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Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

MRS. LAWRANCE ABLEMAN. (1)

Mr. Ableman and I came to Itasca County and settled in what now is Liberty Township, sometime in February of 1903. We settled in Sec. 2, T. 149, R. 25. There were very few settlers here at that time, but I will always recall it as the happiest years of my life. We came as far as Bowstring Hill, or what is now known as Suomi on a M. & R. logging train. From there we took a team and sleigh to our claim. The old trail that used to run from Deer River to Little Fork ran right past the claim of Dr. Russell, and was known as the Dember Trail.

I believe our community was one of the first in the Big Fork valley to make a practice of having dances for amusement. My father had an organ, and a neighbor, Mr. Cool, had a violin, so we had our music. My father would load his organ on a sleigh and start out. He would stop and pick up everyone along the way, so that by the time we reached the dance we had a nice crowd. We generally started sometime in the late afternoon, each taking along something to eat. We would arrive some time before supper. We would sit around and visit for a while, then we would all have supper. Then what a scramble we would have to see who was going to get to wash the dishes. As the houses were not always large enough for everyone to dance at one time, it was a rule that those who helped wash up the supper things were to have the floor first. It made no difference who you came with, if you were lucky enough to get to do dishes your first dance was with someone who had helped wash up. Mrs. Cool almost always played the organ, and her husband the violin. Most of our dances were held at Frank Brusewitz place, as he had one of the largest rooms and an oak floor to dance on.

We danced all the popular dances of that day. There was never any liquor at our dances, but we danced until daylight next morning, sometimes even eating breakfast before we started for home.

Just north of our place, and across the river, Chief Busti and his bank had a large sugar bush. Here they came each spring to make maple sugar. They had a large wigwam here, where they used to boil their sirup. Each spring after the sugar was all made they would hold a two or three day pow-wow. We were over a

quarter of a mile from the river, and their lodge was almost that far from the other bank, yet it was almost impossible to sleep while they were holding their pow-wow. They would then take the bark from their wigwams, roll it up, cache the bark and their sugar kettles, and go back down the river.

Chief Busti was well liked and respected by all of the early settlers along the Big Fork. He was indeed a Good Samaritan. No family was ever sick, that if word of it reached Chief Busti he and his squaw would show up to see if there was anything they could do to help. Many an early settler along the Big Fork owes his life to Busti and his squaw.

Well I remember when my sister, Mrs. Jones', little girl became ill. We had worked with her for days, but it seemed she only got weaker and worse each day, as no one knew what ailed her. One evening there was a knock at the door, and when Mr. Jones answered the door who should walk in but Chief Busti and his squaw. They said nothing to anyone, but walked straight to the bed where the baby lay. They looked at each other, looked the baby over from head to foot, and chattered away in Chippewa to each other. Finally the squaw took a large bowl from the table and trotted out. My sister didn't know just what to think of such goings on, but she had given up hope of saving her baby, so she didn't much care. At last the squaw came back with the bowl almost full of what looked like roots. These she proceeded to pound to almost a pulp. She then put them on to boil. As soon as they came to a boil she sat down beside the bed and began to feed the juice or broth to the baby. She and Chief Busti sat all night with the little one, feeding her the juice of the roots every little while. Everyone was so nearly worn out, that we were glad to turn the care of the baby over to anyone, even an Indian, for a little while. Busti and his squaw stayed for several days. Each day the little one was stronger. At last the juice was all gone. The next morning Busti and his squaw said nothing to anyone, but just rolled their blankets up from the floor where they had slept and departed. We all think they saved the baby's life.

After this, Busti and his squaw never passed the Jones place on their trips up and down the river, but what they stopped and spent the night with the Joneses. My husband used to get a lot of amusement out of their visits to my sister, as it made no difference who or how many were at Joneses, when it came time for Busti and his squaw to go to bed they would find a spot on eht floor where they could spread their blankets and go to bed. They would fall at once to sleep, with everyone talking around them.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Albert Anderson.

I came to what is now Max township in the fall of 1904, this township having been opened for settlement in June of that year. I came in by way of Bena. We hired a team and wagon to bring in our supplies, but we had to walk. But we had just as well get used to walking first as last, as that is how we always made the trip for several years. The only township open for settlement in here before 1904 was Kinghurst.

The lumber for the roof and floor of my first house, and also the lumber for the roof of the barn we sawed by hand. The log was raised up on a support at one end, high enough for a man to stand under. One man stood on top of the log, and the other man under it. The saw looked somewhat like a common cross cut saw, except it had teeth more like an ice saw. The lumber we sawed for the barn roof is still on the barn.

Itasca County History - Logging - northern Itasca County -

The following is a logging day story taken from "The Last Frontier", Bergit Anderson, 1941. -

One story, "the most horrifying happening was perhaps that of "Sour Dough Joe". He was a cook at one of the early camps between Big Deer Lake and Bear River. He was taken ill and died in camp. The members of the crew did not bother to get a coffin, but put his remains in a pork barrel for burial. In order to get the entire body into the barrel, it was necessary to cut the limbs off and push the pieces in with the rest of it.

A rough tombstone was hewn out of a pine log and placed at the head of his grave which they dug under a small pine. On this slab was inscribed the following words:

Here lies Sour Dough Joe

If he don't kick, the tree will grow.

According to Mansel Saunders, who knows the place, the tree is today a nice big pine measuring four feet in diameter at the base."

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The above is the story as printed. I tried out Mansel as I know every section of the country between Big Deer Lake and Bear River. Mansel is very vague about the location of the big pine, although they move about but little. Am afraid the girlie was taken. Anyhow it is a good story, of its kind. One is caused to wonder if said cook was such a very, very good cook. The narrative does not co-incide with the general attitude toward a really good camp cook. After all, why waste a perfectly good pork barrel, if that is the way they felt or carve out a slab grave marker with inscription when about the same amount of ax work would have built a rude coffin, the added work of amputation would certainly covered any difference in the compared labor. Fear that this story parallels the one about the cup of tea made from the hot water from the tank in which the frozen indian squaw had been thawed. There are others, still less "palatable" stories designed to spoil appetites seem to have been considered good "table chat" by the jacks.

Itasca County History - Custer notes

Mrs. Blynn Anderson interview, Island Lake . Feb. 1942

My father Claude Fish came to Ardenhurst township in the summer of 1898. I have heard my folks tell of some of the times they had when they first came here. They came by way of Bow String Lake and on through the string of lakes to the north end of Dora lake and then up Moose brook. This last was the worst part of the trip as the brook was so narrow in places that the brush overhung the brook until it almost tore ones clothes off. I have heard mother and my aunt tell of this trip many times. It was impossible to keep their sun-bonnets on because of the brush. The brush then tore at them until by the time they had reached Island Lake they had lost all of their hairpins. Of course there was no place nearer than Deer River where they could get more, so father and one of my mother's brothers sat down and made them some hair pins out of wood. I still have one of these old hair-pins. It looks more like a nail that was made of wood.

Mother returned to Deer River in 1902 where I was born. When I was three weeks old I was put into an Indian Cradle. That is the kind they put on their back to carry their babies. Anyway I was put in one of those and started on the trip to Island Lake. Most of the trip was made in a lumber wagon, I think. Father still has a picture of me bound to the board with mother carrying me.

One of the greatest events of my childhood was a man who used to drive past our place. He used to drive a large moose to a toboggan. Who he was I don't know, but father says he toted from Deer River. When I first read of the men catching the moose in "The Last Frontier" I thought one of them must be the man. I remember that not many teams came by our place in those days. Every time mother saw a team coming she would call me to come to the window and see what was going by. When it was the man driving the moose I would talk of it for days afterward.

Another event was the Indians that traveled the old trail that passed close to our house. About once each year they would go by headed for Red Lake. Each one would be loaded down with as heavy a pack as he could carry. It was said that they were going to Red Lake to gamble. I f they were lucky they returned by some other route, riding part of the way by train, but id the lost they would all come trooping back without even so much as a blanket. Where they came from we never knew, but the trail came from somewhere nearvLittle Winnie Lake.

The Indians called Island Lake "KAH-SHEN-GO-BE-MIN-IS-E-WOUNG" or the lake having Islands with evergreens on them.

The first school teacher that I remember was Miss Lillian Hunter. She came here some time around 1907, I believe. ,She also taught school for several years in the Finnish Settlement around Round Lake. She was probably one of the greatest forces for Americanization to ever be sent among the foreign settlers of this region. When she first went among the Finns at Round Lake they all lived as if they were still in their native Finland. She said she found conditions there terrible. Many of the children were sleeping on piles of hay in the corner of the cabin. Practically no English was spoken. At first she had a hard time to get them to send their children to school, but she visited the different families, sometimes staying a whole day with one family and staying the night. At last a few pupils began to attend the school. Not being satisfied with teaching her regular school she started a night school for the older folks. Before long it was hard to tell which school had the larger attendance. The night school had not been

running long before every Finnish child who was old enough was attending school. She had then to convince the parents that if a child six years old could attend school why couldn't one five or four years old attend, and especially, if the child was five and one half.

The name of the settlement of "Bridgie" was changed and called "Orth" because the name Bridgie was too often confused with Bemidji.

An old Indian up near Red Lake told my husband a few years ago that the Indians never had a permanent village here on the lake. They only came here each summer to saise their gardens on the largest island in the lake. This Island the white men call Garden Island. The Cunningham boys homesteaded the island and for years they farmed a part of it; They raised some wonderful crops of corn and potatoes but finally gave up farming it as it was too hard to get back and forth, as it is three quarters of a mile from the nearest shore of the lake.

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Itasca County History - Fur Trade - Custer Notes.-

from an article by Dr.H. G. M. Ayre in Fort Francis Times. clipping gotten from George Wakefield.

The history of the north country is far reaching and closely bound up with the destinies of the early fur trading. The two chief companies in this region (Rainy river) were the Northwest Co. and the Hudson Bay Co.

In 1777 the Hudson Bay company was anxious to establish a post in the rich fur producing country around Rainy Lake. At the time, however, the area was not well known to the Companies servants and it was not until the summer of 1791 that Donald McKay marked a site for a fort on Rainy Lake River not far from the entrance of Rainy Lake. By 1821 the Hudson Bay Co. was well established here and doing a very large business with the Indians in furs. The factors or managers of the post were required to keep accurate diaries and records. It is from these that we are able to learn much of the early history of the country.

The Rainy trading Post was first known as LAC LA PLUIE, being named for the lake of that name (meaning Lake of the Mists). The lake was later renamed, Rainy Lake. The chief factor was J. D. CAMERON. Records in his diary show that the post was renamed Fort Francis on Sept. 25, 1830 by the simple process of putting up a new flag pole and breaking a flagon of spirits on the foot of the pole at sunrise.

The place was named for the bride of Governor GEORGE SIMPSON who had visited the post a short time before while they were on their honeymoon. All of the whites gave three cheers and the Indians fired about 300 rounds. Cameron also records that a fire broke out Oct. 7, 1874 and destroyed most of the buildings, which were very old and huddled closely together.

The burned buildings were replaced at the post and they continued as a trading post until the trading season of 1897 or 1898, when, owing to the opening of the country, especially across the border, it was no longer possible to carry on a fur trading business here and the post was transferred from the fur trade department to the saleship department of the Hudson Bay Co.

(According to the article the diary stated that Governor Simpson and his bride were on their way to the Red River Settlement when they stopped at Lac La Pluie. (Fort Francis).

Itasca County History - Cohasset.

Interview with Chris W. Baker, old settler on south end of Bass Lake in 56-26.

Chris W. Baker came to Itasca County in about 1888, before there was any railroad in Grand Rapids. When he first came, the end of the railroad was in La Prairie. He did not stay here, the first time, but came up from Cloquet to La Prairie, then went back.

Mr. Baker was born in Canada. Before he came to Itasca County he was in Cloquet for ten or fifteen years. The ~~second~~ 1904 time he came up here, La Prairie was booming. He and another man, named Savage, thought they would come up and buy some lots in La Prairie. They knew a man by the name of Billy Tyndall, who had a bar in La Prairie. They asked Billy Tyndall's advice about buying lots, and he advised them not to buy, because he said he did not think the town would last. He said Grand Rapids might amount to something, but he didn't think so. Mr. Baker did not buy any lots, but Savage bought some.

Mr. Baker stayed in La Prairie for a while and hired to go and work on the drive. He finally got discouraged, and went back to Cloquet.

George Moore and a man named McCarty started a shingle mill in Cohasset, and came to Cloquet and got Mr. Baker to come and work for them in the mill. He said that after working in the mill all summer he got only about half of his pay. The second time Mr. Baker came here, the railroad had gone as far as Deer River. He has stayed in this country ever since.

Mr. Baker's wife homesteaded on Bass Lake. She was Mabel Jellison before her marriage.

Mr. Baker has worked in the woods and lumber camps, and later in the paper mill. He worked around Bear River at one time, and around Mud Lake, but mostly around Cohasset.

Mr. Baker said he remembers Bob Mosemo. Al Casey married Mosemo's daughter. They are both dead now. The Mosemo house is burned. There used to be a clearing and house on top of a hill . The last time Mr. Baker was up there there were no marks left of where Mosemo's house was.

When Mr. Baker came here he said there were no signs of old deserted logging camps. The first camps he remembers here was Freeman and Gray. They had two or three camps. Mr. Baker worked in one of them. He says they when he worked here first he didn't believe there had been any logs driven out of Bass Lake. There were dams across the creek to hold the water back. The railroad was east of the road that is there now, crossed Bass Brook east of Mr. Bakers place, and went up on the east side of the lake.

Mr. Baker used to work in a shingle mill in Minneapolis. His wife taught school up in Koochiching before they were married.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer.

Interview with Antoine Bellanger - (1)

My father's name was Clemer. He was the next to the youngest in a family of twelve boys. I don't know for sure if it was grandfather or father's grandfather I made trip with to Rainy river, but we always called him grandfather. Father was cooking at Willow River when I was born.

There used to be a mission church and also a school at Raven's Point. This was only about three miles from Third River. I suppose that is how some folks say it was at Third River. This mission was run by a half-breed Indian named Wah-Ka-Zo.

When father ran a trading post at the mouth of Cut Foot Sioux river there were two other posts on Winnibigoshish. Fairbanks ran one, and Old man Gould ran the other one. Father used to take one horse and follow a sort of old tote road. I don't know as you would call it a road, it was just a winding trail among the trees, wherever there was room to pass through. If you came to a windfall that was too big to go over, you didn't cut it out. You found a way to go around it. Anyway, father used to take this trail to Grand Rapids, where he traded for food and clothing.

At one time the Government took most of the Indians to White Earth where they tried to give them a start farming. The Government built buildings and furnished each family with horses and cattle, chickens, pigs and the like. They furnished seed to plant, and gave each family food for the first three years, after which they thought the Indians should be able to support themselves. But the Indians did not know how to farm, and no one tried very hard to show them how. Most of them returned after the three years, worse off than they were before they left. I remember that when Geo. Morgan and his wife returned they were almost starving.

Capt. John Smith, who used to live here on Round Lake was not Wrinkled Meat. Wrinkled Meat was Old John Smith who lived around Bena. Capt. John Smith never lived near Bena; nor did Old John Smith ever live near Round Lake. Old John and Capt. John were no relation, although they were both named Smith.

Made-Way-Gah-Nint was a head chief at Leech Lake. The name means they are calling you over there.

Gas-In-In-Sika was an old Indian village located about eight miles the other side of Red Lake. It means a lot of little stones.

Busticogan means shedding, or causing to shed (as if you would put something on a dog to kill his fleas and it took the hair off in spots.)

Geo. Fairbanks who now lives at Bena near the Fleming farm was a son of Old Man Fairbanks. John Fairbanks married Maggie Fisher, her father was a half-breed Frenchman from Hudson Bay.

Mrs. Antoine Bellanger's maiden name was Bessie Crow. Her father was Big Fred Crow.

Note: Mrs. Elisabeth Washington also helped with the translations and locating the village on Red lake. She says there were several chiefs named Made-Way-Gah-No-Nint, some of them lived at Red Lake and some of them on the west shore of Leech Lake.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer.

Interview with Antoine Ballenger - (1)

I was born on the north shore of Lake Winnibigoshish in the spring of 1872 at an old trading post located at the mouth of Cut Foot Sioux Lake, Minn., where it empties into Winnibigoshish. I have heard my father say that there used to be about 600 Indians living on Winnibigoshish, Bowstring and Dora lake. It was with these that he did his trading. My grandfather, Augustine, Ballenger, was a bull blooded Frenchman. He had blue eyes and blond hair and red beard. He married the blackest squaw you ever saw. The odd part of it was that about one half of their children were just as blond as their father, while the other half were as dark as their mother.

The most of the furs received here by my father and grandfather were lynx, bear, otter and mink. Both my father and grandfather had horses and cattle. I don't know how they ever got them in here in the first place, as I never heard either of them say.

I have heard my grandfather tell of how he used to divide his potatoes and corn with the Indians around the post, when he harvested them in the fall. I think maybe so he trade them to Indians for helping make hay for his cows. After Grand Rapids was started he used to kill his cattle and pack them there for sale. I have heard my father and grandparents talk of a mission on Pokegama lake near Grand Rapids. They said the missionaries came there from White Earth to Brainard. There was a place between Brainard and Pokegama lake called Big Farm. They also had a mission there. Then they came to Pokegama lake.

Mrs. Ballenger says she was born on White Oak point in 1876. She says she can remember going by boat with her father and mother to Pokegama lake. On these trips they always stopped to make tea at a large clearing. There was lots of clearing around there, as though there had been a mission or farm there. I couldn't tell you just where it was, but I think I could take you to it. But I am think it was on the west shore of Pokegama lake.

There used to be Rabbit band of Indians, but that man must have made mistake. Before the white men came the only houses the Indians had was a pole frame covered with birch or cedar bark. This bark was always taken from dead standing trees. Before the white men came the Indians never used green wood for anything. Sometimes in the fall we used to cover our wigwams with brush and coarse grass, and then throw dirt on it to make it warmer.

In those days we had no salt for our food. The old time Indians used to put up lots of maple sugar cakes and syrup. Some families had as many as 1100 birch bark cups for catching the sap. After it was boiled down to sugar cakes it was stored in baskets woven of basswood bark. These baskets would probably hold sixty or seventy pounds of cakes. I can remember seeing my folks have eight or nine of them full. This they buried in a pit dug in a hillside. The pit was first lined with birch bark, and the baskets of cakes placed in it. Birch bark was then placed over the top and covered with dirt. The cakes would keep just as nice in these pits for months.

Wild rice was stored almost the same way after it had been threshed out and parched. A hole was dug in a hill or sand ridge. This was made real smooth. Then we would get in the hole and tramp the bottom nice and solid. We would then take coarse grass or wild rice stalks and place on the bottom of the hole and stand a lot of it up around the sides, then pour the rice into the hole, until it was almost full. The grass we had stood around the edges was then pulled together over the top of the rice and tied. Some more grass was placed on top of it, then it was covered with dird. It would keep

this way for a year or more, and if you had fixed the lining right in the hole there would not be the least bit of sand get in your rice.

We used to also dry lots of meat and berries. The meat was first dried and then pounded between two stones until it was almost like fine corn meal. Sometimes we mixed dried blueberries with it, or wild rice. After it was pounded up it was placed in some kind of skin bag. Some of it was put in small animal skins, and some of it in large ones. If we had any venison tallow we would melt it and pour it over the meat after it was placed in the skin cases that were to hold it, as the tallow sealed it up so no air or moisture could get at it so it would keep longer. This way it would keep almost forever. We had no salt to put with our meat to help keep it in those days. If it was not pounded up it was so hard and dry it was next to impossible to eat it. Even soaking it didn't seem to help much, as it would get about like a piece of wet leather. Also by pounding it up it was more easily stored, and kept longer. If it was not ground up so it could be put in a skin bag of some kind and sealed up fairly tight it would mould every time we had a spell of hot weather.

My father used to use an axe that, as near as I can describe it, was what the white man would have called a tomahawk. I think it was made of cast iron. It had a small loop on the side away from the cutting side to put a handle in. If he was going on a trip and wished to take his axe along he didn't need to be bothered with a handle. He could just knock out the handle that was in it, and hang the head on his belt. When he wished to use the axe he would just take his knife and cut a sapling about the right size and slip it through the loop. The white men used birch bark to build a fire, but when the Indians used a flint and steel they always used dry maple bark. This could be rubbed together until it shredded up until it was just like a pile of cotton. They would catch a spark from the steel on it, and then blow the spark until it burst into flames. The steel was made in the shape of a loop just right to fit over the knuckles.

The small-pox was brought to Indians on lake Winnibigoshish by a white man who came to lake Winnie from up by where Big Fork now is. He was sick, so an Indian family took him into their wigwam to take care of him. This family all got sick and died. Another family took him, and they all died, also the third family. But the white man got well. Someone would go to see if they could do anything to help the sick ones, and when they went home they and their folks would all get sick too. That is the way it spread, until it got so they were afraid to visit anyone who was sick. (The Indians call it the big Small Pox.)

I was about seven years old when I made my first trip to the big river with my grandfather. The policemen there were all dressed in red, red coats, and hats and pants. When we got to the big river the waves were so high we could not go any farther, so we had to camp on the shore. While we were camped here my little playmate (a dog) was running up and down the river shore. A white man who lived there did not like it. He tell grandfather to make it stop. Grandfather asked him what harm it was doing. The white man didn't say anything. He had a double barrel shot gun in his hands. He ran up to grandfather and poked him in the chest with the end of the gun barrels so hard the marks of the gun barrels were on his chest many days.

Interview with Antoine Ballenger - (3)

Grandfather was like Joe Louis, he was good man with his fists, so he knocked the white man down. I thought he had killed the white man. The white man was still lying on the ground when we left. At the next landing we came to they arrested Grandfather for killing white man. They take Grandfather to court house. Grandfather told them how it happened, and pull open shirt and show men the marks of gun on his chest. He say maybe white man have shells in gun, so how I know he not shoot me.

After long time they turn Grandfather loose, but tell him to not hit so hard next time, or he not get loose.

My Grandfather told me sometimes it was impossible to travel on big river, as waves get very high when the wind blows.

The Chippewas who first came up the river to Cut Foot Sioux were led by a big medicine man. There were about three hundred men in the party. When they came to where Inger now is they started to make portage to Cut Foot Sioux lake. They just got started on the portage when the medicine man said he had to stop and make medicine.

He made his men sit down in a large circle while he made his medicine. After he had made his medicine he made the sign of a turtle in the center of the circle. He made it with its head facing the rising sun. He said that he now knew where they would find some Sioux. In the morning, he said, they would know if they would lick the Sioux. "If we will lick the Sioux, in the morning my turtle will be turned around. See, it is facing the rising sun." He then told them all to go to sleep, so they scattered themselves around through the woods and wrapped themselves in their blankets. In the morning as soon as a man would wake up, he went to have a look at the turtle, and sure enough the turtle had turned around during the night. Last night it had faced the rising sun, this morning it faced the setting sun, so they knew they would win over the Sioux.

My father died at Leech Lake when I was twelve years old, so my mother took me out of school there to help support my brothers and sisters, and we moved to Lake Winnibigoshish where we had several uncles. I made snares and caught rabbits, and my uncles caught deer. We raised potatoes and corn, and on this we lived. I also caught a few other animals whose fur I traded for supplies.

My mother used to take the corn and take most of the husks off. She would then turn back the soft inner husks and braid them with a piece of string from the basswood bark, until she had a string of corn braided together two arms long. These she would hang from the ridge of the wigwam. This way she stored our winters corn supply out of the reach of mice.

Somewhere near Harrison hill on the Big Fork river is a place where a great deal of old Indian stuff can be found. I don't remember whether it is up the river from the hill or whether it is down river.

(Mrs. Ballenger says two arms long was the distance you could reach with your arms outstretched. One of Antoine's brothers is now living at the old trading post site at Leech Lake.

Antoine speaks but very little English, so his wife had to act as interpreter, and she was not any too good with her English, either. You will notice that he did not list beaver among the furs taken. I asked about it, as I

thought he might have overlooked it, and he was very sure there were very few beaver furs.

Some of this information was from his wife, but she was acting as an interpreter, and adding what she knew as she went along, so it is very hard to tell which of the information came from which. But most of the information concerning the rice and sugar and such came from her.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Buck Beckman - (1)

I came to Kinghurst township in 1903. I came in by way of Bena. From there I went to Cut Foot Sioux, where John Fairbanks had a stopping place. From there I followed the old Hudson Bay trail until it started around the south end of Round lake. I then went almost due north, going between Round Lake and Squaw Lake, keeping due north until I struck Sec. 30, where I located. On the return trip I went as far as Cut Foot Sioux with an Indian. We talked together all the way until we reached Fairbanks at Cut Foot Sioux, where we met up with four or five other Indians. After this I could not get another word out of the Indian. He even made signs that he did not understand when I tried to talk with him.

Fairbanks' stopping place was a large log building. I think the main building of Fred Willman's resort is the same old building.

Kinghurst township was first called Popple, and was the first township in Range 27 to be opened for settlement. How it ever came to be changed to Kinghurst I don't know.

We had a post office at our place in the NW¼ of Sec. 30, T. 149, R. 27, before there was any other post office in the township. The mail came to the postoffice from Bena. When a post office was put in at Severen Hanson's most of the people throughout this part of the country started getting their mail there. The post office there was known as the Orckid post office. At that time when you applied for a post office you submitted a list of names for the new office. The postal department went through the list and tried to pick a name that no other office had. That is how the new office was called Orchard.

Most of the settlers in Kinghurst township received their mail at the Hanson post office a couple of years before the town board had their mail changed. The postoffice was only called Orchard for about a year. It was then changed to Popple Post Office.

The Finns who built the Round Lake Ranger Station garage were the same ones who are now settled in Max township. At that time all of Max township was reservation land. They came in as a colony. I think John Hartiein was the kind or head of the colony. Old Chief Bob Mosemo did not sign the country around Cut Foot Sioux to the National Forest. He merely got the government to make the reservation a timber preserve, which of course eventually caused it to come under the Forest Service supervision.

I think Pete Niska and Kannana of Squaw Lake were among the Finns who built the building on the south shore of Round Lake. Kannan could tell a lot about the early settlement, but I doubt if you could get anything out of Niska.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Paul Benson - (1)

I don't think there is any truth in the Rabbit story. They had no stock, except four or five ponies until about 1909 or 1910 when then moved to Rabbit Point. They then bought a cow and a calf. Their stock was mostly dogs. If I remember rightly they had a pig when they were at Rabbit Point also.

Old Chas. Rabbit had two sons, Joseph who was the oldest, and Sam. He also had two daughters, Maggie and Mary. Maggie was quite blond. She had a reddish cast to her hair. I suppose most people would call her hair red. Most all of the Rabbit's hair was either curley or wavey. Old Chas. also had a heavy beard. Maggie was never married that I know of, although she lived with at least three different men, and I think she lived with four.

Little Sammie Rabbit is one of Maggie's sons. His father was a Finn named Mattison. Frank was the son of a man named Ford.

As far as I know Joe Lurch never had anything to do with the Indians any more than any other of the early settlers. Joe probably traded some with them, but most of the early settlers traded some with them, too. He did have what he chose to call a farm, through which a portage passed, which came to be known as the Lurch portage, but I don't know as his place could ever have been called a trading post. I don't remember of ever hearing him referred to as Muskrat Joe, either.

The old portage from Jessie Lake to Little Turtle ran about where the Jessie Lake road now is, until it was about a mile west of Little Turtle, where it swung north, hitting the shore of Little Turtle about a half mile north of Talmoon.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer. Indians.

ROBERT BIRD.

I am 67 years old. I was born on Lower Pigeon Lake. I can remember when there were no white men in this part of the state. I have been over the old trail from Bowstring Lake to Canada several times as a boy and as a young man, but it has been so long ago I could not say just where it ran. There used to be an old Indian portage just north of my buildings. This portage went from Rice Lake to Squaw Lake. The portage ran just south of Sec. 34, T. 149, R. 27.

When I was a boy it was many times hard to get something to eat, as we lived mostly on meat and fish. Many folks think this is not so, but the Indians did not always have the things they have now to get game. In those days we had no bread, no tea or coffee, no sugar except maple sugar, and we very seldom had salt. The Chippewa used birch bark for almost every thing, even making pots from it. These pots could be placed over a fire, but they had to be full of water or they would burn. It makes no difference how old a piece of birch bark is, it can always be handled and rulled up or unrolled, if it is first warmed before a fire or with steam.

There used to be an old Indian Look Out on the Vance place. This was a hole dug into the hillside just east of the Vance buildings. From there you could see for miles up Dora Lake, and for miles down Rice Lake, especially if the leaves were off the trees. By stepping out of the hole and to the right, you could see for at least a couple of miles up the Popple.

The first white man I ever saw was at the mission on Pigeon River. I had heard of him before, though.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer.

Interview with Mrs. Robert Bird - (1)

Mrs. Bird speaks no English, and Robert was working, but I got Mrs. James Mitchel to act as interpreter. Her husband speaks very poor English, but he was quite a lot of help when it came to translating. Mrs. Mitchel is a granddaughter of Capt. John Smith. She says he was not Wrinkled Meat, nor was he any relation to Wrinkled Meat. John Smith, or Wrinkled Meat, is referred to by the Indians as Old John Smith.

James Mitchel says that Mrs. Bird is a half sister of George Wakefield.

Old John Smith's Indian name was Ka-Be-Govey-Wen-E, meaning skin that is wrinkled and shakes. Capt. John Smith's Indian name was Me-Quam-Me-Wan-Gay, this name they said was very hard to translate, but as near as they could come was that it meant A bird was flying, ice gathered on its wings and it had to alight.

Made-Way-Gah-No-Nint was a head chief at Red Lake. The name means The One who was Called.

Gasininsika was an Indian village located about five or six miles west of Red Lake. The name means The place of a lot of little stones.

Mrs. Bird says Robert should know a lot about Busticogan, as he was raised in that part of the country. Busti's Indian name was Ba-Bah-Mage-Way-Shunk. He was a chief of the Nett Lake band of Chippewas.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer Chas. Bloomquist.

I came to the Big Fork valley in the fall of 1903. I spent the first winter trapping. My trap line ran through the big bog toward the northeast. I spent the winter in an old cabin which had been the homestead shack of Dr. Roswell. It was three or four miles northeast of the Albert Garling place, the Garling place being on the west line of Sec. 10, R. 27, T. 61.

My catch was mostly weasel, there being many of them, some Fisher, a few lynx. I saw no beaver at this time, nor did I hear of anyone catching beaver. There were lots of old signs of them.

The island of which sister Nellie speaks was in Bowstring Lake. There is no island there now, as the water has dropped so low the island is connected to the mainland by a floating bog.

Dr. Harrison never homesteaded at Harrison Hill, he merely squatted there because of the beautiful location.

I was living in Grand Rapids when my sister, Hulda, came to see me. She told me she had been asked to take a homestead school up in the wilderness somewhere north of Deer River. Hulda and I talked it over, but she thought she wouldn't take it, as we had no idea where it was or what kind of people she would find there. The next day she told me goodbye, and I thought she had gone back to Keewatin.

After a month or so I received a letter from her, and of all things, she had taken the homestead school we had talked of. As the holidays were near at hand I thought I would go and see her during the holidays, as I wished to know the kind of people she was with. I was surprised, you may be sure, to think she was up in the wilderness, as she had always been rather timid as a girl; and I thought it must take lots of courage to venture so far from any place. I think this was in the fall of 1900.

But before I got away for my visit she came to spend the holidays with me. When she returned to her school, sometime in January of 1901, I went with her. We went from Deer River to Turtle Lake on a logging train. These trains were not supposed to carry passengers, so you either rode in the caboose or hung on anywhere you could find a place to sit or stand. But neither was there any fare to pay. The caboose was filled with lumberjacks, tobacco smoke, and the smell of whiskey, in fact it is hard to tell of which it was the fullest. Andy Marcell, the conductor, asked us to ride in the engine cab. Hulda didn't think this so strange, as she had ridden there before, but I looked around at the numerous valves, gauges, pipes and levers and wondered if the engineer would not pull or turn the wrong thing and we would never leave Deer River. But at last we got under way. The slow train through Arkansas had nothing on us. When we moved at all, it was very slowly. I am sure one could have walked as fast. We stopped often to switch cars on side tracks, and some times we stopped for no reason at all that I could see. These stops without reason most likely were the cause of the stories told in later years of the train

crew running a trap line along the tracks. These stories were told as facts.

Reaching Turtle Lake we crossed the lake to Raps Landing where we spent the night. Raps landing, as nearly as I can remember, was about where Gregor's Camp now is. From the landing we started the next morning on foot for the Bergum place, where Hulda boarded and near which her school stood. From Turtle Lake to Bergum's was a distance of about eight miles. We followed an old tote road from the lake to Bergum's place.

Hulda's school was an old log homestead shack about 14x16 feet or 16 feet square. It was built by Andrew Tuffing (not sure of spelling). He is thought to have been Mrs. Bergum's brother. What a school! Rough log walls, shake roof, and balsam poles adzed flat on one side for a floor. The floor was covered with feed sacks filled with hay to add extra warmth.

It was a country of rough shacks, but what of those who lived in these rough walls? Rough people? Well, perhaps. But to an orphan girl who hardly knew what kindness meant it may be their kindness blinded us so we saw no other quality. I,who had come in intending to get out again as soon as possible , decided I would sooner make my home here among these friendly people than anywhere I had ever known. So I returned in the spring of 1901 to make my home in this wild valley, locating in Sec. 21, R. 27, T. 61, Hulda in Sec. 22, R. 27, T. 61.

Most of our trips to the outside were by way of Turtle Lake. In the summer this trip from Turtle Lake to Deer River on a logging was somewhat of a lark. First to find a place on a flat car to which you thought you could cling, then when the train had gotten under way the satisfaction of finding your guess had been right and you could actually sit in the spot you had chosen without too much effort as the train bumped and jolted over the rough road bed. Perhaps you would think everything was fine when the train would give a sudden lurch and you would have to scramble like mad to keep your place.

We also made several trips to Deer River by way of the Big Fork river. If we had a large amount of supplies to bring in we went this way, as supplies were

much easier carried in a canoe or boat than upon one's back. We went up the Big Fork river to Dora Lake, then into Rice Lake. From there we went into Sand Lake and finally into Bowstring Lake and up the Little Bowstring river, where we again took a logging train for Deer River. Coming back with a load of supplies was almost as easy as the empty trip, as you had the current to help you.

One of these trips I remember especially. On this trip there was my sister, Hulda, and her husband, Joe Reigh, my brother, Charles, and myself. We had gotten as far as Rice Lake when a storm came up. It got so bad we had to take to a small island or be swamped. Here we stayed for three days waiting for the storm to cease. Most of the three days and nights we spent hanging on to our tent to keep it from blowing away. At that time the Rice Lake was so full of wild rice it was all we could do to force our boats through it.

In the years following, we made a good many trips both up and down the Big Fork, sometimes to visit a neighbor, sometimes for lack of anything else to do; often only as far as Flat or ~~Ze~~ Zerkel Rock, sometimes as far as Harrison Hill, this being a favorite place for picnics for all the country west of us. Flat Rock is at the south east corner of Sec. 35, and the southwest corners of Sec. 36, R. 25, T. 150.

Harrison Hill was so named for Dr. Harrison, who, it was said, came from England to spend his summers there. As I remember it, it was a low hill on the very banks of the river, sloping gently away on all sides and covered with the most beautiful stand of Norway Pine I have ever seen. There was no underbrush of any kind growing among the trees, and you could see a long distance among the trunks of the trees. There was a log cabin and several other outbuildings. Especially do I remember the old log spring house which covered a large spring of clear, cold water. It, in itself, was a treasure house of information, as it seems it was almost a tradition that all who visited the hill must carve or write their names on the walls inside this spring house. The last time I was there, the wall was so covered with names there could hardly be found

room for any more. A good many of the names also had the dates after them. The hill looked more like a well-cared-for park than a native forest. At this time the woods were full of moose. It is no wonder they were so soon killed off, as in some ways they were foolish. Upon seeing one feeding in the river, everyone pulled as near to the other shore as possible to give them as much room as possible, but this seemed to do very little good. It made little difference how wide the river and how far you tried to keep from them, they would always manage to cross right in front of you before taking to the woods.

There was an old trail crossed the river below my place, I think somewhere in Sec. 25, R. 27, T. 61. This trail went from Deer River as far north as Little Fork. I myself never had occasion to use this trail, but I have seen men go up and down it often, as it swung west after crossing the river running close to where my house stood. I think it ran a little east of where No. 6 now is.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer

Jennie Boileau.

The last battle between the Chippewa and the Sioux in this territory was fought at Round Lake on a high point of land running out into the lake from the north shore. The white man called this point Sioux Point. The Indians used to call it Bwan-Ah-Sha-Wah-Be-Win or Sioux Lookout. This battle took place around 150 years ago, or somewhere around 1800.

The Sioux had established themselves here and had even made themselves some rude fortifications before the Chippewas knew they were there. When the Chippewas discovered the Sioux they found it would be too costly to try and take the point by rushing it. The Sioux could not get away without having to cross the open lake, or else cross a narrow neck of land joining the point to the main land. So the Chippewas, by butting a small party to watch the narrow neck of land, could watch the lake with the rest of the party. In this way they held the Sioux on the point until many of them died of starvation, the rest being too weak to put up much of a fight. They were easily overpowered by the Chippewas.

My grandfather, Chief Sho-Kog-Gee-Chigm meaning Floating Cloud, who was a young man at the time of this battle, was one of the leaders in the battle. Sho-Kog-Gee-Chig was my mother's father. My mother is now past 90 years of age.

There is a large mound on the point, where it is said the dead Sioux were buried. I know many bones and such can still be dug up all over the point. This piece of ground now belongs to me, having been the allotment of my father, Capt. John Smith. My father is buried on the point, also his oldest squaw, although the exact spot where his squaw is buried I do not know.

My grandfather, Chief Sho-Kog-Gee-Chig was supposed to have been a full blood Frenchman from the north shore of Lake Superior. My mother was born on the point.

Jennie Boileau was the daughter of a white man called Indian Bill Smith. When Jennie and her brother Dave Smith were quite young their mother married Capt. John Smith, who raised them as his own.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

BOILEAU

MRS. ~~BOLYIA~~ (a daughter of Captain John Smith and a grand-daughter of Sho-Kag-Gee-Chig, a Chippewa Chief.) - (1)

The last battle between the Chippewa and the Sioux in this part of the country was fought at what is now called Sioux Point, called by the Indians Sioux Lookout. This lookout point is on the north side of Round Lake, in SW¼ of SW¼ of Sec. 18, T. 149, R. 27. This is a high point of land projecting into Round Lake on the north side. This point is considerably higher than the rest of the shore line, giving the party holding it a point of vantage, as the lake can be watched for its entire length and width from it.

Here a fairly large body of Sioux lay in ambush for their enemy, the Chippewa; but the Chippewa found the hiding place and proceeded to surround it. In this way they cut off the Sioux from escape, as well as from food. The Chippewa, instead of attacking the Sioux, proceeded to lay siege to the point, until a great many of the Sioux had died from starvation. Those remaining were too weak to offer much resistance, and were easily overcome by the Chippewa.

The mounds where the Sioux were buried are still visible. Remains of the dead Sioux have been dug up in later years.

Mrs. Bolyia says her grandfather on her mother's side, Chief Sho-Kag-Gee-Chig was a full blooded Frenchman from the north shore of Lake Superior. He was one of the leaders in this battle of Sioux Lookout. At the time of the battle he was a young man. Her mother is past ninety years, and now lives in Duluth. She also came from the shores of Lake Superior. She says the battle was probably fought somewhere between 125 and 150 years ago, probably about 1820. She was the youngest of Captain John Smith's two squaws. This point of ground was part of Captain John Smith's allotment, it coming to her through him. Sho-Kag-Gee-Chig means Floating Cloud.

Captain John Smith and his oldest squaw are also buried on the point. The exact resting place of his squaw is not known. Mrs. Bolyia says her mother came to the vicinity of Round Lake a number of years after the battle. She was then a very small child.

Just how a full blooded Frenchman became a chief among the Chippewa is more than I could find out, as Mrs. Bolyia had to return to Duluth the same afternoon I talked to her; but she asked for my address and said she would talk to her mother when she reached Duluth. Her mother's name is Mrs. Marie Smith.

ITASCA COUNTY HISTORY - Bonniwell.

Biography. Tommie Brown.

Tommie Brown was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1862 and came to Minneapolis the spring of 1885. In the fall of 1885 he came to Grand Rapids by boat from Minneapolis. He said the only team of horses in Grand Rapids at that time were owned by Chris Burns (Mark Burns' dad), and that team was in great demand. Jack Fraser built and owned the Fraser House at La Prairie. It was a two-story building. He said he couldn't see much difference in the morals of La Prairie and Grand Rapids. Just frontier towns, was his opinion.

Jim Sherry had a hotel near where the paper mill now stands. Sherry's Arm, on Pokegama Lake, was named for Jim Sherry. He homesteaded there in very early days.

Tommie Brown met and married a Chippewa maiden by the name of Louise Tib-sih-di, shortly after coming to Grand Rapids. They still live at Ball Club. Louise Tib-sih-di was born April 7, 1869 in the sugar bush at Bowstring Lake, and has lived in Itasca County all her life.

While interviewing Tommie Brown and his wife, I asked about head marks and what significance they carry. She said they were made with flint cuts, made on the temple criss-cross. Medicines were rubbed into the cuts to make them bleed, and then they used a cow's horn over the cut and sucked the blood with their lips. This was considered the same as bleeding in the medical profession of the white man.

Frank Seavey was clerk of court at Aitkin about 1893.

Lowe G. Seavey married Sho-gor-ish, meaning Irish. She was a sister of Betsy Smith, who died at Ball Club two years ago.

Source: Mr. & Mrs. Tommie Brown, Ball Club, May 23, 1941.

Itasca County History - research notes by Mary Bonniwell

Tommy Brown of Ball Club, was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1862 and came to Minneapolis the spring of 1885 and in the fall of 1885 he came to Grand Rapids by boat from Minneapolis. He said the only team of horses in Grand Rapids at that time were owned by Chris Burns (Mark Burns father) and that the team was in great demand. He recalls that Jack Fraser built and owned the Fraser House in La Prairie (not neccessarily at the date of 1885) it was a two story building. Tommy said there wasn't any difference in the morals of La Prairie and Grand Rapids, just frontier towns, was his opinion.

Jim Sherry had a hotel near where the paper mill now stands. Sherrys arm on Pokegama Lake was named for Jim Sherry, he homesteaded there in the very early days.

Tommy Brown met and married a Chippewa maidenby the name of Tib -sih-di shortly after coming to Grand Rapids. They still live at Ball Club enjoying life. They have a few ducks and chickens.

~~Louise~~ Louise Tib-sih-di was born April 7, 1869 in the sugar bush at Bow String Lake, and has lived here always.

While interviewing Tommy Brown and wife I asked about the head marks and what significence they carry and she said they were made with flint, cuts being made criss-cross on temple and medicine rubbed into cuts to make them bleed, and then theybused a cow horn over the cut and sucked the blood with their m mouths. This was considered the same as bleeding in the medical profession of the white man.

Mr. Brown recalled that Frank Seavey was clerk of court at Aitkin about 1893.

Lowe G. Seavey married Sho-gon-osh, meaning Irish, a sister of Betsy Smith. Betsy Smith died in Ball Club about three years ago.

gotten by Mary Bonniwell from Tommy and Louise Brown of Ball Club, Minn. during an interview April 3o, 1941.

Itasca County History - Custer notes
Tom Brown interview, Feb. 1942 (1)

I came to Grand Rapids in 1885. At that time I was about 23 years old. I took a homestead of 40 acres where part of Grand Rapids now stands. There were not very many business places in the Rapids in those days. There was only three or four of them. In tose days all supplies were either toted or brought in by staemboat from Aitkin. The logging at that time was all done with oxen.

I never saw or heard tell of any Indians such as Rev. Gilgillan tells of. The Indians around the Rapids were all the same as any other Indians around this country. They lived the same and had the same kind of stock, which was a few ponies.

The Caldwell who did the early logging on Caldwell Brook afterwards loved to what we called the Round Lake River country, now known as the Popple river. His name was Jim Caldwell. The Caldwell killed by Bowstring Joe was either a son or a grandson of old Jim Caldwell who logged on Caldwell Brook.

The Hudson Bay Co. was the first fur trading Co. in here. Itvwas afterward swallowed up by the Northwest Fur Co.

As far as there ever being any square timber logging done in here, I don't think there was any of it done here. If so, it was very little. In the first place there were too many rapids in the rivers for that kind of logging. The first logging that I ever did anywhere was in a square timber camp in eastern Canada. These logs were made into rafts and sent down the river. At any falls or rapids they were sent over on what were called "slides". This was done to keep the ends of the timbers from being chewed up on the rocks. This did not bother rough round logs as the corners all came off with the slabs at the mill anyway. These slides were operated by the government. Many of these logs were 60 feet long and I have seen 60 foot logs go down river with a 16 inch face. No chances were taken with having these logs scared up. I remember one spring I was with a drive of square timbers going down the Montreal river. This river is quite rough, but when the water is high most of the rough water can be passed over without hitting a rock. The drive started out and we had finished more than half of the drive when the river began to fall rapidly. Within a few days the water got so low that the drive was stopped and the rafts all tied up to the bank until the next spring when the water would be higher. The round logs in the drive were taken on down as the water was not too low for driving.

While in eastern Canada I saw mant Hudson Bay trading posts. All of these posts that I saw were exceptionally well built. I have seen very few log buildings in this country that could compare with those old posts.

Most of the Indians in here are members of the Mississippi band and probably 70% or more are Catholics. Excepting those around Inger many of those still follw the religion of the medicine man.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Frank Brusewitz - (1)

The trip from the railroad head at Bowstring Creek to my place by way of the Big Fork river used to take about two days if we had good luck, which it seemed like I never did. This was going down stream, so the trip the other way took longer. I came to Grand Rapids in 1895. I worked around there for about a year, going to Deer River in 1896. I worked for several winters for Frank Caldwell logging on Little Winnie.

I took my claim on the Big Fork in 1899. Frank Vance was running a store in Deer River when I first came there. He moved to his place on the Popple river some time in 1896 or 1897. I don't think they ever had a school there as early as 1899. I don't think there was a school north of Deer River that early.

At the time I was working for Caldwell (Colwell?) and driving horses through from Dakota for him I used to cross the river at Cut Foot Sioux about where the bridge now is on a ferry run by a son-in-law of William Fairbanks. His name was Shear, and he ran a trading post where the Cut Foot Sioux Inn now stands. This ferry would only hold one team and wagon, so we would have to make several trips. Shear at one time tried to swim some of his horses over behind the ferry when he was logging across the river. One big gray mare refused to go into the water, so he tied a sack over her eyes and shoved her in. She went down like a rock. Shear swore she never came up. Harry Shear was also caught setting fires to get dead and down timber near Cut Foot Sioux. Shear was a brother-in-law of Seelye, who was sent to the pen for the same offense.

Soon after I was married my wife's sister who lived near Des Moines, Iowa, read in the local paper an account of Frank Vances moose hunt. Of course she was worried about her sister, so she cut the piece out of the paper and wanted to know if it was true.

Frank Colwell, for whom I used to work, afterwards took a claim in Kinghurst Township. He located a number of settlers there. It is said he located fifty different parties on the same 160 acres. This 160 acres had one forty of fine pine on it. He would take a land seeker on to this forty and spend a whole day leading them around and around on this one forty, making them believe they were going over the whole 160 acres. He would give them the minutes of the land and collect his fee, but when they went to file they found it had been filed on a dozen times before.

There was no real pine claims in Liberty Township, except in Sec. 25. Of course, there was pine scattered all over the township, but section 25 was the only solid section of pine. The only solid pine I know of that amounted to very much north of Turtle lake was in the Effie country. Several young fellows took claims there for the lumber companies. The pine on these were sold for from $2000 to $3000 a quarter. But the best pine I ever saw in Itasca county was on Pokegama lake shore.

There is an old newspaper clipping in the files at the Cut Foot Sioux Ranger Station, cut from a Minneapolis paper years ago. This clipping had been saved by Fred Willman, who presented it to the Forest Service in 1930. This clipping gave the average price of pine on each homestead on and around Moose point on the west shore of Pokegama lake. According to this clipping the pine on these homesteads had sold for all the way from $5000 to $8000 each. Fred Willman says many had just sold at these prices at the time the clipping was printed.

From interview with Frank Bruisewitz.

I first came to Itasca County in the fall of 1895. I came by way of the old Sapidilla Sapidilla trail with a bunch of horses, for a man by the name of Caldwell. He had a logging camp on Little Winnie. For several years I made this trip each spring and fall. In the spring I would take his horses to the farm at Drayton, North Dakota, bringing them back to the woods in the fall.

The old Sapidilla trail crossed at the old ferry and Trading post at Cut Foot Sioux run by Harry Sheer. (or Shear) There was a large tie camp along the trail where the town of Black Duck now is. This camp was getting out ties for the Duluth and Winnipeg railroad, on the survey of which the trail ran much of the way. The Dakota farmers subscribed lots of money for the Duluth and Winnipeg thinking it would give them a cheap outlet to salt water.

In the spring of 1897 Caldwell sent another man into the Big Fork valley to build him a cabin and to plant a garden on what is now known as the Phelps Place. He had filed on this land and intended to start a stock ranch here. The lumber for this cabin was brought from Deer River. The trip took up about three weeks. From Deer River we followed the road built by construction crews along the railroad right-of-way, as far as little Winnie where we hit the old Caldwell trail. This we followed until we intersected his logging road to the Big Fork. This was somewhere in Pomeroy township. We followed the logging road south to his landing and camp on the Big Fork. This camp and landing was just across the river from where Wirt now is. Old Wirt or Old Town as it is sometimes called was built on the old landing. Here we made a raft of the lumber and took it to the site of the cabin. This was only a few miles down the river, the NE¼ of Sec. 1, Range 26, Tp. 149. This quarter section is about all natural wild meadow.

But for some reason he never moved on the claim after getting the shack built. About this time I began looking around for a place for myself. I at last ran across a beautiful spruce grove in Sec. 33, R.25 Tp.150 that took my eye as a place for a home. I filed on this piece of land in June of 1897 at Grand Rapids. I didn't receive my p APERS UNTIL September. A man by the name of Fletcher helped me locate

my land. It was for him that Fletcher Creek is named as he lived on the creek about a mile and a half above where it empties into the river. I was the only settler between Fletcher and Knute Bergum's on the river. While I put up my shack I lived in an old trappers cabin about a mile down the river from my place. The second night I stayed in this cabin old Chief Busti and some of his tribe kept me awake all night. They buried one of Busti's daughters on a high bank a couple of hundred yards from the cabin. I could have slept through the shouting and moaning but that infernal tom-tom nearly set me wild. It started just before sundown and lasted until sun-up. The next morning there was no Indians to be seen anywhere. But when I went to the spot where they had been the night before, I found a new grave. There was a large tree at both the head and the foot of the grave, the whole thing surrounded by a pole pen or fence. The grave was in Lot 2, Sec. 34, R.25 Tp. 150.

The first vote I cast in Itasca county I went to a logging camp on Bass lake. I don't know the name of the precinct at that time.

When I came here there was lots of signs of logging as the river meadows were full of logs that had been sawed and stranded while being drove down the river. There was also a number of hand-hewed timbers fifty to sixty feet long, some 16 inches square. But there has never been ant hewed timber taken down river since I have been here.

There have been several steamboats on the river in my time. The first one I remember was owned by Ed Wallis (Wallace?) It was flat bottomed stern wheeler, about forty feet by twenty. She was first used as a tow boat and to ferry freight on Turtle lake from where J. Lewis and Fred Potts used to tote and pack to Big Fork.

The first station on the M. & R. north from Deer River was County Road, about 4 miles from Deer River. The next was called Gravel Pit, two miles from County Road. This was where the M. & R. got gravel for ballast. McVey and Clark's was the same place. Jessie Lake Junction was also called Alder. Mack was also called Coal Dock because the road had a coaling dock here., also called Jessie Lake Hoist.

BRUISEWIRZ (3)

The Round Lake branch was also called the Peruna branch as they said the lumber-jacks at Round Lake camp used to have Peruna shipped in by the case, on which they got drunk on the patent medicine.

Ford station was at Dora Lake. Stanley was also called Rattlesnake Junction because of the rattlesnake whiskey sold there. It was where Wirt now stands. Bunrs was a mile and a half north of Stanley on the SW side of Clear Lake. Stanley was the name of the station located on the south side of the river. Wirt was just across the river from Stanley. The postoffice was always Wirt. Afterwards Wirt was moved to the south side of the river.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with William Buentemeire - (1)

We came in here on our honeymoon in March of 1902. It was some honeymoon! At that time the head of the railroad was at Black Duck. There was no depot there. The rails only stopped there. We came as far as Black Duck by rail, got a team and sled to bring our stuff as far as Bridges on an old tote road. From there we walked around by way of Swallow point on the north shore of Island lake, around the east side of Island lake, then east to the south end of Moose lake, then north along the east side of Moose lake until we hit the government survey line which we followed east to our homestead.

Mr. Buentemeire had already been here with a man named John Myers who located him. They had also built a lean-to to live in. Mrs. Buentemeire says the lean-to of poles covered with cedar bark. The roof extended clear to the ground on the north side. The east and west ends were then covered with small poles and bark, while the whole south side was left open.

You should have seen Mr. Buentemeire packing the cookstove across the swamp west of the house. It was about three-quarters of a mile, and oh, the language he used before he finally got it across Moose Brook! He had to cross the brook on a log.

I will never forget the first morning we ate breakfast in our new home. It was only a lean-to open on the south side. The stove sat just inside the lean-to. I baked pancakes for Mr. Buentemeire while he ate.

After he had finished, he started to bake cakes for me. He said, "Well, you can have this one in about a minute." I was sure I saw him take it off the griddle and put it on a plate on the back of the stove, but when I went to get it there was no pancake there. I asked him where it was, and he said "Oh! you were too slow, a lumberjack just got it!" I looked at him to see if he was trying to make fun of me, as the only lumberjacks I had ever seen or heard of were men who worked in the woods. I was sure no man had taken that pancake.

Will said "You just watch this one." So he put another one on the back of the stove. It hadn't been there long enough to start to cool off when a gray and white bird flew in and took the whole thing. I'll bet my eyes bugged out! Will said, "Well, that is your first lumberjack." I afterwards found they would steal a person blind unless you kept everything covered up.

When we came here there was an Indian village just across the brook from the house. We have found a great number of stone arrow-heads and other items there. One of my boys found a copper spearhead there a few years ago. It was pounded from pure copper and was so hard it could not be touched with a file. It was 14$\frac{3}{4}$ inches long. The upper end had been pounded out flat, and then bent around to form a socket for a handle. This he sold to the State Historical Society for $25.00. Prof. Jinks from the State University said he had never run across anything like it in this county before. The village site was on the west bank of Moose Brook in Sec. 15, T. 150, R. 27.

My daughter Elizabeth (now Mrs. Carl Kreiger) was born March 27, 1903, and for several years was the only white child for miles around here.

The old Hudson Bay Trail used to run just west of here about three-fourths of a mile. The Indians used to use it a great deal in the early days. They used to go south on it to get to Frank Vance's place. I don't know just where they left it to get there, as it went farther west from Vance's.

William Buentemeire - (2).

On June 24, 1904 I was appointed postmaster. The post office was in our house, and was known as Pine Top post office. The first post office here used to serve the territory as far south as Frank Vance's on the Popple river. The name was changed to Grattan post office some time during the first World War. I was post master until 1925.

The first post office in here was run by a man named Fosston, but I don't know when it was started. This post office run by Fosston was at Cunninghams. It was on the north-east side of Island lake. Antoine Steerley carried the first mail from Northome. Afterwards it was carried as far as Vance's place. Frank Vance had the post office the longest of anyone around here, but the first mail to Vance's came from Bena.

The town of Bridges was named for Bridget Moore. It is now called Haupt.

The first cattle anywhere in this part of the county was brought in by Frank Vance. We bought a cow from him soon after we came here. She was as wild as a deer. She was not so frightened of a man, but every time she saw me or Elizabeth she would start to run and never stop until she reached Vance's again.

Soon after we came here Mother sent me up a few chickens. They came to Vance's by way of Bena. Will walked down there to get them, and brought them home on his back in a wash boiler. There were two eggs in the boiler when he reached home. We fed them on wild rice.

When Elizabeth was born Will borrowed a horse from Cunningham to go for the doctor. He started down the old Skinner Horn trail with the horse hooked to a dray. He met a couple of Indians on the trail, and the horse got scared and almost tore everything up. Finally the Indians took to the woods and made a big circle around Will. The Indians were all good about anything of that kind. It was strange, but it seemed that a horse could smell an Indian for a mile, and they were all afraid of the Indians.

The first crop we planted here, Will carried the potatoes on his back from Black Duck. They cost five dollars a bushel. We had very little open land at that time, so to save space we planted a hill of spuds and then a hill of peas, and we have never raised a better crop of either than we raised that first year.

When we first came here we could travel up and down Moose Brook in a boat at any time. All forms of fur-bearing animals were plentiful on the brook excepting beaver. Now you can travel the brook in a boat only in the spring or when the water is high. I have often gotten up in the morning and seen deer lying in the clearing around the house. One morning I even saw a little moose calf in the clearing.

ITASCA COUNTY HISTORY - Bonniwell.

Biography. Carl Christie.

Carl Christie and his wife May went duck hunting down the Bowstring river one fall. They heard a terrible commotion, and thought it was the Indians on the "War Path". It was the most hair-raising noise you could imagine, but when they investigated it was timber wolves after a deer.

They paddled along the river, but were not successful in shooting ducks. About that time along came some Indians, and Carl traded shells for a bushel basket full of ducks. They figured their ducks cost them 15¢ apiece. Everyone who saw their ducks went hunting in the same spot, but with not much more success. Then one day George Blazing had heard of the "Big Shoot" Carl and May had, so he went hunting in the same place. He hadn't any luck, but he did meet up with the Indians Carl had bought his ducks from. He wanted to buy ducks, and they said they didn't have any to sell then; but went on to tell how many they had traded to Carl for shells. The "Big Shoot" story was all over. This has been a laugh to Carl and May all these years.

Source: Mr. & Mrs. Carl Christie, Bowstring, May 16, 1941.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Carl Christy.

We came to Bowstring in 1894 or 1895, I am not sure which. The only other settler near here at that time was Walter Johnson, who had a large stopping place on Bowstring Creek. He still lives there. His place is on the west side of the road where State highway #6 crosses the Bowstring. This stopping place was eleven miles from Deer River. In the early days before the railroad was put in, everyone traveling through the Big Fork country packed their supplies to Johnson's from Deer River, where they took boats for the rest of the trip. After the railroad was put in, they used to come from Deer River by rail, unless they missed the train, then they walked.

At the time we came in here the rails were laid, but there was no ballast put on yet so no trains were run on the line until the next year.

There were three families of us came in together, Lew Mellhouse and a family by the name of Erickson came with us. We each brought a carload of stuff. There was no road to bring it in on, but there was a man in Deer River who had a little buckskin pony, and he had a sort of flat car built to which he hitched the pony and moved our stuff in over the railroad. This pony would cross railroad trestle without ever stepping between the ties. This man also hauled all of the lumber for our houses from Deer River.

Someone else had apparently settled on this place before we came here, as there were a couple of small log buildings on the place when we came. They looked as if they had been a small chicken coop and hog shed. We tore the buildings down and have farmed the land where they stood ever since, yet even a stranger could go into the field where they stood and have no trouble locating the outlines of the old buildings. I would judge these buildings were at least fifteen or twenty years old when we came.

Mrs. Erickson, who came in with us, can give a lot of good information, as she kept dates, and everything.

ITASCA COUNTY HISTORY - Bonniwell.

Biography. Robert Christie.

Robert Christie, his wife and two sons, Carl and Rahl, came to Bowstring to homestead in 1896. This was because of the illness of Robert Christie, who had been a musician all his life in concert and band work. The Christie's had all been musical. Robert Christie's grandfather had the first band the Ringling Brothers Circus had, and all down through the generations they did band and concert work. When Robert's health failed, the band was soon abandoned by the others.

After coming to Bowstring he regained his health, and lived until about 1935.

Carl said he hated to talk about those old times, as there were so many hardships connected with them; but as he talked to me he could see some funny things connected with it all. One of these was when his mother was taking care of their stock at Little Bowstring, she had to sleep in the barn where the stock was. In the night she was awakened by men's voices, the barn door opened, and in walked two burly lumberjacks. She arose from where she had been sleeping, and pointing her finger at them, she said, "Get out of here!" They backed out, and very quickly closed the door behind them. In the morning one of the men said to the other, "I guess I am drinking too much whiskey again. I saw a woman in that old barn last night, and I know there isn't a woman closer than Deer River." The other fellow laughed and said, "No, you haven't got them this time. There is a woman staying at that old barn, taking care of her stock." So the lumberjack was much relieved to know he wasn't seeing things.

Carl also told of how he and another youngster started to walk from the portage on Little Jesse Lake to their homes and took a wrong trail and were very thoroughly lost. They sat down and pondered the situation a few minutes. They decided they had to make a fire, so they proceeded to gather wood to last them through the night. The wolves were howling all around them, and they had been warned to stop walking and make a fire and keep it going if they ever got lost. So they put into practice what they had been told. About midnight their folks saw the fire through the trees, and were right beside them when they shot off a gun. The youngsters thought they were about to be scalped by the Indians, but their fears soon subsided when they saw their folks so near them. The parents had been hunting the children for hours, so this was a very glad reunion for all of them. You may be sure it made the children very careful thereafter.

Carl also told of one time he and Andrew Melhus went moose hunting. They portaged their boat into Big Jesse Lake over a half-mile portage, (The Lerch Portage), then paddled along until they came to Bill Brown's place on Big Jesse Lake. They hunted for hours, but nary a thing did they find to shoot, and came back empty handed long after dark. They paddled along, trying to find the Lerch landing at the portage, but Carl said only green kids would have gotten lost. So they went ashore and built a fire and stayed until daylight. This was in the month of November, so it was very chilly. When daylight came, they were only a few rods from the landing so they soon got home, cold and hungry, but none the worse for their expedition. He said the thing that tickled him the most on this expedition was that Andrew's coat tail had gotten in the lake and icicles formed and hung dangling, like long glass beads, as he walked.

ITASCA COUNTY HISTORY - Bonniwell.

Biography. Robert Christie - 2.

Robert Christie couldn't get homestead land on a lake shore, so he homesteaded back of Melhus, then when opportunity arose he traded his homestead for land on Bowstring lake shore, formerly homesteaded by a Mr. Walker. The log house Walker built still stands on this property, and Carl has repaired and fixed it up for a cabin to rent. He also has eight other cabins built and furnished very comfortably, and these cabins are full all season. He says they have things very nice now, but sometimes he would trade all this for the neighborliness and good times the community enjoyed away back in 1896.

Carl also tells how he and W. J. Gibbs portaged their boat over the Lerch portage from Little Jesse Lake to Big Jesse Lake and paddled across to the hoist the Minneapolis and Rainy River Railroad had established on Big Jesse Lake, to get the first Post Office cabinet in April, 1902. They loaded this cabinet into their boat and paddled back across the lake to the Lerch portage, then carried the cabinet one-half mile to Little Jesse. Then they went back and got the boat and carried it across the portage, then loaded the cabinet into the boat and paddled across Jesse to the Melhus landing. There they loaded it on a dray drawn by an Indian pony and took it through the woods to W. J. Gibbs store on Bowstring lake. This sounds easy when you read about it, but portaging a boat a half-mile each way, and carrying a Post Office cabinet that distance was real work, and something Carl would just as soon forget. He says there were always jobs coming up that had to be done the hard way, so it is little wonder that he said he didn't want to remember those hardships or talk about them.

Carl also told about his father, Robert Christie, and Duncan McDougall going Moose hunting. They wounded the moose and he managed to get to the lake. They took after the moose with a boat. They caught up to him and put another bullet into him, and then grabbed him by the horns and towed him to shore. Carl and Andrew went to help get the moose ashore, but all four of them couldn't budge him from where they had towed him by boat; so they bled him and butchered him right in the edge of the lake, and cut up the meat. One hind quarter was all their pony could haul at a time, so they transported the meat from the water and up the hill to a root house on the Melhus property. All the settlers came with their pack sacks and carried the moose meat to their homes. They all knew what the other fellow was eating, for a while at least. Some of the settlers smoked and cured part of this moose meat, and in that way preserved the meat much longer. Necessity was the mother of invention in those days, and taught them to preserve their food for the future.

Carl told of a plum picking expedition the neighbors had in 1902. Each took his boat, paddled to the portage on Little Jesse lake, portaged across into Big Jesse Brook and into the Bowstring river, then into the Big Fork river. On one point they came to in the river there stood a big Indian clad only in a shirt, so they named this point "Shirt Tail Point", and to this time the point is still known by that name.

The Melhus family, Robert Christie family, W. J. Gibbs and wife, the George Johnston family, Mr. & Mrs. Duncan McDougall were in the party. They even took Macks old violin along, and they were gone three days. They said, how so much fun could be packed into three short days, no one but that gang could conceive.

Source: Carl & May Christie (Mr. & Mrs. Carl Christie) May 16, 1941.

(The first Post Office cabinet referred to in this story is still in use at the post office and store of Carl & May Christie, Bowstring.)

Itasca County History.- from Custer notes - INDIANS

Interview with D. Culver,- Soon after I came here SAM STANGLIN started to dig himself a cellar, a new root cellar. There was a large mound between his cabin and Dora Lake. The mound was three or four rods long and a couple of rods wide and about four feet high. He thought this would be a good place for a root cellar.

He had gotten his cellar four or five feet deep when he came upon the buried remains of what he thought was indians. But the odd part of it was the position of the bones, for bones was all that remained. It looked as if a great many bodies had been buried in a single grave.

Some of them were lying down and some were sitting up. Others semmed to have been squatting on their heels and some were even standing on their heads. It looked as if they had been buried in great haste.

It seemed as if the hole had been dug and the bodies just dumped into the hole and then covered with dirt.

It is belived that the Indians had a village here and the smallpox hit the village causing them to die so fast that they could not be buried in any other way. Sam decided it was not the place for a root cellar, but he thought he might make a little easy money by charging people to look att the skeletons. But he never made much money. They soon put a stop to it. I am not sure but what they took the skeletons away from him.

This was located in Sec. 11, Ragge 27 Township 149.

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From an interview with William Hatelman.-

about fifteen years ago I ran across an old Indian wigwam just north of the flat rock. This wigwam was made of ash poles covered with birch bark. The birch bark was sewn together in strips about eighteen inches wide. Although the bark was then quite old it was still quite pliable. I could roll it up easily without breaking it. It had been smoked until it was almost the color of leather and was very thin. The strips sewn together each reached around t the tepee. The next upper strip overlapped the lower one like shingles.

The edges were all sewn to thin strips of cedar with what looked to be cedar bark. These cedar strips were sewn to both sides of the bark. They were flat on the side next to the bark but the other side was rounded. I still have some of these cedar strips. At that time I lived on the Zerkel place, on which the flat rock is located. While plowing my garden there I plowed up a spear head. This spear head was made of flint rock. It was 8½ inches long and between two and a half and three wide. This puzzled me as I have made a study of Indians and their ways and I never heard of the Indians in this country using spears. A few years later up the river a few miles I came upon an old pit where I suppose Indians had hidden some pails for making maple syrup, as old timers say Chief Busticoggan used to have a sugar camp here. This pit was about four foot square. It was lined with birchbark and covered with bark. In this pit I found a number of old pails of different sizes, also one copper kettle. The kettle was about the size of a quart measure. It had a tight fitting lid with a heavy brass ring in it on one side was marked 1 qt. This kettle is now on display at DEAN KANNE'S garage in Bigfork. There was also a small cast iron kettle that I still have. The place where I found this stuff is almost directly across the river from a high sand ridge where old man Babcock said the Inddians used to hold their pow-wows. He homesteaded the place. He said there were times when it was almost impossible to sleep for the noise they made. About a mile down the river from where I fould the old tepee is a cedar swamp which shows lots of evidence of Indians having made canoe here. Also of having taken cedar bark from here to make summer tepees. The summer tepees being of cedar bark while the winter were maDE MOSTLY of birch bark. - Custer's comment)- Bill has made Indians and their ways a study. He has even experimented in doing things as the Indians did them. He says it isn't hard as they managed to do everything so as to cause nature to help them. For the past few years he has made a living making birch bark canoes for sale. The spot where the Indians held their pow-wows is almost on the line between Sec. 2 of 149 and Sec. 35 of 150 range 25.. Bill also says he can find part of an old school seat used in the old Bergum school. He found the seat several years ago and hung it in a tree. Bill thinks that the smoking of the birch bark in a

some way affected its pliability. Probably the kind of smoke used. At one time a ch chemical company in Wis. told him they would furnish him a formula to treat birch bark so he could gateher it in the spring and store it away for future use without it becoming hard and brittle. But they did not know if it would affect the strength of the bark. The Indians never chopped down a tree if they could help it. To ge t the cedar for the ribs of their canoes they would picka nice tree and chop into it about the root swell and then they would make another chip four or five feet from the ground and split out the piece between the chips. Then do the same with another until they had as much material as they wanted, when they could have cut one tree and had ehough material from the one tree. By taking a piece from each of four or five trees, from the side, it left a scar but didn't kill the tree.

Itasca County History - John Sornberger, Sky Pilot -

From interview with Eugene Custer by Gilbert I. Custer, field worker. Eugene Custer ha s made a hobby of collecting "Sornberger" data. The facts as given by Eugene Custer are taken from his narrative and his personal comments omitted, as this is not intended as a tract.- Shaw. Custer claims to have gotten the story mostly from the Rev. Sornberger himself, including all that is given in this item.

Sornberger was born in Ontario, Canada, losing his mother when a small child. He was sent to live with an uncle in New York State. From there he came to live with a family by the name of Sparrow, whose head was an old Cape Cod fisherman. he makes no mention of his father during these years.

John Sornberger, in his early manhood, read law for two years with a St. Cloud firm. He left his studies to trail his father to the north woods of Minnesota where he had learned from a timber company that his father was working. He got a job as bookkeeper with the company. Being desirous of learning if his parent was worthy of being called father, he did not, for a considerable length of time, let his father know who he was. We are not in a position to say whether father and son ever accepted each other or not. He served the company as bookkeeper for two years. He then worked as traveling auditor for the Hines Boarding Co. , contractors, serving with them for almost three years.

When he left this position he came to the logging camps as a cook. In logging camp brawls he built up quite a reputation as a fighter. Fight promoters signed him up and he went in the ring. He was about twenty years old when he began fighting. After 126 bouts, he was matched with an Australian with the ring name of "SHADDOW MABAE" . In this, the one hundred and twenty seventh and last fight, John received a broken jaw, a broken nose and one broken arm. As John himself expressed it, he was well defeated.

When healed up he resumed the role of camp cook, only this time on a wanigan with a log drive on the Mississippi. While on this wanigan, John and his cookeenhad in some way come into possession of counterfeiting equipment which they kept under the floor of the wanigan.

They passed out a considerable amount of this bogus money up and down the river until the federals got on their trail. One day as they tied up at the bank near Cohasset, Minn. the Federals were so close on them that John and his helper took to the woods, leaving on such short notice that they left all their money making equipment.

For several years after this John Sornberger was a fugitive from justice, and also a noted jail breaker as it seemed that no jail in northern Minnesota was able to hold him. At one time, lodged in the Grand Rapids jail, John sat looking out of his cell window where he could see a couple of men clearing brush around the jail. When the brush cutters quit work for the day they left their ax leaning against the building below John's cell window. He had a broom in his room and he removed the wire from it, made a loop in one end, fished up the ax and chopped himself out. He made for a single plank walk made by planks laid loose on cross pieces nailed to pairs of posts. This plank walk extended across a deep water lagoon along the river fromt near the jail. He made the best possible time across the planks but heard heavy breathing close behind. He knew this to be an exceptionally big, ox-like French deputy sheriff and he didn't care for the prospective grapple. As he crossed the last plank he jerked it after him and let the deputy down into 7 or 8 feet of mud and water. With the fresh start he rounded the corner of the big saw-mill and a night watchman who came out under the sawdust carrier at that time reported that he was knocked over by a large moose and trampled underfoot. He even claimed to have spied an enormous spread of antlers.

The supposed moose slipped quietly into the river among the saw logs and dove, coming up between logs, far out. Soon lanterns appeared, twenty or thirty of the them, but no prisoner or moose or moose sign could be found. Searchers decided that the prisoner had taken to the road rather than the river, and went for their horses, and started down the road. After they had gone John took to the road behind them. At a fork of the road John stepped off into the brush, waiting to determine which road the posse had taken. His plan was to wait until they came

back to take the other fork and them use the route they had left. He waited until it was getting daylight. Then the searchers returned to the fork and dismounted. Some held the horses while others scouted the area about the fork. When this action started, John thought it wise to return to town before it was full light. In Grand Rapids John had a colored friend who operated an eating house. John made straight for this friend and was hidden away in an upstairs room, where he intended to rest until dark.

(colored friend was undioubtedly Dave Chambers or Nigger Dave who ran a restaurant in connection with the Logan saloon, on Pokegama Avenue, just south of the Pokegama hotel, about where the movie theater is or just north of it.)

The general strategy was as follows:- When Sornberger should signal by scraping his feet in a certain way, the colored friend would open the door wide and give John plenty of room for a running start. Officers, knowing of his friendship, questioned the colored gentleman, who lied like a gentleman. Dave's politeness was appreciated, but the place was watched, just in case. Dave was not dumb and knew he was being watched. He slipped up stairs and warned John. John said, "O.K., Pop, when I scuffle, open that back door and open it wide and stand out of the way.

After dark, came the scuffle, the wide opened door, and John came down on the run and leaped out as far as he could from the door and lit running. As he came through the door a gun was fired from each side of the door by posted guards. They missed. In all thirty one shots were fired at him in this escape, but he did receive a scratch.

Another time he was in the toils of the law at either Black Duck or Bemidji where he had been arrested by a big French-Canadian officer. John must have protested the arrest as the officer worked him over with a piece of lead pipe. The cop threw John, resembling hamberger, into a cell, locked him up and left, dropping the lead pipe in the hallway in front of the cell. Later the same deputy came with John's supper on a tray. Johnw was playing possum and did not move, apparently was still "out". The sight of John brought no happy thoughts to the mind of the deputy and he began to "

"cuss" John out. When he stooped to set down the tray, John landed on his jaw, and the deputy passed out. John stepped into the hall, picked up the lead pipe, came back into the cell and gave the deputy just what he figured he had received with the lead pipe, stepped outside, locked the cell and walked away,,throwing the lead pipe and the keys as far as he could into about three feet of snow.

John escaped from many a jail and many a trap in northern Minnesota. He was a likable fellow and had many friends, even among officers. At Ten Strike he was told by afficers to get away quickly as the Federals were close upon him. At one time he lay for several days in a swamp east of Black Duck, while "the heat was on".

He was working in a logging camp about fifty miles north of Black Duck, lying in his bunk reading a book while a lumberjack "preacher" was holding services in the room below where was John's bunk. The "preacher" was Frank Higgins. John said he tried not to listen as he was interestee in his book. Listen he did,however, and what he heard led to his conversion. The following morning Sornberger begged Higgins to let him accompany him and help him. Higgins knew John was a fugitive and told him to wait a few days and he would return. Higgins went to governor Johnson and begged for a pardon for Sornberger, testifying to his belief in the sincerity of John's intentions of living differently. He evidently convinced the governor as he was told to bring John in. This he did, and John was pardoned.(Just what was done about those federal charges is not disclosed. There is a hole here.)

From this time John Sornberger became a lumber camp "sky pilot". Oldsters all over the Northern Minnesota area testify to the good that he did in the following years. One of his achievements was the establishment of the first church at Bigfork, the Presbyterian church. The first building was a log structure, later replaced by the present church building.

John was quite active in the boom days of prohibition. He was a stern enemy of John Barleycorn, and toured over a great part of the country on his

speaking campaign for the dry cause. He talked on the subject before thousands, among them, Woodrow Wilson, then president, and Wm. Jennings Bryan.

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W. A. Brown of Big Fork wrote an article as a memorial at the time of Sornberger's death in 1939. He said, in part,- Sornbergerwas introduced into the Bigfork section when our village was new and prosperous under the rule of King Alcohol, with seven saloons, one store, a school, a sawmill, and several shacks. A building that had been used as a saloon was vacated and arrangements made to use the place to hold meetings, and his consuming desire was to save souls. (All recollections seem to agree that Sornberger came to Bigfork to preach in 1909.)

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From "The Last Frontier" and verified by interviews it is agreed that Frank Higgins was the first lumberjack's "Shy Pilot" preaching in the northern Itasca Camps. He traveled from camp to camp, during their winter operating season, by dog team. He it was who placed John Sornberger in thet region as sky pilot for the area.

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Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer

CAMPSITE WHERE GUNS WERE FOUND. (1)

This camp is located 342 feet back from the north shore of the Big Fork river, in NW¼ of NE¼, Sec. 2, T 149, R. 25. From the looks of the camp site it would seem someone camped here who did not wish to be seen by anyone traveling up or down the river. The camp was so located as to be almost completely hidden by a low rise of ground from the river. This places the camp site almost in a slough, yet a man could sit in the camp and just be able to see over this rise of ground, so he could see anyone passing on the river. If the party who used this camp had placed his camp on the south bank of the river he would have had a high, dry camp site, as the south bank of the river rises almost fifteen feet above high water, while the north bank where the camp was located is flooded in even fairly high water. The land surrounding the camp site is too low. A man could never sleep on the ground here, except in the driest of weather, so it looks to me that the only reason for a camp here would be for the concealment offered by the slight rise of ground between it and the river.

From the ashes of the camp fire it would also seem that the party did not care for anyone to know of his presence. It was sheltered from the northwest by a large maple tree, from the west by an elm, and from the southwest by a large ash. The ashes where the fire had been built are three and four inches deep, so the party had camped here for probably four or five days or longer. The fire had been small, just large enough for cooking, the ashes covering a spot not over 21 inches in diameter, and the ashes have probably been spread some by the weather. So the fire was probably not over a foot or sixteen inches across. The party building this camp must either have been hiding here from someone, or he was waiting for someone to come along the river and wished to see them first. White men seldom build so small a fire, unless they do not wish it to be seen. The camp site was so located that the fire was hidden from anyone on the river, both by the rise of ground and by the location of the three large trees.

CAMP SITE WHERE GUNS WERE FOUND - (2)

On my last visit to the site I found only some pieces of bones. These were all among the ashes except one. They were all broken into small pieces, so it was impossible to guess the kind of bones they might be, except the piece which was not in the ashes. This bone must have been from some large animal, probably a moose.

History of Cut Foot Sioux and Bowstring Portage - (1).

There are two historical accounts of this portage which agree almost exactly, and which will be given here as one. This account was secured from Chief Bob Mosomo, the last chief of the Winnibigoshish band of Chippewas. This account was undoubtedly truthful on his part, and was told as it was told to him in legend form. Bob was probably 75 years old when this account was given.

The turtle mound on the Cut Foot Sioux lake and Bowstring river portage was built when my grandfather, Chief Wah-Nah-Chay was a small boy. It was built by the Sioux Indians. The Chippewas later built the snake mound about 500 paces or yards north of this turtle. The Sioux held many medicine dances around this turtle. They used to place tobacco on its head and feed it tobacco and smoke. The Ojibways, who had always fought with the Sioux, started south from the Rainy river region to fight the Sioux again.

This war party followed the Bowstring river for many days. At last they reached the portage from Bowstring river to Cut Foot Sioux lake. They started over this portage after the Sioux, as their chief medicine man had told them to do. When the party came to the turtle, the medicine man sat down on the head of the turtle. They talked for a time of what they would do to the Sioux when they found them.

The war party spent the night near the turtle. During the night the medicine man talked with the Great Spirit to find where the Sioux were. When he had finished making his medicine he lay down by the turtle and went to sleep. When he awoke he told the rest of the party that he had seen where the Sioux were going, but they would be back tomorrow. He told them that early next morning three men should go to the lake at the other end of the portage (Lake Say-Sah-Bay-Gay-Man-Ug). This they should cross to a river, (this would be Third River), and follow this river to a larger lake. In this lake they would find a rush island (located in SE$\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 27, T. 147, R. 27 W.) On this island they should find a swan. If they found this swan on rush island it would be a sign that everything would come out as he had dreamed.

The next morning three men started out. They found the small lake at the end of the portage as the medicine man had said they would. This they crossed and found a river which they followed until they came to a larger lake. In this lake was a rush covered island. When they paddled to the island they also saw the swan as the medicine man had foretold.

He had told them that when they saw the swan they should turn and start south, going to a long point sticking out into the lake. (This is what is known as Big Turkey Point.) On this point they would find a portage. They should follow this portage, but when they came near the big hill on the point they must watch out, as they would be close to the Sioux. The three Chippewas did as they had been told. They paddled south from the rush island and found the point with a portage on it. They hid their canoe and crawled over the portage.

As they came to the top of the big hill they saw three Sioux on the other side of the hill peeping out of the brush. Both parties were too surprised to shoot at once. Finally both parties fired at the spot where they thought the other party was. The Chippewas noticed no more shots were coming over the hill, so they took a look. They saw the Sioux out in the lake in their canoe, retreating. Two of the Sioux were looking backwards, and one ahead. All three were paddling. The Chippewas ran back and got their canoe and started to pursue the Sioux. The Sioux shot and the Chippewas shot.

The Sioux got to a rush island at the mouth of First River that shows only when water is low. The two Sioux threw their dead companion on the beach, put

their canoe on their backs and ran toward Lake Winnibigoshish. When the Chippewas reached the island they went to scalp the Sioux. They found he had both feet cut or frozen off.

They did not shoot any more. The Chippewas looked back to see if the rest of the party was following. As they could see the Sioux were down on the point in a large body, the Chippewa scouts returned to the main force. The Chief said there should be no more fighting as they had had enough.

After this encounter with the Sioux the Chippewas changed the name of the lake from Say-Sah-Gay-Ma-Ug (meaning going over many arms), to Kee-Ki-Sid-A-Bain-Sag-A-Ngan, meaning Cut Foot Sioux Lake.

It is not understood why Bob's story in legend form does not take into account the large battle which was fought at the mouth of First River, and why he simply states that after one Sioux scout was killed and none of the Chippewas killed both parties decided not to fight any more. And also how it happened the Chippewa chief said they had had enough. His story is undoubtedly incorrect; for we can readily realize that with a war party of Chippewas and a war party of Sioux confronting each other at the mouth of First river, together with the fact that one Sioux had been killed, a battle would have been inevitable.

The only reason I can see for the fact that Bob left this battle out of his story is that the Chippewas did not win a decisive victory here; and therefore the Chippewas did not care to have in their legends this story of a battle which was not a complete victory on their part.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

The Cut Foot Sioux and Bowstring Portage.

The Cut Foot Sioux district is cut diagonally from north of west to south of east by the Continental Divide. On the north the water flows to Hudson Bay, on the south to the Gulf of Mexico. It was very desirable for the Indians, from the mound builders time to the present, to have a portage connecting these two great watersheds.

The shortest route lay between Little Cut Foot Sioux lake and that portion of the Bowstring river located between Bowstring Lake and Sand lake. The distance between Little Cut Foot Sioux and Bowstring at this point is less than four miles.

The portage left Little Cut Foot Sioux at the site of the present Ranger Station, hitting the Bowstring river at the present site of the Inger post office, following the general direction of the Inger road most of the way.

The present ranger station site is the old camp ground used by persons on the portage. This site had probably been a camp site for many hundreds of years, for it was cleared of all vegetation when the white man came. When the ranger station was built here there was only bare ground, all vegetation having been trampled out.

Itasca County History - Fur Trade - Itasca Trading Posts- Custer notes

The Hudson Bay Company hired many Indians each spring to transport the furs taken around the head waters lakes, down the Mississippi river., then over the Savanna portage and down the St. Louis to Fond-du-Lac. These furs were transported in large 26 foot canoes, The Hudson had established a post at the mouth of First river in 1784. This post was a branch post of the Lake Superior district. At that time (what time) this was one of the richest fur producing districts operated by the Hudson Bay.Co.

The marks of this post, though they have suffered much from high water of Lake Winnibigoshish, are still visible. This old post was built of logs and stood for many years. Some of the old Indians say the post was in use in their time.(This was written in 1932-33?) This post was later used by two other traders. While the Hudson Bay operated in this district, they cut an overland trail from the post on Lake Winnibigoshish to the Canadian Border waters. This trail hit the border some where in the vicinity of Fort Francis. This trail was cut out about the year 1800. It was used mostly by dog team although they did sometimes use oxen. Much of this old trail is being used today. In some places it had been gra gradedand surfaced to make a good motor road, other parts of ithave been improved nearly enough to make Forest Service fire trails.

Another company known as the Northwest Fur Co. established a small post on the west side of Cut Foot Sioux Lake in 1787. This site was about one mile above the outlet of first river. Like all landmarks on Winnibigoshish, the ruins of this post have been nearly wiped out by high water. According to the Indians this post building was of cedar logs. This company later moved to Pigeon River and operated there a short time.

A trader whom the Indians knew only as SA*SWA established a sort of post at the old Hudson Bay Post in later years. The Indians say this was about the same time that the mission was on Lake Winnibigoshish. SA-SWA operated here but a short time then moved to what is known as Stony Point (on the north shore of Little Winnie?)

About 1858 a half breed trader named OH-DAH-WA-SAH-GAH-E-GUN E-NE-NE (Oneida Laker) established a post at the old Northwest Trading Co. site.

Itasca County History - Fur Trade- Custer notes -

Old Trading Posts (2)

We know definitely that there was a trading post at the mouth of First river when Bob Mosemo,was a small boy. A few remains of this post are still there such as foundation stones, pieces of iron and pottery, cut nailsetc. Many skulls have been found at this site. Also a knife with Franco-American printed on it, brass kettles and an old muzzle loading blood gun of the type granted from the English army by Queen Victoria to the Hudson Bay Company. Thsi trading post was run by a half breed named ZUM-ZUAY.

A small trading post was established some time shortly prior to 1900 at the present Cut Foot Sioux Inn site. The main building of the present Inn is part of the old trading post. The post was run first by WILLIAM FAIRBANKS. Later, it was run by his son-in-law HARRY SHEAR.

Logging in Cut-Foot-Sioux District.-

The last logging of dead and down timber shortly after Seeleye's time, around 1900. It was done at the south end of Cut-Foot-Sioux Lake. Here is to be found the first stand of Norway pine that seeded in after the early logging. This logging was done by the Tibbetts clan.

The first legal logging of green timber in the district was done by an Indian named A-NE-PE-GON (Sturgeon Fish) along the shores of Sand Lake about 1910 and also around Cut-Foot-Sioux and Third River. He employed almost no one but Indians. Geo. Farley, the first U.S.Ranger in Itasca County marked most of the timber on this sale. A-NE-PE-GON had two camps. He logged only one winter and then sold to Backus who logged the rest in 1918 to 1920. The United States government appropriated $8000.00 to build a monument to A-NE-PE-GON, but high water in Winnibigoshish had wiped out any trace of his grave and it could not be found so the money was never spent.

William Schultz Sr. of Lakewood Lodge worked for the A-NE-PE-GON camp in charge of burning slash. The rest of the Cut-Foot-Sioux district was logged by Jim Simpson for the Northland Pine Company.

Itasca County Hist.- from Custer notes -, Museum pieces, gune found on Big Fork.

Interview with George Davis.-

A couple of years ago while walking through the woods north of my place I saw a piece of iron sticking out of the ground. Pulling it out I found it was a gun barrel. I kicked around a little in the leaf mold and found another barrel and also a butt plate. The top rib between the barrels was still fast to one of the barrels. A couple of days ago my son Howard was looking ar around the same place and found another butt plate.

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Custer comment - I saw George a few days ago and he told me of fimding the second Butt palte. He and I took his boat and crossed the river. We took a shovel to dig with and walked over to the spot, which was about a half mile from the Davis home. In a short time I dug up the hammers and lock of the double barrel that Davis had found the barrels of. But we were sure there should be another gun as a second butt plate had been found. After digging around for an hour I found the other gun. It was covered with at least five inches of leaf mold. This last gun was a 38 cal. rifle. It was complete except for the magazine, which I suppose had rusted away. Right by the guns was a spot under the leaf mold where there was six or seven inches of ashes. So there must have been a camp fire here at some time. The ashes were also covered with leaf mold. George thought the ashes came from burning a hay meadow near by and the fire had run into the woods. But if this were the case a fire to make that much ashes would have killed the trees around and there were live oak trees here 18 inches in diameter. There was also some of the stock left on the rifle when I dug it up. It soon fell out when it reached the air. From the position of the guns I would say they had been left standing against a large oak tree. This oak is over two foot through and has blown down. George cut the trunkmup for fire wood about nine years ago. The double barrel had slid down the tree when it fell and layed under the uprooted stump. The falling of the tree might have tipped the barrel up so it stuck up. There was a large elm tree that had stood beside the stump. It looked as if the two trees had almost touched each other. The elm had died and broken off a couple of feet from the

ground. When it fell it knocked the rifle over and fell and laid across it. The double barrel was a muzzle loader with one London twist barrel. sometimes called Damascus barrel. Oldtimers say they used to make guns this way. One barrel was for shot the other for ball.

I showed the rifle to an oldtimer here and he said it is what is known as the 73 model Winchester.

It doesn't seem likely that anyone went off deliberately and left the guns as a gun was necessary in the early days. Two guns looks like two persons.

The spot where the guns were found is a couple of hundred feet from the banks of the river in the NE of the NE of Sec. 2 R.25 - Tp. 149. It is not a quarter of a mile from the spot where the indians used to hold their pow-wows, but across the river.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer. Indians.

Interview with Black Jack Dickson. (1)

I came to Itasca County in 1891. The M. & I. railroad was just starting out from Brainard toward Bemidji that year. The first settlers who brought stock into the northern part of the state was a group of southern settlers who settled around lake Itasca, but they lost most of this stock the first winter for lack of feed.

Chas, or Chief Drumbeater was one of the best and wisest old Indians in Itasca County in the early days. A son of Chief Drumbeater, Joice Drumbeater, is now living at Bena. The Chippewa tribe is full of Drumbeaters. In Wisconsin, Chief Drumbeater was known as White Feather. Chas. Drumbeater and his people all had homes around Pokegama lake. Chas. wife was a half-breed. Harry Drumbeater who lived up by Wirt was a step-son of Dutch Hank. John Smith lived somewhere between Bena and Cut Foot Sioux. He was known as Wrinkle Meat. He was not Capt. John Smith.

Capt. Lyons and Bob Mosomo were the ones who first got the government to establish a National Forest around Cut Foot Sioux. They signed papers for the forest many years ago. Lyons was the Captain of the steamboat Fawn, which ran between Aitkin and Grand Rapids in the early days.

Bowstring lake and river region was the home of more of the Indians around here than any other locality. Mrs. Antoine Ballenger's father, Big Fred Crow, was a cook for Ernie Fleming for many years. He cooked both on the river and at Fleming's hotel at Bena.

A missionary homesteaded the other side of the government dam at Leech lake. I don't remember his name. He is now preaching at Dora Lake. (He was Rev. L. H. Yost.)

I spent almost ten years on the Cut Foot Sioux contract, working for Sam Simpson, moregenerally known as Gin-pole Simpson. The old Skimmer Horn trail was the first road in here. It was an old government trail cut through from Deer River. It followed the continental divide as far as Skimmer Horn creek, which empties into Third river. It then ran north and east until it reached the border. It was first put through by the Government for the purpose of getting in supplies to surveying parties. When the country was first surveyed, it joined the old Sapadilla trail just before it crossed Dunbar Creek.

Notes by Custer: - Black Jack says he is a breed, but the Indians say don't let him fool you, he is not Indian but is a negro. He looks more like a breed Indian to me. He also seems to be acquainted with all of the Indians in this part of the country. He has also spent quite a lot of his life on a couple of reservations in Wisconsin. He has lived alone so much in later years that he seems to get a little jumpy when you talk to him, so I don't put too much faith in anything he told me.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with William Donnelly - (1)

I came to Itasca County in 1889. I spent the first winter around Grand Rapids, afterwards working around in different parts of the county until I moved here on what is called Sugar Bush Point on the north shore of Bowstring lake. The point is so named because the Rabbit family had a large sugar bush here. I settled here permanently in 1895, although I had filed on the land several years before.

When I settled here there were several open clearings on the point, that showed evidence of having been farmed, although to my knowledge the Rabbits never planted so much as a garden. Most of the Indians throughout the district raised corn and beans, and some of them raised squashes. The corn they raised was what we call rainbow flint, or squaw corn. It is nearly every color, red, blue and white, with all the shades between.

The Rabbit band who were in here claimed to have come from White Oak Point. Old Chief Chas. Rabbit had real curly hair and a heavy beard. Chas. generally wore a long handle-bar mustache. Several of the other Rabbits also had curly hair.

As far as the Rabbits ever having stock and farming or having furniture, I don't believe it, I don't care how many preachers say they did. I will still think it is just a story. It sounds about like Vance to me. There was only one fellow in this neck of the woods could come anywhere near Vance when it came to telling stories. That was old man Wallie at Wirt. He used to make Vance sit up and take notice. The story of the moose and wolves was really one of Wallie's stories that Vance used to tell and claim for his own.

When I first came here another fellow and I used to run a trap line as far north as Caldwell Brook. The only beaver in the country at that time were on the Brook. Our trap line used to run up along the chain of lakes to the north end of Dora Lake. From there we would take the Old Caldwell trail where it started north along Windago Brook. One of our camps was on Windago Brook, near a large cedar tree which was one of the trees blazed by Caldwell when he laid out his trail. The blaze had his stamp mark on it. I wouldn't be surprised if the tree was still there. The first time I was ever to Caldwell Brook it was full of logs, and lots of logs along the banks that folks said had been attached by someone so Caldwell could not move them. This was at least 45 years ago. The Caldwell's who settled over in Kinghurst township I think were in some way related to Caldwell who logged on Caldwell Brook. I think he was a nephew.

Joe Rabbit was sometimes called Bowstring Joe, but he is not the same Bowstring Joe who killed Caldwell. There were at least six Indians in here who were called Bowstring Joe. Joe Rabbit was a son of Maggie Rabbit. His father was a Finnlander by the name of Mattison. Frank Rabbit was also a son of Maggie, his father was an early logger in here. His name was Ford. I don't think Maggie was ever married.

The early Indians never bothered to bring meat home when they went hunting. Instead they moved the wigwam to where they had killed the meat. I remember one fall I was hunting ducks with an old doctor at the upper end of Bowstring lake. We met Bowstring Joe. He had had an accident and shot one of his arms off about at the elbow. Joe was gathering rice when we met him. The doctor asked him to let him see the arm. When the doctor undid the arm it made me sick. It was just crawling with maggots, and so full of rice beards and dirt you could not see the wound. After he had dressed it the doctold Joe to come and see him every day, and he would take care of it for him.

A couple of days later Joe came to have the arm dressed. The doctor had no equipment at my place to take care of it as he should, so he had to use what he had. He trimmed the flesh to some semblance of what it should be with a pair of old scissors, and sewed the skin over it with a common needle and thread. This he did without even so much as a shot of whiskey for Joe. Joe sat and watched the operation without even turning a hair, though I was almost sick before it was finished. Joe came a couple of times to have it dressed, but that was all. The doctor was sure Joe would die if he didn't have it dressed every day, but I think Joe lived till a couple of years ago.

Joe Lurch used to do some trapping and some trading with the Indians, but mostly he sold liquor. I remember meeting him and the sheriff one time, about where Mack now is. The sheriff had Joe and a barrel of whiskey. They were riding on a load of lumber. Joe afterwards got a government liquor license for $25.00. Of course this was supposed to be a navigators license, so Joe built a large raft and put a small building on it. This he put in the lake off his homestead. When anyone wanted to buy liquor Joe would take them aboard and pole the raft out into the lake, where he would sell them the liquor. A good many folks called him Muskrat Joe.

The old logging company used to have a tote road across the big bog north of Deer River. They say the continental divide runs through this bog. But one spring I paddled a canoe across the bog, following the old tote road, and I saw nothing to indicate there was a divide, as I never got out of the boat from the time I left Bowstring lake until I came to the high ground about three or four miles from Deer River.

The early Indians especially Captain John Smith used to say that at one time the beaver were thicker in here than the muskrats then were.

Jim McCash told me of being on a logging drive on the Mississippi some time in the early 80's or late 70's, when they were stopped at the Pokegama falls by Indians. The Indians held the drive up there for about three weeks, until the government sent help. He said it was something over the stumpage.

I was around Pokegama a lot during the early days, and I don't think there was ever a chapel there, although there were probably missionaries there with some of the early loggers as this was quite common. I don't see how anyone ever had the nerve to live on any of the islands there, as it seemed the lightning had a habit of striking them. Nearly every tree on the islands in the lake had been hit at one time.

When I first came here I sold quite a lot of oak timber to a logging outfit in Canada. This timber was cut into 28 foot lengths and hewed on two sides, to be used for timbers for railway cars. This was about the time the railroad was being put in to Winnipeg.

One of the reasons so many of the Indians died of small pox was the fact that when an Indian got the small pox the rest of the Indians became scared and ran off and left them to die or get well as best they could. And some of the early loggers were not much better, as the lumberjacks would pull out of camp and leave dozens of men there sick with it. Some would stay, but there would not be enough to half care for the sick.

The first school in here was known as the Taylor school. One of the early teachers afterwards became probate judge of Itasca county. I can't recall her name just now. Iver Erickson's house is made from the logs of that first school.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Mrs. Iver Erickson - (1)

I came to Township 147-25 in the spring of 1896. There were three families of use came together. The other families were Christie's and Mellhouse's. Iver had come up the fall before and put up a small house for us, so we had a place to go into when we brought our stuff. We came as far as Bowstring Creek on the logging train. We women rode in the engine, while the men folks rode on a flat car, as there was no passenger coach on the train at that time.

The three families of us each brought a carload of stuff with us. Besides our household stuff and machinery we had three cows, two calves and one horse, also a few chickens. At that time the train only came as far as Bowstring Creek. Christie's camped at Bowstring Creek while they built a large raft to carry their stuff down the creek and up the north shore of Bowstring lake. Mrs. Christie stayed at the camp and took care of the stock, while the men folks transported the stuff. Our stuff all had to be brought from Deer River by team, as the logging company would not haul it.

The first school in this township was just across the road from where my house now stands. It was in Sec. 15, but I don't know what lot. Old John Larson can tell though. The first teacher was Minnie Seady. She used to board at our house. I remember one night she came home and was telling us of having seen four or five big dogs when she was coming home. She said she whistled and tried to call them, but they ran into the woods. Iver and my father were afraid to tell her they were wolves for fear she would be afraid to go to school alone.

Chas. Rabbit was always called Chief Rabbit. I don't know if he was a chief or not, as lots of the Indians were called chief that I don't think really were. As far as I know Chas. had two sons, Joe and Sammy, and two daughters, Maggie & Mary. Little Sammy and Frank were Maggie's sons. Chas. Rabbit said his father was Chief Joe Rabbit, whose home was near Grand Rapids. When we came here the Rabbits had a few ponies and a lot of dogs, but I don't think they had any cattle until after they moved to Rabbit Point. I think they had one or two cows while they were there. They moved to the point somewhere around 1900. They were always moving around from one allotment to another.

The Indians all seemed to take their dogs and kids everywhere they went. Whenever you saw an Indian going down the trail you would have to look close to see whether there were more dogs or kids following along behind.

Old Chief Chas. Rabbit said the Indians were so thick in here before the small pox thinned them out that there was almost an Indian for every tree along the lake shore.

Itasca County History - Custer notes - Early Settlers - Big Fork valley

from interview with NELS FELSTET (1)

In the fall of 1893 I started into the woods from LaPrairie which was almost the last settlement at that time, as Grand Rapids had only a half dozen cabins, one store and a saloon at that time (this reported word for word although recorded facts differ from this,. He probably didn't stop in G.R.) I first went as far north as 63-24 which is now in Koochiching County. But I found nothing there that suited me so I started back. I came by way of Deer Lake where I found the first white man that I had seen since I had left Farm Camp (Rice River camp). This was at a logging camp on Deer Creek run by Loper and Rummery. I ate dinner at this camp before starting on. I finally came to the forks of the Rice and Big Fork rivers where there was already a settler by the name of "Tom" Neveux who had been there for about six months (newspaper items place him up there spring of 1892.) He thought it would be nice to have a neighbor so he helped me locate a place about a mile and a half from his place. This place is in Sec. 28 R. 26 Tp. 61. where I have lived ever since. My first winters supplies were bought at at Farm Camp (Rice River). If I remember right my flour that fall cost me close to $10 per 100 pounds. The Farm Camp was located on the banks of the Rice River The buildings looked almost new, like they had not been built more than a couple of years. The ends of the logs were still oozing pitch when I first saw it. It was built by Kehl and Deary. The first logs I saw on the Rice river were cut there, It was sure a shame the way they slaughteredt the timber. As I remember they took mostly only 40 foot stuff with at least a 12 inch top,-what they called boom sticks. The rest of the tree was left lying in the woods to rot. They would swamp roads to a tree that was of a size to suit them, fell it and haul the whole tree to the river. Some of these sticks were also hewed on two sides. I have seen Rice river full of them.

When I first came here there was still signs of the old Caldwell landing on the Big Fork river. This landing was between Harrison's Hill and Dora Lake, near a large meadow where it is said Caldwell cut hay for his stock. A man by the name of WALLIE built a store just above the landing. There was an old logging road ran north from the landing to Caldwell Brook. Using this road Caldwell did a lot of

logging in Pomoroy Township. He logged over most of what is now Pomoroy township and part of Grattan township. From the amount of logging he did I think he must have been logging here in 1880 asit must have taken several years to log all the land he is said to have logged. I knew Dr. Harrison quite well and at different times I spent several days at his place. This place was one of the most beautiful spots along the Big Fork. His place was only a few miles below the old Caldwell Landing. In fact, I was at Harrison's place when the State game warden arrested him for killing a moose. He claimed that he and a couple of other men were on the river with a light when a moose charged the boat. He claimed they tried to fight it off with the paddles but they finally had to shoot it to save their own lives. He took the head to a man in LaPrairie to have it mounted. As near as I can find the old Caldwell land on the Big Fork must have been about where old Wirt was afterward located. The meadows referred to was probably the HINKEN CREEK meadows.

I think it was at LaPrairie that the Warden got wind of that moose. Anyway they came and told him they would give him a certain number of days, I don't remember just how many, to appear in Grand Rapids. But he was a fiery old bird and he told them to heck with the number of days, he was ready to go with them right now.

I don't recollect just how the thing turned out but at the time it was said the trial cost the State close to $700.

It has been told that "Tom" Neveux and I furnished meat to camps. Tom may have b but I never did to ~~any extent~~ amounty to anything, although Tom and I did furnish lots of fish to camps especially to wanigans on the log drives in the spring. Tom and I have seen as many as 25 moose between our places and Harrison Hill.

The first white woman that I remember of right around here was my wife, whom I brought in in 1900. As I remember our oldest son Albert was the first white child born here. He was born in 1902. As near as I can remember KNUT BERGUM brought his family to the Big Fork valley in 1898or 99. I

t was in the

Itasca County Hist.- Custre notes - Early settlers, Big Fork Valley

NELS FELSTET (3)

It was in the winter of 1900-01 after the flood that took out all the hay made in the valley that Mrs. Bergum peeled "popple" poles and fed the bark to the cattle to keep them from starving. She had been here a year or two at that time. Bergums were across the river and upstream from my place.

In the old days the Nett Lake indians used to come down the Big Fork each fall and go over to Rice and Squaw lakes and pick rice.

COPY OF LETTER RECEIVED

Oberlin, Ohio
Jan. 13, 1941.

Mr. J. E. Shaw
Grand Rapids, Minn.

Dear Mr. Shaw,-

According to all the evidence known to me the Oberlin mission in Minnesota was restricted to Red and Leech Lakes. Mr Charles M. Gates of the Minnesota Historical Society has taken some interest in this subject, and he might be able to help you further.

Following are some of the sources of information on the story,-

(1) - James Peery Schell, In the Ojibway Coountry (Walhalla, N.D.-1913)

(2) - D. L. Leonard, The Story of Oberlin, (Oberlin, 1898) pp 329 on-

(3) - F. H. Foster - The Oberlin Ojibway Mission, Ohio Church History Society Paper Papers, II, 1 - 25. (Oberlin - 1892)

My historyb of Oberlin College to be bublished some time this year will also deal with it.

Yours sincerely,

Robert S. Fletcher
Associate Professor of History
Oberlin College.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Henry Gagnon - (1)

I, together with Bob Ring and Joe Bisheau came to Itasca county from Michigan in the fall of 1900. We went as far as Bowstring Creek on a M & R logging train. There we were met by Noah Fletcher with a canoe. We started up Bowstring creek, which is the crookedest thing you ever saw. There is one bend in the creek that takes three hours boating to travel, but if you know the creek you can unload your boat and portage not over a hundred yards and save travelling the whole bend.

Fletcher located me on the SE¼ of Sec. 23, T. 150, R. 26; Ring in NE¼ of Sec. 25, T. 150, R. 26; and Bisheau in NW¼ of Section 25, T. 150, R. 26. Bisheau only stayed on his place a few months. After working in the camps around here for the one winter he started for the west shore of Lake Superior.

We used to go to Deer River for supplies twice a year. At that time we could bring a boat up Harrison Creek as far as Bob Ring's place. There was water enough in the creek to bring a boat up to my place, but the last half mile of the creek was so crooked and full of willows that we never did.

One fall Bob and I started for Deer River. We got as far as Rice Lake when a storm came up. We sure thought we were goners. We never saw the other shore of the lake all day. We were trying all the time to reach the west shore, but we were making slow work of it, as we had to keep headed into the wind or be swamped. We broke a paddle, too, but that didn't make much difference, as it kept one of us busy bailing the boat all of the time anyway.

About dark we managed to make shore, but we were lost and it had been raining all day so everything was wet. We wandered around for a while trying to find a bit of high ground for a camp. We finally paddled up a small creek, and we heard someone trying to play a banjo. We tied up our boat and followed the sound. Finally we came to the wigwam of Chas. Rabbit. Here we stayed for several days, as we had to practically make ourselves a new boat. The boat was a strip boat, and it was almost shot. If we didn't have a job patching it with nothing but an axe! Dr. Harrison had left the country just before I came in. I don't remember just when the hill was logged off, but White Fish Lodge is built from logs that came from Harrison hill.

Caldwell used to have a landing on the Big Fork, where old Wirt used to stand. He used to have a road that went down the river until it came to Fletcher creek, up Fletcher creek to Howlin Lake, then over to Fox lake, from there to Sand lake, then to Round or what is now Gunderson Lake. From there it went through to Turtle lake, then to Grand Rapids.

A man named Lovell homesteaded the place just east of me, but they didn't ever live on the place. They went to Duluth to see if they had to live on the place; when they found they did Mr. Lovell relinquished his claim, and his wife took it as stone and timber claim. I don't know just how they acquired so much land there. (Mrs. Lovell says that in some way they paid the taxes for a number of years and so acquired title to it. they have fourteen forties in this one piece, and seven forties in another block. They intended to homestead part of it, but the mosquitoes were so bad when they came up to look at it that they gave it up. I don't know if she meant back taxes or not.)

ITASCA COUNTY HIST. - Biographival - Bonniwell

William J. Gibbs was born in London, England, June 17, 1860, and was baptized in St. Pauls church in London, England.

Sir Walter Gibbs was an uncle of William J. Gibbs and left a large estate in England of which W. J. Gibbs is an heir, but to get this estate he would have to live in England, and his wife wasn't in favor of leaving America. Wm. J. Gibbs came with his parents to America in 1866. Being only six when he came here there wasn't anywhere on earth wehere he wanted to live but in America. They came to and established their home at Omro, Wisconsin. W. J. Gibbs went to Chicago when a young man and clerked in a store there. While there he met and married Amelia Matilda Ruger on Dec. 24, 1888 at Council Bluffs, Iowa.

In the fall of 1896 owing to ill health, W. J. Gibbs and wife came to Itasca County, Minn. and took a homestead in 145-25 and in 1901 he established a store at Bowstring on the same land, then on April 4th, 1902 he established Bpwstring postoffice and was appointed postmaster there from then until 1910 at which time he established a postoffice and general store at Inger, Minn. The Bowstring postoffice was then moved from the Gibbs homestead at Bowstring to Robert Christie's home at Bowstring. Carl Christie took over the store and post-office at his fathers death, and he is still postmaster at Bowstring. The rural routes are all around Bowstring now so that makes the work much lighter for the postmaster.

W. J. Gibbs became a pensioned postmaster a year agox- 1940, and he still runs a general store at Inger and hauls all the freight for the store himself from Deer River to Inger, a remarkable record for a man 81 years old. Mr. Gibbs says "Bowstring" is the correct way to spell it, not Bow String.

Obtained in an interview with Mr. W. J. Gibbs at Inger, Minn. May 19, 1941.
by Mary Bonniwell.

Itasca County History - Northwestern part - Custer.

Interview with W. J. Gibbs - (1)

I came to Deer River in 1896. At that time Frank Vance was running a store there. He had just taken up a claim on the Popple river. Frank lived at that time where the Herried untertaking parlor now stands. It was here his daughter, Virginia, was born. Frank claimed she was the first white child born in Deer River. His youngest daughter, Irene, was born on the Popple river, the same year they moved there.

I first came to Vances on the Popple river and ran a stopping place there for a couple of years. I had come to Itasca county to die. Dunk McDonald told Vance, "What does that fellow want to come up here for? The d--- fool won't live a month." In fact I thought the same. But I have lived to help bury them all, and I am now 82 years old.

In 1902 I was appointed postmaster at Bowstring. I used to carry the mail on my back from Deer River in winter, as there was no trail or road that you could get a horse over. In the summer I brought it in by pack sack and boat. A few years later I carried it from Marcell. That was after the railroad came to Turtle Lake. I built a store at Inger in 1910 and was appointed postmaster there in 1912. For several years I was postmaster at both Bowstring and Inger.

When I first came to this part of the country, there was an Indian buried in a tree where the Bowstring creek and Jessie Creek come together. At the time I came in here there was only one white man between Vance's place on the Popple and the mouth of Bowstring creek. There was an old Frenchman located at the mouth of the creek, but his name I can't recall.

At the time I built my store here at Inger, Inger was only an Indian village, and so it has remained to this day. The site occupied by my store is the beginning of the old Indian portage from Bowstring river to Cut Foot Sioux lake. This old portage was used by the Indians to cross the continental divide, the Bowstring river being in the Hudson Bay watershed, while Cut Foot Sioux lake is in the Gulf of Mexico watershed. This old portage was just a little over four miles long. The present road from Inger to Cut Foot Sioux follows the old portage almost to the dot most of the way, that is, until it reached turtle mound. The road leaves the old portage there and goes more toward the west. At one time the Indians had quite a battle here, at the beginning of the portage.

When the present road was put through it was necessary to make a cut on both sides of the river. A great deal of old stuff was dug up in making this cut, human bones of all kinds, arrow heads, war clubs, and the like.

A couple of years after I came in to this district a school was opened at Frank Vance's. I don't remember who the pupils or the teacher were.

Vance used to tell some mighty tall stories. Sometimes he would start telling me one, and I would just look at him and say "Now, Frank." He would just laugh and say "Hell, can't a guy have a little fun?" I remember when I was running the stopping place on the Popple. Some fellows from down by Glencoe stopped at my place looking for some land to settle on. Frank filled them so full of yarns that he had them afraid to ever get out of the boat. One morning he went out to harness his horse, and some way, while he was putting the harness on the horse one of the horses hit him alongside of the head, and knocked some hide off, besides making a large black and blue spot. After he had finished harnessing he came running to my place and wanted us all to get our guns and go with him. He said a big bear had his him along side of his head as he came out of the barn door. This was too much for the

tenderfeet, so they left within an hour. So the country lost three more settlers. I tried to tell them it was only one of Vance's stories, but he could lie more convincing than I could tell the truth.

The old Indians here say there is a large cache of guns buried somewhere along the river, but for some reason they have never been able to locate them. Since my time here I don't know how many times young fellows have spent weeks looking for them.

Itasca County History -- Indians -- Custer.

Joe Goggleye, Indian, age 81, 1933. (From Cut FootSioux Ranger Station.)

Joe Goggleye is the Indian who worked for Vance in his first wild rice business. He and his squaw did the threshing and roasting.

Pokegama means a widening of the main river. There were five main totems or bands among the Chippewas. All of these totems were to be found at Inger. They were (1) weasel (2) mink, (3) eagle, (4) bear, (5) rabbit.

Ravens Point Trading post was a Hudson's Bay, trading furs each spring from Lake Superior.

Four Chippewas, four Sioux on other side one battery.

Inger was Sioux village, Sioux made mounds. Turtle mound represents help from God.

Out across swamp in shape of snake.

Next place was point on Winnie

John Lyons piloted first boat on Mississippi.

Chippewa was turned around

Syeis was first of Sioux around Pine & Dow Minn. when Joe was small boy.

Pillager band at Leech lake and Ottertail lake were main fighting band of Chippewas. Most of fighting of Chippewas done by them. Pillagers always went first, other bands followed.

First Chippewa village in county at mouth of Pigeon river.

Note by Custer:Some of this I could not get head or tail of, but maybe you can. Wakefield thinks the battery referred to was cannon, probably an old trading post with a stockade.

I came in to the valley with my family in the year of 1902. Although I had located on my place and squatted on it for two or three years before bringing my family in. As nearly as I can remember I came in myself the year President McKinley was assassinated or the year following. (1901 or 1902)

I brought my family by way of Turtle Lake. Mr. Welte brought us by stage from Turtle Lake to the forks of the Big Fork and Rice rivers. We then went by boat up the Big Fork to Mitchell's place. From there I had blazed a trail to my homestead.

Sometime about the time I came in a big wind storm blew down and broke up a million feet or more of pine. This was northeast of Craig (or where Craig now is.) Jeff O'Connell logged this timber. I had spent several summers logging in Oregon, but decided to spend a couple of winters logging in Itasca county. After spending a couple of years in the Big Fork valley, I somehow forgot to go back to Oregon. I worked for the Itasca Lumber Co. the first two or three winters, spending my summers on my homestead, after which I started logging for myself. This I continued for a number of years.

In the year of 1905 a school was started in a small cabin in our door yard. The first teacher was Pirl Philips. There were six pupils, Philix and Philis Barrard (Not sure of spelling), Lee, Selma, Mary and Lula Lofgren. The Barrard children walked four and one-half miles through the woods.

In the year of 1905 or 1908 a logging railroad came to Round Lake, a distance of about five miles from our place. The railroad came to the LeBarge Camp on Round Lake. A few years later I also had a camp on Round Lake.

I recall seeing my first beaver about this time. One day in the fall I was walking through the woods on my own place, when all at once I was in water. I had never remembered seeing water there before, and as the summer had been quite dry I started looking around to see how come. I didn't know for a while whether I was lost, or what. After looking around a bit, I came to a beaver dam. There was only a small trickle of water, but they had put in a dam and had quite

a good sized pond. Here later, I saw my first beaver. There were plenty of old dams to show they had been here at some time earlier, but these dams were all old. I think the lack of popple on which they feed caused them to leave.

About this time I brought in my first team. I rode one, and led the other from Grand Rapids. I went from Grand Rapids to Johnson Lake, from there to Farm Camp (Rice River), from Farm Camp I went to Coon Lake (over in Scenic State Park), from there to Big Fork. The trip took three days.

Farm Camp was so called because it was here the logging company pastured their horses in the summer. The same goes for places known as ranches. Some of these also had wild meadows where they put up hay. I followed old logging roads all of the way except from Big Fork to my place, from where we had a trail cut out.

Mrs. Gustafson.

It seems odd when we came here we had no way to go except to walk, and no roads to walk on even. Yet every Sunday we spent with one of our neighbors or they spent the day with us. We just put the children on our backs and started out. In those days we were just like one big family. Now we have a good road right past our door and a car to drive, yet it seems we never get off the place, let alone visit our neighbors.

When we first came to the valley you could see nothing but trees, and if you looked straight up in some places you couldn't see the sky.

One day when Gust was away in the woods a couple of rabbits started hopping around from one brush pile to another in the yard. In making a clearing there had gotten to be quite a few brush piles around the house. My oldest son, seeing the rabbits, began pestering me to let him take his father's gun and shoot them. As he was only about six years old, of course I wouldn't let him. But he kept after me until I decided to shoot them myself to stop his bothering me. So I took Gust's 12 gauge double barrelled shotgun from the wall and stepped out. I knew nothing of guns. That is, I had never handled them; but I had seen Gust use it, so I broke it open and loaded it. I closed it and cocked both hammers.

I took what I still think was good aim and pulled both triggers. OH! OH! will I ever forget that day. I didn't kill the rabbit, but I was not sure I had not killed myself. At least, I knew I was crippled for life. My ears rang, my head spun around, and my shoulder must be broken, or how could it hurt so?

I found out what kind of a kick a man gets from hunting, but I had a plenty, thanks!

(It is said Gust Gustafson has at least one of every kind of tree native to this part of the country growing in the grove around his home.)

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Mike Guthrie - (1)

We moved to Busti township in the spring of 1902. At that time I was a boy of about fifteen.

The flat rock rapids are between Effie and Craigville on the Big Fork river. Not long after we moved there I ran across the remains of an old camp. As nearly as I can remember, I would say it was somewhere in Section 12. This old camp was almost rotted away. The building was probably sixty feet by forty feet, and made of the largest Norway pine logs I have ever seen used for building purposes. It had had a split pole floor, and also a roof of split poles and cedar shakes. Only a couple of the bottom tier of logs remained.

The reason I say it was an old camp was that I found another building which looked as if it had been the barn. Around this fuilding I found any number of ox shoes. After finding the buildings it was not hard to trace the old logging roads. These old roads had popple trees growing in them at that time large enough to have made saw logs. The old stumps from the old logging operations that were to be found around there had all been chopped with an axe. There were no signs of any of them having been cut down with a saw. I have talked with a good many old men of this country, and I have never been able to find anyone who remembers of there ever having been any logging done in that part of the country at that time. It must have been some outfit probably from Canada stealing timber in there before this land ever was surveyed.

This old camp was on the north side of the river. These are probably the same buildings Warner found, as it could not have been far from the location of the buildings he spoke of. I don't think it is possible that it could have been a trading post, as it was too far from any stream or lake. I have seen a good many old trading posts and also the sites where they have stood, and I can't think of ever having seen one that was not on a lake or stream or an old portage. According to Warner, these buildings he found were on none of these.

As for the Tamarack voting precinct, that was probably some logging camp, as they had a voting place at nearly all of the old camps. I doubt very much if a lot of these old camps ever went to the trouble of being registered with the county as voting precincts, and it was not unusual for some of them to poll over 200 votes. Tamarack was probably one of these.

The first winter I was here the Keewatin Lumber Co. used Farm Camp. They put out close to ten million feet of logs that year. They landed about six million feet on Pelican lake. They also had a camp on the Rice river, just above where Big Fork now stands, that year. They afterwards sold out to the Price Bros. Lumber Co. who later went to Canada and are now known as the Shevlin Pine Lumber Co.

Itasca County History - Custer notes - Early settlers- Big Fork Valley

SEVERN HANSON - (1)

In the spring of 1900 I bought the minutes of a piece of land from a Frenchman in Bemidgi by the name of GAY MINIX. This land I had never seen but he said one forty was all white pine. They told me there was no use of going to Duluth to file; that I could file in Cass Lake by mail. But it took me almost f four months to get my papers back. A big irishman by the name of Murphy came up and built me a little cabin. It took us four days to come from Deer River. We spent the rest of the summer on the claim, but when we returned to Deer River in the fall for supplies some of the fellows there talked me into staying in Deer River that winter and cutting cedar for JOHN RYAN, as they told me I was too short of money to winter on the homestead. At the time I came here I was the only settler between Vance's and Bena except for Frank Calwell. This Frank Calwell located my friend Murphy on a claim for the sum of $50, but when Murphy went to file he found the land already belonged to some lumber company. Calwell had three sons. One of these soms was killed by Bowstring Joe and his brother Bowstring Jim. I guess it was Bowstring Joe who did the killing. But in some way he come clean and got out of it. Calwell is supposed to have been the first settler in Kinghurst township. Calwell had been here a long time when I came.

At the time I came Vance had a herd of close to 40 head of cattle. Calwell alwas told how he was some day going to be the largest stock man in Itasca County but he never had over a half a dozen head.

Vance always claimed his oldest daughter, Virginia, was the first white child born in Deer River and that his daughter Irene was the first one born in Kinghurst township.

The Old Caldwell trail was the only trail in here for many years. It come right pastvour door. After following along the east sideo of my place to the NE corner it turned east crossing the Rice river on a floating bridge between the Colwell place and the DAHLQUIST place, it then turned north following the sand ridge and up through the hardwoods. From the look of this trail it must have seen lots of use before I came here. The first bridge in the township with county help was built across the P.

SEVERN HANSON (2)

was built across the Popple river at the Vance place, SE¼ of Sec.15. This bridge was built by BILL EVANS. Just west of the north end of the bridge is where Vance started the wild rice business. He dug a pit in which an old Indian by the name of "GOGGLEEYE" and his squaw hulled the rice by tramping it with their feet. It was then roarted in two big iron kettles. I have one of the old kettles having paid Vance $1.50 for it after he had made his rice plant, which I think was the first mill ever built to handle wild rice. It stood on the old site of the pit and kettles.

The first postoffice in Kinghurst was at BertvCongdon's. It was known as the Pop Popple post office. It was located where the Popple post-office now is. The mail ca came from Bena, generally by horseback. I think one of the Congdon boys was the first white child born in Kinghurst Tp. In 1905 0r 1906 the P.O. was moved to my pl place, where it was for 6 years. It then was moved to Vance's trading post. 21 yerrs ago last August it was moved to its present location. The first year the mail came from Northome the government would not pay a mailcarrier so we took turns going after the mail. I myself carried the mail 8 years, four from Bena and four from Northome.

MRS. HANSON, by interview,-

It was easy to get married in the early days. I remember on e of the Colwell boys bringing home a young squaw. They were married by the simple process of walking around the stove a certain number of times. No license was needed or the like. The first store in Wirt was started by old man Wallie in 1899 or 1900.

I homesteaded the S ½ of NE¼ Sec. 34,R.27-Tp.150.

Custer comment,-Severn says Frank Colwell must have been related to Caldwell as he made his living stealing timber. The Colwell boy was stabbed and Severn says, s scalped. Severn says there was an old portage just south of his place from Rice to Squaw lake. When he came here it was cut out so wide you could almost drive a team through it. It is still visible.It is almost on the line between Sec. 34, Tp 149 and Sec. 3 Tp. 148 R. 27.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

GEO. HAUCK. (1)

I came to the valley in 1901. We came on the M. & R. R. as far as Bowstring Hill. At that time it was the head of the railroad. The following year the railroad came to Big Turtle Lake. From Bowstring Hill we went to Bowstring River, then down the river to Bowstring Lake to Sand Lake, to Rice Lake, to Dora Lake, then down the Big Fork river to my claim.

Noah Fletcher located me on the NW¼ of Sec. 4, T. 149, R. 25. At that time Chief Busti had wigwams scattered along the river. I had to tear down one of them when I built my cabin, as it sat right where I wished to build.

Dr. Harrison spent his last summer here the year I came. It was he who dug the cut off on the big bend of the river to shorten the route down river from his place.

I cast my first vote in Itasca County at the Itasca Logging Camp, either on Bass Lake or Kill Deer Lake. I remember at that time that Backus brought two flat car loads of lumberjacks there to vote. I don't remember what they called the precinct at that time.

The old Caldwell camps and landing at Wirt were still there at the time I came. This was just across the road from where the Wirt school now stands. It is said Caldwell's men at this camp also had small pox. I remember well old Busti's sugar camp in Sec. 2, T. 150, R. 25, as Ross Walley (at that time called Little Busti) and I killed a moose in the river and took most of it to Busti's band, who were camped at the sugar bush making sugar.

Liberty Township was first part of Wirt Township. It was divided from Wirt sometime between 1905 and 1907. The first school was held in the home of Chas. Swatas, in the SW¼ of Sec. 20, T. 150, R. 25. Miss Moran was the first teacher, and called the school Liberty School. The township was first called Wirt, but was renamed Liberty after the school.

Ross Walley went by the name of Busti for many years. Chief Busti himself gave him the name. He used to call him Little Busticoggan. Ross was for several years employed by the U. S. Forest Service. The last I knew of him

he was in the Regional Forest Headquarters at Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Our dances were held at most any house we could get to, but most of them were held at Frank Brusewitz home. Mr. & Mrs. Cool used to furnish most of the music. Sometimes Henry Hinken furnished the music. I remember one night we went to Frank's, and it rained so the music couldn't get there. We pushed the women in to Frank's in a boat. We men took off our shoes and hung them around our necks, then we walked along and pushed the boat ahead of us, with the women and children in it. The music couldn't get there, but we had come to dance, and dance we were going to, music or no music. Frank had an old mouth harp, so we made him get it out. He would play it a while for us to dance by, then he would whistle a while. But the mouth organ was too old, it played out before morning. So it ended up by Frank whistling all the time. Poor old Frank, by morning his leps were so swollen he could hardly whistle, and he could hardly talk for several days. But we all had lots of fun anyway.

The first logging in here was done by Kehl & Deary, who stole most of the best timber in the Bass Lake district. At the same time Will Long was busy stealing the cream of the timber around Dora Lake and north of Wirt.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer notes -

The Custer notes on the Itasca Indians were gotten from the notes of Indians collected by Gerald Horton, forest ranger, who was stationed at Cut Foot Sioux Station for the approximate period of 1906-1934. He was interested in legends and stories to be heard among the old timers and made his collection. His chief helper seems to have been a breed by the name of "Dave Smith", said to be a step-son of Captain John Smith. This Dave Smith was a son of a white man known as Indian Bill Smith whose Indian wife later married Captain John Smith. Most of the data was collected between 1930 and 1934. Dave Smith got it from some of the older Indians but does not always state just from whom nor does he give the reasons why his informants should be deemed reliable. There are many things in the notes that are correct as to place, person and incident but off on dates, such as his estimate on Beralge.

One of the most elusive of the evidently authentic data has to do with the missions that were on Winnibigoshish at one time. These missions are either some established by Gilfillan or his helpers or by the Ohio Band from Oberlin, Ohio. The mention of Mr. Wright points to the latter group. Have written Oberlin University at Oberlin, Ohio to see if they have any data on it. There was a Presbyterian Semihary connected with that school about 80 or 90 years ago and the Indian Missionaries evidently came from there.

The ranger station at Cut Foot was built in 1903. This Station has the original Dave Smith notes and Custer got most of his stuff from these notes but did not copy them entirely. It is so far from him that I do not like to send him back so I will try to get them to send the copies to me for examination or if this is not possible I will try to get over there myself.

Custer reports that while there he was talking to the assistant ranger and mentioned the rumored snake mound but the ranger had not heard of it. Later one of the head men of the Chippewa council came to the Station and this ranger said they were having their usual long chat when he thought of the snake mound a and asked the fellow about it. He says the Indian shut up at once. Acted as if he

had not heard the question and soon left although he usually had to close up to get rid of him. He said he did not want to press the question when the Indian acted that way as he did not want his ill will.

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The first logging in the Winnibigoshish district was dome in 1896 or 1897. It was what was know as dead and down logging. A man by the name of SEELYL too k this timber out for a Grand Rapids firm. This was on the Pigeon river. Seelye's contract called for the logs to be in Lake Winnibigoshish before he would be paid. It was a year of low water, and the Pigeon had very little water and Seelye had to build a series of six dams to get the logs down to the lake. This took time and money and the time came when Seelye was not able to pay his help. He finally talked the meni into helping finish the drive so they could get their money but for a couple of weeks the men lived on moose meat and blue berries before the job was finished.

LEW HARMAN INTERVIEW - I worked on a log drive on the Pigeon river in 1897 or 98. At the time I was only about 16 years old. The drive was run by a man by the name of Seelye and his foreman was BARNEY McGINNIS. The camp was located on the west shore of upper Pigeon Lake . This was dead and down timber. The loggers then called it dead and dying timber. The timber was taken out for some one in Grand Rapids and the contract said the logs had to be in Winnibigoshish before Seelye was paid.The drive was held up on account of low water and as the men could not get paid till See Seelye land ed his logs we had to see the thing through or go without our pay. For a couple of weeks all we had to,eat was moose meat and blueberries. Captain John Smith of Sand Lake shot the moose to furnish the meat. This was about the time of the Indian trouble at Walker and the government sent a bunch of soldiers up to propect us from the Indians. They did not need to go to that trouble as Capt. John Smith and his band were friendly with the loggers. I remember one of the Lieutenants knocked one of his men flat for threatening John Smith with his gun.

After the drive was over I went to Deer Riverand tried to cash my check in a saloon. The bartender thought I was just a kid so he took my check and told me I could have all the drinks I wanted but that he would hot cash the check till later. I was big for my age and I watched my chance and jerked the check from his hand and ran for it. Some of the men told me I better get out of town as the bartender was town marshall. So over

So after supper I walked up the railroad track to Grand Rapids. Thus I got out of th the country with both the check and my hide.

 [King Stafford]

State Auditor of Minnesota, The State Capitol, St. Paul, May 27th, 1941

Mrs. Mary M. Bonniwell,
Box 422
Deer River, Minnesota.

Dear Mary:

I believe I could write almost a full volume concerning my recollections and experiences as the son of Cyrus and Minnie King, from the 2nd of April, 1902, when they went into the wilderness north of Deer River, and for the five years following when we all lived in the one-room homestead shack.

Frankly, I don't know exactly how far to go or where to begin.

It appears that mother, having been seriously ill, was told by her doctor that she should have a complete change of scenery and of climate. Believe it or not, she was a tiny little thing, weighing only some hundred and ten to a hundred and fifteen pounds, and so dad, in the winter of 1901, came up to Deer River and made some investigations concerning homestead property. Both he and mother were the children of pioneers, dad having been the first male white child born in Middleville township in Wright County, and mother having been the second daughter of James and Elizabeth Cooper who settled in Fair Haven, Stearns County, in 1857. In any event, dad reported back and several of his friends in Wright County decided that they would go along and the group would establish a new colony in northern Minnesota. The families represented were headed by Levi Cochran of Smith Lake, still living at Big Fork, John Coolen of Delano, who was subsequently killed by a falling tree, Sam Gordon of Annandale and his grown son, William, both of whom are now dead, old Man Lane, whose first name I do not now recall, John Rahier of Annandale, his son-in-law, Guthrie, who was Mike's father, Orville Dakin, who had the biggest feet of any man in the community, a retired Norwegian sea captain by the name of Wenaas for whose daughter, Effie, the post office and town of "Effie" was subsequently named. You will remember that she married Perry Coffron, and I believe is now widowed but still is running a summer resort on the north side of Bow String Lake.

Subsequently John Peterson and the two Brushaber brothers filed on claims in 62-26. Out of the original group most of them filed in 62-26 although I think the Guthrie homestead was in 62-25. Subsequently the children of these people attained legal age and took homesteads of their own.

Flora Cochran, now Mrs. Charles Coolen of Big Fork, and her sister, Forrest, now Mrs. Hjalmar Bjorge, also of Big Fork, filed in 62-27. Also in the original group was an old German by the name of Lorenz who also took a claim there, and a little farther to the south, toward the town of Big Fork, Fred Johnson and his brother-in-law, John Dahlberg, filed on adjoining claims. Right close to them was another Scandinavian, whose name I have temporarily forgotten, who filed also and grew to great favor in my boyish eyes by killing a black bear with an axe.

The point of the whole thing is that these people were neighbors, and in many cases friends and relatives of one another, and they all went in there at approximately the same time. The Rahiers and Johnsons, the Dahlbergs, Guthries and Phillipses still stay in the immediate vicinity. Most all of the others are gone, even including those of the second generation.

We brought our household goods into Deer River by train and then reshipped them on the old "gut and liver" north to Turtle Lake. The winter before dad had built a frame house in sections and had shipped it up and had set it up in the woods. After staying overnight at John Lundeen's stopping place on the south side of the lake, we loaded our goods on two sleighs and in company with the Gordons and Billy Rowan, and perhaps others, started by sled along old tote roads and portages to Big Fork, thence north along the old Kinney trail until we reached the big meadows on Borrowman's Creek, and then we turned off into the wilderness and followed the creek until we came to the Gordon shack and subsequently our own.

One roomed though it was, our house was the only frame house in the township. We had no schools, no roads and no churches. The first year after we were there, the men folks of the community got together and held a "bee" during which time they cleared half an acre of land which they thought was in Section 16, but which actually was across the section line in 20--cut down the trees, hewed the logs and built a school house. Dad taught there all the rest of the time we were up in the woods, the first year without recognition and without pay. Strangely enough a good many of the youngsters who went to school while he was there subsequently taught their own schools. Because of his peculiar ability to teach and make the teachment stick, not one of his pupils ever failed a state examination, and almost all of us are exceptionally well founded in educational fundamentals mentally. We had no educational frills whatever, but we learned our basic reading, writing and arithmetic, and our history, geography and physiology so well that after thirty years I imagine that most of us have a better educational background than our youngsters who have had twice or three times the opportunities we had.

After we had built the school house, mother developed a Sunday School program and a Ladies Aid program, and the building became not only the center of our community activities, but it became the place in which one or two itinerant preachers, amongst whom was the lumberjack sky pilot Higgins, came to preach to us. I think it is obvious that there were no frills to our religious training either. We were preached to with the old fashioned and very wholesome hell fire and damnation theory, and we were so close to the soil that all of us developed a most significant humility and tolerance not only amongst ourselves, but for all people.

It is true that we had our little bickerings in the community, but the very fact that we were so completely dependent upon the forest for our very livlihood made us probably as completely cooperative as any community could be. It is obvious that we were all very poor. There probably in the beginning were only four or five horses and six or seven cows amongst all of the families who had settled there. The milk and butter, however, that was made was traded around and exchanged, usually on a friendship basis, as was the meat we killed in the woods. With the exception of bacon and salt pork, probably none of us ate any meat for five or six years excepting the game we killed and the fish we caught.

We could grow any kind of vegetables desired, and while most of us were poorly clothed according to modern standards, and while there were patches on the trousers of most of us, we always had plenty to eat and were to all intents and purposes more independent than anytime since.

If one family was sick or suffered a fire or an accident, or something like that, everyone saw to it that they were taken care of. No one expected thanks, and the charities were given wholehandedly, openly, simply, and solely because we wanted to help one another.

I remember instances of mutual helpfulness, willingly and promptly given amongst the settlers in the community. It was quite common for us to help one another in the building of barns and houses just as we had done on the community school house.

I remember one instance where dad and Sam and Will Gordon, and Zade Cochran, amongst others, carrying an injured man on a stretcher made out of a blanket and a couple of poles from about six miles north of our house clear to Big Fork, a distance of perhaps sixteen miles through the woods. I remember another time that Billy Rowan fell out of a tree, in which he was sitting waiting for a deer to come into a lick, and broke a couple of ribs and otherwise injured himself so that he couldn't travel. He crawled part way to our house where we found him. The next morning dad carried him on his back into Big Fork and the doctor. As big and husky as dad was in those days, he used to grin about that trip and say that it was "rather tough".

All the families killed their own meat in the woods and shared it with their neighbors. Many a time the Lanes and Gordons and Cochrans have brought us over pieces of deer and moose meat, and many a time as a kid I have lugged my share of meat around to them. I don't believe that a pound of meat was ever permitted to spoil regardless of the weather in which it was killed, and we never took more than we needed.

The second year we were on the homestead dad started the petitions and carried the work on through until a road was laid out almost straight north from Big Fork for about eight miles, and thence west a mile north a mile and west again--which took in the western part of the township. Even to this day it is still known as the "King" road, and was the first regularly accredited highway in the township although other logging roads, and tote roads, particularly the Kinney trail, had been in use for years.

John Rahier, Mike Guthrie's grandfather and a civil war veteran, was given the job of carrying the mail from Big Fork originally to his own house, which was about four miles east of where we lived. That was the first accredited mail route in the neighborhood, and subsequently the post office was established in the residence of Captain Wenaas and the post office was named after his daughter, Effie.

During all of this time Itasca County reached from its present southern boundary north to Canada. In 1906, however, the county was divided east and west along the north township line of 62-26, and Koochiching County was developed out of the north portion. This division threw the county commissioner districts out of balance, and John A. Johnson, Governor, appointed dad to be commissioner at large pending the redevelopment of the five required commissioner districts. From then on, and until 1922, when he died,

dad served continuously as county commissioner in County Commissioner District No. 1. He represented the County Commissioners organization, having helped to organize the group, and was the first president of the Northern Minnesota Development Association. During his term of years as county commissioner, he developed a plan of a state-wide system of trunk highways which was subsequently embodied in the so-called "Babcock law", and is now in force and effect in the state.

I think dad worked better than he knew, for he told me one time that I would live to see the day when there would be five thousand miles of hard surfaced highways in Minnesota. We now have almost eleven thousand.

So then we see that dad was the first school teacher, and was responsible for the first highway in the township. Mother and he lived in the first and only frame house there, and she organized the first Ladies Aid and the first church and Sunday School was held in the one-roomed log school house which the community had put up in its first community "bee".

Meantime, Fred Johnson had carried in on his back a plough from Big Fork to his homestead, a distance of about six miles, and the first furrow that was turned there he turned along the top of an old deserted beaver dam.

I don't recall who brought the first cattle into the community, but I suspicion it was either Johnson or John Rahier.

During these early days John Coolen was killed by a falling tree as he was clearing additional land, and Mike Guthrie's father was killed, as I recall, when the top chain broke on some logs going into the Namakan landings in 62-25.

Right here I think you could get valuable information from the old files of the Big Fork Settler, which Saunders at Big Fork must still have, and obviously Roslund of Grand Rapids must have a wealth of information as well as Wolfe at Deer River in the files of the old "Itasca News".

You might bear in mind that Levi Cochran and his daughter still live at Big Fork, that Nelson Phillips is at Effie, and that Dick McGraw still lives in his original homestead shack built probably in the spring of 1901--they could give you an amazing background of recollection and experience.

After dad and mother moved to Deer River, dad established a law office and immediately became superintendent of schools. You are probably as familiar with his work as superintendent of schools as I am. Perhaps his greatest achievement in that job, outside of the fine educational system he developed for us all, was the work and effort which he put into the building of a new school building and dormitory, which to this day, as far as I know, is the only institution of its kind in the state. You will recall that he has never been given proper recognition for this work, but the fact remains that his was the idea and his was the original plan out of which that school was developed.

Meantime, as county commissioner he entered into the development of a system of roads which brought him the continued friendship and respect of all western Itasca County.

Meantime, mother aided in the development of the original Methodist Ladies Aid, and these women, together with the help of all the townspeople, without regard to religion, developed the plan and raised the money which built the Methodist Church in Deer River. You will recall that after dad died, mother became clerk of the school board and served for several years as matron in the dormitory.

It might be well to recall that dad was a great believer in self government and constantly opposed centralization of authority. When he was chairman of the legislative committee of the state organization of county commissioners in 1920, he wrote, amongst other things, the following paragraph which I quote:

> "Let us stand in solid column for the fullest local self-government in town, village and county, using every just means against the insidious encroachment of the state upon local rights."

Dad had been born a Republican, but had been weaned away from the party by the enthusiasm and oratory of William Jennings Bryan, with whom he became a close and intimate friend, and whose teachments of Jeffersonian democracy he followed to the day of his death with one exception. He had been active in Democratic politics, and for years Itasca County was one of the Democratic strongholds, but the party had seemed to lose its force and effect, and along about 1918 dad joined with other men of independent thought in the state, many of whom were Democrats, in the building of a party he thought would give a greater percentage of representation to the common man. He went in, therefore, in the original councils of the Farmer-Labor party, and was its nominee for governor, but left the party and broke with the leaders because of what he thought was a violation of their trust.

Personally, I think he was the only truly great man I ever have known. He never violated private confidence or a public trust. In all the years I lived with him and mother, I think I have never sat down with them alone to any meal. His door was always open to anyone who passed by, and his hospitality was limited only by the amount he had to give. He was never too busy or too sick or too tired to go somewhere in behalf of someone else, or to do something which he believed would benefit his neighbor or his community. His charities were so great that despite an amazing energy he never accumulated any money. He was forever gentle and courteous, and had that indefinable personality which caused men and women who had never perhaps even heard of him to stop and turn around to look at him as he passed by.

If greatness is reflected in vision and intellect, in charity and kindliness, in public service without regard to self, then dad was indeed a great man.

Through all the years of his life, mother helped him, not only in the managing of the household affairs, but almost as a personal and confidential secretary. She was his kindest and most severe critic, and he laughingly would say that if he could make a speech that would please her, he knew it was alright.

Itasca Co. Hist.

Mrs. Bonniwell - #6.

I don't know that I have even touched upon the things you wanted. If there be anything else, let me know, and in the meantime, use this in whole or in part with whatever changes you may desire to make.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Stafford King (Signed)

SK:DH

I know this was done too hurriedly but you will rewrite it anyway.

S.K.

Itasca County Hist.- from Custer notes - Early settlers, Big Fork Valley

from interview with Joseph Lacher, Jr.- November 1941.

The Popple Post Office has been in my store here on the Popple river since 21 ye years ago last August. It was at the same location when Bert Congdon run it but at that time it was in a private home. The mail has been hauled to the Popple postoffice first from Bena, then from Black Duck, from Stanley and for the past few years from Northome. When it first came from Bena the postmaster received no pay as the mail was all cancelled at Bena. That is why the address was at one time Bena when there was a post office here and had been for some time. At the time this township was organized a petition was circulated to call the township "White Moose", but another petition was also circulated not to call it White Moose, but mentioning no other name for the township. When the petitions came before the county board it was found that there were more names on the petition not to use the name White Moose than there were ont the one for the name. But as no other name was suggested the board did not know what name to give the township until one of the board members said, "Well, King is the commissioner there, why not call it Kinghurst? And it was so named.

When I built my store here the old steamer "Eveleth" was pulled out of the water and placed on skids. She was a round bottomed stern-wheeler, owned and operated by Frank Miller and his wife. I don't think she did much towing except to tow Miller's large house boat. She also served as a saloon. When I first saw her she was still in good shape, even her flags were neatly rolled up and tucked aw away overhead in the pilot house. Her liquor license was still hanging on the wall. She was a neat little boat between forty and fifty feet long with a beam of 16 or 18 feet. She had since been robbed. First the whistle was stolem, then most of her pipes and fittings, and so it went until all that now remains is the hull and upright boiler which is too heavy to carry away. If it wasn't it w would be gone too.

My brother Arthur Lacher homesteaded a quarter section in what is now Grattan township. It was after him that Lacher lake was named. Grattan township was named for an old Irishman whom one of the town board members had read about in a story of the civil war.

Itasca County History - from Custer notes - Big Fork valley settlers

Joseph Lacher, Jr. (2)

Probably the oldest clearing and also the first farming in northern Itasca countywas on the banks of Dora Lake. On this clearing the Indians used to raise corn. They were raising corn here when the first settlers came in. This was on the east bank of Dora lake in Sec. 1, R.27-Tp.149. On this spot has been found a great many old Indian knives and other tools.

Vance was the father of the wild rice business in Itasca county. I have heard him tell how he used to buy a barrel of whiskey each fall to trade to the indians for wild rice. He said that every time he traded or sold a quart of whiskey to an Indian he added a quart of water to the barrel. In this way he still had a full barrel at the end of the ricing season. But it was full of mostly water, not whiskey. Along toward the latter part of the season it took a lot of this whiskey to have any effect, so they would have to come back and trade in more rice. Vance told me of old man Stumph starting to his place from the west. He was following the old Sapidilla trail. He thought that by turning off of t the trail and cutting across he could save several miles of walking and considerable time, as it was in the winter. But it was farther through the woods than he thought and the going was tough. He became lost and finally ran out of chuck. He had just about given up hope when he ran across an Indian camp on an Island in Squaw lake. He tried to make the indians understand that he was only hungry but they were afraid that he was sick with the smallpox so they would not let him come into the camp. He finally made them understand that he was going to Vance's, so they made him camp away from them and gave him some rice while one of t them went to see Vance. All that he could tell Vance was "a little man sick", and measure Stumph with his hand. Vance thought of Stumph who he had been expecting and who was late and returned with the indians. He found Stumph propped against a tree writing what he thought was his last message to his wife.

The first bridge in the township was a floating bridge built across the neck of Rice lake by Caldwell on his old trail. This bridge was quite an undertaking for a man with the tools Caldwell must have had. One span was fixed so it could be moved to let the boats through.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with John Larson - (1)

The Rabbit family still have six or seven forties of land here around Bowstring lake. Lot 2, Sec. 29, T. 147, R. 25 they sold to a sporting club in Grand Rapids. This lot was nine acres. They still have Lot 1, Sec. 29, T. 147, R. 25, comprising eleven acres. They also have the following:

Lot 3, Sec. 3, T. 148, R. 25.
SW¼ of SW¼, Sec. 34, T. 147, R. 25.
NE¼ of SW¼, Sec. 34, T. 147, R. 25
SW¼ of NW¼, Sec. 34, T. 147, R. 25.
SE¼ of NW¼, Sec. 33, T. 147, R. 25.
SE¼ of SE¼, Sec. 33, T. 147, R. 25.

They also have about fifty acres on Wabigama Point. This was the allotment of Mrs. Chas. Rabbit's sister.

Chas. Rabbit told me that his father told him that he had paddled a boat many times across the big bog between Bowstring creek and Deer River. He also said the small pox was brought in here by the early loggers. When the loggers found there was small pox in the camp most of them ran away. After the camp was completely abandoned the Indians went and took whatever the loggers had left behind. He said they left many blankets, and it was from these the Indians got the small pox. Chas Rabbit was a chief.

There used to be an old Indian who used to live around where Inger now is. He used to come through here a great deal. He always carried a big hunting knife. One day he met Old Man Donnelly along the Old Lurch portage. He tried to talk to Donnelly, but Bill could not understand him. At last he got sore, and was going to use the knife on Bill. Bill said it was not hard for him to understand that.

Just then McDougall, I think it was, came along. He soon talked the Indian out of the notion of using the knife. He explained to Bill what the Indian wanted. After Bill had answered him the Indian was willing to be friends.

The first school was in Lot 2, SE¼ of NW¼, Sec. 15, T. 147, R. 25.

Itasca Co. History - Bigfork-Effie region.

A letter in answer to an inquiry about first churches in the Big Fork valley. Mrs. H. G. Lee was formerly Mrs. Lander Larson, daughter-in-law to Frank Larson who homesteaded on the site of the present village of Bigfork.

Mr. J. E. Shaw
Grand Rapids, Minn.

Bigfork
Nov. 21 - 41

Dear Sir,-

In answer to your letter of Nov. 4 I have been slow in answering. I have been trying to get the straight on things you were asking about the churches. The Fredheim Lutheran church was built in 1910. They had a congregation at that time but I have heard that they got the lumber from the Art Zaiser saw mill but you can go and see Mrs. Art Zaiser in Grand Rapids and she will know. I never heard that they floated it down river. The Bigfork church was built in 1913. Before the church was built we held church in the first school house (a log one). We never had church in any saloon building. This saloon building she is speaking about is the building where our creamery is. This building was bought by the village of Bigfork for a village hall. We held our Christmas programs in it some times as the school was too small, but ~~it~~ it was one of our saloons at one time. It was run by a man named Bill Daley.

This man she calls Bigfork Slim, I never heard of him. We had a man we called "Slim" but never Bigfork Slim and his name was Fred Potts. I think this is some more makeup stuff.

I can not thimk of any more interesting things to tell you, just now, but if I do I will make a note of it. Hope this will help you. Write me again. I will be glad to help you.

Yours truly,

signed,- Mrs. H. G. Lee.

Itasca County Hist.- Bigfork country

Copy of a letter received from Mrs. H. G. Lee (formerly Mrs. Lander Larson) of Bigfork. Letter was written in answer to a letter of inquiry written to her by myself.

Mr. J. E. Shaw
Grand Rapids, Minn.

Bigfork, Dec. 13, 1941.

Dear Sir,-

I received your letter but I have been pretty busy and so slow answering it. I had to have the Ladies Aid and Christmas Party so you will have to excuse me. Will do better next time, but I will answer any questions that I can. I did inquire about some of these to make sure that they are right.

Question 1.- The small lake south of Bigfork called Bustie got its name from the indian Busticoggan . He used to camp there as he went up and down river and always went to see Nels Felstet and had lots of meals with him.

Question 2.- The story of Busticogan killing his son is not true. Some claim he never had a son, but he did. He had his son with him many times when he called on Nels. His son died from a tape worm. Don't know where he died. His father could not get hold of the right medicine until too late.

Question 3.- The reverends name was spelled SORNBERGER.

Question 4.- There is not much foundation for the story of Frank Larsons difficulties. He was a Swede and many thought themselves smarter than he, but he always managed to have his way in any trouble and went ahead and established Bigfork.

Well, that is a bout all. Excuse my mistakes, hope you can read it. Write me again if you want to find out about anything. I'll find out for you if I can. We may come to see you some time. Thank you. Herb sends his regards.

Yours truly

Mrs. H. G..Lee

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

MRS. HERBERT LEE (Mrs. Lander Larson)

When I first came to what is now Big Fork in January of 1901 there was nothing of Big Fork but a lot of timber. Tom Neveaux and Nels Felstet were the only settlers here when we came. The first white child born in the community, as I remember, was a baby born to a family living at Farm Camp. I think their name was Cameron. She came to Grandma Larson's place to be sick. The baby was born there. I am not sure, but I think the baby only lived a couple of months after she returned to Farm Camp.

A lot of the early settlers were not permanent settlers, nor did they expect to be settlers when they filed on their land. I can name any number who only lived on their claims long enough to prove up, then they sold out to some timber company. It was common knowledge that the timber companies paid lots of these men so much per month while they were proving up. Some of these homesteaders left the county after they proved up, never to return. Some left, but have returned in later years, as they sold only their timber while others sold the land with the timber.

Itasca County History - Custer - Big Fork Valley

Rev. LOOMIS LEE - interview with (1)

In the year 1907 or 1908 I was living on my homestead near "Frontier" on Rainy River and a new settler named Frank L. Vance moved into our neighborhood. This man said he had been living on the Rice River near Winnebigoshish Lake. He said he was known as the wild rice king in that part of the country. He also told us of having made a wild rice harvester while living there. To hear him tell it, this was a machine par excellent. It would almost pull the rice up and knock the rice out of the roots. Most of this was thought to be some more of his wild stories as he was more than full of them. He could sit and tell stories of his experiences for days at a time and never tell the same one twice. The only one that I can remember on the spur of the moment is the one of himself and the wild ducks at Rice lake. Vance proved up on a claim at "Frontier". He claimed that at that time a person was able to homestead a second time after a certainnnumber of years from the date of his first proving up. I cannot tell the duck story like Frank, but will do my best. Consider Frank to be speaking,- I don't remember when this happened but it was sometime in the 1890s. The fall had been an early one, and one day it began snowing. The lakes and river had not fr frozen yet. That morning I woke to find it snowing, all,day long it snowed. My place was right on the banks of the Popple River and along toward evening I heard ducks and wild geese beginning to go over. They were northers and had been flying until they were tired out and dropped down into the slush on the lake and river. They dropped into Rice lake that night by the thousands. It turned cold that night and the next morning I took my gun and went down to the lake, figuring on getting a mess of ducks. When I gotnear the lake I could hear thousands of ducks. I cocked my gun and crept up, but when I got close I saw that there was no need to be careful. That slush had frozen during the night and the ducks were held fast and yelling their heads off. I took a look and decided not to wasted shells on them. I went home and got my team and sled and got out my haying scythe and sharpened it up and drove back to the lake. When I got there I walked out on the ice and went to work. I mowed the heads off about a half acre of ducks and then went

back and mowed their legs off to free them from the ice. When I went to picking the them up I found that I had more than I could haul on my sled so I had to make a second trip.

We lived on ducks all winter and gave them away to all the neighbors that would take them. My wife made three feather ticks from the feathers and I don't remember how many pillows. "

I heard Vance tell this story more than once and the number of feather ticks varied from three to six, depending on his mood.

Itasca County History - from Custer notes - Logging, Big Fork Valley Settlers. INDIANS, Busticoggan.

from interview with FRANS LOGDEHL (1)

I came to Wildwood township in Nov. of 1912 by way of Northome, them by team and sled. At that time we packed in most of our supplies from Gemmel which was closest to us. The old Caldwell trail ran almost by our door. Thistrail running from the old Caldwell Camp on Caldwell Brook, to where it joined what we called the Bena Trail (the whole trail to Bena was usually called the Caldwell trail) somewhere in Grattan Township. The old Caldwell Camp was located on the south side of Caldwell Brook on the NW¼ of Sec. 1, R.26-Tp.155, now in Koochiching county. There is now little remains of the old Camp but the mound where chief Busticoggan buried 18 or 19mmen who died with smallpox. This mound is 12 or 14 feet square. It is marked by several large trees, some having crosses hacked in the bark and a couple with some form of Indian signs. When I first saw the place there was the remains of an old log pen around the mound. It is said that these men that were buried by the indians were the men that were left in camp sick when the rest of the men went out with the drive in the spring of 1882 or 1883. (The latter date is considered the correct one.)
It is said that a number of men were also buried by Caldwell during the winter. It was at this camp that the papers were served on Caldwell, but at that time most of Caldwell's logs were already in Canada or almost there on the drive. He also had another camp located on the north side of the Brook and a couple of miles further down the stream.

Caldwell packed most of his supplies from Bena. From the appearance of the mound it would seem that the dead were buried in a shallow grave then covered to a considerable depth with dirt taken from around the outside of the mound. A few years after I came here a bunch of us was fighting a forest fire near the old camp site. We got to talking about the story and some of us wondered if it were true. So we decided to dig into the mound and see what we could find. We dug a couple of feet into the mound and found no bones, only ashes. This caused us to think that the Indians had burned the bodies before burial, or had placed them in a small out building of some sort and then set fire to the building, finally covering the

the remains of the building and all it contained with dirt.

I was talking some years ago to a couple of old-timers in this country who claimed to have known Chief Busticoggan well. They told me that Chief Busticoggan once killed one of his own sons. It seems that this son had done something for which the Indian penalty was death. Because he was the son of a Chief the tribe would not execute him. So Old Busticoggan, to uphold the tribal law and tradition, killed his son with his own hand.

Proj 8633. Bonniwell (No. 31-8397)

Homesteading in Northern Minnesota. Itasca Co. in 1896. (This is a continuation of material already turned in, written by Margaret Mawhinney, daughter of D. C. McDougall.)

I took wife with me, she got a job as cook in the camp, and we could be together. I put up a small shack near the cook camp, so we could have our evenings to ourselves, but we were always longing for spring to come so we could get back to our homestead. When Johnston drove in and we could load our supplies and start for home again life seemed almost perfect. While in camp that winter a young fellow had a violin he wanted to sell, so I bought it from him for eight dollars. I used to play the violin when I was a boy so I got busy and practiced some, and by the time we arrived at the Johnston's home on our way to our homestead, we stopped over nite at Johnston's, so after supper dishes were cleared away, I got my violin out and the young folks began to dance. Johnston's had three girls and two sons, Annie, Edith and Alice, Mel and Mahley, so with some more young folks who were there that evening we had quite a crowd, and how they did enjoy the evening. They said "Mack you are a life saver, all the music we had before you came was the mouth organ and Jew's-harp, now now we will have real dances." And how to get the neighbors together was the next thing we had to decide. So Mel Johnston suggested they fire three shots in rapid succession to call the dancers together, and Johnston's house being the largest was to be our meeting place for the present.

Mel said he would come over the portage to the end of the lake to give the signal. We got together at least once a week, sometimes oftener, and how we did enjoy the summer time, it seemed to fly along, and winter was upon us all too soon, and we had to decide on what to do to replenish our supplies.

Quigg and McGowan were putting in a camp at Cut Foot, so I again got a job as foreman, and Sophia decided to stay on the homestead and take care of our stock herself. I could come home week ends, and the boys from the camp attended our week end dances. The winter passed so rapidly, we were sorry when the spring thaw came and camp had to be abandoned. One of the boys in the camp had brought a puppy to camp with him in the fall and he was the play boy of the camp life. The boys taught him all kinds of tricks, and among them was to sit up and box back at them when they made a pass at him. They named him Boxer, so when we were breaking camp the young chap who owned Boxer said, "Mack, don't you want a dog? I haven't a good place to keep him, and he is such a nice dog I would like to know he had a good home." I was glad to get the dog, as I would never have any fear about Sophia being alone when Boxer was with her. I brought him home, proud as punch of him, and in a few days he and Sophia were inseparable friends. He proved to be very useful, as well as lots of company.

We got another cow that summer, we now had two cows, and Boxer would bring them home every day. Sophia would open the door and say "Boxer, do you hear the bells?" He would stand with his head cocked on one side and listen. Then, when he got the sound of the bells he would look up, as much as to say "Shall I go get them?" Then Sophia would say "Bring them in, Boxer". Away he would go. He was always successful in his hunt, and as proud as a peacock to be praised for a job well done.

I cleared some more land that spring, borrowed Johnston's pony and plough, so with the team I managed to cultivate the ground and get it in good shape for the seed. I bought a hand cultivator, so wife and I could keep the ground in good shape. We had a very good crop that year, and I was able to sell all I had raised to Quigg and McGowan. They were running camp at Cut Foot again, and I got a job as foreman. This was my fourth winter with this firm. Wife stayed on the homestead again and did the chores as she had done the previous winter, but she had Boxer to keep her company.

Homesteading in Northern Minnesota. (Bonniwell)

Life went on as usual, week end dances and get togethers were the highlights of our lives. We looked forward to those dances all week, and hailed the week end with gladness in our hearts.

George Johnston's got the second pony that next summer, and Mel and Mahley would go thru the trails like young Indians. We could hear them coming long before we could see them. They both had the best pair of lungs any two boys ever had. They were both fine fellows and we were always glad to see them. They also had a birch bark canoe and they portaged it into Little Jesse lake. They used to come paddling along, singing like troopers. One day Mahley got the canoe first, and Mel (or Sammy as Mahley called him) was still talking to us at the door. Mahley kept calling him to hurry, hurry, and at last after successive calls, Mel started to run as fast as he could, down the hill to the lake, and went out on some square timbers I had for a dock. He jumped into that birch bark canoe, and he landed so hard his feet went thru the bottom of the canoe, and he started walking off with that canoe as if it was all part of a day's work.

I laughed so hard wife thought I would have a spasm. We went fishing that evening and found the old canoe abandoned a few rods down the shore. I said to wife, "Well, that's the closing chapter in the life of that canoe." Life was never dull with those two boys around.

This being the fourth summer on the homestead we decided we needed to enlarge our cabin. We built on another room, 12 by 14, of logs, and split out shakes to take the place of shingles. When this was finished we were lots more comfortable and less crowded. Charlie Tufts made his home with us when he wasn't working in camp. I also cut poles and sharpened them and drove them into the ground to make a chicken yard, because the skunks were hard on our chickens. I had gathered a lot of hay wire so I used this to tie the upper end of the the poles together. This made a very substantial fence. We had fifty young chickens and about 25 old hens. I bought two little pigs that spring, so we had a nice start on our farm.

I said to wife "If I only had a good heavy team now, we would be all set." And in a few days the opportunity presented itself. A young fellow had brought a team to camp from near Grand Forks. The breakup came very unexpectedly and he was left stranded with his horses at camp. He offered to sell them to me at a bargain. I was glad to get the team and harness. They were a nice team of Bays. He called them Bird and Rowdy. I had this team for many years, and they lived their last days on the farm they helped to clear and get under cultivation.

The Minneapolis and Rainy River Railroad were building grade and extending their track further into the forest each year, and in 1901 they were loading timber at Coal Dock, (Later called Mack for Duncan C. McDougall.), and the railroad was now only $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles from our home. During hunting season we kept hunters at our cabin and did guiding for them. There were also many fishermen came to our place.

We soon had a nice business, and this being the only place available for people who wanted to get into the deep forest we always had our place full.

Homesteading in Northern Minnesota. (Bonniwell).

About 1900 I built a bunk house, and this was also full of pay guests. With the aid of my new team I cleared more land, and in the winter of 1901 I decided to log some timber on my homestead. The railroad put in a hoist on the bank of Big Jesse Lake, and I could haul my timber across the lake, which only made a mile and a half haul. I could make several trips in a day. I had six men working for me, and I did very well.

The winter as usual went as if on wings, and our usual get-togethers were the only contact we had with social affairs.

That spring while working in the field, a young fawn came into the clearing. Wife and I caught him and fed him some warm milk, and he grew like a weed and lost his spots before the summer was over. He became a great pet, and sometimes a pest. If the door of the shack was open he would jump up on the bed and go to sleep. Wife didn't like this idea so well, so we always tried to have the door closed. But one day just after dinner, I was taking a rest before going back to work. Wife had gone out to look after her chickens and the door had blown open. The deer came in and saw me lying there and jumped and landed with all four feet in my stomach. I thought I was about to be killed, but he looked so innocent and full of mischief, I hadn't the heart to chastise him as he deserved.

He was always with me wherever I went, and many times was a perfect nuisance; but at that he was a lot of company. When I went out to hunt, he would mingle with the wild deer, and after a while he would get near me. I could always tell by the sound of his little bell where he was located. He acted as if he knew I wanted those wild deer near, and would always get where he would be protected.

Our crops brought lots of deer into our clearing, and we could have fresh meat whenever we wished; and who, I would ask, had a better right to them than the settlers who fed them?

I put up hay every year from the wild meadows, and what I couldn't use for my stock I could always sell to the camps. All this made a small income. Our pay guests were becoming more numerous, so in the summer of 1904 we decided to build a frame house. It was a nine-room house, and we had guests enough to keep this house full the year round.

The years rolled along, the same routine of work, the garden and stock tending filled our days. I logged during the winter. I bought George Arscott's homestead in 1909 and logged the timber on it. I now had acquired four hundred acres of land in 145-25, sections 10 and 11. Our buildings were on Lot 1, sec. 10.

The summer of 1909 C. M. King was commissioner in District One. They shipped in a dredging outfit, put it on a floating platform and started to work four miles north of Deer River and made a ditch across the nine mile bog. This was finally smoothed out and a road bed made in the summer of 1910, the first outlet for us homesteaders in Bowstring township, After being on our farms eighteen years, without a summer road. We were all very happy, and from now on farming was very much easier. We could come to Deer River and get back home again the same day; quite a difference from the two and one-half days each way, as it was when we had to make the trip by boat.

Proj. 8633 - Brownell (No. 31-2993)

Mrs. Wm. McCaffery (Formerly Mrs. A. A. Hall)

Mrs. McCaffery's father came to Itasca County in about 1891. He was foreman on the steel gang, When the Great Northern first put in the railroad. They lived along with the first settlers coming in with the railway. To Mr. A. A. Hall goes all honors in the building of Warba. He worked not only for himself but for the good of the people of the community. Mr. A. A. Hall was also a cruiser and a surveyor in the early days. With this knowledge as a surveyor he laid out the town of Warba. He bought the land from Frederick Weyerhoeuser Weyerhoeuser Co. In 1901 he bought a saw mill from Tom Feeley (One of the earliest settlers, and his name Feeley was adopted as township name.) In 1910 he took in Mr. Johnson as partner and called it the Leaf Lumber Co.

In 1902 the first bridge was built across the Swan River between the sawmill and town. In 1903 he built the store owned now by S. Carlson, and the building what is now the phone office. In the same year he built the large house on the East side of the river. As the town began to grow a bank was needed, so Mr. Hall built a bank with Mr. McLarty as the first banker.

All the honor of the Verna Brick yard goes to Mr. Hall. Noticing the strange formation of clay Mr. Hall took samples to Duluth for analysis and found out he had material for brick manufacturing. So after men had tested the ground for quantity of material and as soon as he got reports on the land he built the brick yard, which did a flourishing business and employed a few men for quite a few years.

He also asked the Great Northern for a depot in 1911, which was built the same year.

In 1898 Mrs. McCaffery (formerly Mrs Hall) rode the first excursion train from Grand Forks to Duluth. This was the first passenger train to travel from Grand Forks to Duluth. Mr. Hill gave a pen with his picture on it to everyone who rode the first train. Mrs. McCaffery said she often went to logging camp dances and had some very nice times, but the mosquitoes were almost unbearable in the early days.

Mr. Hall called the town Sebi which is said to mean Swan River in Indian language. He later changed to Feeley, then later to Warba.

Source: Interview with Mrs. McCaffery, May 2, 1941.

Itasca County Hist.- from Custer notes - SCHOOLS

The Bergum Schools, from interview with Fred McLean

Knute Bergum must have come to the Big Fork valley about 1896 as his homestead shack looked to be five or six years old when we came in, 1901. At that time he had just finished a new house. This new house was about 20 by 40 feet. His three children were all of school age when we came here. The daughter is living somewhere near the Rapids now, but I cannot recall her ~~first~~ last name. She was the youngest of t the three. The two boys are both dead. In the winter of 1900-1901 Mrs. Bergum peeped "popple" poles which the children cut, to feed the bark to the cattle. In this way she managed to save all of the cattle. They had lost their hay in high water. The cattle came through in fair shape. The next spring they used the peeled poles to build a fence.

-- Custer Comment,- I have since been told that in Sweden it is not unusual to winter stock on "popple" bark. One old Swede told me he had tried it in this country but he could not get the cattle to eat it.

Fred has a picture of the children who attended the Bergum school. Also some other pictures taken in the early days.of early settlements, up here in Big Fork valley.

Kenneth McLean, his three sons, George, Fred and Basil, the latter only one year old, together with two other families, Lon and Wick Powell and Ralph Rosen or Rosing, left Foreston, Minnesota in the late summer of 1901 for the Big Fork valley. They had three covered wagons, and Rosen had seven head of cattle. They went to Eagle Bend, from there to Cass Lake, then to Bena where they separated, McLean going on to Grand Rapids. From there they went to Farm Camp (Rice River) where they spent several days letting their horses rest, as their horses were getting in bad shape by then.

After leaving Farm Camp they met Knute Bergum who told them they could not get to the forks of the Rice and Big Fork rivers with their teams, but if they would follow his wagon tracks to Jingo Lake they would there find a man by the name of Dunk McMillian who would locate them in the Big Fork valley.

They spent several days at Jingo Lake while Mr. McLean looked for a place that suited him. By this time one horse had played out, so they went from Jingo Lake to Knute Bergum's place on the Big Fork with only one horse. The boy's do not know the description of the land homesteaded by their father, but it is in T 61, R. 27. Earl Patrow now lives on the place.

(Powell and Rosen both settled somewhere around Effie, Rosen ~~and~~ nearly losing his team and family while crossing river on ice somewhere near Effie.)

They were no sooner settled than Bergum was after McLean to help him get a school started. This school was opened in the fall of 1901, in an old log cabin on the Bergum place which was in Sec. 36, R. 27, T. 61. The school building was about 16x20 feet. They covered the floor with sacks filled with hay to make it warmer. The seats were common school desks, but for a blackboard they had two joints of stove pipe opened up and flattened against the wall. The teacher was Miss Hulda Bloomquist. She had five pupils, George and Fred McLean, Howard, Alfred and Margaret Bergum. They had only three or four books between them, so Miss Bloomquist read aloud to them from these books, and so they studied their lessons.

Fred recalls that when Miss Bloomquist's sister Nellie came to pay her a visit they were scared stiff, as they thought she must be some kind of an inspector for the schools.

Most of the cabins at that time had little box stoves in them, not barrel or air tight heaters as now. The floors were of balsam poles dressed flat with an adze.

Fred says that at this time game was plentiful, especially moose. He says it was a shame the way they were killed, as you could go up or down the Big Fork a couple of miles almost any time and see a moose or two dead in the river, sometimes without even a mess of meat taken from them, and sometimes only a small piece taken from the saddle or the rump.

Soon after McLean came to the valley Joe Reigh and someone else, he is not sure who, took a cross-cut saw and sawed out enough lumber to build the first boat on the river. There had been only canoes up to then. It (the boat) was always called the Old Snake.

Fred worked in his first camp for the Keewaydin (Keewatin) Timber Co., on Round Lake in 1903 or 1904. Jim ~~M~~/ McPherson was superintendent, McDermott was scaler and McLeod was boss of this camp. The camp building stood about where Rest Haven resort now stands.

Itasca County History - Logging.

Copy of letter received from Dan McLeod, Kenora, Ontario, Canada.

J. E. Shaw, Esq.
Box 371
Grand Rapids, Minn.

Dear Sir:

Answering your letter of Jan. 26th my first work on Big Fork was in 1891, and while we heard a lot about Caldwell Brook and the small pox epidemic there but it was more or less of a legend with nothing definite. I think the season of 82-83 would be about the time of Caldwell's operations. I have never heard Caldwell spoken of, and am not sure that he was the operator.

I met a number of Indians in my Big Fork days and the only one I can name is Busticogan. He was camped in his township between the Big Fork River and Busticogan Lake in the spring of 1892 when drive was being taken out of Deer Lake. The lower Dam on Deer Creek was on his land and I can remember how he demanded payment for its use and how during one of the flood periods he stood on Dam and would not come off, and how very hard he was to deal with. I became fairly well acquainted with him then and grew to like him. He had a friendly feeling toward Canadians as was evidenced when I met him near what is Wirt P. O. more than ten years later and how his face lit up when he recognized me and he said ""shogonosh".

I have heard something of an overland trail from Red Lake to Rainy River and lake and have travelled what was said to have been a part of it between Deer Lake and the Little Fork and in my day this was a well defined trail. Whether this was made by Hudson's Bay Co., the Northwest Co., or by the Indians I never knew. There was a well defined and much used water route from upper Mississippi waters, portage into Big Fork was made at or near Cut Foot in my day called Cut Foot Sioux. I stayed over night there in the 90's. Stopping place was run by family by name of Fairbanks, I think it was. They were half or quarter breeds.

I do not remember having heard of Dr. Harrison and his activities on Big Fork.

C. E. Joslyn, Land Dept., Hudson's Bay Company, Winnipeg, might be able to give you some information regarding early day operations of their company in Northern Minnesota.

Pat Kerr of Fort Francis is familiar with all of the early day operations on Big and Little Fork and Rainy Lake and I am sure you could get something from him. Pat worked for the Rat Portage Lumber Co. for many years. He is now Relief officer for the Dist. of Rainy River and is a very fine gentleman as is also Mr. Joslyn. If you think it advisable to do so you can say that I have referred you to them.

I have just finished reading Book on Big Fork country adjacent to the Town of Big Fork, and while I have enjoyed all parts which referred to the activities of the settlers, but the chapter on Logging is full of inaccuracies which is really too bad when there are still so many sources from which accurate information can be got. The chapter on camp life is also extreme, particularly where it speaks of brawls and fights in the camps. The book is called "The Last Frontier" by Bergit I. Anderson.

Yours truly,
D. McLeod

Itasca CountybHistory - Logging - northern Itasca [McLeod, D.]

There are many rumors, legends, alleged reminiscences, and "cock and bull" st stories to be heard on the subject of logging in the Big Fork and Little Fork valleys. Those with some evidence of possible basis are the one regarding a m man by the name of Caldwell who left his name on a brook in the region, and another about the early logging on Deer Creek in 62-23 ans 62-24. These early logging activities, according to current stories, began around 1880, but no definite dates given or exact operators, and there was confusion in the location. These logs went north into Canada and it does not seem reasonable to assume that Canadian crews came 75 miles into the States and cut American timber, much on land not yet surveyed and therefore still Federal timber lands.

Folwell, Vol. III, App. 5, states that, when they became involved in the Lord Gordon Gordon thing, ~~they were~~ Merriam and Fletcher were at Winnipeg engaged in"selling several million feet of pine logs to William J. Macaulay" gave me a possible hint. Through Orin Patrow of northern Itasca, an early lumber-jack, now retired farmer, I made contact with a gentleman in Canada by the name of Dan McLeod, who was with the Canadian people buying the logs, he coming to "Rat Portage"nnow Kenora, in 1883. On writing to him far any information he could give me on it, I received the following letter:-

324-3d St. So.
Kenora, Ont.
January 21, 1942

J. E. Shaw, Esq.
Box 371
Grand Rapids, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I have your letter of Jan. 15th. The first saw mill in this vicinity was built in 1879 and no American logs were brought here until about 1885. I came here in 1883 and am familiar with logging and saw mill operations since that date.

In the early years and until about 1898 all of the American logs were purchased from American operators, of which I may mention a few. Chas. Sellers who operated on the Little Fork river and sold his logs to the Keewatin Lumbering and Mfg. Co.--first deliveries about 1885. Mr. Sellers later built a saw mill at Tower, Minn., and was killed by saw bursting in his mill.

O. W. Saunders & a Mr. Bailey operating as Saunders & Bailey and afterward separately, sold logs for some years to different operators here. Most of their production was from the Little Fork and its tributaries. I believe Mr. Bailey afterwards built a saw mill at one of the Range Towns.

Pat Agnew of Chippewa Falls, Wis., was one of the first operators on the Big Fork River, and my understanding is that timber cut and sold by him was owned by the Dennis Ryan interests of St. Paul. He operated on Deer Creek, or Deer River as it was then called, a tributary of the Big Fork. His contract was afterward taken over by Loper and Rummery of Oshkosh, Wis., who operated for several years there. Agnew transferred his operations to Rice River, a tributary of the Big Fork, and operated there for a year or two, afterward selling out to Wm. Deary of Chippewa Falls, Wis., who took as a partner one W. J. Kehl of the same city, and they operated for a number of

years, selling their logs to the Keewatin Lumbering & Mfg. Co., and to the Rat Portage Lumber Company and their predecessors. The Rat Portage Lumber Company was not formed until the early 90's, about 1892, and was an amalgamation of the following companies who operated saw mills at Rat Portage and Keewatin, Ont.:

Dick Banning & Co., Keewatin, Ontario
Cameron & Kennedy, Rat Portage, Ontario
Safety Bay Lumber Co., Rat Portage, Ontario
Rainy Lake Lumber Co., Rat Portage, Ontario
Ross Hall & Brown, Rat Portage, Ontario
Minnesota and Ontario Lumber Co., Rat Portage, Ontario

In the late 90's when it became apparent that mills could not depend on getting logs from contractors the then two Canadion Mills here operated by Rat Portage Lumber Co., Ltd., and the Keewatin Lumbering & Mfg. Co. started buying stumpage in Minnesota, and this continued for some years, and operations for saw logs were carried on. In 1906 the Keewatin Company sold their timber and outfit to the Backus Brooks Company of Minneapolis, Minn. Rat Portage Co. continued for several years thereafter, most of their work being done in the later years by Bob Stitt, of whom you no doubt know more than I do.

The Minnesota & Ontario Lumber Co. mentioned above was formed about 1886 or 1887, and was promoted by W. J. MacAuley, who was the active manager. Most, if not all of their logs came from the Big Fork River. Dennis Ryan of St. Paul was said to be one of the principal stock holders in this firm, and it was said that the timber they were bringing down this Big Fork River was cut from stumpage owned by him on Deer Creek. MacAuley afterward sold his interest to Ryan, and he carried on the operation of the mill until it was amalgamated with other mills to form the Rat Portage Lumber Co., or rather the Ontario and Western Lumber Co., afterward changed in name to Rat Portage Lumber Co.

The W. J. Macauley mentioned by you in the 5th paragraph of your letter was undoubtedly the same man, as afterward built the mill in Rat Portage, as he had a saw mill in Winnipeg in the 70's, logs for which were purchased from Minnesota operators and came from tributaries of the Red River, and were driven down that river to Sinnipeg and sawed there. This is no doubt the operation that Messrs. Fletcher & Merriam were interested in supporting.

There were at least two mills of sizeable proportions in Winnipeg in the 70's, one operated by W. J. Macauley and one by Jarvis & Berragis (?), and after those firms discontinued their operations there the Sprague Lumber Co. operated a plant for several years, using mostly Canadian timber, although as late as 1904 a drive of about two million feet was driven down the Red River from the vicinity of Grand Forks.

Further as to Big Fork timber, Mr. McVicar of your city, who at one time had logging contract from Kehl & Deary can no doubt tell you some of the early history of that stream.

If you use any of the information I have given you, please do not quote me as your authority. I am sure that Mr. Macauley as well as all of the other Canadian firms and men who purchased logs from or stumpage in Minnesota were honorable business men, and if perchance there may have been in the very early days some irregularities in connection with titles these were not brought about by the Canadian firms which purchased the logs or stumpage.

Itasca County History - Logging - Northern Itasca.

Letter from Dan McLeod - (3)

I was actively connected with logging operations on the Big Fork River from 1892 to 1906, and I am sure that all of the firms, both buyers and sellers, during these years were sound and conscientious business men.

Mr. W. J. MacAuley has a nephew now in business in Vancouver, B. C., who was associated with him during part of his Winnipeg and all of his Rat Portage operations, and if there is anything further you want to know regarding W. J., if you will advise, I will get in touch with him.

With the exception of a few million feet during the early years of operation, all of the logs from Rainy River water shed that were brought to Keewatin and Rat Portage passed through the boom of the Rainy Lake River Boom Company, located on the Rainy River just below the mouth of the Rapid River. This company has not operated for several years, but I think some of their records may still be available, although I would not know where to look for them, but if you can locate reports of Rat Portage Lumber Co., suit with the Shevlin interests in either Grand Rapids or Bemidji, or their suit with Stitt & Howe they might disclose considerable information. Meantime, I shall be glad of further information regarding your book and when it will be published, and if further information is required from me, I shall be glad if you will advise.

Yours truly,

D. McLeod

The Rainy Lake River Boom Co. handled logs from both Canadian and American points in the Rainy River Water shed.

Note: I am writing Mr. McLeod, asking him concerning his recollection of Caldwell, and of the Big Fork Valley Indians.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Mrs. Irene Miller.

My folks settled in township 62, range 25 just west of Busti lake. At that time Busticogan owned a piece of land adjoining my folks place on the east. In fact I think there are forty acres there still belonging to the Busti estate. Several parties have tried to buy this land from the government, as it is a beautiful spot touching Busti lake on the east and the Big Fork river on the southwest. It is still covered with a heavy stand of pine. It would be an ideal place for a resort, but the Government refuses to sell as there are still heirs of Busti living and they are holding for a larger price. On this piece of ground there were a number of graves. This land is the NW¼ of NW¼, Sec. 23, T. 62, R. 25.

Through this land, running from north to south, runs an old portage. This portage starts at the Big Fork river on the south, and runs north about 1/4 mile to Busti lake. This portage was so located that a person could enter it at either end without being seen by anyone only a short distance behind. If you did not know the location of the portage you would not know what had become of anyone whom you were following, even though you were only a few rods behind.

On the east side of this portage were three graves. Two of them were supposed to be the graves of two of Busti's sons. The third one was never known. Just as you entered the portage from the south there stood an oak tree. This tree grew on the west side of the portage, and not far from the three graves. In the crotch of this tree was what everyone at that time said was a human thigh bone. The tree had grown around the bone until it was almost a part of the tree. As nearly as I can remember this bone was about five feet from the ground.

A good many tourists and others used to come to see this tree and the graves nearby, until Chas. Larson, who is a great wood-worker, finally cut the tree and used it, bone and all, as a leg for a center table. The people around there were quite angry about it, but it was too late after the tree had been cut. I would not say for sure if this tree marked the portage or the graves. Chas. Larson probably still has the table.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Mrs. Ollie Mills.

Came in 1897 or 1898 from end of steel at Deer River, from then on we came part way afoot, part way by wagon, and part way by sled. Old stopping place known as Dugout was by Dunbar on Deer River & Bridge road, fifteen miles from Washington camp.

Fields ran a store at Bridge, charged $15.00 a hundred pounds for flour, $5.00 for a meal at his hotel. Shimmer Horn (Schermerhorn) trail was so named because it ran by the old Shimmer Horn homestead. It branched off at Dunbar, and went to Bridge.

"Brush Shanty" in Sec. 7, on line between Alvwood & Moose Park township.

It used to take a week each way with a team and wagon to Deer River. One swamp down by Dunbar was four miles across. They had to pull the wagons across with block and line. Six hundred pounds was all the load that we could bring back.

We lost one child soon after we came. We never knew what was the cause, as we could get no doctor. We think probably it was pneumonia.

We went and saw the mound at Dora Lake. We talked to Indians at Squaw Lake, and they said it was not built by the Chippewas, as there was lots of pottery, and the Chippewas said they had never made any pottery. An oak tree twenty-two inches through stood on the top of the mound.

Round Lake Ranger Station is right where the old Washington Camps were when the road was first put in. Flemmings was the first stop, H. Shears Cut T, next Dugout at Dunbar, next our place, next place Dexter. We could not homestead the land here when we came. We squatted a year or so first. The Indians had places at Shallow Pond and at Rice Lake, where they jerked moose meat. Some of these places were 100 feet long.

We used to go to Frank Vances to pick blueberries. Chief Bob Mosemo says he was only a small boy when the country here was burned over. Bridji was first post office. We got weekly mail almost as soon as we came.

The year of the big flood, 1900, was the time flour sold for 15¢ per pound at Bridji.

The first school was in 1903, on NE of NE, Sec. 12, T. 149-29. We lived in NW of NW, Sec. 7, T. 149-28. First teacher was a Miss Pendergast.

I have seen as many as nine moose in Shallow Pond at one time.

After the country here began to settle up the white men would not let the Indians come in here to hunt. My husband had gone to Deer River for supplies. Three Indians came to the door. They said my husband had told them they could hunt on his place. They counted on their fingers to show me they wished to stay four days. I told them yes. I managed to always feed them first. Until one evening one of them got lost. He didn't get in until about 11:00 o'clock at night. I got up and got him his supper. They thought that was grand. Old Cyrus King was the man that could have given this the history. He would start out somewhere to see someone, if they couldn't drive there with team he would tie up his team and walk. He had all of the township roads cut out, although most of them he never got finished.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Mrs. Ollie Mills - (2)

I remember the 1898 Indian uprising. My husband was working at the Winnibigoshish dam. The children and I were alone. It was 11 miles to the nearest neighbor. The oldest boy melted up everything that would make bullets. Not much powder, though. They had a Gattling gun at the dam. The young soldiers at Deer River swelled up so big that my husband said God's overcoat would not make them a vest. Someone in Deer River got old Captain John Smith to give a Chippewa war-whoop. The young soldiers ran over women and everyone trying to find shelter.

Itasca County History - Wirt - Custer.

Interview with John Molton.

When I first came here in 1919 I bought a place on the Big Fork river just above Harrison hill. This was in the SE¼ of NW¼, Sec. 1, T. 149-26, or Wirt Township. When I first broke ground for my garden there, I plowed up several different articles there of old Indian stuff. There were also several mounds on the plot of ground that we plowed up, that looked as if they might have been graves. We never dug into them. This was about the only high ground anywhere close to Harrison Hill. There was a small spot of high ground on the old Felps place that would be nearer to the hill.

On the land owned by Mrs. Vern Anchor, located on the north side of the river in NE¼ of Sec. 10, T. 149-26, has also been found some old stones. There has never been found anything that could be called relics here, but a good many pieces of fine flint were found. There is no other stone of this kind to be found anywhere in this part of the country. Most of these pieces showed signs of having been worked on. That is, they were chipped around the edges, as if someone had started to make something but had stopped for some reason before he had finished. Most of the stones found there were of a clear white flint. I would say from the size of them that they had been intended for arrow heads. This is not far from the old Scott place, which is in the N½ of SW¼, Sec. 10, T. 149-26.

A good number of arrow heads have been found here. An old copper hatchet and numerous pieces of pottery. Whether one of these places is the one spoken of by Mrs. Antoine Bellanger it is hard to say.

Mrs. Walter Scott spoke of the Indians holding their pow-wows in the bend of the river below Nels Eckman's. Nels' place is the NW¼ of Sec. 11, T. 149-26. Most of these places will be hard to get at, as they are all back off the main road.

Given to Mary Bonniwell May 8, 1941, by Elmer Warner, and he got it from Fred Willman. Mr. Willman got it directly from Bob Mosomo.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BOB MOSOMO.

Bob Mosomo was born previous to 1850 on the east side of Lake Winnibigoshish. He descended from a long line of Chippewa Chieftains. His great great grandfather, Chief Gah-Guay-Waun (meaning Porcupine Skin) was leader of a tribe of Chippewas extending from Canada down into Northern Minnesota. At his death the chieftainship passed to his son Mah-Maun (meaning to left up). After he died Bob's grandfather, Wah-Nah-Cha (Dirty Skin) became chief. Wah-Nah-Chay frequently fought with the Sioux. (He killed and scalped one Sioux by the mouth of First River.) He used a gun which he got from Canada. A gun at that time was worth one fish, ten mink, one beaver, and one bear. At Wah-Nah-Chay's death, the chieftain-ship was taken over by Bob's father whose name was Me-Ge-Cey (Eagle). It was next given to Bob's brother, Chief Mosmo, and finally to Bob.

The first years of his life, Bob made his home near a trading post at the mouth of First River. The site of this trading post can still be made out. It was here that Bob first saw a white man. The trading post was run by a half-breed by the name of Zun-Zway. In the spring and fall traders came to First River, via the Mississippi River, in large 28 ft. birch-bark canoes. They usually came in groups of three or four canoes at a time. Bob often camped at the present location of the Cut Foot Sioux Ranger Station.

Bob's book education was limited. There was a mission school either at Pidgeon River or Ravens Point. Bob, however was too small to attend.

Bob and his family used to range up to Lake Vermillion, up to Lake Itasca and down to Little Falls, also to Leech Lake portaging from Bena across to Portage Lake, etc. Leech Lake was dangerous because you had to go across.

A white man wanted to go to Lake Vermillion to see his father who was sick. Bob guided the man and made the trip in five days on snow shoes, grinding and breaking trail for a dog team. For this work Bob received clothing from head to foot, a blanket and $25.00.

The turtle mound on the portage between Little Cut Foot Sioux Lake and Bowstring River was built when Bob's grandfather was a small boy. The Chippewas later made a snake about 500 yards north of this turtle. The Sioux had many medicine dances around the turtle. They put tobacco along the turtle and fed him tobacco and smoke.

STORY OF THE PAST MENTIONED FOUR GENERATIONS.

The Great Spirit told Naunesake what to name children when they made medicine.

The Chippewas start on a war-path south to fight Sioux. They had always fought. When Chippewas got to turtle they stopped. Head man of Chippewa sat on head of turtle. They had a big stone for the head and talked about what they would do to the Sioux. In night head man of Chippewas talked with Great Spirit to find out where Sioux were. When he had finished he said he had been told that they saw where they were going-- coming back tomorrow. He told his men that early in the morning three men should go to lake and then river and then another lake. They should go there and find a rush island, and on rush island there is a swan. He also told them that if they found a swan on rush island that everything would come out as he had dreamed.

The next morning three men started out. They got to Little Cut Foot Sioux Lake, followed First River and when they got to lake found swan on rush island. He told his men when they got to swan his men should start south and go by Big Turkey Point (Portage). (Point in Cut Foot Sious Lake). When they got to Big Hill he told them to watch out for hill. They pulled canoe in to point and crawled over portage. There were Sioux on other side doing same thing. When Chippewa looked three Sioux peeped out. Both parties were surprised. Both parties fired at where they thought each other were.

Chippewas noticed no shots coming and looked and saw Sioux were out in water in canoe retreating. Two Sioux looking backward and one paddling. Chippewas said to each other, "Let's get our canoes and chase them." They started out to chase Sioux. Sioux shot and Chippewas shot. When Sioux got to Rush Island near mouth of First River, Chippewa saw one Sioux was killed. When Sioux got to Rush Island they threw dead Sioux on Rush Island, went to beach and put canoe on backs and ran away. When Chippewas got to Island ran to dead Sioux, scalped him and found that both forefeet had been cut or frozen off.

They did not shoot any more. Looked back for rest of Chippewas who were coming up. Saw Sioux were down on point in body. Chippewa went back to main body of party and head man said no more fighting. They had had enough. After this, the name of the lake was changed from Say-Sah-Fay-Gay-Man-Ug (Lake going all over many arms) to Kees-Ki-Sid-A-Bain-A-Egan.

The Chippewas changed head on turtle. Sioux made turtle first. Turtle was placed where they met Indians. Used to be two snake mounds north of turtle. Lots of marks on tree. Regular stopping place inasmuch as it was on main portage.

Chief Bob Mosomo.

According to Bob he was born on the east side of Lake Winnibigoshish, some time prior to the year of 1850. He was descended from a long line of Chippewa Chiefs. His great, great grandfather was Chief Gah-Guay-Waun, meaning Porcupine Skin. He was the leader of a bank extending from up in Canada down into Northern Minnesota. At the death of Gah-Guay-Waun the leadership passed to his son Mah-Maun, meaning to lift up. Upon the death of Mah-Maun the leadership passed to Bob's grandfather, Wah-Nah-Chay, meaning dirty skin. Chief Wah-Nah-Chay often led the Chippewas against the Sioux. He at one time killed and scalped a Sioux at the mouth of Third River.

The old Hudson Bay Trail went from the Sandy Lake Post to the spot where the Winnibigoshish Dam now stands, thence along the east and north shore of the lake to the First River Road, where the Hudson Bay Co. had another post. Later the trail was cut to about where the Cut Foot Sioux bridge now is, then north and west to within one half mile of where C. C. C. camp No. 707 now is, thence to Six Mile Lake, then to the location of the old Ranger Station on Round Lake, along the south side of the lake, crossing Dunbar Creek in Sec. 22, T. 149, R. 28 W., then North to Alvwood and International Falls.

Bob spent one winter at Ogenah Point on the Little Bowstring. Here he was very sick. After he had recovered from his sickness he went on the path to the Sioux. Bob says this was a peaceful visit. While he was there they had a peace meeting. After his return from his visit to the Sioux he was very, very sick. He thought he was going to die. This winter he also spent on Little Bowstring. During the winter he killed eight moose, one bear, and one caribou. The next winter he spent on the Little Bowstring also. This winter he had the small-pox. At the time he had small-pox his daughter was about ten years old, so he says that must have been forty-six or forty-seven years ago.

The next three years Bob was one of a delegation of seven sent to Washington, D. C. Flat Mouth, the Pillager chief, headed the delegation. The next summer he was again a delegate to Washington. This year they picked Inger as a town site.

Bob says he was but a small boy when the Mission was at Pigeon River. There were five houses, a white preacher, and white women. There were several houses on the hill. The Indians were there when the white man came. They used to go straight across Winnibigoshish in canoes.

William Fairbanks ran a Hudson Bay trading post at Ravens Point on Lake Winnibigoshish about sixty years ago, trading furs each fall from Lake Superior.

The Sioux made the mounds. The Turtle mound represents help from God. The path in the swamp or the snake mound was built by the Chippewas. They used to feed it tobacco and smoke. Inger was a Sioux village before the Chippewas drove them out.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer.

Chief Bob Mosomo.

His father was Me-Ge-Cey, meaning eagle. At the death of his father the chieftainship went to Bob's oldest brother, at whose death it was passed on to Bob.

Bob's grandfather used a gun. This gun he got from a Hudson Bay trader in Canada. For it he traded one fisher, ten mink, one beaver, and one bear skin.

Bob did not attend the mission school at the mouth of First river, because he says he was too young to paddle a canoe across the river alone. He says his family used to range from Lake Vermilion to Lake Itasca, and down the Mississippi as far as Little Falls, and also to Leech lake by portaging from Bena across to Portage lake, etc.

Once when he was a young fellow a white man wished to go to Lake Vermilion to see his father who was very ill. Bob guided the man and made the trip in five days on snowshoes, breaking trail for a dog team all of the way. For this work Bob received clothing from head to foot, one blanket, and five dollars.

ITASCA COUNTY HISTORY - Bonniwell.

Biography. Fred Nason.

Fred Nason was born in Grand Rapids February 20, 1876, near where the old Potter House stood, on the banks of the Mississippi river. This was on the South side of the river, not far from where the Itasca Hospital now stands. This building (the old Potter House) was made of hewn logs, and still stood in 1940. Allen Nason was the father of Fred Nason; he owned a lot of land in and around Grand Rapids. He sold the block where the old Central School building now stands; and a clause was inserted wherein this property can be used only for school purposes.

This has become a very valuable property as it is now in the heart of the town and would be a grand place for a business block had this clause not been inserted.

Mrs. Barney Finnigan was Fred's first grade school teacher. Her name was Miss Maddy. She was the second teacher in Grand Rapids. The first school in Grand Rapids stood about where the depot now stands, it was a log building.

J. B. Chatterton logged off all the timber around Grand Rapids and over to and around Trout Lake. He offered to deed all this land to Allen Nason, after he had removed the timber. Allen said, "What do I want with this land? You have taken everything that is valuable to anyone." How little he knew about how valuable that land could be, with its iron mines and towns springing up all over.

Allen Nason sold two lots where the new First National Bank now stands, for $40.00 to Charley Marr.

In order to get across the river they used to ferry across near the Potter House. There were a lot of boats there, so when anyone wanted to cross, they would call and someone came across for them.

Allen Nason moved his family to Bena, and died at Bena about twenty years ago.

Source: Fred Nason, Bena, Minn., May 22, 1941.

Itasca County History - Ball Club - Rev. Father Parnell - Custer.

Interview with Rev. Father Parnell. (1)

The first Catholic mission work among the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota was in about 1820 or 1825. These missionaries came down from Canada by way of Red Lake. This missionary's name is not known. He stayed a month or two at Cut Foot Sioux where he baptized several natives. These meetings were held in a tent carried by the missionary.

Father Popia came to Fond Du Lac about this time. He walked over land from Port Arthur to form a branch mission. He stayed at Duluth for about three months. He would come and stay a couple of months and tend to the work among the Indians at different missions, returning to Port Arthur where he had a resident mission.

In 1868 Father Hermanty opened a resident mission at White Earth. He had branch missions as far north as Red Lake.

Father Thomas, who has been in the priesthood 68 years is still at White Earth. He was sent to Red Lake the second week of November-1868. He found the Indians there were so numerous that he soon felt he needed an assistant.

Father Thomas was born in St. Mary's of the Rocks, Indiana, April 6, 1861. He took the vows of Benedictine July 11, 1879, was ordained Feb. 10, 1884. In 1888 he was sent to Red Lake to assist Father Alaysen. Father Tanagin had built a chapel 18x40 feet and a residence there in 1879. The chapel was of logs with an earth floor. The residence was a small addition to the chapel. At the time Father Thomas arrived 400 of the 1000 Indians residing there embraced the Catholic religion.

With the arrival of Father Thomas the first residence missionary was placed at Red Lake. The Indians were so pleased to learn that the Black Robes were to live with them instead of visiting them two or three times a year. They called two councils to express their gratitude. At one of these the room was full to overflowing with Indians, each one smoking furiously. The room became so full of smoke that one of the new helpers sent to assist Father Alaysen became ill and had to be carried outside. As he remarked afterwards, the councils were all right, but too much of a good thing was still too much.

In 1889 a mission school was erected at Red Lake at a cost of approximately $6,000. In 1893 a new church was built, it being 36x50 feet, with a steeple 80 feet high. This church was built mostly with Indian labor, and cost somewhere around $2500.

The missionaries at Red Lake visited and had branch missions at Thief River, seventy miles west of Red Lake, Cass Lake, forty-five miles southeast, Lake Winnibigoshish, seventy miles east, White Oak Point, and Leech Lake seventy-five miles southeast.

Father Alaysen, at present the oldest and most popular Catholic Indian missionary in Minnesota, has spent three decades among the Chippewa Indians. He was born in Althiem, Germany, June 10, 1853. He came to America in 1870, entered Benedictine monastery of St. Vincent in Pennsylvania in December, 1870. He was permitted to make profession as a member of the Abbey of St. Louis on the Lake, no St. John's, Collegeville, Minnesota. He was ordained at St. Cloud April 15, 1876. In 1878 Bishop Rupert Seidenbush, vicar apostolic of Northern Minnesota, requested the Abbey of St. John to assume charge of the work among the Chippewa Indians, most of whom had been removed to a reservation at

White Earth in 1868. Up until this time they had been visited by different sectarian missionaries at various times.

Father Alaysens, who was considered the outstanding scholar at the abbey had been expected to go high in the priesthood, shocked his friends and acquaintances when he offered his services as a missionary among the Chippewas. He immediately began studying the Chippewa language at St. John, and started for his mission at White Earth in November, 1878. Upon arriving at White Earth he found his chapel was only a small log cabin, and his residence was a hovel which kept out neither the wind nor the snow. He also found that of the 1700 Indians at White Earth around 800 were Catholics.

Soon after he arrived he started a school for the children in an old stable, with an attendance of from forty to fifty pupils. By 1881 he had built a church and a comfortable residence. Besides his work among the Indians at White Earth he also ran branch missions at the Pembina settlement twenty miles away, the Wild Rice river settlement, Leech Lake settlement sixty miles distand, and Red Lake, 70 miles away. His influence among the Chippewas was such that his services were solicited on numerous occasions by Government officials in their negotiations with the Indians, especially in 1886 and 1898.

Rev. Simon Lange was born Dec. 5, 1865. He came to the United States at the age of eighteen years. He took his simple vows July 5, 1885, was ordained Nov. 1, 1888. Two weeks after he was ordained he started to Red Lake with Father Thomas to work among the Chippewas. He spoke Chippewa, German, French, and English all equally well. He remained at Red Lake working among the Indians there under Father Thomas until March 1896, when he returned to White Earth to assist Father Alaysins.

Father Felix Nelles was born in Todd county, Minnesota, Oct. 12, 1870, was ordained July 11, 1894. Shortly after his ordination he was sent to Red Lake to assist Father Thomas. A year later he was transferred to White Earth to assist Father Alaysins there. In 1904 Father Nelles made his residence at Ponsford from where he attended the branch missions at Bena, Leech Lake, and Cass Lake.

Note by Custer: - I was unable to get exact locations of any of these missions. Rev. Parnell says that Rev. Father Bena, R. F. D. #3, Mahnomen, Minn, takes care of all historical data for the district. He is also a member of the State Historical Society.

This material was obtained from Mr. Orrin Patrow, who lives in 62-25 on Busti Lake at the site of Busticoggans cabin, built for him by the government. Mr. Patrow was one of the early lumberjacks in northern Itasca, coming here from Eau Claire, Wisconsin where his father was sawyer in one of the big sawmills run by Daniel Shaw. He went into northern Itasca in the late '90's, and has kept up his acquaintance with the old logging bosses of those days. His wife is the former Katherine Costello, the first teacher in Big Fork.. Mr. Patrow made a trip to Kenora, Canada (formerly Rat Portage) to see Dan McLeod, 324 Third Street South, Kenora, Ontario, Canada, who was logging in that country for many years before Orrin came in there. This is probably the earliest logging record of any reliability that it is possible to get. Orrin says where dates are given, they are 100 percent correct.

The difficulty of getting dependable records of logging in that region may be because the title to the timber was rather mythical. I will have to go over the field notes for the original government survey to determine when first government survey was made in this territory. This has to be done at a time when the surveyors office is open and the field notes are there and available. Such a time will come when serious winter weather sets in. Orrin is of the opinion that they cut that timber up there in the '80's to keep it from spoiling. His communication follows.

Loper and Rummery ran the Deer Creek Farm Camp one or two years and toted stuff from Aitkin. Then St. Louis County cut a tote road from Tower to about where Bear River is now to get this trade. Then Loper and Rummery built what is now known as Stitt's Ranch, and used that as headquarters until 1895. The fall of 1895 Stitts and Howe showed on the scene. They logged the fall of 1895 and spring of 1896 at Bear River and in 1896 they took over Loper and Rummery's headquarters. I don't think they logged after 1900-1901. This is a little more information I got when I went to Kenora, Canada. So these dates are almost sure to be correct.

That tote road from Grand Rapids to Stitt's Ranch must be the Brush Shanty Trail you speak of, and from Stitt's Ranch to Koochiching Co. is the same trail I have marked on map.

That trapper Matt Spang stayed with at Cameron Lake was Hector Cameron. He must have been here in very early days. He had no claim, but trapped and tanned deer and moose hides, and made them into mittens and moccasins and sold them to the camps.

Two women came with Sandwick and took claims. Don't know their names, and Cameron married one of those women. Then he took a claim on Caldwell Brook. They did not live together long after that, and shortly after that he died of

cancer. That is one gone, and it won't be long before none will be left to tell the tales. The man I got this correct information from is an old man now, 73 years old. Had a nice visit, logged the whole country again. He said he will be here for Timber Tennial next year. If you have any additional questions you could write Dan McLeod, Kenora, Ontario, Canada, 324 Third St. South.

Deer Creek Farm Camp.

The Deer Creek Farm Camp is located in Sec. 18, T. 62, R. 24. My friend does not know just what year this camp was established, but a man named Flint was here in 1910-1911 prospecting for Oliver mining company. He stayed with us one night and told me that he was prospecting in this country when Garfield was assassinated, and stayed at the Farm Camp, so it was established then. I don't know who he was prospecting for at that time. (Garfield assassinated in 1881).

The Farm Camp was set up by Pat Agnew of Chippewa Falls, Wis. Their first supplies were brought in from Aitkin by steamboat to Grand Rapids. There the supplies were transferred to batteaus and taken up the Mississippi river to Winnibigoshish Lake, and then up Cut Foot Sioux to portage to Big Bowstring Lake, then down Bigfork River to Busti Landing. Then they portaged over into Busti Lake (We know it as Busticoggin Lake). I'll mark on the map the route they took. They came to east side of Busti Lake, Sec. 13, T. 62, R. 25. This is now my homestead, and I live within 20 rods of their landing place. There was where they started to cut their first tote road, which was the first road cut in this country, and Angus McDonald "Roaring Angus", was with them on this trip.

The logs were cut for Dennis Agnew of St. Paul, and sold to the Minnesota and Ontario Lumber Co., in which Agnew was interested, and who had a saw mill at Kenora (then Rat Portage). He operated this camp until 1888, then sold to Loper and Rummery, of Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and moved his operations to Rice River and established the Rice River Farm Camp. Angus McDonald went to Rice River Farm Camp with him. Agnew logged at Rice River Farm Camp two

years, and then sold to his son-in-law, Bill Deary, who took as his partner one J. B. Kehl of Chippewa Falls, Wis, and the firm became Kehl and Deary. So Agnew seems to be the man who was the guilty one for all the operations in this country. Agnew built two dams on Deer Creek, and three dams on Rice River, which I will mark as near as I can on the map.

Loper and Rummery had a number of camps around Deer Creek and logged for several years. They used oxen, and as I plow the fields I find an ox shoe now and again which undoubtedly was cast by their teams in toting provisions or material from one dam to the other. One of their camps was known as small-pox camp, and it is said many men died at this camp from it. The site can still be found. I know where 7 of these old camp sites are.

A man was shot about 80 rods down Deer Creek from Deer Lake by an Indian. He put 22 buckshot in him, he lived five days. He is buried at the Deer Creek Farm Camp.

In 1889 to 1892 they ran the Popple Camp and the Horse Camp (now known as Horseshoe Camp) They took the oxen from the other camps to this Horse Camp to be shod. There was another camp between the Farm Camp and Horse Camp that winter. Dan McLeod was the scaler that winter. The logs went to the Kewatin Lumbering and Manufacturing Co.

The next ones that took over the Deer Creek operations was Stitts and Howe, but I don't know when. Maybe I can find out, or maybe you can from Matt Spang.

About the only thing I know about these men is that they were there the fall of 1900 and the spring of 1901. They must have bought Loper and Rummery out, because they own the land, also a Pat Smith seems to be interested in the outfit. I don't think Stitts and Howe used that as headquarters. Their headquarters were about one mile east of Battle Lake. They might have been logging in this vicinity before, but I don't think they did. Most likely those records are easily available when Stitts and Howe showed up. The headquarters was known as Stitt's ranch, and is used as a clubhouse now. He kept the ranch open until he

died, as a home for old time lumberjacks, I presume the men who had worked for him. A Mrs. Bridges was cook there.

As to the Bob Stitts sign in 1888 I can't tell, but maybe I can find that out sometime too, if you can't. His logs were sold to the Rat Portage Lumber Co. I never heard of Sourdough Joe. Better ask Mansel Saunders. Think most likely he is the one who told it.

About 1903 the Namakin Lumber Co. took possession and ran it as Camp 1, and farmed, and Chris Hanson was the farmer. They ran it for about three years. Then in 1909 the Itasca Logging Co. went in there and Harry and Fritz Johnson watched camp in 1910. It burned up that summer, and they lost the outfits of three camps.

That fall, the Namakin Lumber Co. built a camp about 1 mile east and logged there the fall of 1910 and spring of 1911. Then fall of 1911 I went there and logged for Namakin Lumber Co and Shevlin and Matthew Co. The Shevlin and Matthew Co. was the Tom Shevlin of Minneapolis interest, and the Namakin Co. was the Shevlin and Backus interest combined. The International Boom Co. was the Shevlin and Backus interests combined, which looked after the driving of the logs, and Dunc Price was the Superintendent of all three companies.

In 1911 the Red River Co. came in there to log. Amos and Bill Connors, known as the Connor Bros, were the contractors, and used the camp 1 year.

This about winds up what I know of Deer Creek operations.

I don't know of any camp near Knight's. The closest is the Klondike Camp. Guess Bergit got another wire crossed.

That road that Freestone built must have been some of that Lydick and Logan had, the Brush Shanty trail. That road must have come on the old tote road of Loper and Rummery, or some logging concern which came through to the hay meadows of Sunny Brook, and then it went out of county in either Section 4 or 5, I don't know which, and was known as the Jumper Trail. It went through to Koochiching. That road was passable in winter, but not in summer, and is a part of the road cut out by Lydick and Logan. I'll mark the route as near as I can from county line to

Stitt's ranch, but I don't know enough about it to mark it from there to Lawrence Lake. It seems to me that most of the travel was the one Matt Spang said he traveled from Trout Lake to Cameron Lake, then Klondike Camp, then to the Deer Creek/ Farm Camp. That's about the route Matt Spang came in here on. That's the road they toted on from Aitkin to Deer Creek Farm Camp in winter. Angus McDonald told me he toted from Aitkin to Deer Creek Farm Camp when it took 8 days to make the trip. I believe Archie McDougall is wrong when he says there was no road there in 1884 north of Trout Lake. That road that Matt Spang traveled from Rice River Farm Camp to Grave Lake was a winter tote road. It was on lakes more than on land. After it froze up we toted over that road in the winter of 1901.

When they toted from Deer Creek Farm Camp they could go most any time of year, as they followed high land. That road from Rice River Farm Camp must have been cut out by Kehl and Deary to get a shorter route after the railroad came to Grave Lake. I don't know anything about J. E. Johnson and wife, J Decker and wife.

I don't know of any Indian mounds on river, but there are big ones near mouth of Bigfork River. There is an Indian burying ground on Rice Lake on Rice Rice River.

I saw lots of Tom Neveaux from 1900 to 1907. He ran a stopping place across the river from where the village of Bigfork is now. He also trapped some. He never hunted much that I know of. Bergit A. seems to think people hunted for a living, but I never saw it that way. They had enough to get meat for themselves. The way people did in thos days, when anyone got a deer or moose they gave their neighbors some. In 1901 Eli Morency killed one of his cows, and Billy Clair brought a quarter of it up to Tom Neveaux's place. Tom wasn't home, so Billy hung it on the side of the house near the door. When Tom came home he thought someone killed a moose and brought him a quarter. His sister's folks, Peloquin, never ate moose meat, so he invited them all over to supper the next night to have a moose meat feast. When Father Peloquin was eating it he said "By _____, Tom, it tastes just like beef!"

This Eli Morency was a real early man here. His claim was up river from Vic Knight's a short ways. He took a squatters right there. He let the squatters right lapse, and he was notified from land office, and when Vic Knight and Arthur Zaizer looked their land over in 1901 they filed on three forties of that claim. They did not file on the forty the buildings were, but he dropped the land and never lived there any more. He must have come in there in 1894 or 1895. A Roy Johnson filed on a claim at the foot of Muldoon Rapids, who must have been here in 1897 and 1898. I never saw him, but stopped at his shack many times as I traveled up and down the river.

Dick McGraw came here in 1902. When he came first, before he went to his claim he worked in the Keewatin Camp about a mile north of Bigfork. When camp broke up in spring, the tote team moved his stuff to his claim in 1903. His/d1 claim was in Sec. 8, T. 62, R. 26 on Bauman Brook. He had a big wild meadow and cut and sold hay to lumber company, and apparently made a good living. He was a man you didn't see much of unless you went there. He has been in county quite a while. He worked for Morris O'Brien for some time before he came up here. He is living in Effie now, having retired from his farm.

The original site of village of Bigfork was Frank Larson's homestead. He established the first post office. It was in his homestead house, and he kept mail in a bushel basket. He carried the mail to and from Deer River once a week on foot, horseback, any way he could for one year for nothing. The first salaried mail carrier was Will Putnam. He started to carry mail once a week in 1903. He traveled what we knew as the Bella Lake route. He went on foot and by boat to Marcell, which was then on Turtle Lake, the end of the M. R. R. R. railroad, and then by train or speeder to Deer River. The next mail carrier was William Welte in 1904, and then mail went twice a week. When Welte started everyone chipped in and cut a tote road to Turtle Lake. He put on a stage route hauling passengers and freight, so that was the first transportation into Big Fork. In 1903 Frank Larson brought in a printing press and printer, Will Johnson, from Grand Rapids, with horse team, and so the first news-

paper was published in Bigfork. Frank Larson also built the first bridge across Bigfork River in 1903. It crossed the river near where John Peterson's sawmill is now. I believe some of the piling is still there. So Frank Larson was the one who started to build and improve the town. He was the main one to get the town organized, and naturally wanted the town called Larson, but other members on board didn't like that so it was changed to Bigfork.

He was a great man to get things going, and did get things done against great odds. Of course he was ////// helping himself, but others benefitted from his work. All Bigfork is today is owed to Frank Larson, but his life was hell on earth while he was doing it.

Well, this about finishes. Perhaps if you have any more questions I could think of something else, but as it is I guess I've written more than enough. And also paper is getting scarce and I have to save a few sheets for further thoughts. Perhaps in a few weeks we will write our personal experiences and send it to you.

Itasca County History - Logging.

(From Orin Patrow, Effie, Minnesota.)

When was Farm Camp set up?

The Rice River Farm Camp was set up some time in the '80's, as far as I know. A logging company, Kale and Deary (I won't say the spelling is right) built it. One of the foremen for this company was Jack MacDonald, better known as Jack the Horse. Angus MacDonald farmed there and watched camp. About 1895 or 1896 this Kale & Deary contracted their logging and Hurd McVeety took over the work. This man is dead now. He lived his late years at Deer Lake, near Deer River. Jack the Horse is also dead.

About 1897 the Klondike camp was set up by Hurd McVeety. The Rice River Farm Camp and Klondike camp were one outfit. It belonged to Kale and Deary, and this Hurd McVeety was running it. A Dan McLeod was scaler at the Klondike. In 1900 the Keewatin Lumber Co. bought the Kale and Deary outfit, and Nov. 20 the Keewatin Lumber Co. came to Rice River Farm Camp with Dan McLeod as Supt. of Logging and Geo Cliff of Eau Claire, Wis. was foreman that winter.

The first camps they built were in Section 1 and Sec. 2 in Stokes Township 60, R. 26. They were at this camp two winters. The logs were landed in Rice River near the Axel Skallman home now. The road from camp to the river followed Gail (Gale) Brook. The next summer, 1901, John Marshall was the farmer at the Farm Camp. This John Marshall is still living and is at Hibbing, Minn., being janitor at the Glass School at that place.

The second winter they built a new camp, Bell's camp, near the Bergum home four miles up the Bigfork river from Bigfork. In the spring of 1902 Angus MacDonald came back and took up farming at the Rice River Farm Camp.

The next winter they had a camp about one mile north of Bigfork on Bigfork River, known as Clair's camp. Also a camp at the Nels Felstat homestead. The next fall they moved down to the Pat Kinney homestead on Bigfork River, T63, R 26, about 12 north of Bigfork and about two miles from Little Falls on Bigfork River. They still used the Rice River Farm Camp as headquarters, and Angus MacDonald was there as caretaker. They started at this Little Falls camp in the fall of 1903, until the spring of 1906, with Jack McDermott as foreman. He was also foreman at the Nels Felstat camp when it was running. From fall of 1904 to spring of 1906 they also ran a camp in T61 R25 on the old Klondike road, about two miles from Sandwick's place, Billy Clair as foreman.

The spring of 1906 the Keewatin Lumber Co. sold to the International Lumber Co., and ended the Rice River Farm Camp as Headquarters, and Angus Macdonald went on a farm in Alberta, Canada, and a postoffice was established there named Tressy after his daughter Tressy. Whether he is living now I do not know.

Then Hank McInerny, an old employe of the Keewatin Lumber Co. and a bachelor made his home there for quite a few years. Then the fall of 1910 and winter 1911 David Maturen logged his homestead and sold the logs to Shevlin Mathew Co,, and landed them in Cameron Lake. Then spring of 1911 the International Boom Co. sent me to take those logs out, and I used the old Farm Camp as a driving camp. That was the last time there was a crew of men in the Rice River Farm Camp, and also the last drive on Rice River. All the logs cut by those camps were sawed in Canada, I believe at Keewatin, Canada.

Before the railroad came to Grand Rapids the supplies were toted from Aitkin to the Farm Camp. Enough supplies were brought in during the winter to keep the camp until everything was frowe up the next fall.

One summer the Farm Camp was raided. I can't remember the year, but it was after Tom Neveaux came to Bigfork because some of the stuff taken from Farm Camp was found in his root cellar. The raiders locked Angus MacDonald in the office, fastening the hasp with chain on the outside. When he found out what was going on he started to go out the window, and one of the raiders called out that if he started out he would be a dead man. His wife held on to him so he couldn't go. At daybreak he took a boat and went after them alone, and ran up to them in Rice River bog, about two miles up Rice River from Bigfork. They were landed and getting their breakfast, but he didn't land, but was close to see who they were. They saw him, and three of the bunch were for shooting him, but one, Fournier, talked them out of it and let him go. Then he went to Grand Rapids and reported it.

Accompanied by a deputy sheriff he again started to trail them. Angus MacDonald wouldn't go after them without a warrant to take them dead or alive. They heard in some way these raiders were around Poplar River, so they went there and with MacDonald in the lead were going right along when they came face to face with Fournier, only about four feet apart. MacDonald shot and the bullet went theough Fournier's hat, just creasing his hair. Fournier threw up his hands. As far as I ever heard, Fournier was the only one who ever served any time for the robbery. Of course, you could find a record of it in Sheriff's office. I suppose maybe you wonder how I know so much about this. Well, I was one of the Keewatin men and had this story from Angus MacDonald himself. I put in many days at Farm Camp working with Angus MacDonald.

Dan McLeod was to see me about five years ago, and was living in Kenora, Canada. Whether alive now or not, I do not know. If alive, is still Supt. of the International Lumber Co.'s interests at Kenora. When here he was 72 years old. The first time I had seen him for 33 years.

Perhaps some would not recognize this Angus MacDonald as the man they knew. He was familiarly known as "Roaring Angus" and was fearless, not being afraid of God, Man or Devil. In spring of 1903 his daughter went to the first school at Bigfork where Mrs. Patrow was teaching.

He came after his little girl Tressie one Friday afternoon, and two bears were in the road right in front of horses. Angus got right out with an ax and slashed one bear's head wide open. The other bear ran. He had the bear when he came in to town, so he had the evidence.

There was a John Heenan, another foreman for the Keewatin Lumber Co. There was a little joke about Heenan, a song composed about a disagreement he had with a teamster, a Dempsey, and when he went to the barn to settle it this Dempsey met him with some barn implement and chased him into the woods. The name of song was "Heenan's Retreat before Daylight." The editor of the Deer River paper at that time, a Murray Taylor, printed several copies of the song, some of which might be found. A lumberjack, Geo. Taylor, composed this song, and quite a few other that were sung in the various camps.

Itasca County History - Logging.

Copy of a letter from Orin Patrow.

Effie, Minn.
Oct. 16, 1941

John E. Shaw
Grand Rapids, Minn.

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing the map you sent me. I marked in red where that bridge was, just where the river leaves Rice Lake. A span was taken out to let a steamboat through. The steamboat was owned and run by John Wallace. I was there in 1908 and the steamboat was running then. A man by name of Colwell lived right at the bridge. I have the location of Sandy Owen's shack marked on the map. I know nothing about him. He must have been here about 1900. When I was at the shack in 1902 it (had) not been vacated very long. I always figured he and a Conners chummed together. Conners had a claim at Conners Lake, and their land joined. The Keewatin Lumber Co. logged those places in 1902 and 1903.

I marked the location of the first Effie postoffice. It was established there by a man by the name of Olaus Wenaus and named the P. O. after his daughter, Effie, now Mrs Maley Johnston and owns the Sugar Bush Lodge on Bowstring Lake. The Postoffice was established in 1903.

Archie McDougall might be correct about that road, but Kale & Deary must have cut that road and whenever that road was cut that was when that camp was established. Bergit (Anderson) writes the road came through in 1884 and Archie McDougall says it did not untim some time in the 1890's. Well someone is wrong. I think I can get the date when the Farm Camp was set up. I am writing tonight to get the date, and hope it will be settled.

The Keewatin Lumber Co. was R. A. Mather of Canada. All the checks I ever got from the Company was signed R. A. Mather and no other.

Do you want the Deer Creek roads marked out too, on a map? They consisted of quite a net work. That camp ran many years. If you do, I need a map again. The Lydick & Logan road connected with their roads. It will take a long time to think it all up. The Kinney Trail that I have marked of course is approximately, but have the beginning and end. The Kinney Trail ended in Bigfork, but I have it marked right through to the Farm Camp because everyone traveled that way.

Now is this the kind of a write up you want of the Deer Creek Farm Camp? I was not personally acquainted with the men of this Farm Camp, but I know the Companies who were there.

Orin Patrow.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Shaw.

From Mr. Orin Patrow, Effie, Minnesota.

I left Eau Claire, Wisconsin on November 16, 1900, and landed in Deer River, Minnesota on November 17, 1900. The first man I met in Deer River was Pat McCloskey who was marshall at that time. Dan McLeod hired me in Eau Claire to bring two cars of horses to Deer River. There were, I think, 28 horses in the two cars. Each car was partitioned off for harnesses and other outfit. Bill Batson and Ernie Ford accompanied me to help. There were 18 inches of snow, and it was 35° below zero that morning, November 17, 1900. Loaded the horses that afternoon and went to Smith Lake on the Itasca Logging railroad (Gut and Liver).

Archie McMillan and Andy Marcell were the crew, Archie McMillan engineer, Andy Marcell conductor, no brakeman. We stayed at Smith Lake until Nov. 20, shoeing horses, etc. There was a crew now of 42 men who came on the noon train from Duluth, Nov. 17, and came to Smith Lake with Bill Batson, Ernie Ford and myself, and we all stayed at Smith Lake until November 20 when we all started for Rice River Farm Camp. It made quite a caravan, two four-horse teams on sleighs, and one wagon with four horses, and one wagon with one team, and a light sleigh called the tin car, which contained the cooking utensils. Some horses were coming loose. We drove this outfit across two small lakes, the ice was strong enough to hold it up. We made about ten miles, and broke a pole out of a sleigh and were about 1/2 mile from the club house where we had to stay for that night.

There was a kind of shelter for horses. The cook, Johnny Welsh, got dinner. When time came to feed the horses we found we had only two or three sacks of oats for all those horses, but we had lots of hay. They unloaded the tinware and I took this sleigh back to Smith Lake to get oats. Stayed there all night, and started out with a load of oats and caught up with the crew at the Rice River Farm Camp. We had to fix up the place, but were very comfortable, both horses and men.

The tote team started the next morning to tote supplies from Smith Lake to Farm Camp, and crew started cutting tote road to Gale Brook, Sec. 1, T. 60, R. 26. Dan McLeod went to Duluth for more men, and Geo. Cliff, of Eau Claire, was foreman. The logging outfit was purchased from this Geo. Cliff. It was only a few days and camps were built and we were settled. I loaded there that winter.

In this camp were Geo. Ruby, now in liquor store in Deer River, and Rufus Mitchell, now in liquor store in Big Fork, and Billy Clair last heard of he went west.

The next spring people commenced to move in. Three families, La Chapelle, came in and had to wait at Clair's camp about one mile north of Big Fork until ice went out so they could go down to Big Falls by boat.

On March 17, 1901, ten of us took our two fiddlers we had in camp and went to Clair's Camp and had a real dance. I suppose this was the first real dance held in Big Fork. There were quite a few young people in the LaChapelle families, and we all had a very pleasant time.

We had small pox in camp all winter. I went back to Eau Claire in the spring. Geo. Ruby and I walked from this camp on Gale Brook to Deer River. We started about 9 o'clock to catch the train at Grave Lake on March 29, 1901, but there was three inches of ice on the track and the train couldn't go, so we walked to Deer River. Got there about 8 o'clock in the morning. It was 10° below zero. At that time there was only a day train, one from Duluth and

one to Duluth, no night train. I came back to Rice River Farm Camp early in the summer of 1901. John Marshall (Scotty) and a McKinnon were caretakers at the Farm when I got there. I helped put up hay.

In August while I was at Clair and McClellan stopping place or Clair's camp I met Arthur Zaiser and V. L. Knight who were looking for claims. They located themselves and were returning home, and were going to walk to Grand Rapids. After the hay was stacked we rebuilt the three dams on Rice River, and I was working on those dams when I heard McKinley was assassinated. When the dams were completed we went into the camp at Gale Brook again. The sleighing was done in February, then I went to Farm Camp, and I stayed there until April, when I went to Eau Claire and stayed until fall.

That winter we logged around Clair's Camp. The next spring we drove the logs down Big Fork river, which was my first drive on the Big Fork. We started at Clair's camp and drove to Rainy River, then down Rainy River to Long Sioux rapids. Wehn we were through driving we took the steamboat, Kenora, to Rat Portage, then to Winnipeg, then Grand Forks, then to Deer River, then to Big Fork.

That summer about all I did was escort parties down and up the Big Fork. People who were going to claims, and some who were just looking at claims. One of those was a postoffice inspector who wanted to see the post office at Big Falls, which was Ripple then. Then I had to take him to Emo, Canada, where he took the railroad. His name was Smith, and he lived in St. Paul. It was a very interesting trip.

Another interesting trip I took was when I escorted a woman to look at a piece of land in T. 63, R. 25. Went down river from Big Fork to Little Falls, then went to about where 29 is, the end of the Backus Line. A family by name of Bogie lived there then. I stayed there all night, and started on section line and went east and came to a road which I learned afterwards was the Juniper Trail. It had rained very heavy and everything was just about swimming. We went north about two miles on that road, and then east to the land, and back to Bogies that night. There was two ft. of water in places, and I could not leave the line, for if I did all my time would be taken up finding it, so I just put her on my back and carried her that way for ten rods at a time (She weighed about 120 pounds). The next night stayed at V. L. Knight's home, then next day to Big Fork. We ate dinner at Ed Shultis home, then in afternoon went up the bog, then took a trail over the Bella Lake route, then over Turtle Lake to Marcell where she could take the train to Deer River.

She was an author, and when she proved up I was a witness. While in Cass Lake where the Land Office was she took me to the photographers and had my picture taken with pack sack, etc., also with her on my back, to put in the article she wrote of the trip.Her name was Van Huson Wakeman, and she came from Hastings, Minnesota.

That was the first spring there was school in Big Fork, and was the first time I met Miss Costello, the first teacher in Big Fork.

The camp that winter was on Pat Kinney's homestead at the north end of Kinney Trail. The Effie Post office was established in the fall of 1903, and that was where the mail for the camp came. The next spring I went on drive, but only went to mouth of Big Fork river. A Joe Pinnette and I came back by boat. This Joe Pinnette was Lewie Pinnette's father.

That summer Mrs. Wenaus and daughter Effie, Miss Costello and myself went by boat from Big Fork to Big Falls for a two day celebration Fourth of July. It took ten days to make the trip. I boated up and down river the summer of 1904. I left V. L. Knight's one morning at about 4 o'clock and from there to Muldoon rapids, a distance of about 11 miles, I saw eleven moose and only one deer.

The fall of 1904 and winter of 1905 I logged for W. H. Putnam. In spring April 24, 1905 Miss Costello and I were married in Grand Rapids. From then I kind of logged on my own, my own timber, and contracted for Shevlin Mather in winter and took charge of driving in spring. In 1910 I filed on this homestead, and in 1913 I quit logging and now I have a little farm and manage to keep two jumps ahead of the sheriff.

FINIS.

I have written this and you can use any of it you are welcome.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part (Rosy) - Custer.

Interview with C. O. Peterson.

I came in here the year before the railroad, or 1902. I came to Deer River and then walked out the railroad right of way to Bena. From there I took what was known as the Bena and Blackduck trail. It was some trail, too. More than half of the way was across swamps so deep that they had cut small trees a foot or more from the ground and nailed poles on top of the stumps to walk on. Stringers, we called them. I brought my wife and family in with me when I came.

The next year the railroad reached Bena, so I went to Minneapolis and bought two cows and enough supplies for a year. I also brought along enough household goods and farm machinery to make up a carload.

Just north of where I homesteaded was a large burn. When I came here there was not even a brush growing there for miles.

Most of the early logging in here was done by (Gin Pole) Jim Simpson. These logs were all hauled to Round lake, where they were loaded on cars. O. Neal from Cass Lake also did a lot of early logging in here.

There was only one settler between here and Bena. His name was Dwyer. He had a small log shack. His place was known as Brush Shanty Place.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Elmer R. Pike.

Old Pat Agnew was the first logger to put improvements in the Rice river for logging purposes. These dams cost him so much that it practically broke him, so he sold out to Kehl and Deary. One of his sons, also named Pat, logged in here for a number of years after that.

The first government land office at Cass Lake was run by a man and his wife, named Shepard. They were both attorneys. At first, he also did abstract business, but he had to quit it as he was working for the government land office, so he turned it over to his son-in-law.

Uncle Lyman Ayers was not down on the Pokegama lake in Pine county. I have heard him tell many times of his having been born at his father's mission on Pokegama lake south of Grand Rapids. If he were living today he would be somewhere around the century mark, probably past it if anything. I have heard him speak of his father many times, but I could not recall his father's name. I don't believe it was Frederick. I am a man past seventy, and he was a man probably past middle age when I was just a young buck. Uncle Lyman lived for many years at Little Falls. If a person would get in touch with some of the business men there, he could probably get some information on him. I think he died there in 1920 or thereabouts. For many years he worked for the old Weyerhauser syndicate, classifying land for them. The Weyerhauser syndicate was what is now the Cloquet outfit.

Ernie Fleming of Bena should be a good source of information, as he has been here many years.

Itasca County History -from Custer notes - EARLY LOGGING, Big Fork Valley

from interview with ELMER ROSWELL PIKE - (1)

I came to Itasca county Oct. 9, 1896 with Hartley McGuire. This Hartley McGuire was a brother to Miles McGuire who sold stock in a gold mine to be located somewhere near where Northome now is. We came by way of Duluth, on the old Duluth and Winnipeg as far as where the town of Cohasset now stands. At that time I think it was known as the Lelats spur or something like that. I have been several tomes over the old Sapidilla trail in early days. This trail,followed the Duluth and Winnipeg survey from Deer River to about where Alvwood is. From here the survey took several different routes. One survey went by way of the Red Lake narrows toward the Canadian border. Another ran over toward where Fosston is.

In the early days I knew a cousin of Caldwell. At the time this cousin lived in Bemidji. He told me much of Caldwell. He said Caldwell was a civil engineer and from what I have seen of his trails and camps, I don't doubt it. His headquarters were in Aitkin. From here he packed to Bena. From Bena up to Caldwell Brook. The old trail when I first saw it was quite clear. He seemed to have a sixth sense or something of the kind that helped him to follow ever little ridge or bit of high ground as far as possible and then to cross a s swamp or low ground at its narrowest point. Many of the swamps were corduroyed although in many places he did not have to corduroy, but if he had crossed a few rods eithervto the right or left he would have had to corduroy. In my work as a cruiser in the early days I had occasion to,use this old trail a great deal. The trail left Bena, crossing the narrows between Big and Little Winnie((Winnie is short for Winnibigoshish) cutting over almost to the shore of Bowstring Lake, following it within a mile or so of the shore up past Sand Lake, Rice Lake and Dora Lake, crossing the Brook a couple of miles north of Dora lake. Here at the crossing of Windigo Brook was the longest single stretch of corduroy on the entire trail. This stretch of corduroy was over a quarter of a mile long. At this crossing was afterward located Will Long's camp. From the crossing the trail angled north-east till it hit his camp on Caldwell Brook.

The camp was located in the NW¼ of SW¼, Sec.1, R.26, Tp.151. The camp was so close to the corner of the section as is possible. Some of the buildings were in each of four edjoining sections. A man I knew in Big Falls by the name of Swan Swanson told me that he had driven oxen for Caldwell at this camp. He also told me that at the time the attachment papers were served on Caldwell that most of his logs were already in Canada or nearly there, as the papers were served after the ice went out in the spring. Most of these logs were at least forty feet long with a 12 inch top. They were being used to bind booms of logs together on the lakes. Caldwell also had a landing on the Big Fork river. He logged not only in Wildwood township but also in Grattan township. Most of the logs from Grattan township were put directly into the Big Fork river somewhere between Dora lake and Wirt. In the year of the Spanish-American war, McGuire and I started at Pokegama Lake with a canoe. We followed the Mississippi river to Lake Winnibigoshish from where we followed a small creek emptying into the NE side of the lake. We followed t this creek almost to its head, from where we portaged to Bowstring. As I remember it , this portage could not have been much over a mile long. It showed evidence of having had lots of use. It was my first trip into this part of the woods, but McGuire seemed to know every little creek. We crossed the Bowstring into Sand lake into Rice lake then into Dora lake following close to the east shore into Windigo bay and finally into the Big Fork river. This we followed till we came to TOLERSON'S rapids. This rapids is fifteen or twenty miles upstream from Big Falls or what was then called RIPPLE. At the head of the Tolerson Rapids we took an old portage to the foot of Deadman's Rapids on the Little Fork, (this portage ran right past where camp 5 afterward stood.) paddled up the stream finally into Vermillion Lake crossing it to Tower and from Tower we took the old Vermillion trail to Duluth. This trip took us a little o over nine weeks. The old portage from the Big Fork to the Little Fork was one of the main portages at that time. It was well cut out, wide enough for any kind of packing and mostly runningbon high ground.

When I first came in here there were lots of places that at this time go by different names. Haupt was first called Dexterville. Orth was first called

Magzie P.O., Gemmel was first called Stoner and Grattan was called Pine Top P.O.

Pat Agnew was the first man to improve the Rice river for logging purposes. He afterward sold out to Kehl and Deary. Kehl was a big saw-mill man from Eau Clair, Wisconsin. They sold to the Keewatin lumber Co.

Caldwell's first road to the Brook was built in 1881. The place where Busticoggan buried Caldwell's men was on the site of the old or first camp. He buried twenty or twenty two men here, besides what men Caldwell himself buried during the winter.

At the time the Indians buried Caldwell's men the ground was still too frozen to do much digging so the men were buried in a shallow grave. The grave was then inclosed by a log pen which was then filled with dirt dug from outside the pen, the whole thing being covered with logs, forming a sort of roof , supposed to have been done to keep the wolves and other animals out. There is at least six trees surrounding the grave or mound that bear marks cut into their bark. Three or four of them have crosses, the other have some sort of Indian signs cut into them.

Caldwell also cut hay on the Big Fork for his stock, just across the river from his landing. Caldwell's cousin says Caldwell went to Canada after he had gotten his logs out, never returning to the United States. He used an old road that came out of Canada and was used by most of the old Canadian loggers who were stealing timber on this side of the line. This trailcame from somewhere in the neighborhood of where Mizpah now is and ran NE through what is now Nett township betweeh sections four and five, then up Crane lake then to the boundary.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

GEORGE POOL.

I came to Itasca County in 1906. The first year I was here I logged eleven million feet of pine, four million feet for the Three I Lumber Co. This was at Janes. It was the nicest piece of pine I ever saw. We wasted nothing. If a tree broke we picked up every piece, down to four feet long. I took out two million feet for Three I on Lake Rainy. The rest of the eleven million feet I took out for Jack O'Connel at Fox Lake.

I was logging on Turtle Lake when the Arnold Yards burned at what is now known as the Four Corners or Talmoon. It was on the night of July 4, 1906 or 1907. The reflection of the light on my window awakened me. At first I thought it was only some lumberjack who had started a big bonfire, but the longer I looked the more it looked like more than a bonfire. So I put on my clothes and walked down. When I arrived the whole Arnold Yards were afire. We had a number of Russell cars in the yard, and I hated to see them go up in smoke. I knew we could never stop the fire, so I got together a bunch of my men and we managed to push the cars out of the yard. They were about all that was saved.

Mr. Porter squatted on his place two winters before he filed on the place in 1901. His first trip to his claim was by way of Grand Rapids. After that he came in by way of Bena to what is now Federal Dam, then to Wirt. From Wirt he came down the Big Fork river to the mouth of Caldwell Brook, until he came to the old Caldwell Camp. From here he followed a trail blazed through to his claim.

Mrs. Porter tells the story as follows: The children and I came on January 2, 1902. We came to Blackduck by rail. At that time the line ended there, except for a spur running northwest from there about ten miles. From Blackduck we came by team and sled, following an old logging road. We left our own team in Blackduck that winter, because we had no feed for them on theplace. There was only one settler in Plum Creek Township when we came here. Lester Mitchel had come in in the early fall of 1901. He brought both horses and cattle.

There were a number of settlers west of us in Wildwood Township. We used to visit back and forth with most of them. On one of our visits, to Frantz Lugdahl I think it was, she showed me the location of Caldwell's Camp. She also showed me where,it was said, Caldwell had buried more than half of his men. They died with the small pox. The rest of his men packed their"tussicks" and scattered, ending his logging on the brook. I think Caldwell's first name was Dan. It was said he was logging for a Duluth company. Some of his supplies were brought by river, but most of them were packed in.

The first school started in 1903 or 1904, the first term for only six weeks. After a couple of terms the school was moved to Wildwood. Our children then had seven miles to go to school. They were all quite small, but they managed to drive a team back and forth without any trouble.

Gust Carlson's daughter, Violet, was the first child born in this township, in 1903 or 1904.

There was a small creek running by the old cabin. I used to like to walk up this creek to gather berries. One day as I was picking berries along the creek Albert came along on his way to the house. He said "Well, what is the use of going clear around the creek to the house? We will cut through the woods, and I will blaze you out a trail." He blazed the trail through all right.

The next day I started out to pick berries. I started to follow the blazes, but some way I lost them. I had thought, on entering the timber, "Now if I lose the blazes, all I have to do is to keep working to my left, and I will come out to the creek." I walked and walked, but I never came to the creek.

At last I came to a little opening among the trees, and off to my left was a clearing with a cabin and a couple of other buildings in it. There was a little wisp of smoke, coming from the stove pipe chimney, so I knew it was not deserted. I was just a little sore at someone. Here we had neighbors so close, and no one had ever told me.

I stood for a little while, thinking all kinds of thoughts. What if it was someone with a nice young wife, somewhere near my own age? Or would it be better if it were some kindly, middle-aged woman, like my own mother?

At last I started out to see just who it was that lived here. But when I was almost ready to knock on the door, here came a large spotted dog around the corner of the house. Did I feel foolish! I turned around and looked at the small clearing and out-buildings. I then stepped back to look at the house. I wonder what was wrong with my eyes. I was standing almost on my own doorstep. I am not sure whether I was glad because I was no longer lost, or sorry because I had not found a neighbor.

In the year of 1910 they were cutting a road to a settler somewhere west, or in the west part of Wildwood. They were piling the brush in the road and burning it. It was sometime in May. Finishing the road, they went home and left the brush piles still burning. The next day the fire was running through the woods at a great rate. The wind was in the southwest, and the fire traveled

Northeast until it reached the mouth of Caldwell Brook, about seven miles north of us. At that time we were running the Post office in Plum Creek, but as no one would carry the mail from Effie for what the Government was willing to pay we had to close the Post office. So Mr. Porter and I put the Post Office fixtures on a dray, and took them to Effie. We stayed all night at Effie. That evening as I stood in the yard at Cochrans in Effie I could hear the roar of the fire, which was fifteen miles away. Small pieces of burned twigs and grass fell around me. The wind had changed, bringing the fire toward our home. This was some time in June. The next morning early we started for home. When we reached home we began to prepare for the worst. We sent the boys for the cows, while Mr. Porter and I, and a man by the name of Johnsen, who was doing some ditching along the new road to Northome, carried water and filled everything that would hold water. We placed the water at different points about the clearing and buildings.

As the boys should have been back by now we began to be worried, so Mr. Porter climbed a dead pine at the edge of the clearing to see how close the fire was. From the tree top he could see the flames only a couple of miles away. He slid down the tree, and he and Mr. Johnsen went to look for the boys. As he left he said, "When I find the boys, I will come back and light that slashing north of the clearing, as it will help stop the fire." But he was hardly out of sight when the slashing caught fire from a spark.

About this time the boys came in from the south. They had found the cows, about three miles south of the place, but were unable to drive them toward the fire. They would go any other direction.

Soon Mr. Porter and Mr. Johnsen came in with the fire right behind them. They certainly were glad to see the boys.

From now on we were busy. Mr. Porter, Mr. Johnsen and a couple of the older boys kept the fire from the barn and house with water, while I took care of the rest with the help of the youngest boy. The clearing was full of deer, porcupines, and all other wild life, including birds, fleeing before the fire. Sparks would fall in the potato patch and I would make a wild dash to put them out

before they started ground fires. Behind me would come a wild rabbit or two, and our cats. The rabbits didn't seem to be the least bit afraid of me. When I stopped they would hop up close to me and sit down, looking at me as if for protection. One of them even took a drink of water I offered him. It was strange, but the cats seemed to pay no attention to the rabbits at all, when, as a general thing, a rabbit who ventured up close to the buildings didn't last long.

The fire passed our place and went on south a couple of miles, where it burned itself out. Our cattle we found and brought home four days later. This fire made most of the open land we now have.

The next night after the fire, it looked like a large city all around us, from the old stubs that were still burning. The fire destroyed much fine timber, and killed a great deal of wild life.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer.

Interview with Frank Rabbit. - (1)

As far as I know my folks came from around La Prairie. We think we still have land there that belonged to my great-grandfather. There are several summer resorts built on the land now, but I am unable to locate the original allotment papers. But I am only a young man, so I am not able to give you very much information about the early Rabbits.

I was born on Rabbit's Point in 1910. My mother was Maggie Rabbit. Until about three years ago I never knew who my father was. After my mother died, my uncle Sam told me my father was an early logger in here whose name was Jack Ford. When I first started to school I was only a dumb little Indian kid and couldn't tell the teacher my name, so she called me Frank Rabbit, and I have been Frank Rabbit ever since.

I never heard any of my folks speak of ever owning any stock when they lived near Grand Rapids, but I doubt if they did, except possibly a few ponies. Sure, they probably sold hay to the early loggers, but the hay I don't think was put up by the Rabbits. They probably did just as I do now. I sell quite a lot of hay every fall, but it is hay stumpage. Most of it is along Grouse Creek, in T. 147 and 146, R. 25.

My grandmother, the wife of Chief Chas. Rabbit, was adopted, Indian custom, by O-Dah-Guan, also called Qua-Ege-Shig-Oke, when she was about seventeen months old. O-Dah-Guan or Qua-Ege-Shig-Oke was the father of Wah-Be-Gon (or Gwon-Ay-Aush) also called Joseph Goggleye. At the death of O-Dah-Guan the Indian agent at Nett Lake held a hearing to determine the heirs.

George Farmer and Right Boney testified that Joe Goggleye was the only living heir. This was in 1911. At the death of Joe's mother in 1913 it came to the notice of the bureau of Indian affairs that Joe Goggleye had refused to help in the support of his mother in any way during the last years of her life.

Disinterested parties testified that the old lady had spent the last thirty years of her life in the home of her adopted daughter, Mrs. Chas. Rabbit, she being unable to do anything to help support herself. It was recommended that a new hearing be held to re-apportion the estate, as the Bureau of Indian affairs recognized the adoption as legal according to Indian custom. But so far there has never been any new hearing. The property in question is the government allotment, , known as the Boise Fort allotment No. 4, Deer Creek reservation. It is the S.E. of the N. E. ¼, and the S. W. of N. E. ¼, Sec. 23, T. 62, R. 25 W.

This information was taken from a letter to Chas Rabbit from the sub-agent at Nett Lake.

There were several Indians named Bowstring Joe, but none of them was Joe Rabbit. If my uncle Sam was here he could tell you a lot, but he is out looking at some wolf snares. James Waukanaha can also tell you a lot.

I remember when grandfather was at Rabbit Point he had some stock, I think a couple of cows and some ponies.

Frank showed me a letter written in 1910 by the Indian Agent to Chas. Rabbit. From this letter it would seem that Chas. had cut some saw logs on his land without the permission of the Indian agent, but when he went to sell the logs he found he could not sell them without the consent of the agent.

This letter was in answer to Chas. application for permission to sell the logs. The agent said that inasmuch as Chas. could get a certain price from Mr. Gibbs at Inger, and he thought the price very fair considering the distance the logs were from a good market, he, the agent, would give his consent to sell the logs to Mr. Gibbs, half of the logs to be delivered to Mr. Gibbs at once, the rest of the logs to be delivered when Mr. Gibbs got the cash to pay for them. He also said he was sure Gibbs would be very fair on the scale, but as Chas. land would grow trees of such good size and quality he must have very good land. Therefore chas. must take the money he received for the logs and buy himself some stock and build himself some buildings and start farming. This was in 1910 and about this time, so the settlers say, Chas. did buy a couple of cows, and some settlers say he probably had a pig. About this time he also built a nice frame house, this being the first stock anyone seems to know of the Rabbits having except a few ponies and a great number of dogs.

I am also sending the legal descriptions of the allotments granted to the Rabbits by the government. The descriptions are taken from the original patents, most of them being signed by President McKinley in January and February of 1889.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Amos Randall (Sec. 22, T. 62, R. 25)

I came to Deer River in 1909, where I lived for about a year, moving to North Busti township on December 5, 1910. There were a number of old camp sites located around here when I came, some of them quite old at that time. One old camp I remember especially was in Section 11 just west of Shine Lake. From the looks of the old stumps around this camp the trees must have been chipped down with an axe instead of being sawed as they now are.

If I remember rightly the old Gardner place was over by the Zaiser school house. Gardner was not here when I came, but I think that they used to call a place over there the Gardner place.

Bill Long, who used to log in west of here, came from our old neighborhood. He bought out a man named J. D. Logan, timber stamp and all. This stamp he used in here. It was J.D.L. when I came here. I found lots of old logs stranded on the meadows with this stamp. When he first came in here from Morrison county he brought a cousin of mine, who was his edger man, Joe Reigh, his saw filer, and several others. He put each of the men who came in with him on claims so he could get the timber. Some of them took three claims--a homestead, a stone & timber claim, and a preemption claim. The first year he logged on the Big Fork he hung his wanagan up in the Muldoon rapids, where he had to leave it and make the rest of the drive in a couple of small boats. His wanagan that spring was made of barrels. These were lashed together and a pole floor and house built on top of them. When they hit the rapids the barrels broke loose in some way and they could not fix it. They must have used wild meat at the time, as my cousin said the front sight got broken on their rifle in the mixup, so they had to shoot at moose by guess. But they were not very good guessers, as all the meat they had between the rapids and the Rainy river was a small moose calf that one of the men was lucky enough to hit. Long afterwards sold out to the Rat Portage Lumber Co.

When I came here in 1910 the line now followed by state highway #1 was only a blazed survey line.

MR. & MRS. JOE REIGH. Mrs. Reigh was Hulda Bloomquist. Joe came to the valley in 1897 or 1898, by way of Bena to Squaw Lake, then to Dora Lake, going to work for Will Lang who had a camp on the Big Fork river about a mile from where it comes out of Dora Lake. After working for Long for a couple of years he went down the river, settling in Sec. 26, R. 27, T. 61.

Hulda Bloomquist, while on a visit to her sister Nellie in Grand Rapids in the summer or early fall of 1901, was asked to take charge of a school in the wilderness, by the county superintendent. After talking about it to her sister she took the school, not telling her sister as her sister had objected when they talked of it. Telling her sister goodby and letting her think she was returning home, she started for her school.

Going to Turtle Lake from Deer River by logging train the caboose was full to overflowing with lumberjacks, most of them not any too sober. So the conductor, Andy Marcell, put her in the ~~engi~~ cab with the engineer and fireman, saying the caboose was no place for a lady. Knute Bergum met her at Turtle Lake with a team and wagon, as he it was who had asked for the school. They spent the night at Farm Camp (Rice River), where the summer caretaker put them up for the night. As ladies were somewhat of a novelty they were not prepared for such an event, but the caretaker soon fixed that by the simple process of hanging a blanket across one corner of the camp for her bedroom. Although this was all strange to her she soon fell asleep, almost as soon as they were through eating supper.

But the worst was yet to come. The next day they passed through the wildest country she had ever seen. For miles it was up one hill and down another, some of them so steep that Mr. Bergum had to chain both hind wheels of the wagon to keep the wagon from running over the horses. Such a ride, the wagon jolted along over tree roots and stones, until walking instead of riding was a pleasure.

Late that day they reached the Bergum home, she (Miss Hulda Bloomquist) being the fifth woman to enter the valley. Three of the others were Mrs. Bergum, a Mrs. Clark, and her sister Miss Cody. The other one she does not recall. Miss Bloomquist was to board with Bergum,

The school was a log homesteader's cabin, about 16x20 feet, not far from the Bergum home. She had five pupils, George and Fred McLean, Howard, Alfred and Margaret Bergum.

In 1902 Miss Bloomquist filed on a homestead in the valley, located in Sec. 26, R. 27, T. 61. She afterward married a neighboring homesteader, Joe Reigh. They have one daughter.

Itasca County History - Custer notes.

John J. Rose interview - Island lake, NW corner of county

In January of 1898 George White, my brother Alex and I made our first trip into this part of Itasca County. We each picked a homestead site at that time. We then returned to Deer River to await spring before settling on our claims.

In June of that same year we loaded our stuff on a small hand-car at Deer River and pushed it to the end of the steel of what was known as the Gut and Liver Line". The steel ended at Bow String Creek.

There we took canoes and started down the creek into Bow String Lake, then into Sand Lake, thence through Rice lake and to Dora lake, and across Dora lake to its north end. There we entered a small creek known as Moose Brook. From there on the trip became tough. We spent over a week on that brook cutting out logs and brush so we could get our boats through. In places the brook was so narrow we could not paddle the boat but would reach out on either side and grab the brush growing out on the banks and pull ourselves along. In places we got out and waded pulling the boat after us.

We followed the brook to its head in Moose Lake, crossed Moose lake to the Northwest corner from where we cut out a trail that followed the section line which was later made the line between Itasca and Koochiching counties. This trail followed the line about 1½ miles. We then cut southwest to the north shore of Island Lake, where "Danola" lodge now stands. This is Lot 5, Sec. 4, Tp. 150-28.

My claim was located on the northwest side of the lake, Gov. lot 2, Sec. 8, Tp. 150-28. I built my shack on the lake shore in a fine stand of white pine. This spot had previously been used for a site for an old trading post. There was 9 old shanty bottoms and the bottom of a larger building visable when I came here. I have never disturbed these old remains and what is left of the old fireplaces and the outlines of one of the buildings can still be plainly seen.

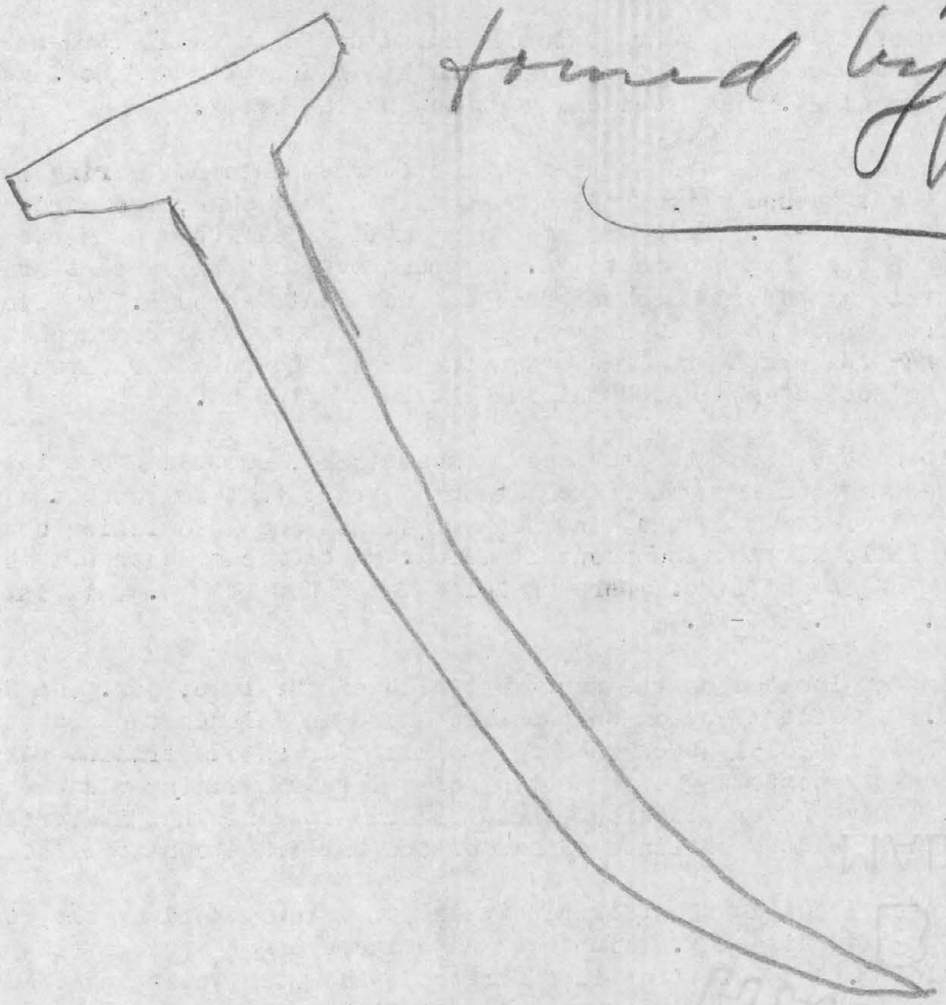
This winter I cut down a fair sized pine tree that stood by the corner of one of these old buildings, This tree had been dead for at least 15 years to my knowledge. I sawed it up into firewood and while splitting it up I came upon an old scar. The scar was completely grown over. I counted 53 rings of wood that had grown over the scar. It looked like it was meant for a "J" except that it was reversed. So figuring a year for each ring of wood and 15 years the tree had been dead and a probable 25 or 30 years before the scar healed over it must have been nearly a hundred years since the scar was made.

I have also found a number of old Indian relics here and on Garden Island which is about three quarters of a mile across lake from here.

I remember the first night we camped here. It had taken us so long to cut our way through Moose brook that we were beginning to get short of meat. We were camped on the very spot where we built my first cabin. We were all seated about the fire eating supper. My brother Alex remarked that if we didn't get some meat in the next couple of days we would have to stop eating. He had hardly finished saying that when we heard something coming down the hill toward the lake. Alex sat with his back against a tree, his rifle leaning against the tree beside him. He reached around and got the rifle just as a t two year old moose came into the fire light. He sat there and shot the moose with his plate of supper still in his lap. At that time moose were to be seen everywhere, but you very seldom saw a deer. It was about reversed from what it i is now. If you saw a moose that was nothing but if you saw a deer you would talk of it for a week afterward.

over

app. size shape & angle to perpendicular
of razor, estimated 150 yrs old,
formed by John J Rose



Itasca County History - Custer notes.
interview with John J. Rose (2)

Later the same year we came in C. D. Fish, Delbert Frederick and Chas. Johnson took claims on the north shore of the lake, so now there were six of us in Tp. 150-28. By 1899 the general rush was on and the settlers began coming in by the dozen.

The first store was started by the Cunningham brothers in 1899. It was located on lot 5, Sec. 4, Tp. 150-28. The first postoffice was in the Cunninghan store and was opened in 1900. About this time a trail was cut along t the east side of the lake to Frank Vance's place on the Popple river, there already being a trail from there to Bena. From then all supplies were toted from Bena. The first year the post-office was at Cunninghams, the Cunningham boys and I took turns carrying the mail. This we did free of charge.

The first school was opened in about 1903. It was located on Lot 6, Sec. 4, Tp. 150-28, and was known as the Cunningham school. The Max school at Bergville was opened about the same time.

In March of 1903 the first township meeting was held. Ed Cunningham was elected clerk; David Rose Sr., Claude Fish and Ross Guptal were elected members of the town board and Wallace Cunningham as assessor. Allen Draper proposed the township be named Ardenhurst. The name was adopted. There is no record of this meeting or of the town meetings for several years later as they were burned up in a fire.

In 1904 George Watson, who was editor of a Northome paper came out here and organized the Methodist church. It was located in the SW of the SW Sec. 20, Tp. 150-28.

Soon after I came here an old Indian named George Platt told me the old buildings had been a trading post when he was a boy. He was quite old when he told me this. He said the old trail used to come up from Little Winnie to Portage Bay on the SW side of Island Lake across the lake to about half way between here and Danola Ladge, thence to Red Lake and then on to Fort Francis, Canada.

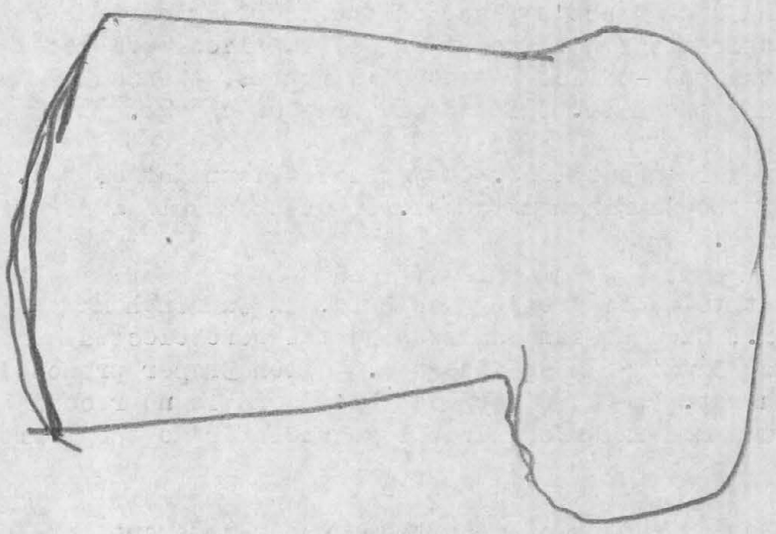
The first saw-mill was brought in byS. W. Painter in 1904. from Maple Plain, Minn. It was unloaded at the end of steel which was near where Haupt is now. The settlers were so anxious to have lumber sawed that they volunteered to cut a road through to the steel so the mill could be brought in. I remember that I worked 30 days on that road and in helping bring in the mill. At that time Haupt was called "Dexter".

Up till the time the mill came in the country it was practically untouched as timber had been too hard to get out and it was so far from a market. The lumber cut by Painter was all local stuff for local use. The Cunningham boys bought Painter out in 1905 and the mill was later sold to the "Stonely Sidel Lumber Co. (???) of Sleepy Eye, Minn.

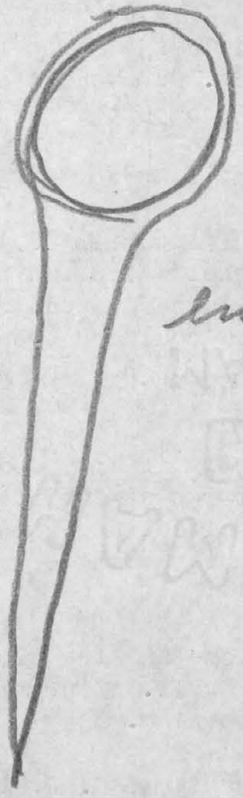
About this time the railroad reached Northome and the slaughter of the pines began as lumber could be shipped out by rail. After the railroad came the pine was gone before we knew what was happening.

In 1911 the Island lake Lumber Co. was organized; C. P.Ellington and Alfred Paulson owned it. They bought what was the old Bovey-Delaittre mill in Minneapolis and moved it to lot 6, Sec. 5, Tp. 150-28. running it steady till 1924. The refuse from this mill which was dumped into the lake killed most of the fish in Island lake.

app. shape & size of "trade ax" formerly
by John J. Rose



side view



end view.

Itasca County History - Custer notes
John J. Rose interview (3)

The first white child born in the township was Dorothy Johnson.

About 1904 or 1905 Orville Berg opened a small store and postoffice in the NW of the NE Sec. 30, Tp. 150-28. The store and post-office was later moved to Frank Magnuson's in NW of the NW Sec. 29 and later moved to, Chas. Johnson's in SW of the SW Sec. 20 and became known as the Bergville store and post-office.

My father and my brother Dan had both had places north of Deer River before I came up here. My father's place used to be a stopping place for everyone coming north. Old Charlie Rabbit used to stop there often. He always wanted to sleep on a pile of hay which he carried into the kitchen. In the morning when father would get up the hay would be carried out and the floor swept up nice and clean and Charlie would be gone. If I remember right old Charlie had something peculiar about his eyes but I can't remember just what it was.

When father was living north of Deer River we had a hay camp on Bow String Cr Creek where we were putting up hay to sell to logging camps. Our camp was at the mouth of the creek on Muskray Bay, near Rabbit Point. One year in the fall while we were camping here the wind blew strong from the northwest for several days. With a northwest wind, Bow String lake gets real dirty. At this time I speak of the waves piled up until it was impossible to venture through the narrows between Rabbit point and Wabagama Point. The beach was so covered with boats on the east side of Rabbit Point, boats of people waiting for the wind to go down, that there was not room to beach another boat. There must have been over a hundred boats beached there. The wind layed one morning about 2 A.M. When I got up to start breakfast that morning about 6:00 o'clock, there was not a boat on the point.

When we were on Bow String Lake there all kinds of white oak stumps that had been logged. They had been cut manyn years before. These trees were cut and hewed on two sides and chained between large pine logs to keep them from becoming water-logged and sent down the river to Canada. For what purpose, I don't know. (Note:- probably were used for R.R. ties on C.P.R.)

There used to be an old Indian village across the river from Wirt on what was the old Scott homestead. I have found many Indian relics there. A school tea teacher in Minneapolis once wrote me to see if I could find her some samples of Indian pottery. I went to the Scott place one evening and in a little over an hour I found pieces with 14 different designs onthem. Every time I visited Scotts I used to go out in their garden and dig around to see what I could find. I found many arrow heads here, also a small trade ax. I also have found some stuff on Garden Island in Island Lake. When I first came there was signs of the old Indian gardens, also storage pits. I don't think this is the same place Mrs. Ballenger spoke of. That place was probably nearer Harrison Hill. The best party to see on the old days is Mrs. Mills. She used to run the Log Shanty stopping place near Bena. She is close to 90 and lives just south of Alvwood. The indian allotment to O-DA-QUAN, SW ofSW, Sec.2, Tp.147-25 allotment 88, according to county plats, would be in Jessie Lake according to Mr. Rose.

Itasca County History - Custer Notes
John J. Rose interview (4)

Early settlers of 150-28

John J. Rose
C. D. Fish
Delbert Frederick
Ross Guptill
J. E. Guptill
Chas. Johnson
J. F. Anderson
J. N. Johnson
Edna Dunham - Essler
Lula Rickmire
Ole Reitan
Ed Ragstad
Richard Anderson
Vernon Anderson
Geo. Lund
Gunar Jacobson
Wallace Cunningham
Bert Wood
Allen Draper.

Robert Anderson
A. C. Anderson
Chas. Sumner
John Guptill
David Rose
Sophia Rose
Wm. Howard
J. F. Welch
Frank Kneable
Hattie Kneable
Frank Magnuson
Carl Magnuson
E. E. Skoe
Arthur Tibbets
Helen Darwin
E. O. Cunningham
Henry Cunningham
Vic Fish

Itasca County History - Custer notes - Round Lake region (1)

Round Lake Ranger Station - This building was built of Tamarack logs in the spring of 1900 by a group of 15 Finns. A fraudulent land locater from Bena had located them there for $20 each. At the time this was Indian Reservation land and not open to entry and settlement or homestead. These homesteaders had just finished their building when the Indian police came along and forced them to leave the Reservation. This barn is the largest building put up by the group and when the Ranger Station was built at Round Lake it was turned into a garage. The building is still in good repair and is a monument to expert log construction.

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The Third River country comprising Tp.147-28 and 147-29 was burned over very completely shortly before 1870. The Governor Gereral's land Surveyors surveying there shortly after 1870 refer to this area as one big ruin. From their field notes we find that the area before the fire had been covered with tamerack swamp and upland cedar with small islands of pine and hardwood scattered through it. Following the burn the swamps came up to black spruce and the the uplands came back to aspen or popple.

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Indian Graves and Gardens - Near Brodecks summer home are located a group of 4 or 5 graves with coverings and railings. There is also evidence that the Indians had gardens here.
North of Pine Grove Lodge are located another group(2 or 3) There is evidence of former gardens here also.
There is a group of two or three graves near the Lake States Research Plantation on the Eagle Nest road. Among those buried here is an old Ojibway named OZ-AMI-GIG-USAN. It is said he died of consumption.
There are groups of Indian graves at the mouth of Pigeon River and just west of Stony Point on the north shore of Lake Winnibigoshish.

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The Indians say the Pigeon Lakes and river were so called by the Indians because of the wild pigeons that once came here by the thousands each spring to nest, until about 75 years ago when they disappeared and came no more. The Indians have no explanation for the disappearance of the birds that once figured so largely in their spring food supply.

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Several years ago Geo. Himman (HINMAN) who now resides in Clairmont, Calif. visited Cass Lake and mentioned that his mother once worked at an Indian Mission on the north shore of Winnibigoshish, for a Mr. Wright about 1850, when she was a young girl. (There is a letter to Horton, ranger, at Cut Foot Sioux Ranger Station verifying this).

DR. RUSSELL - (1)

I homesteaded in township 61, R. 27, but the section I don't recall just now.

As far as I know, the youngest Vance girl, Irene, was the first white child born in what is now northern Itasca county. She was born at her father's place on the Popple river, in what is now Kinghurst township.

Some time in the early days, the year I don't remember, the Fournier gang came to the home of a man named Smith who lived up the Rice river above Farm Camp. They tried to get him to go with them and rob Farm Camp. They didn't need his help to rob the camp, but they did need his boat. Smith told them it was no go, but they talked and talked, but still he said he would not go, nor would he let them use his boat.

Finally they saw it was no use, so they not only took his boat, but they took Smith along too as they didn't want him loose in the woods to tell what they were up to. A few miles above the camp they went ashore, for what reason I never found out. But anyway, Smith told them he would have nothing to do with the deal and got away in the woods. The gang went on, and did rob the camp. The next day Smith went down to the river for water, and there was his boat pulled out on the bank. He walked over to it, and found the gang had left a sack of flour in it. He took out the sack of flour, and looked the boat over. The inside of the boat was all smeared up with flour.

He told me he stood and looked at the boat for quite a while. First he started to wash the flour out of the boat, but he had hardly got started when he decided it was best to leave it alone. He said, "If I wash it out and they find out they will say 'If you weren't guilty, what did you want to destroy the evidence for?'" Sure enough, the boat was found with flour sticking all over it, so he was brought to Grand Rapids. Of course he pleaded innocent. His bail was set at fifty dollars.

He was a friend of mine, so he came to me for help. I said, "Look here, Henry, did you do this thing or not? If you did I don't want a thing to do with

it." He swore he didn't have a thing to do with it, but had no way of stopping them. He told me that Pat Farley offered to turn him loose for seventy-five dollars. I went with him to see Pratt, the county attorney, and they finally called the thing off. I thought I was going to have to lick J. Holland over it. He almost had a fit. He said "What good does it do to arrest robbers if you come along and get them turned loose?"

Smith started out for home, but no one ~~y~~ ever saw him since.

I don't know what year the Gardner trial was, but Spear was the county attorney, and McCarthey was Gardner's attorney.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer.

Interview with Jim Sayers, Indian, Age 80 - (1) (Jim Davis, Interpreter)

I was raised on Moose Point on Pokegama Lake, and I am around eighty; but I never heard of any mission on Pokegama lake. There were probably missionaries there, but there was no chapel that I know of. There were only pagan Indians, and I was one of the biggest pagans of them all. There were never any Indians lived on Farm Island that I know of, as there was too much lightning there.

The first chapel and school I remember was at Raven's Point. It was run by a half-breed Indian called Wah-Ka-So. He was not a Chippewa, but I don't know what tribe he did belong to. There were three or four missionaries going back and forth between two or three missions. I think maybe there was one at the mouth of Pigeon river. The Indians are very appreciative for the missions on Winnibigoshish lake. Maybe missionaries going back and forth to Red Lake, too.

Missionary at Ravens Point used to get stuff at agency at Walker and bring it to Raven's Point. They traveled about sixty miles, didn't take long. He brought much stuff for poor Indians. The mission at Raven's Point must have been in there about 1854, the mission was there a long time.

Joseph Gilfillan was one of the most important missionaries in northern Minnesota. The little chapel here in our community is called Gilfillan Chapel for him.

Made-Way-Gah-No-Nint was a chief and leader at Red lake. There were three different Indians by that name, some of them at Leech lake.

I remember Old man Ballenger was fishing and trading at mouth of Cut Foot Sioux, he had cattle and chickens real early.

I also remember Old Chief Rabbit ask the Commission if Rabbits couldn't get land outside of reservation in about 1898, but Commission say can't get land only in reservation. I remember another Indian gave away all his land to his son before he died, but Indian Commission say no, take land all back and give it to his squaw.

I remember when I was only small boy an old Indian woman used to have a wigwam right where Dora Lake Ranger Station is. She used to plant corn and a little stuff for winter. My father say she is oldest Indian he know.

I remember Joe Lurch used to have a trading post on the west shore of Little Jessie Lake. He used to trade lots with Indians, but I never trade with him much. We used to get whiskey at his place, that is the reason I know him so well. You could generally go to Joe's and find a few Indians to talk to, or a few white men. One place I left out.

I know they used to travel across Winnibigoshish, then portage five or six miles to Leech Lake, where they get into canoes again as far as old agencies, then take horses to Brainard to get stuff such as clothing. They traveled day and night, but trip took many days. Most of the stuff they got on trip was from big mission for school and chapel at Raven's Point. The

The war between the Sioux and Chippewas the Indians call Black Hawk war. First thing I didn't know the Sioux and Chippewa had battle on Crystal Beach (or Sioux Look Out on Round Lake.) Near Effie on Big Fork river was where they had the last big battle. At the place of this battle all the brush and small trees were tramped down and killed, the battle was so bad. The Indians

named the place Busticogan, meaning "everything came off and leave big bare spot." Indian called Busticogan got his name because he live near this place. I think he was no chief.

Really last wind-up was at Red Lake. They used to go back and fight again until the small battle at Red Lake, but they don't fight any more at all after the Red Lake fight. The old portage between Busti Lake and the Big fork river was main route for Indian ricing in the lakes and such. The bone in the tree on the portage was probably used as a marker to show direction. If I come along going north on the portage, I change the bond so a certain end point north. Then I leave a sign somewhere close by so anyone know it was me changed bone. Then any of my people want to find me they know where I am.

Those signs I remember, like mink, like signs of giant foot prints. Marked trees like horses walking there. Some signs like foot prints tell which way a man went or which way something is. Signs like mink tell different things. sometimes tell how much a man is worth, sometimes his totem, then it tells what he expects to turn into when he dies. Marks like horses walking tells how many ponies man has, or how much he is worth.

Some of the old medicine men were great magicians. They used to work all kinds of magic. Many times I have seen them take an owl and take all of its bones and the like out. Then they fill it with thier medicine. Probably a white man would call it stuffed.

They would set it on the ground and walk away from it many steps. If they called it would come to them. They could make it dance. I have also seen them make balls of fire all around on the ground or make them float among the trees.

Some times they wouldtake a medicine man and bind him up so he could not get away. They would then lay him on the ground and build a wigwam over him. This wigwam had no door so he could not get out or anyone get in to turn him loose. Then everyone would go away from the wigwam and sit down. After a while the wigwam would begin to move and shake. All kinds of noises would come from inside the wigwam. Sometimes it would sound like a big storm in the tree tops. Sometimes it would sound as if hundreds of wolves were fighting and snarling inside. Sometimes it would sound like all the wild animals in the forest were fighting inside. Sometimes it would be only the mating calls of different animals. It all depended on how strong a medicine the medicine man was making.

At last everything would become quiet. The wigwam would fall to the ground and the medicine man would walk out, and no signs of the things that had bound him were to be found. The medicine man named the animal which was supposed to be his especial medicine. His medicine bag was made of the paw or some part of this animal. He said this animal had turned him loose, but first he had to overcome all of the other beasts of the forest before he could turn the medicine man loose. That was what caused the noises.

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Jim Davis, who acted as interpreter for me, is one of the twelve men who form the Chippewa Council. He and Jim Sayers both invited me back, as Jim Sayers says he has just started. Most of the main things he was just coming to, he says.

Davis is a very good interpreter except that it seems to take him a long time to explain what you would like to know to Sayers. I didn't get as much

information as I had hoped to get, as we had a time finding him and we got there quite late in the day. Sayers seems to be quite sure of himself on most questions. A couple of times he said he had left out things, but I could not get from him what he had left out. From his actions, I would take it he had left them out on purpose.

Itasca County History - Custer notes - early settlers - Big Fork Valley.

AUGUST SCHOGREEN (1)

I did not come in here so early myself but my father and one brother were here a long time before I came. Severn Hanson located me. Old Vance (Frank Vance) was probably the first white settler in this township but I think BERT CONGDON boy was the first white child born here. Irene Vance was born after her folks came here and before the Congdon boy but Mrs. Vance went to Deer River before the girl was born. Vance was the first one to try picking rice by machinery. The ELI PRICE, a flat bottomed stern wheel steamer owned and operated by Dunc Price was built at Cut Foot Sioux and was used there and on Winnibigoshish to tow logs and haul freight. She was 100 feet long and twenty feet wide. She was afterward brought to Bowstring Lake. She ran for a number of years as far north as the north end of Dora lake.

The firststeam boat on these waters was owned and operated by Ed Wallis. At one time she went as far down the Big Fork river as Qirt. She was used for towing logs and hauling freight. Most of the logs she towed were taken to a sawmill on Little Bowstring. She was built on Turtle lake and was 40 feet long and 20 feet wide.

Vance was located in Sec. 15, R.27-Tp.149. This is also where the bridge was located that he made the fuss over. Irene Lake and Virginia Lake were named for Vance's two daughters. Both the lakes are in Kinghurst township. The hulls of the two old steamboats are now at the Schogreen dam, Lot 6, Sec. 26, R.27-Tp.149. The place where Stanglin dug into the Indian grave is near where Little Dora and Mallard Bay join. It is the old Art Lacher place.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

WALTER SCOTT. - (1)

I came to what is now Wirt in the spring of 1899. At that time there were only two settlers between Wirt and Bena. They were Frank Vance, and a family named Rose. Rose lived up the Popple river from Vances. At the time I came here there were already several settlers along the Big Fork. They were Noah Fletcher who lived on Fletcher Creek where County Road 38 crosses the creek now, and from him Fletcher Creek was named. E. O. Walley lived where Old Wirt afterwards stood. Chas. Rife lived on the south side of the river from Old Wirt, or where Stanley afterwards stood, and where Wirt now stands. Frank Brusewitz lived ten or twelve miles farther down the river. In those days Frank was known as Big Foot the Scout. My homestead was located almost at the mouth of Fletcher Creek.

The earliest logging in here was on the school section, Sec. 16 of Wirt township. This was the Itasca Lumber Co. camp. The lumber companies used to build all of their wanagans below the Hauck bridge, as the bridges above were all too low for them to pass under. The Old Wirt bridge was a draw bridge, which was raised with block and tackle. The only time it was ever used was for the Eveleth, a steamboat operated by Frank Miller and wife.

Dr. Harrison had a summer home across the river and a short distance up the stream from my place. This place he leased from the Walker and Hinckley Lumber Co. He was attracted to this wild country by the abundance of wild game and fish that were here at that time.

Harrison built a large cabin on the hill, which was a large knoll overlooking the river, and covered with a heavy stand of Norway pine. Here he used to entertain his eastern friends. He was very fond of hunting, which at several times caused him some difficulty. I remember at one time, there were reports reached Grand Rapids that the Dr. was slaughtering deer on the river. There were no game wardens at that time, so the sheriff was sent up to look into the matter. At that time it was an eighty-five mile trip by water to Deer River, and as the sheriff was not very well acquainted with the route he and a

deputy went to Deer River to see if some one could be found to guide them. At last they found a man who said he would guide them for twenty-five dollars. The sheriff thought the price was too high, but he finally made a deal with the man to take them for five dollars a day. This turned out to be a poor bargain for the sheriff. They reached Sand Lake in fine shape. Here the guide took the wrong stream and they became lost, finally reaching Chas. Rife's place after fifteen days. Rife's place was where Wirt now is, and was only three or four miles from Harrison's. Their supplies had given out, and they were nearly starved when they reached Rife's. This was in the afternoon, but they decided to have something to eat and rest up until morning before going on. Rife had a large pot of stew on the stove when the sheriff's party arrived, so they sat down and ate, and how they did eat. By t/// night they were all so sick from over-eating, that Rife was afraid they were going to die, so he went and got Dr. Harrison. Harrison gave them some pills, then stayed and sat up with them all night. The next morning when they told him what they were there for the Doctor was fit to be tied.

The sheriff said he had been told Harrison was slaughtering the deer and letting the meat waste. Dr. Harrison told him, "Sure, I kill what I want, the blooming things are too thick anyway. But I never let any spoil. If you think I do ask anyone on the river. If I kill a piece of meat when the weather is warm I always divide it with the other settlers, so none of it spoils. I'll tell you what I'll do. If you want to sent a man up here, he can stay at my place and I will pay him forty dollars per month and his board, so he can report any law violations that I commit." But the sheriff refused this offer. But he wanted Harrison to pay the expense of the trip, which at five dollars per day for fifteen days amounted to seventy-five dollars. But Dr. Harrison flatly told him he would see his bloody soul in hell before he would pay it. So the sheriff had to go home seventy-five dollars in the red.

He wouldn't trust the guide to take him home. He and his deputy took the boat and started back, making the guide walk the tote road to Deer River, a

distance of seventy miles.

Dr. Harrison was an English doctor who was practicing in New York City.

There was any number of settlers who proved up on claims having good stands of timber, for timber companies. One I remember. In fact there were two of them. These two men took claims adjoining each other, on the north and west of Clear Lake. They built a little shack on the line between the claims. This shack was not over four or five feet high, and had neither door nor windows. What time they spent on their claims they lived in a tent. It was said the Itasca Lumber Co. paid them a hundred dollars a month for the time it took them to prove up. They proved up in fourteen months, so it cost the Itasca Lbr. Co. fourteen hundred dollars a quarter for the claims.

For several years I carried mail from Deer River to Big Fork and points between, also to Wirt. There were no mail clerks on the M. & R. R., so permission was granted for star route carriers to ride the train. I carried the mail out of Deer River in this way, going to Big Fork on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, and the Bass Lake and Wirt branch on Monday, Wednesday & Friday each week. The first stop out of Deer River was at County Road, about four and one-half miles from Deer River, and about two miles south of the county road. This was sometimes called Gravel Pit, as that is where the county road ran. The next stop was McVey, or Clark's Siding; then Alder, or Jessie Lake Junction; then Lundeen's; Then Pines; then Jaynes; then Collins; then Round Lake Junction; Big Fork; Effie; Craig.

On the Jessie Lake Branch the stops were as follows: Mack, called the coal docks or Jessie Lake Hoist; Spring Lake; Fox Lake Junction; Fox Lake; White Fish Junction; Bass Lake; Dora Lake; Stanley; Ford; Burns; Pomeroy.

Dr. Harrison was the first settler around Wirt, although some would not call him a settler as he never owned any land here. His place on the Big Fork river was known for miles up and down the stream. It was not considered a summer trip up or down the river was complete if we didn't stop at the large spring on

Harrison Hill for a drink of clear, cold water, and to write our names on the wall of the log spring house which covered it. It was at Harrison Hill that many of our picnics were held, also Fourth of July celebrations, until the pine was cut off in 1917.

Some of the early settlers around Wirt were: E. O. Walley, Noah Fletcher, Chas. Rife, Geo. and Phil Hauck; Frank & Geo. Bruisewitz, Frank Bittner, Fred and John Ekman, Will Franke, Jim Davis, Henry Gagnon, Ole and Paul Paulson, Henry Hinken (for whom Hinken Creek was named), James Bart, Geo. Bart, Roy Phelps, Chas. Vetter, Wm. LaFever, Bert Brown, Andy and Chas. Farrell, J. N. Babcock, L. Ableman, Archie Hiller, and L. D. Lammon.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

MRS. WALTER SCOTT. - (1)

In the winter of 1899 I came to what is now Wirt to keep house for my father E. O. Walley, and my youngest brother, Ross. My father had been here for a year or so before I came. He had been coming in here to hunt for seven or eight years before he settled here.

I sure didn't know what I was getting into when I came. I was met at Deer River by Walter Scott, whom I had known a long time. I had never seen him except with good clothes on, as he had always clerked in a store. When he met me he had on a pair of old wool pants, stagged almost to the knees. He was driving a little pony not over four feet high, which was hooked to a sled with a box on it just large enough for me to sit in. We must have followed a chain of lakes coming up, as it seemed to me there was a lot of hay meadows. After I reached Wirt I found they were not meadows at all, but lakes. My father, knowing my fear of water, had told Walter I was afraid of water so not to tell me when we crossed a lake or river. So he told me they were all hay meadows.

At the time I came in Mrs. Vance and I were the only white women between what is now Big Fork and Bena. My brother Ross Walley was old enough to go to school, so right after I came we took him over to stay at Frank Vance's, where there was a school. This was in the winter of 1899. There were five or six children attending the school. They were Virginia and Irene Vance, two or three of the Rose children, and my brother, Ross Walley. One of the Rose girls taught the school. The school was in Sec. 13, R. 27, T. 149.

Not long after I came here my father married again, and I went to live with Vance's. After Walter and I were married, my brother Ross came to live with us. We used to call him Busticogan, as he and old Chief Busti used to be such friends. Busti would take him to the woods for hours at a time. He would ask Ross the English name of everything they saw. He would then tell Ross the Chippewa name for it. Soon Ross could talk Chippewa and Busti could talk English.

Chief Busti was very fond of music. We had a piano, and he would sit for hours if someone would only play it. Sometimes he would walk around it when someone was playing. He would look on top of it, behind, and underneath it, for he could never seem to understand what made it work.

I never see a butter maker testing cream at a creamery without thinking of Chief Busticogan and the barrel of apples. Some friends from our old home in Iowa sent them to us. Chief Busticogan and his squaw were at our house when they arrived. He would take a bite of an apple, wallow it around in his mouth, screw up his face, then sample another one. We had a hard time explaining to him what kind of bush they grew on. He thought they were the funniest thing he had ever eaten.

My father, E. O. Walley, ran the first store at Wirt. He was also the first postmaster. Walter and I ran a stopping place at Wirt for a number of years. I remember one hunting season, we had thirty-three hunters come in on us before ten o'clock at night, and I had to feed them alone and find places for them to sleep, and most of them had their deer when they left. Some of them had to sleep on the floor that time, as we were not fixed for so many.

Jim Sears says that Sunken Lake was lowered by an electric storm in the early summer of 1914. Several years before thisa logger, Sam Simpson, had graded a sled haul road at th SE side of the lake. He was forced to make a deep cut and a large Norway Pine stood at the west entrance to the cut on the lake shore. During the storm lightning struck the Norway splitting the tree into many pieces and digging a large hole in the sand and gravel. The water from the lake rushed into the hole with such force that it cut through the sand and into the old cut made by Simpson then into a swamp near by.

Jim says he is positive of this as he passed the place that afternoon on his way to a sugar camp on the east side of Pigeon river and everything was as it had always been. Three days later he again came here, return ing from the sugar bush and he found the tree blasted to pieces and the water rushing through the cut with a mighty roar, so he could not get across. He says that at that time the lake was already twenty feet lower than he had ever seen it. The water cut through the soft sand and flowed from the lake till the lake is now almost dry. Very little water even in the spring, and in the summer, if a dry summer, it is dry.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

Early Missions.

In the year of 1832 or 1833 a Presbyterian Mission was opened at Leech Lake by Rev. W. T. Boutwell. In the spring of 1835 Rev. Frederick Ayers opened a mission on Pokegama Lake. In February of 1846 the Rev. Barnard and the Rev. Spencer opened a mission at Cass Lake. This mission was maintained until the year of 1857. Barnard and Spencer record that in 1858 they camped at the outlet of Lake Winnibigoshish on their way back east.

(From the Presbyterian Board of Missions records.)

Jim Sears (Indian, age 81.)

I have been told both by father and grandfather who were both living at the time (I was a boy of about fifteen when my grandfather died), that the first mission ever established among the Ojibway in this territory was at Moose Point on Pokegama Lake about one hundred years ago. These missionaries stayed at Pokegama lake for about ten years. They then came on up the Mississippi and founded a mission church and school on the north shore of Lake Winnibigoshish on the site where the Pigeon River empties into the lake. At that time there was a large Indian settlement on the north banks of Pigeon River. The older Indians still refer to this mission on Pigeon River as Sha-Gun-Au-She Ah-Nah-We-Gah-Mig, which is the present Indian translation for our Episcopal Church.

As near as can be determined this school must have been at the mouth of the Pigeon river, or possibly just west of Stony Point. There was a large village of the Ojibway on the high banks at the mouth of Pigeon River and west of Stony Point, and it would seem only natural for the missionaries to establish their mission at or near the largest village. There was also a large village at the mouth of First River near the site of the old Hudson Bay Trading Post. However, Bob Mosomo states definitely that the old Indian mission school was not at this point on First River, but was on the north shore of Winnibigoshish Lake, which would be the mouth of Pigeon River. These missionaries were at this site for many years.

[illegible] Mrs. John Johnson (Indian, age 67 years (1933)), and her brother, Geo. Fairbanks (Indian Age 65 years, 1933). Mrs. Johnson and her brother Geo. Fairbanks both state that their father William Fairbanks, now dead, had a trading post at Ravens Point on the west side of Lake Winnibigoshish at the time when the mission school and church were established there in 1879. Both state it was an Episcopal mission, and they attended the school when they were seven and nine years respectively.

ITASCA COUNTY HISTORY - Bonniwell.

Charlie Seelye. Biography. May, 1941.

Charlie Seelye was born in Wayne County, Maine, and came to Grand Rapids about 1872. He met and married an Indian girl of seventeen years, whose name was Maggie Aspinwall.* This was in 1874. She was born in 1857 four miles east of where Grand Rapids now stands, on the bank of the Mississippi, across the river from what is known as Seelye Logan. Charlie and Maggie had ten children: Mila, Ella, Jennie, Sage, Walter, Henry, Lucy, Mary, Maggie, and Annie.

Mrs. Seelye, Mary, Lucy and Walter are the only ones living at this time, and they all live at Bena.

Seelye Point on Winnibigoshish Lake was named for Charlie Seelye. He logged the dead and down timber, and hauled rock from the Point across the ice to build the government dam at Winnibigoshish. Charlie Seelye homesteaded at what is known as Seelye's Logan, four miles down river from Grand Rapids. Their first child, Mila, was born there, also several of the other children. Then they moved up to Bena and logged a lot of the dead and down timber around Bena and Winnibigoshish Lake. Charlie died at Bena in 1911.

Source: Interview with Mrs. Charlie Seelye and Mrs. Lucy Seelye Lyons, Bena, May 22, 1941.

*This woman was known locally as "Pakegama Maggie."

E. G. Bonniwell

Itasca County History - Bonniwell.

John Skelly was born at Glengary, Ontario, Canada. He came to Leach Lake in 1882, and worked on the Leach Lake Dam. While working there on the dam in 1882 they had many Indians working on the dam, and an epidemic of small pox broke out. The Indians in a panic wanted to abandon camp. The only way they could keep them in camp was to have the militia come up from Fort Ripley to keep order and enforce a much needed quarantine; less strenuous methods the Indians would not heed. There were 29 Indians who died from smallpox before the epidemic was checked.

In the spring of 1883 John Skelly came from Leach Lake down the Mississippi to where Cohasset now stands. It was night by the time he reached there and the roar of the Pokegama Falls was so great he decided to camp on the river bank until morning. The Falls were where Pokegama dam now stands. He drew his canoe up on the bank, turned it over, and took his blankets and made his bed under the canoe. It rained all night, and the wind blew a hurricane, so the conditions were not so pleasant, but at that he had a fair nights sleep, as he was dog tired.

John cruised and worked all through Itasca and Cass Counties. He still has the old compass he did all his cruising by. John started on a cruise from Brainard to Leach Lake, a mere jaunt of 90 miles. He got lost and his food supply got low. Finally he came to an Indian encampment, and bought fifty cents worth of wild rice from them. It was only a handful, but when he cooked it up he said that was the best meal he had ever eaten. He was thankful for that rice, even though the Indian was a shrewd one. He travelled on, following the Indian trails, and came out where Bena now stands.

John Skelly still has some of the dishes in his home in Cohasset that were used in the Palmer House at La Prairie. The dishes are in very good condition after all those years of use. The Palmer House was torn down and moved to Deer River by Churchill in 1901. He rebuilt it at Deer River and called it the Churchill Hotel.

Among the first loggers were W. L. Torry and Libby. They were logging on a big scale, when John Skelly met them in 1888. He John was traveling around from place to place, and logging camps had a way of springing up over night. This W. L. Torry had a lot of timber on the Willow River near Remer. They landed their logs on the river when the ice was on, and put booms around the logs. Then when the spring thaws came, they towed the booms of logs down the river, with small steamboats.

Joe Dobson, a very good friend of Torrey's) tended Pokegama Dam when Torry and Libby logged around Cohasset.

Source: Interview with John Skelly, Cohasset.

Captain John Smith.

He thinks the Chippewas were driven from this country many generations ago, into Canada, Michigan, and Wisconsin, by the Sioux. The Chippewas later drove out the Sioux.

Cut Foot Sioux was so named for a Sioux Warrior whom the Sioux war party left dead on an Island. When the Chippewas found the body both feet had been cut or broken almost off, probably by a rifle ball fired by the Chippewas.

Inger was a Sioux village many years before the Chippewas came to this country.

Itasca County Hist.- Early Settlers, Big Fork Valley - from Custer notes

~~McElroy~~/ CLYDE SUCHER by interview

I came to this part of the country in August 1912. The place I have homesteaded was first homesteaded by a man by the name of McDonnel. He relinquished to Miss Agnes Cody who in turn relinquished to me. This place was located in Sec. 27&34, R.27,-Tp.62. Laying in the shape of a T. Albert Garling's place joined me on the east in Sec. 34 R.27 Tp.62. although I think Garling owned several pieces of land in here, also in Grand Rapids as he would deal in anything from what I heard.

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ROBERT J. DAVIS. by interview -

My father James Davis, my mother, my brother RAY and my sister BELLA came to Liberty Township in the fall of 1902. We came by rail as far as the ITASCA lumber Co. camp on KILLDEER lake. From there we walked to the Big Fork river, a distance of two and a half miles or a bit more. This camp was run by Bert Cabinew (??) We went down the Big Fork by boat until we reached the Big Bend. There we left the river and went up Harrison creek for about four miles, settling on the SE¼ of Sec. 19, R.25 Tp. 150. At the time we came here, Harrison creek could easily be paddled up in a canoe or boat. But you could walk up the creek bed most of the time now. There were several settlers here when we came, but my father was the first to bring in a family. I'M not sure but what my mother and sister were the fir first women in the Tp. I am not sure if ANNA HAUCK was keeping house for her brother at that time or not.

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Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Mrs. Ivan Taylor - 1.

Ivan was practically raised with Big Sammie Rabbit. They used to play and hunt together when they were boys. He was raised just east of Rabbit's Point, but I have never heard him say if he ever heard where they had lived before they came to Bowstring lake.

Mrs. Rabbit still has several pieces of land around here., two pieces of land lying just west of Rabbit point, also a piece of land about one-half mile west of state highway #6 just south of Grouse Creek. Sammie, who lives at Inger, takes care of the land. One of the pieces of land west of Rabbit's Point is covered with maple. We go there each spring to make maple syrup. Ivan always has to give Sammie a certain amount of the syrup for the use of the grove.

A number of years ago we tore down one of the old houses built by the Rabbits. It had an old stove in it, also an old tumble down table and a couple of benches. Some of the material from this old house we are using for an ice house now.

Sometime around 1920 or maybe earlier the Rabbits in some way received a good-sized sum of money. From what source I can't say. But I do know that the two Rabbit girls for some time after were always going over to Ivan's sister to have her make out an order to some mail-order house for sheets, pillow cases and such things. Of course this was the girls, not old Mrs. Rabbit.

Big Sammie was a son of old Chief Chas. Rabbit, as was also Frankie. Little Sammie is the son of one of old Chas. daughters.

Note by Custer: Some folks say they don't remember any Rabbit daughters.

Itasca County History - Custer - Northwestern Part.

Interview with Martin Torkelson.

I came to Grattan township from Bemidji. At that time the only way from Bemidji was to walk. Dan Rouse located me here. One of Dan's brothers was on a claim next to mine. Will Buentemeire was also here at that time. The remains of the old Indian village in Sec. 15 across the creek from Buentemeire's was plainly to be seen when I first came here. There were also the remains of a small log building on the place when I came. I think it had been a trapper's cabin. This was in the NW¼ of SW¼, Sec. 10, T. 150-27.

There was also an old trail which we always called the Hudson's Bay trail. It ran almost past the door of my first cabin. It ran from somewhere near Little Winnie on the south end. The north end, as far as I know, ended at what is known as Portage Bay on Island lake, which is in the N½ of SE¼, Sec. 16, T. 150-28. This trail was used a great deal by the Indians when I came here. They always camped on the north side of my clearing. If I asked where they were going they always said either Little Winnie or Red Lake.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Mrs. Martin Torkelson - (1)

I came to Ardenhurst township with my mother and four brothers from Crookston in the fall of 1903. My mother was a widow with us five children. We took an emigrant car from Crookston to Haupt. We had our household goods and two cows, a ~~calf~~ calf, and a team of horses, and our machinery. The boys had been up in the summer and located the claim and built buildings. My mother had a nice place over by Crookston, and stock and machinery with nothing against any of it, and we were getting along fine there. But we had heard of what money there was in the timber here. We had been led to believe that a homestead here in the woods was about like a gold mine, so mother sold everything and came here. We located on the east side of Island lake. When we first arrived in the woods we thought it was sure fine. But we soon found we had been misled.

To begin with, we didn't have feed enough for our stock. We could cut hay enough for the cows out of the few pot holes around the lake, but we could not get enough for the team, so each fall one of my brothers would have to take the team out of the woods. The boys had never worked in the woods, so it was hard for them to get work. Besides, we were so far from a market that our timber was worthless until a road of some kind was opened so it could be hauled off. By taking the team out each fall we had no way of moving timber at the only time it could be moved.

Soon mother had spent the small sum she had gotten from the sale of the farm and stock at Crookston. Then times really were hard for us. But it was not long until a sawmill was put in across the lake at Cunningham's. Then things began to get better, as it was then possible to sell timber.

Not long after this the railroad came in. With the coming of the railroad things began to look up. The settlers were just like one big family. We used to have some wonderful times in those days. Our neighborhood dances and Fourth of July celebrations were all great fun. Everyone attended the celebrations and the dances as well. Generally everyone went on foot at first. They would take the smaller children and put them in a pack sack and start out. Later, when there began to be a few roads, they would drive by team.

I remember my brother Henry would load us all in the sled and start out picking up everyone he could pick up along the way. He would generally manage to upset the sled a couple of times before we got to the dance and back. Everyone would go rolling out into the snow, but it was all part of the fun.

When Martin and I were first married and I came to live in Grattan township, everyone here belonged to what we called the Farmer's Club. We used to meet once a month at one of the Member's home. We would all take our dinner and supper. Those who lived close enough would go home after supper and do our chores, then come back and generally stay until about 4:00 A. M.

I remember when we first moved into our new house we had over 100 persons here. I had worked in the hotel at Northome before I was married, so we had folks from Northome and Ardenhurst, as well as Grattan and Pomroy.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

The Turtle Mound.

Approximately 250 or 300 years ago the Sioux Indians built this mound beside the old Cut Foot Sioux and Bowstring lake portage. The Sioux were the only inhabitants of this portion of the state at that time. This mound was originally about three feet higher than the surrounding ground. It was a religious as well as a war emblem of the Sioux. It was located on the outpost between them and their enemy, the Ojibway, who were along the shore of Lake Superior and the Rainy river. It was built with its head pointing north toward their enemy, the Ojibway's. At this mound the Sioux held many of their religious as well as war ceremonies. This vast wilderness the Sioux held for many, many years until driven out by the Ojibways about 200 years ago.

A large Ojibway war party from the Rainy river region following the Bowstring river, or what is now called the Big Fork river, finally discovered this historical old portage. This portage passes just a little east of the Turtle Mound. While travelling south on the portage the war party stopped to camp for the night and hold a council of war. This was about where the W. J. Gibb's store and post office now stands. It was here they selected their oldest medicine man to make his medicine and consult the Spirit to see what the future held for them. This medicine man, according to the legend, had a powerful medicine and was gifted with great power of foretelling coming events. All night long the medicine man worked his medicine. When morning came and the medicine man had completed his ceremony he recited to the members of the party one of the greatest legends of the Chippewa Indians. According to the legend, everything came to pass just as the medicine man had foretold.

These events finally led to the expulsion of the Sioux from this region. Shortly after the encounter with the Sioux on Cut Foot Sioux lake the Chippewas changed the head of the turtle, facing the turtle south in the direction in which the Sioux were fleeing. At this time also the Chippewa moulded of sand a large snake in the swamp about 500 yards north of the turtle. This snake is a war emblem and also sacred emplem of the Chippewas. This snake faces south also, signifying that the snake or Ojibways were driving the turtle of Sioux from this old portage for the last time.

At their last treaty between the Sioux and Chippewas at St. Anthony Falls in 1804 the Chippewas promised to maintain and take care of the turtle forever in memory of past battles between them. This promise the Chippewas have faithfully kept as long as the older members of the tribe were able to do so. But the older ones are fast passing to the happy hunting ground and it seems the younger members of the Chippewa tribe have no respect for the turtle or for the old promise to the Sioux. This mound is located in Sec. 30, T. 147, R. 26 W.

Fred Willman says he has looked for the snake mound, but has not been able to find any trace of it. He thinks loggers skidding logs have probably destroyed it.

The turtle mound is about 20 feet long and 12 feet wide with a large stone for the head. It was probably about three feet high when it was built.

 [Wakefield, Geo.]

Indian scare of 1900, Rainy River Country.

In the spring of 1900, AH-NA-MA-YA-KA-BOU, a Chippewa medicine man of Leech Lake band received a message from the great spirit, "Manitou", concerning the future destinies of the redman. An event of great importance was to take place, the exact nature of which was a mystery. However this message gave information concerning the conduct of the Indians before and throughout the predicted event. All relations with the whiteman were to be broken off. There was to be no trading with the white man and all things derived from the whites were to be discarded.

The prophet picked two trusted messengers, gave them the information, and sent them to carry the message to the other Indians tribes. The others to be informed seem to have been only those connected with his band by ancient blood ties, those around Winnibigoshish and up the Big Fork valley, and in the Rainy River country. (This was the location, at the time, of about all the "Pillager" groups.)

The messengers set out the morning after the prophet received the message, taking the Bowstring portage, through Sand and Dora lakes down the Bog Fork to the international boundary, delivering their message to the various bands. They followed the Rainy to the Little Fork and informed the Indians at the Little Fork Reservation. The Little Fork Band watched the approach of this strange canoe with great interest. As it drew near the Indians saw that its occupants were dressed in deer skins and had eagle feathers in their hair and paint on their faces.

As the canoe reached the shore, the messengers sprang out and extended greetings to the assembled Indians, who, sensing from their serious demeanor that they had something of importanceto disclose, took the visitors into the presence of their chief. The messengers waved their hands, and after a brea breathless pause, they delivered their message and stated that they would return at a future date with more detailed instructions concerning the preservation of the Indian race. The Feather Crest Chieftian of the Little

Fork Band addressed the messengers and in solemn tones pledged himself to obey the commands of the Great Spirit as intertreted by the prophet. He said he would promptly have the message sent on to the other bands of the district and that he and all his people would conform to the ancient customs, as requested. After the council, the visitors were entertained in the chiefs lodge. They puffed the smoke of their stone pipes, cementing their agreement and the next day returned home.

It was the middle of May and the settlers along the Rainy were expectantly awaiting the first boat from Rat Portage. At that time, this was their only contact with the outside world. It was at this time that the settlers, alert to notice anything unusual, observed a change in the attitude of the Indians. In traveling from one settlement to another, they always went in groups. Im their canoes they carries rolls of birch bark for their dome shaped wigwams. They were in feathers and paint and avoided the whites.

It was evident that all this indicated something out of the ordinary. When the Indians were confronted and asked to explain their conduct, no satisfactory explanation was given and they were as uncommunicative as they alone can be.

Late in the afternoon of June 10th the same two messengers arrived with fihal instructions from the prophet. The chief gave his orders, and the din of the tom-tom began calling his band together to hear the final instrudtions. Then the messengers from the south spake to them in fluent speech the words of the prophet. They told them to leave their present dwellings where they had adopted the customs and manners of the white man. They were told to take their bark canoes and travel to a secluded spot in the deepest wilderness and there live in dome-shaped wigwams covered with bark pulled from trees, and having the door facing south and with a black eagle feather over the entrance. Above all, they were to conform to all the ancient customs of their race. Each member of the band must wear a black eagle feather as a token of his faith in the word of the prophet. They were to move to their new homes within

twenty days, or before the first of July, for between the first and fifth of July something eventful was to happen.in the way of action by the Great Spitit. However, the "Manitou" would save them from disaster if they conformed to his wishes. After the great event had taken place, they would return to their homes.

The news traveled quickly from one reservation or village to another, and many were the bark canoes on Rainy River. That year and the year previous had seen many settlers come in on the Canadian side from eastern Ontario. The newcomers did not appreciated the mysterious movements of so many war painted ~~redskins~~ Indians. They had vivid visions of an impemding massacre and of their dripping scalps hanging from the buckskin belts of the warriors, and were not happy. Fears of possible outbreak were felt also by the American neighbors on the other side of the ~~river~~ Rainy river. They also had studied the paint daubed faces and felt their helplessness in case of an outbreak. So State officials of Minnesota were notified and they immediately dispatched fourteen officers and seventy-five men to the region. They came by way of Tower, Minnesota, the nearest railway point, across Vermilion Lake by boat. They then marched the 26 mile portage to Harding, then west by boat to Kettle Falls. They spent the 4th of July marching across the portage and arrived at International Falls on the 5th. on the steamer Seagull under the able shipmaster Joe Lloyd. I may say that manybof the Canadians appreciated the presence of the troops across the border.

In the meantime the Indians of the Manitou and the Little Fork and all the Indians of Rainy Lake and Seine River banded together and encamped on Rainy Lake on the mainland about on e milesoutheast from the mouth of the Little Canoe River. The Long Sault Indians traveled west and encamped at Point Brule on the Lake of the Woods with all the other bands of that territory. By this time many settlers, whose fears were increased by many wild stories, left the region, especially women and children. During the days of the prophet the indians were very jubilent and played many of their ancient games.

Itasca Co. History - Indians - from Custer notes, from George Wakefield.

1900, Indian scare (4)

To the music of their tom-toms ~~they danced for days~~ which could be heard for miles they danced for dayss all unaware of the great anxiety their movements were causing the white settlers. The Indians were joyfully awaiting the wrath of the Great Spirit which was to destroy the whites by a great wind storm. No massacre was planned. The Spirit Manitou was to look after the extermination of the white race. Then as nothing unusual took place they remained at their encampments and enjoyed their surroundings and put on a regular party.

About this timeWilliam McCarthy the mayor of Rat Portage and Howard Barnes, collector of customs, made a trip to Paint Brule. There they interviewed the assembled Indians who met them in friendly fashion. The Indians told them that the crisis was past, time was up, and they intended to return to their usual place of abode soon. So ended the last Indian scare.

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From an article by Pat Kerr in the St. Francis Times, which was clipped by George Wakefield. With Wakefield's help the article has been altered a bit, portions left out that were inaccurate, and minor changes made to meet the facts as Wakefield knows them. Wakefield was at the "party".

Itasca County History - Indians & Custer.

Interview with George Wakefield - (1)

My grandfather learned the trade of flour milling right in his native Scotland. He was brought to Minneapolis from his home in Maine when they were just starting to build the great milling industry in the Twin Cities. He came to the Twin Cities in 1854. My grandmother and the children came in 1856. My father, William Wakefield, then a young man of 20 came with his mother. He, having learned the trade of millwright under his father, went to work in one of the mills in Minneapolis, where he worked for several years. He later established a trading post on Sandy lake.

When I was born, in 1869, he was running a post and living at White Oak Point. At that time he had several posts scattered over the district. He later tore down the post at Sandy Lake and moved it to Grand Rapids. This was when I was about seven or eight years old. Here he ran the first store and post office. It was located on the south side of the river just east of where the paper mill now stands. To my knowledge there was never a mission on Pokegama lake near Grand Rapids, although it is possible that there might have been one. I know there was a lot of cleared ground on Farm Island in Pokegama lake. Here the early Indians used to raise both corn and potatoes.

The story of there ever having been a band of Indians near Grand Rapids who lived in permanent houses and raised stock must be a mistake. There was a bunch of Indians near there who were the descendants of old Joe Rabbit, but I would not say they were ever considered a separate band.

My grandmother on my mother's side was married to old man Rabbit, and if they had ever lived in permanent houses or raised livestock it seems I would have heard her speak of the fact. Also, I played with the Indian children around there, and we ran all over the woods, and we surely would have found some signs of the old buildings. The Rabbit Indians probably had a few Indian ponies, as did any number of the other bands, but the only Chippewas that had any stock that I know of were those at Sandy Lake. They had both horses and cattle. Most of the Indians in here belong to either the Nett lake or Winnibigoshish bands.

The first white men in here were Hudson Bay traders. They travelled this country and established branch posts through all of the northern part of the state. These first posts were branches of the main post at Duluth on Lake Superior. The furs were taken down the Mississippi to Sandy lake, across Sandy lake, and up the Prairie river a few miles, until they came to the mouth of the West Savannah river,up this river for a number of miles. They then made a six mile portage to the East Savannah river, followed it until it emptied into the Floodwood river, which they followed to the St. Louis river, thence to Lake Superior. I myself have made this trip several times. I have heard my mother tell of having seen Hudson Bay men packing on this portage with tears running down their cheeks, when she was a young girl. She said these men had been drafted into the Hudson Bay service much as they are now drafted into the army.

I remember that the year of the Hinckley fire, father was running a logging camp in the West Savannah country. The fire had burned most of the hay, so my uncle Bill and I started up the river to see if we couldn't find a meadow along some of the streams or lakes that the fire had not destroyed. We camped one night on the old Savannah river portage. We selected a site that showed signs of having been used previously as a camp site. This was on a small knoll. This knoll had all come up to black and burr oak. While we were camped here we found any number of articles, such

as old English coins, forks, knives, and several thimbles, along with other articles I can't recall just now. These articles all had the English Crown stamped upon them. My uncle had these in a show case for a good many years, but he finally gave them to the State Historical Society at St. Paul. He also had a great deal of copper stuff which was found at the Sandy lake dam site when it was being built. I think most of this stuff was found in the water. There were several copper axes or hatchets, which were so hard they could hardly be touched with a file, a couple of bracelets or arm bands, and other ornaments.

In spots this old portage was worn a foot or more into the ground. I am sure I could still find and follow this old portage. In fact, a Forest Service Ranger was here to see me this fall, to see me about locating this old portage, but I told him it was the wrong time of year to find it. So he is coming up after me some time in the spring after the snow has caused the leaves to all lie flat on the ground, and we are going to go over it together. A couple of years ago I told a State forester where to find the old portage, and also the old camp site. He found the portage as far as the camp site, here he also found some old articles, but I don't recall just what they were. He was stationed at Deer River at that time. I think this is the most important portage in this part of the state, as far as history goes. Later, the furs were mostly taken out by way of the Fort Frances post.

Father's main supplies for trade with the Indians were calico cloth, black tea, and tobacco, as these seemed to be most in demand by the Indians.

At the time of the Civil war my father was living near Crow Wing. Here he enlisted in the Union army, but he didn't get far. When they found he had married a squaw and had a lot of influence with the Indians, he was sent back to try and quiet the Chippewas who were almost on the verge of going in with the Sioux in an uprising against the whites. The Sioux had talked the Chippewas into the notion that if they would unite while the white men were all away to the south they could take back what the white men had taken from them. Father held several peace councils with the Chippewas and finally managed to keep them from forming an alliance with the Sioux.

The death of Chief Hole-in-the-Day also had a great deal to do with keeping the Chippewas from joining the Sioux, as he was one of the strongest supporters of the alliance. Chief Hole-in-the-Day was shot while riding in my father's buggy. He had borrowed the buggy to make a trip to White Earth. Some of the Indians had found he was going to make the trip, so they lay in wait for him where he would have to ford a small creek. Hole-in-the-Day stopped in the creek to let his horses drink. While they were drinking he was shot in the back with buckshot. I remember counting the holes in the back of the seat many times when I was a kid. There were seven of them, and Father said the back curtain was shot to shreds. Father said there were five men hid in the brush along the creek. Father said he was killed by the lesser chiefs who were jealous of his influence with the tribe.

Father rode from Duluth to Aitkin with General Custer about four weeks before the Custer massacre. Custer came to Aitkin to try to get a couple of the Tibbets boys to go with him as scouts. Old Matt Tibbets was for letting the boys go, but their mother couldn't see it, so they didn't go.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer.

Interview with George Wakefield - (3)

The last trouble between the Chippewas and the white men has been sadly mixed up in history. According to history the trouble with the Chippewas at Leech lake in the late 1890's was over timber. This was not exactly the cause of the trouble at all. Old Chief Bug, as he was called, had made a trip to Walker where the Indian agency was located. While he was there one of the U. S. marshals sold him some liquor, knowing that with liquor he would be almost sure to get into trouble before he got home. The marshal was right, of course. So Chief Bug was put under arrest and taken to Duluth, where he spent the winter in jail. In the spring he was turned loose to make his way back to Leech lake with nothing on but a pair of old shoes. He had never been to Duluth before, so he didn't know the way home, but he finally managed to reach Leech lake, almost starved to death.

The next year they tried to pull the same thing on him, only this time they took him to Walker. His people went in a body and forced them to turn him out. Of course, the Government would not stand for that, so they sent Major Wilkinson and a hand full of men from Fort Snelling, with orders to take Chief Bug into custody. But the Indians showed fight. Major Wilkinson and five privates were killed, and old Chief Bug was still out of jail. There were several years when Old Chief Bug would not go to Walker, even to get his annuity, even though the Indian agent sent him word that he would not be molested if he came.

Finally the agent prevailed upon him to come in and get his pay. He was wrapped in a blanket from his head to his feet. He looked neither to left or right, nor spoke a work to anyone, although many spoke to him. An Indian was not allowed to carry a gun on the agency, but everyone could see plainly the gun old Chief Bug hugged to his breast beneath his blanket. The agent could not help but see it, yet he made no sign that a law was being broken, for he knew well that Chief Bug would never have gone back to jail alive.

George Wakefield says this was a very common thing in those days, that is, the Marshals sold the liquor so they would get paid for going after the Indian when he got into trouble. The marshalls got no regular pay, only mileage and a days wages when they were bringing in someone. He says that the heaviest populated part of the Chippewa country was around Lake Winnibigoshish, mostly on the north and west sides. He says he is sure there was at one time a mission on Ravens point. Mrs. Wakefield says there is still tame fruit growing there, planted by the missionaries.

George Wakefield said that at the time his father was logging in the Savannah country he had seventeen trading posts scattered over the district. George's father was Joseph Watts Wakefield.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer.

Interview with Mr. & Mrs. George Wakefield - (1)

The original Chief Rabbit married George Wakefield's grandmother's sister. Old Chief Rabbit's original land allotment was at La Prairie. His son Chas. had his allotment about one mile west of state highway #6 on Grouse Creek in Sec. 28, T. 147, R. 25. Chas. wife had a grant of land on Wabigama point on the northeast side of Bowstring lake in the NW¼ of Sec. 20, T. 147, R. 25.

The Rabbits moved back and forth between the place on GrouseCreek and the place on Wabigama point. They had small log houses at both places. They had stoves and some home-made furniture, but their stock consisted mostly of Indian ponies. Cattle were few if any. Their ponies lived as most any wild stock lives, fat and sassy in summer, but living mostly on browse that they could find in winter. As for putting up hay for their stock, they may have, but if they did it was never enough to feed their stock through the winter.

The Rabbits did not mix very much with the other Indians. They seemed to keep pretty much to themselves. Of course they did visit back and forth some, but not nearly as much as many of the bands did.

Frank Rabbit, a son of Chas., is now married and lives at Inger. Another son, Joe, who is a single man, also resides at Inger.

In the year of 1856 Joseph W. Wakefield, George's father, together with Major Whitehead and an Indian guide, left Fort Ripley, going up the CrowWing river to its head, the Eleven Lakes. From there they portaged across to Leech lake, crossed Leech lake, down Leech river to the Mississippi, then down the Mississippi to Fort Ripley. On the way down the father of waters, soon after leaving Leech river, they began to look for a place to camp for the night. At the mouth of Ball Club river they saw a canoe beached on the river bank. They also beached their canoe and climbed the bank. There they found John Smith and his two wives and their six children. This was the John Smith who was the original Wrinkled Meat. This was not Captain John Smith, who I know impersonated John Smith and called himself Wrinkle Meat.

John Smith was a great friend of the white man, and was a very influential member of the Chippewa tribe. It is probably partly because of his friendship for the whites that there was never a serious outbreak of the Chippewas against the white settlers, for at several different times the Chippewas were on the verge of rising against the settlers. Each time John Smith, by his influence and eloquence as a speaker managed to quiet the young braves. Remember, this was not Capt. John Smith. Capt. John Smith lived on and around Round lake. Wrinkle Meat never did live on or near Round lake, he lived around Ball Club lake and Bena.

John Smith was probably one of the greatest peace makers of full Indian blood to ever use his influence to keep peace between Indian and white man.

Mrs. Wakefield was a Deuber. Her father, George Deuber, was of German descent. She says it was a breed Indian by the name of Ogic-Dah (possibly meaning Little Chief) who established the mission at Third river under the supervision of Rev. Ayers, and she thinks Rev. Gilfillan also was in some way connected with. She thinks this was possibly 70 or 75 years ago. She says she is well acquainted with the wife of Geo. Morgan of Bena who attended this school, and that she and Mrs. Morgan have talked of it often.

Mrs. Wakefield in later years lived in the Gilfillan home for about eighteen months, helping with the house work and attending the mission school at White Earth. She says that although Rev. Gilfillan was quite an old man at that time they had three children, the youngest not over 10 or 12 years of age.

Rev. Gilfillan soon after this turned his mission over to the Government and went back to New York, where he died. She says Rev. Gilfillan was a very tall, slender man, who always went about dressed in a long, flowing black robe. To see him strolling about the fields dressed in his robe, and see the bearing of the man was enough to cause anyone to stop and take heed.

She also recalls that the Gilfillan home was located near the bank of a small lake. Rev. Gilfillan took his morning dip in this little lake, the weather never being too cold for him. In winter he would chop a hole in the ice and take his dip anyway. She says he was an Episcopalian. Mrs. Wakefield says she knows definitely there was a mission at Raven's Point. She says she can take a person there and show them fruit trees still growing that were planted by the missionaries.

Notes by Custer: Mr. Wakefield tried to talk his wife out of the idea of the mission at Raven's point, saying it was only about three miles to Third River and the location had therefore been confused, but he finally had to admit that the fruit trees were at Raven's Point, and that he had never heard of men at trading posts setting out fruit trees, while the missionaries did.

Mr. Wakefield says he knows Capt. John Smith claimed to be Wrinkle Meat, but he most certainly was not. He merely took advantage of Wrinkle Meat's prestige to further his own ends, such as making an easy living for himself. He says that Wrinkle Meat not only kept the Chippewas from going on the war path against the whites, but at one time when the Sioux wanted the Chippewas to join them against the whites Wrinkle Meat talked the Chippewas into agreeing to join the whites against the Sioux should the Sioux go on the war path. The Sioux might have gone on the war path without the Chippewas, but they didn't like the idea of having to fight the whites and Chippewas both, so they also gave it up.

Itasca County History - Indians - Custer.

Interview with Mrs. George Wakefield, Pillager Band - (1)

I was born on Ottertail Lake in 1874. I went to school at the mission there to Rev. Gilfillan. My father was head chief at Ottertail. His real or Indian name I don't know, as he died when I was quite young. The white men all called him Findie. He was half French. My stepfather's brother Joe Ketchum was chased by three Sioux who overtook him on the shores of Ottertail lake. He managed to kill one of the Sioux, but he had to dive into the lake and swim under water for a long way. He then had to hide on a small island in the lake for four days to get away from the other two Sioux, who searched the whole lake for him.

My stepfather, John Ketchum, had one leg shot nearly all to pieces while working for General George A. Custer. He was carrying mail for Custer at the time.

Cut Foot Sioux lake was named because of the Chippewa's finding a Sioux Indian on an island in the lake who had had both of his feet shot off so he could not walk. The old Indians used to mark their trail and camp sites by tying a small whisp of grass together, then hanging it in a tree or low bush. They would then bend or break a small branch or twig pointing the direction to be taken.

I have never heard of a Rabbit band of Chippewas, but there was a Joe Rabbit and his family that lived close to where Grand Rapids now is, in the old days. One of the Rabbit boys tried to prove title to some of the land around Grand Rapids a couple of years ago, but he was told the taxes had eaten it up, so he had no land there any more. Joe Rabbit now lives at Ball Club.

Itasca County History - Big Fork Valley - Custer.

P. C. WARNER - (1)

I was running compass for the surveyor on a trip to the Gardner place. He was living somewhere in Township 61, and I think Range 24. We crossed the Big Fork at what was called the flat rock. This was somewhere northeast of Effie. We were running northeast from the rock.

Not long after we crossed the river we came to a heavy stand of popple. They were so thick we could hardly push our way through them, so we started to go around them. After walking a short distance we came to the end of the popple. But the popple thicket made a perfectly square corner. In those days a stand of popple was unusual, as they were only found in an old burning or clearing, and these were surrounded by a heavy stand of pine. The square corner looked as if it must have been a clearing, so we thought we would have a look.

Pushing our way through the popple we came upon an old log building. It was probably fifty feet by seventy feet. The floor was of hewed poles, and the part of the roof that was still left was covered with shakes. The roof had all fallen in, and the floor was almost all rotted away. There were some popple trees coming up through the floor, some of them at least eight inches through, so the building must have stood there a long time.

We were on our way to the Gardner place to take some measurements for evidence in a murder trial. Gardner had killed a man named Garrett, or Garrison, over a hay meadow.

On the way back we stopped at the old Stitts camp, where we ate supper and stayed all night. We also stopped at Farm Camp, sometimes called Burned camp because a fire had gone through there and left nothing but burned, charred snags.

As far as I know there was never a Tamarack precinct. It I think it was used as a joke. Every time there was an election where feeling was strong, or the vote was considered close a bunch would be standing around talking about how the vote was running. Someone would come along and say, "Well, it is hard to tell, the votes from Tamarack haven't come in yet." Or else they would say,

"They just got a feed sack full of votes in from Tamarack." It was always considered good for a laugh.

At the time we came across the old buildings we figured they had probably not been used for forty or fifty years, as we estimated the popples were probably fifteen or twenty years old, and the building had more than likely stood twenty or twenty-five years before the roof fell in, and the trees wouldn't start growing inside the building until after the roof caved in.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer.

Interview with Grace Wheeler.- (1)

I have known the Rabbits for many years. Sammie and Frankie were only small boys when I first came here. The Rabbit land on Rabbit Point was sold a few years back to a Grand Rapids outfit for a Club House. The land bought by them was one plot of 11 acres and one plot of 9 acres.

The Grouse Creek Bay Gun Club also stands on land bought from the Rabbits. The land is where the Grouse Creek enters Muskrat Bay. Just how Mrs. Rabbit acquired all of the land that was said to have belonged to her I don't know. She owned land along the north-east side of Muskrat Bay in Sec. 21. Of course Wabigama point in Sec. 20 was her original allotment. The land in Sec. 21 was lots 1, 2, and 4.

Twenty years ago they owned most of the land touching the northeast, east and southeast shores of Bowstring lake. At that time they were living on Rabbit point. They had at that time a couple of cows and quite a few ponies. The ponies did not fare so badly as they could shift for themselves fairly well, but in the winter I still can't see how the cows ever made it as I never saw a cow that would eat fish. I don't remember of them ever putting up any feed for the stock. They might have raised a small garden, but as nearly as I can remember they lived mostly on fish.

Our place here on Duck Pass is only about 1/4 mile from their old village site on the point. Old Maggie Rabbit, Chas. squaw, used to come here to borrow things, especially salt. We girls tried our best to teach her to talk English. I think she could speak it all right, but just wouldn't. She would come over to borrow salt, and ask for it in Chippewa and make signs as if sprinkling with her fingers. We would act as if we could not understand what she wanted, and try to make her ask for it in English. We would name over everything in the house, but she would just shake her head. Finally we would give up and ask Sammie what she wanted. He would try to hide behind her skirts all the time she was there. He wouldn't tell us, but he would tell her to show us what she wanted. She would go straight to the salt box and say "For fish."

They used to take their cows every where they went. If they went over to the big burning to pick blueberries they took them along. I doubt if they ever gave any milk.

Carl Christie used to carry the mail with a yoke of oxen. I expect this was the first team ever to come over highway #6. I know that Ed Chill drove the first car over the big bog north of Deer River. It must have been some ride, as I had come over it the day before in a wagon and the road was so full of holes that it was impossible to ride in the wagon so we walked behind most of the way.

Joe Rabbit was also called Bowstring Joe. Little Sammie Rabbit was the son of one of the Rabbit girls who married a Finnlander named Mattson.

Notes by Custer: Mrs. Wheeler showed me a piece of stone which she found in Bowstring lake while swimming near Rabbit Point. She thought the stone was a piece of a meteor that had fallen into the lake, but I think not. It is not the same kind of stone that is found anywhere near the lake. It is of a light creamy white on the outside, and exceptionally heavy. In shape it looks as if someone had taken a large hubbard squash and cut it lengthwise into about three pieces, and then removed the seeds. Around the outside edges it looks as if it had been chipped. What would be the inside of the squash had been burned until it is quite black. The inside is smooth except

that around the edges it seems to be covered with small blisters caused by the fire. It looks to me as if it had been used as a receptacle to pound something in. It is about 1½ inches thick. From the signs of fire I think it has been larger, but has since been broken, as the evidence of burning seems to extend over the edges except on one side which looks as if it had been broken. The depth of the burning can be plainly seen, it being about 1/16 of an inch deep, with no sign of the broken edge being burned as are the other edges.

Itasca County History - Northwestern Part - Custer

Interview with Fred Willman - (1)

I came to Itasca County in September of 1886 to help build a feed store for John Staples. That winter I drove team in the woods. In the year of 1882 cutover lands adjoining Pokegama lake had been classed as reservoir land and taken off the market. With the completion of the headwater lakes dams this land was again opened for homesteading in 1890.

When this land was thrown open I helped my mother establish a claim on Moose point on the west shore of Pokegama lake, on which she proved up in 1891. For several years I worked on Pokegama lake, picking up logs that had gotten away when log booms broke. I also drove oxen in camp during the winter. So I doubt if there is a white man in Itasca County who knows Pokegama lake better than I. I know Moose Point as well as I know my own hand, and I don't think there was ever a mission there, as I have been over every foot of it; and fifty-four years ago when I first came there there would surely have been some signs of it left, as the old signs left from banking buildings never seem to disappear. But there had probably been one on Farm Island, as there was lots of open land that looked as if it had been cleared when I came here. I have also heard old Indians tell of there having been trouble on the island, and they had to move to Drumbeater's Island. These clearings on Farm island also showed signs of having been cultivated.

I remember one winter I drove team for Billie Nesbitt from camp to camp while he sold watches. I remember visiting the Kehl and Deary camp on Bass lake in Wirt Township. This was late in the spring. When we left camp we followed old hay roads from one lake to another down a chain of lakes, until we came to Bob Mosemo's place on the Bowstring. This was the first time I ever met Bob. From this meeting sprang a friendship that lasted as long as Bob lived.

As for the story of there ever being a band of Indians near Grand Rapids who farmed and raised livestock or lived in substantial houses, someone must have been dreaming or had too much to drink. There were some powerful story tellers in the early days, and maybe that is where this story started. I could name several who would delight to tell such a yarn to some tenderfoot. I never heard of a Rabbit band of Indians, although there was a large family near here whose name was Rabbit, but I don't think they were called a band.

I knew old chief Bob-E-Dash and his brother Capt. John Smith well, Bob-E-Dash especially being a great friend of mine. It is too bad I didn't learn more from Bob-E-Dash, as I could have learned much of the early history before the coming of the white man from him. In fact, I always intended to, but somehow I never got around to it.

Captain John Smith never had any children of his own to my knowledge, but he did have two step-children, having married a daughter of Chief Sho-Kog-Gee-Chig who had a son and a daughter. Her first husband's name was also Smith. The children were Dave Smith, who worked for the U. S. Forest Service for a number of years and helped gather much of the data for the Forest Service at Cut Foot Sioux. He also acted as interpreter for them when the Service first started dealing with the Indians in the Cut Foot Sioux district. The daughter, Jennie, married the sub-Indian agent at Bena, whose name was Boileau.

Mrs. Capt. John Smith is past ninety and lives with her daughter in Duluth. If you want information on the Pigeon river country I would advise you to see Robert Bird, as his folks are said by the Indians to have been

living there ever since the Sioux were driven out. If you will come over here in the summer I can show you where the old Indian camp was located when the first small-pox plague hit the Chippewas. I have been over every historical site in the Cut Foot Sioux district, and have put in some time studying them. I put in a lot of time searching for the snake mound built by the Chippewas, but I have never been able to find it. I think it has been destroyed by loggers, who probably skidded logs over it.

ITASCA COUNTY HISTORY - Indians - Shaw

From interview with Edward Malcolm Wilson, President of the Chippewa Council of Minnesota. - May 25, 1941.

The Chippewas in Minnesota number about thirteen thousand. There are six reservations. They hold an election every year, in the following manner. Each local council elects two delegates. There are about sixty delegates altogether. These delegates go to Cass Lake for the election. Out of these sixty delegates are elected two executive members from each reservation, which makes a board of twelve executive members. The officers are elected from these twelve executive members. The Chippewas in Minnesota are organized under the Wheeler-Howard Act, which was put through Congress by the work of Senator Wheeler and Representative Howard.

Mr. Lewis Burton Wilson, father of Edward Malcolm Wilson, came from the State of Maine shortly after the Civil War. He had enlisted in the war before he was of age. Two of his brothers had also enlisted. One of these brothers was killed in the war; the other, George, left the State of Maine after the war, went around Cape Horn to California. There he made his home. He had a mill there, in partnership with another man. He also owned orchards there. Later, the partnership broke up, George Wilson sold the mill and retired. He died in California.

Mr. Lewis Burton Wilson and the rest of the family moved into Minneapolis when Minneapolis was just a small place. Three of Edward Wilson's aunts married there in Minneapolis. Lewis Wilson came up the Mississippi, landing in Brainerd. Later he went to Aitkin, and finally came up to this part of the country. When he arrived here, he met some of his old schoolmates, among them being Bob McCabe and Mike McAlpine.

At that time there were no roads, all travel being done by steamboats, canoes, and trails. Lewis Wilson worked on the Prairie river and the Mississippi River. At that time they chopped the trees down, instead of sawing them, and Mr. Edward Wilson says that some of the old stumps from the trees his father chopped at that time are still there.

Lewis B. Wilson cruised most of the country between here and Canada. He had learned cruising in the State of Maine. Edward Wilson remembers when they used to paddle up the Mississippi into Winnibigoshish and following the Pigeon river go into Round Lake, and thence into Canada. Sometimes they went through Cutfoot Sioux and the portage, and that is where the Turtle Mound is.

The Winnibigoshish, Cass Lake and Leech Lake bands are Pillager Indians. The Mille Lacs Lake Indians are part of the Mississippi band, as are the White Oak Point Indians. All originated from the Great Lakes bands, when the Sioux were here, and it was this Great Lakes band that made the Turtle Mound.

ITASCA COUNTY HISTORY - Indians - Shaw.

From interview with Edward Malcolm Wilson, President of the Chippewa Council of Minnesota - May 25, 1941.

I have a brief prepared by the Department of Interior, at the time the Indian Swamp Land case came up. The State of Minnesota went to law over this land. The Government had issued patents to the state. The swamps belonged to the Indians. The state lost that case. We, the Indians, class these swamp lands as about the most valuable lands we have, because the Indians get their wild rice there every year, and used to get most of the fur bearing animals there also. This land is most valuable land to the Indians, outside of the sugar bushes.

In 1855 our great-grandfather was chief of White Oak Point band of Pokegama Indians. His name was Ge-che-way-me-te-goosh, meaning Big Frenchman. After our great-grandfather died his authority went to his oldest son. His name was _____.

In 1855 the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and the Governor were acting as Superintendent of the Minnesota Chippewas. There was an agency at Crow Wing. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent a telegram to gather all the old chief together. Chief Hole-In-The-Day was Chief of the Mississippi Indians, and was also the leader of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribes. My great-grandfather was chief of the Pokegama Indians. They were called down to Washington in 1855. The telegram read that if they could not be in Washington by the 15th of February of that year they should not proceed.

The Governor sent out runners. The runners went to Crow Wing and notified the agent there to sent the Chiefs on a trip to Washington. The time was so short they did not have time to spread the news, so only part of them went. They did not know what the trip was all about. However, the word was spread, and the Chiefs started for St. Paul with the sub-agent from Crow Wing. At St. Paul the sub-agent from Crow Wing left his delegation and went on to Washington by himself.

The Chiefs stayed in St. Paul a few days, and all this while more Chiefs kept dropping in. The Governor wrote a letter criticising the action of the Sub-agent in leaving the Chiefs in St. Paul and going on alone. He gave this letter to Chief Hole-In-The-Day to present to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Washington.

When the delegation of Chiefs finally got to Washington the Government called them together and tried to get them to sign off six of their reservations to the Government. These reservations were: the Pokegama, Sandy Lake, East Lake, Mille Lac, Rabbit Lake, Gull Lake. The Indians refused to sign. They called this delegation together about twenty times or so, and they would not sign. They wanted the Indians to sign their reservations to the Government, and the Government would establish Leech Lake and White Earth reservations.

Finally, at the twenty-first meeting the Indians signed. I believe Chief Hole-In-The-Day was promised two thousand dollars if he could get his Chiefs to sign, and I think he used liquor to get them to sign. There was one Indian, one of the Chief's from the Pillagers, who never drank; and he would not sign, and he was the only one that would not sign. He promised to tell his band all about it when he got back to Minnesota.

ITASCA COUNTY HISTORY - Indians - Shaw.

Int. Edward Malcolm Wilson - 2. (Hole-In-The-Day.)

When they got ready to go home, Chief Hole-In-The-Day wanted his money. They said that would be too much money for him to carry, and that he should go back to St. Paul and they would wire the money to St. Paul and it would be waiting for him in the bank there. When he got to St. Paul he went to the bank and there was no money there for him. When he discovered that the promise to him had not been kept he joined the Sioux on the war path. The Mill Lac Chiefs finally stopped them.

When the other Chiefs started on the old trail from St. Paul to go to their homes they camped the first night on the Mississippi river. Here they killed the Chief who had promised to tell what had gone on down there in Washington. (His name was Wa-be-besh-she-kee, meaning Gray Ox.)

However, after they got back, the news leaked out in some way. It went for some time before this news did leak out, and _____ made another trip to Washington that winter. When he came back he got a couple of gallons of liquor in St. Paul to take back as a treat. While he was down in Washington the news had spread. When he got back he invited this bunch to a party. They were practically all relatives. After they had got to going, someone sprung this. It ended up in a wholesale fight, and almost every one of them was killed in this trouble at Rabbit Lake.

(Taken in shorthand, and transcribed from notes given at this interview.)