decided perhaps it was time to get away and start the new life he had planned for when he came to this country. It is believed that his reason for coming so far inland, beyond land that was easily homesteaded, was that the Town of 52-13 was still covered with a fine stand of virgin white pine and certainly, beyond a doubt, it was "away from it all."

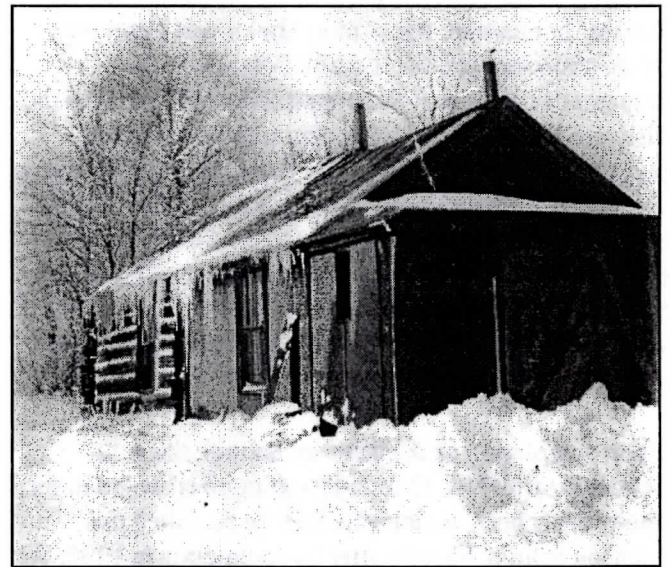
In the summer of 1890, he came up the Vermilion Trail, just west of the Town of 52-13 and across the section line that is now the Normanna Road. This east-west line between Sections 18 and 19 is the center of the lower town of what is now the Town of Normanna. He then built a cruising shack one mile into the town and proceeded to locate the section corners and section lines adjacent to this area. It is believed that this area was originally surveyed around 1860. He apparently liked what he saw and returned to his family and old country friends and told them of his findings. The next summer was spent doing further locating and possibly making preparations for the move to the area the following year.

In the summer of 1892, Mr. Hjelm, an interpreter and master of 26 languages; John Ronning, a carpenter; and Jens Solem, school teacher, carpenter and preacher of the Gospel, proceeded to prove up their homestead in the new town. Ronning moved into his new home on Christmas Day of 1892. Jens Solem moved into his new home shortly into the new year of 1893.

The next year found such families as the Sivert Larsens, Irving Arndtsons, Charley Hagens, Arndt Olsens and the Bill Johnsons in the new area.

These people found mountains of work ahead of them. Shelters had to be provided for their families and stock. Land had to be cleared, stumps pulled and rocks picked. Tote roads connecting the area were cleared and leveled. There must have seemed no end to this enormous struggle, this new and hard wilderness; but, pioneers that they were, they knew they must provide education facilities needed by their children.

The summer of 1898 found these hardy people erecting a log schoolhouse on the Sivert Larsen homestead just to the south and east of that which would become the site later for the John A. Johnson School. Labor and materials were donated, and by the end of harvest time, the new school was ready for use. The only missing item was the schoolteacher, and since they were unable to find one, it was decided that Mr. Hjelm would fill the vacancy. He was the first teacher in the Town of Normanna.



First Schoolhouse (rear log section), 1898-1900

By 1899, the town population was booming and a new and proper school was built. Mr. Larsen donated an acre of land in the newly established District No. 32, and a large one-room school, which later became the John A. Johnson School, was built.

The school year started February 8, 1900. Miss Mae Cummings found herself in charge of nine pupils; Ida Ronning, Edward Ronning, Carl Solem, Jens Solem Jr., Anna Solem, Hattie Hjelm and Lessie Larsen are survivors of this class.

By the early 1900s, the Rusdahl, Fred Schumann, Moen, George H. Cooke and Brandt families had moved into the new town. To the east on the section line that is now the Pioneer Road and adjacent area were the William Kruse, Matt Sarff, John Hagberg and Albin Kanen families. By now, the logging camps had moved into this area, and the new families plus the timber cruisers' and sawmill workers' families needed a school. In 1905, a logging camp school was erected across the road from the William Kruse homestead, and there were five children in attendance. The distance and lack of roads and transportation prohibited these children from attending the new school in the center of town. The logging camp school is believed to have closed in 1909, and these few pupils then walked to what was later called the Johnson School.

The population in the eastern area began to grow by 1910, and the year 1911 found the District No. 32 building a school on the Pioneer Road just east of the Kruses' homestead. Mr. Anton Hjelm was supervisor of construction, and Mr. Ludvik Solem was the carpenter in charge of the construction. Because of the distance of travel, a building was erected for living purposes during construction and was later turned into a wood shed and outhouses. This school was completed by the fall of 1911 and named after Minnesota's first territorial governor, Alexander Ramsey. The Ramsey School could accommodate from 25 to 30 pupils. This was also a one-room school with grades one through eight taught by one teacher.

Upon completion of the Ramsey School, the new School District No. 32 found itself quite crowded in the one-room school, which was later to be called the Johnson School. Shortly after its completion in 1900, the town had a building erected on the back side of this school building which was called an assembly hall. Its dimensions were the same as those of the school, and it was used as the town hall. A town hall had been erected on the French River Road in 1910, so it was decided this Assembly Hall would be moved alongside the present one-room school to provide facilities for twice the number of students.

Again, Ludvik Solem was in charge of construction. A basement was built under the entire structure. Windows were changed, the roof was remodeled, and the easily remembered belfry, with a bell, was built front and center.

The new building now had two schoolrooms—one room for grades one through four and another for five through eight, a library, a stage, and the basement had ample recreation area.

The fall of 1912 found the children attending the new John A. Johnson School, again named after one of Minnesota's governors.



John A. Johnson School, 1912–41

ALEXANDER RAMSEY SCHOOL AND SPRING LAKE SCHOOL

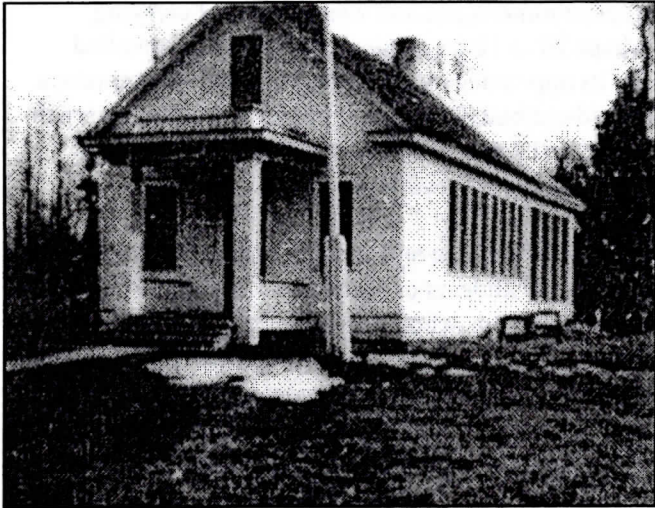
This is the second in a series of articles on schools in *The Landmarks* area.

In the last issue, we covered construction of the first log cabin school, 1898–1900; the one-room school built on the site later to become the John A. Johnson School, 1900–1912; the Alexander Ramsey School, 1911; and the uniting of the Assembly Hall and the one-room schoolhouse into the John A. Johnson School in 1912.

The year 1912 found the Normanna school district in quite an enviable position. They now had two new school buildings, each located in a population center with room to accommodate 70 to 80 children.

The Alexander Ramsey School opened on schedule in the fall of 1911 with Miss Constance Falstad as teacher. She taught grades one through eight, as was the custom in those early days. The new school found the children of William Kruse, Justus Carlson, John Hagberg, Albin Kanen, John Lundgren, Ole Johnson, Beyer Olson, Hjalmer Carlson, Matt Sarff and the Francis family in attendance. The children were required to walk to school since none of them lived too

far away. In later years, transportation by means of horse and sleigh was provided in the winter months by Messrs. Kanen, Hagberg, Carlson and others. Each day began with a 15-minute song period, accompanied by music from the fine organ, which many remember to this day.



Alexander Ramsey School, 1911–32

The new two-room John A. Johnson School was completed in the summer of 1912 and opened that fall. It appears that only one room of the school was in use the first few years, and Miss Bohmer, later to become Mrs. Ed Ronning, was the first teacher in the new structure.

Transportation had to be provided for some of the more distant children as winter set in. The first horse and sleigh “bus driver” was Olaf Hagen in November 1912.

Following the excitement and labors of equipping the new school district with two new structures, the Town of Normanna settled down to learn and grow. The people of the town, all interested and participating, anxiously looked forward to such events as the Christmas programs, the May Day play and graduation. Perhaps the most popular of all events taking place at the Johnson School was the Second District Commissioner’s Picnic, usually held in July. Games were played, races were run, speeches were made and prizes were won. In the fall following the harvest, a farmer’s market day was held. Townspeople one and all toted the finest of their produce and vegetables to display and compare them.

As time passed, the two schools saw many teachers come and go. Many recall names such as Misses

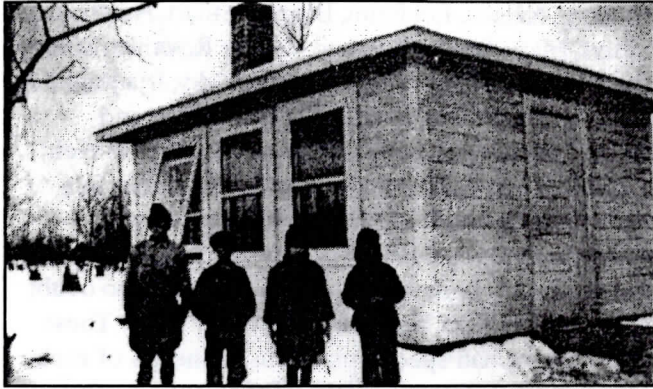
Schoberg, Nelson, Eckholm, Brophy, Smart, Newland, Phillips, Mary Arndtson Solem, Gladys Rovainen Solem, Mae Rovainen Solem, Linnander, Polinsky, Irja Rahkila, Grace Anderson, and Messrs. Rolf, Meager, and Dvorak. These were people of great devotion to their profession. Not only did they teach eight grades in a single room but were required to tend the stove, oversee the library, direct plays, supervise lunch periods, tend to bruises, mediate quarrels, and no doubt mend many broken hearts and dry many tears. These teachers have had special places in the hearts of each of their students throughout their lives.

The method of transportation remained the horse and covered sleigh for many years, except for an occasional ride by auto, solely as a fill-in. About 1925, the first wheeled transportation was provided by Olaf Hagen in the form of a Model T truck with a covered box on the back. The following years found the population still growing, and additional autos were enlisted to speed up transportation from the outlying areas. Before 1931, these student carriers were provided by Lud Solem, Bud Cooke, Carl Shadley, Fred Schumann and others.

In the early 1920s, land was settled farther north in areas adjacent to Spring Lake and Barr’s Lake. Ray Britton had homesteaded in the Spring Lake area and Art Shelton at Barr’s Lake. In the summer of 1923, school was held in the Art Shelton home at Barr’s Lake, and the teacher was Gladys Rovainen Solem. It is believed this method was used for only a year or two.

In 1926, Eben Britton moved into the Spring Lake area, and a few years later the Praeger family moved into the Ray Britton home, and because of the great distance to Johnson School, it was decided that a school would be built at Spring Lake. The school was built in 1929 by Swen Johansen and was opened in the fall and taught by Ethel McIntyre. The children enrolled this first year were the Praeger children—Paul, Richard, Julia, and John. This new school was featured in a Ripley’s “Believe It or Not” article as the smallest school in the USA.

This brings us to 1930. The Alexander Ramsey, John A. Johnson, and Spring Lake Schools are operating and the Depression is here. The next issue will take us through the gradual and inevitable closing of the schools that found such a warm place in the hearts of the residents of Normanna.



Spring Lake School, 1929–39

LITTLE CLOQUET SCHOOL

By 1930, the Normanna School District found it had progressed quite well in its efforts to provide a fine education for their youth. Aside from the addition of a recreation room to the Ramsey School in 1920 and the building of the Spring Lake School in 1929, there had been little need of change of buildings since 1912. The Ramsey and the Spring Lake Schools remained one-room schools teaching grades one through eight, while the John A. Johnson School taught grades one through four in one room and grades five through eight in the other. The teacher in each room taught all subjects to all grades in this given room or school. The local school became the center of activity in the community, and because of the means of transportation in those days, the teacher boarded with a local family through the school year and, in turn, became involved in community affairs.

In early 1931, the school district decided a school bus must replace the cars and trucks then used for transporting the children to the Johnson School. Bud Cooke and Archie McCarrison built a school bus body on a 1931 Model A in the summer of 1931, and Mr. Cooke was owner and operator of the first regulation school bus in Normanna. The bus could carry about 20 passengers and this speeded up transportation considerably.

With the improvement in transportation facilities and funds being hard to come by in Depression days, it was decided in 1932 that the Ramsey School should close, and these children should be bussed to the Johnson School. Miss Phillips was the last teacher in the school and, without doubt, there was much heartache to both the parents and pupils in the east part of the township because of the closing of their school.

Perhaps the lighter side of the closing of the Ramsey School was the transportation provided by Mr. Sidney Sarff to bus the children from that area to Johnson School. His bus, a Kissel auto, was a retired Hotel Duluth jitney used to transport guests from the train depot to the hotel. It had an extended body with unusual posterior dimensions and was capable of carrying perhaps 10 to 12 passengers. More readily recalled than its appearance was its absolute refusal to make a trip without balking or breaking down, but with wrench in hand and patience at his side, Mr. Sarff provided transportation that first year.

Up to this time there had been no high school facilities available to students of Normanna, except for a few scattered periods when a qualified teacher was teaching where they were able to get extra instruction beyond grade eight. The only means of obtaining a high school diploma was to board in Duluth and attend Central High School. This a number of students did.

In 1933, the county schools of the unorganized territory made high school available at the Clover Valley School. The Ludvik Solems took a Packard touring car, extended the body for additional capacity, and Ole Solem, then a junior, hauled the students to high school, attended school and returned home with them in the evening. He continued to transport for two years after graduation, and then his brother Adolph took over. This service was maintained by the Solem family for many years.

As the years passed by, with the Johnson and Spring Lake Schools at capacity and high school available at Clover Valley, the residents must remember these as years of contentment and cooperation, always a flurry of projects and activities to look back on with pride.

Through the 1920s and the early 1930s, the Spring Lake residents consisted of the Eben Britton, Roy Britton and the Praeger families. In the mid-'30s, the Harry Jacksons moved into the Barr's Lake area, and to the north, in what is called the Little Cloquet Valley, we find new families: the Joe Flatleys, William Lathrops, Arthur Olsens and Al Wilsons at Pequaywan Lake. The students in these areas were bussed to the Spring Lake School for a number of years by Joe Flatley and Harry Jackson. The addition of these students to the Spring Lake School swelled it to overflowing, and in 1938, with the addition of the William Wallace, Tom Parker and Elmer Hagen families to the area, it was decided a school must be built at Little Cloquet. Being in an unorganized township, this would become a county school.

The first teacher when school opened that fall was Miss Harriet Wargstrom. The school was, as usual, a one-room school with grades one through eight.

Transportation was again a problem and provided by William Wallace, Mrs. Al Wilson and Jess Story, among others. If transportation could be found, high school was available at Clover Valley, or students were boarded out near schools they preferred.

This new school, like all rural schools of that day, became the hub of the community. All activities, such as the Winter Frolic, Christmas program, 4-H and annual picnics, were always well attended and truly community projects.

The building of the school at Little Cloquet thus relieved the enrollment at the Spring Lake School to the point where Miss Grace Anderson, teacher of the past two years, was transferred to the upper grade room at the Johnson School, and the Spring Lake School was closed in the spring of 1939.

By this time, things were looking quite blue for the Normanna School District, now in its 41st year of operation. Strains of the Depression were still evident and funds to operate a small, independent district were hard to come by. Discussion of joining the county system was in the early stages, but the fear of losing what was felt to be the hub of the community, the school, made them keep going.

Methods of transportation and roads had improved to the point where bussing students greater distances was possible, and the ever-increasing problem of providing adequate funds to operate the district had become insurmountable.

Despite the objections, pleas and carrying of petitions by many, much as we are going through with school consolidations of today, it appeared the John A. Johnson School was doomed. As Miss Irja Rahkila and Miss Grace Anderson excused classes in May of 1941, heavy hearts felt the doors close, never to open again.

The Little Cloquet School, being quite distant, remained open, but with pressure to do away with the one-room schools and the necessity of providing education and transportation through high school grades, the Little Cloquet School followed the fate of the John A. Johnson, Alexander Ramsey, and Spring Lake Schools.

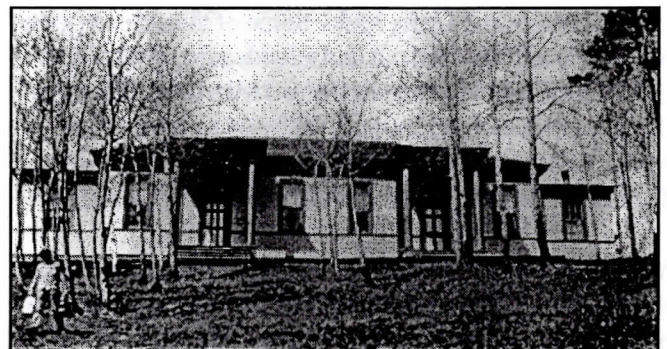
When Miss Hilma Hilmas and her pupils completed the school term in the spring of 1948, the Little Cloquet School closed, bringing to an end an era fondly recalled and cherished to this day.

SCHOOL 90

Children in the French River area literally attended "a little red schoolhouse" until 1916 while they waited for School 90 to be built on the Mace property on the Ryan Road. The first school was near the McQuade home on the Old North Shore Road. They attended School 93 for one year (1917) and the next year the new School 90 was ready. Children came from along the lake shore and from as far north as the Martin Road.

The schools were heated by jacketed wood-burning stoves, which the older boys helped tend. The water cooler was a crockery affair with paper cups. We all learned how to fold paper into a make-do cup when the supply of waxed cups was temporarily exhausted.

Later, a new School 90 was built on the hill near the junction of the Ryan Road and the Old North Shore Road. The hill played a big part in free time activities. Emptying the water cooler down the slope made a slippery slide which sent youngsters on cardboard scooting in and out of the ditch, over the road and into the gravel pit on the other side. Dangerous! Walking the top board of the fence and playing tag and hide-and-seek around the huge wood shed were other "phy-ed" activities.



Second School 90

Lest undue emphasis be placed on the free play, let's hasten to acknowledge that this was where many successful adults learned to read, write, figure, sing, spell and draw. Older students helped younger ones and thereby strengthened their own skills; lasting friendships resulted.



Inside School 90

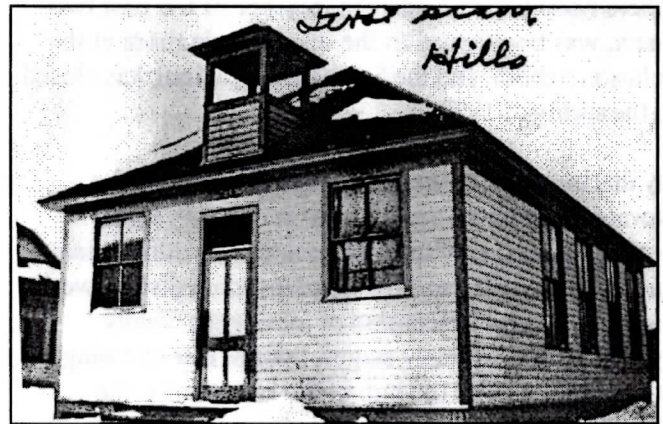
HILL SCHOOL 93

The early 20th century found settlers moving into the area that we know as the Town of Duluth. Charles Saari established a home on the Sucker River near the Finn Road, now known as the Shelhon Road. Andrew Hill settled near the Sucker River on Ryan Road. The Charles Johnson and Postal families were in the area by 1904. By this time, timber companies had also moved in; the Lesure Camp (1908) located at the Lismore and Bergquist Roads, and the Alger-Smith Camp (1908) above the Korkki Road. A school had to be created for the children of these pioneers. Mr. Nordstrom from Two Harbors was hired as carpenter, and the Hill School was ready for pupils in 1908. The first to attend were Gunnar, Hilmer and Svea Grundstrom; William and Elmer Hill; Paul and Nellie Saari; Edna Mattson; and Lydia Maki. Some of these youngsters had previously boarded out and attended the McQuade School at Clifton. The first teacher was Miss Mary Maloney, the second was Miss Haugner, followed by Miss Laura Miller, Miss Hazelcamp, Miss Danforth and Miss Kulos. The teachers obtained room and board from nearby families.

Young men students participated in more than learning the three Rs. They took turns serving as janitor for \$8 a month. The Hill School was not a modern building, so this meant pumping and carrying water and stoking the potbellied stove, which left much to be desired when the weather became bitterly cold. Lunch pails would have to be pushed close to the source of heat so that the contents wouldn't solidify, and frostbitten toes for pupils were not unusual. The youngsters depended on their feet and skis for transportation. How eagerly would today's students absorb an education with these difficulties?

After 1910, more families moved into the district. Finnish people left St. Croix Avenue (South First Avenue East) in Duluth to establish farms where they first logged off the timber and then raised and shipped potatoes. The Swedish settlers came from Garfield Avenue, and at that time Ryan Road was known as Garfield Avenue. Laiti, Lundquist, Jacobson, Burk, Abrahamson, Savola, Culas, Forslund, Hendrickson and Wicklund were new names in school. The Hill School could no longer accommodate the pupil load, so on May 22, 1916, John Knuti was hired to build School No. 93.

On September 9, 1916, two teachers signed a contract to teach in this new school. School started in October and was run on an eight-month term so that ample help could be at home to harvest the potato crop.



Hill School

The community's dreams were being realized. Roads became a reality, and mail was delivered by Mr. Peterson in his auto and sometimes by Paul Saari on skis. Until this time, mail was picked up by patrons at Mr. Jackson's post office and store at the French River train depot. A store was established at the corner of the Bergquist and Shelhon Roads. This originally was a co-operative run by Paul Saari. The upstairs was rented for dances, and these are still vividly remembered by many area residents. Transportation to school in cold weather was provided by Hugo Korkki and John Culas.

The school system was a progressive one, and then tragedy struck—School No. 93 burned to the ground in 1922. They quickly shifted to the Hill School and the store on the corner while the new School No. 93 (Bloomingdale) was being constructed.

BLOOMINGDALE SCHOOL New School 93

School days, school days, dear old golden rule days, reading and writing at Bloomingdale...

The name isn't familiar? Well, the school is gone. This report isn't one of specific years or actual changes made at the school. It is one of nostalgia. Only a small area of rubbish remains at the site of the Bloomingdale School 93 at the corner of Ryan and Shelhon Roads.

Bloomingdale School 93 was very highly rated, the best in the county. The school was comprised of three big classrooms and a library. Two of the classrooms had a folding door between them which was opened to create an auditorium for school programs. The first eight grades met in the classrooms, and the high school (grades nine, ten and eleven) met in the library. In the early days, a student had to go to Duluth to attend twelfth grade and thus graduate. The library also served as a place to be removed to for punishment. This writer remembers being sent there because of the inability to pronounce the letter "r"—no speech therapy in those days. Next door stood a small school building that sometimes was used to accommodate two or three classes. Sometimes grades four, five and six were in there, and sometimes high school students. The teacher that taught in the "little school" would have to tend fire in the big potbellied stove, and a large crockery water cooler stood in the corner of the classroom or in the cloakroom.

The teachers lived upstairs of the big school, and sometimes the sixth, seventh and eighth grade girls were chosen to do their dishes for them in the morning and at noon. They were paid for their work and payday was always a big thrill. On Friday afternoons, the teachers rode the school bus down to the railroad station (now Schmidts) on Ryan Road to catch the train into Duluth so they could go to their homes for the weekend.

In the early 1920s, children were driven to school in wagons or sleighs behind horses, and in the middle 20s, quite a few of the youngsters walked a couple of miles to school. Children "over the hill," Jacksons and Andersons, would pile on a bobsled and slide down the hill over "old Mrs. Liljander's yard" (now the Viergutz property), and end up right at the corner of the Ryan and Shelhon Roads. They would leave the sled there,

and in the afternoon they would pull it up the hill and get in a couple more rides before they went home. In extremely cold weather, it was necessary to warm up in Mrs. Liljander's house. She'd help the children take off their overshoes and shoes and open her oven so they could warm their feet before continuing on to school. By the time they reached school, they would be as frozen again, and then the teachers would have to thaw them.

Olaf Gustafson and Walter Johnson were two of the early Bloomingdale bus drivers. Gus Gustafson took over Olaf Gustafson's run and, to this day, Walter Johnson transports children, now to North Shore Elementary School. Busses finally were provided for the children "over the hill." Tegnar Johnson and Rudy Anderson were early drivers. In 1932, the students from the old School 90 down near the Old North Shore Road began coming to Bloomingdale.

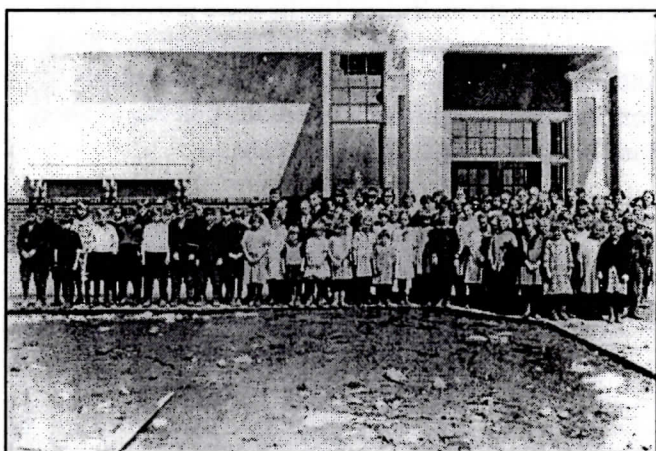


Bloomingdale School, 1919

The school was the center of community social activities. The school picnic at the close of the school year was often held at the falls on Sucker River (behind Ernest Mattsons), and in spite of the fact that there were always a few tumbles into the river, no one ever drowned. Mothers walked to the picnic with baskets of food, and somehow there always was ice cream, a real treat in those days. An equally big event was the Christmas program with a very special play presented by each room and a few selections by the Teenie Weenie Band (no relation to Tauno Thompson's fine school bands), followed by the exchange of gifts and distribution of candy, nuts and apples by a Santa

Claus—Ed Engelson, more often than not. This was an evening event, and this meant that the little children would be walking home after 10 o'clock in the cold winter night. After the PTA was organized, the Winter Frolic became another community event. A large slide for toboggans was made on upper Ryan Road, and skiing competitions took place on Eli Johnson's hill. The highlight of the day was crowning of the King and Queen.

Until custodians were hired, teachers and pupils did the necessary work inside and out of the building every day. Carl Forslund Sr., Art Mattson, Eli Ratkovich and Jack Pavlisich were custodians later, each in turn.



Bloomington School, 1925

The first PTA was formed in 1932, and it was called a Mother's Organization. The hot lunch program was not far behind. Mrs. Hilmer Sunde was one of the early cooks and is still conscientiously guarding the nutrition of the youngsters at North Shore School. Many a student has been introduced to a food they would otherwise regard suspiciously, simply because they wanted to receive the treat given each Friday to "clean plate clubbers."

In the 1930s, Bloomington began graduating students after eighth grade, and they were transported to Clover Valley for high school. The number of grades being taught at Bloomington changed many times during the rest of its occupation. Many changes were made according to what might be beneficial for the education of the children. In its latter years, Bloomington served the first four grades and graduated fourth graders to join the Clover Valley fifth graders. Finally, it seemed a new school was imperative. The population in the area was growing, and a modern plant became a necessity.

Mixed emotions ruled. Mrs. Marie Brown, Mrs. Clarian Frink and Mrs. Ella Mandelin said good-bye to their pupils at No. 93 in May 1961, and greeted them at North Shore Elementary that same September. North Shore Elementary School serves grades one through six, and Clover Valley serves grades seven through twelve, but there are changes anticipated in the future in compliance with state laws.

ALDEN SCHOOLS
District 156 Peter Huotari
District 156 McCrea School

In the early 1900s, we have the first school that existed in the Clover Valley area. The school district was known as L-133, and the superintendent was C.H. Barnes. The first teacher was Ruth Gowan, who taught in her house for six months and then in the Don Driscoll home for two years. Other teachers were Misses Grabor, Evelyn Phanoff from the Range, Dorothy Truman from Two Harbors, Edna Castern, Gertrude Porier, Agnes Hooper and Barbara O'Donnell. In those days, the first eight grades usually were accommodated in a one-room school.

The first school in Alden Township was opened in 1918 on the Laine Road in a two-room cabin owned by Herman Lepisto. Presently, the Towers family owns it. Mr. Lepisto lived in one of the rooms and the classroom was in the other. It was heated by a small wood burner that had two cooking lids on top.

Miss Esther Gould, an 18-year-old girl from North Dakota, was the teacher. She boarded at Pete Huotari's house (Laitinen home now) the first year and with the Eli Neil family the second year. Miss Gould had a habit of heating her coffee bottle on the hot stove, and it broke more than once. She never learned.

This was in the day before school busses, so children walked or skied to school.

In the spring of 1919, Miss Gould decided to have a picnic for the youngsters and chose a spot up the creek. Everyone brought lunch with them, and Miss Gould planned to make coffee on an open fire. This took place in an open spot where an old trapper's log shack stood in a lot of dry grass. Paul Lampi lit a match and the dry grass began to burn. From then on, it wasn't quite a picnic. Everybody quickly scurried out, and that evening

all the farmers fought a forest fire. Luckily, the wind went down and they were able to get the fire under control.

The following year, the pupils went to the Driscoll School (District 133). Transportation was provided—a mule team pulling a canvas-covered sleigh. The driver was Sam Lucci. For warmth in the sleigh, a small kerosene heater was used, but even then, the youngsters froze in spite of the fact that they also were equipped with two pairs of wool socks and rubber pacs.

On one occasion, wolves frightened the mules on the last one-and-a-half-mile stretch to school, and the poor driver couldn't stop them until they got into the school yard. What a wild ride!

The following were pupils at the Lepisto School (1918–1919). All the pupils were in different grades: John Libal, Fern Little, Clarence Little, Lillian (Kantola) Ilenda, Vieno (Jaaskelainen) Marchand, Wesley (Jaaskelainen) Laine, Ellen Long, Aili (Lampela) Anderson, Delia (Virtanen) Reitan, Swante Maki, Aino (Hakala) Pylkkanan, Tuovi (Hakala) Kangas and Paul Lampi.

District 156 held school in the Peter Huotari house (the Rudy Laitinen home now), and the first teacher was Mr. Decker. School began there in 1921. Miss Harriet Wilkins taught in 1922–23. There were three years of school, and the teachers boarded with the Huotaris. At that time, the house stood across the field from its present location. There is still a landmark near Arne Saamanens—a stone foundation near the culvert, which was Huotari's root cellar. There were a small barn and outer buildings, and of course, timber surrounded it all until it was cleared away. The building was later moved to its present site.



McCrea School (1999)

Mrs. Fiina Huotari was a grand person. She would join in the singing of "America" or whatever else was being sung, and if one of the students forgot to bring his lunch, she would invite him to eat with her and Mr. Huotari.

In 1928, there was another school held at the Frank Laine place, known as McCrea's, where most of the same pupils attended that went to District 156. The teacher was Miss Ada Nickinen, and some of the pupils who were in the lower grades are still living in our community.

CLOVER VALLEY SCHOOLS



Clover Valley students, circa 1925

In the Clover Valley area, the first school was built in 1894. This was a rough-hewed log building. It is believed that no picture was ever taken of this school. However, an "L" was added to create more space and the original building was remodeled.

A new school had to be built in 1918. The location was in the Martinson field (now Zane Smith) to the north of the present Clover Valley High School and on the opposite side of the Homestead Road.

In time, the 1918 school was on the verge of being outgrown, and a portable structure was erected next to it. This served until the present brick building was opened in 1929.

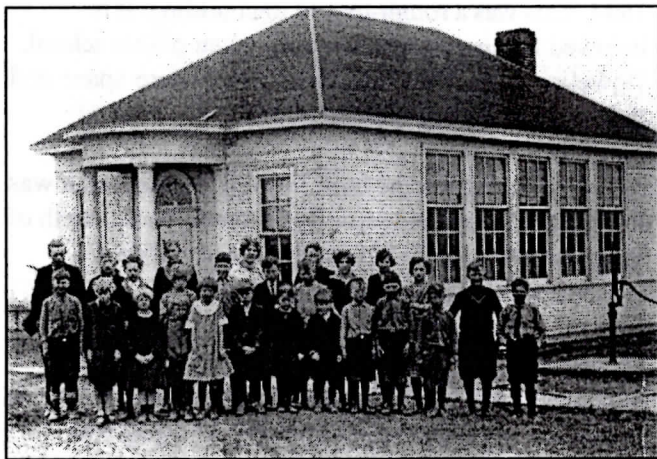
The 1918 school was used as a teacherage after it had outgrown its use as a school. Even today, it still is used for a teacherage at its present location near Clover Valley High School.

Many teachers have worked in the Clover Valley Schools. The first one was Miss Parsons, the second was Miss Eiling, and others included Mr. Sund, Miss Rice, Philip Olsrud, Miss Ida Eckorn, Mrs. Opal Corcoran, Miss Edith Ostlund, Miss Cora Wassberg, Miss Catherine Haugen, Miss Cora Zaiser, Miss Alma Holbeck and Miss Dorothea Price.

SCHOOL 91

In the 1800s, a landsite office was established and a dock was put in Lake Superior. This place, which was later abandoned, was named Buchanan. Settlers moved into this area. Supplies were brought in on boat and by stagecoach from Duluth. The stagecoach trail can still be faintly seen running by the Hilmer Sunde home.

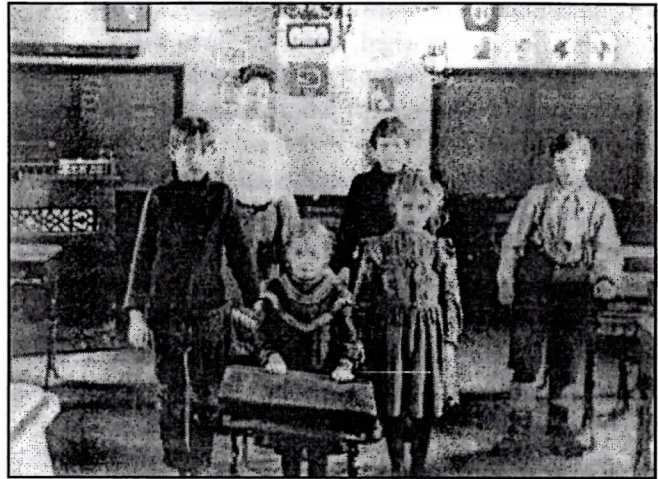
A one-room school was built about 1900 close to the Lake County line. The first teacher was Miss Wigdahl, who later taught in Two Harbors. Times were hard for the settlers. Some of the children had to walk to school without shoes. The students who went to this school were: Sig and Carl Erickson (Knife River); Chester Anderson (Knife River); Christine Walborg; Martha and Hans Mindestrom; Sam, Fred and Susie Croft; John Sandvick; Herman Hanson and his sisters. Later, a school was built at Knife River. The Buchanan School was moved to Crofts near Stoney Point. The Mindestrom, Sandvick and Croft children attended school there.



Palmers School 91, circa 1925

After a few years, the school was moved to Palmers. It seems as though the school was moved where it was needed the most. This school burned and the new

Palmers School was built about 1921. This was School 91. Some of the teachers were: Miss Minnie Remalds, Miss Alma Isackson, Miss Holbeck, Miss Butler, Miss Mildred Saire and Mr. Oliver Hoyum, who taught in 1926–28.



Inside School 91

Children who attended School 91, located just north of the present railroad tracks in Palmers were: Walfred Johnson; Ellsworth, Herbert and Kenneth Olson; Carl, Ethel and Hazen Bergquist; Alice Croft; Howard, Wayne and Bessie Shelhon; Eldred Stromberg; Ethel, Stanley and Raymond Mindestrom; Ruth, Grace, Fred and Marion James; Violet Peterson; Clarence, Milton and Lillian Alseth; Conrad, Lida and Myrtle Sunde; and Clifford, Art and Alphonse Carlson. Graduation exercises were held at the new Bloomingdale School because the Palmers School was too small.

The early bus drivers transported their pupils by horse and sleigh and later by car. Some of the early “bus drivers” were Harold Alseth, Albert Carlson, Carl Bergquist, Mrs. Reynolds and Sever Sunde. The school enrolled about 40 pupils in eight grades, all taught by one teacher.

Bert Stanway of the American Sunday School Union established a Sunday School in the school and met with a group every Sunday.

In 1928, the school was moved again, this time to Clover Valley to be used as a teacherage. It is still serving the same purpose.

CLOVER VALLEY FIRST GRADUATES

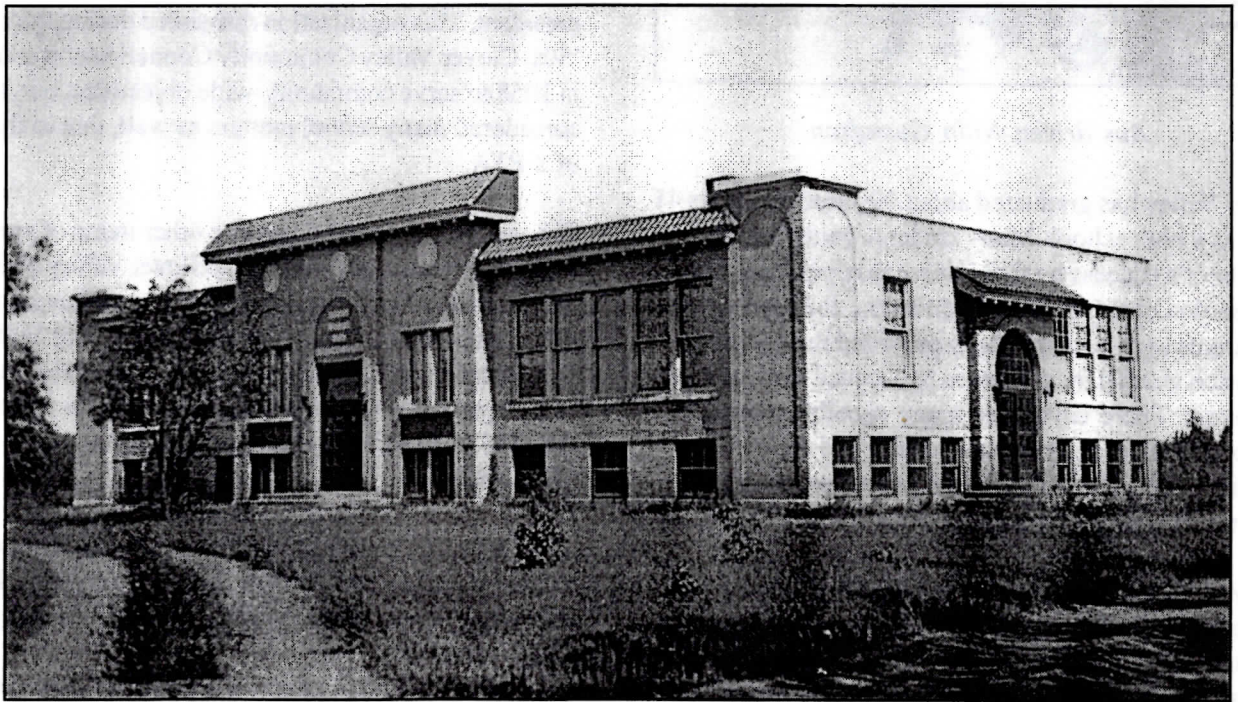
The first senior class of the new Clover Valley High School had 14 graduates. They were pleased because they had a choice of subjects to choose from. Physics and chemistry were especially popular. The whole school coughed and sputtered and eyes watered on the day they made "rotten egg" gas. This class of 1933 had great plans for a class play, but the students giggled and laughed so much during rehearsals that Miss Peters, the teacher, refused to direct them. The play was never presented. Angie Hakala was valedictorian of that first graduation class.

There were 15 members in the 1934 class. They were known for getting things done. By sponsoring dances, they earned money for the things they wanted. They were the first class to have class rings (earned through dances), a class play, the senior prom, a class photograph, an annual, dress-up day and a party at Dan Mahoney's summer home on the lake shore. Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Jensen and Mr. and Mrs. Paul Saari chaperoned the party. Graduation exercises were held on the front steps of the school. The proceedings were

continuously interrupted by squeals from the girls when moths flew too near, and many a pesky mosquito received a loud slap. William Anderson was valedictorian of this class. In August, the class went on a farewell trip on the Steamer Montauk. The most recent activity for members of this class was the reunion for the first five graduating classes of CVHS. This was held last May and was an outstanding success, as testified by the numbers who attended the dinner, tour of the school and dance.

This may or may not have been a typical senior class of CVHS, but each graduating group in its own way has left its mark on the school. The enrollment increased so that in 1953 a new addition was built. This updated the educational process, and the community was proud of the increased learning opportunities that were gained.

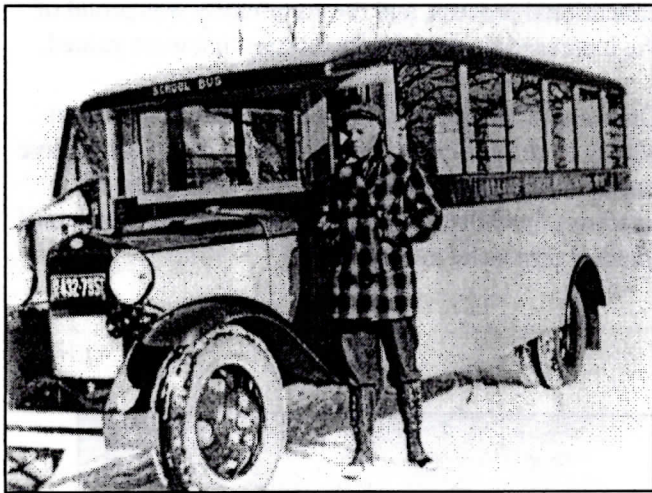
Once again, there is a change in the future of Clover Valley High School due to legislation which would have our unorganized county schools become a part of another school district. This story will have to wait until another time to be told.



Clover Valley High School, circa 1935

CVHS GRADUATES LAST CLASS

May 29, 1974. The last senior class to graduate from Clover Valley High School received their diplomas with the usual mixed emotions of relief and satisfaction, anticipation and anxiety for the future, and the strange realization that Clover Valley is closing. This class cannot return to basketball games or dances to meet again with classmates and teachers. Others of their families won't follow their footsteps through the same halls, and someday they'll probably hear, "Clover Valley? Where was that?" They'll be without traditions. The underclassmen expecting to transfer to Two Harbors also have mixed feelings about consolidation.



Bus driver, Niilo Gustafson

Clover Valley has graduated about 800 students in its 41 years as a high school. Many students contributed to the school's success by their active participation. The cooperation of the Board of Education, the teachers, the parents and the community provided the quality of education needed by graduates to succeed in their adult endeavors. There have been many excellent teachers at Clover Valley, and students usually had their favorites. Most of the faculty will move now with the students to Two Harbors schools.

Many interesting items can be garnered from the school's yearbooks. The class of '53 was the smallest with only six graduates, and the class of '71 was the largest with 45. The classes of the early '40s were all small as the boys left to become men for Uncle Sam. There were 14 in the first class of 1933. The class of 1934 with 15 members was known for spirit and leadership. Their president, Margarite Oberg Blaisedell,

is still enthusiastic about class activities. In 1969, this class held a reunion for the first five graduating classes, which was a huge success. They had a smaller reunion on May 18, 1974, to observe the 40th anniversary since graduation.

Community fairs were held every fall at Clover Valley in the 1930s. Small barns on the school grounds housed animals, and there were exhibits of garden produce and handwork, plus a variety of contests to test the menfolk's skills.

The first yearbook (1934) was called the *Bugle*. Names for the annual changed frequently according to whim, however it was known for many years as *The Clover Leaf*. W.W. Salmi, the County Superintendent, suggested in 1951 that the book be known as the *Cavalier*. The annual won many awards including two national awards in 1948 and 1949. The school paper was *The Echo* until becoming *The Swashbuckler* in 1973. "The Cavaliers" were the basketball team and always received community support. Basketball homecoming was the most popular event of the entire school year. In 1947, 1948 and 1949, Clover had the winning squad of cheerleaders in the South St. Louis County competition.

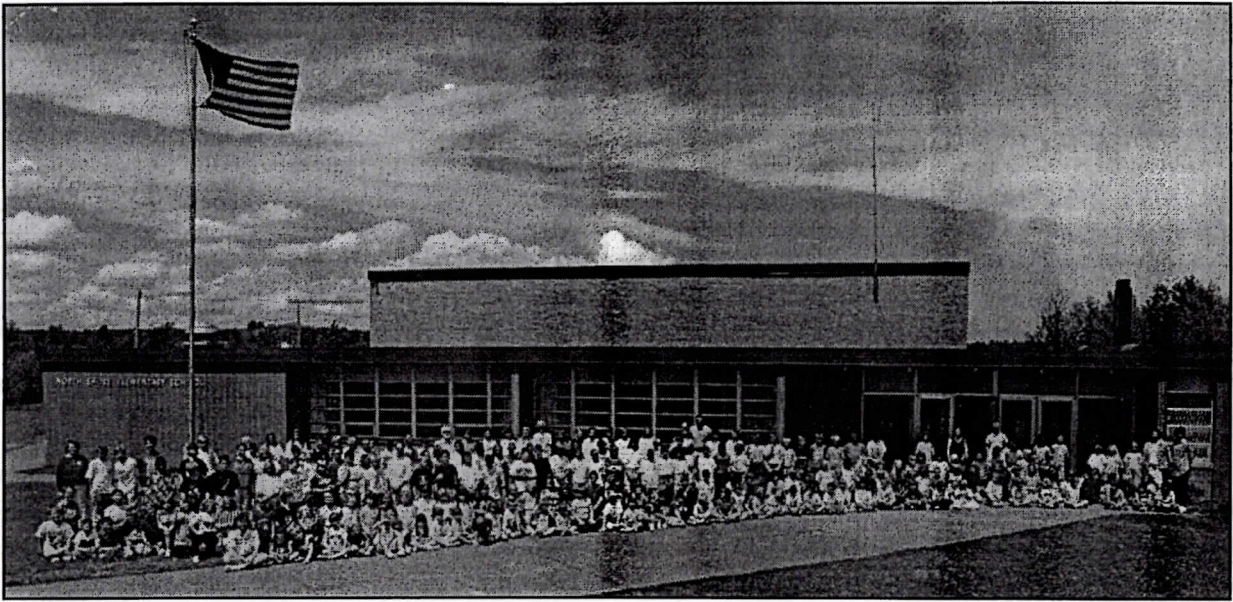
Anton Martinson was the first Clover Valley PTA president. This organization disbanded during the mid-'50s. Clover Valley Community Council was organized in 1958 to serve community-wide objectives, but it has considered many school matters as well, due to the lack of a PTA.

The yearbooks, the trophies and other items of special interest to friends and alumni of Clover Valley will be transferred to North Shore School for safekeeping now that the school is closed. Allegiance to Clover Valley will continue, and most hope that the substantial building can be put to good use. Area youngsters are already enrolled at Two Harbors High and at Minnehaha Middle School.

Ann Colby Albright was an outstanding choral director at Clover Valley in the 1950s, and she organized the community chorus here also. She put the following words to music:

"Clover Valley, Clover Valley, Alma Mater Dear,
We will rally, We will rally, Listen to us cheer.
Our hearts and our minds are close to you
We'll do all the things that you taught us to do.
Clover Valley, Clover Valley, Alma Mater Dear."

NORTH SHORE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



North Shore Elementary - School of Excellence, 1993

During the post-war “baby boom” years, the community outgrew the accommodations of School No. 93, the Bloomingdale School. North Shore Elementary, at the intersection of Ryan and Lismore Roads, opened in September 1961, originally serving grades one through six. The school saw early enrollment levels of over 300 students. Student populations dropped to and have generally remained in the low 200s following the reassignment of over 50 Normanna students to Lakewood School in the early 1970s.

Educational opportunities have expanded at North Shore. The 40-plus acre site allowed for development of ballfields, playgrounds, and interpretive trails—projects that continue into the new century. The first kindergarten class was welcomed to North Shore in 1971. New large classroom facilities, gym space and creative staff fostered growth of the music curriculum, which today boasts a fifth/sixth grade band. Winter and spring music programs are seasonal events awaited by the entire community. Special education programs greatly expanded in the 1970s. In 1975, the district’s classroom program for students with physical and mental disabilities was located at North Shore.

The school has had the benefit of a succession of fine teachers and administrators. Instructional aides, nearly all community members themselves, have provided a

boost to children in the development of essential reading and math skills. As early as 1968, a large contingent of parent volunteers began helping and supporting staff so they could be most effective in the classroom. That strong parent involvement tradition continues to this day.

North Shore came under the auspices of the Lake Superior School District in 1974 after a protracted statewide consolidation process, which also resulted in the regrettable closure of Clover Valley High School. It seems fair to say that, in the absence of the high school, North Shore School has evolved into a social crossroads for area citizens, from seniors to the youngest family members.

Political caucuses, Halloween Carnivals and Winter Frolics, musical programs, Grandparents’ Days, open houses, special guest artists’ performances and instruction, senior activities and elder visits to classrooms, community work parties for construction of playgrounds and fields, ice skating rink preparation and fun, community education classes, visits from resource managers about habitat and wildlife found on school grounds, thousands of child athletes and dozens of coaches over the years in the basketball and soccer recreational programs, PTA meetings and community forums, entertaining variety shows, hundreds of Boy and Girl Scout meetings and events, fund raisers of

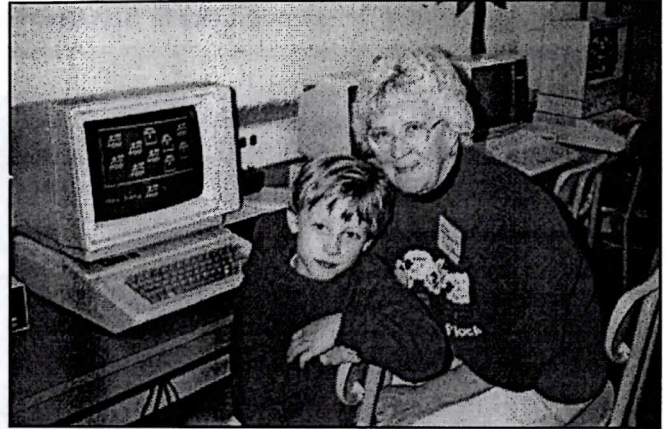
every kind, science fairs and Earth Day symposia, Maypole dances, grant-funded projects to enhance knowledge of our home and role in the larger world, and vital dialogue between teachers, parents and students. These are but some of the ways North Shore School has engaged the community and shared its learning experiences.

Since the 1970s, the school has embraced changing priorities. Students now have remarkable opportunities to gain a sense of wonder through study of the natural world and how to safeguard its diverse beauty for the future. The school nature trail, first laid out in 1971, was upgraded with grant support beginning in 1995. Today it serves as a cornerstone for the environmental education curriculum. Recent acquisition of snowshoes allows entire classes, as well as community members, to explore the trail year-round. In the coming year, a solar-heated, sustainable greenhouse will be constructed on school grounds thanks to staff and parent commitment to promote hands-on interdisciplinary learning and funding from the Center for School Change.



Snowshoes permit winter use of the nature trail

The ongoing Clover Valley History Project, started in 1997, is a living testament to the commitment of community elders, past and present, to future generations. School curriculum will soon include richly detailed units of study on the various periods of local history as recorded in the first section of this book. Hundreds of interviews of elders and other area residents have been collected in print and on audio or video tape. Someday soon they may be stored in a community history archival depot at North Shore School.

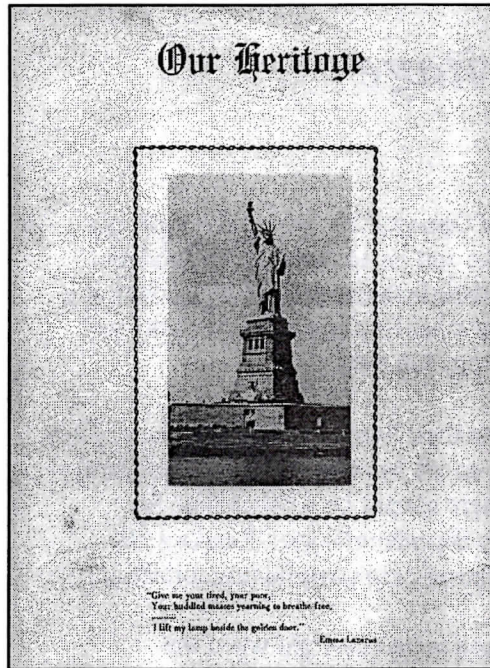


Community elders enrich classroom learning

A building expansion added a beautiful new media center and library, which opened in March 1994. A very popular pre-school relocated to North Shore in the mid-'90s, bringing more youngsters into the student family. The school received recognition of its fine academic programs in 1993, when North Shore Elementary was cited as a "School of Excellence" by the Minnesota Principal's Association. 0

Teachers and staff, parents and students, and the community-at-large are currently hard at work to solidify North Shore's future as a great school, one which succeeds by providing students an education defined both by its place *in* the community and a mutually beneficial relationship *with* the community.

We call this relationship *Roots in the Past, Seeds for the Future*.



Dedication

Our Heritage is a collection of homesteaders' tales which were gathered and compiled by Margarite Oberg Blaisdell in 1976.

We are grateful for her permission to reprint the original book so these stories will continue to be read and heard.

We dedicate this section to Margarite, who has taught us to honor our "roots in the past."

Our Heritage

So they came, the Immigrants, to this Land of Opportunity. Why did our people choose this area? Probably because of the Lake and its advantages for food and travel. But also because it was like the sea by their homeland, with the birches, the evergreens, lilies-of-the-valley, blue violets and other flowers. Even the rocky soil and the swamps reminded them of the homes they left behind.

Through them we have tried to tell a little about their lives as they settled here. They were proud people and we are proud of them, so we have put together these stories that others may share our heritage with us. There cannot be a better time for recalling the lives of our early settlers than this Bicentennial year. Reading *The Landmarks* and the stories it has contained inspired us to compile this collection.

The Statue of Liberty was used because it was a welcome sight when the immigrants came to Ellis Island. It was an inspiration to them which has remained in their lives through the years. This was proven when, in 1955, one of our early settlers saw a colored slide of the Statue. She stood up, smiled and said, "Hello, Lady." Then, in Swedish, added, "Jag har inte sett dig I aver fyrti ar!" ("I haven't seen you in over forty years.") Genuine proof she and others like her had accepted America as their real home.

We wish to thank all of those who took the time to gather the material for their stories. We especially appreciate their sharing their pictures with us as they are surely treasured possessions. These people have made it possible for us to put this book together. May it be a book our children and their children will cherish in years to come.

Margarite Oberg Blaisdell
1976

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FRENCH RIVER DISTRICT

The genesis of French River takes us back almost to the middle of the last century when the first pioneers began to homestead scattered tracts along the North Shore. One of the first of these and whose name still remains in the community was Samuel C. McQuade. He acquired a quarter section just west of the river in 1861, and it was on this property that the first school building was erected in 1892. The Old North Shore Road may have been and probably was in existence as a trail at this time and would have been the only overland line of communication to the settlements farther up the shore.

In 1884, the Duluth & Iron Range Railroad was built through to Duluth, and a siding and station were installed at French River. Included in the station was a boarding house and also the local post office. One of the early stationmasters was Matthew Jackson, who was also the section foreman and postmaster for many years. A little later, Mr. Jackson bought land along the track across from the station where he built a residence and store while still maintaining the boarding house until it was abandoned and torn down in 1933.

The year of 1910 saw the arrival of the Robert Mace family, and D.B. McDonald also bought and built along the river at about this time. Previous to this, Louis Mattson had located on the shore near the mouth of the river in 1905 and was later joined by his brother in fishing. Mr. Mattson had a large family, and the children attended the McQuade School nearly two miles distant. He related how he used to break a trail for them through the snow by tying a line to a block of wood and dragging it while they walked single file.

During the period just previous to the First World War, a number of businessmen from Duluth and Superior bought land in the vicinity. There were the Frecker brothers, Frank and Louis, on the McQuade Road, J.R. McCarthy, who built a fine place on the bank of the river, and John Olson, who bought a large acreage along the east side of the Ryan Road and brought in a saw mill (steam).

The Ryan Road at this time was little more than a trail, and many of the early arrivals used the old logging roads to reach their destination. The expression "packsack farmer" was in common use.

Among the earliest arrivals of this period were the Burk, Hill and Abrahamson families, also the Stromgren brothers, Arvid and Gust, Erick Johnson, Mike Laiti and many others. At one time the Ryan Road was spoken of as Garfield Avenue as so many of the newcomers had formerly lived in that district.

In 1918 came the great forest fire, which swept over the territory. Many of the settlers were burned out completely, although here and there a home escaped the flames. The fire speeded up the clearing of the land, and the Red Cross came to the aid of the ones who had suffered with building materials and equipment.

In 1920, the State Fish Hatchery was built at the mouth of the river, and Mr. Gale was appointed as superintendent. Adolph Sundstrom and Ben Gustafson were among the first employees.

Some years earlier a school had been built on the Mace property. In 1922, this school and the McQuade School were combined in a new two-room building at the lower end of the Ryan Road. This school was continued until about 1932, when bus transportation was provided to the larger Bloomingdale School and the new Clover Valley High School, which could take care of the increasing enrollment.

About 1916, a Farmers Club was organized and a hall was built near the intersection of the Ryan and Lismore Roads. This became the center of community activity for several years, being reorganized as a Community Club through the leadership of the Misses Mace, the Gales, Mrs. Englund and others. The French River Pleasure Club was organized about 1916 also, but later became the French River Women's Club. A Dramatic Arts Club was formed under the direction of Frances Hoffman, and a large group of the young people conducted this successfully for some years.

By 1920, the Ryan and McQuade Roads had been greatly improved and extended, and there was no lack of interest and attendance at any and all public gatherings. This continued until the completion of the new Highway 61 along the lake shore, when the advent of the taverns and the increased use of the automobile, together with other factors, caused interest to swing to other sources of amusement, and the various organizations gradually died out. The hall was finally torn down some time in the '30s.

The French River Lutheran Church was organized with its first regular pastor being Rev. Carl Silfversten, who was to remain for nearly 20 years. Meetings were held at the various homes of the members and, later on, in the schoolhouse. Then a church was built on land given by Einar Hendrickson at the junction of the Ryan and Anderson Roads (now Paul Road). A new modern building was erected near the lake shore in 1954, and the old building was sold to Edward Engelson, who transformed it into a residence where he now lives.

In 1961, a Bomarc Missile Base (since closed) was constructed on the Bergquist Road. That year the county closed the Bloomingdale School and built the North Shore Elementary School on the corner of the land formerly owned by Erick Johnson, who had maintained a store at the same location many years before.

Of all the changes that took place through the years, perhaps the most spectacular was the construction of the new divided lane highway roughly paralleling the railway, and which was put in operation through the French River section in 1965. This and the introduction of electric power to the area about 1935 have been of the greatest advantage to the community, in my opinion. Drilled wells have taken the place of the old undependable dug wells, and it is now rare to find a home without water and sewer.

French River has not been without its tragedies over the years, but perhaps not more so than other communities. Life was quite difficult before the automobile and the tractor became common and much more hazardous for the fishermen before the motors came into use. Few would now care to speak of it as "the good old days," nor prophesy as to what the future may have in store.

Vernon A. Palms - 1968

THE EARLY DAYS OF CLOVER VALLEY AND ALDEN

Being the oldest settler in this area, I thought it may be of some interest to someone to know when the first settlers moved in.

In the winter of 1892, three men filed on homesteads. One by the name of Alfred Swanson built their home where the Al Pearson's house now stands, Chas. Rosen built their house where the Henry Schumann home is, and the third man being my father, built one-half mile south and back one-fourth mile in from where the Homestead Road now is located. My father's first name was Martin.

The Alfred Swanson and Chas. Rosen families moved up in the late winter, and my folks moved in June 1892. We came in from Knife River over a sort of road through the heavy timber. A team of oxen and sort of sled was used for transportation. I was 18 months old, so I do not have any recollection of it at all. I had two sisters older than me who perhaps remembered the first ride in.

The mosquitoes were one of the main problems in the early days. Smoke smudges were the best repellent known at that time. At night they used cheesecloth covers they built over the beds about three feet high and then ran pieces between the corner sticks and hung the cheesecloth over that. It made a good protection, providing a few mosquitoes did not get in too.

About the first project the beginners had was to cut out a road straight down to Palmers. It was in 1894 that they got it cut through, but it wasn't graded till some time later.

And, of course, they had to have a school for the children that were old enough, so a little log building was erected and teacher hired. The teacher was paid \$35 a month and paid \$12 a month for room and board.

During this time they cleared a little more land, which was slow as the timber was quite heavy, and there wasn't any money for dynamite to blast out the stumps. But stumps weren't too big a handicap as the hay was all cut by hand. They could cut hay on the meadows that the beavers had made by damming up the streams.

To make a few dollars in winter, they would get out some railroad ties, etc. Several years later, bigger loggers came in. My folks sold the stumpage on their 120 acres for \$200. When spring came, the \$200 was paid by letting my dad go into the loggers' barn to pick out any team in the barn. He picked out a young black team, which he had for some time. I can still remember their names—Nelley and Nigh. They were a wonderful team and helped in breaking up more fields.

Around 1898 or so, a family by the name of Agnew came up from Superior and built quite a large steam sawmill across the road from where the Clover Valley School is located now. It operated for some time, and finally the mill was made into a shingle mill. It was run as such for several years till the man who operated it was killed in an accident. His son then ran it for a while, but finally one morning it caught fire, and that was the end of the mill. The two boilers stood there a long time, but finally were hauled away.

During these years, a few new settlers moved in so the Post Office Department saw the necessity of starting a post office up here. It wasn't a very elaborate post office, but it served the purpose for quite a few years. The man from the Post Office Department asked the man whom they'd appointed to be the postmaster, Halver Halversen, what they should call it; and as he had come from a place in Norway by the name of Molde, he suggested that the place be called Molde. A fellow by the name of Archie Larvie carried the mail twice a week across the woods to Knife River. It was later changed to three times a week, and as the mail started getting heavier, a horse and buggy (and cutter in winter) were used. A Mrs. Duncan drove the mail for quite a few years. She was a daughter of the Swansons and one of the first children up here. Then as more people came, a Farmers Club was started, and about the first thing they did was change the name of Molde to Clover Valley, which name has stuck ever since. After that the rural free delivery route was started out of French River. Matt Jackson, who was section foreman for the railroad, got the postmaster's job besides. He operated a little store along with the post office. Eventually the mail route was enlarged, and a part of the area was put on a Duluth route, and the rest was put on the Two Harbors route.

The Farmers Club started talking about putting in a telephone in 1913. Each farmer cut and set seven

poles; then a couple of men who had moved up from Iowa and who had experience in telephone work were hired to hang the wire and install the phones. Connection was made at Palmers to the railroad telephone. It served the purpose for a good many years until it was settled heavier here. Then the Duluth Bell System took over and put in a modern system, which gave everyone a chance to have a phone, and it has worked out very well.

Going back a few years now, some people started moving up in Alden. It was still a part of the Town of Duluth then, but later this township was divided and the Town of Alden was born. The Driscoll's two families and the Lucci family came down from Virginia, coming in from Westover on the Alger-Smith Railroad out of Knife River. I would say this was about 1913 or so. Then a little south of the Driscolls and Luccis, a man named Oscar Laine, I believe, was the first one to move in. Then it started settling quite fast, and a road had to be built to give these new settlers a way to get in and out. Hence we have the Laine Road.

More settlers started coming in and the need for a meeting place for dances, etc. developed, so a hall was built on the northeast corner of the App Road and Two Harbors Road about a mile west of Thor Borgen's home. It got to be known as the Molde Hall. This was during prohibition days and like most everywhere, moonshine liquor got to be a big thing, and these dances got to be quite wild on Saturday nights. This hall got to be quite a notable place, and people came, both good and bad, to see what it was like. But as the years went by and prohibition ended, it sort of died away and eventually the hall was torn down.

Some nice little farms were developed with nice homes through the area. Most all had a small herd of cows, but then the Second World War came on, and the demand for labor on the docks and shop in Two Harbors became greater. The men most all went to work for the railroad, and their wives stayed home and milked the cows. As the years went by, farming sort of came to an end. Many of the original settlers had either died or moved away. A new generation of younger people came and bought a lot of the homes just for a place to live. Most were employed at Silver Bay in the taconite industry.

The story was much the same in the Town of Duluth. The schools were being enlarged every so often. The older part of Clover Valley School was built in 1929, and the new addition was built in 1953.

The main roads were widened about 1934 and 1935 and blacktopped several years later. The high line was built out of Two Harbors in 1937 and 1938.

When the present town hall was built on the corner of the Shelhon Road some 30 years ago, the Ladies Aid bought the old hall one-half mile south of the Clover Valley School and converted it into a church.

This about covers a brief history of the Clover Valley area. I have not mentioned many people by name—only the first ones in the various areas. I am not sure that this will be of much interest to anyone, but in case it should, it has brought back many memories to me in writing it down.

*Anton Martinson
March 10, 1967*

Note: The Rosen property is now occupied by Lawrence Smith. The first post office was just east of Cartwright's store on Ernest Larson's property. Robert White has made a home from the former Clover Valley Presbyterian Church and former town hall. Schmidke owns the Martin Martinson homestead now.

The Landmarks - February 1973

Anton Martinson was born in Duluth when his parents lived on Piedmont Avenue. His parents had come from Gotland, Sweden. Marie Nyberg was born in Vivstavar, Sweden. She came to America alone as a young girl. She met Anton and they were married. They have four children—Dorothy, Catherine, Ralph and Roy. Anton is now 85 years old and lives with his wife in Duluth, where they moved a few years ago.

FRANK SHELHON

Frank Shelhon was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. As a young man, he became a carpenter's apprentice earning \$1 a day. Elizabeth Hall was born in a small town near Cedar Rapids. Both her parents died before she was 11 years old. As she had no other relatives, she worked wherever she could, mostly baby-sitting, so she would have a home for a while. She liked to watch the trains go by and wished she could get on one and go somewhere else. She went to Cedar Rapids High School and graduated. She found work in a dress factory earning \$2.50 a week.

Frank met and married Elizabeth. He built a little house on a piece of land he owned. Wages were so meager as they started out on their married life. Frank bought a motorcycle so they could go for rides; they also went for rides on the lake in a rowboat. They had a garden and the vegetables grew so well in Iowa's warm climate.

In 1912, a group of people bought land in northern Minnesota from Dr. Lord, a land promoter. They put all their belongings in a railroad car. As they needed more furniture to fill the load, Frank and Elizabeth decided to go with the Fishers, Hungerfords, Baileys and Fausés. Bernal Bailey Jr. and Bill Hungerford rode in the box car with the cattle because they had no money for train fare. Shelhons bought land on the Homestead Road. They cleared the brush and built a house and developed a very productive farm with fields of clover and lovely gardens.

Dances were held at the hall on the Homestead Road, south of Duncans. Louie Brown played the accordion, but the only song he knew was "Red Wing." They danced all night long, as they didn't want to go home in the dark! There were picnics at Coffetts. Later there were dances at the Duluth Town Hall, when Vostry would play his concertina. Frank would call for the square dances.

Frank did carpenter work, building new homes like Van Wagonen's and Bon Aire, and also remodeling like the McQuade home for Vernon Palms. He was on the town board, serving as clerk, and on the board of the REA in Two Harbors. He played the French horn in the Two Harbors City Band. Elizabeth belonged to the Molde Ladies Aid.

The two boys went to Palmers School until it burned. Then they went to Bloomingdale and later to Clover Valley.

Shelhons had four children—Howard, who married Margaret Williams, Wayne married Delores Pearson, Dorothy married Ted Noyes, and Leona—Leonard Lorntson. Their niece, Bessie Shelhon, lived with the E.E. Reynolds family. Howard and Margaret now live on the Shelhon farm.

Mrs. Shelhon lives at Faith Haven in Duluth. She enjoys good health and keeps busy, especially with her sewing.

Mrs. Frank Shelhon

ALFRED ELICKSON

Alfred Elickson was born in Finland. He came to America alone in 1900. He worked on the coal docks in Superior. He had married Minnie Pykari in Finland, so in 1905, he sent for her and their son Emil. Einar was born in Superior.

Matt Pykari bought the land on the Homestead Road for the Elicksons. They lived in the bath house by the creek until the log house was finished. During a terrible thunderstorm, the lightning came down the chimney striking 16-year-old Emil. This was such a tragedy for the family.

They added on to the house as the family increased. Alfred did some farming, although he was a blacksmith by trade. He made sleighs, skis, skates, plows, nails—anything that was needed. He died in 1932.

Einar became a sawyer in the logging business. Eddie was a car mechanic. Elna, Ellen and Esther did housework and were married later. Dorothy remained at home to take care of her mother. Esther and her husband, Anselm Nynas, still live on the Elickson farm.



Photos, pages 126, 156 and 178

CHARLES SAARI

Charles Saari was born in Pori, Finland as Kalle Loukkula. He changed the family name to Saarinen, then Saari, and the Kalle to Charles. He was a logger and also gathered pitch which they sold. He married Alexandra Simola of Turre, Finland. They would get a piece of land from the government, build on it and farm it. Then in five years the government would take it back and give the farmer another piece of land to build and work on for another five years. Mr. Saari worked one piece of land after he was married and about three years on the second piece, when they decided to leave for America, where working conditions were supposed to be much better. They had one son, Paul Alexander, born in 1896, and he was 6 years old when the family came to America. They came on the boat called the "Celtic" of the Cunard Line. They slept in bunks in the hold with just an aisle in between. There were no decent living quarters or sanitation, so the stench was terrible.

They lived in Duluth for two years on South First Avenue East, where Nellie was born three months after they arrived. A colored lady lived upstairs of them whose name was Nellie, and as she had been so helpful to Mrs. Saari, they named their baby girl after her.

Charles bought property on the Sucker River in 1904 and built a 12x16 foot cabin on it, where Paul and his dad lived while they built a house. They would take the train to French River and walk through the woods toting their supplies on their backs. One day Charles walked southeast of his property and could see Lake Superior and also smoke in one place near the shoreline. He walked down to see where it was and found the little settlement of Palmers. After that, he would take the train to Palmers, and the walk home was so much shorter.

A son John was born to them and was just an infant when the family moved up to the property. There was a lumber camp to the south of the river (later the property was bought by John Strom), so Mr. Saari found work there. It was called LaSuerre's Camp. They hauled logs to French River and rafted them to Bayfield across the lake. Nellie and Paul would go to the camp, and the "cookee" would give them thick white sugar cookies the size of saucers. The laborers, or lumberjacks as they were called, would come to Saaris for sauna (bath house) and buy bread, buttermilk, or "filia," a Scandinavian thick sour milk.

Edwin, Waino and Lillian were born to the Saaris. Son Paul helped his father cut logs, and they hauled them to Palmers or Knife River.

A Finnish Co-op was built on the corner of the Bergquist and Shelton Roads with settlers buying shares in it. Ordean of Duluth donated the property. In later years about 1915, it was bought by Mr. Saari and Mr. Waltonen. The store was downstairs and a meeting hall upstairs, where dances were held. Later Mr. Saari moved the store to his home, where he operated it for several years while he farmed.

Paul and John went to work in the lumber camps; Nellie worked in Duluth; Lillian went to beauty school; Edwin and Waino (Wayne) worked in construction.



Photos, pages 126, 127 and 155

MOR LUNDQUIST

March 9, 1852 in Sweden, Hilda Maria Strandberg was born. In the first half of this, the 20th century, she became a part of the lives of many who lived in the French River area and was known as "Mor Lundquist." It was she who delivered numerous babies who today may be reading *The Landmarks*.

Hilda was a little woman with wavy auburn hair and beautiful blue eyes. She had a keen mind and a regal bearing even when she was in her last years and lived to be 92. She was proud! For her 80th birthday, a granddaughter was buying her a new hat and she said, "Tell the clerk I want a hat that doesn't make me look too old!" She was independent and refused assistance in crossing a busy street.

When Hilda was growing up in Sweden, women's lib (or any liberation, for that matter) was unheard of. Although she had limited formal education, Hilda acquired many skills. She learned to read and was always interested in current events. Often she would read aloud to her grandchildren the news from the Swedish papers.

Among her many skills were sewing, weaving, cooking, baking and practical nursing. In Sweden, her baked goods were much in demand.

Hilda married Johan Adam Lundquist, who was born in 1849 and died in 1916. The minister's wife helped her dress for the ceremony. As was the custom in their community, there were often several couples married at the same wedding. There were three this time, and Hilda wore a gold crown.

The Lundquists had ten children. Four died in infancy. Three boys, Hilmar, Hjalmar and Victor, survived as did three daughters, Maria Lundquist Oberg, Tillie Lundquist Englund and Huldie Lundquist Gatlin.

All the Lundquists eventually came to the United States. Hilmar, the eldest, came three times and then returned to Sweden where he was an inventor. His two daughters in Sundsvall still receive royalties from his works.

Hilda, Johan and their youngest daughter Huldie came to Duluth in 1905. They built a two story, four-room log cabin on 80 acres of land on the Lundquist Road. For many years Hjalmar and Victor owned a sawmill and

later a box factory at that location. Grandpa Lundquist was a shoemaker. His grandchildren would gather around to watch him make their shoes.

Mor Lundquist was a midwife in French River for many years, even when she was quite old. In later years she would not want to go "one more time," but the anxious father would plead with her to come. Sometimes it meant going in a sleigh in a blinding snowstorm. She would stay with the family to care for the mother and the children and to cook until the mother was "on her feet" again.

The Lundquists had 19 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren and many, many great-great-grandchildren. The names are no longer exclusively Scandinavian. One finds surnames in the family which may have prompted Hilda to say, "But what kind of name is that?" Do you recognize any of them? Kasey, Stassen, Bolen, Puent, Blaisdell, Aho, Swartz, Saari, Paro, Drawz, Molitar, Gravelle, Jay, Whiffen, Blood, Legg, Gatlin, Fairchild, Ferguson, Ausland, Fahrenholz, Marble, James.

Hilda's descendants include people in accounting, architecture, business, building, education, home economics, insurance, interior design, music, nursing, banking, drafting, law, electricity, art, dentistry, sports.

We have many memories of the years we spent in French River, and we enjoy visiting with relatives who still live in *The Landmarks* country. It was a good place in which to grow up, and we feel very close to people we knew in the "good old days."

Vivian Englund Drawz



Photos, page 130

JOHAN ADAM LUNDQUIST (1849–1916)

Johan was born December 24, 1849 in Angermanlan, Sweden. He had eight brothers and one sister. His trade was shoemaker. He married Hilda Strandberg, also born in Angermanlan. They raised six children. They were Maria, who married Johan Oberg, Otilia (Tillie) who married Alfred Englund, Huldie, who married Charles Gatlin, Hilmar, Hjalmar and Victor. The latter two were bachelors. All lived in America except Hilmar, whose wife died after a year of marriage.

They lived on a farm at Östersund until the house burned; they moved to Kubikenborg. Here the boys went to work in the sawmills. Victor speared lobster and salmon. Hilda made her own bread but baked it at the local bake shop, "bak stuga," along with the round flat hardtack with a hole in the center. The hardtack was stored by stringing it on poles in the ceiling. Her parents sent her flax and wool, so she carded and spun it into her own thread and yarn from which she wove their linens and clothes.

Their son Hilmar invented tools and machinery for sawmills. He and his mother-in-law came to Manistee, Michigan for patents for his inventions. Later they came to Duluth. He sent for his brother Hjalmar; then a year later, his brother Victor. They in turn sent for their sister Tillie, who came after she had been confirmed, about 16 years old. Hilmar returned to Sweden, arriving home at 2:00 a.m. Hearing a noise, the family awakened to find him there looking for something to eat. His nephew Carl came over in the morning to see him, and Hilmar gave him three red and blue striped sweaters for himself, Mauritz and Hjalmar. Carl ran home waving the sweaters and yelling, "America! America!"

In 1905, Hjalmar and Victor sent for their parents and sister Huldie. Hjalmar also sent money for them to buy him an accordion. They left Sweden for England in a small boat with makeshift bunks and poor conditions. The captain said on his return trip to Sweden he would haul cattle in the hold.

It took them three days to get to Hull, England, arriving on Easter Sunday. Then on to Liverpool. Johan bought them each a banana. As they had never seen one before, they tried to eat them with the skins on them. Hilda thought they tasted terrible so gave hers to a

fellow passenger. It took eight days to get to Boston. They came through Canada to Duluth and lived on Garfield Avenue. Tillie did housework and Huldie became a seamstress. Victor worked for a lumber company, and for Bradley—he worked up the North Shore at Cramer.

The Lundquists bought land on the Sucker River. The roads were mere trails, and logs were laid across the rivers and creeks to form bridges. The Lundquists built their log house and set up a sawmill with a steam engine. There were several sawmills at that time. One at Gus Banks' on the Sucker River. The Grundstroms had a water wheel but lost it in a flood on the river, so "Skreeka Gust" built one southwest of Lundquists.

Johan accompanied Hilda to Saaris on one of her trips as midwife and he stayed one and one-half weeks making shoe pacs out of cowhide. They were a moccasin type shoe with a leather heel. Johan passed away in 1916.

Hjalmar and Victor carried on the lumber business, installing a planer. They also made fishboxes and had a ski factory for a few years. They raised and sold tame raspberries. Hjalmar patented several inventions but lost out on the transactions. He was well-known throughout the area for his accordion playing at get-togethers and especially the barn dances they had in their barn. Both he and Victor enjoyed playing cards with the neighbors; their favorite card game was whist.

Although with the passing of Hjalmar and Victor, the Lundquist family has no one to carry on the name in Minnesota. The family will always be remembered as being one of the first in the French River area, and the Lundquist Road will always be a nice reminder of these early settlers.



Photos, pages 127 and 130

JOHAN LEONARD OBERG (1872–1926)

Johan Leonard Oberg was born in Upsala, Sweden. His parents were caretakers of one of the government's estates. He was in the military when he met and married Maria Lundquist of Örnsköldvik, Sweden. He became a shoemaker and they settled in Sundsvall. They had eight children—Mauritz (Morris), Carl, Carrol, Hjalmer, Elsa (Elsie) and Huldie born in Sweden, Leonard and Margarite were born in Superior. Johan and his 9-year-old son Carl came to America in 1906 through Canada to Superior. Here he found work at the coal docks. Carl stayed with relatives in Bovey on the Range.

In 1909, he sent for his family as Maria wanted to be near her parents, the Johan Lundquists. A close friend of the family couldn't bear to see them leave so she hid in a closet. They went from Sundsvall to Christiania, Norway, then Liverpool and on to New York City on the vessel, the "C.F. Leitgen." Maria came alone with the five children ranging in age from 3 to 13. Being hard of hearing, it is a miracle they made it.

Huldie, the 3-year-old, was almost kidnapped in Liverpool when a man grabbed her and started to walk away with her. She liked to go up on deck to watch the fish eat the garbage the sailors threw to them. One day she leaned too far out and would have gone overboard if a sailor hadn't grabbed her by the back of her coat and saved her.

Their arrival in Superior, where Johan had rented a home for them, was delayed. So relatives went to the station every time a train was due to watch for them. On the third day, Alfred Englund went to the station. When he saw this typical immigrant family with the usual bundles of their belongings with them, he knew he had the right family, so he went to greet them. They were a welcome sight to relatives when they came down the street, even Mauritz with his big roll of blankets and a pillow sticking out of each end of the roll. Cries of "Tante Nelson," "Mor! Mor!," "Moster Tillie" filled the air!

In Sweden, the children had been taught to bow, if boys, and curtsy, if girls, when they were introduced or if anyone stood up to greet them. So when they started school, the American children kept introducing them to everyone just to see them bow or curtsy. The teacher told Elsa no one has that name in America, so the teacher changed it to "Elsie."

As the children grew older they found work, as it was plentiful in those days. They could work in bakeries, stores, furniture factories, etc. Johan became straw boss at the shipyards; the older boys worked there too. Johan also had his shoe shop.

The family became active members of the Salvation Army in Superior. Hjalmer played the tuba in the band, and Johan was Staffbearer. He also played the zither.

In 1919, Johan was going to buy land near the present fish hatchery, but Maria wanted to be nearer her parents, so they bought land on the Bergquist Road. There was a small log cabin on it where Johan lived until he got the land cleared so he and his sons could build the house. The family moved up there in November of 1920.

Johan farmed through the years. He liked to experiment with new types of plants and trees, like watermelon, muskmelon, and an apricot tree. But he found they would not mature in our cool summer climate. He planted apple and plum trees along with gooseberry and currant bushes. But later the government had all the currant bushes destroyed because they were supposed to have some sort of disease.

The men went to work in the lumber camps at Schroeder, Tofte and Cramer. In midsummer, they would come home with their packsacks bulging with blueberries. But what a tiresome, endless job it was to clean the berries!

Johan passed away in 1926. His sons went to work at the ore docks or the Lundquist box mill. Later they worked in construction. Leonard had been active in Boy Scouts under the leadership of Donald Read. He went to Duluth to Central High School where he graduated and went into construction. Hjalmer had a store on the Ryan Road at Sucker River before his accidental death in North Dakota. The girls eventually married. Out of 21 grandchildren that Johan and Maria had, only one is able to carry on the family name of Oberg.



Photos, pages 126, 127, 130 and 154

PAUL ALEXANDER SAARI

Paul Saari was born in Pori, Finland in 1896, the first child of Charles and Sandra Saari. The only remembrance he has of the old country is of going sliding without permission and being spanked because he did. He came to America at the age of 6 on the boat called the "Celtic" of the Cunard Line. He lived on South First Avenue East in Duluth. When his father bought land on the Sucker River, he would accompany his dad to the home site where they built a 12x16 foot cabin before they built the house.

When he was 11 or 12, he helped his father cut logs and they hauled them to the station at Palmers. He attended the Clifton School until the Hill School was built on the Shelton Road. He would cut and haul wood into the school for the teacher, Ilma Rautio.

When he finished school, he went to work in the lumber camps. The Alger-Smith Railroad went to Knife River. There were spurs all through the forest. The spur west of Elicksons' went west to Brooks Scanlon. The section camp was west of Elicksons' too. A spur ran west at Anton Martinson's; the Drummond Line was in Alden and went east to Waldo in Lake County. A big camp and headquarters were at Stanley. Lumber camps were throughout the region—Nordling's near the lake shore in French River, one at Palmers, Bank's Camp in the hollow of Sucker River west of the Ryan Road. Walter Clark, LaSuerre and Chandler also had camps in that area. Camps were busy from about November 1 until late in March. Sometimes they ran all year round. Paul worked at several of these camps and for two years with the Cloquet Co. on Moose Creek by Island Lake. The building still stands where they logged their last load from the Cloquet area. Grundstroms had a camp on Smith Creek, but it burned in the 1918 fire and they lost everything.

In the camps, they had swampers—men who could cut branches to make the roads. They would put hot coals on the roads too, to make ruts so the loads wouldn't tip. One of the biggest camps of about 150 men was at Alden Lake. West Alden Lake was a man-made lake. The bunk houses were crowded and noisy as the men talked over their card game called "Black Jack." Haywire clotheslines had been strung above them where they dried their snowy or sweaty clothes. There were also bedbugs and lice in the camps. Sometimes the men would put their underclothes in tubs of hot

water and use the air hose on the steam engine to stir them up to try to get rid of the lice. When they brought them home, the women would boil the underwear in a boiler on the stove. Then they would hang them on the clothesline outside to freeze. When they were frozen stiff, the women would shake the union suit, and the lice would fall out like grains of sand on the snow.

Paul delivered mail for a while. Later he bought a motorcycle, then a Ford touring car. He did some trapping and worked in Highland in the lumber camp.

In 1923, he married Elsie Oberg and settled in French River where they raised their two daughters, Beatrice and Lucille. Paul drove the grader for St. Louis County for years, then did construction work for J.D. Harrold. Later he worked for the Duluth & Iron Range Railroad.

RICHARD ABRAHAMSON

Through correspondence with relatives and friends who had left Finland to settle in Duluth, Richard Abrahamson decided to leave the old country and join them, which was in 1898. Later, other friends followed including Hilda Johnson, whom he married in 1900. They settled in Superior.

Mr. Abrahamson operated the Lamborn Draw Bridge for some time. He also was a co-owner of a saloon in West Duluth.

Their son Fred (I) was 3 years old and their daughter, Signe, was 1½ years when they decided to make a return visit to their homeland. That's where and when they realized Minnesota was still the best place to live.

On their way back on the ocean liner, "Kungsholm," their children became ill with typhoid fever, which was an epidemic at that time. Signe recovered, but Fred (I) passed away, and his burial was in England.

Arriving in Duluth, they settled on Garfield Avenue. Mr. Abrahamson worked as a carpenter for Whitney Bros. Shipbuilders, which was at the site where Superwood is now.

As years went by, there were three more children, Roy, Fred (II) and Einar.

Mr. Abrahamson and his wife decided to move out in the country and start farming. In 1908, he bought a forty of land in French River, which was dense with tall and heavy timber and plenty of porcupines, wolves, deer and bobcats. He knew it was a massive hill, but not until he and his friend started cutting down the trees did he realize he was getting a glimpse of Lake Superior. As more trees were cut, there seemed to be no end to the view of the lake.

Logs from his land were sawed into lumber by the Lundquist Bros., who had a steam-powered saw mill. The Abrahamson home is partially built of logs, which were also squared at the mill. When the house became livable, his wife and family joined him.

Light from the kerosene lamps glowed into the night, as the crackling sound of fire in the Round Oak heater and kitchen wood stove provided the heat. Placed on top of the warming closet of the kitchen stove was a reminder to the children—a brush branch to be used freely if they misbehaved.

To prove how rugged women were those days—one forenoon Mrs. Abrahamson was helping her husband by carrying and piling brush as he was clearing more land. At noon she told her husband, “Richard, I think you better call on Mrs. Lundquist now.” (She was a midwife, living some distance away.) At 3 o’clock in the afternoon, the blessed event occurred—a 6½ pound baby daughter, whom they named Nina, and their only child born on the farm.

Signe, being the oldest of the children, helped take care of the younger ones as well as household chores.

It was time to build a horse stable, chicken coop and a barn large enough to hold six or seven cows. Once they became occupied, Mr. Abrahamson could see progress ahead. His wife churned butter, which relatives and friends in Duluth were begging to buy. Earthenware one-pound containers were purchased and filled with butter. Mr. Abrahamson placed them in a suitcase and a packsack and walked five miles to French River depot where he boarded a train for delivery in Duluth. After purchasing groceries, it was another five-mile walk from the depot to home.

There were hardships. Patched clothes and “hand-me-downs” were not uncommon. The children walked one and one-half miles to school, in deep snow during the winter.

In 1915, Mr. Abrahamson bought a used 1913 Model T Ford with straight fenders, gas lamps, isinglass windows and a rubber ball-like horn. As he drove it up the rocky driveway, the thunderous roar and backfiring echoed into the house. His 4-year-old son Einar ran for cover under a bed screaming with fear.

As the children grew older, they became a great help. Billy, their white horse, did his share of work too, as Mr. Abrahamson plowed and tilled the land. There seemed to be no end to the rocks. The huge rock piles still on the fields serve as reminders that there was never an idle moment.

In 1917, Mr. Abrahamson built a sauna, which was also enjoyed by neighbors, including Mr. and Mrs. Louie Anderson, who never failed to bring their cedar boughs.

In 1919, Mr. Abrahamson purchased another forty of land next to his property. With the help of his sons and the hiring of Louie Anderson, he went into the logging business. Axel Anderson moved in with his sawmill, and the lumber business began to boom.

Roy, Fred and Einar started traplines, as there were an abundance of weasels, mink, wolves and bobcats. They made their own stretchers, and the skins were sent to Taylor Fur Co. and Funstens. They waited for their checks with anticipation, as prime skins made it quite profitable.

In 1923, Mr. Abrahamson bought a Samson truck, which was the first cab-over engine type. As there was a demand for wood, he also bought a Galloway saw rig. He sold and delivered four to five truckloads of wood a day.

In 1927, Mr. Abrahamson decided to build a new and larger barn. With the help of his sons, it was completed by fall. A barn dance was a must. It was that night that Fred made his “debut” into the profession as an accordionist, accompanied by John Forsmark (who was a popular violinist). They supplied the music for the gay all-night affair. The dance was held upstairs in the barn. The rough flooring was forgotten by the large dancing crowd as the “mountain dew” began to flow, although the next day parts of women’s high heels were found scattered around the floor, besides a sole off a man’s shoe.

Nina (a piano player) and Sig Mattson (a drummer) joined up with Fred and, as a trio, gained their popularity as they began to play at dances and nightspots.

Mr. Abrahamson joined the Guernsey Breeders' Association. Having a herd of 27 head, he started to sell cream to Bridgeman's and Blue Valley Creameries. He bought some sheep and when they were sheared, his wife carded the wool and spun the yarn with her spinning wheel. Mr. Abrahamson also made her a rug loom. She wove countless yards of rag rugs, which she used or sold. She had great love for flowers. Busy as she always was, she still found time to dig flower beds, which were filled with beautiful annuals and perennials.

Mr. Abrahamson purchased a well drilling machine, and in 1932, with the help of his sons, drilled a 250-foot well in solid rock. A windmill-pressured water system was installed, which keeps a 700-gallon water tank in the basement continuously filled with good water. With its 42-foot tower, the windmill has earned its name as a landmark. Fred and Einar took over the drilling business and drilled wells for many years. Roy became a St. Louis County road employee.

As Mr. Abrahamson purchased more labor-saving machinery, there was more time for social life. Both he and his wife became very active in community dances and other affairs.

The dinner bell sits proudly on its weather-beaten post. It holds memories of long days and hard work in the fields. When it was rung, it echoed to the neighbors as if to say, "It's time for 10 o'clock coffee, dinner or afternoon snack."

As fate will have it, sadness also played its part in the family—with the passing of Mr. Abrahamson and his wife, followed by Roy and Signe.

So there it stands—a historical emblem on the high and mountainous hill off the Pioneer Road—the Abrahamson farm with its panoramic view, owned and occupied by their son Fred.



Photos, pages 155 and 157

ELI JOHNSON (1891–1967)

Eli Johnson was born in Nedervetil, Finland in 1891. He had one brother and five sisters. At the age of 19, he came to America because he had relatives here.

Ragna Lasenius also was born in Nedervetil, Finland in 1893; she had two sisters and one brother. Her mother wanted her to take up nursing in Helsinki; instead, she went to America with a girl friend (16 years old then).

Eli and Ragna met in 1913, were married in 1916 and lived on Garfield Avenue in Duluth, Minnesota. He worked in a sawmill at first, bought 80 acres of land in French River and built a log cabin there, spending weekends clearing and plowing land getting ready to move up there, which was in 1921. His two sisters, Mrs. Abrahamson and Mrs. Jackson, were already homesteading in that area.

They had four daughters. This one-room cabin eventually became their home, and so a room would be added on now and then to accommodate them. They were fortunate to find a couple of springs on their property, later digging a well (by hand). They built their own barn and chicken coop from lumber from their land. Kerosene lamps were used for many years until electricity was brought in. Their first radio was bought during the Hoover-Roosevelt elections year.

When Saturday night came around, each one would take her turn for a "wash tub" bath in the back room. Since they did not have any boys, the girls had to help farm too. Haying time was the worst, getting up at 4:30-5:00 a.m. to sit on the hay mower trying to beat that rain cloud! But at the end of the day a great reward was waiting, cold homemade root beer which Mrs. Johnson always made.

It was a struggle getting up before sunrise to care for livestock, farm work, then scrubbing clothes by hand. They got their water from the well by carrying a yoke on their shoulders, with two ropes which supported the pail in each hand.

All homesteaders pitched in to build the new Bloomingdale School, which was ready when the oldest daughter started school. In the winter, the children dressed warm in long underwear and long stockings. They would have a big bowl of hot oatmeal before going to school, either walk or ski—three-fourths mile

one way. There was very little sickness, otherwise Mrs. Johnson had the knack for being a wonderful nurse, which is probably why two of her daughters became nurses in later years.

Mr. Johnson was a "natural" barber, always cutting his girls' hair plus everyone's in the neighborhood. He even managed to trim his own. Later on he was employed at the Duluth grain elevators, which is where he retired from. To get to work in the winter, he would ski five miles down to the railroad depot, packsack on back (food, clothes), stay in a boarding house in Duluth and come home on weekends. He was laid off during the 1930 Depression; they were lucky to have enough to eat off the farm. The milk and cream cans were picked up regularly which brought a little money to buy a coat or shoes for someone. Mrs. Johnson did all her own sewing, had a small stocking-knitting machine, also would get "wool batts" which they carded to make fillers for the quilts.

Tragedy hit one day during Christmas when their chicken coop burned down, losing 300 chickens. So much depended on the sale of them and the eggs. Several farmers had a huge dinner bell set on a post which would signal meal time for the workers. It was also used for distress, which Mrs. Johnson used the day of the fire, and all the neighbors came to help. It was a sad day.

Mr. Johnson came from a musical family—couldn't read music but played a harp, violin, organ and accordion, and would get the whole family involved. Sunday afternoons Mrs. Johnson would bake her "special" cakes. They always had company, and their nephews would come and join in the band. In those days the children would go wherever the parents went.

He also made his own toboggans and skis. The back hill was cleared and neighbors helped build a ski and toboggan slide. It was a popular place; people would come to watch or use it, bringing their own equipment. At night bonfires were built to see by; their house would be like Grand Central Station for changing, drying of clothes, warm-up, or a hot cup of cocoa and cake. The school had their Winter Frolic events there too. The toboggan slide, having two hills, had been clocked at 70 miles per hour.

Just before dinner on Christmas Eve, the tree would be trimmed. Small candles in their holders were placed on

the end of each branch. When lit, everyone would sit around and watch and sing carols. New Year's Eve was a celebration of taffy-pulling with friends.

In spite of hardships, they did well toward educating their daughters. Bernice became a beautician, Lorraine a secretary, and both Margaret and Nancy registered nurses, and they are very grateful.

To this day, Mrs. Johnson is still active; you no sooner walk in the door and the coffee pot goes on, plus all the goodies! She has seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. She still knits mittens, etc., and bakes her own bread. At the age of 83, a true Christian, she is a most wonderful, remarkable, loving person still living on her own farm and is very happy there as long as she can go out in her own yard and garden just one more time.

Bernice Johnson Dahl



Photos, page 157

HERMAN JACKSON

Herman Jackson and Fanny Johnson emigrated from Finland to America in the early 1900s. They were not acquainted in Finland, but both settled on Garfield Avenue where they had friends and relatives who had come there previously from Europe.

Mr. Jackson acquired a job at the Alger-Smith Lumber Co. Miss Johnson worked in the laundry at the Spalding Hotel and later as a seamstress at the Patrick Mills.

They met through mutual friends and married in July 1908. Three boys were born on Garfield Avenue.

They purchased their home in French River from Mrs. Jackson's sister and brother-in-law and moved there in 1916. The house was only partially finished and there was much work to do. Mr. Jackson and the boys spent many hours clearing the land and completing the house.

Mrs. Jackson bore eight more children there. Mrs. Lundquist, a neighboring midwife, and Dr. Nyquist delivered the babies at the home. Mrs. Jackson was a very busy woman. Many hours were spent heating water on a wood stove and washing clothes on a scrub

board trying to keep up with the laundry. They bought flour and sugar by the 100-pound sacks in the fall to tide them over the winter. Mrs. Jackson churned her own butter and baked many loaves of bread several times a week to feed the large family.

The children had to walk one and three-fourths miles to school. It was difficult for the older boys when they started school as they couldn't understand or speak any English. The first day when Hubert entered school and the bell was rung, he thought it was cowbells and assumed the cows had gotten loose, and so he ran home.

Mr. Jackson worked at the Capitol Elevator and stayed in Duluth during the week. He took the train home on weekends, got off the train on the highway and walked home carrying groceries in a knapsack on his back. Mrs. Jackson, with the help of the children, was kept busy at home doing all the chores.

The boys trapped for weasel and mink and sold the pelts for spending money. Mr. Jackson made all the skis and toboggans for the children. Their recreation was skiing and tobogganing in the winter and swimming in the river during the summer.

Mrs. Jackson was very musically inclined. She played the accordion and the harmonica and loved to sing. She was invited to sing in church but was too shy to do so. Most of the children inherited her love for music. Harold and Helge entered talent shows that were held at the community hall on the Ryan Road.

But it wasn't all work and no play. Their neighbor, Nestor Mattson, with the help of friends and neighbors, built an outdoor dance pavilion, and dances were held there on Saturday evenings with local talent providing the music. Mr. Jackson belonged to the Runneberg Lodge, and he and his wife would attend many of their functions.

Mr. Jackson and the boys built a sauna and invited neighbors and relatives for a sauna on Saturday evenings. Of course, coffee and a smorgasbord were always served.

Fourth of July was looked forward to every year. Neighbors, relatives and friends would all get together for a picnic to enjoy the festivities and fireworks that were held at Lester Park.

Many summers neighbors congregated and with picnic lunches would go to Pequaywan Lake for the day to pick blueberries.

Mr. Jackson always had a huge garden and raised his own cattle, pigs and chickens. One year he and the boys planted four bushels of potatoes that yielded 94 bushels.

But there is always tragedy in a family. They lost Hubert at the age of 40 with a heart attack in 1956.

Mr. and Mrs. Jackson would have celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in July of 1958. However in May, Mr. Jackson became ill and passed away.

Harold was stricken with a heart attack in March 1972. He had just retired from the Capitol Elevator the month before.

Mrs. Jackson died in July 1968. She and Mr. Jackson have been sadly missed by the children and grandchildren.

Surviving Mr. and Mrs. Jackson are 9 children, 37 grandchildren, 54 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.



Photos, pages 129 and 157

LEANDER ANDERSON

Maria Sophia Johanson left Finland in February 1903 for America. Matt Leander Anderson came shortly after. After arriving here, Maria worked as a waitress in a restaurant (recently known as Green's Bar), which was demolished with the Fifth Avenue West remodeling. She also worked at the Patrick Garment Factory. Leander, better known as "Louie," worked at the Alger-Smith Sawmill, mostly piling lumber or loading it on boats. He earned \$1.50 to \$3 a day, depending on the job.

After the two married in 1905, they first lived in the West End and later at 48th Avenue West and Magellan Street, later to become Michigan Street. He continued working at the mill, also at Zenith Box and Lumber Co. and as a carpenter on the church at 40th Avenue West and Fourth Street.

About 1915, Andy Johnson and Louie bought 40 acres of land north of French River, Louie taking the north 20 acres where a spur of the Alger-Smith Railroad line ran. In the spring of 1917, he decided to move out to his land; and after building a small 12x24 foot shed-type house, he moved his family to the country. Louis and Sophie had six children then. Some of the household furnishings had to be stored with friends until Louie was able to build a larger home. The truck driver was able to get only as far as the Liljander Road that led in from the Ryan Road. From there the furnishings were hauled up the Dalvick hill by horse and wagon. The north end of the Ryan Road ended where the Pioneer Road crosses it now. The one-half mile yet to go to the Anderson property was like a trail, just wide enough for the horse and wagon. After getting settled in their new home, it was time to do land clearing. Stumps were grubbed out by hand or with a stump puller. Louie Anderson was still working in Duluth and was only able to come home on weekends.

In the fall of 1918, the Andersons had two forest fire scares. Toward the end of September, a fire broke out southwest of their property and was heading for them along the old railroad grade. Flammable belongings were taken into their root cellar and metal items left in the field; but, thanks to a rain, the fire was contained when it came to within one-fourth mile of their home. A careful watch was kept to see if any smoldering areas would flare up. Then on October 12, another fire coming from the northwest again threatened. Supplies had to be moved back into the root cellar. In the meantime, the first fire rekindled itself and wiped out Gust Eklund's saw log piles, Hjalmer Lundquist's sawmill and Art Mattson's shingle mill. The Andersons were going to the neighbors in the evening with lit kerosene lanterns. The wind was so strong it blew the lanterns out, but the glow from the two fires was so bright, there was no need for the lanterns. Louie and his neighbor had been in town working and had hired a taxi to take them home, but the taxi would come only as far as the Lakewood Road, so Louie and Jackson spent the night down at the lake, not knowing if their homes had been destroyed or if their families were safe. They walked home from the shore the following day. Eventually the fires just burned themselves out.

In 1918 after World War I, Louie received government surplus picric acid dynamite for clearing out pine stumps. Some were so large that it required six charges (five sticks to a charge) to blast them.

About 1920, Louie was working for a neighbor as a swamper, branching off saw logs and tie cuts to be sawed into lumber and railroad ties. For another neighbor he hewed pine ties—getting five or six ties out of one tree—which were hauled by Charlie Bergquist by sleigh to Palmers.

About 1920, Louie built the new house—two-story, 20x24 feet. This was done all by hand-cutting, sawing, planing, etc. Two more children were born. About 1921–22, Louie transported his and his neighbors' children to School 93 with horse and buggy in spring and fall and sleigh in winter. He also furnished firewood for the school, which Rudy very well remembers because he was always put at one end of the crosscut saw when he got home from school. In 1922, the old school burned down and the children finished out the year in the present Nolte Store.

In 1925, Louie and Elof Strand bought stumpage on McQuade Road—timber for pulpwood, birch and tamarack which were hewed into ties—some so large it took three men to load them into box cars down at Clifton. He also delivered wood into town for firewood and for smoking fish. Louie's sons followed in his footsteps and continued, for the most part, in the timber business.

Life was not easy for Sophie. Besides taking care of the eight children, there were numerous farm chores, cows to be milked morning and evening, and the waterings and feedings, sometimes pigs to be taken care of, later chickens, and at one time sheep. Water had to be drawn from a dug well and carried by bucket for all purposes. In the summer she would build a fire outdoors, fill up the copper boiler with water and boil the wash. In the winter, the boiling was done on the cast iron range indoors. The ironing was done with flat irons heated on the stove. You can well imagine the heat in the homes when fires had to be kept going for all the baking and cooking. In the winter time, flour sacks would be bleached out on the snow to be used for sheets, towels, pillow cases and underwear. Sewing was done on the treadle sewing machine; it was forever open, to be used between chores.

Farm animals, gardens and canned wild berries provided most of the family food. Turkey at Thanksgiving was a rare treat. Venison was usually the holiday fare. Partridge was in abundance though. Rudy remembers going out with a 16-gauge and lining up two birds in a

row and getting both with a single shot. Once he got three that way. In the summers, brook trout was a delicacy. And fishermen from the shore would come selling smoked herring. When Charlie Saari and Carl Mandelin had their stores, they would deliver staples—flour, sugar, coffee, etc., and there would usually be a cookie treat for the small children.

Summer was a busy time on the farm. All the boys in school seemed to stay home on May 15 to plant potatoes. Home gardens were large. Strawberry picking sometimes had to be delayed until after the hay was cut, so as not to tramp down the hay. And haying had to be done by the Fourth of July, or no one could go to any celebration. Rudy remembers when Louie, himself and brother Arne would cut hay with the old scythe—each cutting a swath, then spreading and raking. Then they made a sling from a one and one-half inch sapling and rope to hold the hay together, and they would carry it on their backs to the haybarn.

Rudy also remembers all-night dances in the upstairs of the present Nolte store. Also Community Club dances and the Sunday afternoon ball games. "Building bees" were quite common—neighbors getting together to put up homes for others. Also "shivarees"—groups of neighbors getting together to serenade a newly-married couple with the noise of kettles, pans, horns and other noisemakers.

One of the big building bees was making the "dans lava" at the Nestor Mattson place. This was an open-air dance platform, benches around it for sitters. Anyone who knew how to play a musical instrument would furnish music—accordion, violin, saxophone, etc. It was lively music, aimed at keeping mosquitoes away. Kerosene lanterns furnished light after dark. "The Waltz You Saved for Me" was a favorite request of one of our local girls. Sometimes parties started in the morning, everybody bringing potluck for dinner; there was always ice cream for the youngsters.

Winter activities centered around sliding down the "big hill" on homemade bobsleds. Willie Anderson had made one, and each morning the kids would slide down the hill across the Liljander field to the Ryan and Shelton Road corner. After school they would pull it back up the hill; then if the girls wanted more rides down, the boys made them tug it back up. The Jacobson boys had also made one, and the "gang" would slide down the Abrahamson hill almost to the Hill farm, but would get

in only two rides an evening because of the long hard pull back up the hill. Later a toboggan slide was made down Eli Johnson's hill. Some rides were clocked at 84 miles an hour. "Flinch" was a favorite card game on cold winter nights at the Andersons.

Times have changed much since the struggles of the early pioneers in this area; but, even in spite of all the work and hardships, there were fun times, family times, never-to-be-forgotten times. And our children will know them only by these tales.

Louie Anderson died April 5, 1948.
Son Arne died August 22, 1948.
Sophia Anderson died April 3, 1949.
Son Wildred died April 28, 1950.
Daughter Viola died August 14, 1943.

Those remaining of the family are: sons—Rudolph and William; daughters—Diana, Verna and Virginia.



Photos, pages 127 and 130

JOHAN LUNDGREN

Johan Lundgren was born in Ornskonsvik, Sweden. He married Elida Nordval of Petco, Norland, Sweden. They came to America and lived in Escanaba, Michigan, where Einar and Bayer (Carl) were born. They came to Duluth in 1910 and lived at 24th Avenue West and Ninth Street. Edith was born in Duluth. In 1912, they moved to French River where Russell was born.

Johan farmed and worked on the county roads. The Pioneer Road was built in 1913 and the McQuade Road in 1914. So the Lundgrens came up a tote road that was full of stump holes and a trail that was later the Smith River Road. There were three teams of horses hooked up to the grader when they worked on Olson's hill. Some of the stumps were so big around it took 16 sticks of dynamite to blow them up. Sometimes the dynamite didn't go off right away, so men would be badly hurt by going to the stump too soon. Jack Nyman had such an accident so he sold his land to Charlie France.

Einar started school at the Ramsey School where the teacher was Grace LaVaque. Sidney and Nettie Sarff,

Bill and Herman Kruse, and Einar were in the first grade together.

Einar was sent to Jackson's store at French River for groceries where he bought a ten-pound sack of sugar and had the gallon kerosene can filled. It seems everyone lost the little caps on the spouts of the cans in those days, so a potato was used in its place! With the coins he had been given by his parents to buy a treat, he bought fig bars and a small can of milk. Einar went up the tote road (Ryan) to the Sucker River, then followed the trail south of the river west till he was home.

The boys would cut down trees on the weekend, then after school they would cut them into 16-inch lengths to make a load of one and one-half cords. Johan would drive the load to Lester Park to sell it. Besides, the boys would also cut wood for home use.

When Henry Kruse Jr. came home from World War I, he bought a sawmill. Then the Lundgren boys would help skid logs to the mill and carry ties. Wages were about 30 cents an hour.

Einar was just a young fellow of 14 when he went to town to the Villa St. Scholastica to work, milking 14 cows morning and night besides other chores. At 16, he began driving a coal truck, doing this for five years. Later he drove the Gnesen School bus.

Carl started a feed business besides hauling cream and milk from the farmers to the creameries. He went into construction and had the first bulldozer and backhoe in the area. He married Hildegard Hultstrom, Einar married Sally Erickson, and Russell married Helen Andelin. He is a mechanic and owns his own garage in Montana. Edith married Elmer Swartz and they live on the Lundgren farm.

HILJA PAIVARINE

Hilja Lehtonen was born in Hinnerjoki, Turun Lääni, Finland, in 1902. She came to Cloquet in 1910 and attended school there. She married Edward Hendricks and they had one daughter Ellen.

Hilja cooked in lumber camps for several years. In the early 1920s, she worked at the section house at French River where Matt Jackson was the boss. Irene Mattson worked for her. Mrs. Jackson ran the store and post office across the road from the section house. Hilja met one of the teachers at School 90, Cecilia Nankervis. It was her first teaching job. Later she taught at Lakewood for many years.

A contractor by the name of Starr and his men boarded at the section house while they were building the Scenic Highway (61). Later Hilja cooked for 500 boarders at the Toverila Hotel in Duluth.

Later Hilja married Waino Paivarine in 1927, and they farmed in Lakewood on the Lester River Road. They had two daughters, Mae and Irene. Hilja was on the School Board of Independent District No. 702 for over 30 years, first as a member of the board and many years as treasurer until the school was taken over by the City of Duluth.

ADOLPH SOLEM

Our grandfather, Jens Solem, and family came to this country from Norway in 1886. He came to Duluth to teach in a Norwegian school. The panic of 1893 hit and he lost his job, so he homesteaded in Normanna in 1893. He worked as a carpenter until he had a stroke. His sons worked in the lumber camps.

The oldest son Adolph was only 16 years of age and had to carry groceries and supplies from Duluth. He told of taking the street car to the end of the Woodland carline and walking to Vermilion Trail late at night carrying a pack of groceries, and from Arnold and north there were wolves following him on both sides of the trail. The Trail was the old Vermilion Road, which was the route to get supplies to Lake Vermilion. From that road to the homestead was a pole trail part of the way. Later our grandfather moved back to Duluth in 1907, but his oldest son Adolph stayed in Normanna.

Our other grandparent, Even Arntsen, came from Norway shortly after the Civil War and settled on Garfield Avenue. Later he moved to Normanna in the early 1900s His daughter Mary was one of the early teachers in Normanna. There she met Adolph and they were married in 1904, and they built a log house on part of the original homestead. All of their children were born and raised in Normanna.

Early social life consisted of skating, skiing, baseball games, singing and dancing parties. Our dad and his brothers had a quartet and entertained at many Duluth functions. They also were members of the Normanna Male Chorus. Dances were held at the Johnson School with music provided by an Edison phonograph. They had a club known as the "You and I Club." Many young people who had lived out here, but then moved to Duluth, came to these dances in covered sleighs. The parties lasted all night. When our folks went to Duluth, it was a two-day trip as they went by horse and buggy.

One of our most terrifying experiences was the fire of 1918. A fall fair was being held at the Johnson School. In the late afternoon, Mr. Cooke, who was with our dad on the fire watch west of the North Tischer Road, came and told us the fire had gotten out of control. Our dad came from the fire, and in the evening, we put what we could in the wagon and left heading east, as the fire was all around and there was no other way to go. There was fire on all sides of us at times, and it would jump ahead of us. Trees very often fell right behind the wagon. We finally stopped at Palmers late at night and found refuge at the Van Wagner farm. It was several days before we could go home with bridges burned out and such.

That winter the flu was with us and we lost Grandfather Arntsen at the age of 83.

In 1923, our mother passed away and several years later Dad married Gladys Rovainen, who taught at the Johnson School.

As we grew up, more roads were built and cars started appearing, so our social contacts expanded, and we could go to neighboring communities to social activities.

Eventually Normanna High School students transferred from Duluth to Clover Valley High School. Brother Jens and sister Carrie were in the first graduating class of Clover Valley High School. Younger brothers and

sisters finished their education there also. Four brothers and one sister served in the Armed Forces in the Second World War.

Over the years, Dad served on the local school board and township board and was elected Second District County Commissioner for several terms. He passed away in 1963 at the age of 83.

Lud Solem



Photos, page 128

JOHAN HAGBERG

Per Johan Hagberg was born in Varmland, Sweden. He worked in the lumber yard. He married Ulricka Nilson of Sundsvall, Sweden. They had three daughters—Alma (Mrs. Henning Johnson), Ada (Mrs. Noah Rawn) and Evelyn (Mrs. Ed Laiti).

They came to America in 1892 and settled on Garfield Avenue with friends they had known in Sweden—the Nels Paulsons. They moved to 28th Avenue West in 1905, and he worked as a policeman until they moved to the farm on Sucker River in 1920.

In later years, Hagbergs would have a picnic every August 1 for Johan's birthday. Friends from Duluth and neighbors would come. The usual good Swedish foods were served, and Mrs. Hagberg would always get new potatoes out of the garden no bigger than quarters or half dollars, which she cooked with the jackets on.

In 1936, they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Mr. Hagberg passed away in 1942. They will also be remembered in years to come because of the Hagberg Road named after them.



Photos, pages 126 and 127

CHARLES BERGQUIST

Charles Bergquist was born in Sweden and came to America in the early 1900s. He was a lumber scaler for Scott-Graff. He married Maren Paulson of Westby, Wisconsin, who came to Duluth when she was 19 years old.

They bought a farm where the abandoned Bomarc Missile Base is now. Charles worked for the county on road construction. He was on the town board. Maren was a charter member of Wesley Methodist Church, a member of the St. Louis County Historical Society and one of the founders of the Palmers Chapel on the North Shore. It was she who named the Bloomingdale School after a town in Wisconsin.

Mr. Bergquist had a sister who passed away and was the first one to be buried at the Lakeview Cemetery at Palmers.

The Bergquists raised four children. Carl, who married Nellie Saari, was a taxi driver, worked for the county, and was a car salesman. Grace married Hilding Dahlen; Ethel married Carl Anderson and they owned the store for awhile which is now Nolte's, and later a store and cabins at French River by Highway 61. Hazen became an electrician and married Iris Olson, who taught school at Bloomingdale.

The Bergquist family will be remembered in future years as they also have a road named after them.

HENRY HILL

Henry Hill was born in Oulu, Finland. His family name was Ylikangas, which translated meant Overland, so they changed it to Hill when they came to America in 1905 and settled in Duluth. With him were his parents and three brothers—Jack, John and Jonas. He met and married Hilja Woutilainen from Kemijarvi, Finland, who was living in Duluth with her parents and three sisters—Mrs. Emil (Ida) Knihtila, Mrs. Hugo (Alma) Korkki and Mrs. Eli (Lydia) Harju.

Henry's mother came to live with them when he built their home in French River, where in 1910, their son Eugene was born—the first child delivered in that area by Midwife Lundquist. Later they had Eddie, Vienna and Viola.

Henry worked in logging camps and sometimes for the St. Louis County road crew. He farmed 40 acres of his land, and as the north 40 was wet and swampy from the several springs there, it was used for pasture. With logs from his land, he built a large dairy barn, sawing the logs on his farm. They shipped cream to Blue Valley Creamery. Like most farmers' wives, Hilja did the milking and housework besides extra work during haying season. She kept the family in cool drinks by making the churn full of "kaliaa" (Malt Leader), a drink a little like root beer. Her pride was her flower garden, but she also had a large vegetable garden. With that and wild strawberries in the fields, wild raspberries from the old railroad right-of-ways and the old sawdust piles of the abandoned lumber camps, and apples from the trees Henry planted which bore well for many years, she kept her family well-fed all through the cold winter. Her crocheting was lovely. She would leaf through the mail order catalog and find a dress she liked for her girls. Then she would proceed to make her own pattern on newspaper, cut and sew a dress the exact replica of the one in the catalog.

In 1916, both the grandmothers passed away just three days apart. Grandpa Woutilainen died in 1920.

The winters were cold with deep snow so Henry would take his children and others along the way to and from school with the horse and sleigh when the weather was severe. Little did the children mind if he'd used the sleigh during the day to haul manure onto his fields.

Neighbors would drop in to visit and play cards—Musta Maja (Black Maid) was the favorite. Then there would be coffee served with Hilja's sugar biscuits. In the evening, she'd read the news in the *Päivälehti* out loud to Henry, with the kerosene lamp pulled down from the ceiling and sitting between her and the newspaper.

In 1929, Eugene went to work on the boats for two years. How thrilled the young people were when he brought home the record of the latest hit song, "Tiptoe through the Tulips." He brought records of Viola Turpeinen's accordion music for his folks. Later he worked for the Package Freight, then the shipyards, the ore docks and lastly for National Iron. He married Norma Heleen in 1933, and they have two daughters.

Eddie sailed one year. Then he worked in the scrap yards, the ore docks and back to the scrap yards. He married Vivian Kyllonen and they have four children.

Vienna and Viola worked in town. Vienna married Carl Bergquist of Two Harbors; they have one son. Viola married Art Alvar and has four children.

In 1950, Henry sold the farm and bought property east of it. When his home was destroyed by fire, he had to rebuild. They lived there until his death in 1952. Eddie and his family moved to the house and are still there. Mrs. Hill lived with her son Eugene in a little house of her own until her death in 1956.



Photos, pages 154 and 155

HUGO KORKKI

Hugo Korkki came to Duluth from Finland in 1906. He worked in the iron mines for a time. He married Alma Woutilainen in Duluth. In 1910, he purchased 80 acres on the present Korkki Road, where he and his wife reared their seven sons and two daughters.

He drove the school bus for a time, which in spring and fall was a Model A truck and in winter, a team of horses and a covered sled. One Monday morning in 1922, he brought the children to school to discover the building had burned down.

Four townships (Clifton, Buchanan, French River and Alden) were united in the early days to form the Duluth Township, and therefore four supervisors were elected to the town board. Later, Alden became a separate township. Before a hall was available, the board met at Dan Mahoney's at Palmers on the Sucker River. The first town hall later became the Clover Valley Presbyterian Church, and even later a private home. When the present Duluth Township Hall was built, most of the labor was donated.

In 1910, the road nearest the Korkki farm came only one-fourth mile off the Homestead Road. Mr. Korkki admitted running for the town board in order to get the road extended to this property. He enjoyed being supervisor however, and continued to serve about 20 years, earning an alias, "Mr. Town Board." Ryan Road residents weren't too happy that their road was neglected when Korkki's road was cut through to meet the Shelhon Road. Once it was completed, they appreciated the shorter mileage to Clover Valley and

the elimination of an often difficult climb up the steep hill on the Shelhon Road. So the Korkki Road came to be.

Mr. Korkki's wife and three sons, Eino, Ray and Roy, preceded him in death. Ray was killed in World War II. Arvo, formerly owner of Korkki Aviation Service, now resides in Scottsdale, Arizona; Ed is in the insurance business in Duluth; Dorothy lives in French River; Rudy is in St. Cloud; Robert in Minneapolis and Faye in Ely.

Hugo Korkki died in August 1975, in his late 80s, one of the last of our area's "Minnesota Finns."

The Landmarks - November 1972

JOHN TUOMINEN

On August 11, 1912, John Tuominen and family arrived at their new land on the Bergquist Road with all their worldly possessions in their buggy. John's family consisted of his wife Minnie and their two sons—Eino, age 2, and Reino (my dad), age 6 months. They came up the Ryan Road which was a logging trail at that time and went across just north of where North Shore School is now located. The Bergquist Road went only as far as Laitis at that time, but by 1914, it went as far as the Tuominen home.

John Tuominen was born January 12, 1885, in Elimaki, Finland, the third of five children. He came to America at age 20. Minnie Halkonen was born May 12, 1885, in Ruovesi, Finland, one of 13 children. She came to America in 1906 at age 21. While in the old country, Grandpa worked for his two older brothers—one had a carpenter shop and the other a slaughtering business and butcher shop. Although they did not know each other in Finland, they both decided to come to America where life seemed to be easier and conditions better.

Grandpa chose Duluth because he had a cousin, Otto Wickman, living there. He met Grandma at the boarding house where he stayed. She helped in the kitchen and served the food. They were married in Duluth and lived at Second Avenue East and Second Street. They both wanted to move their family to the country and were able to buy the Bergquist Road property from cousin Otto. Grandpa cleared land and built a log house which had three rooms—two on the main floor and one upstairs. They also built a barn for

the cow and horse. These buildings were just south of a tall oak tree which was then only three to four inches in diameter. That tree is now two feet in diameter. I am sure Eino and Reino had many happy hours climbing trees.

Every year Grandpa cleared a new plot of ground for his potatoes and vegetable garden. Hay was then planted on the old plot. He was very proud of his potatoes, and in the early 1920s had a bumper crop one year of 1000 bushels.

The Tuominen family went to town only a few times a year. They took their horse and buggy as far as 43rd Avenue East, where they had friends. They would leave the horse and buggy there and take a street car the rest of the way. My dad recalled his first trip to Duluth at about age 3. He remembered seeing only about two autos along the whole way.

Eino and Reino attended the original Bloomingdale School (School 93). They walked to school and along the way met the Laiti boys—Paul, Robert, Alex and John—and the Mattson boys—Hugo, Hjalmer and Felix. Hugo was one of the oldest boys and was the leader of the group. He and the bigger boys were responsible for carrying in firewood and starting the fire in the morning. Bloomingdale was a two-room school at that time. My dad will never forget when the teacher put a large mitt on his left hand and made him write with his right hand. Apparently “south-paws” were not too popular at that particular time.

Christmas was always a special holiday for the family. The boys would always receive handmade sleds or wagons which they enjoyed. The Christmas program at School 93 was always fun for the whole family. The tree was decorated with many lighted candles. One year Santa Claus got too close to the tree and his whiskers caught fire. A traditional Christmas menu always consisted of lutefisk. My grandmother continued to serve this every year on Christmas Day with a white sauce covering it and butter and allspice on top of that.

Each year in June on Midsummer’s Day (Juhannus Juhlat), many friends of the family rode the train to French River, and John would pick them up with the horse and buggy. The visitors enjoyed picking wild strawberries if they were out and later ate strawberry shortcake. Grandma would make delicious “pulla” (yeast coffee bread) with cardamom and also a

squeaky-like cheese when visitors came. It was called “leisjuusto.”

Eino and Reino picked many pails of strawberries and raspberries, which their mother would can. One year a canning jar broke and Minnie was badly burned. John was on his way to ask Mr. Abrahamson to take her to the doctor, but along came Oscar Laine in his car, so he took her to the doctor in Duluth. She recovered without any serious complications.

My dad made many trips to Saari’s store, which was located where the Stan Moes now reside. He remembers buying a large bag of candy for a nickel. They also sold dried apples, raisins and prunes in bulk. These were the only types of fruit available at some times. Another of his fond memories was his first automobile ride to Duluth with Matt Jackson. He had a 1918 Reo car. My dad then returned home by train which cost 15 cents at that time.

A very serious and dangerous time for everyone was October 12, 1918, and the tragic forest fire. Grandpa had a plowed field, and he and Oscar Rahkila hauled water barrels into the field in case the fire got that far. They were fortunate; the fire did not get to their land. Everybody stayed up all night as it was as bright as daylight and also very hot.

In 1920, Grandpa bought his first car, a Model T Ford. At that time he worked as a longshoreman in Duluth. My dad has always told about one of his trips to town in that car. They had bought supplies, among them a bag of oranges. The oranges fell out of the car, and he and Eino ran down First Avenue East chasing after the oranges. It really must have been quite a treat to have fresh fruit!

When my dad was around twelve, he had a trapline along the Sucker River. He trapped many weasels and mink and was a very happy lad when he received a check for \$76.90. He deposited \$75 in the bank and spent the \$1.90. The same year he made his first pair of skis.

My grandparents were hardy souls, both living into their 80s. They outlived their son Eino who died in a car accident in 1940. Even in their later years, they enjoyed living off the land, farming and growing vegetables and fruit. My dad has also followed in their footsteps of living off the land. He is now enjoying his retirement after milking cows for 50 years.

My husband Jeff, my daughter Emily and I are presently living in my grandparents' small retirement home. We are in the process of building a home just north of where the original Tuominen homestead stood. I am very happy and proud to be living on this land and hope to follow the fine examples my ancestors set out for me.

Carolyn Tuominen Marino



Photo, page 155

PETER RAMSTROM

Peter Ramstrom and Brita Olin were married in Sweden and came to the USA on August 25, 1911. Evick was born in Sweden in 1903, so he was 8 years old when he came to America. Their first home was in Duluth on Courtland Street. Helen was born there in 1914. Peter worked at Scott-Graff Lumber Co.

In Sweden, the Ramstrom's good friends, Chris and Ellen Grundstrom, had convinced them to come to America. Now the Grundstroms bought farm land at French River, so Ramstroms bought 40 acres of uncleared land too. They first built a house across from Tuominens; then they discovered a creek on the other corner of the forty, so they built a house there and did some farming. Peter kept on working at Scott-Graff and came home on the weekends.

Edith was born in 1917. In 1918, there was a huge forest fire. Erick Johnson came over and took Mrs. Ramstrom and the children to his house. As they walked through the woods, trees fell on all sides of them from the terrific wind. Johnsons had a ditch dug in their field and had tubs of water alongside the ditch with blankets ready to soak in the water to cover everybody in case the fire got too close. All of a sudden, the wind changed so the fire went a different direction. A lot of people hurried to the river to be in the water. Peter came home on the midnight train as he was worried about his family.

Farming was hard work. All the land was cleared rock by rock, tree by tree, and stumps were dynamited from the ground.

The good times were get-togethers with the neighbors; children were always included. Somehow the Finnish

and Swedish settlers learned enough English to visit each other. There were dances at the community hall. The parents brought food for lunch. After the evening was over, the parents would have to wake the children sleeping on benches. Edith remembers being carried on her father's back, while he carried a lantern in one hand to find the path through the woods behind Erick Johnsons.

The mailbox was on the Ryan Road, so we'd have to go through the woods to get our mail. In the spring, the creek flooded so it was hard to get to the mailbox, but somehow we got there with a temporary bridge. When the *Svenska Amerikarnen* newspaper came in the mail, all work stopped while the Ramstroms devoured the latest news and stories.

Times were hard; no one had much money, but everybody seemed happy. When someone had bad luck, everybody helped out. Erick left home to look for work in Milwaukee and the harvest fields in the Dakotas.

In 1941, Erick died at age 38. This was a sad time for all of us. Then Peter had a stroke a couple of years later; he lost his speech and was paralyzed. He died in 1944 at age 71.

This seemed to be the end of our days in French River as Mrs. Ramstrom moved to Duluth. Helen got married in 1940 to Everett Hicks, and Edith in 1941 to Edward Jankowski. Helen lives in Rochester and Edith in Duluth.

Mrs. Ramstrom died in 1968, almost 92 years old.

There are four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren in the Ramstrom family.

French River will always mean home to me.

Edith Jankowski

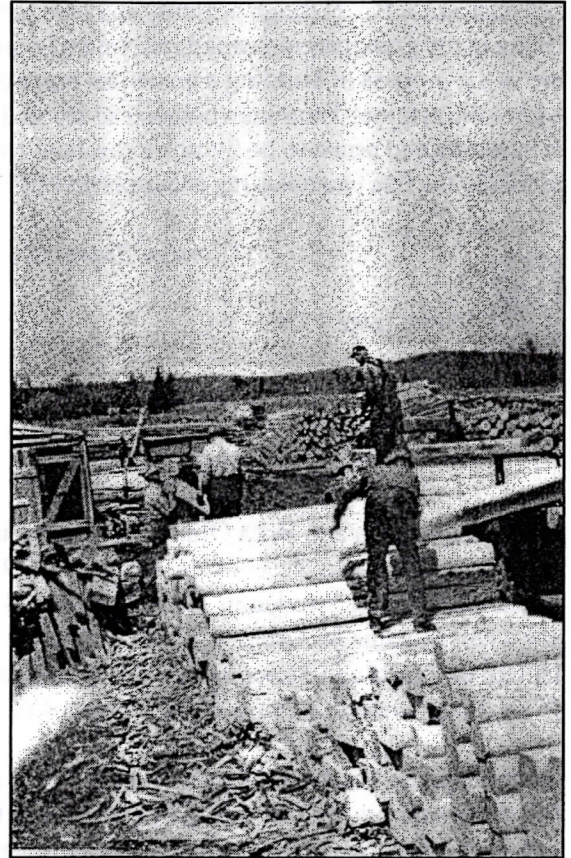
P.S. In June, Helen and I are going to Sweden to visit relatives and see where our parents were born and raised.



Photos, pages 129 and 178



John Saari & Hjalmer Oberg, circa 1923



Pykari's logging operation



Mr. & Mrs. Matt Pykari



Mr. & Mrs. John Hagberg



Edward & Esther Engelson
25th Anniversary, 1934



Sophie & Louie Anderson, 1924



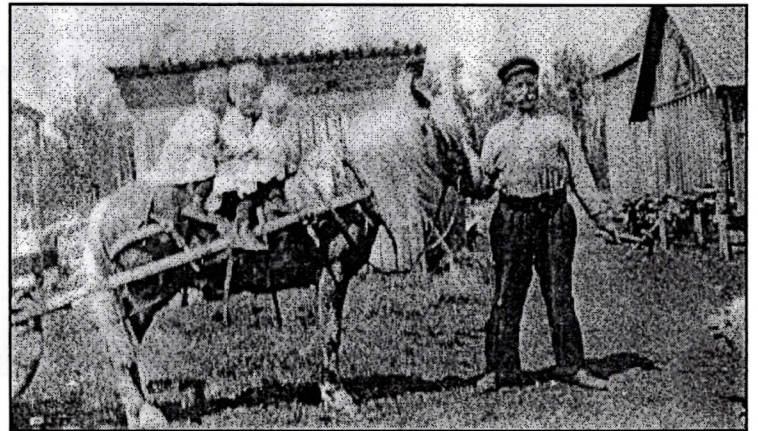
Mr. & Mrs. John Hagberg



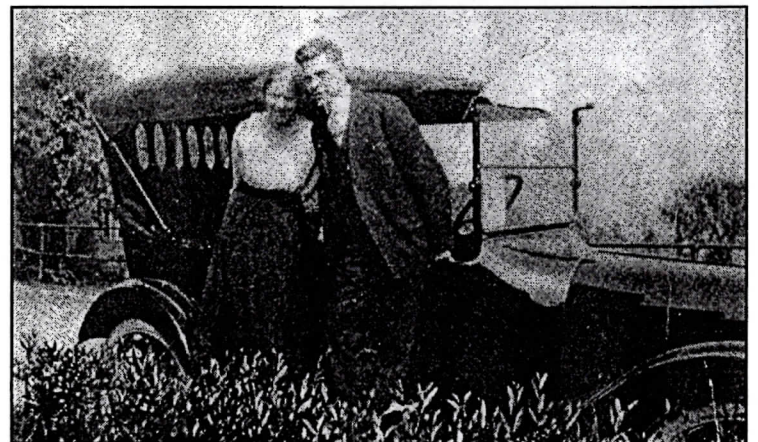
Mrs. Johan Oberg and
Mrs. Charles Saari



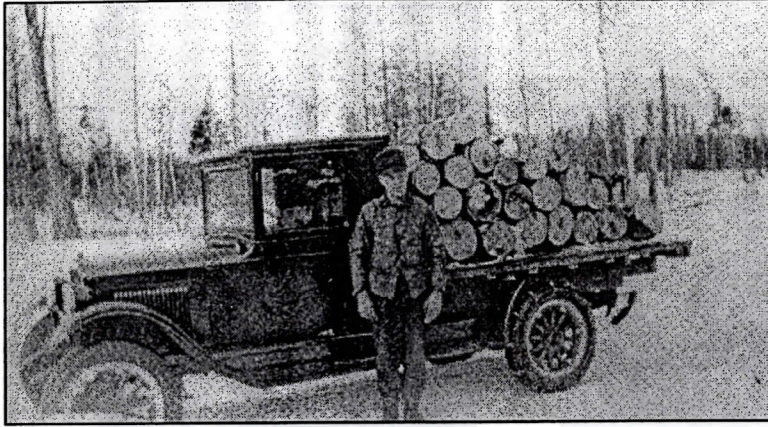
John Hagberg



Vivian, Evelyn and Violet Englund with Mr. Lundquist and pet wolf



Mr. & Mrs. Elof Strand, 1919



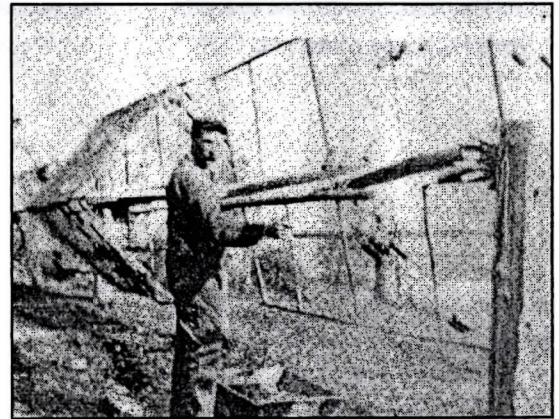
Elof Strand, 1924



Adolph Solem



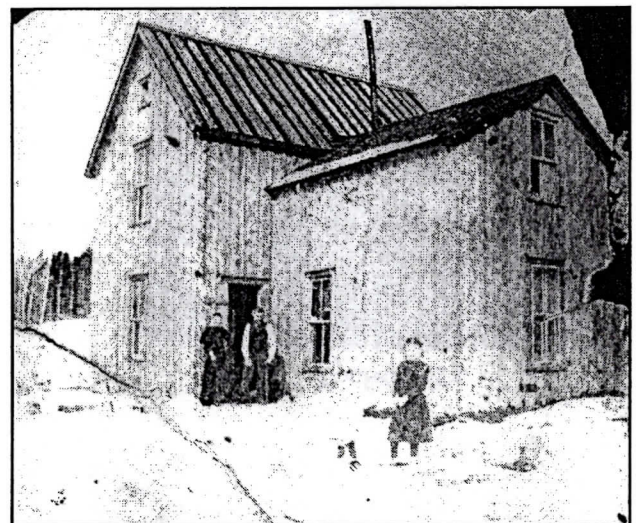
A.I. Nappa, Mrs. Nappa with Laila on wagon
Horses Nellie and Pilku, and Joseph Aro, 1921



Louis Mattson with fish nets



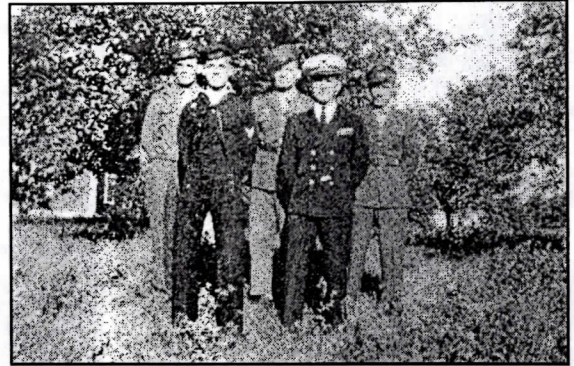
Making hay at the Beck farm



Mr. & Mrs. Jens Solem with Ingeborg, the first
white child born in Normanna, and Anna



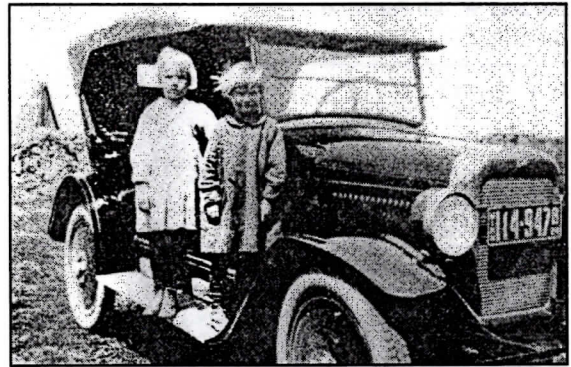
Mr. & Mrs. Peter
Ramstrom and Helen



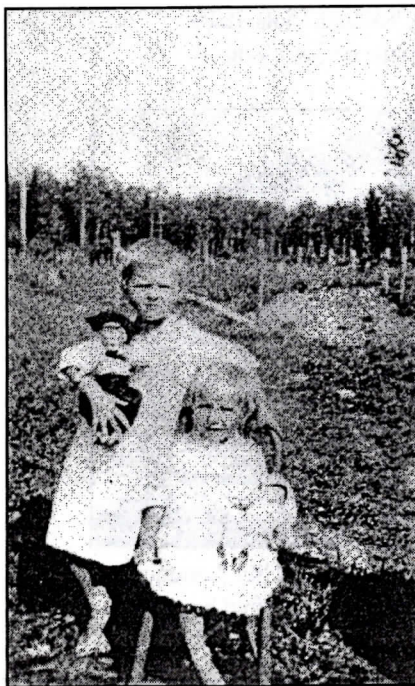
Jackson boys: Helge, Carl, Helmer, Howard, Hilding



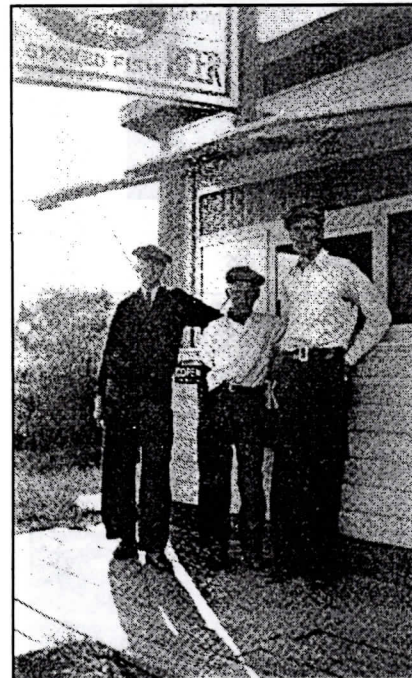
Miss Mary Haugner
(early French River teacher)



Helga (7) and Alli (6) Hampspinnar



Helen and Edith
Ramstrom, circa 1920



Gust Dahlberg, Pete Dahlberg,
Harold Jackson



Rudy, Arne and Willie Anderson



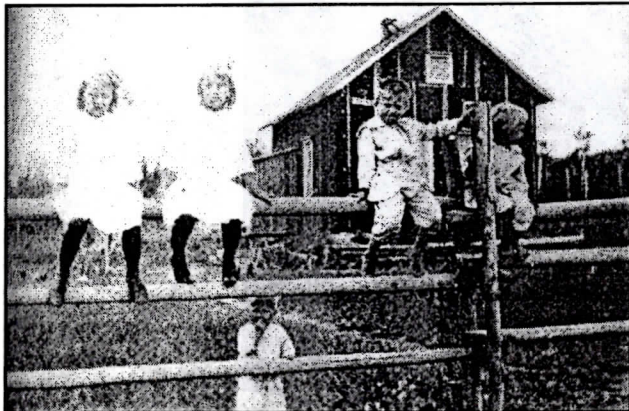
Oberg's Shoe Shop - Superior



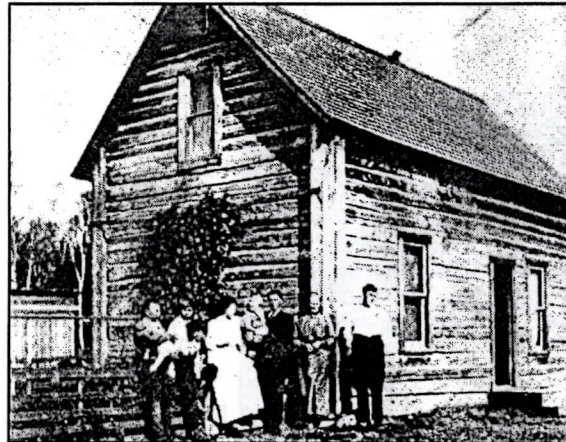
Mr. & Mrs. Johan Lundquist
and daughter Huldie



Louie Anderson family, circa 1920
Arne, William, Wildred, Viola, Rudy,
Verna, Sophie, Diana, Louie



Johnson children: Mary, Alma, Edwin, Tegner, Melvin



Johan Lundquist, Morris Oberg, Tillie Lundquist
Englund, Evelyn Englund Paro, Alfred Englund,
Hilda Lundquist (Mrs. Johan), Victor Lundquist

OSCAR RAHKILA

Juho Oscar Rahkila was born in 1882 in Tyrvää, Finland. In September 1907, he immigrated to America, coming to Duluth where a number of young men from the same locality had settled. Here he worked mostly at odd jobs and in lumber camps.

Hilja Aleksandra Jarvinen was born in 1889 in Kokemäki, Finland. In May 1907, having just reached her 18th birthday, she too decided on the same move. Contrary to Oscar, who was severing all ties with his native land, Hilja's plan was to "make her fortune" in the land of golden opportunity and return to Finland in five years. Had she obeyed her heart instead of her head, she would have turned back from Liverpool, England, because already she was suffering the pangs of homesickness. Pride kept her going, however, but a most miserable Atlantic crossing it was with seasickness added to her homesickness.

Hilja also chose Duluth for her new home. She worked as a domestic and as a cook's helper in Finnish restaurants and boarding houses (poikatalos).

An effective and enjoyable aid in learning to read the English language was the silent films of the day. The well-worn condition of the English-Finnish dictionary and its counterpart, the Finnish-English, indicates that they were frequently consulted. In fact, the English-Finnish version was often taken to the movies so that the mysteries of that unfamiliar language could be unraveled at the very earliest opportunity.

Hilja's five-year plan was forgotten for two reasons—no fortune had been accumulated and she met Oscar. They were married in 1912. They worked together in logging camps at first and then lived in Duluth for a time, where their daughter Irja was born in 1914.

Oscar had bought 20 acres of forested land in French River. He cleared a small patch and used the logs to build a small house to which they moved in September 1914. There was no road to use as a guideline, so when the Bergquist Road was constructed, he discovered that the house was at an angle to the road. This really bothered him, but a few years later when he remodeled the house and built a basement under it, he was able to correct this error.

The early years were spent in clearing land for a little farming, raising a few cows and garden vegetables. Oscar spent those winters at lumber camps, leaving Hilja alone at home with a small child to cope with the rigors and hardships of the winter weather.

An invaluable service to the immigrants was the Americanization classes, which were held at the school and taught by the local teachers. Hilja was the first to take advantage of the opportunity as Oscar was still away at camp during the winters when the classes were held. Irja usually chose to accompany her mother to class as she did not like to stay at home alone. Sometimes the teachers, Mr. and Mrs. McHugh, would invite her to go home with them for dinner to save her the extra two-mile walk when the weather was stormy or cold. Home for the teachers at that time was a temporary apartment at the Heino home because the original School 93 with its teacherage had burned in the fall of 1922. School was held in the store building, which is now Nolte's. Irja remembers one time when Helene Schonberg came to keep her company and stay over night. Her mother, who was deathly afraid of fire (an ever-present danger in those days of wood stoves, oil lamps and water carried in pails), cautioned the girls as she was leaving for school, "Now, don't tip over the lamp." The girls hardly dared breathe as they tiptoed around, for fear of knocking over the kerosene lamp on the kitchen table.

The people attended the classes for two or three years learning the English language, American history and civics. The culmination of their efforts was an examination before the judge of either the United States District Court or the St. Louis County Court, whichever was specified by the Immigration Service at the time. Each alien would bring his or her own witnesses to testify to his character and integrity, indicating he would make a desirable citizen. The judge would interrogate them orally to make sure they had gained a knowledge of our government and Constitution, and they would be tested to make sure they had a functional command of the English language. Ballots were not printed in any minority languages in those days. Finally they would receive that precious document proclaiming them citizens of the United States of America.

Oscar gave up logging during the winters so he, too, was able to get his "citizenship papers." He turned to carpentry as a trade and was kept busy, usually spring through fall, building for people in the community.

Hilja had the checks for cream sent to the creamery, and she earned pin money during the summer selling milk, cream and butter to Duluthians who had summer homes on the Sucker River—the George Richards and Stephen Jones families. Her fingers were never idle; her leisure moments were spent in knitting and crocheting articles for family and friends.

Although they had only the one child themselves, they had several foster children for varying lengths of time—the last one being Helen Silander, who was a second daughter to them.

Hilja died in 1943 and Oscar in 1947, but his works survive him in the houses, barns and garages built by him which are standing today throughout *The Landmarks* country.

ERIC SCHONBERG

The official family name of Schonberg came from a great-grandfather who was a sea merchant carrying goods from Germany to the Scandinavian countries. He eventually settled in Finland and marriages brought about a mix of Swedish and Finnish mates. Mrs. Schonberg, whose maiden name was Mary Ylakuja (meaning Upper Grove), was of Finnish stock as far back as the family history can be traced.

Eric had a fairly good education in Finland for those days. He worked as a glassblower and carpenter. He served his military training in the cavalry under Russian control. No doubt it was to escape Russian oppression that he chose to come to America. He came in 1908 at the age of 29 with Hugo Hampspinnar, who was 21 years old. They came on the ship "Corsican" and entered the United States through Canada. They worked in northern Wisconsin lumber camps and on the docks in Duluth, picking that city because Eric had a brother Sam there who was a preacher.

He sent for his family in Finland (his wife Mary, son Sulo Eric and daughter Gertrude who was about 2 or 3 years old at the time). They had their own cabin on the ship "Celtic." Mrs. Schonberg used to tell of Gertrude's being a little "ham," who sang and danced on board ship to entertain the other passengers who would throw pennies! Gertrude thinks it was only because of the

scarcity of entertainment on shipboard in those days, but people always enjoy watching children perform.

The Schonbergs lived for five years on Sixth Avenue West and Third Street in Duluth. Mr. and Mrs. Carl Mandelin lived across the street. When young Eric and Gertrude started school, the girl ahead of them being enrolled was named Alice Sandberg. When the teacher asked Mrs. Schonberg if they were related, she said, "No," but in her broken English, her pronunciation of her name must have come out "Shanebar," so they were enrolled as Sandberg. Since the main effort those days was to keep alive and the struggle for existence was a full-time job, there was no time spent on misspelling of names as they probably thought this was the American way it should be done. The family continued to use that name until Eric and Trudy were grown up and ready to leave the home area. Then Eric Sr. suggested that they explain the circumstances of the name correction to everyone concerned, and from then on, it was spelled correctly.

Eric worked at carpentry on ships and on the docks in Duluth. Helene was born there. On Thanksgiving Day, when she was about 2 months old, they moved out to a little farm on a forty on the Sucker River they had bought from Carl Mandelin. Eric continued to work on the docks and came home only on weekends. He was a barber for the early settlers.

About three years after they moved to French River, one day Eric borrowed Mandelin's horse and wagon and went to get Mrs. Lundquist, the midwife. There were no roads, so they came through the woods. It was March and the river was swollen, so he had to get planks to make a bridge so that Mrs. Lundquist could cross the river and deliver Violet.

Eric, with his false pride, never got far as he couldn't master the English language; but Mary was outgoing and visited in her broken English and got along fine, except, like so many others, she worked too hard on a non-paying farm. She would carry water for the farm animals from the river in pails hanging from a wooden yoke she wore across her shoulders. She loved house plants and had them arranged on attractive tables made purposely for them by Eric.

Trudy and Eric Jr. were active in the French River Dramatic Arts Club, an organization which was inspired by the Hoffmans. Many plays were given with

local talent under the direction of Frances Hoffman (now Mrs. Max Lavine). Trudy moved to Minneapolis to work and married Ed Rice. Eric worked in Duluth for Clyde Iron Works; Helene and Violet moved to California where both are residing now.

Trudy relates a story about the thoughtfulness of her sister-in-law, Evelyn (Eric's wife). Knowing some years ago that they were all approaching retirement age and sensing that legal documents are needed for Social Security, etc., she went to the Finnish Counsel in Duluth and gave him Trudy's and Eric's names and what records they had and asked if there was any possibility of getting their birth certificates from Finland, all the time thinking it would be a hassling job. She was told, "No problem at all as Finland has a safe underground system of keeping records in order and out of reach in case of war or other catastrophes." He took care of the matter for her, and in two weeks' time, she had both documents in hand—an invaluable gift to the recipients. This information may prove helpful to others in a similar situation.



Trudy Schonberg Rice and Eric Schonberg

Photo, page 155

AN INCIDENT RECALLED BY HELENE

This is an incident that happened on a cold winter's night about 1923 or thereabouts, that has remained with me all these years.

Our home was a small two-room house at the time, with an upstairs that would be closed off during the winter months in order to keep warm downstairs. My sister Violet and I were the only ones left at home with Mother and Dad.

No telephone or electricity (gasoline and kerosene lamps) and the old-fashioned wood heating stove was our mode of living. Our parents retired early and the children along with them.

Suddenly we were awakened by a banging on the door, which alone was quite frightening—but on such a stormy night, it was more so. Dad, in his long-handled drawers (not red), lit the kerosene lamp and went to the door. There stood a big man, beard and nostrils laced

with frost, asking for shelter for himself and a team of horses. First, let me explain. My dad spoke very little English, having come from Finland in adulthood. The stranger spoke just as little, being Polish. Also, in our little clannish neighborhood, if one wasn't Scandinavian or Finnish, he may as well have been from another planet altogether. How they were able to get to a mutual understanding at all, I will never know.

My dad got dressed, lit a lantern, and those huge work horses were put up in the cow stalls of our little barn. Mother warmed the coffee. The man retired on the floor next to the stove, and we all settled down again—all of us a bit uneasy, no doubt.

Not long after, we were awakened by this loud clatter that brought everyone up. The horses had kicked out the windows in the barn! That alone was serious enough because of the extreme temperature and wind, but the broken windowpanes were a big loss. Dad would have to walk to Palmers, take the bus or train into town and bring the glass home. They nailed gunny sacks over the windows, and finally daylight did arrive.

The man did pay for the glass, and after a hot breakfast, was on his way to a lumber camp north of Two Harbors. He'd come from Normanna and was cutting through farms to shorten the distance.

I was so impressed with the size of those huge workhorses that were used to haul the fallen trees and the dark complexion and extremely black hair and beard of that man, that I had many a nightmare about them. And I wonder if WE would take a complete stranger out of the stormy night to bed down with us in the same room?

*Helene Schonberg Bevins
Susanville, California*

CARL MANDELIN

Carl Mandelin was born in Turku, Finland. He came to Duluth as a young man and worked for the Buckley and Beckstrom Employment Agency, which was located on the Michigan Street side of the old Spalding Hotel. Later he became a partner; but in 1929 when there were no jobs to be had due to the Depression, Mr. Beckstrom and Carl gave up the office. He then moved full-time to the farm in French River where he owned several forties, on one of which his son Elmer built in later years.

He married his wife Ida in Duluth. She had first come to Eveleth, Minnesota from Tornio, Finland. She had a cousin in Eveleth, who had married a pharmacist by the name of Oberg.

The family would go back and forth between Duluth and the farm before they finally moved there. Mr. Heino would come to meet them at the train at Palmers with his horse and buggy. After the family moved to the farm and Mr. Mandelin was still working in town, he went home only on weekends, often walking the distance between Palmers and home. Someone would walk to Palos every evening for milk. Saima recalls someone delivering butter and eggs routinely—it could have been Mr. Heino.

Mr. Mandelin first built a little house down by the river below the hill. When the big one was built on top of the hill, they sold the little one to Andrew Goss (Koosi Antti). It took many horses to pull it up the hillside and north to the corner adjacent to Palos east of the Shelhon Road.

The Mandelins operated a store, the first one also being down on the riverbank. Later they built a store building near the big house. Mrs. Mandelin ran the store while Carl worked in town. (He later worked at the Government Employment Agency in Duluth.) When the neighborhood ladies came to shop, they would often have coffee and visit with Mrs. Mandelin.

Mandelins had five children—Saima, Elmer, Irma, Esther and Sue. Saima attended kindergarten at the Jackson School in Duluth but started first grade at School 93 in French River. She graduated from Suomi College in Hancock, Michigan, where she prepared for her career in nursing. She now resides in St. Petersburg Beach, Florida. Daughters Irma and Esther are also nurses. Irma was a captain of nurses in France during World War II and is now retired and living in Wilmington,

North Carolina, having been a Director of Nurses in a veteran's hospital in Alabama. Esther lives in Haverstraw, New York; and Sue, married to an Air Force colonel, is back in the States after living in Guam. Their son Elmer married Ella Pearson, who taught at the Bloomingdale School. He worked for the St. Louis County Maintenance Department for many years and is now retired. He has a home on the site of the old Bloomingdale School.

Mrs. (Mandelin) Johnson is now back in Duluth after living in Tombstone, Arizona for a number of years. Her old friends were happy to see her and visit with her again.

DAVID AND HILJA (HEINO) IVARINEN

David and Hilja left their native Finland in their late teens due to economic conditions. David came first to Michigan where he worked at his cousin's sawmill. From there, he moved to Duluth where he worked on the railroad. Hilja came directly to Duluth where she worked as a house maid and later in restaurants.

After David and Hilja were married, they operated hotels and restaurants in Duluth. In 1922, they moved to Palmers to the farm on the Old North Shore Road that was known as the Palmer Stock Farm. The farm had a dairy herd of 25-30 Guernsey cows. Milk was sold to customers along the North Shore Road and to creameries in Duluth.

David was elected to the first Board of Directors of the Lake County REA in 1937. He was a Duluth Township Supervisor for four years. In July 1939, David was severely injured in a fall from the hayloft to the barn floor. The fall resulted in a broken back and paralysis of the legs, but he still kept farming. David died in 1952. The farm was sold to the Roy Mattsons in 1954. Hilja moved to Duluth. She died in 1959.

They had one son Henry, who graduated from the Clover Valley High School in 1935. Henry played saxophone in dance bands, starting out at the town hall parties and the Molde dance hall. He and his wife Ladonnah now reside in White Bear Lake. They have two daughters.



Photo, page 154

NORDLING

Times were hard in Sweden, and many of the young people left to immigrate to the Midwest. Land was plentiful and relatively cheap, whereas owning property in Sweden was not common. Fulfillment of a dream led my parents to this area to find work and settle on a farm.

My dad bought an 80-acre tract with a buddy he had known in Sweden. He later married our mother in Minneapolis, where they both worked. An uncle had furnished Mother with a free ticket in return for services performed in his home, as his wife was ill. The trip was an unforgettable experience, as the journey over the ocean from Liverpool, England proved hazardous. Anyone who saw the movie, *The Emigrants*, or read the book can attest to that.

Mother worked as a housekeeper for a Stone family in Lake Minnetonka for some time prior to her marriage. She often spoke of a grandson of the Stones who grew up and became an Air Force ace—Jimmy Doolittle. He referred to our mom as “Grandpa’s Annie.”

Our parents moved to Duluth after their marriage in December 1906. They built a home at 24th Avenue West and Second Street, and it is now occupied by an Anderson family. Our dad bought the land from the State Bank of Michigan at Ionia. This land had many owners from the time the U.S. government set up homesteads—a John LaPrairie and John Watress were the first settlers in 1859, but to our knowledge, no houses were built by these families.

The Duluth & Iron Range Railway sought to build a line from Duluth to Two Harbors in 1889, and subsequently, had 3.86 acres of our property in French River condemned. The sale price was \$19.30. The railway still divides the property, as does the expressway built some years ago.

A log cabin built by Dad served as a summer cabin for ten years until they sold their city home and built a two-story house. Later a barn was constructed also.

A well-known Duluth family had possession of the property prior to our father’s time. In 1890, the Alworths bought the 80-acre tract for \$50. It was sold in 1898 for \$125. It was traded and sold numerous times before our dad took possession in 1906 for \$850.

It is still in our family; Art, Carl and I share in this 60-some acres left at the present time.

The property was used for farming until all three brothers were drafted in 1942 to serve in World War II. They saw service in Europe and Africa and returned home in 1945 after peace was restored.

Helen Nordling Olson

JOHN AND ELLEN OLSON

For some years, the Olson home on the Bergquist Road served as a weekend retreat which the boys loved. By 1912, it became the permanent home for five years. After moving back to Duluth for two years, they returned to French River to set up a farming and lumbering enterprise. Ray tells me his father borrowed \$5,000 to have a lumber mill erected on the land. It was a steam-powered mill, burning wood or sawdust! The 1918 fire destroyed the business.

Ken went to work for the United States government in Washington, D.C. Herbert lives at Cotton, and Ray secured employment with the State Highway Department at Grand Marais, where he resides with his wife Alma.

I do not know the present owners. I understand the barn burned to the ground when Gust Gustafson owned it.

Emil was rural mail carrier at French River for six years. He married Helen Nordling and was transferred in 1936 to the Hunters Park Post Office to serve on Route 3. He has now been retired for eight years and spends summers gardening, playing golf or going fishing. Winters he keeps busy bringing in wood for the fireplace or bowling with a senior citizens’ group at Ridgeview Lanes. We are active in a church group and can’t find enough hours in the day. Busy? We are!

Helen Nordling Olson

LOUIS MATTSON

Louis Mattson was born in Larsmo, Finland and settled here in 1906. The mother and four children, accompanied by Alfred Bloomquist, came here September 24, 1906, by train. There was just a small trail to French River. Andrew Carlson and Louis came by sailboat with the family belongings. The cabin had no windows or door, just a rug over the doorway until the father came. The children were Inez, Ingrid, Irene and Ellen, who was 6 months old. Later Julia, Lilly, Hjalmer and Theodore were born in French River.

The older children attended Clifton School—five students, Ingrid, Inez, Viola (?) and two McQuade boys. Ingrid and Inez were confirmed at Bethel Lutheran Church in Duluth. They took the train into town and the streetcar to Lester Park coming home, then walked the rest of the way home. John Skomars came on the train on Sundays and held church services for the Mattsons and neighbors. Pastor Gustaf Oberg from Bethel Lutheran often preached, too. Julia and Ellen stayed at Arthur Mattson's and went to Bloomingdale School.

Louis and his sons became commercial fishermen. One time they had one ton of herring at the station to ship to Duluth. The train did not stop, and although it was January, a thunderstorm came up, so the fish spoiled and couldn't be sold. Sundstrom and Gustafson fished together, and Lee Johnson fished alone.

Louis was a watchman of the bridge during the First World War. The night the forest fire came through in 1918, they fought fire all night. Louis and an uncle carried water for the cattle, as everyone else was sick in bed with the flu. The flu was the cause of Mrs. Mattson's death in December.

Four of the Mattson girls married four Alseth boys. Theodore Mattson lost his life in the Second World War.

Hjalmer continued to fish during the years. He invented his own ice cutter. He also designed two unique fishing boats. The first was a "sea sled," which moved easily over the ice, yet was adequate when the ice floes drifted apart. The second boat was to catch smelt ahead of the boat before the boat's noise caused them to scatter. He has seen many changes in Lake Superior over the years. He remembers when two million smelt were first planted to feed the larger fish in small lakes

adjoining Lake Michigan. They appeared here about 1939. He believes smelt have depleted herring by eating the eggs and fry and will eventually do the same to trout, being a worse scavenger than the lamprey.

Last paragraph reprinted from *The Landmarks* - April 1972



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I REMEMBER GRANDMA SANDBERG

Mrs. Anna Sandberg and her son John were living on the Sandberg homestead when I joined the family. I don't recall hearing why she left Sweden; I only know she and her husband had lived in Washburn, Wisconsin when my mother was born in 1898.

Soon after that, they moved to the Palmers section house where Mr. Sandberg was section foreman on the DM&IR Railroad. The family, which included their sons, Carl and John, and my mother Lillian, lived there when Mr. Sandberg was struck by a train and killed instantly. Leaving the section house, they moved to the Sandberg property as it is today—a granddaughter and great-granddaughter live there now. Carl married Mary Sandvik; Lillian married Clarence Jensen; John, unmarried, served in World War I, then came back to live with his mother.

This warm-hearted woman was a haven for us all whenever we needed her. My parents lived in Duluth when I was little, but we made the trip by train every weekend to be with Grandma. While we were there, we were joined by my cousins (Carl's children) from Two Harbors. It didn't occur to us that she was poor—her home was ours; she was so kind-hearted. Her favorite picnic was to build a fire on the beach, provide an impromptu meal for her guests and roast wieners and marshmallows. Her social life included activities in the Ladies Aid. A religious woman, she gave me my first Bible when I was very young, which I've cherished all these years.

The Depression struck. My dad lost his job in Duluth, and no one could afford to hire house painters. So again, Grandma's was our port in the storm. By this time, I was school-age and attended the one-room school at Palmers. Our next move was to combine

Grandma and my dad in a business venture—"The Little Store," which is now Shorecrest. When we moved there, the Carl Sandberg family, also hit by the Depression, moved on to the old homestead. For a few years, we had a good thing going. Grandma was such a friendly person and active in the business. Unfortunately, she passed away at this time, at only 54 years of age. We missed her very much, and she left such an endearing impression on me that even today, myself a grandmother, I can still vividly remember Grandma.

Clarice Jensen Johnson

SMITH CROFT

The Smith Crofts came to the United States from Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, England in 1872 with a son and daughter. They lived in St. Paul for four years, where two more children were born. In 1876, they came to the Scargland Wiklund farm in Clifton, where they raised cattle and sheep. This farm was in the vicinity of the present Forrest Inn, and it was a marker for many years for the fishermen setting their nets. When the Crofts needed groceries which they could not raise, they would hike on the dog trails to Duluth, purchase such things as flour, sugar, kerosene, etc., and tote it all home on their backs.

They heard of land on Stoney Point being for sale, so they bought 227 acres at \$2 an acre. Mr. Croft and the boys cut logs and built a one-room cabin at what came to be known as Croft's Beach. The cabin had bunks along the walls and only enough room for a stove and a table. The family moved to their new home by boat. There were nine children by then—Mary, Charlie, Joe, Jack, Sabina, Lillian, Bill, Tom and Jane. Later more logs were cut to build a four-room cabin on top of the hill and back from the lake. Three more children were born at Stoney Point—Fred, Sam and Susan.

A new family moved to Buchanan (a town site just east of Stoney Point) about this time, arriving from Norway. This was the Mindestrom family and eventually included eight children—John, Mary (Alseth), Martha (Sunde), Hans, Christine, Walborg (Brownlee), Herman and Obert.

Mr. Croft was an educated man and knew of the need for an education for his family, so a one-room school was built on his property. He then went to the county

office in Duluth, and, after much haggling, got a teacher named Tom Carter for his school with 13 students. Carter later married Jane Croft and moved to Lutsen.

About 1888, the railroad was built through Croft's property, and Mrs. Croft cooked for the crew.

In 1894, a school was built in Molde, where the Martinsons, Hans Olsons and Axel Larsons attended.

In 1904, the Croft School was moved to Palmers and the children hiked along the railroad tracks to school. One time they had a narrow escape in a snowstorm when they did not see the train before they started across the trestle.

Mr. Croft became deaf later and was killed walking on the tracks to Knife River.

The Landmarks - June 1973

EDWARD AND ESTHER ENGELSON

The Engelson family is relatively new to the French River area, for they have only been there for 48 years! Mrs. Engelson Sr. is one of the older residents of the community, and her life has been typical in many ways of the immigrants from Sweden. She has done without, endured, enjoyed, persevered, adjusted and worked just as many others of her generation, but what she accepted as her life is truly remarkable when compared to the expectations, the complaints, the conveniences and experiences of most Americans today.

Esther Olson was born in Eskilstuna, Sweden. After completing the fifth grade, she had to leave school and go to work. She remembers the work, the small wages and the homesickness. She was doing housework in Gavle when she met Edward Ingelson, a blacksmith apprentice. They married in Gavle in 1909, when she was 21 and he was 24 years old.

Their first daughter had been born when Edward decided to go with a friend to America to see just what opportunities might be here. It was 1910 when he left his wife and child with his parents and sailed to this country. The men came directly to Duluth because the friend had relatives here.

The employment office in Duluth sent many men to work on the Grand Trunk Railroad in Canada. En route the men heard rumors that many men in the camps were dying of smallpox, so a group of men including Edward decided to take unauthorized leave from the train at Saskatoon. There a railroad subcontractor hired them, but they lived only in tents for that winter on the prairie. Edward took care of the horses and mules. This situation led to a rather unorthodox re-entry into the United States and complications years later when Edward applied for American citizenship.

Edward also went by boat (there were no roads or railways) to Grand Marais, where he worked for the Red Cliff Lumber Co. His first job in Duluth was blacksmithing for Duluth Implement Co., which made logging equipment. Later on he worked for East End Ice & Coal Co. as a blacksmith—and when the horses were gone, he became a truck mechanic for the same company.

Edward sent for Esther and 3-year-old Svea in 1913. They crossed to New York City on a passenger steamer. The Titanic's disaster in 1912 frightened Esther, for she recalls that she always went to bed fully dressed just in case a similar accident should happen to them. The train trip from New York to Duluth was tiring but uneventful, and they were met by Edward and the family he'd been living with in Duluth since leaving Sweden. The Ingelson's first home was in West Duluth.

A typographical error or a misunderstanding led to the misspelling of "Ingelson" by one of Edward's employers. It would have been complicated to correct, so he let it ride, but the error led to others by repetition, and so the family's name has been "Engelson" since then.

Esther and Edward bought a small farm at "Exeter Farms" in Lakewood Township, where their second daughter was born. They were living there when the terrible forest fire of 1918 swept through the area, and they lost everything except their lives and the cattle. Edward was unable to reach home after work, and later reports made him believe that he had probably lost his family. Esther spent the night lying on the road with eight-year old Svea and the baby and a neighbor with her children. The whole area was burning and there was no place to go. In the morning, her friend discovered that two of her children lying with her had suffocated! Later that day, the homeless people were taken to the National Guard Armory at 13th Avenue

East for temporary shelter and care. Here, Edward found his wife in the crowd and confusion and realized that they were still alive.

That winter they lived in Duluth, and Esther fell on some stairs causing a permanent hip injury. The next summer they moved back to the farm and built a small house provided by government help to fire victims. It was too small, so in time, they built a larger home there. A son was born. They enrolled in special classes at Central to prepare them for American citizenship.

In 1928, they bought a larger farm on the Shilhon Road. That house was also small, so in 1937, the present house there was built. Edward eventually retired from Marine Iron Shipbuilders, where he'd worked since 1941 when East End Ice & Coal Co. went out of business.

The Engelsons went back to Sweden for a visit in 1953 to see their relatives for the first time in 40 years. They enjoyed their visit greatly, but they no longer felt at home with the customs or the language. French River was home to them now.



Photo, page 126

FRANK W. BECK

Frank Beck's grandfather was Swedish and his grandmother was German. His father was a glassblower from Kokkola, Finland who had served in the German army. When he came to the United States, he spoke German, Russian and Finnish. He tried to join the American army to learn English but wasn't accepted, so he bought a Swedish-American dictionary and practiced the language with that.

His father, Victor Beck, stayed with an uncle in Brule, Wisconsin helping around his saloon. In winter, he worked in the woods. He happened to meet a woman born in Finland but working in a Superior, Wisconsin laundry, and he married her. They lived in Brule for awhile, where two of their children were born.

Victor Beck saw an advertisement for homesteading in the Brimson area, so he filed for 160 acres. He worked in the lumber camps as a saw filer while his wife was trapping.

Frank Beck was one of four children born in Brimson. He came to Palmers in 1926, where he worked for the railroad and lived in the section house. He also helped with the work at Ivarinen's stock farm. He lived with Elickson's for awhile and Mahoney's at Palmers. Eventually he bought 40 acres of land at \$7.50 per acre and married Elna Elickson. Frank Beck worked for 28 years on the railroad, but he has also been a logger, a sailor and a construction worker. He and his wife still live near the Homestead Road.



Photo, page 128

ALDEN TOWNSHIP—BEYOND TERMINUS OF HOMESTEAD ROAD

Based on best estimates, it is believed that some of the earliest settlers dated back to 1895–1905, the heyday of the logging era. When the majestic white pine was completely cut, some of the lumberjacks decided to stay. The influx of settlers started off at a trickle around 1916, reaching its greatest peak of activity around 1918 and 1919, tapering off sharply after 1925. Land parcels purchased were seldom over 40 acres; however in a few cases, families would own 60 or 80 acres of land.

The majority of the settlers were diversified farmers producing milk, cream, some meat, eggs, oats, barley, potatoes and hay. Some would cut firewood in the winter time and sell the wood mostly in Two Harbors. A few did road work or worked in industry. A large number of the settlers tried their hand at producing home brew and moonshine during the prohibition period. As the country worked its way out of the Depression, the settlers had cleared more land and increased and improved their dairy herds. The entire family was involved in making a living. As the children left or graduated from school to seek their own fortunes, the decline of farming began in the area.

Prior to World War II, the area was very stable; very few new settlers came in, and less moved out of the area. During the war, many of the settlers left their farms to help with the war effort. Many of the young men entered the Armed Services. Some gave their lives to their country. Many returned to the area to live and raise their families as their parents had done 30 or so years earlier. Many have gone to seek their fortunes in other

states of the Union. Many of the original settlers have retired and/or moved to the cities, and very many have passed away.

The majority of the settlers in this area are of Finnish origin; however, many other ethnic groups are represented. An attempt has been made to get as correct a listing as possible of the original settlers and the years they moved to the area:

Alfred Swanson - 1892	Robert Ranta - 1917
David Heikkila - 1917	Chas. Rosen - 1892
John McCrae - 1910	Emil Lampi - 1918
Martin Martinson - 1892	Adolf Long - 1919
Don Driscoll	Oman Brothers
John Mikkonen - 1919	Earl Driscoll
Hugo Hampspinnar - 1919	John Aho - 1918
Sam Lucci	Sam Saari - 1920
Peter Saamanen - 1919	J. Kantola - 1916
Charles Wuori	Frank Kallio - 1918
Herman Lepisto - 1916	Hugo Nordlund - 1925
Velis Courneault - 1921	John Peterson - 1925
Burt Walin - 1920	John Hill - 1918
Arthur Johnson - 1916	Lester Drummond - 1919
Abel Hurri - 1925	Mr. Kntra
John Aho - 1919	Jack Maki - 1915
Charlie Maki - 1920	Arvo Helleen - 1917
Gust Sariin - 1925	Clarence Jensen - 1917
Gust Jarvi - 1921	Tom Maki - 1920
Peter Huotari - 1919	Eli Ronnback - 1918
Joseph Aro - 1916	Eli Neil - 1917
John Suuttinen - 1916	Mike Hakkila - 1916
John Elman - 1915	Gust Hill - 1919
Ilmari Nappa - 1917	E.E. Esterly - 1920
Frank Gravelle - 1928	Otto Pelander - 1921
Mr. Spanfellner - 1916	Tony App - 1900-05
Jalmer Jaaskelainen - 1916	Robert Swanson - 1892
Len Culbertson - 1918-23	Henry Lampela - 1916
Henry Young	Thor Borgen
Mr. Mannu	Arthur Maki - 1920
Emil Maki - 1917	Ben Kauhanen - 1919
Alfred Long - 1925	Konstu Hakala - 1918
Toivo Virtanen - 1917	

The settlers of the area can be justly proud that through their efforts of toil and sweat, they encouraged and made it possible for a large number of their children to get the necessary education and training for them to rise to many prominent positions in the area, state and nation.

Dr. Arvo Kallio

SOME SHORT SKETCHES OF SOME OF THE OLD-TIMERS

One of the colorful old-timers was JOHN MCCRAE, probably Scotch and Irish. He had been a sailor and later worked at the logging camps as a teamster. He loved horses and took good care of them. He would help the newcomers clear land and plow their fields and make hay for a meager wage. He always had a supply of venison on hand, plus fish and the strong coffee which was served in enamel cups from old lumber camps. Later he built an addition on his shack, which was used for a schoolhouse for a few years. The teachers were Vieno Johnson and Ina Impola. Later the property was sold to Frank Laine.

FIINA AND PETER HUOTARI built their big log house about 1917—two big rooms downstairs and two upstairs—with moss and other stuff between the logs. It was a warm building. Mrs. Huotari was a wonderful person who never said a bad word about anyone; the welcome mat was always out for anyone in their house. They were hard-working, hospitable people. They rented their living room to the county for a schoolroom for a few years—the one where I graduated from the eighth grade. The teachers were Miss Harriet Wilkins and Mr. Aubrey Decker. He loved to ride the horse and was a very good violinist. They boarded at the Spanfelner's close by. Mrs. Huotari cleaned up the schoolroom and would use some of the water colors from the desks to paint pictures of her home in Finland—they remind me of Grandma Moses' pictures. Rudy Laitinens own the property now.

The most elaborate property on the Two Harbors Road was the LEN CULBERTSON place. When we were small, we thought they were millionaires. In 1918 when we moved to the farm, Mother was asked to wash clothes for them. She and we three girls would walk the one mile there; in fact, my baby sister had to be carried. The clothes were washed by hand on a washboard and an old hand wringer; the clothes were hung outside. There was a beautiful living room with a fireplace and a nice piano; there was a screened-in porch all around the building. The day of the big Cloquet fire they had many of the local farmers cleaning up the property. The fire burned the top of the big hill where the fire tower is standing. It was nip and tuck watching the fire at midnight. We had packed our valuables; Conrad Wicsted had his Model T ready to take us to Two Harbors; but fortunately, the wind went down and we got rain.

We, the KONSTU HAKALAS, moved to our farm on a beautiful day in June 1918, in an open touring car along Ive's Road. Mother had two pounds of coffee beans in a paper bag in the back seat with lots of other goodies, but the bag broke. She picked up every bean she could find because they were precious to her. We got through the brush to our house—just bare log walls, no attic yet, single windows and rough floors. What amazed me were all those moths and Junebugs when we lit the kerosene lamps. I didn't even find out we had a river there until a few days later. Our neighbors, the ROBERT RANTAS, had been there since the previous October. He was very dark-haired and had it cut Indian fashion. They were very happy to get neighbors. After that, many more settlers moved in.

MIKE HAKKILA was a pretty good carpenter. He made most of the skis for just about everyone. He also made a loom which the women took turns using in their homes. There was no shortage of homemade rugs.

JOSEPH ARO was the township veterinarian and butcher. People would often pay him for his services by giving him meat. Most of us remember Joe as the best "coffee cook" at the Alden Town Hall dances. He was well-known in socialist circles, and he and ILMAR NAPPA would travel for miles to attend Finnish festivals, etc. Old Joe never owned a car nor had any modern conveniences, but he never seemed to want for any of these so-called necessities. He kept up on world affairs by faithfully reading his newspaper, *The Industrialist*, and for entertainment, he would crank up his old phonograph and sing along with the records. He had the first dance in Alden Township in the winter of 1918 at his house in the living room with rough floors. "Paul Revere," BILL MAKI, made the rounds earlier in the day alerting people about the dance. He had a horse and sleigh (fast), and later he picked many of us up to transport us there. My dad played the violin and JOHN ELMON had his two-row accordion. They had a Finn ring-dance with partners, and they sang old songs to accompany that. For lunch it was coffee with sugar and real cream and homemade braided biscuit coffee bread—no fancy hors d'oeuvres or salads. Later when we went home that night, bitter cold, snow crunching, and horses doing their thing, the music itself kept ringing in our ears until we fell asleep exhausted.

Tuovi Hakala Kangas



Photo, page 128

SAM AND ELSIE SAARI

Sam and Elsie Saari moved from Duluth to Clover Valley in the spring of 1920. Both were immigrants from Finland, Europe. They had two children when they moved to the country—Vienna was 2 years old and Elsie was 1 month old. They made a living by farming, and later Sam worked on the ore docks in Two Harbors for a few years.

They raised five children—Vienna, Elsie, Aili, Irja and George. Sam succumbed to cancer in 1948 at the age of 57, and Elsie to cerebral hemorrhage in 1962 at the age of 74. Vienna resides in St. Paul, Elsie near Two Harbors, Aili in Palo Alto, California, Irja in Whittier, California and George in Minneapolis.

We started school at the original School 92, which was located on the property now owned by the Berrys. The first school bus we rode in was a homemade wooden box built on the back of a truck. It was made and driven by the Fees who lived at Paradise Lake, or Fox Farm Lake, as it was known then. There was a small wood stove in the bus to warm us when it was cold, and we always saved a piece of bread from our lunch to toast on top of that stove to eat on the way home. The bus wasn't in operation very long, so we were back to using our own two feet to get us to school and back.

Saturday night was always sauna night, of course, and some neighbors who didn't have one would come over, and also the school teachers enjoyed coming over for a good steaming.



Photo, page 178

Elsie Saari Williams

ILMARI NAPPA

Antti Ilmari Nappa (used his middle name) was born in 1881 in Oulu, Finland. He immigrated to Duluth, Minnesota in 1901 at age 19.

An only child, his father died when he was 4 years old. His widowed mother supported him until, at the age of 12, he went to work for a livery stable. He would bring the horses back after the travelers arrived at their

destination. Even then he was interested in horticulture—he spoke of cultivating wild strawberries.

His formal schooling consisted of confirmation classes. America beckoned to him because of the religious freedom and educational and monetary opportunities.

He joined his cousin who was working at the Spalding Hotel in Duluth. He worked in the woods cutting timber and spent one winter in Hancock, Michigan working in a copper mine. That did not appeal to him; he preferred being out-of-doors. As soon as he had earned sufficient money, he enrolled at Work People's College located between West Duluth and Fond du Lac, where he studied English, arithmetic and business. He applied for U.S. citizenship as soon as he met the residence requirement. He never expressed any desire to return to Finland; America was his home. He clerked in a grocery store and solicited and delivered orders to private homes and lived in a co-operative boarding house.

He was very active in the social and cultural life of the Finnish community in Duluth. He belonged to a gymnastic drill team and did some wrestling. He attended plays and programs put on by amateurs.

He bought the 40 acres in Alden where he, Mike Hakkila and others built a Finnish sauna out of logs on the bank of the creek that ran the length of the property. It was a weekend and vacation retreat at first; he used to bike the 27 miles to Duluth.

Lydia (Lyyti) Elena Piipari was born in 1889 in Ikaalinen, Finland. She was the only girl in a family of seven children and grew up on a small farm. Her older brother sent her a ticket to join him in Duluth when she was a young woman. Sharing a room in a private Finnish family with another young woman, she cooked in a restaurant. She enjoyed crocheting, knitting and embroidering.

Their Life in Alden Township

Ilmari had built a two-room log house with an unfinished upstairs before he and Lydia were married. The first winters, he worked in logging camps and hunted deer, rabbits and partridges for meat, and caught fish during the summer for food. He bought a mare which he paired with Joe Aro's stallion to make a team to clear the land. The stumps left from the logging

operations had to be pulled out, chopped up and burned, and the second growth brush had to be cut and burned. Countless loads of rocks had to be picked and hauled away before the virgin soil could be plowed.

Their aim was self-sufficiency. They started with one Holstein cow named Lindsey and increased the herd through her offspring, at the same time bringing more land under cultivation for hay, oats and barley. Potatoes became the cash crop, as well as the weekly delivery of cream to either Two Harbors or Duluth. They switched gradually to Guernsey cows because of higher fat content of their milk. They raised all their own vegetables, canning some green vegetables and storing root vegetables and cabbage in a special root cellar along with the potatoes. There were lots of wild raspberries for the picking and canning.

Lydia bought raw wool which she washed, carded and spun into yarn during the winter months and knit into caps, sweaters, socks and mittens. She made her own laundry soap out of fat (lard) and lye. Nothing was wasted. The worn-out underwear was dyed and cut into strips, sewed together and then woven into rag rugs together with other colored strips on a room-size loom built and owned by Mike Hakkila and loaned out to the women in the community.

Ilmari and Joe paired their horses to work for the town and county, building and maintaining the roads and bridges.

At the time of the big Cloquet fire of 1918, Ilmari was working on the ore docks in Two Harbors and could see the fire and smoke. Luckily the wind changed direction before it reached Alden. Fires were a constant threat—chimney fires in the house and brush fires outside, especially in the spring. The smoke would be so thick the sun was just a red ball all day long. The men spent long days fighting the blazes.

They bought their first car in 1913—a Model T touring car from Bill Maki, a neighbor.

They were very civic-minded and active in town and county politics. Ilmari served numerous terms over the years as Town Supervisor, and they were active in the Farm Bureau and other local clubs. Lydia was usually on the refreshment committee. They enjoyed an active social life and attended plays and programs put on by Finnish amateur groups in Duluth and Two Harbors. We had lots of company on Sundays—some fished, others visited.

The Alden Town Hall was the center for larger social gatherings. Weddings, anniversaries and birthdays as well as farewells were celebrated there, and lunch was served after funerals. It was the scene of many a masquerade party and New Year's Eve dance, not to mention Saturday night dances.

They had built their dairy herd to 12 milking cows, plus heifers and calves when the Depression of the 1930s hit. They started a retail route in Duluth selling milk, cream, eggs, fryers, roasting hens, potatoes and extra vegetables. It was dry during the Dust Bowl days, but fortunately the crops matured. The sun was red from all the dust.

Two children were born to their union, Laila Sylvia in 1918 and George Ilmar in 1926.

Lydia died December 27, 1935, and was buried at Palmers on New Year's Eve, their wedding anniversary.

Ilmari continued farming with George's help until 1943, when he sold his cattle and went to work in the shipyards in Alameda, California. He returned after the war and lived on the farm until he was stricken by a stroke in July 1956, and spent his remaining years in a nursing home in Two Harbors, where he died March 5, 1963. He is buried at Palmers (Lakeview) Cemetery.

Laila Nappa Schissler



Photo, page 128

RUDY GUSTAFSON

To the Editor of *The Landmarks*:

Thank you for sending me the paper which I enjoy very much. The news from my old home brings back memories of the years I spent there from 1910 through 1935.

My first two years in school were spent in the little one-room log building that was later moved to the Swanson corner and used for a garage for one of the first Ford Model Ts that were owned in the country. The new school was built on the same lot, which was a part of the Martinson Farm. Much later after I had left school and the new Clover Valley School was built, that

same building was moved and used for a teacher's residence. It has since been demolished and the Clover Valley School closed. What a shame. This was once a vital part of community life that can no longer exist. The old town hall also served as a church and community center, and on various occasions, dances were held on Saturday nights. My first steps at square dancing took place there, and I must say, I really haven't forgotten how much fun we had.

Life was simple then, and I might add, very interesting and rugged. For example, young teachers were sent out with only a high school education, and sometimes if they were lucky, they would have two years of normal school behind them. They were hired to teach eight grades plus kindergarten class. The salary, if you can call it that, was from \$30 to \$60 a month. For that stipend, she also had to take care of heating the school and doing the janitor work. These chores were generally farmed out to one of the older boys for \$5 a month. I know because I was one of those who did that job for about three years. To get there I had to walk two miles ahead of the rest of the kids in order to get the place warmed up for the rest. The fire was always out for the night, so it was cold by morning. I also had to clean the school after the others had gone home and then walk home alone. On one of these occasions, a moose jumped out on the road behind me. I was too scared to run, so I walked briskly till I got below the hill, and then I ran for dear life.

Needless to say, we got our exercise by doing the necessary things to live and learn. We also played ball and games together during the recess periods. Our sports were participating sports, and we weren't bussed miles away to scream and shout, while the few dressed in monkey suits played to entertain. I am sure now that this was more beneficial in building character and the ability to face the problems of life than the present system of hauling kids miles away and exposing them to the influences of other forces.

My first intention in writing to you was to try to correct the misspelling of the Homestead Road. When my parents and I moved to that area known then as Molde, the name of the road was the Stiff Line. About 1914, the post office name was changed from Molde to Clover Valley. The name of the road was changed to the Homestead Road in honor of the homesteaders who originally moved there in the late 1890s. They were the Martinsons, Swansons, Rosens and Halversons. Mr. Halvar Halverson was from Molde in Norway, and

he had the post office named Molde. I hope this will clear up the misspelling that I see when I drive up the North Shore to my old stomping grounds.

Thanks again for the news I get from your little paper, and may it continue a long time.

*Sincerely—an old timer,
Rudy Gustafson*



Photo, page 178

THOMAS GRAY

Thomas Gray came from Indiana as a young man. He went to Dakota to work in the harvest fields. There he met Etta Belle Heaton and they were married. They had four children—Ervi, Walter, Laura and Dora. They lived in Superior, then moved to Park Rapids where they lived for two years. As he had lost his wife earlier, he came to Duluth with his children. He bought land up in Lakewood. They followed a wagon road up to the French River, where they took a trail along the river and settled there. The men worked for Dixon's Logging Co. in Lester Park. The girls stayed with families there so they could go to school.

When Ervi went to Biwabik to work for the railroad, Dora went up there to find work and be near her brother. She found work in Aurora instead. She went to St. Paul for three years' nurses training, earning \$3 a month the first year, \$5 the second year and \$7 the third year. She went back to Virginia, Minnesota, where she had a nursing job waiting for her. She worked days and nights with little rest during the 1918 flu epidemic. Ervi was in France during the first world war.

Mr. Gray was on the farm in Lakewood alone when the 1918 fire came. He wrapped his feet in wet newspaper and his body in wet blankets. Then he lay down in the river. The fire came through, but missed Mr. Gray and the buildings! It burned the wooden handles off the farm implements that had been left so hurriedly in a field of freshly plowed soil.

Dora Gray met Bill Kuchta and was married in 1919. He worked for the DM&IR Railroad. They lived at Allen Junction and had three sons and a daughter. Ervi continued to work for the railroad, married and had

three children. Walter worked for Clyde Iron Works, married and had a daughter Laurena. She married William Sundberg. She is well-known in the area today because of her faithful work at the French River Lutheran Church and the Lakeshore Lutheran Home.

ELOF STRAND

Elof Strand was born in 1898 in Dalslund, Sweden. His father was a carpenter, building homes and making anything from wagon wheels to coffins. As a young man, he worked as a laborer in the woods. He was 19 years old when he came to America because his uncle was here in Duluth.

Elsie was born in Kabmor, Smoland, Sweden. Her parents were farmers. Her mother died when she was 2½ years old and her father when she was 5, so her aunt and uncle raised her. She was 18 when she came to America in 1913 because her sister was here. She lived in Superior with seven girls in a dormitory and worked as a waitress. Later she worked for the Northern Pacific Railroad.

Elof worked for Rust-Parker Packing House and one year on the Northern Pacific Railroad too. They met at a dance where Elof won the polka contest, but Elsie wasn't his partner then. They were married in 1919 and lived on Garfield Avenue for six months before moving to the house they had built on the Ryan Road by the Sucker River. Many community picnics were held there. In 1924, they moved to the house they had built on the McQuade Road.

During the Depression, they both went to work at a small lumber camp in northern Minnesota. They left their son Gunnard with neighbors to attend school and took 3-year-old Alice to camp with them. Elof was foreman of the pulp and woodcutters, but he worked right along with the men. Elsie was the only cook for 24 lumberjacks. All the cooking was done on a wood stove with Elsie and Elof taking turns rising at 3:30 a.m. to start the fire. Meals were served at 6:00 a.m., noon and 5:00 p.m. Since she had only one cook stove, Elsie baked eight loaves of bread twice a day besides cakes, doughnuts, fried-cakes, pies and thick round sugar cookies. Groceries were delivered twice a week. Elof tells of using bacon grease for a mosquito repellent, but it only helped a little bit.

In 1935, they moved back to French River so Alice could start school. The neighbors came from all around to the building bee, and in three days, they had the house up ready to be occupied. Elof finished it after they were living in it. He cut and sold pulp wood. He also drove truck and snow plow for the county. Elsie walked two miles every day, even in snow up to her hips, to care for Mr. and Mrs. Kruse, as Mrs. Kruse was an invalid.

They enjoyed the dances on Saturday nights at the town hall or the French River Community Club Hall.

In 1946, Elof decided to raise and sell chickens to earn money for a trip back to Sweden to visit his family. In two years, he had the money to make the trip. Since Elsie had no relatives there anymore, she decided not to go with him.

In 1948, Elsie had an accident that left her with serious injuries; but through the years, she has carried on smiling and doing her work as best she could. Alice married but lived nearby, so has been a great help to her mother. Gunnard was killed in an accident in 1961 when he was 39. The Strands celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1969.

At present, they live at the Lakeshore Lutheran Home, where they keep busy with their handicrafts—Elsie crochets and Elof decorates flower pots and other articles. He still has the time and spirit for a peppy polka or waltz at the dances they have at the home.

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Photos, pages 127 and 128

ARTHUR MATTSON

Arthur Mattson was born in Finland. As a young man he worked in the woods. He came to Michigan at the age of 18. He left Finland because the country was suffering from oppressive measures against the partial independence of its government, which Russia had pledged to observe. Fannie Kaitfors was 4 years old when she came to North Dakota. She and Arthur met somehow and were married in Duluth. They had seven children.

In 1915, Arthur built a log cabin on Sucker River and the family came up there on weekends until the house was built. Fannie kept the butter, milk and cream cool in a big crock in the river. One night they awakened to hear a bear trying to get the dairy products out of the crock.

A lathe mill was built, and they did well with that until Arthur cut his foot severely. Lundquist came with a team and big wagon and took Arthur to a hospital in Duluth. In 1918, the mill burned and Arthur was working in Duluth. He tried to get home to his family, but could get only as far as Lakewood. Though he soaked himself thoroughly, he still couldn't get through the fire. In the meantime, Mr. Heino and neighbors came, so the house was saved and the children were taken to Heino's for protection.

Uncle Fred Kaitfors from South Dakota brought his herd of cattle to Bergquist's pasture because of the drought in the Dakotas in the 1930s. The family moved here, so there were many picnics and parties with relatives.

Albert and Millie Adolphson would come out from Duluth to hold services on Sunday. He was of the faith called Brethren. Several laymen would take turns having Sunday School at the schoolhouse. Adolphson had been an accountant, but gave it up to do missionary work.

Arthur farmed and did odd jobs. The children attended Bloomingdale School, where he was a janitor. Fannie gradually lost her eyesight, but it didn't change her disposition as she went about singing as she did her work.

Gladys, Florence, Alice and Lois married. Laurence went to the state of Washington, where he worked as a carpenter. Johnny went into the service and gave his life in Korea. Ernie does carpenter work for contractors and lives on the original Mattson farm where, in these later years, he has started a nursery called "Ernie's Acres."

ALEX JOHNSON

My parents were born in Finland. My father came to Ashland, Wisconsin at the age of 17. My mother was 24 when she came to the United States. My parents moved to French River from West Duluth in 1913. I remember my mother speaking of the woods being all

around the one-room house in which they lived. Life was not easy. My father cooked in lumber camps, so my mother was alone with the children much of the time. She often spoke of the fire of 1918. My father was away at work. Mr. Heino, our neighbor, had the team harnessed and ready to go if the fire spread to their farms. My mother watched the sparks on the horizon, and fortunately, the wind changed and our farm was saved. She had no word from my father, so she did not know if he survived the fire.

I remember my father driving us to school with the horse and wagon when the road was flooded or when the weather was extremely cold.

My oldest brothers and sisters had to walk to School 90 for confirmation classes. My mother was very active in church work. She belonged to the Ladies Aid and the Birthday Club.

I also remember my mother telling of buying water. They didn't have a well when they first moved to French River. They raised big gardens and hauled produce and dairy products with the horse and wagon with a green box on it to Duluth to sell.

My mother liked to tell the story about my brother Tegner. She thought he was going to be an inventor because he was always taking things apart to see how they worked. One day she noticed the warming oven on her stove teetering back and forth. She looked behind it, and there was Tegner unscrewing all the nuts and bolts on the stove!

There were eight children in our family. My parents lived on the farm until they were unable to stay there any longer. They lived in Duluth and in Two Harbors with my sister Mary. They always spoke of the farm and loved it in spite of all the hard work they had done. They hoped that one of the family would take an interest in farming and take over the land.

My mother passed away at the age of 81 and my father, three months later at the age of 90.

Martha Johnson Olson



Photo, page 130

HUGO HAMPSPINNAR

Hugo was born in Viipuri, Finland and came to this country when he was quite young. He came to Brentwood, Wisconsin, later to Minneapolis, and then moved to Duluth. Here he met Ellen Ulvi, who was born in Isalmi, Finland. There she had gone to work when she was 9 years old. When she came to the United States, she worked in New York and New Jersey before she came to Duluth. She worked as a cook for the F. Paine family on London Road. During the evenings, she attended night school where she learned to speak, read and write English.

Hugo and Ellen moved to Clover Valley during the fall of 1919 with their two daughters, Helga (Nylund) and Alli (Johnson). The first homestead was built by Mr. Sundstrom where we lived until 1930 when the present home was built.

Hugo worked in Duluth as a stevedore for 32 years. They loaded and unloaded the large package freighters in the Duluth-Superior harbor, usually unloading a boat one day and loading it the next. Mostly Finns, Swedes and Norwegians worked there about seven months a year. Some of his working companions during the early years were Frank Kallio, Uno Nordlund, Arvo Heleen, John Tuominen and Art Abrahamson.

In the early days, Hugo walked to Palmers every day where he would board a train and return the same way. In 1926, he bought his first Model T Ford.

During the winter months, Ellen would churn butter and put it in three-pound crocks, while Hugo would cut birch cord wood. He would load his sleigh full of wood, butter and cream, which he sold in Two Harbors. In return, he would arrive home with "goodies" purchased with the hard-earned money.

Our next-door neighbor was John Lindahl (Swedish), who was helpful in many ways. It was quite a thrill to run to his place with a note when we needed help while Hugo was at work. He always had a candy dish filled with lemon drop candies that he offered to us. The other close neighbors were the Sam Saaris, Eli Ronnback, Charles Wuori, Oman Brothers, Gust Peterson and Archie Larvie.

The early days consisted of hard work trying to farm besides working out. There were a lot of pick and

shovel jobs plus a lot of rock picking. However, the hard work was rewarded by social activities, and the coffee pot was always warm when neighbors dropped in. On Sunday nights, we would go to the Finnish Community Center in Two Harbors for dances, three-act plays or talent shows. The highlight of the evening would be a bottle of orange pop and an ice cream cone. Midsummer Day would be the annual picnic at the Smithville Park in Duluth.

We all walked to the first Clover Valley School, but the thing we all remember was when Duncans had a large turkey that chased us home. Helga and Alli were lucky to drop off home sooner, but Elsie, Vienna and Aili Saari had to keep on running further with their escort close behind.

During World War II, Hugo worked at the Globe Shipyard. After that he worked for the DM&IR Railroad at Two Harbors until his retirement in 1960. Ellen passed away on May 15, 1948. The present family consists of Hugo, his present wife Sally, two daughters, four grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Alli Hampspinner Johnson



Photos, pages 129 and 153

ADRIAN HEINO

At the turn of the century, immigration to America was at its peak. Finland was under Russian rule and Czar Nicholas II wanted to blend the Finns into the Russian Empire. Hundreds of young men and women left everything dear and familiar to them to seek independence and economic security in America. Our father and mother were among them.

Father arrived in Bessemer, Michigan in 1901, waiving his rights to land and home ownership to which he was entitled as eldest son.

Mother left her home in Merikarvia four years later to make her home temporarily with a brother and his family in Bessemer.

In the next few years, Father traveled throughout the Midwest and Canada, finding employment in the wheat fields of the Dakotas, copper and iron ore mines of

Michigan and Minnesota; while in Duluth, he invested in land 18 miles north of the city. The unspoiled lakes, virgin forests, cascading rivers and the rocky terrain reminded him of his homeland. Andrew Hill, at whose boarding house he was staying, had already purchased land in French River and was planning on settling there.

Father returned to Bessemer as he had an aunt living there. The small mining community was a beehive of activity. The temperance movement was at its height. There were rallies, socials, community theatricals, musicals and the ever popular public dances. Adrian and Ida met, fell in love and were married on October 12, 1907.

They enjoyed the friendliness and activity of the location where they made their home. Mother was kept busy with a growing family. Martha, a son William who died in infancy, and Helen were born in Bessemer. Father found steady employment in the copper mines and enjoyed the challenge of working underground, and the exchange of ideas with immigrants from many European countries. He was working hard to be in a position to have a farm of his own. He had already added 40 acres to his original investment.

In the spring of 1912, Mother, a little apprehensive, and Father, his dream about to be realized, boarded a train for French River, Minnesota. Wheeling Martha and carrying Helen, they walked the narrow trail to the home of the Andrew Hills. There they spent the summer while their home was being built.

The following years were especially busy ones; farm buildings sprang up to house the cow and later, a horse and chickens. Forests receded as land was cleared of trees and undergrowth. We children watched spellbound from the safety of the house as Father ran from one stump to another lighting fuses. We heard the deafening explosions, one after another, and saw the rain of sticks, stones and dirt falling to the ground. The heaped-up piles of stumps made beautiful fires at night.

When the supply of groceries ran low, Father would walk to the French River depot with crocks of freshly churned butter in his packsack, board a train for Duluth, sell the butter and return home with groceries. Often, rather than wait for the midnight train, he would walk the 12 miles from the end of the Lester Park street car line.

Teaching was definitely a challenge in the early years. Most of the beginners, Martha included, spoke not a word of English! Miss Hazelcamp, who stayed with us that year, helped Martha at home and taught the youngsters English along with the Primer.

Years later, after the Bloomingdale School fire, we again shared our home with teachers. Mr. and Mrs. J. Bryan McHugh and Miss Ann Matyas lived in our newly-converted upstairs apartment.

Mother and Father loved feasts and holidays. Saint John's Eve was celebrated June 23. A few days before the big day, poplars were cut down from the forest and "planted" all around our porch; extra branches were festooned inside. Mother would scrub, scour and bake. Each room would get a fresh coat of calcimine. Furniture was carried outside and varnished, as were floors inside.

There was excitement and anticipation in the air! Each year, first by train and later by automobile, relatives from Bessemer or friends from Duluth would arrive for the midsummer celebration—some for a week and others for a month or longer. Mother was in her element. Conversation flowed and laughter filled the air—it was a gala time! Everyone shared chores and on Saturday nights after a sauna, would dance to the tune of Elof Nordin's accordion upstairs of Charles Saari's store. We could hear the strains of polkas and schottisches from our open windows, and upon occasion were allowed to accompany the oldsters and cavort on the highly-waxed floors.

Our return visits to Bessemer were planned well in advance and eagerly awaited. Mother worked far into the night sewing dresses for the girls and crisp white shirts for Ray. She used her ingenuity as ready-made patterns were not available. We thought they were beautiful. Last summer's hats were given another coat of dye—the pungent odor of which would linger the remainder of the summer. Mother usually added a bunch of cherries or some new flowers to her own. A neighbor drove us to the depot where we boarded the train to Bessemer. We were treated royally and came home with many happy memories.

In the spring of 1917, a fire raged through the area burning all the timber on our back forty plus 50 cords of cut and piled wood. It was a huge loss as this was our main source of income.

The fire of 1918 was a traumatic experience. Smoke was everywhere, and the sun was a brilliant red. Early in the day, the Alec Johnson's brought their children to our house, feeling they were, in some measure, safer with us because of the wide clearing around the farm. During the night, with the fires only one-half mile away, a shift in the wind spared our farm, but most of the homes on the Ryan Road were destroyed.

Early in life we learned by example the lessons of thrift, resourcefulness and honesty. Mother made soap, candles, potato flour, sausage in casings and was always looking for new ideas. Father raised wheat and had it ground at a mill into flour and cereal. There were hundreds of jars of canned food in the cellar—berries, fruits, pickles, meat and even soup. Mother carded wool, spun it into yarn, and knit dozens of pairs of socks and mittens. During the long winter evenings, we helped cut up strips of used clothing which she wove into colorful rugs.

Nothing was ever under lock and key, whether it was the family purse or Father's Smith and Wesson. Even the candy which Father invariably brought home from Duluth was safe from little fingers. We always waited for an invitation before helping ourselves, and often it was given as a reward for a task well done.

The family was growing larger. Reino, Vienna, Elsie and Gertrude were all born at home. Father would hitch "Billy" to the wagon or sleigh, depending on the season, and bring back Mrs. Lundquist, the midwife, with her little black bag. In the morning, we would find a little bundle next to Mother, and a bar of Jap Rose soap would mysteriously appear in the soapdish. Mother decided to have Betty in the Two Harbors hospital. She deserved the nine days rest and was appreciated more than ever when she brought the last little bundle home.

Summers were busy times. We helped plant the potatoes, which in the fall Father would haul by the wagon load to Knife River and Two Harbors, picked berries, raked hay with our miniature rakes and weeded the rows and rows of vegetables. After the day's chores were done, we would go swimming in the nearby river. The end of haying season was always celebrated with a dasher of homemade ice cream and a case of soda pop.

To this day, we look forward to rainy days. As growing children it meant shutting oneself off upstairs with a

book, an apple from the barrel in the cellar, and listening to the pitter-patter of the rain on the roof. Father would busy himself sharpening scythes, mending broken rakes or re-soleing shoes, always carefully sweeping up the shavings. Mother had her handiwork, creating things of beauty from crochet cotton and woolen yarn, often raveled and re-dyed from outgrown garments. She might also bake pans and pans of homemade bread or rolls.

Years went by. In 1936, a tractor replaced the horses, the barn was modernized and housed 22 cows plus young stock and a purebred Guernsey bull. A two-unit milking machine took the drudgery out of milking. Ray was Father's right hand man helping to lighten the load of the growing farm. Year after year, Father upgraded his herd, keeping careful records of each cow's potential. He was rewarded by receiving the distinction of "Master Farmer of St. Louis County."

Years have passed since those early days, but they seem like yesterday. We "children" have scattered and have families of our own, but keep in close touch. We often laugh at the foibles of our good old days back on the farm!



Photos, pages 153 and 157

LAMPI FAMILY

Among the loggers in the area northeast of Duluth at the beginning of this century was one Johann Lamminmaki, my grand-uncle. When the logging boom ended, he tried some farming in the general area of Lakewood, but then went west before World War I.

Meanwhile, other members of the family on both my father's and mother's sides became interested in the area. My father arrived at the Lakehead about 1912 and mother, a short time later. For a short while during the World War I period, my father John worked on the old Markkanen farm on the Lookout Road in Normanna. Later, another bachelor, Uncle Nestor, tried some farming in the area, followed by yet another uncle, Jack.

My father liked the area so well that he bought his own homestead on the Lookout Road and built a cabin and cedar log sauna in 1930. Later, my Uncle Jack joined him and built a log cabin and barn in the early 1930s. Jack returned to Finland in 1939 to fight in the Russian

War; Nestor died after a long illness; and the old Markkanen farm also broke up by World War II.

My family continued to use our old homestead as a summer home. All the original structures on Lookout Hill are now gone with the exception of our log cabin and our old smoke sauna, which still stand and see periodic use.

My own sons have now adopted the old homestead and this constitutes the fourth generation here.

During the early years, a trip to Duluth by walking or horse was a major event, bears would freely roam around the cabins, and my trip to "French" would yield a load of brook trout. The gardens would have fabulous yields, and life was hard but good.

My wife Irene and I have spent many happy vacations on our lovely hill and have enjoyed the friendly associations with neighbors through these many years.

Paul John Lampi

ALFRED ENGLUND

Alfred Englund was born May 15, 1880, in Sundsvall, Sweden. He lived about one Swedish mile from the Lundquists, but he did not know them until he came to Minnesota.

Alfred's brother John sent for him and his sister Amanda. They left Sweden October 2, 1903, and arrived at New York Castle Garden November 1, 1903. They reached Stillwater on November 5 and were taken by train to New Richmond, Wisconsin. They took a "rig" to Star Prairie where Aunt Betsy and Uncle Magnus had settled in 1879. If you've gone tubing on the Apple River, you've gone through their farm.

The next year Alfred went to Minneapolis, where he was hired to work in a lumber mill. Work in lumber camps took him to Upper Michigan and finally to northern Minnesota. There he met many people who had lived in and around Sundsvall. He worked for Bradley Lumber Co., which also employed Hjalmar and Victor Lundquist. Alfred married Tillie Lundquist, bought a farm and built a home at French River. He lived there for the rest of his life, except for the year after the 1918 forest fire.

Life was not easy for the Englund. For some reason, the Englund never received the government aid their neighbors got. There were five daughters—no sons to help clear stumps and break sod. The soil was heavy red clay, but somehow Alfred managed to raise beautiful vegetables and small grains. The girls remember all too well the haying season, picking berries, weeding the garden, digging potatoes, chasing cows, carrying water and all the other pioneer chores and discomforts.

Alfred and Tillie Englund never had any formal schooling in America except for "night school" to meet requirements for citizenship papers. Both of them became avid readers and instilled their love of learning in their children. Alfred would ask, "Girls, what kind of flower (or berry) is this?" This sent us to bird and flower guides and the encyclopedia.

Alfred's longest term of employment was with the State Conservation Department, French River Fish Hatchery. That job gave him the opportunity to learn more about our lakes and streams and the wildlife of the area.

Old newspaper clippings show Alfred serving at the Community Club pancake supper and belonging to the "bull ring." Activities at the Community Club gave neighbors a chance to socialize and take their turns cleaning, taking tickets, serving coffee and cake and enjoying the dancing, singing, dramatics and athletics. Those really were good old days.



Photos, pages 127 and 130

THE MACES AND THE GALES

There were two families in French River who do not fit the pioneer category, but they had a great influence on the Swedish settlers and their children. They were referred to as "the Maces" and "the Gales."

The Mace family moved from Montreal, Canada to Wisconsin and then Michigan before settling at 1631 East Third Street in Duluth. Mr. Mace, a purchasing agent for the Oliver Mining Co., found property on the French River that appealed to him as an ideal spot for a summer cabin. In 1910, a log cabin was constructed, and the family spent countless happy weekends there.

In those days, Ryan Road was nonexistent, so the family would ride the train to French River and walk a trail on the west side of the river and cross over on a bridge at their cabin. The bridge has since washed away.

After the death of their parents, the three sisters—Edith, Callie and Isabel (Bel)—decided to add onto the log house and make French River their permanent home. Neighbors and friends in Duluth were aghast that “these three girls plan to survive in the wilderness.” And wildlife did exist in those days—many deer and occasionally moose and bear. Their home was completed in 1927, and they left their home in Duluth. At this time, the girls drove a seven-passenger black limousine, so they were able to attend the theater and keep in touch with friends in Duluth. At home they had no time to spare. The Misses Mace pitched in and helped the hired man harvest hay for the animals on their farm—cows, horses, pigs, ducks and chickens.

They were active in the Community Club. The Women’s Club and Glee Club members were often entertained at the Maces. Bel and Callie played the violin and piano, and Edie joined in the singing. Reminiscing about those days brings back mental pictures of a real grandfather’s clock with Westminster chimes, Persian rugs, a glockenspiel, the breast of an eider duck, a stuffed moose head, Navajo rugs, pottery and jewelry. All of this to look at while enjoying good music and conversation.

Robert Gale was Superintendent of the French River Fish Hatchery. He and his wife, Mary G. Gale, were both concert pianists. Both of them shared their musical talents in directing and accompanying the Glee Club. Under their leadership, we sang songs by Mendelssohn, Wagner, Tschaiowsky, Lehar, Gretchaninoff and other great composers.

We had an operetta which gave several performances, and we sang on a radio program. Those were highlights in a day when radio was new and TV nonexistent.

*Ethel Englund Dahlgren and
The Landmarks - October 1970*



Photo, page 178

AUGUST DAHLBERG

August Dahlberg came to the United States in 1903 from Sandviken, Sweden. He lived in West Duluth where he operated a store on Raleigh Street.

In 1923, Gust and Alina settled on the North Shore with their four children—Irene, Cecelia, Edna and Harold (Pete). Gust was a carpenter by trade and built his house on the upper side of the Greenwood Road near the Ryan Road. A short time later, he built three cabins and a small store next to Highway 61 where he sold fish and small items. He was well-known for his smoked fish, which he smoked himself in a smoke house on the shore of the lake. He shipped his smoked fish to all parts of the United States.

Gust and Alina were charter members of the French River Lutheran Church. Gust passed away in September 1944 and Alina in January 1959.

The family consists of three daughters, one son, 23 grandchildren, 39 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Marilyn Flatley



Photo, page 129

VERNON PALMS

Vernon Palms grew up near Augusta, Wisconsin. After he finished high school (quite an accomplishment in those days), he went to eastern Alberta to file for homestead rights in the spring of 1907. His aunt, two uncles and a cousin went along also to file, for immigrants could select 160 acres for a \$10 fee.

In September 1908, Mr. Palms sent to Augusta for his fiancée. They were married in Lloydminster on the day she arrived. It was located on the Saskatchewan-Alberta border and was the nearest railroad station to the homestead, which was about 45 miles away. Their first house was a one-room log cabin with a sod roof built by Palms.

The first years were filled with hours of backbreaking work, living with only the barest necessities and often being apart. Mr. Palms found employment breaking horses, as a janitor, a hotel porter, as a dishwasher, in

plowing or threshing, and hauling sand for the Fort Saskatchewan power dam which was under construction. In the spring of 1911, he plowed 200 acres with oxen. Mrs. Palms, meanwhile, was doing hotel work, housework for others, operated a restaurant, and later, a boarding house. Late in 1911, they went back to Wisconsin intending to stay 18 months to replenish their funds and buy farm machinery. Circumstances prevented their return to Canada, so they sold the homestead.

They remained in central Wisconsin until 1922 when they moved into *The Landmarks* area. They lived on the McQuade Road, then on the Lismore. While there, he served on the school board. They moved to the Old North Shore area where they bought the old McQuade property. Their son Roger still lives near their home on the North Shore.

Many of us remember Mr. Palms when he played his musical saw on many occasions in the past.

Mrs. Palms is now in a nursing home in Wisconsin. Mr. Palms is presently making his home with his daughter Marian in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, but is waiting to go into a nursing home also.

A "forever young" nonagenarian, Mr. Palms is again planning his annual visit with his good friends in the French River area. He says it best himself, as I quote from his letter to Helen and Ken Hendrickson:

"I am looking forward to getting up to Duluth later in the summer as the old friends grow ever more dear with each passing year. I guess one has to reach quite an age before they can appreciate the full value of their friends. I am very dependent on mine. They constitute all my wealth, and I am a rich man. Furthermore, my wealth is such that I hope to take it with me, as I cannot conceive a heaven without all these assets."

The Landmarks - June 1971

LOUIS HOFFMAN

What comes to your mind when you hear the name Louis Hoffman? Do you remember him as a neighbor, farmer, ecologist, philosopher or inventor?

Mr. Hoffman was all of these things. His story does not fit the pattern of most of the stories contained in this

volume. He did not arrive from the old country as did most of the French River residents. He moved out from Duluth to satisfy a longtime desire to live in the country.

Perhaps you remember the Hoffman children more vividly. Harold and Morris attended old School 90. Frances, Morris and Harold were all active in the Community Club, especially the Dramatic Arts Club. Frances directed numerous plays and entertained us with her dramatic readings. Her presentation of "Pavlova" was a classic. Out of this grew her one-woman theater. Her experiences at French River were the foundation on which she built her great skill with dramatic production. Some of us were fortunate enough to attend performances at the Duluth Children's Theater founded and directed by Frances, which became nationally known. Frances has been an artist-in-residence on numerous college campuses throughout the country.

To get back to Mr. Hoffman, he supported his children in all their activities. He was often seen perched on the edge of the stage or the top step of a porch giving his encouragement and approval to participants.

One of Mr. Hoffman's favorite occupations was planting trees, especially blue spruce. Trees which he planted or shared with others are still lending their beauty to many yards, farms and cemeteries.

Another contribution Mr. Hoffman made was to promote the recognition of outstanding students through the Abraham Lincoln Foundation at Clover Valley High School and a Memorial Garden at the corner of the McQuade Road and Old Highway 61. Mrs. Alfred Englund was honored as "Mother of the Year" at the dedication of that garden.

At present, Frances (Mrs. Max Lavine) lives in Superior, Wisconsin. She is still active in the arts and is on the Board of Trustees of the College of St. Scholastica. She is listed in *Who's Who of American Women*. Frances acts as president of four daily newspapers in Wisconsin. Morris is retired and lives in Phoenix, where he is a consultant to the Cluster of Culinary Arts at the Skill Center. Morris lives his father's philosophy in his civic service to Phoenix and his work with Indians.

Harold is retired and worked with the Executive Corps. He and his wife are world travelers and find ways to give to humanity in their own way.

Mr. Hoffman's philosophy was that man must pay his room rent here on earth. One of his sayings was: "Be sure to keep your own doorstep clean." He and all three of his children have surely paid their dues in full measure. And the best part is, they all feel they received more than they gave.

MATT JACOBSON

Matt Jacobson was born in 1874 in Seinajoki, Finland. As a young man, he worked on the home farm before coming to Waukegan, Illinois in 1893. He worked on the water mains there that were coming from Chicago. They earned \$1 a day and stayed at the boarding house, which was so expensive that most of the weekly pay check was spent on the board bill. Italian immigrants fared better, as they camped out and ate greens, roots and berries found in the woods nearby.

A story Matt enjoyed telling in later life concerned the time he walked by a grocery store and saw in the window the most luscious-looking, bright red "apples" he'd ever seen in his life. He bought a few and when he got outside, in eager anticipation, he took a big bite of one. To his surprise and disappointment, it turned out to be vile-tasting and unfamiliar, and he disgustedly threw all of them into the bushes beside the sidewalk. In years to come however, he learned to really enjoy *tomatoes!*

He then came to Cranberry, Wisconsin, where he worked in logging camps. In 1895, he came to Duluth and worked in lumber camps in the Clover Valley area. In 1902, he became a citizen.

Wilhelmina (Minnie) Filpula was born in Laihia, Finland in 1880. As a young girl, she worked as a nursemaid. She had heard about the rich land of America where one could work to earn a great deal of money, so at age 18, she came to Ely with a cousin. She met Matt Jacobson and they were married in 1902. They raised three children—Waino, Nellie and Ernest. Another son died in infancy.

The Jacobsons bought land in French River in 1907 but didn't move there until 1910. Matt had work at a cement plant in Duluth for a few years. The dusty work didn't agree with him, so the doctor told him it would be best for him on the farm, and there he regained his health.

In Duluth, they lived on St. Croix Avenue near the old Marshall-Wells Building, and they owned a cow, as did

40 or so other families living in the central part of Duluth. During the summer, a herdsman would take all the cows up to the pasture on the hillside at Fourth Avenue East for the day. Waino was about 3 at the time and enjoyed watching the herd go by the house. When the time came to move to the farm, Mr. Jacobson walked the 20 miles leading the cow. But she refused to cross the bridge at Lester Park. Some people passing by helped him get the cow across the bridge.

The farm house was built of logs. It was southeast of the Alger-Smith Railroad tracks. The camp crew was burning slashings one day, and the fire got out of control. It burned the woods right around the farm buildings without destroying any of them. The last lumber camp was in 1912 on the land that was bought later by Hugo Korkki.

When Waino started school, there were no roads so he would follow the logging roads. He remembers when the road to Henry Hill's farm was built. The base of it was logs with gravel over that. No wonder driving on these roads felt like going over a washboard.

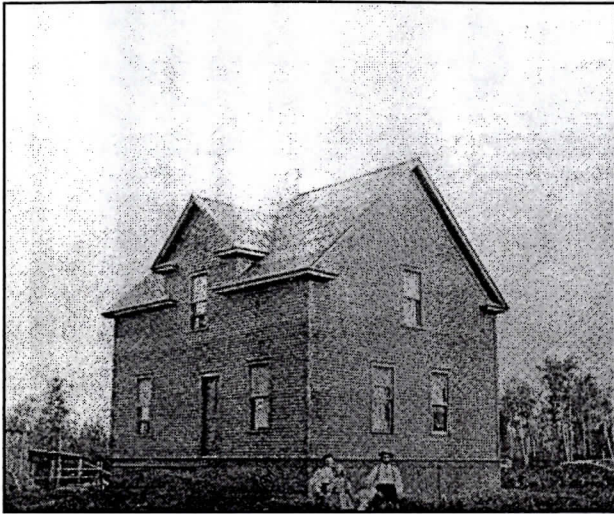
Waino and Ernest were always interested in the new invention, the radio. So they read a great deal about it, then went to the dime store where they bought parts to make crystal sets. These radios had earphones so everyone had to take turns listening. In later years, Ernie had training in radio and TV repair, and that was his line of work until he retired. Waino did a great deal of trapping. He would get \$30 for the bounty and \$12 for a wolf hide. At the age of 16, he went to work on the McQuade Road, which was then under construction and earned \$4 a day.

The family moved to Duluth in 1951, where Matt passed away in 1953. Waino worked as the manger of the Farm Bureau and later, in the service department of the Hotel Duluth. Nellie worked at St. Mary's Hospital and at Gustafson's Bakery. The family still lives in Duluth. Mrs. Jacobson is 97 years old, and although her hearing and eyesight are failing, she is very alert and has an excellent memory.

Margarite Oberg Blaisdell
Irja Rahkila Houghtaling
The Landmarks - November 1977



Photo, page 155



Mr. & Mrs. Heino and daughters
Helen and Martha, circa 1913



Helga Hampspinnar
Gladys Heleen Norma Heleen
Alli Hampspinnar



Einar, Esther, Irja, Arne, Mrs. Reini, Mr. Reini



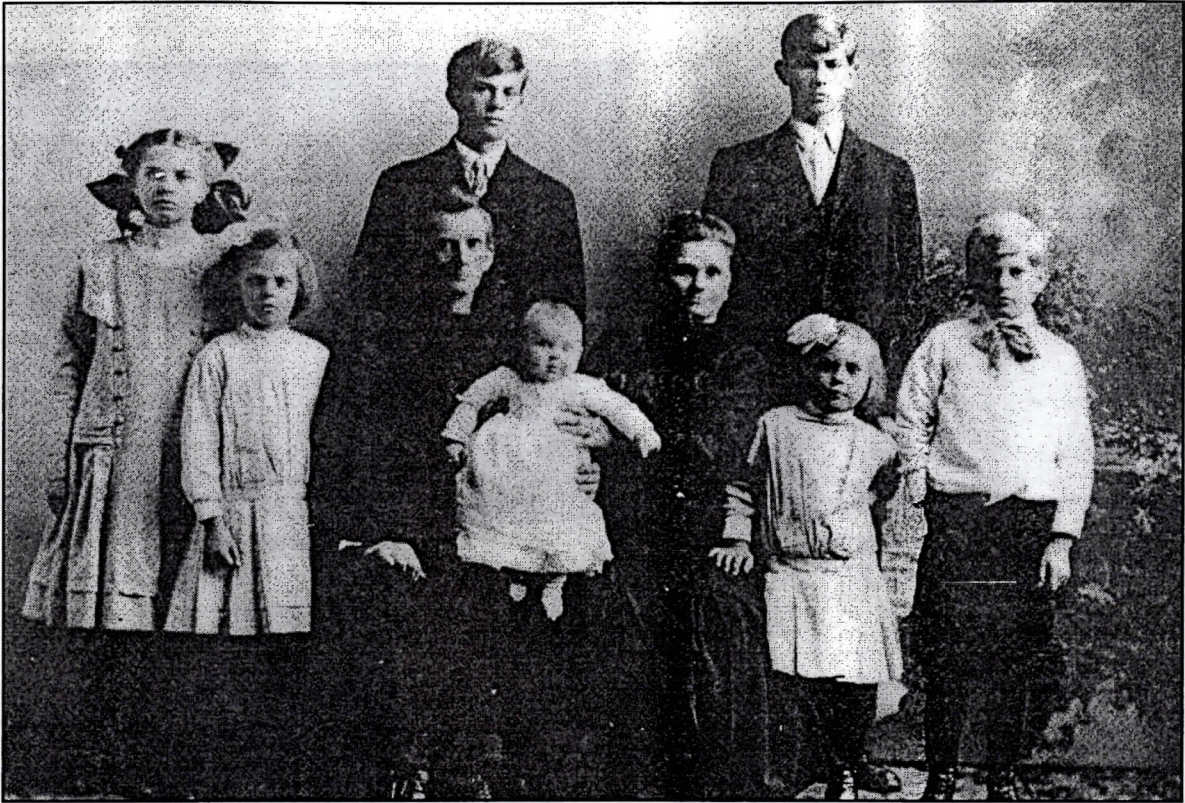
With Hampspinnar's first cow
Mrs. Hampspinnar holding Alli, Helga in front, Mrs.
Ronback, Mrs. Heleen, Gladys and Norma Heleen,
(far right) Arvo Heleen, Hugo Hampspinnar



Heino children: Reino, Martha, Helen, Vienna, Elsie, 1918

School 93 Graduates, 1922
Viola Anderson,
Martha Heino,
Evelyn Englund,
Nellie Jacobson,
Saima Mandelin,
Gertrude Schonberg,
Fred Abrahamson





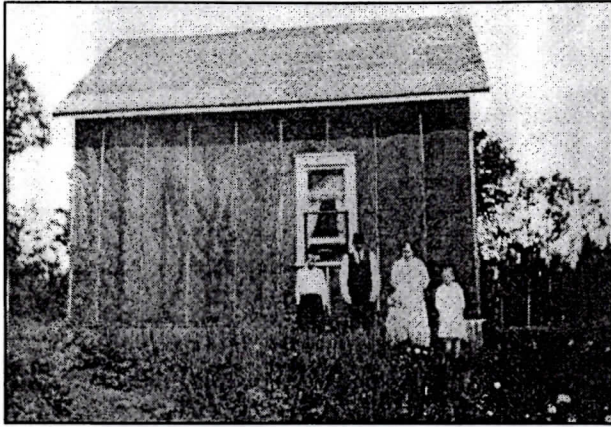
Oberg family: (back) Carrol, Carl, Morris, (front) Elsie, Mr. Oberg, Leonard, Mrs. Oberg, Huldie and Hjalmer, 1912



Mr. & Mrs. Ivarinen and Henry



Vienna and Viola Hill



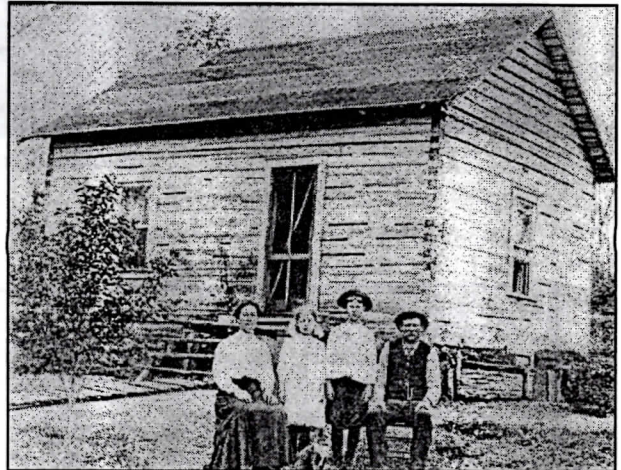
Sulo, Mr. & Mrs. Schonberg,
Gertrude and Helene in front



John, Mr. Charles Saari, Lillian,
Mrs. Saari, Eddie, Nellie, ?



The unfinished home, 1914
(front) Signe, Roy, Fred, Einar, Nina
(back) Mr. & Mrs. Abrahamson



Mrs. Matt Jacobson, Nellie, Waino, Mr. Jacobson



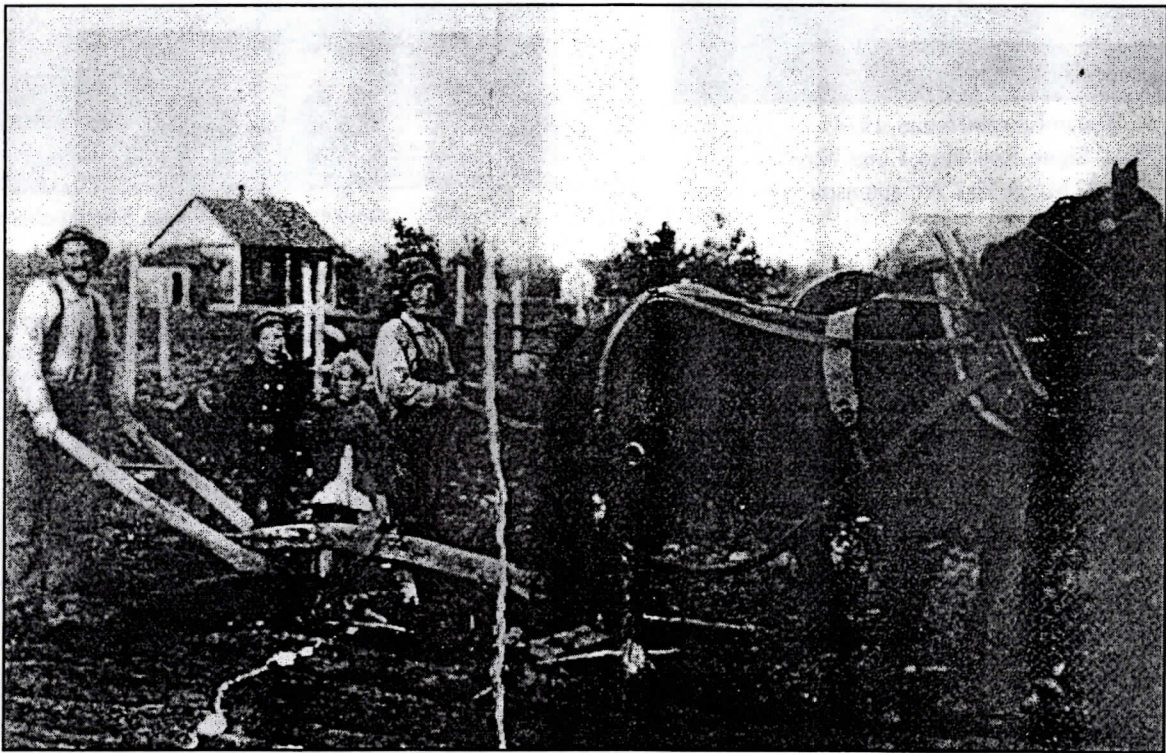
Eugene, Mr. Henry Hill, Vienna, Mrs. Hill,
Eddie, Mr. Hill's mother



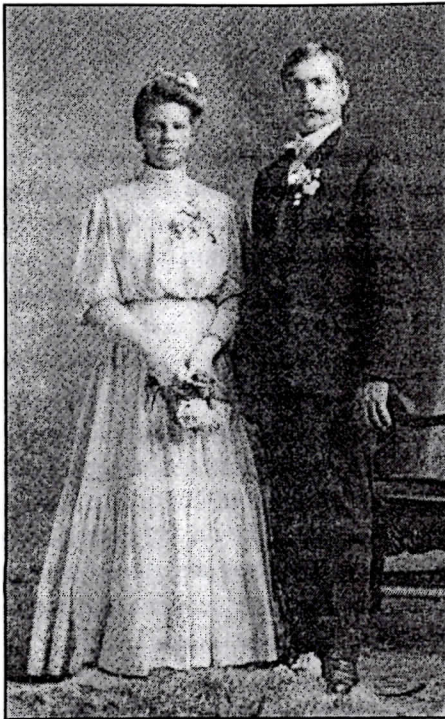
Mrs. Tuominen, Reino, Eino, Mr. Tuominen



Elickson Homestead, circa 1912



Mr. Elickson, Einar, Elna and Emil with home-made plow



Mr. & Mrs. Adrian Heino



Mr. & Mrs. Richard Abrahamson,
daughter Signe and son Roy



Mr. & Mrs. Eli Johnson



Mr. & Mrs. Herman Jackson

The following articles and photos record additional family histories of immigrants and early settlers to this area. For a variety of reasons, their stories were not available at the original time of printing of *Our Heritage* in 1976. Gathered in 1999–2000, these “new” families and individuals are offered to supplement and enrich the historical record of Clover Valley, French River and surrounding communities.

ALFRED AND MARIA BURK

My father, Alfred Bjork (later changed to Burk), met Maria Ingestrom in Duluth, where they both worked. Mother had longed to live in the country, so after their marriage and the expansion of their family to three children and pregnant again, the family moved to land at the end of a trail which later became known as the Ryan Road.

Father had traveled to what was to become the French River settlement on a trail created by the Alger-Smith Logging Co. The trail began at the French River rail station and went north to where father found land on the hillside overlooking the entire valley area. Sandy loam soil was necessary for raising produce, trees to build a house, maple trees to make maple syrup, and rabbits for food. Father bought the land and began, with the help of some of my uncles, to build a house. The logs were never cured properly, so during the winter, they would crack and make a loud snapping sound at which Father would be heard to remark, “It is getting colder out.”

In June of 1910, Father, Mother (who was already six months pregnant with twins), sisters Freda—age 9, Agnes—age 6 or 7, and Irma—4 years old, a cow, and all their worldly belongings boarded the train to travel to the French River. The station, which once stood just below the expressway by the new existing railroad tracks, was where the family would begin the next part of their journey to their new home. Irma was too young to walk, so Father carried her on his back on a chair-like apparatus which he had made. The walk was a long slow one, but upon arrival, the family was happy to settle into the building which the men had first lived in and which later became the barn. My sister Lillian and I were born on October 8 in the lean-to. Shortly after our birth, our family was happy to move into our new home, which consisted of a kitchen, dining room, living

room and one bedroom on the first floor. Our bedrooms were in the upstairs in a story-and-a-half home that still exists today.

Stumps were still left where the trees were cut down, but some land could be worked to plant rutabagas and potatoes in the soft, rich soil. That first year was difficult and hard, but Father managed to reap a harvest from his planting of vegetables. Rabbit hunting produced enough meat for our first winter. We also had milk from our cow, and staples such as salt, flour and sugar could be obtained from the French River depot store. Mother made a lot of milk dishes and homemade cheese, which as I remember tasted very much like Swiss cheese. We had lots of buttermilk and curds and whey as well. As time went on, we planted carrots, cabbage, onions, beets, peas and green beans so that we had a variety of fresh vegetables in the summer and canned goods for the winter months.

The spring following our move found Father and Mother tapping the maple trees for the sap, which was then boiled down to make syrup and sugar. As I grew up, I remember this being a fun time for all of us and seeing the large pots on the kitchen stove boiling the sap into syrup. Father would haul hay from a place he called the “meadows” on his back in a rope string made with strips of willow or sometimes cedar branches. Father would also have to haul sacks of flour on his back from the store when we needed supplies, until we could afford a horse several years later. Our Christmas presents which Mother loved to knit were stockings, shawls and caps. We really loved the dough dolls that Mother would shape from cardamom bread too.

Immigrants from Sweden, Norway and Finland were settling into the area around us, and some of our closest neighbors were Mrs. Lundquist, Mrs. Liljander and Mr. Axel Dahlvik. Mrs. Lundquist was the midwife who delivered my twin sister and me, and she became a very good friend to mother. Occasionally she would visit bringing a little black poodle with very shiny black eyes that would sit under her long skirts and watch us. We were never allowed to play with him. Axel Dahlvik, a bachelor who became a very good friend to our family, would come over to buy milk and sometimes spend Christmas Eve with us. He was a great storyteller and would fascinate us with his re-enactment of scenes from some of his stories. Our home became a central meeting place, and in the winter, men who worked in the lumber camps would tell stories about

their experiences. They would cut the timber in the winter and haul it out on sleighs.

Dad set aside about two acres in front of the house as a park for his children to play in. The park-like area had a variety of trees such as maple, linden, oak, cedar and one pine and was a wonderful place to play. Mother's uncle fashioned a large swing for us, and even grown-ups used it. When we were old enough to work, we were assigned tasks such as picking wild strawberries, raspberries and blueberries. One year, Mother was so very proud of her daughters because she was able to boast that she had 100 quarts of berry sauce put up. Our blueberry sauce tasted so good on pancakes made by Mother.

Life in our community was simpler and slower than today's, and we enjoyed visiting people from the variety of countries from which the immigrants came.

Sometimes we didn't understand one another's language, but we learned to get along nonetheless. Father could speak Finnish as well as Swedish. We spoke Swedish and learned English in school. Mother was so excited when she learned to speak English and would sit and read whatever she could find as soon as a catalog or mail came. Swedes and Norwegians settled on the Ryan Road. Various nationalities settled along the North Shore and continued traditional employment such as fishing. The Finnish people settled on the Shelton and Homestead Roads. People sang in groups called glee clubs and played their accordions or violins at dances and other get-togethers. Life centered around families and what they could do together. Our family loved to sing together or sit on the porch in the evening just listening to the sounds around us. One sound that comes to mind is that of the cowbells from our cow and others. You learned to detect what the animal was doing just from the sound the bell would make.

I hope my recollections of my years of growing up in French River paint a mind picture of our struggles just to live each day with the simple pleasures and even the hardships of life. These experiences are what I believe have helped to strengthen me and give me pleasant thoughts of the past. I will be 90 years old on October 8, 2000, and I am thankful to God for the years he has given me.



Photo, page 176

Signe Burk Stromgren

THE TRAIN RIDE

One of my fondest childhood memories was riding the train to visit my aunts and uncles in French River. When I was in grade school, I lived with my mother, sister Jeannie and brother Bobby in Lester Park. It was just before the end of World War II and we didn't have a car, so wherever we went, we walked, took the bus or the train. Mother was Aunt Signe's twin sister. They had four other sisters. Aunt Signe and Aunt Freda lived in French River; and Aunts Agnes, Irma and Thelma lived in Duluth. We children called them "the Aunties." Often on weekends we took the train ten miles to French River to visit Aunts Signe or Freda. This was a steam train (but we didn't call it that then). It had a big, shiny black engine run by coal, one or two passenger cars, sometimes freight cars and a red caboose.

This was always an exciting day. We carried whatever we needed for the day in baskets. I usually didn't have to carry anything because I'd get carried away and swing the basket so high everything would drop out. We walked about two miles to catch the train. There was a small building at the train track in Lester Park. There was nobody in the building to sell us tickets or tell us the train schedule. There usually was nobody else waiting for the train. We could hear the train coming from a long way off. It would toot its whistle before each railroad crossing. When the train came into view, in order to get it to stop, Mother stood beside the tracks and waved a white scarf. The train engineer blew his whistle two times to signal that he saw her and would stop for us. Mother got off the track in a hurry, and we'd step back from the track a bit. I covered behind her, Jeannie or Bobby and peered around them so I could see the big, black shiny engine pull up and stop for us! It was so exciting, even if it was scary and noisy, to think it stopped just for us.

The door of a passenger car opened, a conductor stepped off the train, put a stool on the ground, called "ALL ABOARD," and helped each of us onto the train. My legs were so short, the conductor lifted me and swung me up onto the train. Then Jeannie, Bobby, Mother and I walked single file through the passenger car to find seats. Some times the Aunties were on the train and had seats for us. Usually the train was pretty crowded because most of the passengers got on in downtown Duluth. We often had to sit in separate seats, but I'd always sit on Mother's lap or in the same seat with Jeannie or Bobby.

Shortly after we got on the train, a conductor walked through the car calling "TICKETS." Everyone got out their tickets to show they'd paid. Mother paid for us—10 cents for each of us children and 20 cents for her—for a ten minute ride. Then a steward walked through calling, "COFFEE, DOUGHNUTS, SANDWICHES." I always thought it would be fun to eat on the train, but we couldn't afford it. We weren't on the train long enough to eat anyway. It was fun to talk to the passengers we sat with. They were always interested in where we were going. Then before we knew it, the conductor walked through and called, "FRENCH RIVER." Mother, Jeannie, Bobby and I got up and staggered to the front of the car swaying back and forth with the moving train. We held onto each other, sometimes falling on a stranger's lap as the train lurched to a stop. The conductor opened the door, got off the train, set his stool on the ground and helped us off the train, lifting me to the ground. We were in the country in French River! Ryan Road was just a dirt road crossing the railroad track.

When we went to Aunt Signe's, we walked from the train up the Ryan Road for about a mile. We crossed the French River and could see the bubbling water falling over a small waterfall just above the water hole where we swam on hot summer days. Aunt Signe and Uncle George lived in a tiny bungalow about a mile from their nearest neighbor. Aunt Signe lived there alone while Uncle George was in the Army. It was always fun to visit Aunt Signe because she played with us and found interesting things for us to do. She was the artistic one in the family and was always working on special projects. Aunt Signe had a dog that was bigger than we were, and it played too rough with us. The dog had to stay inside because we were constantly running in and out, and the dog often ran in and out with us! Aunt Signe had a big box outside her kitchen door full of sawdust and big blocks of ice where she kept her food cool. We thought it was great fun to find things in that big box. (Not too convenient for Aunt Signe in the wintertime!)

Sometimes when we got off the train, Aunt Freda was waiting for us in her black Model T. We'd all climb in and ride five miles to the end of Ryan Road to the Burk homestead where Aunt Freda and Uncle Adolph lived. They lived on a hill, and we could see Lake Superior five miles down the hill.

The house as I first remember had no electricity or running water, was heated by a beautiful potbellied

stove with wood in the parlor, had wide unfinished wood floors, kerosene lamps, and a trap door in the dining room floor to the dirt potato cellar. There was a black iron wood stove for cooking in the kitchen. There was a pump for water just outside the kitchen door. There were three tiny bedrooms upstairs where Mother and the Aunties slept when they were children. There were old books that we loved to read, adventure stories and mysteries, all of the Nancy Drew books and even *Anne of Green Gables!*

We loved to explore the house, which was always immaculate. The Aunties always said cleanliness was next to godliness. Just because we were poor didn't mean we couldn't be neat and clean! We may have been poor in some ways, but we were rich in family togetherness. All the Aunties were wonderful cooks and enjoyed life. It was even fun helping with chores and doing dishes with the Aunties. Uncle Adolph was a first-class carpenter. We loved to visit the outhouse he had sanded and varnished. It had three holes and didn't look or smell like any outhouse I ever saw in my entire life. Aunt Freda always cooked a special meal for us and made the most delicious pies.

Whether we were at Aunt Signe's or Freda's, the end of the day came too soon. We were back at the train tracks before sunset waiting for the train ride home. At the train crossing once again, we could hear the train coming from a distance. When it finally came around the bend and we could see it, Uncle Adolph, one of the Aunties or Mother stood beside the train track and waved a white scarf until the engineer blew his whistle two times. I cowered behind one of them and peered around, so I could see the big, shiny black engine and dream of the day when I was big enough and brave enough to wave the white scarf. And one day when it was time to wave the white scarf, Uncle Adolph picked me up in his arms, stepped to the side of the track, and I WAVED THE WHITE SCARF AND I STOPPED THE BIG, BLACK SHINY TRAIN!

Kathy Rossie

EINAR EMANUEL AND FRIDA WILHELMINA HENDRICKSON

Three of the families who settled along the Ryan Road in the early 1900s were closely related. In fact, they were the Hendrickson brothers, who had emigrated from the town of Nossemark in Dalsland, a province bordering Norway in western Sweden. Dalsland is a beautiful, rugged land of forests, tumbling rivers and sparkling lakes, so it is no wonder the Hendrickson men were drawn to the familiar landscape surrounding Duluth and chose to put down roots in the area.

Einar Emanuel Hendrickson, my grandfather, was born in 1884 to Henrik Johnsson and his wife Inga (Petersson) Johnsson. Einar was the third oldest in a family of ten children, and he was one of six brothers (Severin, Walfred, Einar, Peter, Carl, Nimrod) who eventually came to America, leaving two brothers (Otto, Hilmer) and two sisters (Ottillia, Frida) in Sweden.

The portraits of my great-grandparents, Henrik and Inga, hang in my parents' home. We have been told that Henrik would spend much of a sunny summer day moving his chair into the shadows around the outside corners of their home so that the sun would not get into his eyes as he relaxed, while Inga had no time for rest—no doubt busy raising ten children. I have always believed these stories. Henrik has a twinkle in his eye and a smile, while Inga looks quite stern. Both great-grandparents are buried in the cemetery of the Nossemark church. On a recent trip to Sweden, relatives visited the church, which still stands beautifully maintained bearing a brass plate with the date 1749 etched on it.

I remember Grandpa Einar telling stories about growing up in Nossemark on the banks of the beautiful Stora Le, a long narrow lake which, according to Grandpa, was teeming with huge fish. He said that one time he carried home a fish so large that its head rested on his shoulder, and its tail dragged on the ground behind him as he struggled under its weight. We often wondered just how old Grandpa was when he caught that fish. Was he a child or a full-grown adult? Or was he teasing us with a fish story?

Grandpa's lifelong love for fishing and sailing was learned on the Stora Le, where as a young man he

worked on a tugboat. In French River, he built boats for Lake Superior use. The last of these, "The Strand," is on the beach near Stoney Point Drive.

Einar immigrated to America around 1906, when he was in his early 20s, coming through New York City by way of Ellis Island. In the Swedish way of naming, Einar was Henrik Johnsson's son, and his Swedish name was, therefore, Einar Henriksson (Henrik's son). However, in the confusion and attempt to Americanize foreign names at Ellis Island, his name was changed to Einar Hendrickson. He followed his brother Severin (Americanized to John) who had already settled in the Duluth area.

Life was difficult in the early 1900s, but people were willing to work hard because they believed America offered them opportunity that their home countries could not provide. Grandpa Einar found work as a barn boss for the Sundby Tea Co. in West Duluth. In return for caring for the horses that pulled the delivery wagons throughout the city, Einar was allowed to occasionally borrow a horse and buggy for his own needs. He bragged that one of the horses was so fast that it could make the trip from West Duluth out to French River in just one hour; a "pretty pony" Grandpa called her. While living and working in the city, Einar bought land on the Ryan Road and began to homestead the 60 acres where my parents now live (6037 Ryan Road).

Einar met my grandmother, Frida Wilhemina Lindberg, in Duluth, where she worked as a domestic. She too was a Swedish immigrant and was known for her happy personality and ready laugh. They were married and lived in West Duluth for a few years, and my Aunt Ethel was born there.

Grandpa Einar would often travel out to the French River property to uproot stumps left from the logging companies that had gone through the area, and he would till and plant the land, developing farmable acres. Grandpa told the story that one time while busily working on the property, some rutabaga seeds had sifted out of a hole in his pocket and scattered in the soil as he walked the land. His neighbor mentioned to him later that summer that he had passed by Einar's land and had seen quite a rutabaga crop. Grandpa always said they were "as big as pumpkins!" I think this is another example of my grandfather's imaginative storytelling. Remember the fish story!

In 1914, the family moved out to the Ryan Road and lived in a log home over a root cellar, which had been built next to the large willow tree that still stands near my parents' driveway. While living in the log cabin, the story is told that a bear broke into the root cellar one night and stole apples the family had stored for food.

The family of five (including three children—Ethel, Harold, and Helen) lived in the cabin until 1926, the year my father Kenneth was born, when they moved across the driveway into a two-story home made of sawn lumber which had come from Grandpa Einar's sawmill. During the early years of living on the farm, Grandpa supplemented the family income by becoming a custom sawyer, a person who would travel the area with his sawmill, cutting and planing lumber for building. He worked as far north as the Gunflint Trail and as far south and east as South Range, Wisconsin.

As more and more people moved out to the French River area, a community was born. Einar sold some acreage at the southeast end of his property to his brother Walfred and wife Sophie (where their granddaughter Judy Kaylor and family now live). In 1926, Grandpa Einar donated one acre of land at the corner of the Ryan and Paul Roads for the erection of Immanuel Lutheran Church, which is now the home of the Edward Engelson family.

The Ryan Road community was certainly not immune to natural catastrophe, and one year a forest fire nearly destroyed Grandpa's livelihood. He was able to move his sawmill equipment from the lower pasture on the Paul Road to the cleared area around the house just in time, but he lost his lumber pile, his future income, to the flames.

The community often came together for special events and holiday celebrations. Midsummer (June 21) was an occasion for picnics and games, and the 4th of July was very special because ice cream cones (a rare treat!) were handed out in Lester Park.

My father remembers when the Ryan Road first received electricity in 1936. Knowing that wires would eventually be strung in French River, Grandpa Einar wired his new home in 1926 anticipating that he would be ready to hook up when the power lines came up the Ryan Road. My Uncle Harold brought home a Tru-Tone radio that Christmas, and wonder of wonders, plugged it into the outlet and it worked! Grandpa was

always interested in things mechanical and wore out many early model automobiles, such as the Durant and the Grant Six, on the rough country roads.

The years brought many changes to the Hendrickson brothers and their families. John died of typhoid fever; Carl moved to Washington State; Frank (Americanized from Nimrod) remained in Duluth; and Einar, Peter and Walfred all lived within five miles of each other on the Ryan Road.

During World War II, Grandpa once again worked in Duluth, this time as a pattern maker for Globe Duluth, a foundry and ironworks, while Grandmother Frida remained on the Ryan Road taking care of the family's small dairy. Frida died suddenly in 1943, and Grandpa never remarried.

Grandpa Einar never returned to Sweden to visit, instead choosing to remain in the Duluth area for the remainder of his life. When my father married my mother (Helen Silander, a Finnish girl from the Bergquist Road!) and eventually bought the family home and moved back to the Ryan Road from Duluth, Grandpa Einar moved to property on the North Shore just below Greenwood Road, where he lived until he died in 1964 at the age of 83 years. I like to think that the daily view of Lake Superior brought back good memories of Sweden and growing up on the shores of Stora Le.

French River was a wonderful community to grow up in, and I am grateful that we are able to gather and put down on paper the family stories that made us what we are. There are fourth-generation members of the Einar Hendrickson family living just a few miles from the original homestead. Although I have lived in northern Wisconsin more than 30 years, each time I crest the rise at Pattison Park and see the hills of Duluth and Lake Superior, I know I am home once again.

Christine Hendrickson Byerly



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PETER AND ANNA HENDRICKSON

Peter Iver Hendrickson (1887–1962)

Anna Anderson Hendrickson (1888–1984)

Peter and Anna's home and barn represent a lifetime of work, love of the land and the values brought with them from Sweden. The home they built still stands on their property at 5634 Ryan Road. The barn is a reminder of a way of life that no longer exists.

When Anna was 17 years old, she was an auburn-haired beauty who caught the eye of a young man whose parents lived next door to Anna's family in Sweden. His home was Duluth. On a visit to his parents in Sweden, he saw Anna and fell in love with her. After returning to Duluth, he sent a gold watch to Anna. The next gift was a proposal of marriage and a boat ticket to America. In 1906 at the age of 18, Anna came to America because she loved this young man. She left behind a loving family of nine siblings and parents who missed her dearly. Eight months after her arrival in Duluth, her fiancée died from cancer.

Many years later, Anna's mother wrote a letter telling Anna of her father's death. Anna's mother wrote that the day before he died, he said, "I suppose Anna will never come home." In another letter her mother wrote, "Thank God you are alive. We have not heard from you in five years and feared you were dead." Anna was the only child from her family to come to America. The separation from her family was hard for both Anna and her family.

Her mother was a very beautiful woman with thick, dark hair that hung down past her waist. Her first husband was a very wealthy man. They had one son, and life was good until her husband died leaving Anna's mother a widow with one child and enough money for a secure future. Unfortunately, her mother trusted a dishonest man to take care of her accounts. He spent all of the money leaving her penniless.

Her mother married for the second time and had nine more children including Anna. Anna's father was a farmer. With ten children to feed, times were tough. Church, family and work were the center of her family's life. When Anna was 12 years old, she had to leave home, move into the village and work for a

family. She became the village's cheese maker. She loved doing that because it allowed her to meet a lot of people.

The first seven years Anna lived in Duluth, she worked for the Swanstrom and Freimuth families as a maid and baby-sitter. The first purchase Anna made in America was a dictionary. She was determined to learn English. It only took her three months to learn English. She studied the words in the dictionary diligently. Even in her old age when she was in a nursing home, Anna played spelling games in her mind in order to keep her mind working. She had an inner strength and determination to live life to the fullest that amazed the people who knew her.

Peter came to America because he had brothers who lived in Duluth. The Hendrickson siblings who lived in Duluth were Severin (John), Walfred, Einar, Peter and Nimrod (Frank). Karl lived in Washington. Brothers Hjelmmer and Otto and two sisters remained in Sweden. Peter's parents were farmers. He became a carpenter after moving to America. He worked on many of the homes and public buildings in French River. His full-time job was plowing snow in the winter and grading roads in the summer for the county. He was a big, strong, gruff man with a generous heart.

After Anna and Peter were married in 1911, they left Duluth and applied for a homestead in Beltrami County in the Red River Valley. They built a home out of lumber on their land and started a farm with nothing except a determination to succeed. While living here, they had three children—Salvin, Verner and Walter. Life was difficult, money scarce and jobs hard to find. When Anna was pregnant with Walter, Peter was asked if he would do some carpenter work for a neighbor who lived many miles away from their home. Anna didn't want him to go leaving her alone with two small sons and a child due any day.

Peter often had to go a long way from home and stay away for weeks in order to earn money for the things they could not raise on the farm. Always when he walked the vast fields or lakes, he had to protect himself from wolves. He could not afford to buy a gun. He always took an extra coat and a long stick with him. He would put the stick through the arms and hold the jacket next to himself so that it looked like there were two men walking. The theory was that wolves would attack a single man, but not two.

Peter arrived home in time for Walter's birth, but a black cloud hung over the future for the young couple. Grandma Anna told me that even before Walter was born, she had a dream her baby would die. Before Walter was 1 year old, he died of spinal meningitis. In later years, Grandma said that she never did get over her baby's death. It was during this bleak time that she didn't write to her parents. Her heart was too broken to talk about what had happened. After their baby died, they wanted to return to Duluth, but had to wait until they had legal title to their homesteaded land. They finally sold their homestead and bought the property in French River. The year after they sold their Red River Valley property, a bog fire destroyed their entire homestead. The fire burned underground for over a year. Grandma said that God was very good to them in getting them out of there in time.

Before Grandma and the children came to French River, Grandpa bought property by the French River Store. When Grandma arrived, she took a look at the land and said that it was not good for farming. They bought 80 acres on the Ryan Road and started life over. They built a one-room shack to live in until they could build the house. They cleared the land using their bare hands and strong backs, horse-drawn plows and lots of dynamite to blow up the tree stumps. Grandpa was an expert in using dynamite to clear the land. They built the big barn that still stands behind the house. They raised cattle for meat, milking cows, pigs, chickens and turkeys. A mule, a goat, numerous cats and dogs were pets.

Each summer, we five children were allowed to spend a week with Grandma and Grandpa on the farm. Some of our most precious memories came from those visits. I remember coming into the barn and seeing Grandma milking her favorite cow, Snowball. She sat on the milk stool, pail between her legs, and her head rested on Snowball's stomach. She loved Snowball because she was a gentle cow who produced the greatest amount of milk of all their cows. My brother Bob was at the farm when Snowball died. She had to be buried, which was a big job. Grandpa used dynamite to dig the grave. It was the first time Bob saw dynamite explode.

It was difficult for me to understand how my grandparents could butcher animals. Grandma told me, "In life, you do what you have to do." That phrase still runs through my mind when I have something difficult to do. It is a source of strength that Grandma left behind.

One day she took me out to the garden she had planted in the turn-around by the driveway. She picked up some of the soil, smelled it and put a tiny bit of it on her tongue. She said that it was good soil for flowers but not for underground plants like potatoes. She had a sense of and appreciation for good soil. She let some of the soil run between her fingers. Tears came to her eyes, and she said, "The soil has been so good to us."

Spring was Grandma's favorite season because she loved to watch the green plants pop their heads up out of the soil. She loved new life and understood life's cycle. She also loved flowers. Pansies were amongst her favorites. One day she knelt down in the flower garden outside of the pantry window. She put a pansy between her fingers and said, "Just look at that beautiful face. Doesn't it just give you joy!"

Waking up to the sound of the bell on the cream separator was something I looked forward to every summer. By the time we woke up, she had already fed the chickens, milked the cows and had the barn clean. The cows were milked twice a day. Every time they left the barn, Grandma had to shovel up the poop they left, and then she cleaned the barn stall floors with water and a hose. Grandma's barn was always so clean!

Grandma and Grandpa had a root cellar dug into a bank near the creek. In the fall, it was full of potatoes, carrots, rutabagas and apples. It was dark and cold. They also had an icehouse, which they filled with ice that was cut from Lake Superior. My dad Salvin (Sully) told the story of how he and Verner cut huge blocks of ice from the lake. The blocks were so big that they had to use a lever to lift it into the wagon. As they came up the hill on the Ryan Road, the ice slid off the back of the wagon blocking the road. Dad and Verner had a terrible time trying to clear the road and were afraid that Grandpa would be angry when they came home without any ice.

Haying was also a very big job. For many years, Grandma and Grandpa worked side by side doing this heavy work. In later years, my brothers helped hay. The hay was first cut, then pulled into rows using a rake behind the tractor. The boys loved to drive Grandpa's "joker," a cut-down '32 Chevy truck that had an eight-foot rake on the front of it. They would drive the joker fast down the rows of hay, packing and stacking it onto the fork. When they did this, hay and debris would fly causing a great cloud

of dust. The hay was then loaded onto the hay wagon. Then it was lifted into the barn, salted and packed.

Grandpa died in 1962. A car hit his tractor. His leg was broken. He was in the hospital when a blood clot killed him. Somehow Grandma sensed that Pete was in trouble. We were sitting at the lunch table when, all of a sudden, Grandma got a shocked look on her face. She said, "We must go to Pete right now!" When Dad and Grandma got to the hospital, Grandpa had died.

When Grandpa died, I was old enough to learn many lessons about life and faith from Grandma. That is when I realized how much God meant to her and how much He helped her get through tragic times. In her grief, she turned to the Bible, reading it and clinging to the promises it held for her. Her acceptance of what life is about, unshakable faith, determination to make the best of every circumstance and ability to take each day as a gift are the legacy she left behind.

Grandma and Grandpa were among the founding members of French River Lutheran Church. Grandpa worked on the design and construction of the church. At the time of Grandma's death, she was the last founding member of the church.

At age 85, Grandma had both hips replaced. The rehabilitation process was painful. Through sheer determination, Grandma got back on her feet in record time. When her hearing and eyesight failed her, she never complained. "Find something good to do or say every day" was the advice she gave me. When her body was worn out, sight and hearing gone, she said, "Bette, doesn't He know I want to go home?" I would always reply, "Yes, Grandma, He does. He will give you strength for just one more day." And He did. Grandma made her final passage at the age of 96. What a gift she was!

*Bette Hendrickson Alseth
Granddaughter*



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WALFRED OLENIUS AND ALMA SOPHIA CARLSON HENDRICKSON

Walfred Hendrickson was born in Dalsland, Sweden on August 17, 1879, to Henrik and Inga Johnson. He was one of ten children, one of five brothers who sailed to America. Alma Carlson was born in 1879 to Mr. and Mrs. Carl Carlson, one of four children and Dalsland was home.

The two of them grew up together and attended the same church and school. As they grew older, friendship blossomed into love, and on August 20, 1905, they were married.

In the year 1909, Walfred got the call of the new world. He left his wife and son, Conrad Folke, to explore opportunities that awaited in the new land. His daughter Svea was born after his arrival in America.

Eight years went by before it was his privilege to send for his family, and they arrived safely on May 19, 1917. They came directly to French River. Their first dinner was at the home of Einar Hendrickson, Walfred's brother. There they met their first new neighbors, Mrs. Ole Nelson and her daughter Sadie. A strong friendship between the families was formed and continues to this day. How wonderfully we are blessed.

Together, an attractive home was built, but it was destroyed by fire in 1953. A garage was quickly remodeled on the property to replace the house, and a great-grandson lives there now. A granddaughter also lives in another home on the property—the Bob and Judy Kaylor family.

When Walfred's family arrived at French River, his son Conrad had already attended three years of school in Sweden. In the fall of 1917, both Conrad and Svea went to the Bloomingdale School. Church was of great importance, so a group of neighbors held services in their homes with Rev. Carl Silfversten until a church was built by the members on the corner of Ryan and Anderson (now Paul) Roads. Immanuel Lutheran was replaced by French River Lutheran in 1953, and Immanuel was sold and remodeled into the Ed Engelson home.

Walfred worked on the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad. During the week he was gone, and all the farm work was left to Sophie and Connie and Svea.

Walfred and Sophie were married for 50 years with happiness, sorrow, good and bad fortune, hope and despair. Sophie died in 1955 at age 76 years. Walfred died in 1957 at age 78 years.



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Barbara Judith Hamlin Kaylor

MIKE AND ALFA LAITI

Michael Alfred Laiti was born in Gamla Karleby, Finland in 1847. He came to America with a friend in the early 1860s. The family story says they stopped in Chicago, where they had their suitcases stolen while standing in the street. Then they spent some time in Dassel and Cokato, Minnesota before coming north to Duluth. Here he married Alfa Jordahl, a mail-order bride from Vadso, Norway, a part of Lapland. She was a big, strong woman, a very hard worker, and she could weave, knit, crochet and tat.

Mike bought a store on Lake Avenue in Duluth, which eventually turned into a very prosperous grocery store. After the children had a couple of falls from the aerial bridge complex, they decided the city was no place to raise children, so they bought land in French River in 1910. They sold the store for \$20,000. For many years, the upstairs was filled with barrels full of store merchandise. Alfa also brought with her all the fine furniture, dishes, pictures and other furnishings they owned. It is said she had colored rugs for every season and always changed them accordingly.

Mike and Alfa had twelve children: Peter, John, Charles, Frank, Edward, Mike, Irene, Lillian, Paul, Selma, and twins Alex and Robert. By 1912, they had added on two more rooms downstairs and a storeroom upstairs. There were not enough cleared fields nearby for hay for their cows, so the family cut hay way back by the west branch of the Sucker River and hauled it out by dray. They also raised chickens, a great garden, raspberries and apple trees.

Living on the river, most of their recreation involved the water—skiing, sliding, and bonfires on the ice in winter and fishing for the large rainbow trout in summer. The children went to school through the eighth grade. The county had an eighth grade graduation ceremony. Robert told the story of having no shoes to wear

until someone gave him a pair of red ladies' shoes, which turned his feet red whenever they got wet, which was often!

Mike worked on the road crew for Duluth Township. He helped build the Bergquist Road. He died in 1928, and afterwards, Alfa provided room and board for road crews that worked on the Ryan and Shilhon Roads. She did the washing and baking, and Evelyn, Ed's wife, did the cooking.

After Alfa died in 1942, Ed and Evelyn moved onto the farm. Evelyn remembers wondering how they were ever going to get her large Maytag combination stove up the stairs and into the house. They backed up to the door, greased some planks with lard and slid it right in the door.

Evelyn still lives in the house where Ed grew up and where she and Ed raised their seven children. It is now the house where her grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren come to listen to her stories about their roots in French River.

Barb Jackson

AXEL AND ELVIRA LARSON

Axel Larson emigrated from Sweden in 1910. Elvira Enroth emigrated from Sweden as a child in 1906. They were married in Port Arthur, Ontario in 1917. In 1918, they bought a farm on the Hegberg Road. During the next few years, Axel farmed and worked as a carpenter and builder. He drove a horse-drawn sleigh and wagon bringing students to the one-room Clover Valley School. During his lifetime, he built many buildings in Canada, Clover Valley, Knife River and Duluth. The Larsons also logged and shipped pulpwood from the landing at Palmers.

Axel and Elvira built a windmill in 1934, remodeled their home in 1935 and built a new barn in 1938. They raised five children—Florence, Raymond, Theodore, Walter, and Carl. Friends and neighbors would come from far and near to enjoy the sliding parties on the hill by the Larson farm.

Many years ago the Larson family went raspberry picking. They were gone for six hours. A strong wind started to blow, and the windmill did its job. It pumped hundreds of gallons of water into the house. When the family returned, they found water flowing from the two closed doors. Everything in the house was wet. Storage

boxes were floating everywhere. It seems that when the family left to go picking, the weather had been calm, and no one had put the brake on the windmill!



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THE LUND FAMILY

My parents, Violet and John Lund, first saw the Homestead Road in 1921 when they took the train from Duluth to Palmers. Five miles north was their property purchased from Nick Smith, a neighbor who sold 40 of his 80 acres. After walking one-fourth mile, Mother could continue no longer. Dad stopped at the Ivarinen farm to ask him to drive them to the Axel Larson farm atop a big hill in Clover Valley.

They stayed there until settling in the one-room cabin that was to be our home for 18 years. As we three girls came along—Lillian, Joyce and Mildred, Dad added on the necessary rooms, and we lived there until building the new house in 1939 on the same property.

We were always warm and well fed as Dad was a carpenter, hunter, fisherman as well as a farmer. Even during the Depression and lean years, we never suffered. Dad would show his beautiful vegetables at the Clover Valley Fair and just beam when our ag teachers, Harry Peterson and Roy Nelson, would praise them.

My sisters and I always enjoyed the wiener and marshmallow roasts on the Axel Larson hill and then walking home on a moonlit, cold, wintry night. Hearing the crunch of snow under our feet, we ran a little faster past a tall wooded area fearing the howl of wolves and a possible bear crossing.

I attended one year at the one-room schoolhouse on the Anton Martinson property, and in 1929, the new school was built—Clover Valley School. We three girls graduated from that school, and on senior prom night had the privilege of going to the beautiful Dan Mahoney summer home on Lake Superior at Palmers for our dance.

We all married at the homeplace, coming down the staircase to fulfill our mom's dreams, and then went our own directions.

Lillian (Lund) Larsen

OLE AND INGABORG NELSON

Ole was born in 1867 in north central Sweden. Skorpved was the name of the place. The family was 12 children—one sister and 11 brothers. He was the third Olaf born—the ones before him died as babies. In Sweden, he formed and built rock foundations. He would take a rock and tell me, "See, it wants to split this way." He raised oats and could cut it with a scythe and take a handful to tie a bundle as good as a grain binder. When I helped him plant corn, he had a hoe and I had seed in a little pail, and I had to walk bent over so two seeds would go exactly in the center of the hole. He could walk down a field throwing hay seed, and when it came up, it was perfect—no thick or thin spots. When making hay, it was all handwork and he and his wife carried the hay home on two poles—one on each end.

He had been married in Sweden, but his wife died giving birth to a daughter, and he lost them both. He was heartbroken and left Sweden in 1902 and came to Mora, Minnesota to a cousin's home. He found work near Moose Lake cutting logs on "burnt over" land. In 1904, he wasn't satisfied, so he went back to Sweden to visit and say a final good-bye and came back to Minnesota.

He came to Duluth then as he had heard about grain elevators hiring for \$1 a day. He went to work for Consolidated Grain Co. at Elevator E. He lived in a boarding house on Garfield Avenue. Many of the French River families lived there.

Ingaborg Jacobson was born north of the Arctic Circle on the Island of Skroga in 1881. Norway has many islands, and she learned to row boats to other islands. Her mother died when she was 7 years old, and she was raised by her aunt. Her father was really tall for those days—6 feet, 7 inches. Ingaborg was 5 feet, 2 inches. She left Norway when she was 18 years old and came to her cousin, Agnes Rask, who lived in West Duluth. Ingaborg got a job as a nanny taking care of Sadie and Marvin Oreck. When those children went to school, Ingaborg went to work for the boarding house where Ole Nelson was staying. They were married in 1908 and Sadie and Marvin, their children, were born in 1909 and 1913. They lived in Duluth's West End where Sadie started school, and Ole went to work in Elevator E. Ingaborg told me when Ole got a raise to \$1.25 a day, they didn't know what they were going to do with all their money!

Ole wanted land because in Sweden if you owned land, you were "well-off." In 1918, they moved to French

River. The house was bought in 1917 and made livable before they moved in. Ole had a 1917 Model T Ford he left for Ingaborg to drive in summer, but it stalled on the railroad tracks. While in front of it cranking to start it, she saw a train coming and got the kids out of the car. The train hit the car, smashing it. The railroad helped Ole buy a new Model T in 1920.

They had an older log house that was used for a barn, and they filled it with six head of cattle—cows and young stock. They had no well for water and used the creek below the hill on the Paul Road. Ole stayed at a boarding house all week, coming home on Saturday night on the midnight train with many others that lived in French River. They then walked five miles or more to their farms. They had worked all week ten hours a day, six days a week. On Sunday, Ole cut wood and moved manure piles. When grain came into the elevators, Ole couldn't get home as he worked seven days a week and overtime every day.

Ingaborg carried water from the creek twice a day for the cows, then the creek froze dry, and she had to carry water from the Sucker River a half-mile away, leaving the kids with kerosene lamps. She was so afraid of fire. She walked to the river 16 times a day with a yoke on her shoulders and carried two pails at a time. She was full of "ruptures" from working so hard on the farm. Ole hired Lundgren brothers to dig a well the next summer. The land was cleared by Ed and Robert Laiti, and he hired Charlie Lindquist to build onto the barn and other buildings. John Anderson used dynamite to blast stumps and rocks.

Ole bought a white horse he called Susa. She had been a "milk horse" in Duluth, so every time she was driven out on the road, she ran fast as she had been trained. She worked on the farm for 20 years, laid down in the pasture and couldn't get up, so had to be put down. Sadie and Marvin were both born on August 5—four years apart. One year their dog Fanny went into the woods and came back with a baby rabbit and put it in Sadie's hands, and then she went back and brought another rabbit for Marvin on August 5!

Ingaborg had met a woman on the boat with twins coming to Minnesota. She helped her with the kids, who ran around the deck. They ended up living one-half mile apart in French River—the Carl Forslund family.

Ole Nelson died at home on July 27 when he was 74 years old. His son-in-law, Morris Oberg (my dad), died

on July 27 when he was 74 years old. My grandfather and my father—and I'm almost 72 years old.

*Don Oberg
Grandson*



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THE NORDIN FAMILY

The Nordin brothers, Halvor, Elof, William and Gust, and their sister Nancy came from Sweden to the USA in the early 1900s. They all settled in French River on the Ryan Road, starting on the Johnson Road where Halvor had the first 40 acres. The rest of the brothers and Nancy each had 40 acres north of where Halvor lived.

Halvor married Signe and they had five children. They were Sadie, Clarence, Evelyn, Margaret and Roger. Elof married Marian and they had one son Elwood. Nancy married Mr. Gustafson and they had four children—Gust, Olaf, Adeline and Ben. William remained a bachelor and took care of his mother Johanna. Gust married Christine and their children were Elsa, Mae and Everett.

Probably their most memorable experience was the 1918 forest fire that destroyed all their homes and almost took their lives. They escaped by walking down to the railroad tracks and getting on a train to Duluth, where they lived until they could rebuild their homesteads.

Halvor was a farmer, and he worked for the Lundquist brothers who made fish boxes. Elof also farmed and worked in construction for J.D. Harrold. Gust farmed and worked for the county and highway department. He also worked at the State Fish Hatchery. William farmed and also worked at the fish hatchery. Nancy was a housewife.

Clarence, Elwood, Roger and Everett all served in the Armed Forces during World War II.

The surviving members of the Nordin family are Margaret, Evelyn, Elsa, Mae, and Everett and their children and grandchildren.

Everett Nordin

JOHN MORRIS OBERG

John Morris Oberg was born January 21, 1896 in Sundsvall, Sweden. He was the first child of John and Maria Oberg. His father was a shoemaker in the days when they went to a family and lived with them and made shoes for everyone in the household, and then went to the next family.

When Morris was 11 years old, his father took the 10-year-old brother Carl and came to America. He told Morris to "take care of the family" because he was the oldest, and there were three sisters and a brother to take care of in Sweden. No money came from his father in America, so Morris tried to sell newspapers. He made so little they had to have help from Grandma Oberg (his father's mother), who had a little farm. Morris would walk seven Swedish miles to get milk and pork once a week. He told me boatloads of cattle came into the docks, and they would pay "Femera" (about a nickel) a cow for him to lead them to slaughterhouses at the top of the hill. He would get up early in the morning and put a piece of bread in his shirt and run to the dock. If he led two cows at a time, he would make more money. He never had shoes and the cows would step on his toes, so he had rags tied around his toes after leading them. Once he had them in a pen, he would run down to the boat for two more. Bulls paid double, but he could only take one at a time. When the cows were unloaded, he ran home to give his mother the money, but kept one nickel for himself.

The lumberyard knew of this family without food or money, so Morris got a job there working ten-hour days, six days a week. My aunt told me Morris would come home so tired at night, his mother had to hold his head up to feed him. They never had butter. They saved grease from frying pork and put that on their bread. It took Morris' father's sister in America to help the family come over here when Morris was 13 years old. They lived in Superior, Wisconsin then, and father John Oberg had a shoe repair shop. They had two more children after coming to America. They were so poor Morris had a wagon, and he would walk along the railroad tracks to pick up coal to heat the house they lived in. He also picked up scrap metal to sell to the junkyard.

There were grain cars full of wheat parked on side tracks, and at night men would drill holes under the boxcars so grain would pour out. They stole the grain to sell to feed stores or families with chickens, and then

they would drive a plug in the boxcar so grain wouldn't spill on the tracks. As time went by, they became careless and didn't plug the holes, and there would be big piles of wheat left on the ground. Morris would load sacks with this grain and sell it the next day. Then the railroad put watchmen in railroad yards with guns to stop anyone from getting grain.

He tried to go to school, but he could only understand Swedish so he never went to school in America. When he was 15 years old, he and brother Carl were hired to burn pine tops in a logging camp about half a mile south of Clover Valley School. This was before the school was even thought of. Morris learned English there that winter. There were Swedes in the logging camp, but they wouldn't talk to him unless he spoke English. I was impressed with the stories he told about that winter.

They had bobsleds with six-inch wide runners and heavy wide bunks to hold pine logs they hauled to Knife River. It was downhill all the way. At night, they hauled water to put in the tracks of the runners. In the morning, they put on four horses to start the loads moving down, then the team in front was unhooked and pulled out of the way. The team on the sled was just there to steer. If the load went too fast, it would run over the horses. So they had men working all along the trail called "hay monkeys." When the load started to go too fast, the teamster would yell, "More hay, more hay!" Hay slowed the loads down so the horses could handle or steer it. They let one load get down a little way and then started another until all sleds were gone. When the last one went down the road, the "monkeys" got busy cleaning the hay and manure out of the tracks so the horses could pull the heavy sleds up the hill. When the horses got back up the hill, they were trembling. The next day they stayed in the barn to rest, the second day they had light skidding to do, and the third day were back on the sled to Knife River. They killed three horses that winter.

Morris worked in many logging camps. When he cut railroad ties, they used a broad ax to chop two sides flat by hand. I remember a picture of him sitting on a skidway with logs four to five feet around. He sawed logs like this on a sawmill in the woods. They had to quarter saw the log and still chop by hand to get the logs into four pieces so they could handle them. He drove horses once for the lumberyard, and he didn't know they had been "fire department horses." When they heard the fire bell coming down the street, they

would go in full gallop to the fire—no holding them back! He liked horses and on Sundays would go to the fire hall to talk to the fire horses and pet them. Three horses pulled each fire engine. He also drove horses when they paved Tower Avenue in Superior. He told of tar buckets—one on each side of the horses' backs, so they used only old horses because tar would spill on them and burn their legs and backs. He drove teams of mules to haul water for steam shovels when they built the steel plant in Morgan Park.

He then worked as a riveter in the shipyard in World War I and made and saved enough money to help build a house for Father and Mother in French River on the north end of Bergquist Road.

Morris married Sadie Nelson in 1926. I was born in 1928, then sister Delores in 1937 and sister Ingrid in 1946. Three kids born nine years apart!

When I was very young, I remember everyone made beer called Home Brew. It was strong and some men got really drunk. Then some men made "moonshine" and sold it to bootleggers. Morris would buy it in five-gallon jugs. When there were dances at the town hall on Homestead Road and at the Community Hall on Ryan Road, he would sell pints out of his car to people. You'd bring your bottle, and he filled it for 50 cents. Sometimes he'd sell all the five gallons and would have to go home for more. He also filled bottles at home and would hide them in the woods behind the house. He sold for a couple of years, and then a man came to the door wearing a gray suit and topcoat. He wanted a "pint" and was staggering all over the kitchen. Ole Nelson, my grandfather, was there, and I was sitting in his lap as this man insisted he wanted a "pint." Morris said he didn't have any. The man finally left. Grandpa said (in Swede), "That man was really drunk."

Morris said, "No, he was a cop." Grandpa said, "It's time to quit." Morris said, "Ya, I guess so." Morris never got in fights. Every dance had "fist fights" of drunken men. When he stopped drinking, my sisters knew a loving dad that was altogether different than when I was young.

Morris worked for a contractor in Duluth until World War II. He worked at Zenith Dredge and Riverside as a shipfitter. When I turned 16, I worked at Riverside with him. After the war, he went to work on the ore docks in Two Harbors.

In the winter, he cut logs to sell for pulpwood, shipping two railroad cars a winter. He had trucks most of the time and was the first "school bus driver" in French River—after horses, which were the original power for school busses. He also hauled gravel for WPA and hauled fish boxes for his Uncle Hjalmer Lundquist's box factory. He left the railroad ore docks after a heart attack in 1952. He had worked cutting logs in the winter, skidding them and loading them on his truck. He then hauled them to his sawmill and sawed them into lumber. The day he had the heart attack he had cut 40 logs and walked in deep snow back to the road. (This was just after prostate surgery.)

When he got the lumber to the box factory, he re-sawed it to three-eighths inch boards cutting them into lengths and ripping them to make smelt boxes and pallets. He worked alone with his horse Lula.

Morris died on July 27, 1970. Ole Nelson, Morris' father-in-law, died on July 27, 1943.

Donald Morris Oberg

HANS AND EDITH OLSON

Hans and Edith Olson lived on the Hegberg Road. Hans was an immigrant from Norway. He bought his land and built his log home by himself in 1899. Hans was a huge man, over six feet tall, and heavily built—yet his nickname was "Little Hans." He carried roofing paper in a packsack on his back from the McQuade Road rail station to his property. He later built a root cellar for his vegetables and a barn for his horse and cow. In later years, he raised potatoes which he sold for seed. He would also sell his excess potatoes in east Duluth, which he would transport there by horse-drawn wagon. In 1914, he worked on improving and extending the Hegberg Road. In October of 1925, Hans and Edith married. Hans later worked as a county tool house employee until his retirement.



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HERMAN PALO FAMILY

Both Mr. and Mrs. Palo were born in Finland, Europe. Mrs. Palo (Sophie Huotari) was born in Kuhmo in 1875. Mr. Palo was born in 1863. Mrs. Palo's brother, Peter Huotari, also immigrated to America and settled in Clover Valley.

The Palos were united in marriage in Duluth in 1902. They operated a boarding house on South First Avenue East. In 1905, my mother, Alina Pulkkinen, came from Finland by herself at the age of 15 to work and live with the Palos. She worked a year and a half to pay back the ticket Mr. Palo had mailed to her.

Around 1908, the Palos moved to the French River area where they operated a small store for several years. They weren't blessed with children. My mother married John Salmi in 1911. A set of twins was born to my mother on Christmas Eve 1912 in the little log cabin of the Palos. Mrs. Liljander, a local midwife, delivered us, Allen and Alice. Mrs. Palo was just like a real mother to our mother, to Allen and to me. We lived with the Palos until 1918, when our mother married for the second time to Esa Harrison. Mother and stepfather wanted both children to come live with them in Duluth, but Mrs. Palo said, "No." Allen was her boy and she loved him dearly, so our mother consented to have him stay, since she still had me. The Palos adopted Allen, and my stepfather adopted me.

I remember quite well, though I was only six, our mother having a little party at Palo's on Christmas Eve in 1918, for it was Allen's and my last year together. She bought a cake, cookies and small gifts for the neighbor children who came there with their parents. Sulo Schonberg was Santa Claus. Allen got a nice toy piano, and I got a nice doll. Later, Oscar Rahkila made a cradle for my doll.

Allen attended Bloomingdale School until, at age 17, he was stricken with pneumonia and passed away. His funeral was held at the schoolhouse. This was a great blow to Mrs. Palo and to the rest of us. Five weeks later, Mrs. Palo had a gall bladder operation, but she had no desire to live. So she too passed away. Mr. Palo sold the farm to the John Mattila family about 1932. He died in 1935.

Alice Harrison



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ERNEST AND ESTHER SWANSON

Ernest Swanson (1890–1969)

Esther Carlson Swanson (1888–1979)

In 1907, Esther Carlson was 19 years old. A mother of three small children offered Esther, my grandmother, an opportunity to come to America. The lady lived in America and was visiting relatives in Sweden. She needed help with her children on the ocean voyage back to the States. She let Esther borrow \$50 for her ticket. The loan had to be paid back when Grandma got a job. The boat trip was terrible. Almost everybody was seasick for the entire voyage.

When Grandma arrived in New York, she didn't know the language, couldn't count the money and her clothes were not appropriate for life in New York City. Even though she didn't know anything about cooking, she got a job working as a cook that paid \$10 a month and bought a suit for \$10. It took her a year to pay the lady back. For the first two years in New York, she worked as a cook for the Stanley family. They owned the Stanley Steamer Co.

At first, life was difficult in this strange land. She said that she did many foolish things because there were so many things she had never seen before. She told us that she didn't know that the gas light had to be lit quickly after being turned on. She thought she just had to turn it on. Thank God she never got the match lit before someone smelled the gas and intervened. She felt bad because she could have killed the family she was working for. Then there was the challenge of getting onto the open trolley cars. The first time she tried, she grabbed the pole. The trolley took off. She ran for one block holding onto the pole before the trolley slowed down enough for her to get onboard. She was not afraid to tackle anything. Only those who were willing to work hard and were courageous survived.

After living in New York for two years, she became lonesome for her family and returned to Sweden where she stayed for a year. Even though she loved her family very much and leaving them again would be difficult, Esther decided that she longed for the freedom and opportunity America offered her. When she made her second voyage to America, it was to settle here permanently.

Ernest Swanson, my grandpa, was 19 years old when he and his brother Albin left Malmo, Sweden and crossed the ocean arriving in Halifax, Canada on April 4, 1909. From there, they took a train to Detroit arriving

on the 11th. Their destination was the home of August Noreen in Duluth. He came to America because of the promise it held for a good life, a job and land he could own. Everybody remembers him as a quiet and gentle man who had a dry sense of humor, loved his family and also loved his chickens.

Grandpa and Grandma met while working for the Jones family on 5910 Bergquist Road in French River. Grandma was their cook and Grandpa their chauffeur. They were married January 20, 1916. Shortly after that, they purchased 80 acres of land on Swanson Road east of Ryan Road. Clearing the land was difficult. All of the big pine trees had been logged off the land, leaving huge stumps. The property was still almost all woods. Clearing the land and building a house while Grandpa worked in Duluth and Grandma worked the garden was a big challenge. They built a little shack to live in and cleared the land, planted a garden large enough to feed themselves and also help out some of the neighbors. (Their address was 1061 Swanson Road.)

My mom Svea was born in 1917. By September 1920, Grandpa wrote in a letter to his brother, "Esther and Svea are farming at French River. We have two cows, one calf, one chick and two roosters." When mom was four years old, she and Grandma returned to Sweden for a visit. Only Swedish was spoken during that time. It caused problems for mom because she couldn't speak English when she started school.

Grandpa worked several jobs before retiring. He worked in a gravel crushing plant and was co-owner of a tire company. During the war, he worked in a shipyard in California making PT boats. Grandpa had promised my oldest brother Bob that he would bring him a PT boat when the war was over. Much to Bob's disappointment, Grandpa didn't bring back a PT boat. Instead, he brought a roll of wallpaper with boats on it. In 1951, Grandpa started working on the construction of buildings for Reserve Mining Co. in Silver Bay. He worked there until he retired.

We didn't get to see much of Grandpa Swanson because he always worked away from home and was only able to return home on weekends. That left most of the farm work for Grandma and Mom to do. It was a difficult life with lots of hard work.

Grandma and Grandpa saved every penny they could to buy the things that they would not have been able to

buy had they stayed in Sweden. They raised dairy cows so they could sell the milk and cream. In the milk house, they had a concrete tub. The fresh milk was cooled in the concrete tub that had been filled with nice cold water from deep in the ground. In the 1940s and '50s, a ten-gallon can of cream sold for about \$20. That was a lot of money in those days.

The extra milk was fed to the pigs along with old sweet rolls from a bakery in Lakeside. The pigs didn't have it so bad. That was until butchering day. All of the meat that fed Grandma and Grandpa and also our family of five children was raised on our grandparents' farm. Butchering was a hard lesson in reality. The meat was processed, canned and put in a metal locker in the snow bank. When it was time to butcher chickens and turkeys, the entire family had to work. Grandpa butchered, we children cleaned the chickens and plucked the feathers and singed the feathers. We couldn't pluck over the open flame of Grandma's wood cook stove. Grandma and Mom canned or froze the meat or smoked it. She converted a 55-gallon barrel into a smoker. It took four or five days to smoke the meat. Her hams were the best!

Another way to earn money in the winter was to rent out Goldie, Grandma's faithful workhorse, to Andy Erickson. Andy and Goldie worked for a logging company during the winter. He earned \$10 a month and was paid \$20 a month for Goldie's services. Out of the \$20, he had to feed Goldie and pay Grandma rent for the horse. He and Goldie would return to the farm every summer, where Andy earned his room and board helping with the heavy work. Andy didn't have any family here, so we became his family and enjoyed him very much.

I wonder if Goldie didn't learn some of her ways from Andy, or maybe it was the other way around. After all, they spent a lot of time together. Some of the fond memories I have of Andy are about when he was old and tired, he would not do some of the chores he was supposed to. Grandma would get very frustrated with him and yell at him. Andy would take it all in stride. Every time Grandma yelled at him, he would merely reach into his shirt pocket, turn off the volume control on his hearing aid and let her go on yelling while he basked in utter silence.

Goldie also had a mind of her own. Sometimes she wanted to be ridden. Sometimes she didn't. We had to mount her broad back while standing on a fence rail or

hay wagon. If she didn't want to be ridden, she would merely take one step away from us at the moment we almost reached her back. Of course, we fell to the ground, and I am sure Goldie had many chuckles playing her game with us. One day she figured she had been ridden long enough and walked through the lowest barn door wiping Bob off her back. He fell into the manure on the floor. Was Grandma ever mad! I think that was Goldie's golden day!

Haying was also a very big job. My brothers helped hay. The hay was first cut, then pulled into rows using a rake behind the tractor. Then two men working in unison would lift the hay from the rows into piles five feet high. The hay was then lifted by hand onto the hay wagon and taken to the barn. It was put on a pallet. Using Goldie and a pulley system, the hay was lifted into the upper room of the barn. Once Goldie got spooked. She ran away while attached to the rope pulling the hay up. The hay went up, over the pulley, and back down on top of my brother. I wonder who spooked Goldie? Maybe there is justice in this world!

On warm summer nights, we were allowed to sleep in the fresh hay. Even the bats and birds didn't bother us. We loved to jump from the haymow into stacks of hay on the floor of the barn. Another exciting time was when the calves and piglets were born. It was so much fun to feed the calves milk and let them suck on our hand.

Going to the outdoor bathroom was a scary thing for me. On the other side of one of the walls of the outhouse was the pig house. My brothers would get the pigs all excited when I was in the outhouse. The pigs would bump against the wall. My brothers said that the pigs could come right through the wall. I was scared half to death. I remember the day when Grandpa finished the bathroom inside the house. I was so delighted because I thought it meant that I would never have to go to the outdoor biff again. Wrong! They wanted to save the bathroom; so for the first few years, we used the outdoor biff.

Grandma made fancy cakes for weddings and other celebrations in the community. She was well known for her baked goods. They were all made from scratch and baked in her wood oven. She could determine the temperature of the oven by looking at the color of the wood fire or by putting her hand inside the oven and counting how long it took to get her hand hot. There was something about that oven that made her bread golden brown, moist and delicious.

Thanksgiving was Grandma's favorite holiday. I remember riding in the car to Grandma's house, and the snow banks were so high I could not see the top of them. The moment we walked into her warm kitchen heated by the wood cook stove, the holiday began. The large dining room table was set formally with linen napkins that were woven by Grandma's mother; the china and real silverware were brought out of storage. She always had fresh flowers set in the glass swan bowl sitting on a decorated mirror. It was beautiful! The joy of being together and anticipating the good food Grandma cooked was the best part. Grandma must have worked for days preparing that meal. After we ate, the children had to go outside. We were to be seen and not heard. When we came back in, all five of us children would sit around the phonograph and listen to Swedish music. Then after dark, we could have another meal that always included fruit salad, leftover meat and rolls. The warmth and love in Grandpa and Grandma's home will always be remembered.

Grandma and Grandpa saw a lot of changes in their lifetime. Shortly before Grandpa died, the U.S. space team walked on the moon. That was beyond Grandpa's wildest dream. He and Grandma grew up in a world that didn't have electricity, telephones, television or autos. Everything was done by hand. Neighbors depended on each other to help in big work projects, emergencies and for socialization. They measured their worth by the work they did. They had a dream and worked hard to reach their goals.

*Bette Hendrickson Alseth
Granddaughter*



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SWANSON (SVENSSON) AND OLSON FAMILIES

To understand the history of Clover Valley, we have to go back a long time. It all began in Smaland, Sweden on October 21, 1852, when Johann Alfred Svensson was born. Johann married Gustava Loisa Almquist, and the family had four daughters and one son. In 1887, Alfred (as he was commonly known) set sail for America, leaving Gustava behind. Alfred had a brother Charles living in Hermantown, therefore, the reason for his destination.

The lumber companies in the Clover Valley area had numerous "spur" lines on which they could transport the pine and cedar timber, first by teams of horses and later by rail. It was on one of these lines coming from Knife River that Grandpa (Alfred) found his spot. The spur line was at the base of a hill, so his choice was to build up a hill located on what we know as the southwest corner of the Homestead and West Knife River Road. He built a large log cabin with materials carried to the site by way of that spur line. He would walk it, or when possible, hop the rail car.

A year later, he sent for his family in Sweden. His wife and five children (ages 10 years to 6 months) arrived in November 1888. They lived in Hermantown for one year, and my father, Robert Gustave, was born there on September 23, 1889. Three months later, the log home in Clover Valley was ready, and they moved there in January 1890.

A new life began for the family on the farm. Cows, horses, chickens, sheep, oxen and pigs were acquired. Machinery was obtained, and crops and fruit trees were planted. The whole family pitched in, but ultimately, the oldest daughters left to find work. Frieda, the oldest, cooked at a lodge in Two Harbors, Hannah was in the Duluth area and Hilma cooked at a nearby lumber camp. All three married, and now Grandpa had eight grandchildren. Hilma married Joseph Duncan, and they made their home on the corner of the Homestead and Torgeson Roads. Hilma Duncan carried the mail for the early homesteaders with a horse and buggy or cutter accompanied by her dog and pistol.

Richard Walfred Swanson was born October 28, 1892, the first baby born in what was known as Molde. During the early 1900s, there were losses in this family. Oscar, age 18; Lydia, age 20; Hannah, age 26; had all been born in Sweden, but died within five years in their new home. The girls had consumption (tuberculosis), and Grandma Gustava died in 1907 of diabetes.

Education was a must for the children, and a log school was built on the Swanson property. A teacher was hired and lived with local families. She had to be at school early to build a fire in the potbellied stove and carry water. All ten of the surviving grandchildren had advanced education beyond high school, often at great sacrifice to their parents.

The need for religious guidance was filled by missionaries who visited lumber camps. Gatherings

were held in homes until the lumber camps left. A minister from Duluth, Rev. Chester B. Frank, agreed to pastor at the schoolhouse every two weeks on Mondays. For four years, he rode the train to Palmers and was picked up from the train. He would return on the night train, signaling for it to stop by swinging a lantern. Rev. Frank remained a close family friend and returned to perform my wedding and my father's funeral.

Harvest dinners became one of the ways for the local Ladies Aid to raise funding to purchase the old town hall at 6656 Homestead Road. Services were conducted by American Bible Association pastor, Rev. Stanley, and from Two Harbors, Rev. George McLeod. Until this time, a pastor had often been paid with a chicken, canned goods or a crock of butter.

Mabel Clara Olson was born in Franklin, Minnesota on September 24, 1903. Her parents, Joseph Engelhart and Olava Olson, came from Norway with three children and located where her mother had a brother in southern Minnesota. They moved to Duluth in 1908, where Engelhart worked on the coal docks. He purchased land from Alfred Swanson and built on Molde Hill near the fire tower in 1918.

On May 6, 1922, Robert Swanson and Mabel Olson traveled to St. Paul to be married by Chester B. Frank. They returned to the home that had been built by Robert Swanson and Engelhart Olson on Culbertson Road, the home where I am living today.

My father was an engineer who operated the dredge, farmed and maintained the roads with a horse-drawn grader. His health was affected by a World War I nerve gas experiment. He died in 1966, the last survivor of the original Swanson family. Mother lived until 1995. Shirley Swanson Garland and I are the only surviving grandchildren. I, Beatrice Swanson Dwyer, was born April 23, 1925. I feel fortunate for growing up where there was a good work ethic and understanding of values, respect for people and nature, and though times may have been hard, they built character and an appreciation for life.

Beatrice Swanson Dwyer



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BACHELOR LIFE

Several bachelors lived in our community over the years. Many of these men worked as laborers on farms, cut wood or made their living off the land.

John Lindahl was a bachelor immigrant from Sweden who lived on the Knife River Road buying his land around 1912. John farmed and was a general laborer. He built his own saw rig and cut firewood for many neighbors. In 1959, John died at the age of 84.

Swan Carlson lived on the Hegberg Road. He was a painter and laborer as well as an employee of the County Tool House. Swan died in 1947. Albert Swanson also lived on the Hegberg Road. Albert was a lumberjack who died in 1932.

Hans Olson was another bachelor that lived on the Hegberg Road. His property was located about two miles west of the Homestead Road. Hans was a very large man and was nicknamed "Big Hans" because of his size. He was a lumberjack who one day in 1934, while walking through the woods to his lumber camp, disappeared. He was never seen again.

Milton Hart moved to Alden in the 1920s from Chicago. His property was located on the Hart Road just west of the App and Two Harbors Road intersection. Milton had a log cabin on 40 acres and raised silver fox for a living. He also raised and trapped beaver on the small pond on his property. He would sell a few beaver and about ten to 15 fox a year. The Fox Farm Road is named after Milton's farming enterprise.

CHARLIE RINNE

In our collection of stories of the early settlers, very little has been said about the bachelors who settled in French River. Some were quiet, hard working men, living alone, attending to their own affairs. But a few were "different" in their mode of living and their lifestyle. One such man was Charlie Rinne, "Rinnen Kussu" as the Finnish people called him. He lived in the woods just east of the north end of the Bergquist Road.

Many stories were told about him and the truth may have been stretched a little in some of them, as he didn't associate with his neighbors very much. He was born in Finland, possibly in the 1880s. He had a taxi-type service there with a horse-drawn carriage. He most always

worked at night, so everyone believed that was where he got the habit of sleeping days and wandering around the countryside at night. He came to Duluth to work, possibly in lumber camps or shipyards, but the story was he'd been in a fight and beaten so badly, it injured his head so much that he wasn't quite himself. Naturally the children heard this story from their parents and were very afraid of him.

He wore the usual woodsman's clothes, but had a light-colored trench-type coat. The large felt hat he wore made him appear even taller. He wore his hair shoulder length so it curled over his coat collar. It may not seem unusual in this day and age, but back in the 1920s, it was unheard of.

Around 1901 or so, he owned the property west of Henry Hill's and lived in a little shack on the northeast corner of the Oberg forty with another fellow until he bought his land on the hill from Jacob Lampi, the Jacobson farm—now Ulland's. There he lived in a dugout that the children called a cave. The roof was made of evergreen boughs, which occasionally caught fire when his little stove got overheated. Later on, he built himself a cabin with windows and all, but he never lived in it as far as we know. His outhouse was just a hole in the ground with poplar poles standing on end to form the walls and a pole across the edge of the hole for a seat.

It was said of him how he had been to Saari's store on Shilhon Road for groceries and bought white navy beans. When he checked them over at home, he found a brown bean among the white ones. He walked all the way back to the store with the beans and wanted his money back because he didn't want to buy beans that had dirty ones in them. He always carried his groceries in a canvas bag slung over his shoulder like Santa and his pack.

Evidently he worked winters and spent summers up at his property. He was going to start sheep farming but worked in the lumber camps most of the time. One time he hid his rifle in a hollow log while he was gone so no one could steal it. When he returned and found his rifle, it was all rusted.

He was going to visit neighbors in the late years and became violently ill on the Korkki Road. Mr. Korkki found him and brought him to the hospital in Duluth, where he remained until his death.



Photo, page 177

*Margarite Oberg Blaisdell
The Landmarks - April 1977*



Alfred & Maria Burk, Irma, Agnes,
Frida, Lillian, Signe, Thelma



Anna & Peter Hendrickson, Verner, Salvin



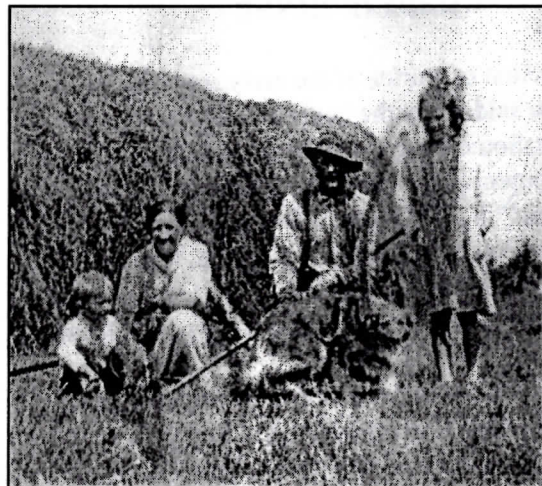
Frida & Einar Hendrickson



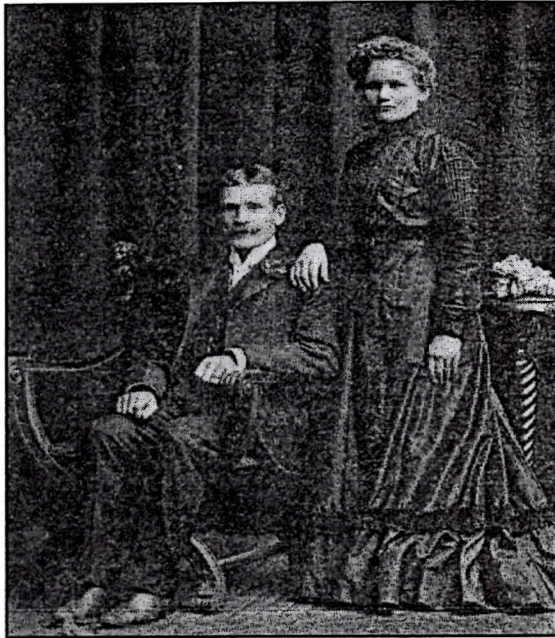
Axel & Elvira Larson with children



Hendrickson Brothers: Einar, Pete, Walfred, Karl



Ingeborg & Ole Nelson, Marvin, Sadie



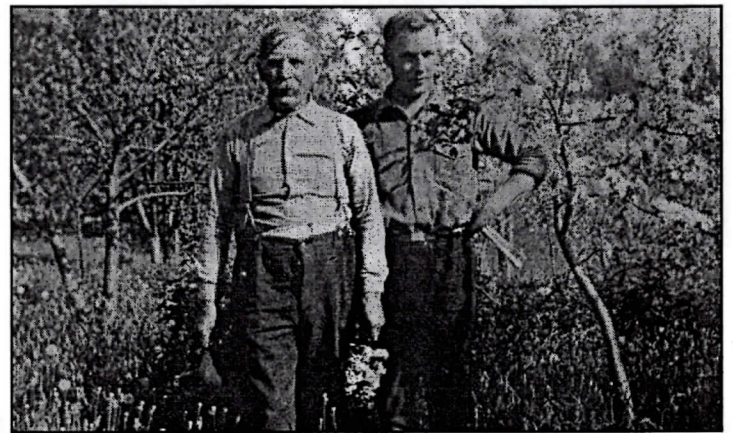
Herman & Sophie Palo



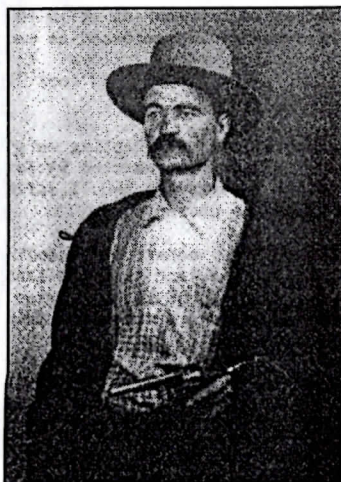
Hans & Edith Olson



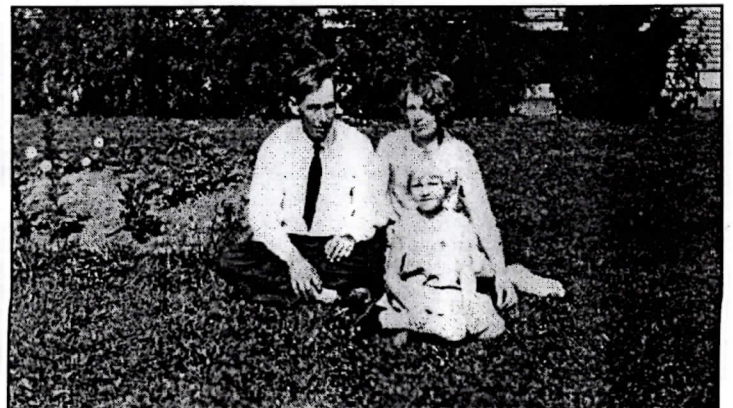
Ernest & Esther Swanson on
50th anniversary



Alfred Swanson and son Richard



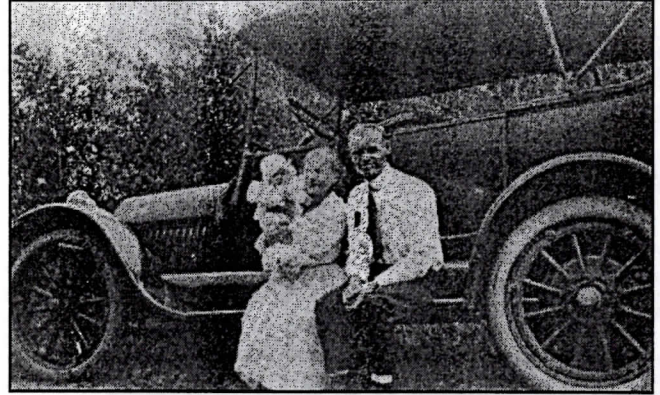
Charlie Rinne



Robert & Mabel Swanson and daughter Beatrice



Peter & Brita Ramstrom, Erick, Helen, Edith



Sam & Elsie Saari and baby Vienna



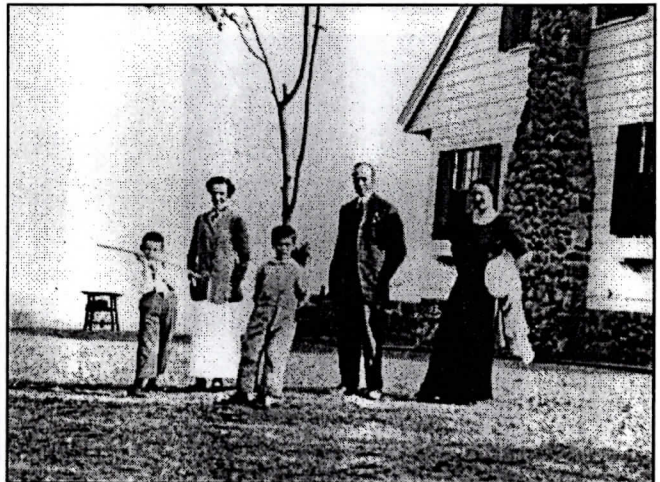
Robert & Clara Mace, Edith, Belle, Callie



Ellen, Elna, Eddie, Dorothy, Esther, Einar Elickson



Victor & Hannah Gustafson
Edith, Elsie, Ruth, Signe, Rudy Gustafson



Kenneth Costello, Janet Costello, Stephen E. Jones,
Stephen H. Jones, Minerva Jones

Our Landmarks

From September 1968 until June 1979, a monthly newsletter called *The Landmarks* was published in our community. Its name, *The Landmarks*, was derived from the first letter of the four townships for which it was produced—Lakewood, Alden, Normanna and Duluth. The newsletter was the idea of Pastor Arthur Solberg of the French River Lutheran Church, who strongly felt a local publication was needed as a vehicle for communication within the community.

At the time, the issue of school consolidation was just starting to be discussed, and *The Landmarks* served as a forum for that debate, as well as a means for local people to get accurate information regarding the possible closing of their high school. Approximately 30 parents of students attending Clover Valley High School and North Shore Elementary were initially involved in getting *The Landmarks* off the ground. Through the sale of sloppy joes and cinnamon rolls at local events, enough money was raised for Volume 1, Number 1 to be printed. A \$1 per year subscription fee was charged for the newsletter, and soon over 250 families were receiving *The Landmarks* in their homes each month.

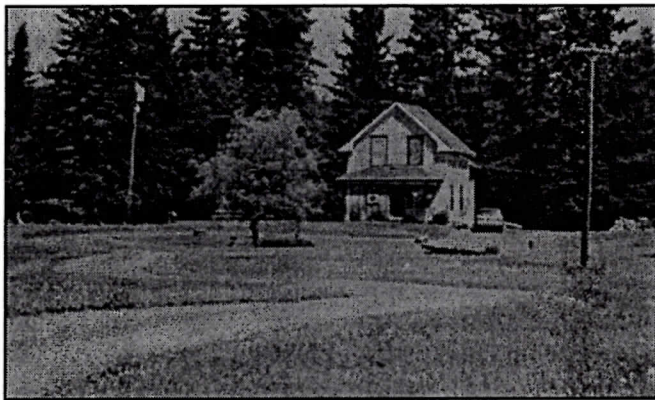
The Landmarks was designed as a means of communicating important local news; no personal information such as wedding announcements or birthdays would be reported. Many of the articles, however, did have historical significance. In fact, seldom did an issue of *The Landmarks* get published without a story detailing the life of an immigrant homesteader or containing information regarding one of the many early schools of the area. In the first few years, news from each of the four townships was submitted regularly by a core of local “reporters,” including people like Doris Schyberg, Norma Lindquist, Judy Spooner and Verna Holappa. For most of its existence, *The Landmarks* was published by Jeannine Engelson and Helen Hendrickson, who wrote many of the articles and did most of the newsletter’s editing. *The Landmarks*, however, was truly a cooperative effort, and it was successful only because of the energy of numerous people within the community.

For a four-year period in the late 1980s, *The Landmarks* was revived under the leadership of Patti Aho Hellman. The same format of local news and historical articles was carried on in the new *Landmarks*, but it too eventually ceased publication. On February 22, 1989, *The Landmarks* was published for the last time. The following selections are but a small sampling of the type of historical articles that made *The Landmarks* such interesting reading.

THE MCQUADE HOUSE

Driving north on Highway 61 between the McQuade and Ryan Roads, one sees a barricade where the Old North Shore Road crossed the present highway area. Beyond the barricade, an older two-story frame home is seen.

Few realize just how much "older" the house actually is. It has the distinction of being the oldest home in this area, for it was built by Sam McQuade.



McQuade House (1999)

Sam McQuade was born in Pennsylvania and married in Michigan. When he died in his Duluth home at 331 West Third Street at age 67 in 1896, he had assured his place in history.

McQuade came to Superior from Ontonogan, Michigan to look for copper in 1852. He first arrived in Duluth on snowshoes in 1854 and is reported to be the third settler in Duluth. By 1855, he had a claim at Endion and established a trading post there. The next year, W.W. Spaulding and D. Cash grubstaked (outfitted) five men, including McQuade, to go about Duluth to make homesteads or pre-emption claims. McQuade established a claim here at French River and first lived on it until 1858, when he apparently went back to Michigan. The year before in 1857, McQuade, Cash, Spaulding, Carlton, Parry, Cowell, Kingsbury and Vose Palmer with \$400,000 capital incorporated the first mining company (copper) to be formed in northern Minnesota Territory.

McQuade served as a second lieutenant in the Grand Army of the Republic for three years during the Civil War. He was back in Duluth by 1870 and had entered into a partnership with a Patterson in a sash and door

business until 1875. The mill was on Park Point. He was one of the organizers of the Old Settlers Association in 1886.

McQuade was, in turn, an alderman, a county commissioner and the first county sheriff (1878–1888). He was Duluth's police chief from 1890 to 1892.

About 1865, McQuade built a 16x20 foot, two-room, story-and-a-half log home with a hip roof on the French River claim. Today it is the rear of the present building, and it's still used for a kitchen and a bedroom. A summer kitchen with the original house has since been removed. It is unclear how long the family lived there. A son Robert added the present front portion to the house about 1920. It consists of a living room and two upstairs bedrooms built by Frank Shelton. The carpenter added the decorative eave-facing on the front of the house, called a banshee roost. Supposedly, the spirit would rest there instead of entering the house down the chimney, and therefore it was hoped that no one of the family would die within.

Eventually the property changed hands several times before Vern Palms bought the remaining four acres from one of McQuade's sons and the rest back from the state. He rented the house, which was adjacent to the Palm's farm, for several years, and in June 1970, Palms sold the house to his last renters, the George Gruber family.

Interesting things were told about the house by Palms and the Grubers. McQuade had four children—three sons and one daughter. (A grandson lives in Duluth now.) Mrs. McQuade carried water for the family's needs from a shallow well 127 feet from the house. They hoped someday to dig a well nearby and saved toward the estimated cost, which they felt would be considerable to reach the probable water level. Isn't it ironic that when Palms dug a well near the corner of the house, he reached water at only 27 feet? Billy McQuade fell into the first well and was saved from drowning by his mother. Palms said that when Billy was still little, he planted the tree nearest the porch, which today towers over the home.

McQuade donated the corner acre nearest the barricade for a one-room school. Billy married one of the teachers, Myrtle Harrison. This school and another on the Mace property later consolidated, and the children attended a new School 90 on the corner of Ryan and Old North Shore Roads. The McQuade

school was actually a little red building in use until 1916. Palms later bought back that acre of land.

A sawmill and camp were located on the property in the area that is now the expressway. Palms found five feet of logging chain made of inch metal and having foot-long links, as well as part of a capstan and a stump puller. Mrs. Gruber reports finding harness parts and an extensive dump. A test pit is also there. Any other remains of original barns or buildings are gone.

Hand-hewed floor joists can be seen in the area excavated under the old portion of the house to level and provide for plumbing. Otherwise, the original structure of logs is hidden by the exterior siding and remodeling that has been done over the years.

The Landmarks - September 1971

FROM TERRITORY TO TOWNSHIP

Native Americans occupying this area recognized the natural boundaries created by rivers and Lake Superior. They shared the space and its resources without understanding the foreigners' effort to establish personal and political property lines.

Grand Portage became the first white settlement in Minnesota when the trading post was established. France claimed the area until 1763, when the French and Indian War ended and England gained possession. After the Revolution, the new Union claimed the extensive area known as The Northwest Territory comprised of lands south of the Pigeon River, east of the Mississippi, and west of the Ohio River and Pennsylvania.

As a territory, the governor was appointed by Congress in 1787, and Congress controlled the territory's finances. Income was anticipated from auctioning one-square-mile sections of land to settlers at a minimum bid of \$1 per acre. Congress then divided the area into states when specified procedures were met and population density warranted. Thus the configuration and size of Northwest Territory changed often with the influx of speculators, prospectors and settlers.

Indiana Territory was established in 1800. Ohio gained statehood in 1803. Michigan Territory was created in 1805 and extended to the Mississippi River, thereby including the north shore of Lake Superior. The

boundary between Canada and the United States was in dispute at the time (1782-1842). The river used as a fur trade route was to be the national boundary, but there was confusion as to which river. The U.S. wanted Pigeon River and Britain wanted the St. Louis. The Webster-Ashburton Treaty settled in our favor. If it hadn't, we would likely be living in Canada. Another dispute over boundaries wasn't settled until 1912, when St. Louis County and Lake County agreed to their common property line.

Meanwhile, Illinois became a territory in 1809, Indiana a state in 1816 and Illinois a state in 1818. Each state was smaller in area than as a territory. When Michigan became a state in 1837, we were in Wisconsin Territory established in 1836, and we remained so until 1848 when Wisconsin became a state.

Minnesota became a territory in 1849 and gained Indian lands west of the Mississippi to the Missouri River in 1854. Statehood was finally declared in May 1858. Boundary debates were over, and citizens could elect their governor and representatives to conduct the state's business.

Three years prior to statehood, in October 1855, J.S. Watrous platted the townsite of Clifton, the first between Lester River and Knife River. Located near the Talmadge River with loading docks and streets with fancy names, it was only his dream on paper. Only the Clifton railroad depot existed on today's McQuade Road.

Montezuma was also platted in 1855. Located between the Little Sucker River and Sucker River by Vose Palmer, the area is known now as Palmers. This townsite also appeared on paper only, having just a depot and a few residents.

W.G. Cowles laid out Buchanan between Stoney Point and Knife River in October 1856. There actually was a small settlement including the first post office on the North Shore, and from 1857 to 1859, a U.S. Land Office. The townsite disappeared when the Land Office moved, then an 1860's forest fire removed all traces. A sidetrack for loading logs near the present Alseth Road was known as "Arthur" by the railroad.

In 1855, the village of Duluth, now the Lake Avenue area near the ship canal, was created. It was named to honor the French explorer, Sieur du Lhut, who first stepped on the beaches of Minnesota Point in 1679.

Three years later, on April 5, 1858, the county board established four townships, one of which was named Duluth. At the time, the duplication of names was not perceived to be a problem, since approximately 15 miles separated the two sites—a full day's journey.

About 1865, Sam McQuade built a two-room log home on his property. Additions and alterations were made over the years, but the log portion on the rear of the present house still stands as the oldest building now in the township. Located at 2224 Old North Shore Road, the home is visible west of the expressway.

Duluth Township was created from Buchanan, Montezuma, French River and Clifton. Each site had a railway depot. Today's Lakewood area was part of our original township, and the Alden area was annexed in 1897. Township meetings may have been informal gatherings for serious discussions. Record keeping may have been inconsistent and records may have been lost. A township voucher dated 1883 and minutes since 1896 are safely preserved today at the Ironworld Heritage Center near Chisholm, Minnesota.

The first monthly meetings were held in private homes at Palmers. A motion to build a town hall passed at the 1901 annual meeting. The site chosen was in Molde (known today as Clover Valley), named after Molde, Norway. Residents living west of the McQuade Road objected to a longer horse and buggy ride beyond Palmers, so in 1902, they formed Lakewood Township.

The next change occurred in 1920, when Alden residents established their own township hoping to receive a larger share of county road funds. Alden still shares Lakeview Cemetery, in recent years merged their volunteer fire department with Duluth Township's, and has access to its recycling centers.

Lakewood, Alden and Duluth Townships have each replaced their original town halls. Duluth Township's first hall at 6656 Homestead Road has had varied uses. The area farmers' association met there in the 1930s. Later the Clover Valley Presbyterian Church owned the building until about 1970. Today it is a private home with the steeple remodeled and hardly recognizable.

Duluth Township's second and present town hall at 6092 Homestead Road was built in 1930 by a local contractor, Peter Hendrickson, whose farm was at 5634 Ryan Road. The new hall accommodated more

people, had a stage for community programs and two outhouses. In 1935, a kitchen and storage area were added. Fifty years later in 1985, washrooms and office space replaced the stage area, and the kitchen was updated. New siding, new windows and a new side entrance were added. Insulation and improved wiring completed the plan to make the building more comfortable, efficient and easier to maintain. About three-fourths of the cost was financed by a grant from the IRRRB and many "in kind" contributions.



Duluth Town Hall

Local government, both a democratic responsibility and privilege, serves citizens through a variety of functions and services. It provides a site for national, state and local elections. Our local elected officers include three supervisors, a clerk and a treasurer. One of the supervisors is then chosen for a chairman.

Planning a budget funded from county property taxes is a main issue at the annual meeting. The tax assessor was a local resident until the county assumed the task for more impartial and consistent evaluations county-wide.

The township's constant responsibility is the maintenance of roads. In the early days, Duluth Township was responsible for every road except for McQuade, Ryan and Homestead Roads, which were cared for by the county. In 1934, the state ruled that the county should be responsible for all interconnecting roads also, so today the township cares for only dead-end roads—many miles of them. The township pays the county for any plowing or grading it does on township roads.

Until 1935, the township provided a health officer to record births and deaths and to quarantine those with a dangerous contagious disease such as scarlet fever. The latter is no longer necessary, and the county

records all vital statistics. The township has provided a cemetery since 1915 and appoints an administrator. An ax marks one unnamed grave (possibly at the request of the deceased) believed to be a woodsman named Ahlstrand, who died about 1948.

For about 25 years, the township maintained a landfill near the Little Knife River and Shilhon Road. The county finally closed all landfills about 1975 as the public became more aware of environmental concerns. Now residents use commercial services and two recycling centers.

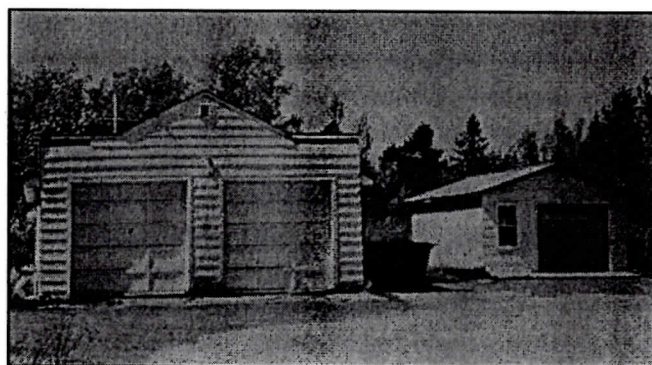
Some services provided by the county have been assumed by the township. Because of the vast size of St. Louis County, most local residents prefer to hire two local security officers rather than depend solely on distant deputies. The township also provides a Planning and Zoning Commission to enforce our building code. This method is more efficient and effective.

The township is proud to be the home of one of the oldest incorporated volunteer fire departments in Minnesota. It began in 1947 with each volunteer providing their own three-gallon bucket. Under the leadership of John Barlass and the backing of the Clifton Community Club, 40 charter members organized to protect Lakewood and Duluth. They weren't mechanized until six members bought five-gallon portable pumps. A women's auxiliary, known as the "Firettes," enthusiastically worked to support the department by holding dances, dinners, bingo games and bake sales. Homeowners subscribed for fire protection with a \$10 donation. The fire department was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1949. In its first nine years, the department responded to 144 calls.

The department's first purchase was a 1939 Chevrolet chassis to be housed in a volunteer's garage. Barlass and Henry Hemmington built a 500-gallon tank with a portable pump capable of shooting two 80-foot streams of water at 100 gallons per minute. Claude Midlam donated an electric siren to call volunteers and mounted it on a tower he built. (Some had no phones and others had party lines.) The first fire call was to a nearby garage, which was successfully controlled. In 1951, Lakewood Township donated \$250 to the department, as did Duluth Township in 1952. Normanna subscribed for protection. Neighboring townships in quick succession soon formed their own departments. The

Lakehead Volunteer Fire Department Association was formed for mutual assistance as needed. It is still very active.

In 1951, the garage where the truck was kept was sold. On Highway 61 the Clifton Garage, a building erected and a business started by Carl Bergquist, was for sale by the second owner, Harold Hendrickson. The township donated \$1,000 toward the purchase, and the auxiliary kept raising funds. This first fire hall had room for three vehicles. Coats, helmets and boots were purchased in 1954. Gradually other improvements came about in equipment and training. For a few years, the township donated to the fire department financially, but a definite budget was needed for regular expenses. It was decided support, through taxes, was fairest and best.

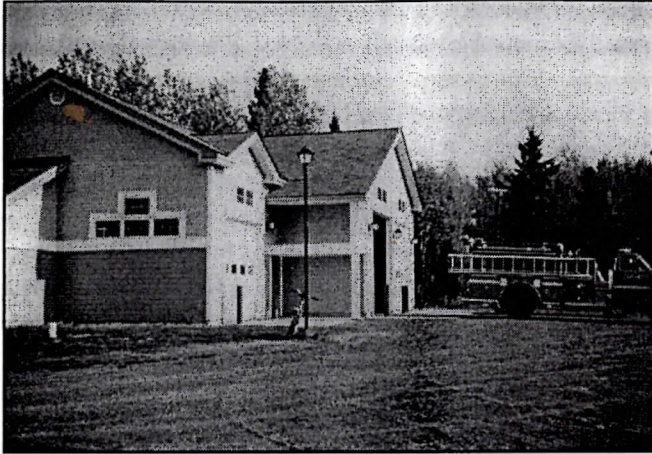


Original Clifton Fire Hall on Scenic Drive

After Clover Valley High School closed, a truck was kept there in readiness for the northern area of the township until a second fire hall was built next to the town hall in 1985 for \$15,000 and donated labor. The Clifton Hall was inadequate for servicing equipment and training sessions, and it didn't meet state codes for fire halls. It was replaced in 1994 with a new building which meets present and future needs.

Twelve of the current volunteers are "first responders," trained and equipped to handle emergencies until professional medical help arrives. The firefighters are trained to handle a variety of situations encountered at a fire scene. This is all reassuring to a township of about 1,700 residents. Few people realize how much time the volunteers commit regularly to the department.

In 150 years, the township has weathered economic challenges, forest fires, and changes from logging, farming, and fishing to tourism-related businesses. We still value our location on the lake, our rural character, and family-centered activities. We remember our past and prepare for the future with confidence.



Fire Hall built in 1994

COUNTRY STORES

The first settlers in Duluth Township did not have shopping centers, but they didn't seem to need them either. They would patronize small neighborhood stores and enjoy a little socializing at the same time. Shopping trips into Duluth or Knife River were infrequent because one had to make the trip either by train, wagon or on foot until cars became common.

Most people were farming then, so they raised most of their own vegetables and meat. They could purchase staples needed at the little stores operated by neighbors to supplement meager farm incomes.

The first known store "up in the country" (not near the lake) was operated by Herman Palo on the corner of the Shilhon Road adjacent to Hjalmer Hillstrom's present home.

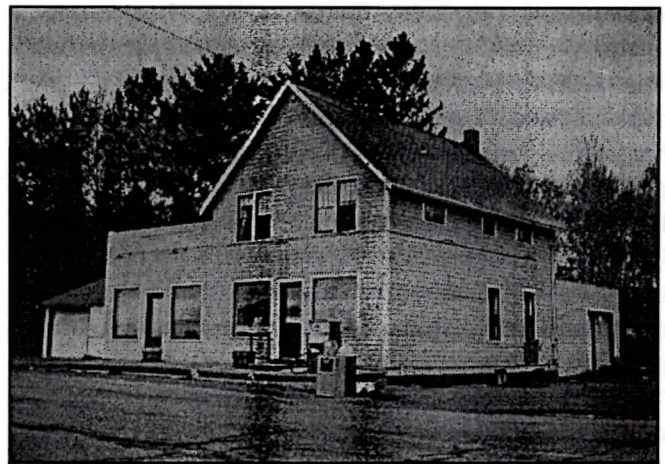
Nearby on the corner of the Shilhon and Bergquist Roads, Mr. Waltonen and Charles Saari started a co-operative. It did not succeed as such, so Saari ran the store alone for about six years. When the first Bloomingdale (School 93) burned in 1922, some grades were shifted to this store building for the remainder of the year.

Pie socials and dances were also held in the hall above. Carl Forsland, a Groffstrom, Albert Johnson, Axel Wexell and Hjalmer Lundquist were some who played either the accordion or violin for the dancing. People brought their children to the dances too, and they would

sleep on coats put beneath the benches. With the good times were some good fights also, but the details needn't be recorded for posterity. The constable was John Culas, who restored order so the dancing might continue in the lantern light.

H. Ellis owned the business next, then he sold to Carl R. Anderson, who built an addition on the west side for a pool hall. During the Depression years, this hall was a popular gathering place.

Walt Nolte bought the store in 1941. Although there was a fire in 1956, he still has a thriving business today at an age when most men have retired. He sells groceries, gas and miscellaneous items with congenial small talk all enjoy. He sells candy, gum and pop with infinite patience to the youngsters who weigh their choices carefully before spending a dime.



French River Store

The next two stores to open in the same area in the '20s were owned by neighbors on the Shilhon Road. Charles Saari operated a store having a traditional atmosphere with bins of staples, a coffee grinder, a cracker barrel and dried fruits in bulk. He also sold dresses, shoes, DeLaval separator parts, hardware, kerosene and feed. The store was part of his home, which stood near the place of Stanley Moe's home now.

Carl Mandelin's store was in the frame building nearest the road where William Dalagers now live. Groceries, hardware, gas, oil, feed and general merchandise were available there. Mandelin was also a dealer for International Harvester. His business had begun about 1914, and it closed in 1950.

Gus Banks, a logger, had a store before World War I near Sucker River on the Ryan Road. His camp was on each side of the road in the hollow along the river.

Hjalmer Oberg had a store in the mid-'20s where gas and groceries were sold on the crest of the hill north of this same Sucker River. The building stood where the first driveway begins on the east side of Ryan Road. The building was moved to the Shilhon Road in 1928 and converted into a home by Ivar Anderson and his brother Otto.

Mrs. Wicklund used her car to peddle clothes door-to-door, and Adrian Heino peddled meat from his open Model T truck. There was also someone who sold fresh baked goods the same way. It would seem that products were available if cash were too.

The Wicklunds had a small store in their home before they sold the property to William Gustafson in 1931. Gustafson continued the gas and grocery sales, but he replaced the building in 1934. Hokan Egerdahl acquired the business in 1944, but he kept the store going only a short time and remodeled the house before selling to Robert Ostern. The Schwendingers are the present owners. An unused culvert where there once was a circular driveway is the only remnant left of the country store.

Eric Johnson had a store from the early '20s to 1949 and perhaps a little later, which stood where the blacktopped playground is south of the North Shore School now.

Herb Inch had a store on Ryan Road in the late '20s and early '30s. John Norman owns the property now.

At the north end of the township, Eli Ronnback had hardware and plumbing supplies for sale at the end of West Knife River Road where the Nesgodas are living now.

Al Pearson started the Clover Valley Store at the north end of the Homestead Road about 1947. They sold it in 1966 to William Aho and Rodger Winter. They in turn sold it in 1968 to Roger Cartwright, who still has it and the business is still thriving. It is the only store in that area to offer gas and feed, hardware and groceries, and it's well-recommended.

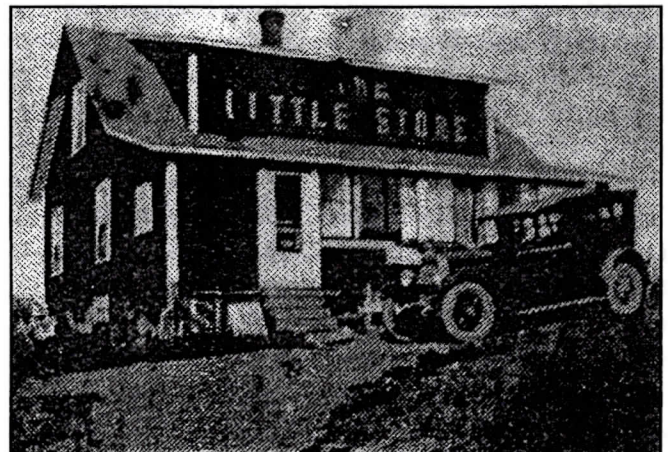
Sam Carlson sold general merchandise and groceries at a store he built in 1929 on a corner of the Hagberg and

Homestead Roads. The store closed in 1958. Carlson had equipment for a shoe repair service also.

Art Sammons had a store near the northeast corner of Homestead Road and the Anderson Road in the early 1920s. Odine Torgerson had a store just south of Sammon's. That building is gone and the present buildings on the site are abandoned.

Gas or candy was available at Palmers in the early days, but apparently there never was a general grocery store. For awhile in the 1940s, Elmer Mandelin had a Direct Service gas station near the railroad across from Sullivan's Lodge then, and Compton's now. The next person to have a business there was Martin Strebbling, who established a tourist stop about 1952 on the Homestead Road just above the railroad crossing. Strebbling moved to a site near the Bomarc Base in 1961.

Early residents at Palmers could buy groceries at a tiny store where Shorecrest is now. Ernest Hendrickson built the "Little Store" in 1915 on land bought from Tom Croft, and he had a business there until 1928. The store changed hands a few times before Ernest's son Clarence and his wife operated it between 1936 and 1938. The store drew business from a CCC camp at Palmers, and the Hendricksons also maintained a first aid station. They built a dock and bought a boat for trolling parties.



The Little Store

Clarence and Cora added a dance hall to the little store in 1937. That same year they had to rebuild one wall of it after a cigarette ignited the palm trees near the orchestra alcove. Ole's Orchestra played there often, and the speciality of the house was a fish sandwich—

cisco on rye—served with a beer. Andrew Carlson can recall that at one time the only gas pump in the area was there, and when the business was about to close, residents and tourists insisted that it continue.

Pat and Ida Valentine bought Shorecrest in 1946. Motel units were added in 1953. They built a new restaurant on the site in 1957 and a swimming pool in 1963. In the early '50s, they also operated a grocery out of the oblong building beside the parking area. When trolling was popular on Lake Superior, Henry Young built the "Ida V" and tied up at the dock in front of the Shorecrest. Glen Ludviksen skippered for private parties. Now the dock is gone. The Shorecrest has been under new management since 1972.

The first Wonderland Store was built by O.E. Thompson in 1938–39. It also served as his real estate office. When a lodge was built later, the first building was demoted to a storage shed. Eventually the property was divided, and the two portions came under separate management. In 1973, the lodge became Walker's Inn and in January 1974, it burned.

Vern Thompson built the present Wonderland Store and cabins at 10094 North Shore Drive in 1949. In 1968, he sold the business to Jack Bates, who still has it.

Matti Jackson was the first postmaster of French River, so his store may have been the first in the township too. He had a log building near the railroad bridge on the road that followed the river beside the present hatchery. In addition to the store, Matti Jackson also did some logging with the unpublicized help of the railroad crew at the section house.

When the Ryan Road was built in the present location between the tracks and the lake (and about as far as the Mace Road area in the other direction), Jackson moved his post office into a new frame building, and this became the station store until 1938. Myron Perry kept it three years; then in 1941, Carl Anderson moved from Shilhon Road (Nolte's Store) to keep the store. Jacob Schmidt continued the business for a few years after buying it in 1953. Schmidts live there yet.

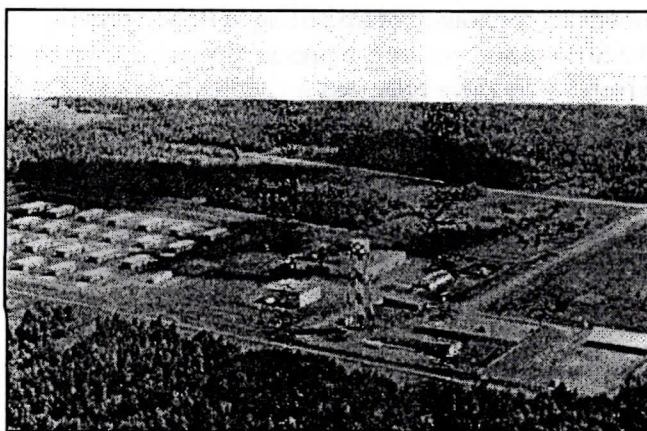
Carl Anderson built the French River Motel about then on the corner of Ryan Road and Highway 61 (North Shore Drive), and he had a little store there too for awhile. It all burned in 1972.

The last store to be mentioned has been in business under various owners for about 40 years, and it is found on the east side of the McQuade Road and Scenic North Shore Drive. Claude Midlam had it built, and he kept a store for many years. His son Fred bought it about 1959. Since then, Clarence Erickson, Donald Hatfield, Fred Marble and now Ronald Halvorson have owned the store, providing gas, groceries and sometimes fish to the local folk and tourists.

Until they are listed, it doesn't seem possible that so many country stores have come and gone in Duluth Township. Today Nolte's, Cartwright's, Bates' and Halvorson's are all that remain to link us with the past while providing immediate needs and convenience. The small store simply can't compete with a supermarket's inventory or prices, but they are a highly valued asset to the community, a convenience to residents and examples of rural friendliness and service.

The Landmarks - May 1974

THE BOMARC MISSILE BASE



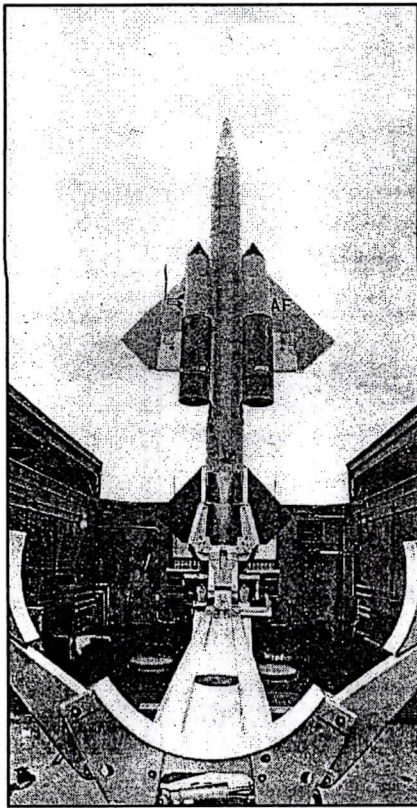
Aerial view of Bomarc Missile Base

The St. Louis County School Board decided to replace the Bloomingdale School with a larger and more modern building. The board invited suggestions from the local residents and members of the Clover Valley Community Council. This group considered the various properties available, population density and access roads. The favored property at the intersection of Lismore and Ryan Roads was the best location for serving Alden, Normanna and Duluth Townships' elementary students—but was it safe?

A missile base was to be built a mile away on Bergquist Road, and it was rumored to have nuclear warheads.

Would base traffic or noise impact the school? Officers from the Duluth Air Base assured everyone that the sheltered missiles were not a hazard, and if ever fired, the targets were distant. Traffic to and from the base had a direct route to the expressway, and most airmen would arrive by bus from the air base in Duluth. A few might live in the area with families, helping to increase school enrollment.

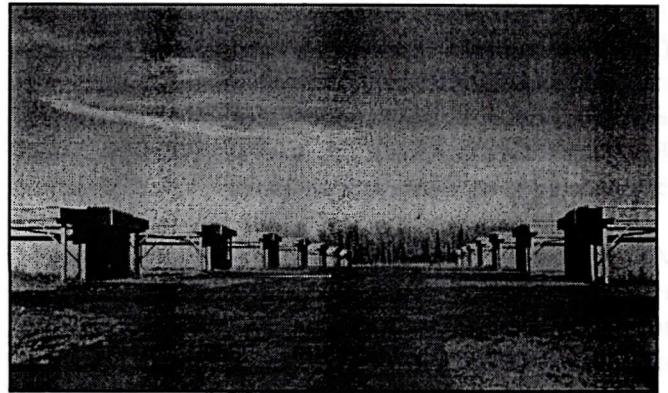
Trusting the sincerity of the spokesmen, ground was broken for North Shore Elementary School. Construction on the missile site also progressed, initially under the direction of the U.S. Corps of Engineers and later under Boeing Aircraft. Missiles to be used at the site were designed jointly by Boeing and the Michigan Aeronautical Research Center, resulting in the "Bomarc" name. Both sites were ready for business by September 1961. For the next ten years, there was never a cause for concern. The Community Council was invited to tour unrestricted areas and responded with enthusiasm.



Bomarc missile

Following the Korean War and the Cuban missile crisis, Communist Russia was an increasing threat. Because technology develops faster than production, the Bomarc Base was obsolete by the time it was installed, but it was our defense nonetheless. An impending air attack

would be seen on radar near the Arctic Circle and relayed to computers in Wyoming, Kansas and Minnesota. "Alert" orders from NORAD to the Duluth Air Base SAGE Building then to the Bomarc Base, would open shelter doors and raise a missile to firing position in 30 seconds. Six minutes later at 80,000 feet and up to 400 miles from Duluth, the unmanned missile would intercept the targeted enemy plane.



Bomarc missile shelters

There were eight Bomarc Bases in the U.S. and Canada. Its assigned area for defense included the Midwest states to Hudson Bay, an area of 745,000 square miles. The base conducted a continuous testing and preventive maintenance schedule. Personnel handled base security, fire protection, road maintenance and utilities. One commander brought some sheep on base to keep grass cut, but they huddled to shelters to keep out of the wind and accomplished little. What they contributed wasn't appreciated. Their tenure was brief.

The Bomarc property of 125 acres was originally purchased from Frank Wright. About one-third was timberland shielding the site. Various sources list from 117 to 208 enlisted men, 17 officers and seven civilians as the base staff. They were cooks, mechanics, engineers, security, firemen and office staff. When the base was vacated in 1975, the property was turned over to the township. The area south of the access drive was retained by Wright.

Bruce Mathisen relocated his tire recapping business on the north side without success. Now under joint-ownership, the buildings are leased to local businesses which employ many people. A cabinet shop and Superior Marble Company use the largest building. True Ride leases what was the assembly building. Van Technologies Incorporated occupies the former mess

hall. All of the missile shelters are rented as storage space. The best known company in the complex is Northshore Wood Products located on Wright's area.

The air base in Duluth eventually closed as well, and today it is a Federal Prison Camp. Capehart, the large housing complex originally built for air base personnel along Arrowhead Road, was converted into townhouses several years ago. It is now called Aspenwood. The huge windowless SAGE building (Semi-Automated Ground Environment) with radar consoles and the direction center commanding the Bomarc Base, is utilized by UMD for the Natural Resources Research Institute. It is located on Highway 53 at the edge of the former air base.

As the Bomarc Base was closing, the ad to the upper right appeared in the Duluth newspapers. The telephone number was answered by a commander who never identified who had placed the ad, we are told.

quarters. Must see to appreciate. Write Box Z-572, Duluth Herald.

FOR SALE: 40-acre estate at French River, Minnesota. 28 cabins with seven bathrooms, kitchen with large dining room; 25-car garage with resurfaced driveway. Recreation facilities include: outdoor pool, skeet range, three volleyball courts, softball field, helicopter landing pads. Must sell by June 30. Best offer in Sun Realty, 525-1930.

Income Property 84

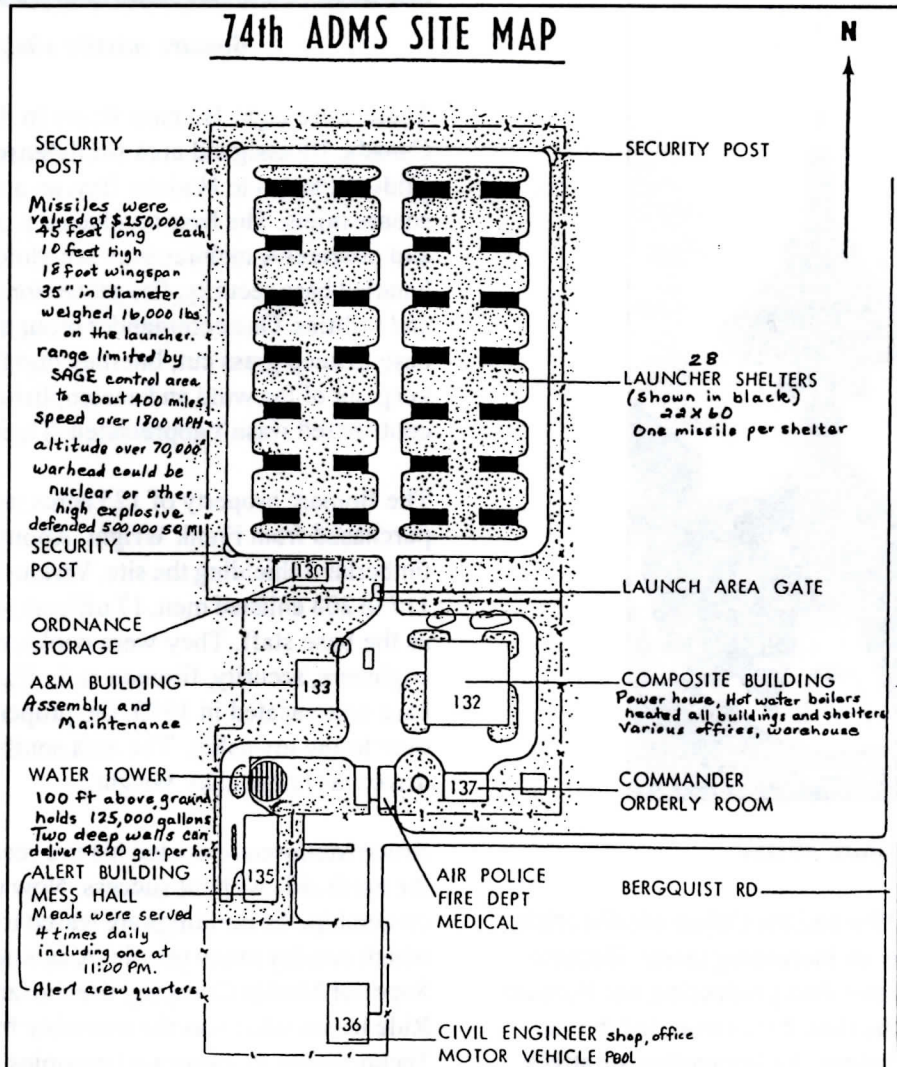
SMALL apt. apartment, centrally located, shopping and transportation in good condition. In and out of town. Call, 525-4600. Overman, 722-1433.

Newer 2-bedroom, with large expansion living room. Dining cabinet kitchen, tiled and water heater corner lot. Includes draperies. \$21,500. 24

DENFE

RUR

5-room, 2-bedroom, 3-bath, 1-acre, plus 3-room rental unit. Main h renovated. See \$16,000. Assume GI down (N1)



CLOVER VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Homesteaders to the Clover Valley area (known as Molde) began arriving in 1889, and their first priority was housing for families and livestock. They had high regard for education for the children and before long, a school was built on the Alfred Swanson property.



Clover Valley Presbyterian Church

The need for religious guidance was filled by the wandering missionaries who visited the lumber camps. After the lumber camps left the area, people had to find another leader for worship. A minister from Duluth was contacted, and Rev. Chester Frank agreed to come to Clover Valley every other Monday. Services were held in homes. He came by train to Palmers and someone would meet him there, and then bring him back to the train stop in the evening. He would have to signal the train to stop—the signal was a swinging lantern.

Later, the church bought the old town hall on Homestead Road with money raised through Harvest dinners. Rev. McLeod's pay was often donations of canned goods, crocks of butter, and other items. Rev. Stanley from the American Bible Association was the next one to fill the pulpit.

For many years, the Clover Valley Presbyterian Church was the worship center for the community and home for the Ladies Aid and Youth Christian Endeavor. Now the building is the home of the Robert White family.

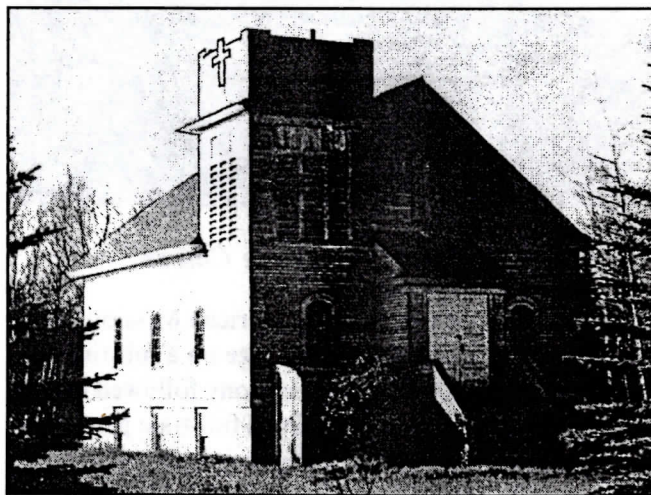
PALMERS CHAPEL

In 1780, in Gloucester, England, Mr. Robert Raikes gathered street children and lower classes in a building in Sooty Alley. Contrary to the Church of England and with no cooperation from clergy, the group grew rapidly and became known as the London Sunday School Union. This was how Sunday Schools began. In 1790, twelve Christian laymen met in Philadelphia and introduced Sunday Schools to American churches.

In 1950, a church was built in Palmers at the base of the Homestead Road and Scenic Highway 61 by Hilmer Sunde and Carl and John Sandberg. Monthly services were conducted by Rev. Stanway of the American Missionary Fellowship, formerly known as the American Sunday School Union. Twelve active ladies formed the Palmers Ladies Aid. Sunday School was led by Violet Sunde, Bayne Brown and Joan Abrahamson. Summer Bible School, conducted by young women preparing for the mission field, was an annual event children looked forward to.

The building no longer serves as a church. It was sold in the 1990s; the current owner uses it as a workshop and storage building.

FRENCH RIVER LUTHERAN CHURCH

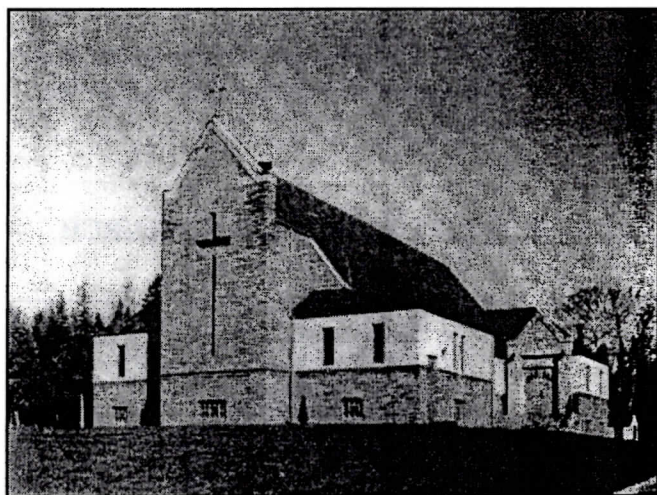


Immanuel Lutheran Church, 1944-54

The congregation of French River Lutheran was organized on July 2, 1924, with a membership of 24 adults and 27 children. It was first called the Immanuel Lutheran Church of French River. Their first pastor

was Rev. Carl Silfversten, the pastor of Bethel Lutheran in West Duluth. Worship services and other activities were held in homes and in the Bloomingdale School for a number of years. In 1927, preliminary plans for a church were investigated. Blueprints were drawn in 1934, and construction began on the acre of land donated by Einar Hendrickson at the corner of the Anderson and Ryan Roads. Since the congregation had but \$1,200, members donated their labor as time permitted. In January 1944, it was decided to complete the interior. The building was dedicated December 3, 1944, with Dr. Emil Swensen, President of the Lutheran Minnesota Conference, presiding.

The Rev. John Benson, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, took charge after Pastor Silfversten retired. As the North Shore developed, it seemed wise to relocate the church, and land was purchased. Pastor Benson resigned in 1951 and was replaced by Pastor Philomon Smith in October. He encouraged the congregation to proceed with plans to relocate.



French River Lutheran Church

On June 8, 1952, the Board of American Missions sent the Rev. J. Rasmussen to take charge on a full-time basis, and a ground-breaking ceremony followed the worship services that day. Having a full-time pastor and regular weekly services gave impetus to this work.

Construction began in 1953. Again, much of the labor was donated by members and friends. The cornerstone was laid on October 11 and by December, the first floor was on and covered for the winter. Rev. Marvin Greene was installed in February 1954, as the first full-time resident pastor. Construction of the superstructure

began in March, and the exterior was completed so that on August 8, the last service was held in the Immanuel Lutheran Church. After that, services were held in the basement of the new building. The church was completed within a few years at a total cost of \$60,000 and dedicated on October 6, 1957. A parsonage was also built in 1955.

The Rev. Elroy Blomquist was installed in 1960, and he served the congregation until 1966. When he left for Milaca, Minnesota, Pastor Arthur Solberg came to the French River Church and was installed in September 1967. Pastor Solberg ended his 12-year ministry in 1979, and Rev. Lindsay J. Shaner led the congregation until 1989. Pastor Juli Sutton-Deem then served the church until 1996. Pastor Gerald Erickson became the interim pastor. During this time, the parsonage was totally renovated, and Pastor Erickson and his wife Barbara moved in when he accepted the call to become pastor in 1998.

The Immanuel Evangelical Swedish Lutheran Church, which organized in 1924, celebrated its 75th anniversary on July 11, 1999. There are many individuals who made sacrifices and gifts for their church. Men caught herring, women fried them and served fish dinners to earn money for the original church, and also part of French River. The early faithful were determined to have a place of worship. A reminder of the past, a painting of Rev. Silfversten done by his son Hilding, hangs in the French River Church basement.

Seventy-five years of reaching out and serving others in the community continues to be the mission of French River Lutheran Church.

*The Landmarks - June 1974
and Helen Hendrickson*

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE PROJECT

The Clover Valley/French River Community History Committee, composed of Jeannine Engelson, Helen Hendrickson, Bobbi Keener, Duane Madison, Rich Sill and Robbie Tietge, would like to thank all those who made this project a reality.

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Related Resources:

- The Landmarks*. Periodical published from the 1960s to the 1980s detailing daily life, family life and a background of the history and heritage in the four adjoining townships of Lakewood, Alden, Normanna and Duluth.
- Memories of Knife River*. Book published by the descendants of the original settlers of Knife River detailing the history and beginnings of their community.
- North Shore Commercial Fishing Museum Journal*. Published quarterly by the Tofte Historical Society, Inc.
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- Resettling Duluth*. Book focusing on the settling and resettling of the City of Duluth published by the Duluth Energy Resource Center in 1986.
- The Seiche*. Quarterly publication from the Minnesota Sea Grant Program.
- Two Harbors: 100 Years*. Book detailing the history of Two Harbors published by the Taylor Publishing Co. of Dallas, Texas in 1983.

Historical and Research Facilities:

Duluth Public Library

This library, located 520 West Superior Street in Duluth, has a fine collection of books concentrating on local history. It also archives on microfilm census records and local newspapers dating back to the mid-1800s.

Ironworld Research Center

Located in Chisholm, Minnesota, this center has one of the largest collections of historical material in the region. It is a center for genealogical research, has thousands of photographs on file, and has archived all of the official records of Duluth Township.

Lake County Historical Society

Located in the old depot building in Two Harbors, this center concentrates on collecting the history of Lake County.

Minnesota Extension Service

Located in Washburn Hall on the "Old Main" campus of UMD at 2305 East Fifth Street, the building houses both the St. Louis County Extension offices and the Minnesota Sea Grant Program. A wide variety of publications are available from both agencies dealing with fresh water and agricultural issues.

Minnesota Historical Society

Located in St. Paul but accessible on the Internet.

Northeast Minnesota Historical Center

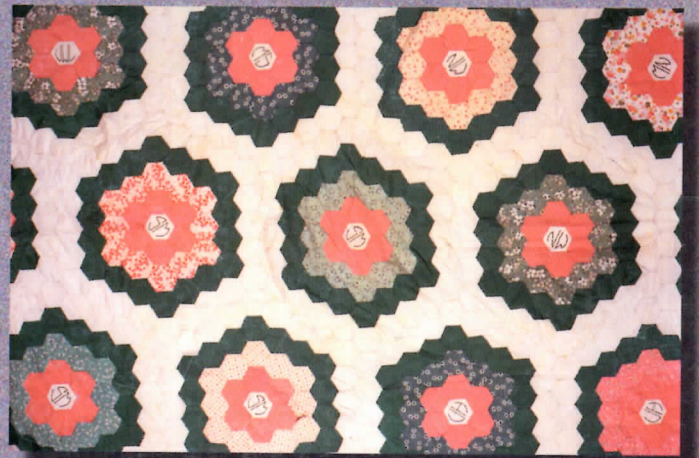
Pat Maus is the director of this center which houses the St. Louis County Historical Society Archives. Located in the UMD Library, the center is one of the best places to begin a search on local history.

Superior Public Library

Located on Tower Avenue in Superior, Wisconsin, this library has a research room housing a collection of historical material.

Two Harbors Public Library

Located at Fourth Avenue and Sixth Street in Two Harbors, this library has a collection of materials dealing with local history as well as newspapers on microfilm.



"We are of this place -- not just from it"