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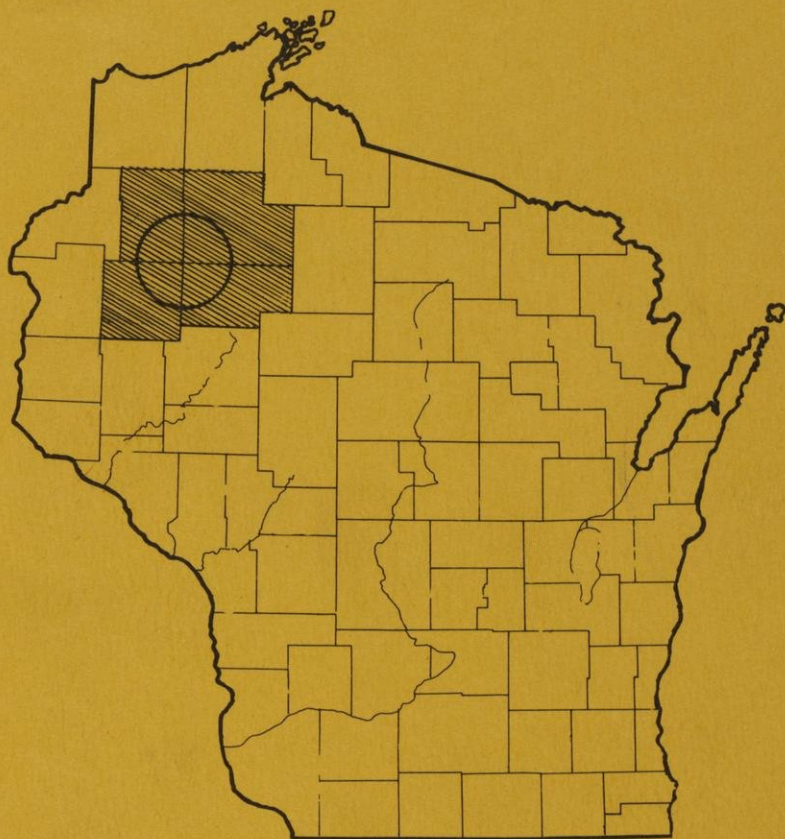
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Around the Four Corners



**A Pioneer History of the Washburn,
Sawyer, Barron and Rusk Counties**

Ethel Elliot Chappelle

Birchwood, Wisconsin

Marge Hoyer

Around the Four Corners

by

Ethel Elliot Chappelle

Published by the
Chronotype Publishing Co., Inc.
Rice Lake, Wisconsin

— PUBLISHER'S NOTE —

Ethel Chappelle, fondly named "Mrs. Birchwood," died April 24, 1972, at the age of 84.

While she did not live to see her book in completed form, Mrs. Chappelle was able to see the result of her many years of work in actual print through printer's galley proofs which were sent to her for approval and correction. Each printed word received her careful scrutiny. Corrections were made as she designated, and additional instructions noted by her on the proofs were followed to the letter.

Mrs. Chappelle furnished the basic design for the cover of the book and in addition wrote the captions for all the pictures. The introduction written by her, reads like a chapter from her book because, as she states in her introduction, she lived and breathed pioneer history most of her life.

So "Around the Four Corners" is Mrs. Chappelle's book—from cover to cover, and its contents reflects the style of writing that was so typical of "Mrs. Birchwood."

Thanks to her efforts, the early, detailed history of the "four corners" area and first-hand accounts of its early pioneers is being preserved in printed form to be passed on to future generations. Otherwise, they might be lost forever.

Introduction

You may be asking, "How does Mrs. Chappelle know so much about pioneer history?" The answer is, "I have lived and breathed it the most of my life"

My grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. William Taylor, came to Wisconsin from New York state in 1863. They had heard of the fertile land east of the St. Croix river. They came up the Mississippi river to Prescott, then overland to River Falls, where a few families had settled and the original part of the city had been platted with wonderful wide streets. My mother was 14 years old at that time.



After the close of the Civil War, William and John Elliott came west from New York state and boarded at the Taylor home. William married Jeannette Taylor December 11, 1867. He took his bride to a home he had built on 80 acres of timberland on the county line road, four miles east of River Falls. I was the youngest of their eight children and when I was two and a half years old my father died of pneumonia. I was raised on pioneer stories and shared a lot of their experiences myself.

The older children married and left home. Mother sold the farm and then decided to take another fling at pioneering. She moved to Stanberry in Washburn County in 1913. Her oldest son William had settled there in 1896. The new Wisconsin Central or "Soo" Railroad went across a corner of his land in 1907. A coal dock and water tank were located there so most every train stopped. He platted a small village and soon a number of houses were built for the section men to live in. My mother built a house there also.

I accompanied my mother and had a real taste of pioneer life. That same year Herbert Chappelle had moved with his uncle from Forest Lake, Minnesota to Springbrook. We were married in 1917 and lived at Stanberry, where our five children were born, aided by a doctor and a neighbor woman. The nearest hospitals were at Ashland and Rice Lake.

Looking for a location where we could give our children a high school education, we heard of the school at Birchwood. There was also a chance of employment there so we moved in the spring of 1928.

Although much larger than Stanberry it was still a pioneer village. You were lucky if you had a well within a block of your house. But there was a

high school in a fine new building, three churches, a mill and several stores and two railroads. We were well satisfied.

In 1951 the village celebrated its Golden Anniversary. As I was the news reporter for the Rice Lake Chronotype, I was requested to compile the early history of Birchwood. The time limit was three weeks. Many of the pioneers were still living here and they came and poured their stories into my ears. It was printed as a supplement in the paper and is the most authentic account of the early history of this area that has been written.

Ancient pictures were hung in the hall during the celebration. Many of them were handed over to me as they were of no value to the owners. I glued them into a huge album and with the aid of the old timers I compiled the description of each one which I typed and glued under its picture.

Besides this album I have 16 large scrapbooks filled with clippings of "News Notes" from this area which have been printed in the Chronotype since I started reporting in 1943. Also enough filed away to fill two or three more scrapbooks. But without these books it would have been impossible to compile these chapters on Birchwood. If the other communities had done the same it would have been an easy task to write their stories.

It had worried me that only one copy of all this important history was available to the citizens of this area. Then in March 1966 I slipped on snow-covered ice and fractured my leg and am doomed to walk with a cane the rest of my life.

The next winter I kept myself busy at the typewriter assembling into chapters the logging stories written by Paul Kirkendall. I felt that the world should have a chance to read them.

Then I got my great inspiration as I stood at my south door looking towards the Blue Hills. I suddenly realized I was looking into the corners of four counties all at the same time. "Around the Four Corners," I said. "What a title for a book, and I might as well be the one who writes it."

I decided to take in the area of 12 to 15 miles in a circle around those corners. The old timers have co-operated in fine spirit. I was taken on many tours by people who could explain the old as well as the new history of the area we were covering. By telephone I was able to talk to dozens of pioneers or their children. Many have made special trips to my home with pictures and information.

Children of the pioneers have done their best to recall events or stories told them by their parents. I am grieved by the fact that many of these people have died before they had the pleasure of reading the book. Some of them died a few days after the last interview or letter. Much of this information no one else will be able to gather. I studied books on early history and ancient atlases, then talked to old timers to see if they agreed. If it aroused too much controversy I dropped the subject.

The activities of F. D. Stout were almost entirely supplied by his son, Allison, who died nine days after I received his last letter. He corrected many stories which had been told or published previously.

I decided the best way to arrange the chapters was to go clockwise starting

with Barron county, then Washburn, Sawyer and Rusk. Some settlers came into each one at a very early date.

I worked on this project four years and met many fine people who gladly helped me all they could and supplied pictures which illustrate the past better than words could. The Chinese have a maxim which states, "A picture is worth two thousand words."

The "History of Barron County" which was published in 1922 was loaned to me. It weighed eight pounds. I gleaned material from it which aided me in compiling the history of the towns of Cedar Lake and Doyle.

Another eight pound book, "The Story of the Chippewa Valley," gave me much of the history of the early days of the Knapp, Stout & Co. I felt it was valuable history that should be handed down to future generations. It was published about 1900.

This is not a continued story as each chapter is a story by itself. I have tried to keep it in the same form as it was given to me and hope people will enjoy reading it as much as I've enjoyed compiling it.

I was born February 17, 1888 and it is now 1971. I have listened to pioneer stories and have been a pioneer almost all that time. I know these stories in this book are not exaggerated.

Ethel Elliott Chappelle,
Birchwood, Wisconsin
In the year 1971.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the countless number of people who supplied information, and photographs, written accounts of their experiences, granted interviews and who otherwise assisted in the development of this history of the "Four Corners." Without their help and encouragement, this work would not have been possible.

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Chapter I

THE MEN IN THE KNAPP, STOUT & CO.

• When I write a story I like to start at the bottom and work up to the top. The man who gets the credit for starting the big logging operations in this area is Capt. William Wilson who was born in Pennsylvania Feb. 9, 1807. His parents were natives of England. He was a farmer in early life, but came out to Fort Madison, Iowa in 1832, when he earned the title of Captain while piloting on the rivers. His first wife died at Fort Madison, leaving Thomas B. and Eliza T. He soon married again and in due time had nine more children.

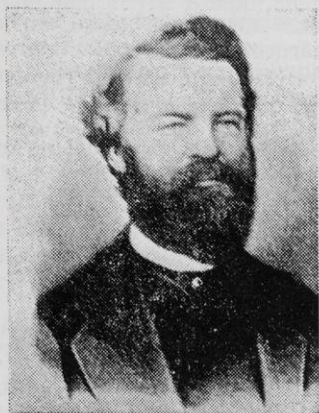
He heard a rumor of vast pineries up the Mississippi river and its tributaries. He resolved to investigate for himself. He traveled by boat most of the way and reached the area around Menomonie in the spring of 1846. He explored the pine lands and comprehending the vast resources and wealth they embraced if properly handled he returned to Fort Madison full of enthusiasm for the forests of Wisconsin.

Wilson's means were limited, but he related his findings to John H. Knapp, also of Fort Madison who had come into the possession of \$1,000. He too became enthusiastic and left with Capt. Wilson in June of 1846 for what is now Menomonie, Wis. They purchased a half interest in a saw mill from David Black who died that fall, and so they purchased the other half.

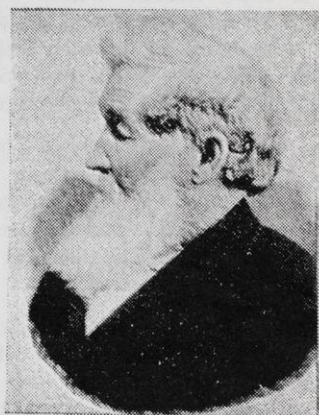
Now what kind of a man was John H. Knapp, jr.? (His father before him was named John H. but we will forget about him and from now on will leave off the jr.). He was born Mar. 29, 1825 at Elmira, N.Y. He came with his parents to Fort Madison, Iowa in 1833. When 20 years of age he went east and spent a year in a college. Later he took a course in a business college. With that background and \$1,000 in his pocket he set out with Capt. Wilson to commence that career in business which has been marked with a degree of success that has rarely been equaled in the northwest.

His first wife died in 1854 leaving one son Henry Eno Knapp who joined the company after his father's death in 1888. His second wife bore him six children of whom we have heard quite often. There was Effie V. who married Van Reed, (they had a summer home on the island at the mouth of Pigeon Creek in Cedar Lake), William A., John H., Edgar J., who became a doctor and practiced in Rice Lake. He owned the island in Cedar Lake, known for many years as the Faust Island. Also Herbert V. R. and Rolla S., all of them well known in Rice Lake in the early days. Mr. John Knapp was a sincere Christian, which sustained him through years of suffering from an incurable disease. He died Oct. 14, 1888, aged 63 years. His was the first death in the Company.

Now let's step back and see what Wilson and Knapp have been doing at their saw mill. Evidently things were going in good shape. A year after they had started Wilson again got curious about the pinery to the north. He and two men started up the Hay River on an exploring expedition. Reaching the mouth of Vance creek they followed that stream for a short distance. They then cut across the country in a northeasterly direction and in time came to a bluff overlooking the Hay River. Here lay the apex of a slightly prairie, narrowing among the hills to the immediate northward and stretching to the



John Knapp



William Wilson



Henry Stout



Andrew Tainter

southward in ever increasing expanse. Hazel brush grew in profusion and here and there were to be seen patches of scrub oak.

Already in Capt. Wilson's mind was a vision of the future when the rich timber lands of this region would become the scene of busy logging operations. He foresaw that a central camp would be necessary and realized that with the difficulties of transportation it would be wise to start a farm to supply the camp with food and fodder and he contemplated also the advantages of a mill at such a camp.

The land upon which he gazed from the top of that bluff on that historic day answered every requirement. An advantageous situation on a swift flowing creek, into which emptied many smaller streams flowing through heavily wooded areas. A sufficient drop to afford ample water power, and fertile land awaiting the plow of the husbandman.

"Prairie Farm," he exclaimed as his eye swept the landscape and measured its resources. To this day the name has remained. A camp was established soon after Capt. Wilson's visit.

This was just one of six large farms they established in Dunn and Barron counties for the raising of supplies for their camps. The horses and some oxen from the logging camps and also many men were employed through the summers at these farms. They had 6,000 to 7,000 acres of improved land. In the 1870's there were 1,200 men on the payroll. Logging camps were established on many of the rivers: at the present site of Barron in 1860, at Rice Lake in 1868 and at Chetek in 1872. From Rice Lake they followed the chain of lakes to Big Chetac and mowed a swath for several miles on both sides.

But before all this happened other men had joined the Company. First of these was Andrew Tainter, the most colorful of them all. First of all his father's name was Ezekiel who was born in New York state in 1790 and married Ruth Burnham in 1822. Moved to Fort Crawford (Prairie du Chien) in 1832. Poor Andrew was the oldest of 13 children, nine of them were girls. The only ones to be mentioned in this story are Andrew and David L. the 10th one down the line. Folks had a habit of attaching the mother's maiden name onto one of the sons and in this family one got tagged with J. Burnham. All we have learned about him was that he was the engineer on the building of dams.

As might be imagined, Andrew grew up into a tough young product on the frontier. In his early twenties he set off alone for the Chippewa River and the pineries. After working a year in a saw mill he joined Blois Hurd in a saw mill on Irvine creek. He must have worked on boats on the Mississippi before coming north for he, too, had acquired "Captain" on his name.

In 1848 Capt. Tainter started logging on his own with four yoke of oxen, a few Indians and half breeds. He located about eight miles north of the present Turtle Lake. He shackled up with an Indian maiden named Mary Poskin. She gave her name to that region.

When he reached Menomonie with his drive in the spring he intended to use the proceeds and follow the Gold Rush to California. Instead he became interested in the operations of Knapp and Wilson and in 1850 he purchased a 1/3 interest in their mill. (The story goes that Knapp and Wilson were unable to pay him for his logs so persuaded him to join his activities with theirs).

Thus as he used to say, "discovering a gold mine in the timber of Wisconsin instead of the quartz of the Pacific coast."

Captain Tainter stood 5' 11" tall, weight in his prime was 210 lbs., stood perfectly erect. His wife Poskin had the habit of going back to her tribe every spring when the sap began to rise, to help with the making of maple syrup and sugar. Finally he told her if she did it again she needn't come back. Next year she went—and didn't come back.

While living at Menomonie he married a white woman. No doubt, there was a minister or a justice to tie the knot this time. They had two children, Lou S. whose name was given to the steamboat which pulled the log booms on Red Cedar and Balsam lakes, and Mabel, the daughter who died in 1886.

We may tell more about Capt. Tainter later, but we must hurry back and pick up our story about "The Company."

As the business enlarged and became more diversified, more capital and resources were needed. By 1853 Henry L. Stout who had been in the lumber business for a number of years at Dubuque, Iowa, purchased an interest and became a member of the firm. The name of the firm had changed several times, but now became "The Knapp, Stout & Co." It would seem that Wilson and Tainter became the silent partners as their names were not used in the company name. Could it be that the money Knapp and Stout invested in The Company earned for them the privilege of their names being used in the title?

It is interesting to note the ages of the men in this Company at this time. William Wilson 46, John H. Knapp 28, Andrew Tainter 30, Henry Stout 39.

At the age of 18 years Thomas B. Wilson had joined his father at Menomonie in 1850. He had attended Howes Academy at Mount Pleasant, Iowa. In 1852 he was one of the government surveying party and carried the chain through the principal lumber countries, which was a rough and tough job, but it gave him a wonderful knowledge of the timber stands.

In 1854 he had become a member of the firm. A few years later John H. Douglas of St. Louis, a nephew of John H. Knapp, became a member. By 1856 the firm needed a trusty person and a good business manager at Read's Landing, located on the Minnesota side of the Mississippi river, opposite the mouth of the Chippewa river. Thomas was sent over there. His principal job was the shipping and receiving of lumber and supplies done first by keel and flat boats, later on the steamers. In 1874 he returned to Menomonie.

By 1878 it was deemed expedient to organize the firm into a corporation as their business had extended into four different states. John H. Knapp was elected a director and president of the new corporation, Thomas B. Wilson, Secretary, and John H. Douglas, Treas. The name became "Knapp, Stout & Company" with capital stock of \$2,000,000, which was doubled by 1882.

The company made vast purchases of pine lands in this region from the Government at \$1.25 an acre. In 1863 it bought 10,000 acres of pine land and the mill at Waubeek from C. C. Washburn. In 1879 and '80 it purchased over 100,000 acres from Cornell University and the Northwestern and Omaha railroads. Other extensive purchases were made also.

In 1885 the valuation of their holdings had increased to \$7,500,000. William Wilson and Henry Stout had retired. Added to the Company at this time were Henry Knapp, age 34, son of John H., and James H. Stout, age 37, son of Henry Stout.

We want now to report bits of the life story of James H. Stout who was born Sept. 25, 1848 at Dubuque, Iowa. He attended Chicago University one year. It became irksome to him and his father gave him a choice of work or study. He chose the former, which he later regretted.

He started with his father at the bottom of the lumber business. He climbed step by step until he attended the legislative business of the Knapp, Stout & Co. Company and lived in Washington, D.C.

One of those steps was when he succeeded Thomas B. Wilson in the management of the river business at Read's Landing in 1871. In 1877 he removed to St. Louis where he looked after the river and saw mill business.

After the death of John H. Knapp in 1888, James Stout returned to Menomonie to become the Pres. of the Knapp, Stout & Co. Company. The next year he was married to Angeline Wilson, daughter of Capt. William Wilson. They had one son, James H. Stout, jr.

Altho he did not crave a political life, he answered the call of the people and served as state senator from 1896 to 1911. He fought for better education and better roads. While living in Washington, D.C. he became acquainted with the workings of Manual Training Schools.

Mr. Stout started the Manual Training School in Menomonie. He not only supplied the building but even furnished it complete in every department, overcoming all opposition to it, and paying all expenses the first year. Pure love of doing good to the rising generation prompted this most unselfish deed. For many years it was known as the Stout Institute, then the Stout College, now the Stout University with a branch campus at Rice Lake.

James Bracklin was another very important man connected with the Company. He was born April 28, 1839 in Maine of Irish parents. When 19 years old he left home and made his way to Menomonie where he worked for K.S. & Co. for 10 years. The following eight years he was with the North Western Lumber Co. of Eau Claire. In 1876 he returned to K.S. & Co. and took charge of their extensive interests at Rice Lake. At one time he had some 2,000 men in his employ, also 450 horses and 550 oxen. He not only was popular with the men in his employ, but stood high in the hearts of his fellow townspeople. (There were those who did not agree with that statement). James Bracklin was the first Treasurer of Barron County. The early records of the county were lost in the Red Cedar river. The satchel in which the documents were contained, as well as a certain sum of money belonging to the county, fell overboard on the occasion of one of his trips down the river. He also carried the mail to and from Menomonie and Barron.

Bracklin was an early mayor of Rice Lake. In fact he and the Company tried to rule the city and also the whole county, but failed in that attempt. In 1868 he married Julia Vance. They had five children, Guy, Roy, John, Andrew and Julia. It was John who lived to tell the Story of the Big Fire, told in a later chapter. Mother Julia died in July 1886. He quickly found Minnie Russell, a native of Canada whose parents lived in Oak Grove township. They were married Jan. 1, 1887. To this union two children were born, Paul Kirkendall who supplied the Story of the Logging days told how he spent many weeks with this Mrs. Bracklin and the younger children at the log cabin at Birch Dam Camp during the summer vacation.

Simon P. Barker was Superintendent of logging before Bracklin. His camp was called Louseburg and was located on the Red Cedar river in section 7 of the town of Stanley. The date given is 1858. His name is often mentioned in the early politics of Dallas county, and after the name was changed to Barron. He was a member of the first county board and the meetings were held at his camp several times.

Barker was another who shackled up with an Indian maiden. By 1878 he was tired of living and while staying at the Smith House in Rice Lake he shot himself. A note left by him requested that his body be buried on the northernmost island in Red Cedar Lake.

Andrew Tainter was general superintendent over operations in and out of the Rice Lake center.

Capt. Andrew Tainter

I promised you more on the life of Andrew Tainter. He started out with no capital and became the wealthiest man in the whole Chippewa Valley. He built a three story mansion in Menomonie on the bank of Lake Menomin. Close beside it was a towering greenhouse with a walkway between it and the home which was completely closed in so that the Tainters or their gardener could have easy access to the imposing structure which looked like a hip roofed barn with a huge dome on the top, all of glass.

Tainter also owned the Oakland Stock Farm just east of the city. It was established in April, 1889 for the breeding of trotting horses. There were 500 acres of choice farm land, an octagonal training barn 80 ft. in diameter, and many other large barns. Also barns for cattle and sheep.

A covered track $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in extent for use in unseasonable weather, and a half mile training track. There was a beautiful house for the caretaker and the numerous workmen.

Andrew was having a good time spending his money. But his money could not save the life of his favorite daughter Mabel who died in June 1886. The Mabel Tainter Memorial Building was formally opened to the public July 3, 1889. Cost was \$125,000. It was illuminated with 600 electric lights and lavishly fitted and furnished. (We are happy to report that it has been restored to its original beauty after years of neglect).

Andrew had retired in 1886 and his son, Lou S., took over in his place with K. S. & Co. He took a string of racing horses to the fair at Rice Lake, one of many fairs he attended each year. He got chilled in a cold rain, altho in his younger days he braved all kinds of weather. At the age of 76 it proved fatal. He died of pneumonia at a Rice Lake hospital Oct. 18, 1899.

Let me quote this story as told by Calista Stout Kern. "My parents, Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Stout, were invited to the Tainters for dinner. Mother had been warned to expect anything and say nothing as Capt. Tainter had a terrible temper and a vocabulary to start a fire in a sodden log.

"He started to carve the meat but the carving knife was dull. With an expressive flow of language he hurled the knife into the wood-panelled dining room wall, where it stuck quivering, like one of those knife throwers in a circus."

Be it said to the Captain's credit, the death of his daughter drew him toward a deeper interest in religion and philanthropy. The Tainters became charter members of the Unitarian Society in 1888.

Stout Family History

The family history of the Stouts is so very unique that the publishers of the "History of the Chippewa Valley" in 1892 included it in their book. I feel the same way and I believe you will agree.

Richard Stout, the first of that name in America was born in Nottinghamshire, England. His father's name was John. When quite young, Richard paid his addresses to a young woman whom his father thought was below his rank, and a disagreement between father and son followed.

The latter left his father's house and in a few days enlisted on board a ship of war, where he served seven years, receiving his discharge at New Amsterdam, now called New York.

About this time a ship from Amsterdam, Holland, on her way to New Amsterdam, was driven on the New Jersey shore, the passengers landing with great difficulty. Soon after, the Indians appeared and the result was the massacre of the entire crew, it was supposed. But a certain Penelope Van Princess, whose husband the Indians had killed, found herself possessed of sufficient strength to creep to a hollow tree, where she remained seven days. An Indian passing that way was attracted to the spot by his dog's keen scent leading it there. Penelope was found in a suffering condition, being severely bruised about the head and possessing other cruel bodily wounds.

In his compassion he took her from her tree and carried her to his wigwam, where he treated her kindly and healed her wounds. A short time after he took her in his canoe to New Amsterdam and presented her to the Dutch who then owned the city. Here she afterward became acquainted with the above mentioned Richard Stout, to whom she was married and this union resulted in the founding of the Stout family in this country.

Following is the lineage: David, son of Richard; James, son of David; John, son of James; Nathan, son of John; William, son of Nathan; Henry L., son of William; James H. and Frank D., sons of Henry. This brings the Stout family up to 1854.

Capt. William Wilson

A final tribute to Capt. Wilson whose visions started this great company. He sought no political preferment but yielded to the wishes of his friends and served them in the capacity of state senator. He was a leader of men and to him should go the credit for holding this great company together. It was recognized as the leading lumber manufacturing company of this country. He was always called "the silent partner."

John H. Knapp died Oct. 14, 1888, aged 63 years.

Capt. William Wilson died Sept. 9, 1892, aged 85 years.

Capt. Andrew Tainter died Oct. 18, 1899, aged 76 years.

Henry Stout died July 17, 1900, aged 86 years.

Footnote: The facts and figures in this chapter were gleaned from the eight pound book "History of the Chippewa Valley in Wisconsin," loaned to me by the late Donald Hammond of Wausau.

Chapter II

THE KNAPP, STOUT & CO. CAMPS

Long before Knapp, Stout & Co. decided to set up headquarters in Rice Lake in 1868, they had sent out timber cruisers to learn where the pine was growing. Also they studied the waterways as a means of transporting the timber to their big mill at Menomonie.

In the area north and east of Rice Lake they discovered the famous chain of lakes, Chetac, Birch, Balsam, Cedar and Hemlock which fed into the Cedar River. There were also Long Lake and Bear Lake with streams which fed into Cedar River and Rice Lake. They decided it was an ideal setup.

The S. A. Jewett Co. had in the late '70's partly logged some of the timber around Cedar Lake and built a dam at Mikana. Knapp, Stout & Co. acquired all their holdings in 1882. Jewett had established two camps near Mikana as early as 1872 and 1875. The one in Section 22 was used as a stopping place for tote teams. At one time it was operated by "Cap" Robert Bull.



Air view showing the location of the first Knapp, Stout & Co. camp at Village of Mikana on Red Cedar Lake. The Mikana dam to the left of Highway 48 caused the widening of the river which flows out of the lake. On the south shore of the "pond" was located the first Knapp, Stout & Co. camp. It became the stopping place for tote teams. Later this big field became the first farm for the Company in this area. When the property was divided, F. D. Stout became the owner of this farm and many sections on the east shore and all around Balsam Lake. His big summer home was built on the Big Island. The golf course is the cleared strip dotted by trees on the east shore. The Meteor Hills are in the background. The "Four Corners" is located two miles east of the north end of Red Cedar Lake.

The first camp on the east side of Cedar Lake was located at the foot of Downs Meadow. It was built in 1875 to harvest a big windfall. The record which we are following is one made by Jim Bracklin, the Big Boss over all the K. S. & Co. camps.

There are 12 camps listed as being in the town of Cedar Lake. One listed as "Mulvaney's Last Stand" was operated by him in Sec. 23 east of Cedar Lake. It was one of the last ones operated by K. S. & Co, in 1898-1900.

In the town of Wilson we find nine camps. Many of them landed their logs in Cedar Lake, one had a seven mile haul. Others landed at Tainter's Pond, Hemlock Lake, Pigeon Creek, Upper Hemlock Dam, Nelson's Dam, and Murphy's Dam. Only one is listed for the town of Wilkinson, east of Cornell Meadows. They landed at Hemlock Lake.

Five camps are listed in the town of Long Lake. One in Sec. 12, on the upper end of the arm on the east side was operated by John McCulloch. We will hear later about the oxen which went through the weak ice at this landing. This area was logged from 1896 to 1900. The Rice Lake Lumber Co. had large holdings in this area.

Four camps were located in the town of Sarona at this time. Their logs were landed at Bear Lake and transported down Bear Creek. Town of Birchwood had seven camps. Birch Lake Dam was built in 1882-'83, altho some of the workmen told they had walked from Menomonie to work on it in 1881.

The first dam was found to be too small. A much larger one was installed in 1893. Three of the camps north of the dam landed their logs at Lawler's rollway which he had built at the foot of Lawler's Hill in Sec. 27. This is on the west shore of Balsam Lake where a large point projects to the west. One landed on Long Lake Stream and two at the north end of Cedar Lake.

The Birch Dam camp was sort of a headquarters for the camps up the line and kept watch over the dam. It became very active when it was time to harvest the timber adjacent to it on the south. From the huge stumps left in the area it was easy to imagine the extremely heavy stand of timber which had been harvested where the village of Birchwood now stands. The rollway was on the high bank where Birch Lake Inn now stands. They could drive their teams and equipment over the dam to the camp on the north side.

We find 17 camps in the town of Edgewater, most of them on the east side of Lake Chetac. They would cut the timber within an easy haul of the lake, then move on a mile or two and build another camp. It was easier to build camps than haul long distances. Each camp had to be located beside a supply of water. There were many little lakes and streams in that area.

When they got down near Sucker Creek, it was a long haul to any landing. The camp in Sec. 36 claimed the longest haul of 8 miles to Cedar Lake. The camp in Sec. 32 seems to have been left intact and in good shape. When Harry Lockwood brought his family here in 1902 they lived there for several years and many more of the first settlers took refuge in it until they had their shanty built. In all, 55 camps are on the list, 85,000 acres of timber were cut and floated down the Cedar River to the Big Mill at Menomonie before the Company broke up their headquarters in Rice Lake in 1900.

Chapter III

PAUL KIRKENDALL'S STORY OF LOGGING DAYS

When Paul was two months old he came to Rice Lake with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kirkendall in May, 1884. Having had previous experience, his dad was soon put in charge of the oxen and the barn at headquarters. Paul grew up with the business. He rode with the tote teams to the different camps or accompanied Jim Bracklin, the head boss, on some of his trips. He knew the life of the loggers from A to Z.

The family moved to Seattle in 1900. He was an invalid with a bad heart for his last 20 years. In 1951 some unknown friend in Barron County sent him a subscription to *The Chronotype*. In a November issue he read the article written by me about "the farewell to the Soo Depot at Birchwood." He thought, "I wonder if that woman would like to hear about the days of the logging camps?" He wrote to me suggesting the idea. That started two years of correspondence. Paul died in Nov. 1953.

I have now compiled his letters into a "story of Logging." It is told just as he wrote it.

Camps

Each camp had a certain number of buildings. A barn for the horses and one for the oxen. The sleeping shanty as it was called, was long and roomy. There was a tier of bunks two high down each side and part way across each end, with two men to a bunk. A tick filled with straw was under them and blankets above. Average about 68 to 70 men in one sleeping shanty.

One end had a door of boards about three feet wide and the other end had a double sliding window, under which was a sort of wooden trough where men could wash up, shave, etc., to get ready for their meals. (Few of them bothered to shave). The boss saw to it that the men kept themselves clean. Practically all had beards, even the younger men. All healthy and husky and all lousy as they could get. The ventilation in the shanty was through the cracks between the logs. Pity the fellow who slept next to the wall.

I used to like to stay in the cook shanty and help the cook and cookee. They did the cooking at one end of the dining hall. Sometimes the cook (with a little help) would build a good-sized cabin on to the cook house for him to sleep in, to be near the stoves to keep them going all night. He did not care to sleep in with the other men.

The two men would do all baking of bread, doughnuts and cookies and for Sundays sometimes pies and pastry. They cut up and prepared meat, etc., set table and served meals to from 65 to 70 men, all eating at once. (I would help just for the fun of it). We would have pancakes sometimes for breakfast. The cook would stir up a mammoth dishpan of batter and keep a continual stream of dough going on top of stove. A large six griddle stove with large flat place to fry on. It moved like a piece of machinery. Some cooks were always cranky and fussy about how the men acted at the table. Most men were real tidy and nice at the table, some were more or less like heathens.

There was always a blacksmith shop for repair work. (Excavations at some of the old camps have brought forth the theory that the oxen were shod at central camps where special equipment was provided. Oxen were shod by placing the animal in a canvas sling and lifting it by pulley and rope. There was also a pit under it where the blacksmith could more easily do his work. At some campsites you can find heaps of shoes, at others none at all.)

The oxen used for skidding logs in the woods were never shod. Just those with the loads on the iced roads.

Jim Bracklin

Knapp, Stout & Co's logging was on a big scale, was run with precision and system. Jim Bracklin was Superintendent of the whole affair and drove from camp to camp all winter long. He would go back to his home in Rice Lake and rest for a few days, then out again through the deep snows and bitter cold. He had two teams of rugged strong Montana horses to change off with. He drove them on a medium heavy sled with four runners. The seat was enclosed and feet section was sort of enclosed. He wore a heavy buffalo coat and wrapped his feet and legs in fur also. He sometimes stopped over with Cap Bull at Cedar Lake Dam and rested for a day, then out again.

The Boss would drive up to a camp door and whistle. The men would rush out and help him out and take care of his team; sometimes he would be nearly buried in snow, just sitting in the seat all covered up. He was a very austere, persistent and exacting man. Very particular, sometimes almost too fussy about the work. But at the same time he was dearly liked by all the men and their foremen.

Every one was up on their toes when they expected Bracklin to drive in. He might come into camp and stay overnight and leave next day and never say a word about how things looked. Generally asked the "Boss": "How are things going?" "Have you enough men?" "Any complaint on the food?"

He would drive down logging road all alone and take in everything from the fallers to the landing men. Put on rubber boots and walk out on the ice where landing men were at work. Sit and visit and get warm in their shack out on the lake. Sometimes toward spring the ice would settle under the tremendous weight of logs piled as much as 20 or so logs high. Water would cover ice up to 2 feet deep. Horses, oxen and men had to walk in this cold water. Loads, teams and logs were seldom lost. The driver would climb down and sit on the pole horse or an ox's back.

I have often ridden with Jim Bracklin; he liked to have me for company. During vacation in the summer the Bracklin family would spend much of the time at the log cabin at Birch Dam. I spent many weeks with them as I was about the same age as their children.

Bracklin was very strict about business matters, but he was a good man and a good reliable and faithful worker was always his choice of a good friend and always received the best jobs in camp and all haying and logging operations.

Long Lake Camp

John McCulloch was the foreman of a camp located on the south side of the big arm or bay of Long Lake which extends from the center of the east shore to the northeast. It was almost to the end of this bay; I have been there many times.

The only loss of a team and sled that I can remember was at this camp. It was a beautiful four-ox team, all pure white, which incidentally was one of my Dad's favorite teams. The ice had become honeycombed and the driver could not tell, but they figured he took a chance and drove out on it to turn around after getting rid of his load of logs on the landing. The sled, oxen, harnesses and all still lie at the bottom of Long Lake. The driver jumped and

saved himself. My Dad felt bad about it for sometime. Glad the driver was saved but sad about the beautiful four oxen which were lost.

Road to Birch Dam and Haying Operations

The only way to get to Birch Dam was by way of horses and wagons. The road at that time came from the south and passed close to the west shore of Balsam Lake. In fact, so close to the shore in one place they could drive the horses in and let them drink. Near to this place was a quicksand spot which had been fenced off after a team and wagon went down to glory.

The road then came up onto high ground and into the dam area from the northwest side. A good many acres were cleared north and east of the dam on that high ground.

The Knapp, Stout & Co. sent about 85 men (a haying crew) up there each summer to cut the hay to feed their oxen and horses in their logging camps, at Birch Dam and up on Big Chetac where they had many camps. It was also used on the logging roads. They owned what was called the Cornell Meadows, 1,600 acres near Cedar Lake, a marshy low place. All this hay was cut by hand with a scythe. A beautiful sight to see, up to 75 or 80 men all in a row slightly behind and to one side of each other all cutting at once. All stop to rest or whet blade of scythe at once by a signal given by boss or leader. This hay was cut by hand on account of so many stumps and steep places.

But on the Cornell Meadow it was too soft in summer to put horses onto. After it was cut it would be stacked in shocks and as soon as it froze hard enough to hold a good sized horse, it was sledged up together and put in large haystacks which were raked down in dome shape so rain and snow would run and slop off.

This was wild swamp grass and was hauled in bales to camps in winter, not to be used as feed for horses or oxen but to be used on logging roads. May sound odd to you but the mammoth loads of pine logs they hauled from woods to the lake, never got stuck, only going down hill. That's where the hay came in. These large sleds had 14 or 16 foot bunks and big long runners about eight feet apart. The bunks were fastened to the front and back bobs with a large steel king bolt and cross chains. The bobs were kept apart by a loose oak beam between them.

Hay and Loads of Logs

On a long haul from back in the woods to the lake, they would stack logs straight up each side as many as eight or nine high, one on top of the other and then peak off like the roof of a house. The horse teamster with two or four horses would set up on front of load and quite often the load was so high his lines went straight down to the pole team. Many drivers drove mostly by talking to their horses. My Dad could drive up to six and eight horse teams. He'd hold all eight lines in his left hand and a long whip in right, but mostly talked to them to pick up their feet and move along.

Least bit downhill the horses would shack along to keep out of way of load. This would give them a good start for the next grade. Then they would have to pull for all they could.

Going down steep grade or from bank onto lake, two men called "road monkeys" would sprinkle hay in one of the ruts the big runners run in. This would hold the sled back. Otherwise it would run over and crush everything in its way. If they got too much hay in one rut or both ruts it would heat

the runners too much and they would stick and stop the load. Hence they would only get stuck "going down hill." Also the road men had to be very careful about their ruts, especially if it started to snow.

Even oxen had to run sometimes on a grade. Oxen all had big heavy leather harness with big collar, took a strong man to harness an ox for the collar and harness had to all be lifted at once. Pole horses and oxen both had leather tugs, leaders had leather harness with chain tugs. The oxen were sharp shod on all four feet, could walk and pull on glare ice easily.

The rollway of these sleds connecting front end of front runners were made of heavy oak to which the tongue was inserted and a good oak pole was sprung in the rollway so as to carry weight of tongue off horses and oxen necks.

Wolves

While staying overnight at Cap Bull's boarding house a whole pack of wolves kept us awake nearly all night. Probably 12 to 16 timber wolves howled at the moon across the dam at the Cedar Lake Dam. We could see them plainly, sitting on their haunches. We could see signs of them through the woods anywhere, where they had killed a rabbit or a stray dog and eaten them.

We lost a beautiful Durham cow in Rice Lake one winter from eating too much goldenrod in her hay. Dad brought home a yoke of oxen and a stone boat (low sled) and we took the cow to north end of Rice Lake and left her in a tamarack swamp on northeast corner of the lake. A couple of days later a bunch of us kids skated up there and nothing was left but the bones. Timber wolves had enjoyed a feast. We got out of there in a hurry. There were always black bear a plenty, and also wildcats and some panthers in the woods around there.

A pack of grey wolves treed a logger one night and kept him there nearly all night. He had been over from his camp to the camp that was at Hemlock Dam to visit and play cards. On his return he'd come upon this pack of wolves. The poor guy nearly froze as it was in the dead of winter.

Cap Bull who operated the halfway house was a pretty good guy. He was a sport and liked racing horses. He had a team of buck deer broke and trained to harness either to a buggy or sleigh. He drove them around on the meadows or nearby roads. I had a ride in a sulky with him once myself.

My Friends the Chippewa Indians

Knapp, Stout & Co. did hire some of the Indians, about four or five in each camp, especially around the Indian country like Long Lake and Big Chetac. They always picked the younger husky ones.

Squaws cut all their wood, did all the work around the wigwam or tepee. Men laid around wigwam, smoked and generally took it easy. The squaws fished the year around, in Birch and Big Chetac. In the winter they would lay pine boughs on the ice with a blanket on top, then lay on it with their right arm poised in air with a long spear in hand. They speared fish through hole in ice. Sometimes they lay there for hours. I have stood beside them many times and talked to them when it was way below zero.

I have seen squaws sawing wood with a cross cut saw with the temperature 20 or more below zero right there on the shores of Birch and Chetac Lakes. I would be riding on a tote sled to some of the camps. I'd get off and help them saw and even split some, too. They would laugh and ask, "Who You"?

I would say, "Billy's Boy." Most of them around those lakes knew my Dad for he would give them ox livers, tongues, tenderloins, jowls or cheek meat and often the whole head from the slaughterhouse in Rice Lake. They would walk in and generally leave to walk back to Birch and Chetac about dark on cold windy days in the winter.

Sometimes the men would stay all night with the night watchman at the barn where Dad worked, then bum a ride back up home next day with the tote team. The old bucks would take these long trips.

When some of the bucks worked and got some money, the squaws might get hold of some money to buy store clothes and also some groceries. But many wore buckskin even up to 1900. They had cheap shoes for summer wear and buckskin moccasins in winter. The hides were tanned by the Indians in the brains of the deer and were soft and warm and waterproof. I had a pair to wear one winter and would wear them to school and change to regular shoes during the day. I could walk through deep slush and feet would be dry and warm. They made them so the upper part would fold over and wrap around your ankle. The squaws wore buckskin skirts, leggings and jackets, too, if they could not beg or buy wool skirts, etc.

My parents were well known by the Indians. Sometimes the squaws and girls would walk to Rice Lake. Mother would fix a lunch for them. She would generally have some used dresses and things to give to them. Even used to scout the neighborhood and ask for clothes for them.

There is a difference between wigwams and tepees. A wigwam is oblong shaped like half of an egg. Ribs were split oak strips, steamed and bent in shape. They were put up and covered with birch bark, which was fastened together with tar or pitch.

The tepee is also covered with birch bark on poles which are set in a circle on the ground and all meet at the top, where they are tied together with vines or strings of buckskin or wire. Their birchbark fire was inside and smoke went up through the top of roof in both. Along about 1900 they did get hold of lumber for roofs and built cabins of logs.

If you have never ridden in a birch canoe you have missed the thrill of your life. If you look at them slant ways even, they will tip and throw you out. Birch Lake got its name from the numerous birch trees which grew in that area.

My Dad knew many of the leading Indians at that time. He knew the Chief well. The Chief gave me beautiful buckskin moccasins several times. I came to know many of the Indians in that district. There was a large band including the Chief that lived on east side of Big Chetac, about the center of the lake. On their trips to Rice Lake they would buy flour, etc. to pack on their backs clear to their camp, and all the meat Dad would give them.

I believe the prettiest woman I ever saw was a young Chippewa squaw on the west shore of Long Lake. Dad and I were at an Indian Pow Wow where they were celebrating the fall harvest of Indian rice and other occasions at late fall. Some of both men and women were really dignified and aristocratic looking. They were the real Indians. Tall and straight she was with long black hair in two large braids down her back. As light on her feet as a cat she would stand straight and move her head around and stare like a wild deer (if you have ever seen a deer when it is on guard and listening for danger). They all wore buckskin moccasins and jackets, etc. The men wore buckskin pants and the women buckskin dresses and jackets all trimmed with white, blue and red beads. They also made gloves.

They were really decent Indians. They would give you things of their own if they took a liking to you. My Dad, like I said, was always good to them and they kept him in buckskin gloves, jackets and moccasins, etc., and me, too.

No wonder when they asked me "Who You"? all I had to say was "Me, Billie Kirkendall's boy." Then they would say "Me sabbe, Me sabbe."

Birch Lake Dam

There was only a moderate stream flowing from Big Birch to Balsam Lake, until the Knapp, Stout crew walked up from Menomonie in 1881 to start building a dike at the west end of high banks on both sides. A dam was built with one large gate and possibly two small ones. They sluiced logs thru the big gate each spring and down the river and thru Balsam Lake into the north end of Cedar Lake. This backed-up water was named Little Birch.

A wagon road was built across dam, below the tops of gates. On the south side of lake and river was solid forest. The company would drive several hundred oxen up from Rice Lake each spring (as they came in from different logging camps). We would drive them across the dam two abreast, 'til all were over, then shut the gate on the south end of the dam.

They would roam through the woods and pine slashings and on old logging roads all summer and eat and fight mosquitos. They had a man who lived in a cabin on the south side of the stream. He watched for animals who might harm or chase the oxen. Also took care of the salt licks which were placed near the stream to coax the oxen to come back often. Grass quickly grew on the open places, skid ways and logging roads. The company even seeded grass in some places to make pasture.

The woods were inhabited by black bears and big timber wolves. The man in charge always carried a rifle. Sometimes he would find an ox which had been crippled on rocks or old logs. He would just shoot it and get help to cut it up and give the meat to white men and sometimes to the Chippewa Indians. Sometimes far out in the woods an Indian or two would catch and butcher one for themselves, but the company could not do much about it.

The Birch Lake Camp was located beside this dam and operated until all the timber within reach was harvested by 1900.

The Knapp, Stout & Company Barns

All barns and yards were between the railroad and Main street on south side of Cedar River in Rice Lake and covered many acres. They had a large horse barn and two long mule sheds where the animals were kept as they stopped over on their way from summer work to logging in the winter. The horses worked on many large farms of K.S. & Co. around Chetek, Prairie Farm, etc. They were also hired out to such men as Senator Price who had large holdings in the near center of the state.

The horses and mules were all picked and bought for size and strength. Some of the prettiest and most beautiful four and six horse teams that you could possibly imagine. When they had to move to keep out of the way of a load of logs, the driver would tighten up lines, just speak to them and they would perk up their ears and commence to step on it. Sometimes they would have to shack right along for quite a ways if it was slightly downgrade, as the load would push them anyway. Oxen had to do the same. Hence as oxen

grew older they would be used for skidding logs in back woods, hauling wood to camp or pulling the water tank at night icing the logging road ruts.

There was a big ox barn and vast yards with covered sheds where they could eat hay out of racks, out of cold winds and snow. My Dad was the supervisor of the oxen. All oxen that were too old and slow or had become crippled in anyway, Dad fattened up in small separate yard from the rest. He would butcher about four or five each day during the winter, and send the meat to the camps. Please rest assured any cook in the camps could bake, fry and stew that meat until it would melt in your mouth. If they couldn't then they soon went down the road to Rice Lake.

The ox tongues were delicious pickled. My mother would boil them good and then slice it and make a pickle of vinegar and spices. Fix six or eight in the fall and we kids would carry slices to school in our lunch boxes.

My Dad was a lover of good horses and oxen. Those large strong oxen would come up and nuzzle him and lick his arms or hands. He always carried a goad stick and would scratch their necks and back and around their ears and jaws.

It was unsafe to go into a large yard of them without an ox whip or goad stick. They were not ordinary small oxen you might see on a farm. They ran from 1700 pounds to a team of Holsteins he had which weighed 2300 pounds apiece. The latter were as gentle as kittens.

When my Dad walked into a yard several hundred oxen might be laying down, and most of them would get up when he called to them. It would be inspection or feeding time. A logging boss would be with him and Dad would say "Here is one of your oxen and here is one," etc. He seemed to know them all by sight. They would walk them around to see if one was lame or otherwise. Boss would show ticket from Bracklin on how many teams to allow for each camp. A helper would be with them to take them out, and Dad would find one and would refer to it as a "near ox" and then walk around and look for its mate, an "off ox."

It puzzled some of the newer bosses how he could do it. But, you see, a number was burned into their horn down near the head. On a near ox it would be on the left horn, on an off ox it would be on the inside of right horn. You could see both numbers at a glance standing on near side of team. He also could remember them because he broke nearly all the steers they bought for logging, etc.

The Spring Breakup

By the time the logging roads in the woods were too soft for hauling, the ice had softened in the lakes and it was time to start floating the logs downstream through the dams. Not all the logs were stacked on the lakes. In case of a high enough bank, the men would clear a few acres real good and put the logs in piles all blocked by a keyblock, and in the spring after the logs on ice had been taken away they would knock out the key block under each row of piled logs. It was really fun and really quite a sight to see them go rolling and splashing into the lake. The bank or ground on which they laid was always called a rollway; same in woods or on the ice. One was located where Birch Lake Inn now stands on the south high bank of Little Birch.

When they broke the rollways all the men that could, even the cook and cookee, would be there to see the fun. If a camp was to be disbanded, the

buildings which had the better logs would be torn down and those logs floated down stream with the others.

If the camp was to be continued another year, the fellows after the clearing of the rollway would have a few drinks around, then go back to camp and start cleaning up the place and putting things in order, packing up their belongings ready to go back to Rice Lake and then home.

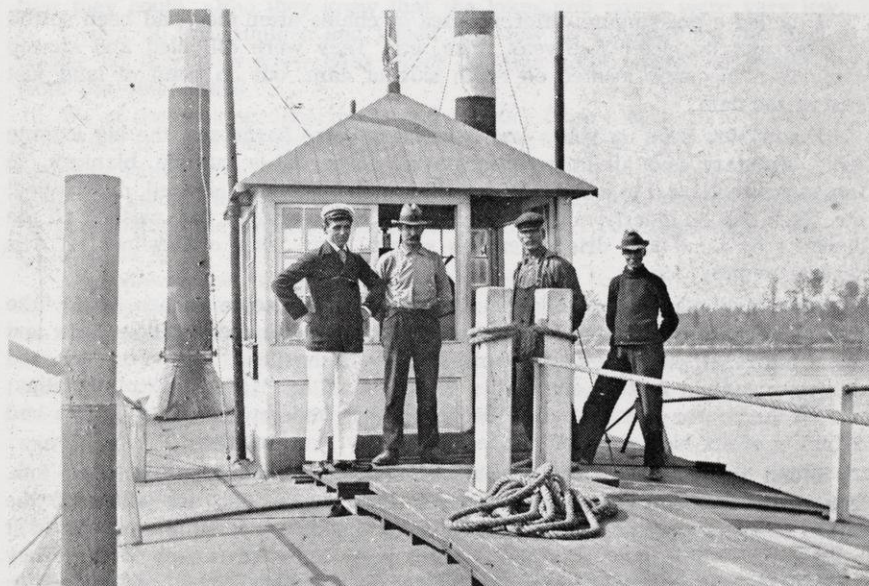
In Rice Lake many, many of them staggered around the streets for several days and left for home broke. The married men never had much money left to draw when they hit Rice Lake, because their family had been drawing and using it before they arrived back at the office.

All in all, they were happy, fun-loving and generous to a fault. We kids would meet and follow them on the street and they would pull out a nickel or a dime and say "Here, kid, get you some candy." (better to give it to us than buy more whiskey; they would have spent it anyway.)

As the guy says, "Them days is gone forever!"

Steamer "Lou Tainter" on Cedar Lake 1899

This is the boat which towed logs on Cedar Lake until they quit logging. Towed all logs that came from Big Chetac, Birch, Balsam and several big camps on Cedar Lake. All were sluiced through dam at Cedar Lake dam. Floated down Cedar River to Rice Lake, thru the dam there and on down Cedar River to Menomonie.



The man in cap and white pants was Captain John Bracklin, the son of Jim Bracklin. I am standing at the other end, and my Dad next to me. I can not identify the other man. We had a big boom of logs under tow, notice the tight line in foreground.

This boat was a large stern wheeler, had twin engines with about 5½ or 6 foot stroke. Dad was engineer and sometimes worked around the clock if they were bucking a south wind. He had a hammock slung from ceiling up off the floor so he would be handy to the throttle and Johnson bar in case he had to stop (or I should say if the Captain called for a stop).

I was up spending a few days with Dad when one fireman came down with the mumps. They rushed him home to Rice Lake. I took his place as fireman at 15 years of age. Two firemen worked six hours on and six hours off, turn about. I worked from midnight until 6 a.m. and again from 12 noon to 6 p.m. A big Scotch marine boiler which carried 250 pounds of steam, fired by four-foot oak and maple hardwood. They all trusted me to do it as I was a very steady and observing boy. I would set in a warm place underneath the stairway and watch the water level and steam gauge like a hawk. Even in the middle of the night when all were asleep except Captain and me. Sometimes Dad would come from engine room quietly and peek around the corner to see if everything was alright. One night Captain fell asleep and nearly ran boat and logs into the shore. I called up to him through the speaking tube to wake him up.

Breaking up Camps in 1900

The camps sent all of their equipment to Rice Lake in the spring of 1900 after the last logs were sent down the rivers. I quit school and went to working for Knapp, Stout, driving a yoke of oxen hooked to a stone boat, hauling all the different things which came in from all the logging camps.

I hauled a good many different sizes of chains after they had been sorted in piles and inspected for weak links, etc. They were all oiled and stowed away in a big shed located on north side of dam, out on point of land just east of the dam.

Everything from ox yokes and harnesses, horse harnesses, the big logging sleds, dishpans and all large camp cook stoves, table cutlery, blankets, in fact everything used in a camp. Everything was inspected, cleaned, overhauled, etc. They had an elderly man with tanks and a big wringer that washed all the blankets by hand and dried them on several long, long clotheslines. It was several months' job.

After they were all dry, they were inspected and some women would take the job at so much apiece to mend and darn torn blankets, pillow slips and even mattress ticks. They always used straw in the ticks. They were all good and my dear old mother sometimes took several hundred of the pillow slips; cut up the poorer ones to patch the better ones and sew up the rips. We had a family of six kids and Dad made \$1.50 a day, working from 6 to 6.

Much of the equipment was sold to other small logging outfits in job lots. The sleds were mostly too large and they would cut the width of the bunks down to suit their jobs. Knapp, Stout did, however, ship carloads of it to Missouri where they also had a good many acres of timber to log. They wanted Dad to go there too but he decided to go west. I took over his job in the ox barn at Rice Lake. As soon as the snow was gone and the grass was good enough south of Birch Dam in spring of 1900, I and eight or nine others drove nearly 1000 oxen over the road from Rice Lake to Birch Dam and put them across both Cedar and Birch dams, two abreast and into the woods south of the dam.

They eventually sold most of them around country for farms, etc. They were all large oxen, especially one yoke that Dad used a lot around the barns. These weighed 2300 pounds apiece. They could pull a sled piled high with feed in the old two bushel, white canvas grain sacks over bare dirt. Lots of times in front of the Company's grist mill sun would melt snow off where it was traveled on so much. I just used the goad stick a little and over the dry dirt, sled, load and Paul Kirkendall would go. You see, Dad taught me all the tricks.

The Company disposed of everything in 1900 after logging 85,000 acres around Rice Lake, Cedar Lake, Birch Lake, Long Lake, Bear Lake, Big Chetac, Balsam and Hemlock.

I have been in and on all these lakes, mostly in winter time, except when they would send Dad up on some of the haying expeditions in summer. Just for a little vacation for him from his job in Rice Lake. He handled the team that hauled all the paraphernalia for the work crew of up to 80 or 85 men. Of course, other tote teams would follow in a week or so with more grub.

All slept and ate and cooked in big canvas tents. Some carpenters were also taken to repair logging camps nearby.

The Last Drive in 1900

Knapp, Stout & Co. closed out their logging program in summer of 1900. The log drive started from Bear Lake, Long Lake, Birch Lake, Cedar Lake and Hemlock late in the summer of 1900. This was a terribly dry summer in Wisconsin and they hoped for rain which did not come so they had to do the best they could, altho they knew that the lakes and rivers were very low.

I went up thru Haugen and joined the crew as a helper for the cook and cookee on the drive down Bear Creek to Rice Lake where we joined those from the other lakes.

We of the cooking department had to work from 3:00 a.m. to 7:00 or 7:30 p.m. Had to have breakfast ready about 4:00 or 4:15 a.m. each day. Four meals or rather breakfast, two lunches and supper. On this last drive we had about 300 men as they were afraid the water from all the lakes up above would be gone before they reached Menomonie Junction. That was where they did have to tie up.

We followed the men down the river in big flat boats and cooked on shore by floating past the men and logs to a place where it was planned they would be by time we had supper ready. We would bake bread, cake, cookies, doughnuts and meat enough during the afternoon to last 300 men for the full four meals. We baked beans in the ground in a bean hole, which needed some good three foot hardwood. Baked bread right outdoors, sometimes in a pouring rain storm.

When we reached Menomonie Junction I packed my clothes in a two bushel grain sack with rope tied to each end to carry over my shoulder. The head cook came after dark and put a large ham in my sack and said, "Say nothing at all." We kids and mother ate on that for our lunch all the way to Seattle. I made \$2.50 a day on that drive, earned enough to pay my fare and clothes beside. We left Rice Lake on Aug. 2, 1900, sixteen years after arriving there when I was two months old.

Always rest assured of these writings as I have been there and seen all that I have told about. Knew Jim Bracklin and family very well.

—Paul Kirkendall

Chapter IV

ORIGIN OF OUR FOUR COUNTIES

Wisconsin became a state in 1848. It took many years before the counties were established and their boundary lines settled. We will hit on a few of the high spots. West of the Red Cedar River was named St. Croix County and east was Chippewa County. Next, a portion bordering on Lake Superior was set aside as La Pointe County. Then in 1853 Polk County was the name given to what is now Burnett, Washburn and a portion of Barron, (then known as the town of Dallas), as well as what is now Polk County.

But as settlers came into this new country they wanted to have something to say about their government and a county seat closer to home. The town of Dallas was taken out of Polk, and the name changed to Dallas County. In 1869 the name was changed to Barron in honor of Henry D. Barron, a man who had gained recognition as an editor, assemblyman, senator and jurist.

The boundaries were changed many times but finally in 1874 they were fixed as they are now, making a square county, and after many divisions it now has 25 townships.

Washburn County also had its troubles for at one time portions of it were in the counties of La Pointe, St. Croix and Chippewa (the only county in the state which can claim that honor). Burnett County was established in 1865, and it included what is now Washburn County. Finally in 1883 Washburn was detached from Burnett. Its name of Washburn came from a governor who had served the state three terms as early as 1872. His first name was Cadwallader.

By an act of the legislature in 1883 the upper portion of Chippewa County and the lower part of Ashland County were joined to make a new county which was named Sawyer in honor of Philetus Sawyer of Oshkosh. He was a United States senator from Wisconsin.

By 1898 Chippewa County was the largest one left in the state. A division was being agitated. The citizens in the northern part of the county wanted a county of their own. The legislature of 1901 granted the division and named Ladysmith to be the county seat. This created a turmoil among the other villages along the railroad line. It was a central location.

James L. Gates, who with associates owned immense tracts of wild land in this territory, put on the pressure to have the new county named after him, with a promise that he would do great things for the county in the future. The construction of the court house was started in the fall of 1901. A whole block was set aside for it and an imposing structure was erected. The name "Gates County" is still on the iron plate of the doorstep of the building's main entrance.

At a session of the legislature in 1905 the name of the county was changed from Gates to Rusk to do honor to the memory of Jeremiah M. Rusk, a former governor of Wisconsin. It seems there was some animosity between James L. Gates and Senator Sanborn of Ashland county who introduced the bill to change the name from Gates to Rusk. It was quickly passed, and the governor signed it. The first the voters in the new county knew about it was when they read it in the newspapers. They had not been consulted. They never did get a handout from Gates.

The Creation of Townships

Now let's take a look at when and how the towns were created in our circle "Around the Four Corners." In Barron County the northeast corner became Cedar Lake township March 21, 1876. It was 12 miles long and 6 miles wide. Aristide Mero was the first chairman. He lived in the southwest portion of it and that section was settling up rapidly. In those days all transportation was by team and wagon or if you were rich enough you might have a buggy. The roads were not built for speed. It would take an hour to go six miles.

In 1903 the question of a division of the town was submitted to the voters. From the southern portion 76 of the 77 votes cast were in favor. From the northern half 29 of the 35 votes cast were in favor of the division. John J. Doyle, an early pioneer, was named the first chairman and was honored by having the new town named after him. Men were the only ones allowed to vote at that time. You can see that Doyle had more than twice the voters as Cedar Lake. Most of them were eager to get a public office and always turned out for the town meetings.

I have an amusing story to tell about the two men mentioned in this account. John J. Doyle had purchased the Mcaji Pope farm in section 16. He drove from Chilton with a team and wagon loaded with his worldly possessions, taking eight days for the trip. He arrived Oct. 28, 1884 at this farm east of Rice Lake. His wife and children came by train to Chippewa Falls which was as far as the tracks were laid. A friend with a team and wagon met them there. The rest of the trip was on very poor roads. In after years when folks were getting discouraged and moving away Mrs. Doyle would say, "Not me, I'm staying right here in this beautiful valley for I love it here."

That first winter was a hard one on the Doyles. One team of horses died. They bought a cow and it died. Mr. A. Mero who lived over two miles away heard of their misfortune and drove over for a friendly call. As was his habit he brought a gift on his first visit for GOOD LUCK. It was two little white pigs in a box. They were able to get milk from a neighbor and the pigs grew, and that was the last of their bad luck. Both men liked politics and became fast friends.

When Washburn county was formed in 1883 it had two townships. The north half was named Veazie after the old logging boss. The south half was named Bashaw because of a small settlement which had extended from Burnett county over the line to the east. Later it was learned that the name had been created from B. A. Shaw, an early logging boss. A big sawmill had been set up on the shore of Shell Lake and of course that meant a good sized settlement. Naturally the court house was located there.

In 1889 the southeast corner of Bashaw was set off for a new town and named Long Lake because of the big lake in it. (At that time the lake was called Little Bear by the Indians after their very good chief). John R. Mullen was elected the first town chairman.

In the fall of 1901 the Soo and Omaha railroads had made their way into the lake country in the corner of the town of Long Lake. Settlers swarmed into the area urged on by land agents. George M. Huss was one of them; he built a nice home here. Wilbur Loomis built the first store and established the post office.

These men headed a committee which petitioned the county board in 1903 to set off the east half of the town of Long Lake for a new town. Mr. Loomis

insisted that it be named after him (later changed to Birchwood). It is a double township and Mr. Huss served as the first chairman.

Settlers had been flocking into the area north of Long Lake. By 1915 they petitioned the county board for a separate township and it was granted. A post office had been established there and named Madge after the Shell Lake postmaster's daughter. Naturally they gave the same name to the town. Ole Soholt, jr. became the first chairman. Ole Kjorstad retained his seat as chairman of Long Lake and also served as county board chairman for a number of years.

Sawyer County has a history unlike any of the others. After it was created in 1883 it remained without the formation of townships until 1887. Mr. Weyerhauser was president of the lumber company which set up a mill on the Namekagon river and, of course, a small village soon sprang up around it. The name Hayward was attached to it. This was in 1881 before even the county was formed. In 1887 the township of Hayward was created and it covered the entire county. The first census was taken in 1890 and showed a population of 1,977 persons, scattered over the area, all in the logging business.

Another census was taken in 1905 and showed the population had increased to 5,044 people. By this time many people were trying to establish homes in the cut-over lands and wanted a voice in their government, also a place to vote without taking a full day to go and come. The roads were mere logging trails.

And so in 1905 they started to carve up the town of Hayward. The southern portion was divided into Radisson, Reserve, Sand Lake and Winter. The northern part remained in Hayward, and the village of Hayward became the county seat. It became a city in 1915.

Couderay grabbed the southwest corner of the town of Radisson in 1907. Weirgor took two townships in 1907 on the south edge of the county. Ojibwa took $1\frac{1}{2}$ townships from Radisson in 1919. By 1913 the people around Lake Chetac wanted another division, they got one and a half townships from Couderay. In 1918 Weirgor was split and the eastern half became Meadowbrook. The last township on the south border pulled out of Couderay in 1919 and was named Meteor (for some unknown reason). This is the portion we have included in this article.

These statistics were found in the office of the Secretary of State and furnished to us by the State Historical Society on the History of Sawyer County.

As to the first chairmen in these towns, we learned Sherman Ruch was the first in Meteor and it is believed that Mr. Upham was the first in Edgewater. We have been unable to get the others.

Now when Rusk County was created out of the northern part of Chippewa County in 1901 there were seven townships. Most of the northwest corner was still named Atlanta with A.M. Arpin the first chairman. In 1913 Murry was created with P.M. Brown the first chairman; and Wilson was created with Joseph W. Jones the first chairman.

The town of Wilkinson was created out of Strickland in 1923, with Zeno Wilkinson the first chairman. (He had been the first one in the town of Strickland in 1901 and was living in the northern part of it. No doubt he was the ringleader in demanding a division of the township).

The first census of all four of these towns was in 1930, which states the population of Atlanta as being 614; Murry 494; Wilson 135; Wilkinson 85.

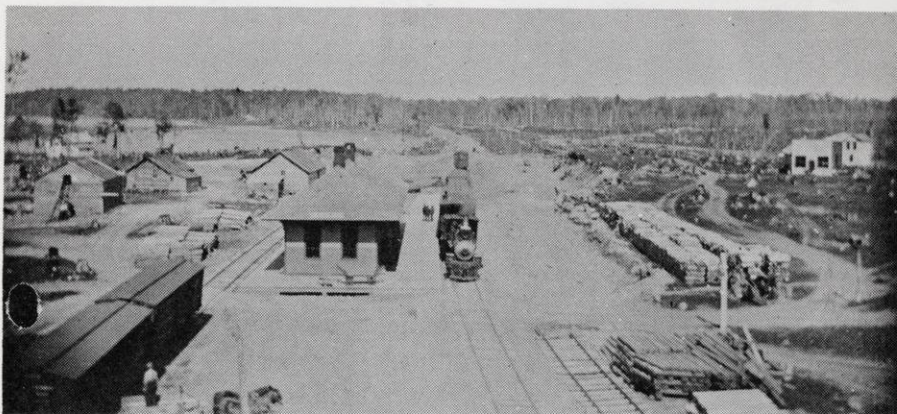
Chapter V

RAILROADS

The harvesting of the pine forests came first. By clever plans of erecting dams on small streams it was possible to float these logs to the big mill at Menomonie which was operated by Knapp, Stout & Co. Also down the big Chipewewa River to other mills.

But up in Burnett County there was a wonderful stand of timber of all kinds and no waterway near it for transportation. Fredrick Weyerhaeuser and his associates put on pressure to get a railroad extended into that area.

The Northwestern Railroad, which we will call the Omaha, built a line from the Twin Cities to Turtle Lake and on thru Cumberland to Barronett in 1878. The next year it was extended to the west shore of a big and beautiful lake where the tall timber was waiting to be harvested. A huge mill was erected on the north shore and people flocked in and built homes because they



Omaha depot, Birchwood, May, 1902. At extreme left is first house built by George M. Huss; at extreme right the Vance restaurant in front of Soo section house.

could find work. Later this place was named Shell Lake and became the county seat of Washburn County which was detached from Burnett County in 1883. This line was quickly extended to Chandler (later named Spooner).

This means that the first railroad in this area was built in 1878 in the western part of Barron County. In 1882 the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha R.R. (hereafter to be known as the Omaha) started to lay their tracks from Eau Claire thru Cameron and northward thru Rice Lake and to Spooner, where they joined the line coming from Shell Lake at a junction on the south side of the village. They called it Chicago Junction and moved their depot down there. This lasted only a few months when the depot was moved back to the location where later the big depot was built and the town was named Spooner.

If ever people worked rapidly it was the railroad companies, for this combined line was extended thru what is known now as Trego on to Ashland,

Then they came back to Trego and formed a junction and extended a line to Superior. All with the intent of transporting timber products. The Knapp, Stout Co. had already established headquarters at Rice Lake and were compelled to transport supplies by teams until the railroad came thru in 1882.

The Northeastern line did not intend to let all this harvesting of the timber go into the hands of the Northwestern. They made Turtle Lake their headquarters and in 1884 built their line to Barron, which they reached in July. Then they settled on the site now known as Cameron, built the line back west to Barron and east thru Chippewa County to a place they named Bruce, where they tied up for the winter.

In 1885 this Soo line was built west to Minneapolis and east to Rhineland where it joined the Sault Ste. Marie, Mich. which made the connecting link of a transcontinental railroad.

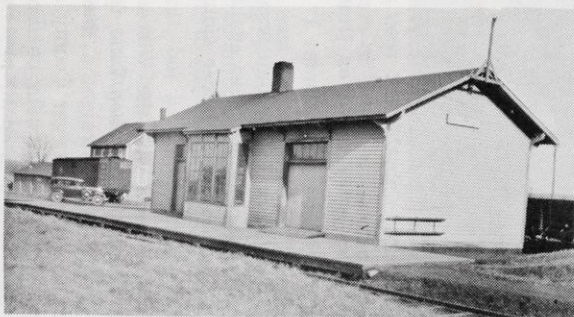
A branch line of the Soo was built from Cameron to Rice Lake in 1894, a line from Barron to Ridgeland in 1900 and one from Rice Lake to Birchwood in 1901. They were all called "The Blueberry."



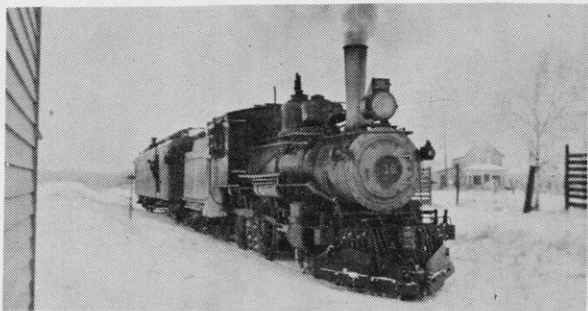
Soo and Omaha trestles at Narrows, between Cedar Lake and Balsam Lake. Top of Narrows depot visible at left.

They were preparing for another extension to the northeast as soon as the Knapp, Stout Co. was thru cutting pine which was in 1900. They started grading and building culverts and track around the south end of Rice Lake over the Narrows between Upper Rice Lake and Lower Rice Lake, then diagonally across the Town of Rice Lake, across the corner of Doyle, up the west shore of Red Cedar Lake reaching the Narrows between Balsam Lake and Red Cedar in the late summer of 1901.

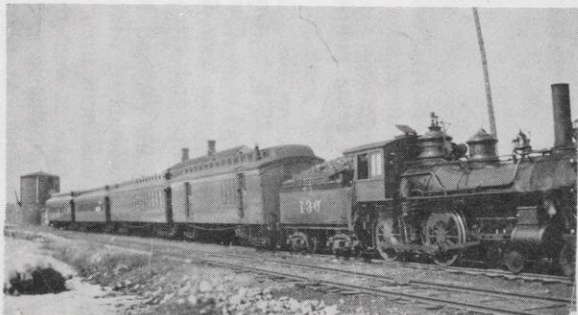
Now let's step back to Rice Lake and see what the Omaha was doing. They started a branch line about 3 miles south of Haugen, built a "Y" and named it Radisson Junction (later it was changed to Tuscobia). They built their line diagonally across the town of Oak Grove, put in a passing track



Soo depot at Birchwood. Extreme left are the coal sheds.



"Blueberry Special" pulling into the Soo depot. The last Soo train pulled out of Birchwood Friday, November 13, 1936.



Regular train on the Omaha in 1921, going north. Water tank at left.

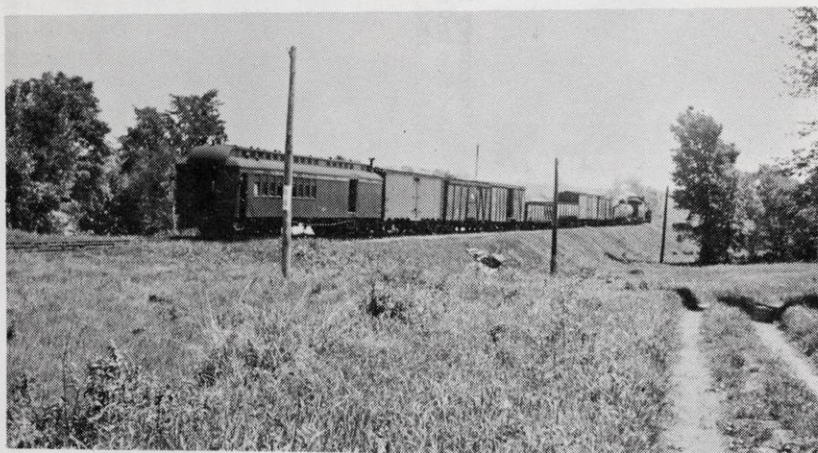


Soo work train at the Narrows, going west.

which became known as Brill, then up across the corner of the town of Cedar Lake put in a passing track to be known in later years as Angus. They soon reached the Narrows where they were instructed to put in another passing track for the convenience of Frank D. Stout.

Both companies built a bridge across the Narrows at the same time and about 2 rods apart. They encountered numerous hills to the east which took a lot of cutting off the top of a hill and rolling it into a valley. A ferry operated by Goodie Brooks served both crews. They reached the platted village of Birchwood in the fall of 1901. The Soo beat the Omaha by three weeks. They tied up business for the winter but ran work trains over the rough road bed to bring in supplies of rails and ties to be used in the spring. Also a regular train thru the winter as many prospectors were coming in to look over the cut-over country.

The two tracks crossed on the east side of the village, the Soo going up on the west side of Lake Chetac, but when they got to Reserve they decided they'd had enough grief. Also, some one had beat them to the harvest of the



Accommodation train being pulled by steam engine, going north on Omaha track, 1944.

timber on beyond. By 1912 the Omaha had reached Park Falls; that was as far as they had intended to go. They established many passing tracks enabling the loggers to load out the logs. Several villages sprang up at these sidings, with a store, post office and a schoolhouse.

The last important railroad to be built in this area was the Wisconsin Central (it was consolidated with, or perhaps owned by the Soo Line from its beginning). It was built from Chicago to Duluth in as straight a line as it was possible to take. It went thru Ladysmith, cut thru Sawyer County and across the corner of Washburn. It was finished in 1907 and both passenger and freight were running by that same year. Sixty years later all passenger trains had been taken off.

The last of the tracks thru Birchwood were removed in 1967. All passenger service on all these lines is a thing of the past.

Chapter VI

MINES AND QUARRIES

In Sawyer County there was quite a flurry of excitement over indications of mineral deposits. Some drilling was done but not enough ore was found to pay to develop a mine. Up north of Lake Chetac on the east side of Hiway "F" is a flowing well, the result of one of the drillings.

Eldon Marple of Hayward furnished this information: "The results of the drilling in Hole No. 102 in Sec. 22 were 0-94', surface material; 94-195', cambrian sandstone; 195-435', shale and sandstone. It is a flowing well because it is lower than the source of water coming down between layers of rock from the surrounding hills."

In the first place the water shot far into the air, then some smart alecs put stones into the pipe which checked the flow, some wise person put an elbow cap onto the casing to make it impossible to plug it up. It has flowed on winter and summer since about 1916 or '17. The water joins a creek which flows into Lake Chetac.

To the west of this spot over in north Birchwood, Edgar Loyhed the millionaire from Faribault, Minn., got the idea that iron was to be found on his 1,250 acres. He brought in a mineralogist from Faribault with fancy instruments to detect the ore deposits. It was all a waste of money.

Out in the Pribram community it is hardly safe to dig a post hole for fear of tapping a spring. Every farm has a well of flowing spring water with pretty good pressure.

The biggest stories come from Rusk County as told by W. A. Blackburn. "In Rusk County the site of the quite famous Wisconsin Homestead Iron Mine was near Soft Maple creek east of Weyerhauser in which many thousands of dollars of Boston and other eastern speculators was invested."

"I remember distinctly of a committee of these investors arriving from the east to investigate their holdings. They had circulars put out by the promoters showing great smelters spuming smoke into the heavens, docks, and steamboats plying up Soft Maple creek carrying ore to the Chippewa and down to the Mississippi. It was quite a stretch of imagination to grasp such a feat, but I presume many other like mining ventures throughout the west were the hope and despair of thousands of eastern widows, preachers and other credulous persons of whom Barnum said, 'there is a sucker born every minute'."

"In the Blue Hills near Devil's Creek, close to the Old Red Mill, was another iron mine, which was likewise highly publicized in the east and in which many thousands of dollars of eastern money went down the drain."

To the west in the town of Doyle in Barron County the Steve Smith iron mine was opened about 1893. There was a mining company organized and Mr.

Smith was offered \$10,000 for the mine. After several tests were made it was found that there was not enough iron ore to pay for mining it. Mr. Smith did not get any money for his mine. This was located on the northwest corner of section 14 in the town of Doyle. The farm is now owned by Reuben Reul who states that as many as 14 holes of various dimensions were found on his farm.

The pipestone quarry which was operated by the Chippewa Indians several generations before 1850 and described by Longfellow in *Hiawatha* is thought to be the one located in section 27 of the town of Doyle.

Up in Sawyer County on the Indian Reservation there is a stream named Pipestone Creek. There is a mound near it where according to legend the early Indians found the clay to make their peace pipes.

Much is being said nowadays about the Hardscrabble Ski Hill, but did you know that when the first settlers came to the fertile valleys north of it that they discovered very fine quarry rock in that hill? Most of the basements and foundations for their buildings were made from that rock. A Catholic church had been organized and the community named Dobie, which was a mile west of the Doyle town line. The parishioners decided to build a nice church made of the reddish brown rock quarried from this hill. Each family was to haul 5 cords of rock. A cord weighs 12,000 lbs. It had to be hauled on sleds as there was no wagon road over which a load could be hauled. This means that it would take 2 or 3 loads to haul out one cord, and it was about 7 miles each way. The old timers tell us that it took at least two years before they had enough rock collected to build the church. The church is still there.

The making of good roads was a great problem for the early settlers before they discovered gravel on some of the farms. Charles Amans, jr. had taken a homestead in section 5 of the town of Doyle. It was 80 acres in the southeast corner. According to the first census taken in Barron County in 1870, Charles is listed as 10 years old when he came with his father, Charles Amans, sr., in that year or perhaps earlier. He never expected any settler would go farther east than his place in the deep forest. They, among many others, had come from Canada.

So much for an explanation. After farming for many years, by accident he discovered a peculiar type of gravel under his top soil. Farmers began to use it on the town roads. Soon the county got interested in it and in due time purchased several acres. We believe the pit was opened in about 1925. There were many large stones in the gravel. A crude crusher was used in the first years. That gravel has been hauled onto the roads in all directions, and in later years was covered with a coating of blacktop. Anyone who has traveled on Highway 48 east of Campia has passed this pit. It now covers at least 35 acres and should last many more years.

Elmer Petersen opened a pit in the town of Birchwood east of the Narrows between Balsam and Red Cedar lakes in 1937, and is now working the second pit. This gravel has paved all the streets of Birchwood and the roads in all directions. Throughout this region many small pits have been opened and used to make our Hiway system one of the best.

As the old prospector out west said years ago as he waved his arms around, "There is gold in them thar hills."

Chapter VII

EARLY SETTLERS IN THE TOWN OF DOYLE

With the aid of an atlas issued in 1903 and the History of Barron County published in 1922 we have gathered this brief on the earliest settlers in the town of Doyle who stayed on for many years.

John B. LaBrie came from Canada in 1868, which makes him one of the earliest settlers in Barron County. He started what was known as the "French settlement" on the line between the towns of Oak Grove and Rice Lake. As you will see this settlement spread over into the town of Doyle. His daughter Sarah married Aristide Mero in April 1868. They took a homestead of 168 acres in Sec. 19 in 1873. They had 11 children. He was a progressive farmer and a prominent public official. Their son Gilbert started farming for himself in Doyle in 1895. Purchased 120 acres in Sec. 19 in 1900.

Camille Forrest was born in Canada of French parents. He and his wife took a homestead in Sec. 6 in 1874. Later they moved to land in Rice Lake township which is now partly included in the village of Campia. They had 13 children, five of whom died in infancy. (Infant mortality ran high in the early days due to epidemics and lack of doctors). Their son Louis Napoleon rented his father's homestead. He was patrolman on the road between Campia and Angus for many years. Another son John became a prominent business man in Campia.

Settlers were coming into the eastern part of the town also. In 1874 Joel R. Ackerman took a homestead of 160 acres in Sec. 24. It was in the hills and covered with hardwood timber. The Horsman post office was on his land. In 1893 he replaced his log buildings with a frame house and barn. In 1904 the house burned and they moved to Oregon, but returned in a bit over a year. Another house was built in which they lived until the death of Mr. Ackerman. Their son Merton purchased the home place.

James M. Hathaway homesteaded 160 acres in Sec. 26 in 1875. After making improvements he sold it and bought 40 acres of wild land in Sec. 9 of heavy timber. He put up a log house and cleared the land. His son James G. Hathaway worked with his parents for many years. In 1884 he bought 20 acres, then soon an 80 and in 1910 his father's farm of 40 acres also, all in the same section. Then he erected good buildings and remained there many years.

Mr. and Mrs. Provino Beffa brought their family over from France when their son Cherubin (Bin for short) was 11 years old. In checking old records we have set the date at about 1880. They settled among the other French people in Doyle. At the age of 35 "Bin" married Oboline Amans and settled on the old farm in Sec. 7. They had 10 children; six boys and four girls.

In 1898 Leon Neau purchased a farm in Sec. 7 after he had sold one in Cedar Lake where he had lived for four years. They had seven boys and two girls. Their farm joined that of the Beffa's. Have you guessed it? Ed Neau married Alice Beffa and they are still living near Campia. Claire Neau married Nap Amans and they had 10 children. They are now retired and live on the old Neau farm.

In 1881 Ole Kringle bought 100 acres of railroad land in Sec. 5, and added 80 more. He farmed until 1908, when he sold and moved to Mikana. His son Alfred was a licensed fishing and hunting guide. Daughter Ellen married Jack Snyder who later became a caretaker of the golf course.

In 1891 Mons Larson bought the Knute Fadness farm in Sec. 7 which was across the corner from Our Savior's Lutheran Church. Only 10 acres were cleared but he developed a good farm and erected good buildings. He married the widow Oleana Fadness in 1892. When the Soo railroad was being built nearby he saw the opportunity for a shipping center and built a scale house. He shipped the first car of produce out of Campia before a siding had been established. By 1908 he had sold the farm to Adolph Skar who had married Anna, a daughter of the late Knute Fadness. Larson purchased the general store at Campia, ran a potato warehouse, and helped establish a bank of which he was vice president for many years. In 1884 Anders G. Strand purchased a tract of wild land in Doyle. He married Belle J. Oleson. They had 12 children, many of whom settled on various tracts of land which he purchased. Mr. Strand was an able business man and a political figure.

Because of a depression in Germany in 1884 two brothers, Christ and Jacob Mommsen, brought their families to the United States. They found a depression here also and could not find work until they landed at Bloomer where Knapp, Stout & Co. were operating. They soon came on to Rice Lake and took homesteads out in the hills in sections 13 and 14. They put up log houses and worked for the Company out of Rice Lake. The children went to the Horsman school to learn the American language.

In 1892 Ole N. Bradseth brought his family to live in Sections 9 & 10 where he had purchased 200 acres. He had three sons John, Seymore and Norman, who helped him. In 1923 Norman took over the farm and stayed there until 1967.

John J. Quinn purchased 60 acres of cut-over land in Sec. 17 in 1892. His parents lived with him in the log house he had built. He brought his bride there in 1907, a better house was built in 1910 and a good barn in 1917.

James Quinn, brother of John bought 80 acres of timberland in Sec. 8 in 1894. He built a log house and barn and brought his bride there. By 1910 he was able to put up better buildings. Son Edward J. was born there in 1905 and still resides near Brill.

Nels Solum came into the town of Doyle as a renter in 1900. He soon purchased 80 acres of partly developed land in Sec. 6. He put up good buildings, established a herd of Holstein cattle, purchased more land for his sons Cyril and Harold to run. There were nine children in the family. Nora married Arnold Strand and Helen married Arthur Strand. Mr. Solum was manager of the Albert Miller Potato Co. warehouse in Campia.

Nels Larson married Helene, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jake Mommsen in 1891. After living in Rice Lake and other places for six years they came back to live on the 80 acres which he had purchased in Section 3, and were successful farmers until his death. Mrs. Larson continued to live with her son Ed on this farm until her death in 1958, making a total of 61 years. The daughter Helen came back to live on the farm after completing 42 years in the educational field, nine years in classrooms and 33 in supervision.

The early settlers who came here with small children lost no time in establishing schools, often the first building was made of logs. The Ulysses school was started in 1876; Horsman, which took care of the children in the eastern part of the town, in 1887. The people who had been settling on the west side must have established the Fadness school in about 1883. Over in the lovely valley north of the Blue Hills one was needed by 1884. Adolph Mommsen who was one of the many teachers of this school was given the credit for naming it Pleasant Valley. The Liberty Bell school was located in Section 32. The year is not known when it started, but the doors were closed in 1930.

Due to the shift of population, some of these schools closed and the few children remaining were taken to the Ulysses school. Then it became so crowded by 1915 a new one was built in Section 11 called Greenwood. Later it was closed and the few students bussed to Ulysses until 1962 when all that territory was annexed to the Rice Lake district.

The Fadness brick school house replaced the old frame one in 1916. After the consolidation it operated for certain grades for 5 years. The key was turned in the door at the end of May 1967, marking the end of rural schools in the towns of Doyle and Cedar Lake.

The records show that 62 teachers taught in Ulysses school in the 86 years it operated. At Pleasant Valley 57 teachers in its 77 years. Jake Mommsen's sons William, Adolph and Max are mentioned several times. They would teach to earn money to go on to school, then back to teaching again.

Five families came to live in Pleasant Valley in 1880. They were George Johnson, James McConnell, George Dibble, Mcaji Pope and Holstien Hanson. John J. Doyle bought the Pope farm in 1884. James Doyle was born on that farm in August 1889 and has lived there all his life. His sister Mary lives with him in the valley which their mother loved so much.

Another family which has made a remarkable record is the Reeds. Thomas Reed and his son Lewis came into section 16 in 1899. Neal Reed took over the farm after his father Lewis. Now his son Thomas has built a new house on part of the old farm for him and his family to live in. That means five generations who have lived on the same land.

James Doyle recalled these early settlers living on Hiway C who may not have been mentioned before. From the east, Zene Wilkenson and H. J. Stecker over the line into Rusk County. J. F. Bittles who kept the Horsman Post Office in his home. The mail was delivered once or twice a week. It broke the loneliness to have someone drop in to pick up his mail. Henry Jeffers, Al Locke, Sam White, Walter and Willis Taylor, Dave Seeley, Joe Reynolds, Andrew Johnson, Charles Stevens, Louis Bourey, James King, A. Mero, Dennis Renville, John B. Demers and Phillip Roux.

Also these who lived north of Hiway C: H. Peabody, James Gilrey, Joe Wilson, Mrs. Briggs, Bert Smith, Nels Olmstead, Steve Smith, James Hathaway, L. S. Merrit who kept the store and Post Office named Ulysses. Mike King, George Colan, W. O. Ayrea, W. T. Porter, Coryr Crisler and John Crisler. Some of these may not have stayed long as their names are not listed in 1903 Atlas. One name appears frequently, "N. W. Bailey." He was a successful banker in Rice Lake. He loaned the settlers money. If after they had made some improvements on the place they failed to pay the interest

or some on the principal, he would foreclose and take back the land. He would then load it off onto someone else. His name appears seven times on the old map of Doyle.

There was one lady who will never be forgotten. She brought some tanzy seed to plant in her garden. Tanzy tea was used as a tonic in the spring to clear the blood, most as effective as sulphur and molasses. Now the tanzy weed has spread all over the country. A tall plant with clusters of little yellow button-like flowers on the top which bloom in the fall. When touched it gives off a pungent odor.

The man who originated the word "Hardscrabble" will not be forgotten either. One day a stranger was driving through the town of Doyle and stopped to chat with a poor man who was trying to clear his land of stones and stumps. He asked, "Well how you doing?" The mournful reply was, "It's a hard scrabble." Now we have the Hardscrabble Ski Area and the Hardscrabble Theater Group.

This brings us up to about 1900 when the Knapp, Stout Co. finished their pine harvest out of Rice Lake. Some of the men stayed at home a bit more and worked harder to improve their farms. The sons were old enough now to go to the woods to work for Weyerhaeuser or Arpin over in Rusk County.

We will add the names of a few of the farmers who moved into Doyle in the early 1900's. In 1901 Jay F. Smith purchased 120 acres in Section 2 and 120 acres in Section 11. He erected a frame house and good barns and developed a fine dairy farm. There were seven sons and one daughter in the family. Some of the sons and grandsons are still living on this land.

Two of the sons of Mr. and Mrs. Gabriel Kringle who lived in the town of Maple Grove decided to strike out for themselves in the town of Doyle. Edward bought 120 acres of timber in Section 10 in 1901. He built a shanty and brother Gustavus came to live with him. They cleared the land as fast as possible. Edward brought his bride to this shanty in 1906. Two years later he built a comfortable house and by 1912 a large barn and silo.

"Gus" Kringle was five years younger than Edward. He struck out for himself and bought 80 acres in Section 10 in 1904. He built a small frame house and barn and was married in 1908. By 1914 they built a modern home. The farmers by this time had found they could raise fine potatoes on new breaking. The Kringles and many others were going into it in a big way.

In 1902 Charles E. Wickens bought 200 acres in Section 2, 3, and 4. There was a house on it which he had to renovate, then he put up good barns. He built up a good dairy farm, raised Duroc Jersey swine and added a flock of sheep to his program. Cletus was the oldest child and he now lives near Long Lake.

In 1903 Ole P. Naess bought 80 acres of hardwood timber land in Section 15. He cleared the land and erected buildings and was a successful farmer although he had worked at many other trades before he started farming.

Benjamin H. Oliver started out in Cedar Lake, Section 35 in 1905. He improved his 86 acres and sold it in 1917, went over the line into Doyle and bought 80 acres in Section 8. He farmed there for many years. His daughter Iva M. became the wife of Martin M. Lewis. They lived for a time in the town of Birchwood, but are now living in Rice Lake.

In 1907 Henry M. Olson bought 80 acres of partly improved land in Section 17. The house he started to build, burned down, then he put up a frame house and other buildings. He was the son of Ole and Anna Olson.

Herman Thalke was born in Germany where he learned the stonemason trade. He came to America in 1880. By 1907 he wandered into the town of Doyle where he purchased 80 acres in Section 4. He erected excellent buildings on which he did all the masonry. He rented the farm to his son William in 1916. Then he built a nice home in Mikana for himself and his wife. Their daughter Martha married L. H. Funk and they retired to a home in Mikana.

In 1915 Patrick E. Drew purchased 200 acres of partly cleared land in Sections 2, 11 and 12. Log buildings had been erected. By 1917 he was able to build a better house and other buildings followed. He became a dairy farmer.

Robert J. Loew bought 80 acres of partly improved land in Section 11 in 1919. He had farmed in many places before he came to Barron county. He put an addition onto the house and built a silo. Besides a dairy herd he raised Poland-China hogs. In 1921 he took his only son Austin J. into business with him and ran it as "Loew & Son." Austin is now a resident of Rice Lake.

In 1899 the farmers of Doyle decided to build a co-operative cheese factory one mile south of Our Saviors Lutheran church. After the Soo R. R. was built through in 1901 and the village of Campia was platted the factory was named Campia. It served the farmers from a large area. It was closed in 1965.

The settlers on the east side of the town got interested also and organized the Central Cheese and Butter factory in about 1906. It was located on the line between Doyle and Cedar Lake, on the main north and south road which is exactly in the center of the towns. It started operations in 1907 with William Germain as the cheese maker. For several years it did not operate in the winter, Germain soon moved on to run the Campia factory.

George Dundas was the cheese maker at Central from 1908 to 1913. During that time he married Gertie Johnson. Gifford Kittleson was the operator from 1916 to 1921. The first year he ran it twice a week during the winter. For a time Ed Larsen ran a milk route to collect it from the farmers. Generally two or three farmers would take turns delivering for each other. They also made butter out of whey cream. At times also the regular grade of butter. Now in 1972 the Central Cheese factory is still in operation with Stanley Miller as the cheese maker.

There were a few small saw mills in operation in the early days where the farmers could take logs to be sawed into rough lumber for their buildings.

Doyle can not boast of any large lake or river. But it has the beautiful Blue Hills, the Pipestone Quarry, and Gundy's Canyon which nature bestowed upon them.

Chapter VIII

EARLY DAYS IN TOWN OF CEDAR LAKE

S. A. Jewett & Co. logged in the Red Cedar Lake area in 1875. They established a camp in Sec. 21 and another in 22 where they built a big house on the south side of the river which they called "The Stopping Place." They built the dam in 1881. All of this property was acquired by Knapp, Stout & Co. in 1882. Capt. Robert Bull operated the stopping place for several years.

Joseph Loveland had an eye for business and purchased land in Sec. 33 where he built a shack for himself and a store in 1875. Then he set about to get a post office which for some strange reason was named Ironwood. But if the letter was addressed to Loveland Corners it reached its destination. No doubt the tote teams for the K. S. & Co. did all the delivering of the mail. Mr. Loveland had a team which he used to bring out his supplies from Rice Lake. At the age of 67 he died at the Chicago Cancer Institute July 28, 1894.

The valuation of his estate was recorded as \$2,070.27 in cash. Personal property \$1,554.56. He had made a will which provided that all of his estate be left to a "church to be free to all denominations" to be erected on NE of NE of section 33, town of Cedar Lake.

A sister, Alice Loveland Pelton, of Canaan, Conn. objected to the will on the grounds no such beneficiary existed as an organization, and the will was "not fully expressed or clearly defined." N. W. Bailey, Arthur Ritchie and George Ewing appealed the judgment; but the county ruled against them. They took it to the circuit court and again it was denied on Oct. 9, 1887. It was declared that the sister was the sole heir-at-law.

Many years later the Free Lutheran Church was erected on his property. The old schoolhouse still stands by the road, almost on the exact spot where he requested his church to be built.

Mr. Loveland was a kindly man whose books showed many unpaid accounts which his poor neighbors had been unable to pay. He had requested that his body be sent back to be buried in the Cedar Lake Cemetery. Arthur Ritchie bought the property and ran the store and post office for many years.

Stephen and Nancy Clute were the first white settlers on the shore of Red Cedar Lake. They drove a team of oxen on a wagon with all their worldly possessions packed on it from Winona, Minn. in the year 1875. They also had three daughters on that wagon. Merritta was aged 13, the others were younger.

They built the first log cabin beside the lake. Its location was just north of the now popular Barron County Park. Their home was a haven of friendliness for the next settlers who arrived.

The first we heard of Lon Smith in this area was when he walked from Menomonie to work on the Birch Dam in 1881. He continued to work for

Knapp, Stout & Co. for many winters. In all he claimed to have worked in the woods 45 winters.

It did not take him long to get acquainted with the Clute daughters. By 1881 Merritta was 19 years old and Lon was 31 when they were married. We do not know where they lived until he made his first purchase of land in 1884 when he got 80 acres of railroad land in Sec. 9. He cleared a few acres and put up log buildings; then he got another place and fixed it up and sold the first one to a newcomer. This he did until he'd purchased nearly 400 acres and cleared 160. The latter buildings would have been of lumber. In 1910 he purchased Maple Inn on lower Cedar Lake. It was then just one large building. He erected 3 summer cottages and ran a flourishing business for many years. It is now known as Oak Crest Resort. The Smiths had six children.

Another bachelor, David Edgette married Rachael Clute. They became the parents of a daughter named "Goldie" who married Joseph Kringle. Maryette married Alson Cornwell and moved from this area.

The next settler we learned about was Anton Olson Frosli. At the age of 17 he left Norway with his widowed mother and two brothers. They headed for Nebraska where the mother was soon married again. The sons heard of the logging camps in northern Wisconsin and worked their way back to Menomonie. The time was in the early 1880's. Olaf found work and remained there. He dropped off the name Frosli and was known as Olaf Olson.

Anton came on to Rice Lake and started working in a Knapp, Stout camp. He gave his full name as was the custom in Norway. The boss said, "We will settle for Anton Olson." (When he signed official papers he always added "Frosli"). The third brother settled at Elroy and he fixed over his name to be Ole "Fresley." This is only one example of the mix-up of names in families who "came over" in the early days.

Anton acquired a large tract of land on the west shore of Cedar Lake. (The location of his buildings was south of the Lone Pine Stout farm buildings). He worked in the camps during the winters. No doubt he worked for the K. S. & Co. on their big farm south of the Cedar Lake Dam in the summers. They ran a big crew clearing land and raising feed for the camps. But he found time to build a cabin on his property.

He had heard about the Mommsen families who had settled in the Horsman district in 1884. But Dora, Anna and Jake were employed in Germany until 1887 when they joined the Chris Mommsen family. They attended the Horsman school for 6 months to learn to read, write and speak the English language.

My, what an excitement it made for the bachelors in the neighborhood. Anton lost no time courting Anna Mommsen and in six months they were married and settled in his log cabin. Now what language did they use? She was fresh from Germany and he had not learned very good English since his arrival from Norway. They had three children, Ida, Louie and Margaret.

George W. Ewen at age 27 came to Wisconsin and worked in the logging camps. In 1882 he purchased 40 acres of hardwood timber land in the town

of Cedar Lake. He added to it until he owned 247 acres. A portion of this later became the Stout's Lone Pine Farm. He developed 60 acres and put up buildings. Soon he followed the trail Anton Frosli had trod to the Mommsen home where he courted Dorothy and married her in 1888. In 1910 he sold the farm and moved into Mikana where he became an implement dealer. It was his threshing machine which brought him fame.

Ewen purchased his first thresher in 1900, and started the shock threshing down in the French settlement in the town of Rice Lake, then worked up the line. As the settlers came in and got into the dairy business more grain was raised. Ewen's threshing season would run for the stacks in the Angus area until snow was on the ground. His son John was his right hand man for many years.

Mr. and Mrs. Ewen had six children; four of them married and settled down in Mikana. Mary married Halver Halverson; Martha married Henry Ertel; John married Effie Coats. Irene's first husband was Dale King and the second was George Amans. Many of their descendents are still living at Mikana.

John Mommsen and his parents left the Hardscrabble country and got a place close to Gus Mabus who had married Wilhelmena in 1890, but did not purchase his 80 acres of cut-over land in Sec. 9 until 1900.

Now you can see why it was said that at one time the Mommsen blood ran through the veins of more than half the residents in the Mikana area.

This brings us up to 1900 when the Knapp, Stout Co. finished their logging operations up the chain of lakes. The news was spreading that the Soo line was coming up through the town of Cedar Lake and the Omaha was cutting across its northern border. This brought an influx of many more settlers. From a letter written by Mrs. John C. Harms to the Chronotype in 1952 we quote the following: "A group of men from Sterling, Ill. and vicinity in May 1901 went to the Mikana area and bought land which was offered for sale by the Wisconsin Land Co.

"They were John Funk, Ludwig Kerber, Peter Ausmussen, Henry Jensen, John C. Harms, John Meins and Fred Reiners. My husband, myself and his sister left Sterling Jan. 22, 1902 and reached Mikana the next day. We landed at what is now the Harlow resort, run at that time by Martin Jensen of Iowa. Jack Stone who ran the livery stable drove us out from Rice Lake. My husband built the first fire in our old home that day to warm it up. We went back on the Soo line to Rice Lake to await the arrival of our possessions.

"It took 8 days for the car to reach Brill from Sterling. The car contained our cattle, horse feed and furniture. Brill in those days had a depot, grocery store and blacksmith shop. Keesey Bros. ran the store and Ben Herricks the blacksmith shop. There was also a hotel where the railroad men boarded. Between Brill and Mikana, there was only a trail which followed a route about as county B is presently laid out. By Twin lakes and around the swamp. There were only three houses between Brill and what is now County trunk C. Mikana had only a depot.

"Fred Mabus rode a little Indian pony to Loveland Corners twice a week to pick up the mail. April 1, 1902 was a big day in Mikana, as that is the date

George Kringle and Henry Lee opened their store near the Soo depot. That year, too, marked the coming of E. A. Smith, the banker of Morrison, Ill., and many other summer residents whose children and grandchildren still are residents of our lovely town of Cedar Lake.

"The Mikana store was a blessing to those of us who lived near by, as before it opened we had to take our eggs and butter to Rice Lake and do our trading there. From the Mikana store we were able to get all the staples such as coffee, tea, sugar, soap, flour, etc., but not in big supplies.

"About two and a half years later, they started a little creamery at Brill along the railroad track and more folks moved in from all over to settle there and make it a fine community. It was lots of hard work to clear the land, but it was worth it all.

"Now 50 years later we have hard roads, telephone, electricity, tractors, milking machines, and practically every kind of labor saving machinery possible on the farm. We have come a long way from the early days at Mikana, but I sometimes sigh for the good times we had then." End of quote.

What she called Hiway "B" is now "V" and County Trunk "C" is now State Hiway 48. Both are good blacktopped roads with long curves at the corners.

Tobias T. Hazelberg purchased 240 acres of cut-over land in Sec. 33 in 1900. He erected a modern frame house and barn and started to clear the land of stumps. The barn burned in 1910 and was rebuilt. Wrecked by the wind in 1913 and rebuilt, that one was destroyed by a tornado in 1918. Once again he built on the same site an even better barn. He held many county offices and for more than a year he was State Prohibition Director.

Ludwig Kerber came to Barron County in 1902. He rented places in Doyle and Oak Grove before he finally purchased 120 acres in Sec. 31. His daughter Amelia was one of Mrs. Stout's most faithful maids; she married Fred Boetcher, the handy man.

Gilbert Brooks of Minnesota who had moved many times finally in 1899 bought 80 acres in Sec. 21. He erected log buildings, but by 1913 he was able to erect the nice house which is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Skar south of Mikana. They have added many improvements on the place.

Edward J. Yager purchased 220 acres of land in 1901. Part of the land and the buildings were on the Cedar Lake side of the town line; the rest was over the line into Doyle. He was a very progressive farmer. He had 30 head of full blood Holstein cattle. He married Mary Kramer in 1906, she was a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Kramer who later moved to Birchwood, when they retired they sold their home to the Chappelles.

George G. Kringle was a colorful man who dabbled into many activities. Besides his store and post office he was manager of the Independent Lumber Co. at Mikana and owner of a potato warehouse at Angus. After a few years his brother Noah took over the operation of the lumber yard.

In the early days practically all the summer residents around Cedar Lake had a motor boat or "launch" and most of them made a daily trip down the

lake to the "landing" near the dam. They would walk to the Kringle store for their mail and groceries. He had a white horse "Nellie" and a cart or small wagon for deliveries. Nellie must have been part homing pigeon because people often borrowed her to take the groceries to the landing and turn her around to find her own way home. Because of the scarcity of cars this worked out very well and no one seemed to think it was strange. His store was the community center for many types of activities during the early years of the settlement.

Ed A. Smith, the banker from Morrison, Ill., purchased more than half of Sec. 28 in 1902. He also owned several sections east of the Stout property east of Red Cedar Lake. Part of this became known as the "Smith Meadows" but in the logging days it was called the "Downs Meadow" near Pigeon Creek. He pastured a lot of cattle out there and used the long red bridge built over Hemlock Creek. His farm is now operated by the Frambs Bros. (The farm with three silos on Hiway 48).

The farm now owned by Eugene George is claimed to have been owned in the early days by Lon Smith, Joe Turner, Jacob H. Carlsgaard and many more.



A Sunday picnic of Angus neighbors.

Emil Schenck, wife and daughter Della came from southern Wisconsin in 1906. He had been a farmer and continued in a smaller fashion at Mikana. At the same time building up a resort which later became known as the Harlow Resort. He sold out in 1915 and lived in a cottage owned by E. A. Smith. In 1921 he purchased a nice bit of lakeshore property north of the Lone Pine Stout Farm. He named it Harmony Bay, the reason may have been because he joined the Birchwood Band and they often practiced at his home. Some years later Mr. Schenck purchased the nice house Mr. Stout had built out by the Hiway for his herdsman to live in. (Della still owns the place and desires to come back to it when she retires).

Nels Everson came to Mikana in 1912. He was school janitor for six years, road commissioner for 11 years. He had worked for K. S. & Co. in the woods winters and blacksmith shops summers for 40 years. For a long time he was station agent at Mikana.

In 1915 Gustave A. Freitag moved from Birchwood to a 120 acre tract of land he had bought in Sec. 24. As he was a carpenter and stonemason he put up good buildings and cleared 40 acres. When he had a good chance he sold out and moved into Mikana.

Ommund E. Oftedahl in 1918 purchased 120 acres in Sec. 33. His first wife died leaving four small children. He soon married her sister and they had eight more children. In 1920 he erected a modern brick residence. On this farm for many years stood the old frame building in which Mr. Loveland kept his store and post office, on Hiway 48.

Leander Coates built a 46x28 foot blacksmith shop at Mikana in 1920, after operating one in Birchwood for several years. In those days there were horses to be shod, wagon wheels to be fixed, plows to be sharpened and many farm implements to be kept in repair.

Alpheus G. Seward purchased 80 acres in Sec. 34 in 1910. Later his son-in-law Wesley D. Snyder purchased the farm.

M. B. Uren the founder of Angus came from southern Wisconsin in 1906. He established a store near the Omaha side track. When he applied for a post office he was asked what he wanted for a name and he replied, "Angus." (He was proud of his herd of Angus cattle). At one time he owned 560 acres of land in this vicinity. In 1908 he sold the store to his son Warren, who succeeded him as postmaster. There was an apartment over the store. Later the store was doubled in size with an outside stairway to the apartment.

Mr. Uren built a two-story eight room house near the store and a barn 36x82 feet with full basement and many other buildings. He located there in 1912 on the 240 acres north of the Omaha track which he operated with his son M. H. Uren. Warren sold the store to E. H. Leonard in 1911. It changed hands many times until it burned on a cold night in January 1956.

Mr. Uren was a stockholder in the Angus Produce Assn., the Shipping Assn., the Potato Growers Assn., and the Mikana Feed Mill.

An interesting person who will be remembered by the people of Angus was John Anderson. He was a cheerful little man who lived alone and worked for neighbors at odd jobs. His specialty was blasting stumps which numbered into the thousands. He had a slight limp which earned him the name of "step-and-a-half."

Albert T. Johnson, a successful farmer in Minnesota for several years, sold out in 1912 and moved to Angus. He bought 93 acres in Sec. 4 where a house and small buildings were on the land. The Hiway and a portion of Pickerel Lake cut into it on the east side and the Soo R.R. went across it back of the buildings. About 10 acres had been improved, but he went right in for general farming and dairying. His specialty was producing certified

seed potatoes of the Green and Triumph Bliss varieties. Mrs. Johnson was an expert poultry fancier, specializing in single comb white Leghorns. She exhibited at many fairs, and sold to customers all over the northwest. Their farm is now owned by Lorris Lande.

William H. Hill developed three good farms in Barron county. The last one he tackled was in Sec. 7 in 1907 and it had 107 acres all covered with heavy hardwood timber. He built a log house and barn and started clearing land and farming. Soon he was able to put up frame buildings. They had eight children, mostly boys who were able to help with the work. Some of them continued to live in this area after they were married.

Frank P. Morkin came in 1913 and bought 120 acres in Sec. 9 & 10. It was partly improved, and may have been one of the places Lon Smith started. He carried on general farming, added to the house, and finished it off with a brick facing. Many will remember the deserted square brick house across the road from the Stout Farm buildings. Recently the Birchwood Fire Dept. was hired to burn the old buildings.

Frank Stevens owned land north of the Morkin farm and also across the road south of the old school house where his house was located.

In 1916 George Gould bought 160 acres in sections 4 and 9. He built a large square house painted white and a big red barn set back among the trees. A very attractive place, now owned by Ed Blaha.

Joseph Kringle (another son of Gabriel and Barbara Kringle) worked here and there for several years before he settled down on 60 acres in Sec. 16 in 1917. He built up a farm with all the modern conveniences. After about 25 years he moved again, this time into the Angus area where he still lives. He was a man with good clerical ability, and served on town boards and school boards wherever he lived. In fact it would seem that most every man in the Doyle and Cedar Lake towns had their turn on those boards.

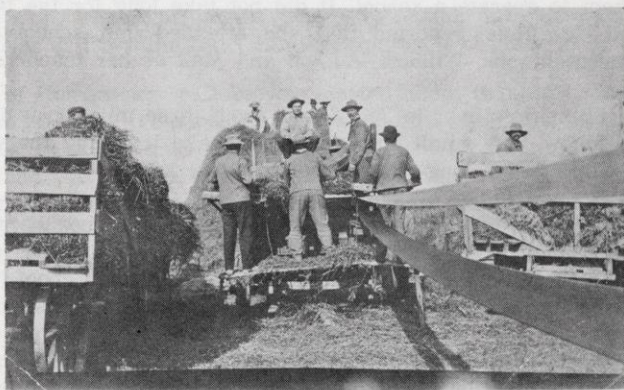
We have one more son of that Kringle family to account for. This time it is Robert who waited until 1935 to come to Cedar Lake to live. He and his wife bought 160 acres in Sec. 5 covered with hardwood timber. He cut logs for a house, but for the other buildings he took the logs to mills to be made into rough lumber. Much later a modern home was built, which they still call "Home Sweet Home" no matter how far they travel from it.

Robert Cronholm brought his family from Chicago to the Mikana area in 1912. He had purchased 80 acres on south side of Hiway B in Sec. 16. He had been a bricklayer in Chicago; therefore he built the same type of house he had been building in Chicago, square with a flat roof. The idea was that it would be warmer than the gable roof which most people were in the habit of building. Richard became the famous stonemason of this area. Andrew and Robert, jr. knew the trade but drifted off into other work. Evelyn was the only daughter.

Tragedy hit this community in the fall of 1920. John Funk who had lived here since 1902 died Sept. 11, 1920 after suffering from cancer for a long period. His wife's brother John C. Harms, with his son Harm driving the



First school house in Angus district, Phoebe Arnett, the teacher.



George Ewen's threshing machine at the John Harms farm. Ewen is on the load, pitching the bundles which had to land with heads toward the machine. Feeder in middle guided bundle into machine after men beside him cut the twine. Louie Frosli is sitting on the machine. The stacker was stationary and it took August Mabuse, an expert stacker, and John Funk and another man busy to keep the straw going in the right direction to make a good stack.

Studebaker touring car, were driving to Rice Lake to meet the early morning train on which relatives were coming for Mr. Funk's funeral.

They were going south on the Long Lake road when a truck loaded with milk cans came across the hiway from a side road, crashing into the Funk car, overturning it into the ditch crushing Mr. Harms who lived only a few hours. Harm was seriously injured but did recover. Mr. Harms died on Sept. 15, 1920. The relatives stayed on for his funeral. He left a wife and six children, the youngest one Julia was nine years old.

Mrs. John Funk died the following Jan. 10, 1921. There were 11 children in that family. The oldest son Joseph took over the management of the farm after the father's death. The only daughter Dorothea was 15 years old and two brothers were younger.

The first schoolhouse to be built in the town of Cedar Lake was near Mr. Loveland's Store. It was called District No. 4, indicating that some had been started down in Doyle earlier. (It was still a part of Cedar Lake at this time). We are setting the date at about 1890, altho very few people had come to live there at that time.

By 1894 a school was needed on the west shore of Red Cedar Lake. It was built one half mile north of the road to Brill. Some children were sent to school at a very early age to make the required number of students to permit them to operate a school. It did not take long for the building to be well filled. Ida Roen reported that she attended that school and had the three Mommsen sons, William, Adolph and Max as her teachers.

The Hill children over in Sec. 7 had about three miles to walk and hardly a trail to follow. The small ones could not make it during the winter. Some of the children had a long walk to get to either school.

By 1910 a new schoolhouse was built at Mikana and the territory was divided by Hiway "B." Those living on the south side of the road went to Mikana and those on the north side to what was called School No. 8. People were moving into the Angus settlement and were included in that school.

It was decided to build a new schoolhouse up at the Angus Corner. The families over the line in the Town of Birchwood were included in that district. It was ready for school in the fall of 1915. Mabel Arnett was the last teacher in the old building and the first one in the new. In all she taught 5 years in that district.

After the school in Brill was started the Hill children were included in that district, only about a mile and a half from their home. The children on the east side of Red Cedar Lake had to walk to the Birchwood School. Those that lived in the S.W. corner of the town could go to a school one half mile north of Dobie.

The Barron County History Book published in 1922 from which most of these statements were taken, tells us all these farmers learned the trade from their fathers. Not once does it report any young man attending the Agriculture Short Course at Madison. Dean Henry and other professors at the

college were very much interested in developing the cut-over country in north Wisconsin. They sent out men to demonstrate stump pulling machines and found a safer explosive for blowing stumps than with dynamite.

The experiment station was started at Spooner in 1909 for sandy soil and one at Ashland Jt. in 1910 for clay soils. They developed seeds more suitable to this northern climate. The college at Madison was educating young men to act as instructors out among the farmers.

Barron County was one of the three first counties in the state in 1912 to hire a full time agriculture agent. His name was F. D. Otis. Transportation around the county was a great problem at that time.

Potatoes had become the big cash crop. Soy beans and alfalfa were being introduced. Farmers were raising hogs and sheep as well as cows. Better silos and better corn to fill them were being stressed. Many farmers were building up high grade cows and full blooded sires to head the herd.

F. D. Stout co-operated with the agent and invited the farmers to the Lower Stout Farm for many demonstrations. They came in cars for miles around, after the Model T was put on the market.

Rusk County hired G. M. Householder for their ag agent in 1916. The same year Sawyer County hired C. P. West. Washburn County fell into line in 1920 when it hired R. H. Rasmussen. Known the county over as "Ras." He worked with community clubs where he could talk to many farmers and their wives at the same time. Life became a bit brighter after that.

A form of Homemaker's Clubs was started about that time. Women were sent out from Madison to demonstrate the wonderful food value of the cabbage. To eat it raw in salads and make kraut and even to drink the juice (which was more than the women could go for). Then there were the women who taught other women how to make dress forms, to enable them to make and fit their own dresses. This worked fine so long as she kept her maidenly figure, but no good when she became plump.

Cheese factories and creameries were established in driving distance from all the farmers. Stock yards were built at every train stop. The railroads did everything possible to help the new settlers build up business in north Wisconsin. For years pulp wood and railroad ties were cut and shipped from every siding along the lines.

Life was rugged for these early settlers, but the rich people were flocking to Red Cedar Lake and building home of all types. Anyone who could handle a saw and a hammer could find a job. Farmers were glad to pick up stones from their fields and deliver them for foundations and fireplaces.

The young women were employed as maids and the young men found work at the Stout Farms. Life in general was full of excitement.

Besides owning Tamarack Lodge, W. A. Hance owned the land extending to Angus in Barron County. He sold it to W. E. Duffy who was the ag agent from 1920 to 1924. Duffy used it as a demonstration farm. He named it Lake-dale.

Chapter IX

OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

On May 9, 1878 the following families organized this congregation: K. N. Fadness, Ole J. Oleson, Thomas J. Oleson, Ole A. Dale, Knute J. Oleson.

(This is a portion of the History written by Mrs. Theron Kringle & Mrs. Robert Koepp in 1968).

In the early 1870's a group of young men from Spring Prairie, Columbia County, Wis. came to Barron County to locate. Although this part of Barron County was then a dense forest inhabited by Indians and wild animals, these sturdy Norwegian pioneers were not discouraged. Some took homestead land and others bought railroad land for which they paid \$2.50 per acre. Here in the town of Cedar Lake, which is now the town of Doyle, they cleared a patch, prepared logs, and built log houses. Then they returned to Spring Prairie for their families. In the fall of 1874, Tom Oleson, wife and two children; Ole Dale, wife and two children; Knut Oleson, single, came here to live, traveling all the way by team. In the spring of 1878 Knut Fadness and family moved here and Ole Oleson brought his family in the fall of 1878.

Having been faithful members of a church back home, they felt they wanted an organization in their new home. Rev. Haakenson helped them organize and they named it "The Norwegian Lutheran Congregation of Cedar Lake" in 1878.

Ole Anderson with his family came from the same place in the spring of 1879. In the spring of 1880 John J. Oleson and his niece, who was later Mrs. A. G. Strand, started out from Spring Prairie on a Monday morning late in May. Driving by team they reached Eau Claire Friday evening and stayed with friends over Sunday. Two days later they arrived at the home of Knut Fadness. John Oleson bought railroad land which is now the Christ Skar farm. In 1883 he built the first home in the neighborhood of all lumber—not of logs.

Home mission ministers served as many as fifteen to twenty settlements. The settlers were thankful to have five or six visits a year. Services were held every Sunday in the homes with laymen taking turns in leading the services and always a lot of singing from their hymn books.

Later a frame schoolhouse was built and the services were held there. The parents were faithful in teaching their children at home or joining with a near neighbor. Sickness and death struck often in their midst, especially among the small children. Knute Oleson donated an acre for a cemetery and it was dedicated in 1886.

In May 1888 a Ladies Aid was organized at the home of Mrs. Ole Oleson. Wednesday was set aside for the meeting day and has continued to this date. Ole J. Oleson donated $\frac{1}{2}$ acre of land in the southwest corner of his farm for the church to be built on. It was started in April of 1897. The size was 24 by 40 with an entrance 10 by 10. They were to build only as fast as they had money to pay. The Ladies Aid was raising most of the money.

In 1915 the decision was made to have one-half of the worship services conducted in the English language. In 1927 two-thirds of the services were to be conducted in English and one-third in Norwegian.

This congregation joined the Union in 1917 and has been known as "Our Savior's Lutheran Church." It is located on Hiway 48, one mile east of Campia. Many enlargements and alterations have been made on it during the more than 73 years since the church was started.

This was the first organized church in the country "Around the Four Corners" which we are trying to cover in this book.

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

This church was first started in 1901 in the August Thielke home, with the assistance of John Harms. The services were held in various homes for nine years, until the congregation became too large for the homes.

Charter members were Messrs. and Mmes. John Harms, John Funk, John Reul, August Thielke, Ludwig Kerber, Herman Thalke, Ed Bahrs, Mike Bothke, and Frank Zieroth.

For three years services were held in the Loveland Corners school. One of the first pastors was Rev. John Wolfe of the Iowa synod, who served until 1908. His successor, Rev. Otto Biermann served until 1913.

At the beginning of 1913 the congregation accepted an acre of land from Fred and Karl Schifler and elected Frank Zieroth, Frank Rachut and Ed Barhs to a building committee. Under the guidance of Rev. William Krebs a building was completed and dedicated that year and the church was incorporated.

The first confirmation took place in 1908 in the Loveland Corners school with three confirmands, Angie Oliver, Gertie Johnson and Lydia Thielke. The Ladies Aid was organized in 1914. The ladies purchased the altar, pulpit and organ. Mrs. Carl Winkel served as organist from Nov. 1905 until 1945.

On July 18, 1943, the congregation severed its connection with the American Lutheran Church and voted to remain independent.

This church is located in the town of Cedar Lake on Hiway 48, about two miles south of Mikana.

More About the Churches

In those first days the people were very clannish. Each nationality wanted to settle close together. The French settlement was to the west of Doyle and the Irish to the west of Cedar Lake but they crept over the line to the east. They were all of the Roman Catholic faith and worked together to build a church at Dobie. The children of those first settlers have told how it worked out. The French people sat on one side of the church, the Irish on the other. When they had a feast day the Irish sat at one table, the French at the other and the priest always sat at the head of their table.

But there came a day when the boys at one table were flirting with the girls at the other one. The first marriage after that kind of a courtship created a terrific friction in the neighborhood. But love won out and after a time more and more French and Irish weddings were taking place. But when the Norwegian Lutheran children in the town of Doyle grew up to the marrying age there was still more excitement.

Back in 1915 when Rev. Sund was the Methodist minister at Birchwood he organized and built a church at Mikana. It flourished for a time being supplied by the Birchwood ministers. Many of those people moved away and as the Lutherans took over their homes, the interest in the Methodist Church diminished. The Sunday School was kept going but during the 1940's, while Rev. Abbie Burnett was the minister, all the services were discontinued. It was dismantled in 1957 by men from the Rice Lake Methodist Church. The good material was taken to the Whispering Pines Camp to be used for boys' cabins.

Chapter X

SUMMER HOMES & RESORTS ON CEDAR & HEMLOCK LAKES

Tamarack Lodge

A very attractive summer home still stands on a high bank near the north end of Red Cedar Lake on the west side. It was built by W. A. Hance and family of Freeport, Ill. about 1910.

The Hance family had spent one summer at Cedar Lake Inn, with transportation headquarters at The Narrows. While going up and down the lake he had noted this location and the log cabin where Goodie Brooks was living. After a summer at Hemlock Lake and one at Round Lake near Hayward, he returned to look at this location again. Yes, this was what he wanted. The deal was quickly closed as Goodie had decided he wanted to move into Birchwood.

They lived in Goodie's cabin for two seasons while a two story boat house was being built, then they moved into the second story. During this time they were preparing to build a nice home. Mr. Hance went up to Winter and searched



Goodie's Log Cabin which he sold to W. A. Hance.

the swamps for perfect tamarack trees and marked the ones he wanted. He hired men to cut and load these logs onto flat cars and ship them to Angus. An expert carpenter was hired to do the work, he knew the art of log building. It took two seasons to perfect this dream house, the carpenter decided it would add to the beauty of the house both inside and out if a tower bedroom was added.

Oh, yes, we must add that Goodie's cabin was moved back to the west as a workshop and it is still there altho it has been sided up with vertical slabs.

The Hance family furnished this home with antiques and curios gathered from the four corners of the world. They sold the place to E. A. De-Campi of Chicago, who became a paid up member of the Cedar Lake Golf Club for the season of 1925.

The son of the Hances whose name is Willard, better know as "Wid," supplied many of the pictures of The Narrows and Cedar Lake Inn in this book. He and Allison Stout played together as kids, and have helped me a lot with this history of activities on Red Cedar Lake.

Mishawak formerly "Longtheway"

That is what the sign says down on Hiway 48, but for many years it said "Longtheway." A new corporation formed by Byron James and Don Aspenes of River Falls and Arnold Bertelsen of Hudson purchased the Charles S. Pearce property on Red Cedar Lake in 1967. They have turned it into a Summer Youth Camp.

But let us dig up the early history of this place. Count Ernst Von Markwald, a retired general in the German Army, had come to Chicago because he had married a commoner and was looked down upon in Germany.

The Count and wife and son Conrad spent a few weeks at the Cedar Lake Inn. As they went up and down the lake he looked for a desirable place to build a summer home. The Slocum Land Agency sold him a large tract of land in 1906. It was located near the north end of Red Cedar Lake and extended west to the Hiway at Angus and includes Pickerel Lake.

The Count built a large lodge near the shore for the family. A large extension to the south was for guest rooms and a dining room. He wanted to dabble in a bit of farming, so built a large house and barn by the Hiway and stocked his farm with high grade Guernseys. His son attempted to run the farm, but it is evident that things were not going to suit the Count. He advertised for a herdsman in Canadian papers. An English couple, Harry and Marie Hartley, answered the ad and soon arrived at Angus to be greeted by Claire Neau who was the maid of all work at the Count's lodge. This was in 1915 and the Hartleys ran the farm and eventually owned it.

Pictures of the Count in uniform, his helmets and swords were much in evidence on the walls of the lodge. He had a violent temper and would go into a tirade. His wife would quietly leave the room, and not return until he had calmed down.

In due time he learned that his property in Germany had decreased in value and he was no longer a rich man. They entertained less lavishly. He decided to sell out, and arranged a deal with Hartley to take the farm.

Knowing that Irene Setterlun Taufner had been a maid at the Count's home, I appealed to her for some stories. You will enjoy them I'm sure. "Of him I can remember he was a gruff old fellow, no one dared to contradict him. He'd been an officer in the Prussian army and how he got to be a "Count" I'll never know. He'd been quite a horseman in his day until one threw him, breaking his arm in the elbow area. It had not been set properly so his arm was quite crooked.

"He also had new dentures the summer I worked there (1921) which he could not cope with. One morning he rang the bell for me to come. When I got to the table he had them sitting beside his plate. (He'd been trying to eat cornflakes). He said "Here you, see if you can eat with these — things." I did what I could by warming the milk for the cornflakes. That helped. His son Conrad visited them for a short while. He was very pleasant and used to help me with the dishes in the evening, then I'd row the boat while he would cast for "that big one" which never got caught. He was divorced.

"Mrs. Markwald was a lovely woman. I learned a lot from her in the line of setting the table, serving and the like. She was an excellent cook. Her Indian Pudding dessert was a specialty.

"Thursday afternoon I had off, but before I could go up to Angus I had to clean and fill every lamp in the house. Wicks had to be trimmed JUST SO. I'd about make it to the store to mail letters, have a chat with Mrs. Hartley or Margaret Olson at the cheese factory and hold the baby (her first) when it was time to race back to prepare the evening meal.

"Washing was done by hand, no wringer. He would help with the sheets or try to, all the clothes had to be hung with the hems towards the woods. That was to show off the pretty side towards the lake where Mr. and Mrs. Stout and others might see them if they went by in a boat.

"The storekeeper's name was Leonard. The Count had him drive them places. He had a standing order for meats and groceries. Soon after the train brought the meat up, Leonard was delivering it. (Those were the orders).

"One day the Count was going to paint the back steps green. He started painting the bottom one, standing on the step above it. I told him it would be easier if he went from top to bottom. He was mad and told me I knew nothing and to get away. Soon he tried my method. Later he came and patted my shoulder and said I was a pretty smart girl.

"One of the tables in the large room seated 50 people, and I had to iron the linen table cloth (woven in Ireland with their crest). He wrung it out of boiling water in a sheet. Then I ironed that THING with sad irons. We sure kept the kitchen stove hopping that day."

During a visit to Chicago he learned that Charles S. Pearce was interested in finding a summer home near a nice lake. They made a deal whereby Pearce purchased about 25 acres with 2,200 feet of lake shore, the rest extending west of heavy hardwood timber. The deal was closed Oct. 17, 1924. Count Ernest Von Markwald and family returned to Chicago.

Charles S. Pearce Takes Over

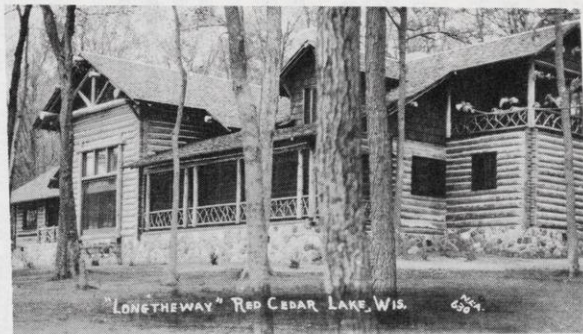
It was too late in the year of 1924 for Pearce to start any activity. He appealed to George Kringle, the friendly man at Mikana who helped everybody. He asked him to keep an eye on the place during the winter.

The Pearce family occupied the Count's lodge for two summers. They were making elaborate plans for reconstruction of the lodge, but immediately started erecting other buildings. Mr. Kringle suggested that Charles Roark would make a good supervisor. A large garage was built with a second story for the Roarks to live in. Part of the first floor was divided off for the laundry room.

They planned to employ numerous maids, so built a large cabin for them. There are 4 bedrooms, bath and living room downstairs. One big bedroom



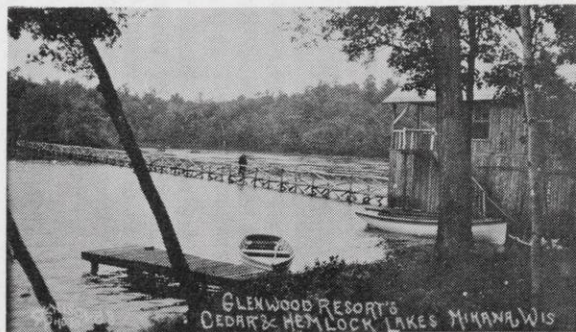
Tamarack Lodge, built by W. A. Hance.



The lodge after Charles S. Pearce remodeled it.



The original lodge, built by the Count.



Boathouse and cabin on the mainland, with foot bridge to the island.

upstairs and a large closet completely lined with metal. It was built close to a tree that they wanted to keep. The edge of the roof was built around the tree. (It is still there).

A very large ice house was built, with a concrete room on ground level to be used as a walk-in refrigerator. Two woodsheds were also erected in preparation for the numerous fireplaces they intended to build in their reconstructed lodge.

There was a son and daughter in the family and they had many guests. A barn to hold four or five riding horses was built at the west end of their acreage. Also a cabin for the riding master.

Mr. Pearce employed Benjamin H. Marshall of Wilmette, Ill. as the architect to draft the plans for the large lodge he wanted built, using as much as possible of the Count's lodge. When Pearce left for Chicago in Sept. he laid the plans before Roark and said, "I want this completed by May 30th."

Four expert carpenters were rounded up; Halvor Halvorson, Fred Petersen, John Falstad and Ole Johnson. Forty-four men worked all winter on the job, under canvases when necessary.

More logs were needed to match those in the old lodge. They knew of a virgin stand of pines owned by Urinholt up at Seeley. Halvorson and Roark went up there and ordered as many as could be loaded onto two flat cars. They were to be from 40 to 58 feet long, 10" at the butt and 7" at the top. They paid \$1.00 per running foot.

George and Nap Amans had the job of delivering them from Angus to the site of operations. They took two wagons, attached them together, extended each wagon as far as the reach would go. No canthook was allowed to be used on the logs or chains for binding. Not more than four or five logs could be stacked on those wagons. To engineer that long caravan thru the woods was some trick.

The portion of main lodge extending to the south was changed very little. Two fireplaces were installed back to back for the bedrooms. The men had to dig a trench underneath and pour a big foundation of cement to hold up the fireplaces.

There are 10 fireplaces, seven bedrooms and four baths in the lodge. The main lounge is 22x40 feet and two stories high. At the far end the mammoth fireplace stands 22 feet to the roof, the width is 16 feet, the firebox is 4'x6' with the door at the end for the butler to replenish the wood without entering the room. The foundation for this fireplace is 12x14 feet and 10 feet deep of poured cement.

The stones used were boulders picked up from the neighbor's fields. Dick Cronholm laid the stones for the fireplaces and foundation of lodge. Jim Everson was his right hand man who mixed the mortar and carried the stones. They had learned the science of splitting the stones to give a flat outer surface. It also shows off the beautiful inner coloring of stones. On the front of the wood beamed mantle John Ewen carved: "Cut Your Own Wood, It Will Warm You Twice."

The floor of this room is made on two levels. The front of the fireplace is about seven inches higher than the portion in front of the 7'x10' plate glass window which can be raised its full height. The floor was laid with two inch thick cypress planks of random width, set with screws and dollpins.

The steps of the open stairway are made of split tamarack logs. This leads to the master bedroom upstairs and to the narrow balcony which leads back to the library which was Mr. Pearce's favorite room. A small fireplace was built into the backside of the huge one in the lounge. A door to the west opens onto a bridge that extends to the brick steps that take one to the top of the hill.

Railings on stairs and balcony and also on the porches were made from peeled hemlock branches purchased from the loggers up near Winter. The logs of the lodge were mitered at the corners in an artistic fashion, much different from the pioneer cabins.

Walks around the lodge and off on trails are of red brick laid in a herring-bone pattern. Other trails were made of cinders which the railroad gave to them.

We must not forget the beautiful doors made of Ponderosa pine. The planks are six inches wide and more than two inches thick. The carpenters used an adz to smooth them down, leaving a peculiar rough surface which gleamed after varnish was applied. These planks were joined together by tongue and groove. To hold them firmly wrought iron straps were made by John Falstad. They are about three inches wide at the back end coming to a point at the outer end. While still hot, dimples were made by a balpeen hammer then varnished while warm. These were placed on both sides of the door at top and at bottom with bolts extending thru from front to back and a nut placed on bolt. It takes two men to lift one of these doors.

The handles on each door were designed and made by Oscar Hansen another expert blacksmith. He used another tool for the design on the handles. There was a blacksmith shop on the grounds during the days of the construction of the lodge. An Indian name printed in black on a brass plate is on each bedroom door. A corresponding plate is above the towel racks in the cooperative bathroom.

There was an intercom system, connecting the master bedroom, the library and the butler's pantry. The book cabinets are hand hewn.

A message was sent to Mr. Pearce on May 29, telling him that the lodge was completed. They came up the next day to inspect it and were delighted.

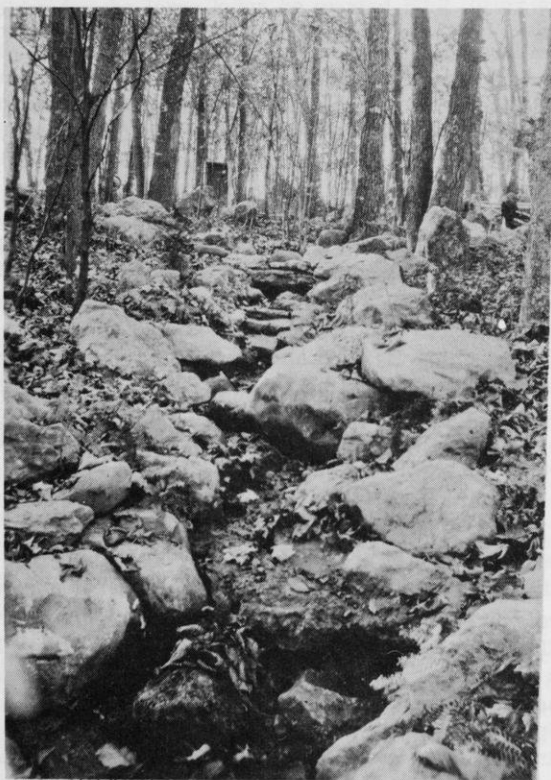
Mr. Pearce wanted an artificial lake placed up on the hill. It fell to Nap Amans and Elmer Petersen to do much of its construction. The lower end was five to six feet deep, the floor and three sides were of cement. An electric pump was placed in a pit in the lake which pumped 100 gal. a minute thru a four inch pipe and forced it up the hill thru a three inch pipe. From the little lake a stream flowed down over large flat rocks which had been loaded onto flat cars at Yarnell by Mr. Libby and shipped to Angus. (He was glad to get rid of them). Rocks were shipped from more distant places to decorate the shores of this miniature lake. A rustic bridge was built over this stream in line with a trail back into the woods.

Mr. Pearce added a speed boat to his fleet of boats. He named it the "Gee Whiz." It could make 50 miles per hour which was better than the "Jiffy" did for F. D. Stout. This made a bit of goodnatured rivalry. But the "Gee Whiz" consumed a gallon of gas per five miles. This kept the helpers busy lugging the gas cans, 40 rods from the tank.

When all these buildings had been completed a nice cottage was built south of the garage for Mr. and Mrs. Roark, and the chauffeur moved in over the garage.

Mr. and Mrs. Pearce were great lovers of flowers and each spring Holm and Olson, florists from Minneapolis shipped in a carload of plants and shrubs and filled one-quarter mile of lakeshore with blooms for the season. There were some large trees near the buildings which showed signs of decay. Pearce hired men from the Davie Tree Surgery in Iowa to work three months to save them. It is reported that they are still living.

When the construction work was completed Pearce let Charley Roark go. And went in search of a man who could make flowers grow. He found William Friele, a trained horticulturist, who took over as superintendent of the property in March 1935 and lived in the cute cottage for 32 years.



Preparations for stream from artificial lake built on top of the hill.

He did away with the shore line flower bed, and made terraced beds up on the hill behind the lodge. Friele also made a circle drive for cars to come in on, and raised roses and all kinds of flowers and shrubs which delighted Mr. and Mrs. Pearce and their many distinguished guests

The Pearces kept as many as 11 maids and men servants during the summer until his health failed and he retired. "Longtheway" was hailed as the "show place" of Red Cedar Lake.

Mr. Pearce was 87 years old when he died March 15, 1965. He was a retired board chairman of the Colgate Palmolive Co. and was associated with other companies and banks. He was president and director of the International Cellucotton Products Co. and had many other interests.

He bequeathed this lakeshore property to the Glenwood School for Boys in Illinois 10 years before his death. At last they decided it was too far from Chicago and offered it for sale.

It has never suffered from vandalism. Now people are allowed to visit the place during the camping season. It is truly beautiful.

Knollwood

Knollwood is listed as an early summer home on Red Cedar. The first name on the abstract is Baldwin. Richard G. Howse purchased it from Baldwin in 1908. We do not know the kind of house they lived in before the spacious rambling 10 room summer home was built, perhaps in 1919.

This home was built high above the lake shore. On the first floor there is a 20x40 foot living room, maple paneled, with huge native pink stone fireplace. There are two large bedrooms including the master room which has a split stone fireplace. In addition to a 20x20 dining room porch and a kitchen is 140 feet of glazed and screened porch. A three car garage on the ground floor was later remodeled into bedrooms. The second floor has two large bedrooms, and a maid's room. The usual number of baths of all sizes are scattered about.

There is also a beach house, tool house, ice house, laundry, wood shed and barn. Huge maple trees surround the buildings and a few pines.

The Faust Island is off a few rods to the south. A romance flourished between Peggy Howse and Ed Faust. Dr. Knapp was the first owner of this island.

Mr. Howse sold out to Mr. Sutherland in 1936. By 1944 he was ready to get rid of it. At that time P. W. Edwards and his brother-in-law Ted Barker purchased it jointly. They and their families enjoyed it until 1965 when they sold to a charitable trust and it was deeded to "Knollwod Presbyterian Lodge," a non-profit corporation. This did not include the 46 acres of woodland Edwards and Barker owned jointly with Dickson.

They did not want to leave the lake, just wanted smaller quarters. The Barkers moved a small barn over onto a point on the shore at the north end of woodland. They installed large windows on three sides and added a kitchenette and bath at the back. They named it "Wit's End." A truly clever little cottage, and such a view!

Mr. Edwards has built a lovely home at the south end of the woodland and named it "Meadows End." It's across the road from the Barron County Park.

But the history of this land goes back to 1875 when Stephen Clute and family were the first white settlers and built the first log cabin on Red Cedar Lake. We assume that they homesteaded this land and lived there many years. They had driven a yoke of oxen on a covered wagon up from Red Wing, Minn.

Mr. Edwards found the foundation of this log cabin when he built his new house. It is claimed that the cabin was moved to the Harlow resort.

There were many nice homes built on the west shore of the lake, but not quite so pretentious as the ones we are telling about in this story.

Deerpath Lodge

Deerpath Lodge was established at the turn of the century on the west shore of Hemlock lake by the Prussia family. It contained 35 acres of woodland. They built a log lodge and a huge fireplace of field stones. Guests ate at a common table heaped with food, family style.

They began taking in hunters, bringing them by team and wagon from The Narrows station at the head of Red Cedar lake. Soon they had a big white launch (almost as big as Stout's) for their passengers and also to bring groceries from Kringle's Store at Mikana.

We are told by an early settler that the Prussias had a son named Glenn and they named their resort Glenwood; others say that the first name was Deerwood.

In 1909 Mr. and Mrs. Gus Dameier of Chicago purchased the resort and changed the name to Deerpath. He was a jolly fat man and it was he who added the wings to the original log lodge and built six rustic cabins. He also fashioned the rustic furniture in the place and furnished much of the decor, the bearskin with head, the pelts of animals, the Indian artifacts, the parlor organ and a screened-in porch that went around two sides of the lodge.

Mrs. Dameier was the go-getter type. In the early years she made the lodge resplendent with kerosene lamps with reflectors, a ceramic toilet set in each bedroom and a mounted muskellunge which she found in Chicago.

In the days before electricity, Deerpath Lodge had a big icehouse. It had to be big. They had a deer park and a tame deer with a collar and bell. They locked it in the icehouse during the hunting season.

In Chicago Mrs. Dameier found an enormous walk-in cooler which she decided was just the thing for Deerpath. It was custom made, of enameled tile, with a huge oak door and would hold half a beef. It was shipped to Rice Lake by rail and it took all summer to get it to the place and cost a heap of money. Then they found they could not get it into the kitchen so they built the kitchen around it.

Later Mrs. Dameier built a dining room that would seat 72 people. She hired a cook from Chicago. People came from Rice Lake and all over the countryside for chicken dinner, all you could eat for 35c.

Gus Dameier died; his wife kept on with the resort, battling changes, and the shortage of help during World War I. She was in her 70's when she finally gave up and sold to Mr. and Mrs. A. G. Krager in 1946. The Kragers built another cabin and modernized the others while building a capacity business. They found this sign left behind by the Dameiers, "Private Property, no teams or picnics allowed beyond this point."

They had spent about 20 summers operating Deerpath Lodge and enjoyed every hour of it when Mr. Krager died suddenly. She then sold out to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cahoon of Beloit in 1967.

In the early days a two-story boat house was built on the mainland. The apartment was reached by an outside stairway. A large log cabin was built on a nearby island. The fancy foot bridge was extended to the island. It has been removed. The transportation is now by boat.

Chapter XI

Cedar Lake Inn

Even the old timers have no recollection of the Cedar Lake Inn. Its history has been hard to dig up. Ted Field of Rice Lake purchased some land on the west shore of Cedar Lake in the late 90's. He built this large house for his family to live in while he built shooting galleries for a living. He soon decided it would be better if he moved back to Rice Lake. The following experience may have hastened this decision. The arrival of a new baby was drawing near and in some way he got word to Dr. Charron to hurry. Now the roads back in 1900 were not the ideal kind to hurry on. Be that as it may, the doctor got there and the horse was white with lather. He threw the reins to the little boys and told them to look after the horse as he dashed into the house. One of these boys was Art Field who now lives in Rice Lake and told me this story. He was seven and the brother 10. The horse was so exhausted it fell over and broke the thills; the boys were unable to get it up.



Cedar Lake Inn and cabins.

In 1902 Mr. Field sold the place to H. B. Smith of Freeport, Ill., who quickly turned it into a resort and named it Cedar Lake Inn. Four frame cottages and five log ones were added and a lot of row boats. From an elaborate brochure I've taken this information. "All meals were served in the dining room, the cottages were for sleeping in at night and living in or on the porches by day. Rates at the Inn were \$2.00 per day. \$10.00 per week."

The "Narrows Flag Station" became the popular place for the guests to come and go from. The launch "Neptune" was used for transportation at 25c each way, trunks 25c each, Hand baggage free.



Log cabins and guests.

Water was furnished for the Inn by a tank high in the tower of the Stover wind mill. The small boy is Willard B. Hance of Freeport who furnished this information and many of these pictures. His father who stands behind him, later built Tamarack Lodge, which we tell about in another chapter.

The Lone Pine Farm

Frank D. Stout and family were well established over on the nearby large island. They were disturbed by the noise at The Inn. He decided the only way to get rid of it was to buy it. He told his financial assistant to go over there and buy the whole works. When asked what he was to offer for it, Stout replied, "I told you to go and buy it, so get going."

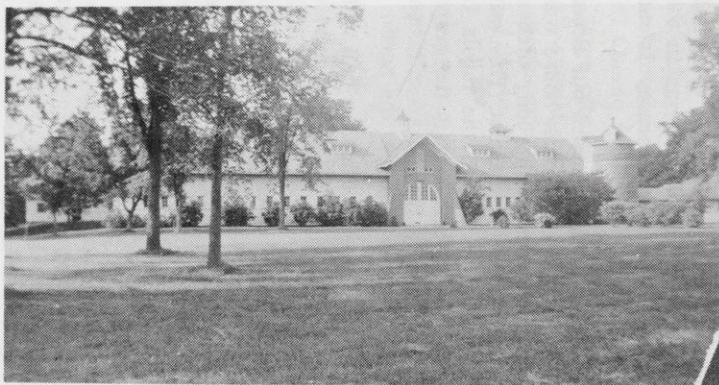
Needless to say the deal was made. Mr. and Mrs. Stout had dreamed of operating a Big Dairy Farm, now was their chance. He hired an architect to draw plans for an elaborate house and an equally elaborate barn. Work was started at once. They wanted to use The Inn for the workmen to sleep and eat in, but as it was very near where the big house was to be located, a corner of the porch had to be cut away.

Bernard Scheu of Rice Lake was the first foreman on the job. Steve Govin, a contractor at Menomonie, brought George Roen up and they worked on the house. Roen stayed on and became the foreman in 1910 and continued in that capacity until the end of Stout's building adventures. Halvor Halvorson was Roen's right hand man. John Falstad (known as Walrus John for his huge mustache) and Frank Thalke were other fine carpenters on the job. Many men found employment during these days of construction by Mr. Stout.

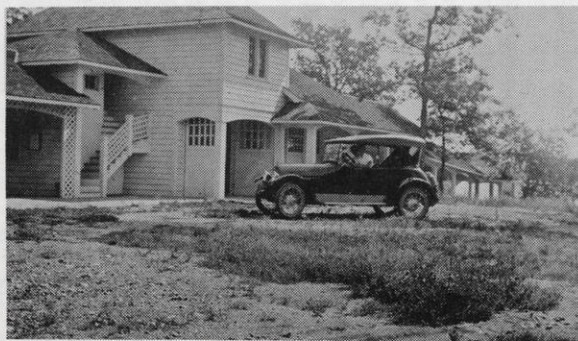
The big barn was first planned to hold cows in the east end and horses in the west end. They kept at least four teams and a man for each team. They were set to work to clear the 120 acres of land west of the road which F.D. had quickly purchased from George Ewen. It was covered by brush and big stumps. One nice pine tree had been left, and they did not disturb it. This gave the family the idea for the name of "Lone Pine Farm."



Lone Pine Farm House as seen from the front lawn in 1937. A portion of the bunkhouse for the hired men can be seen to the left.



This elaborate barn was built between 1909 and 1912. It housed the Stout's wonderful Guernsey cows and calves. The big fancy door opened to allow loads of hay to pass through. It was then unloaded by a hay fork. Then the team drove out through a duplicate door on the other side. The big silo was made of red brick. Behind it is the milk house and pump house. These pictures were taken while Robert W. Koeppe was manager, from 1936 to 1938. Mrs. Stout was never quite so happy as when touring these buildings and giving instructions to the workmen.



Garage and apartments for chauffeurs for the Island.

The cow barn was fitted with "James" metal stanchions, the first of this type in the whole area. There were also box stalls for special cows and calf pens. They purchased purebred Guernsey cows from big farms in the states. They imported several cows and a bull from the Guernsey Island located off the coast of France in the English Channel.

They hurried and built a large horse barn north of the big barn but closer to the road. Their herd quickly filled the big barn. Soon a bunk house was built for the workmen to sleep in, and a small square house with a long kitchen extending to the east was built in the northwest corner of the plot. This was for Hans Haugen and family to live in. Mrs. Haugen served the meals to the men. Then the old Inn was torn down, as it did not fit in with the grand buildings so close at hand. One after another a machine shed, chicken house, garage and tool shed were built. Yes, and a hog house far off to the north.

The most special building was the Bull Barn for when you have a bull with the delightful name of "Langwater Hayes Rosie's King of the May" you provide him with a castle to live in, for he was the World Champion Guernsey Bull. Then they owned the National Champion cow, "Langwater Charity." When they were taken to any of the big fairs they had their own private express cars and two herdsman for each. Allison wrote, "I can't recall the value of either of these critters at their prime, but I do recall that the bull brought in over \$200,000 in stud fees. My Dad said that was the happiest way of making money he had ever found."

In those first days carriages and horses were used and space was provided to house the carriages. With the advent of the automobiles a garage with an apartment for the chauffeur upstairs was built down by the lake, which was for the use of the folks at the Island. The dock was made in the shape of a large V with a walk-way on both sides. The big launches anchored in the V. A covered stairway leads from the dock to the garage. Often a visiting chauffeur would have to bunk in the apartment.

A small dock was located to the south for public use and small boats, especially for the workmen who were employed at the Island. Mr. Stout also supplied a deep well and a storage tank holding 11,000 gallons of water. A pump house was built over this which was also called "the dairy."

It was in this building where the testing of the milk was done. Olaf Olson, who was herdsman there for seven years, said that besides milking those special cows every six hours around the clock, he had to churn 28 pounds of butter per week for use at the Island and have milk and cream ready each morning to go with the workmen on the boat. Also have chickens and ducks dressed per order. There was a special man to care for the poultry but evidently it was not his chore to dress them for the table.

Back to the water supply. Water mains were laid underground to hydrants all over the place to water the lawns and for fire protection. Nothing was forgotten. A maid's quarters and ice house were attached to the main lodge. The family were great for putting up signs in the barn one of which read, "Speak to a cow as you would to a lady."

It was a 14 hour day for many of the helpers. In the first days shade curtains were on the windows of the cow barn. Later they were discarded and board awnings were built over each window. A beautiful silo was built to the east end of big barn and another on the horse barn. F. D. is reported to have said, "If I can't fill them with corn, I'll fill 'em with money."

The first manager at this farm was Joe McGowan. Others were Guy Terry, Freiss, Wolverson, Darling and Bob Koepp.

The dairy products not used at the Island and the Farm were sold to local creameries and cheese factories located at Dobie, Angus, Brill and the Central Cheese factory.

A large plot of ground south of the buildings was turned into a garden where a special gardener raised vegetables for the tables at the Island. The water works extended to this garden. A special house was built for the gardener to live in. It is the one with all the gables to the south of the main lodge.



Lone Pine farm house seen from the lakeshore in 1937.

It was later given to their faithful man of many talents, Hans Haugen. It is now owned by his daughter Hazel and husband Irving Evertsen. Mr. Stout purchased every available piece of land near Lone Pine for he loved to expand. A woven fire fence from Sears Roebuck was built around all his holdings. He ordered George Roen to build a house up the road to the north of Lone Pine. The original plan was quite extensive. Mr. and Mrs. Stout left for California to spend the winter because his health was failing a bit. Roen had the house partly built and material on hand to finish it when they returned in the spring.

F. D. had changed his mind and ordered him to stop the project. But for once George Roen reasoned with his boss and showed him he was wrong. They agreed to reduce the number of rooms and he was allowed to finish it. It became the home for the herdsman. Later Emil Schenck purchased the place and his daughter Della now owns it. The Buttricks have lived there for several years. That ended Mr. Stout's career as a builder.

By 1912 the carpenters were sent to the Island to reconstruct all the buildings and add more, which we are telling in another chapter, then on to the golf course to put up all those buildings. But they never knew when they would have to return to the farms to build something else.

Cedar Lake Farm

We will now hear more about the Stout's oldest son whom they called "Harry." But he was named Henry after grandfather back in 1890. They all lived at Dubuque, Iowa, until 1900 when the old man died. They found it confusing to have the boy called Henry like the grandfather so they nicknamed him Harry. When he grew to maturity he signed his name H. L. Stout.

During the first years of building up the Guernsey herd Harry became much interested in the project and wanted in on the deal. Mr. Stout had acquired the Cedar Lake Farm when the Knapp, Stout & Co. divided up their holdings in 1900. He had a manager running the farm of over 600 acres, but in a modest manner.

Allison said, "My Dad just up and gave that farm to Harry and took him into partnership on the Guernsey project." Harry was in business in Chicago and came up occasionally to stay at his cottage at the Island and see how things were progressing.

There was a large house which had been used by the "Company" and



House which was the original stopping place for Knapp, Stout & Co. loggers and teamsters.

also as a stopping place for teamsters going through to the camps. There was a log barn with a frame upper section on it and a very long shed used by the camp.

F. D. sent the carpenters down there to erect a barn almost as fancy as the one at Lone Pine. How much it had been used we do not know, but Harry and Allison were in a boat at the mouth of the river when they saw it struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

Not daunted, Mr. Stout set the carpenters to building another barn as soon as the ashes were cold. It was as good as the first one but not so fancy. It was fitted with cow testing rooms and every device that modern science had invented, which were said to be the best in the northwest.

A large share of the pure blooded Guernseys were taken to the "Lower Farm" of which 75 were milch cows. Harry also went in for Shropshire sheep, Duroc Jersey swine and White Wyandotte chickens, all pureblood.

Fine buildings housed all of them. Harry had heard of the good work Frank J. Wolverson, a highly trained agriculturist was doing in the eastern states. In 1919 Harry secured his services as manager of his farm. Back at Lone Pine they still had enough of cows to fill the big barn, for the best of them had large box stalls which took up a lot of room.

The great upset to Mr. Stout's life came with the death of his son, Harry in 1924. As Harry had handled much of the business of the Guernsey project, Mr. and Mrs. Stout felt they could not take on that added burden. They decided to sell the major portion of the herd.

They shipped 60 head (all Federal accredited) in express cars on the Northwestern R. R., loading them at the Angus stockyards. Their destination was the Chicago Guernsey Farm at Hinsdale, Ill. where they were prepared for the sale on Oct. 3, 1924. It was acclaimed as the biggest sale in history up to that time, when 54 individuals sold for a total of \$97,215. Lone Pine Mollie Cowan topped the sale at \$15,100. Her sire was "Langwater Hayes Rosie's King of the May."

The old prize winner "Langwater Charity," now 13 years old, was rejected and sent back to the farm to raise more good calves. Five other animals were also sent back to the farm.

Carl Jones reported that he was one of several men who went along on that trip. They had to milk the cows at regular intervals and throw the milk away. He was assigned the job of delivering three of the animals to a farm in New York State.

Before Harry's death the old house on the Lower Farm burned to the ground. Mr. Stout had the bright idea that time would be saved if he ordered a pre-cut house from Sears Roebuck. George Roen thought differently. He would have saved time had he planned and cut it himself. That house remains on the place and a few other buildings used by the Stouts. The fancy hog house has been remodeled into a very nice motel.

Early History of Stout Island

The original homestead claim was purchased by John H. Knapp at Eau Claire Government Land Office in 1868 for \$1.68. Quit claim deed by K. S. & Co. to J. Hornby Butcher April 15, 1886 for \$1.00. Butcher was foreman of their lath mill. He passed it on to Sarah A. Hopwood, Menomonie, Dec. 24, 1894. Price??? Hopwood was a financial clerk for the K. S. & Co. He must have been quite a blowhard. He had led his sweetheart back in England to believe he was rich and that Menomonie was a flourishing city back in those early days.

She came over from England and brought her silver tea service. They built the first one room cabin on The Island, and perhaps lived there for three years. Mrs. Ida Roen told of going over to the Hopwood Island with her father when she was a small child. There was a well which had been dug, and a building over it. A pulley was attached to the roof with a rope which ran over it and a bucket attached to each end. When you drew up a full bucket the other one went down. As she watched this process, to her surprise when the full bucket came up, there sat a frog on the top of it. The Indians frequented the island and poor Mrs. Hopwood was scared to death of them for they would peer at her through the window.



Narrows waiting station, stairs and slide.

Dec. 1, 1897 Frank Stout and Thomas Wilson jr. went into partnership and purchased the Island of the Hopwoods and also procured many sections of land around Balsam Lake and on the east and south sides of Red Cedar Lake. They used the cabin for a hunting shack. Then they ordered a large log building put up because they wanted to bring their men friends up for fishing and hunting.

The women soon wanted to come and see what all the excitement was about. Mrs. Stout and the older children came one year. She did not like the shoulder high partitions. More buildings were being added each year made of local logs peeled on the inside but with the bark being left on the outside to make it look more rustic. On those early trips they came to Rice Lake by train and a team from the Cedar Lake Stout farm met them. The poor roads of that time made it a long, hot and dusty trip.

Early Days on The Island

F. D. Stout was a director of the Chicago, St. Paul and Omaha R.R. He knew they were building a line through the Stout property in order to reach Birchwood and the timber beyond. He ordered a passing track built at the Narrows between Balsam and Red Cedar lakes for his own convenience. For many years anyone in Chicago wishing to buy a ticket for Angus was told they never heard of the place. They had to buy it to The Narrows.

The summer of 1903 was a great one for the Stout family. There were now five children. Allison was a year old. All the nursemaids and butlers accompanied the family in a private car which was switched off the main line at Tuscobia and onto the Y to await the train headed for Birchwood. Then the car was set off on the siding at The Narrows. The family and their baggage scrambled down the steps into a bleak wilderness. They had to cross the Soo



Steel foot bridge to Island No. 2.



West end of original buildings from front lawn. The daughters' square cabin, master bedroom and living room, Harry's cabin at extreme left.



East end of complex of original buildings. Master bedroom, living room, breezeway, dining room, kitchen, and maid's quarters. Taken about 1914.

track and walk down a rough path to the shore of the lake where motor boats were waiting for them. It was a three mile trip down the lake to The Island.

There was quite a village of buildings, but life was very primitive. There was a well, of course, but it was powered either by a windmill or a motor which was not very reliable. Three outdoor toilets were placed at the west end of the old complex and two out beyond the maids' quarters to the east.

In September, 1903 Mr. Stout purchased the half interest in all the property from Thomas Wilson, jr. for \$15,000. (Thomas was the grandson of Capt. Wm. Wilson, the senior member of the old K. S. & Co.).

The great excitement for the family and their friends was to go on picnics. First they would cross the lake in boats or perhaps go down through Hemlock Lake and be met by Fred Boetcher with a team and carriage from Cedar Lake Farm. They had two pairs of carriage horses, the brown pair "Colonel and Cyclone," and the black pair, "Storm and Major." The Stouts used fancy horses in Chicago and Calista suggested that her father may have shipped them to the farm when they lost their polish. Calista called the carriage a surrey, but Allison called it a mountain wagon. It had a top with fringe around the edge and curtains that rolled down in case there was a change in the weather.

The early cooks on The Island were former camp cooks. There was Billy McFarlane who called them to dinner with a horn three feet long; then came Frank Yeddo who let the girls help him make blueberry pies and also made three dozen bottles of root beer at a time and put them out in the sun (to ferment??). Not to be forgotten was old Miller with the big full beard who was a general handyman and so gentle with the children that he'd put them in the big clothes basket on the wheel barrow and give them rides.

It did not take long for FD to get more accommodations at The Narrows. A 20x20 foot open air waiting station was built on the north side of the track and a room where they could lock up freight. There was a pay phone at the station and a big sign across the ends which read, "THE NARROWS." It was now an official flag station.

To get the freight down the hill to the barge was a terrible task. He got the railroad to build a slide of planks, and by manpower the trunks were pulled and pushed up and down. It was a dangerous process to get the big objects down the slide. They placed planks with cleats across them for pedestrians to walk up and down on. Not until these planks rotted were the cement slide and cement steps installed at The Narrows. A big dock was made from boom logs they found around the shores of the lake. These were hewn flat and bound together. Many carloads of cement and lumber were transported from The Narrows to The Island during those first years.

There is an odd shaped island to the east of the main island which contains six acres. A wooden foot bridge was built between them and later replaced by a fancy steel one. Attached to this island by a narrow isthmus is the third island. Neither of these have been developed and the isthmus was protected by a double seawall years ago, as well as the north side of the main island which consumed tons of rocks and cement before it was completed. In all, the "Isle of Happy Days" (which the Stouts had named it) contains approximately 26 acres.

Chapter XII

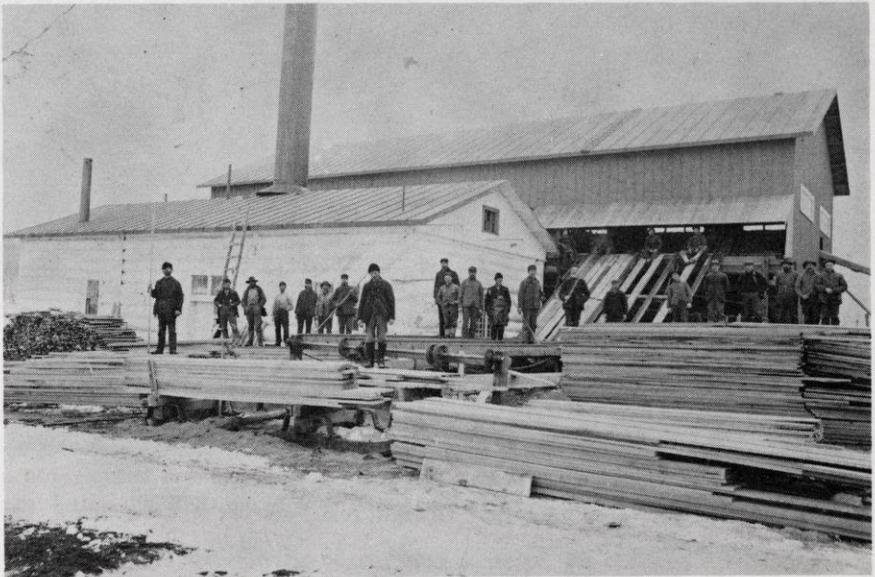
Town of Long Lake

The town of Long Lake had a long history before it was ever known as Long Lake. In fact it all started about the time that Washburn County was created out of Burnett County in 1883.

The Knapp, Stout & Co. and the railroads had laid claim to most of the timber land but had not started cutting. A prominent man by the name of O. H. Ingram, who was a financier and banker and many other things in Eau Claire, got the idea of going into the logging business. He owned a very large lumber mill in Eau Claire and wanted to expand. He was affiliated with the Weyerhaeuser Co.

Mr. Ingram's first visit to Rice Lake was in 1882. He observed how the K.S. & Co. was operating and sent out scouts through the timber to estimate how much there was and its worth.

He founded the Rice Lake Lumber Co. in 1883 and built a mill there.



Rice Lake Lumber Company's hardwood sawmill at Long Lake Dam, 1900 to 1906.

He had fallen in love with Long Lake and the timber stand around it. He went to Menomonie to talk things over with the K. S. & Co. officials and found them very gracious and co-operative. For the important Mr. O. H.

Ingram to come to consult with them was no doubt a great surprise. He got what he wanted for they relinquished much of the timber around the lake. They had found out it would cost them another dam to be able to float it down the river. Mr. Ingram made such a favorable impression on Andrew Tainter that he offered to take \$10,000 worth of stock in his company.

Mr. Ingram built a dam at the south end of Long Lake where the stream flows towards the Red Cedar river. This raised the water level many feet. The headquarters camp was established west of the dam where the book-keeper and the head boss and many others stayed. By 1884 he was ready for business and camps were established on all sides of the lake but the lower east side, which the K.S. & Co. retained. It was agreed between them that while they harvested the pine they could use each other's improvements and float their logs together, to be separated at Rice Lake.

Mr. Ingram was not slow about letting the world know about his new project and the wonderful lake full of fish he had found. The first ones



Last year of loading pine logs, 1900. George Todd, driver; Andrew Score, top loader.

to come up to see for themselves were Laage Kjorstad of Eau Claire and his son-in-law, Nels Hovey of Mondovi in 1884. Kjorstad was delighted for it was the nearest thing to his old home in Norway he had seen.

Two years later he purchased 200 acres of land near the south end of the lake and built a big hotel high on the hill with a wonderful view of the lake. Settlers were moving in and either homesteading or buying land and stopping over at his place.

The county had been divided into two towns, Veazie and Bashaw. The settlers felt they should have more to say about their portion of it. In 1889 by action of the county board a 12 mile square of timberland in the southeast corner of Bashaw was set aside for them and it was named Long Lake. John R. Mullen was the first chairman. Now they would need a place in which to hold their town meetings and elections, and there was need for a school house also. The latter was built near the south end of the lake and used also for elections. The children were eager for that day to come because it meant no school for them.

About the same time a post office was established at the home of Even M. Kirkeby, who became the one and only postmaster. It was named Nobleton after the superintendent of the Rice Lake Lumber Co. It is now the Cletus



A stable of large work horses, used in the woods.

Wickens home. Mail was delivered three times a week by Mr. Tucker from Rice Lake with team and buggy. When the village of Brill was platted out on the new Omaha line and a post office was established, a route came out from there. Later the RFD came from Haugen and Nobleton P.O. was closed.

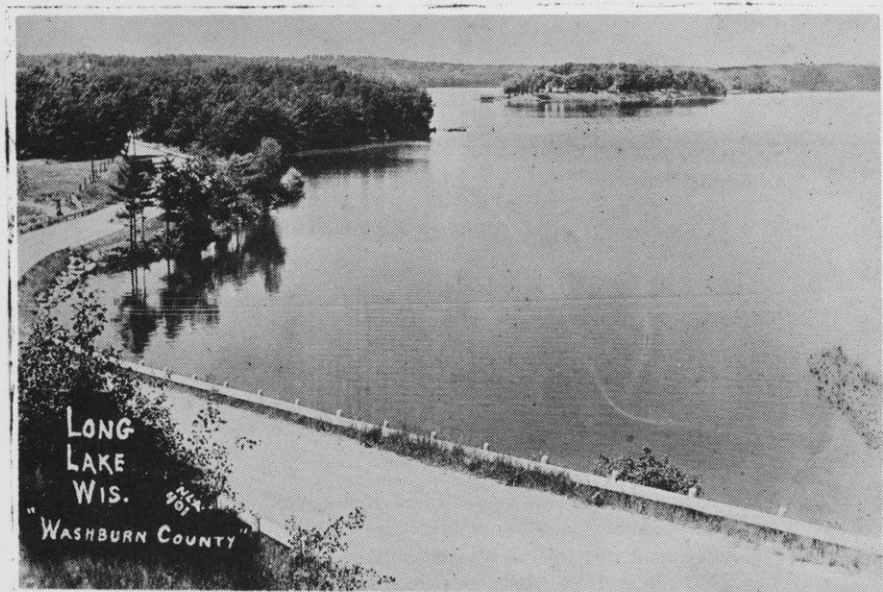
Many Indians were living nearby and some of the children attended the Nobleton school. It is believed that an Indian burial ground is located in the school yard. The schoolhouse which stands there now may not be the one which was first erected, but it operated until the district was consolidated with Rice Lake.

Families from all over the country were moving up to buy the "cheap" land. The men worked in the camps during the winter and dug stumps and rocks all summer. The west side of the lake soon had many settlers and another school was needed. One was built in section 36 in about 1895, it was

named "Pioneer." The first teacher was Lena Kjorstad, who had come up with other members of Laage's family in 1893. She was 20 years old and no doubt had only a third grade certificate. Teachers were so scarce that she taught for many years. One of her first pupils has told of her wearing a square mortar board cap at school. She must have wanted to impress them. She was tall and very dignified and her pupils toed the mark. (A lady teacher always wore a white apron which came nearly to the bottom of her long dress). Later she married August Larson. She resented being called Lena, and even after his death insisted on being addressed as Mrs. A. J. Larson.

As the settlers moved in along the road going to Sarona another school house was built on the Peter Schultz farm one mile west of the present town hall in 1911. He had a large house and the young folks would walk up there for dances.

Here is a good story about a teacher at the Pioneer school. She was Corine Foss who was walking the trail from her home when she met up with a lot of oxen from the headquarters camp. They were feeding near the church.



Scenic view of Long Lake, showing Kunz Island.

One ox did not like the looks of her and started after her. Elias Lee had a log house about half up, across the road. Mr. Ox chased her around and around that house. In desperation she managed to climb that wall and perched on top of it and the ox kept his eye on her as he fed nearby until late in the afternoon, when he wandered off to the other oxen. Nothing is remembered of what happened at school when she did not appear for school, nor why no one was alarmed about her whereabouts.

Here is a list of the earliest settlers in the western portion of the town: Laage Kjorstad 1886, Eau Claire; Louis Tronstad & Even Kirkeby, Eau Claire; Emil Weideman, Milwaukee; Martin Severson, Norway; all in 1890; Ener Foss, Eau Claire and Iver Hugdahl, Deer Park in 1891; Carl Foss, Eau Claire, 1892; Nels Hovey, Mondovi, 1893; Sigurd Anderson, 1896 who was the first owner of Woodland Park.

Another influx of settlers came in 1903. Ezekial Shultz, Madison; Adolph and Fred Gunderson, S. Dakota. Another group from Eau Claire: Henry Elmgreen, Ole Stensley, Kunte Kolstad, Tom Iveland, Ed Anderson, Ole Bogstad, and Chris Everson. Charles Kunz of Ft. Atkinson may have settled on the Big Island at this time but he first saw it while cruising thru the area with Charles Thomas and Joe Garbutt in 1895.

The Hans Martinson family located on the northside of The Narrows in 1897. He was camp boss and his wife the camp cook. When the logging ended they moved to a farm in the town of Sarona. They were lonesome because relatives and old friends had settled near Long Lake. They moved down into section 25 on Hiway D in 1910 and built a nice house near where we take the short cut across to Hiway M.

Laage Kjorstad did not live long to enjoy his beautiful view of Long Lake. He died of what his family later believed to have been appendicitis. Nels Hovey also died a few years after settling here. Before long his widow Mary married Sever Soholt and they had two sons, Lawrence and Chester. Art Hovey told stories of how he and his older brother Oscar took turns rocking Chester in the cradle and reading a book at the same time. They were eager for the job because it gave them an excuse to read. Art was a well educated man but his days in the school room were very limited.

It was surprising how many friends these people had who came from Eau Claire to visit them each summer. Some of them put up cabins to live in. The influx of new young people made life very exciting.

Mr. Ingram was willing that his boats be used for pleasure, providing Sever Soholt was along as the captain. One July 4th, whole families boarded the big steamboat and went up the lake for a picnic in the Todd settlement. The friends from up there came back with them on the boat for a night of dancing in the camp dining room. Some of the men were instructed to come down after the chores were done with rigs to take them home in the morning. There were no telephones but it did not take long to gather a group of young folks together for a row up the lake for a dance at the Rockford Hotel or most any other place.

Mr. Ingram built a nice cottage on the south end of the lake west of the dam. He employed a young woman as cook as his family and friends loved to vacation on the lake. They had a 40 foot launch for enjoyment. The cook's name was Mary Olson. The young bookkeeper, Iver Hugdahl, soon won her affections and they were married and moved into a log house in the camp. She kept right on cooking in the camp until the mill closed down.

Don't get the impression that these people were all for fun and frolic. Most of them were serious-minded Norwegian people and they soon organized

a church. In fact there were two branches of the Lutheran Church in the Long Lake area. The first to be organized was the Synode Hauge with Rev. Kvam serving as pastor. The Ladies Aid was organized in 1895 in the Ener Foss home. Officers elected were Mrs. Knut Kolstad, Pres.; Miss Carrie Foss, Sec., Mrs. Ener Foss, Treas. They were the branch which started to build the original church in 1897. Rev. Skagen and Rev. Kjerlaug also served them.

The other branch was the United Lutheran Church. Their Aid was formed in 1901 at the home of Mrs. Lewis Hommø. Officers elected were Mrs. Iver Hugdahl, Pres.; Mrs. O. H. Kjorstad, Sec., Mrs. Martin Severson, Treas. Their services were held in the schoolhouses and were served by Rev. Nord and Rev. Ritland.

After the merger of these two synods in 1917 the two aids met at the Alfred Kirkeby home and decided to merge. Rev. Kjerlaug and Rev. Ritland assisted with the meeting. Officers elected were Mrs. Ella Jacobson, Mrs. Mary Hugdahl, Mrs. P. A. Helgeland and Mrs. Mary Soholt.

The congregation also met to elect officers which were P. A. Helgeland, Martin Kolstad, and Oscar Foss the trustees, and Ole Martinson, Sec. Before the merger Rev. Ritland lived at Ladysmith and made his semi-monthly trips by train to Brill and from there to Long Lake by horse and buggy or sleigh. On alternate Sundays Rev. Kjerlaug would have the services.

Rev. Kleven was the first pastor to serve the merged churches. He lived in Rice Lake and was also in charge of the Stanfold and Our Savior's parishes. First oak pews were installed in 1931. First furnace in 1933, and electric lighting in 1938.

Many of these people walked to church even though the sand was as deep as their shoe tops, or in the winter in the deep snow. They established a cemetery beside the church as soon as possible.

Blueberries and long blackberries were plentiful in the woods towards Birchwood. The folks brought them home by the milk can full.

In the early days the Menomonie Band of about 15 young men spent three weeks each summer at the Kirkeby place in tents. They were met at the train by men with teams on wagons with hayracks, to be used for their luggage. They were out for fun and preferred to walk or ride the horses. They were a rough bunch and did not care who they ducked in the lake. They gave a band concert every night which could be heard all over the lake. This program went on for eight or ten years.

Life may have been hard in many ways back in those days, but people knew how to get enjoyment out of simple things. With the fish from the lake and game in the woods they lived high.

We will now go up the road on the east shore of Long Lake. The first 80 acres east of the road was purchased by Guy Green in 1946 from John Burke who had owned it for several years. In the early days Ole Evenson owned one of the 40's but had made no improvements. Next Rev. Kvam owned it and had a house built.

Art and Carl Overby of Rice Lake built the first cottage on the east shore. Next on the east side of the road was the Antone Gruenhagen homestead of 160 acres. He also had four acres of lakeshore property. His son, Fred S., took it over and Antone and his wife lived there until their deaths.

The Wisconsin Land Co. owned an 80 acres which was sold to Fred Lohn. It cut into the section owned by R. H. Pritchard. Mr. Krug was the latter's overseer for many years. Each year they shipped in about 50 head of feeder cattle which were brought out from Brill cowboy fashion. In the fall they were taken to Brill in the same fashion to be shipped to market.

Somebody named it Sunset Ranch, and H.R.P. Miller became the next owner. He too had many overseers and operated in a big way. He divided his lakeshore into lots which are now filled with nice homes. Before his death he donated the farm property to the Holy Trinity Catholic Church at Haugen in honor of his third wife. (He made charitable gifts in honor of his first and second wives.) Ted Hovde bought it from the church in 1954.

The land up to the tip of this arm of Long Lake was first owned by V. C. Holmes. He wanted to build a cottage on it 62 years ago. Young Ed Foss was hired to haul the lumber. When he passed the Gruenhagen farm Fred came running to the road with a broad smile and shouted, "A big bouncing boy was born at our house this morning." Of course he was named Fred after his dad. As he grew up the name of "Fritz" was tacked onto him, and he still carries it. Mr. Holmes's lakeshore property is now called Holmes Park and some of the relatives have cottages there. The rest of the land is now owned by Clarence Bergren.

Fritz Gruenhagen took over the lakeshore property and built cottages on it, and he and his family still live there. His brother Frank still lives on the homestead.

A schoolhouse was needed in this area. One was built on the section line between sections 1 & 12 and on the Long Lake side of the town line. A few children from the town of Birchwood attended it. It was known as the White Pine School. The first building burned and it was quickly replaced. Winoma Gruenhagen (Fritz's wife) taught there in 1940-41 with only three pupils, which ended the life of that school. The building was made over into a cottage and is still there.

The story of the Elver Ranch would fill a book. It comprised the territory surrounded by Long Lake and The Narrows. Some called it "The Island," while others said "The Peninsula." When Elver operated the ranch by having supervisors run it, he shipped in cattle and horses from the west to Sarona. They were driven over to the narrowest part of The Narrows and were forced to swim the channel to get to the ranch. It changed hands many times, with many men acting as the big boss. Always things were run on a big scale.

Somewhere along the line Aksel Nielsen, a Chicago restaurant operator, became the proprietor of the "Nielsen Hereford Ranch." He evidently got tired of the deal and in March 1953 he sold 1,965 acres to the St. Paul area Boy Scouts of America. He retained 163 acres for himself west of Little Mud Lake. North of that Ralph Rosebloom owns 396 acres and Oswald Rindsig 531.

These farmers have extensive buildings and farm in a big way. The Boy Scout camp has many large buildings. Hundreds of boys camp here every summer.

Woodland Park was first owned by Sigurd Anderson. Rev. Jaastad of Houston, Minn. and banker Sanderson of Harmony purchased the first lots and built two small cottages. The word spread among the ministers and bishops of the Lutheran Church and also fishermen from Chicago and they swarmed onto this peninsula at the south end of the lake. They built nice cottages and brought their families. It became known as "Holy Island."

We have a few early settlers down on the county line road. B. J. Lewis became interested in this country in 1904 through his former pastor Rev. Jaastad



Woodland Park (or Holy Island), south end of Long Lake.

at Houston, Minn. He purchased 160 acres on the Brill river in section 36. To the east his neighbors were Wm. Coleman and Len St. Clair. To the west three bachelor brothers from Norway named Lilloe. They were stonemasons and found plenty to do. Also, Tom Iveland who sold his land to Elias Dahl in 1915. And the Dan Dinga family who were not Norwegians but in time learned to talk the American language and mixed with the other folks. Some of the family still live on the farm.

Lenore Helgeland came up from Harmony, Minn. to visit relatives. A romance developed and she married Joseph Lewis, son of B. J., and they took over the old farm.

Torger Kleven and Andrew Hovde came from Norway together in 1910. Both were expert carpenters and built many of the barns and houses in this area. Torger married Mary Lee and Andrew married Inga Dahl.

We must mention the store Ed Kjorstad operated in a small building beside the hotel. He decided in 1895 to put in a stock of groceries and other much needed articles such as sox and gloves, lamps and lanterns and kerosene. He had a powerful horse named Maude that hauled his wagon or sleigh full of supplies from Haugen where they had been thrown from the train onto the loading platform. He had ordered his stock from wholesale houses in Duluth or Superior. He never had a stove in his store, so folks would not loiter in the cold weather. They could go into the hotel to get warm. By 1915 the roads were good enough so people could travel to Rice Lake with more ease, or take the train at Brill. So he gave up the store.

By 1900 the pine harvest was ended, but there was a fine stand of hardwood ready to be harvested. Ingram decided to build a mill on the east side of the river, right beside the lake. They built a hot pond by fencing off a corner with



Chippewa Indians camped at Long Lake.

a plank barricade, the steam from the engine warmed the water so the logs could be washed and the mill could operate all winter. This made a lot more activity at the main camp. This continued through 1906.

The lumber was hauled to Haugen to be shipped out on the train. After the Omaha R.R. was built through Brill up to Birchwood and beyond in 1901 much of the lumber was hauled to Brill for shipment. Walter Sykes of Rice Lake was the engineer and Sever Soholt the scaler.

The big steamboat was built on a dry dock on the shore of the lake and was named "N. B. Noble" after the superintendent of all operations. A smaller boat for utility and pleasure was also made in the same way. Ingram's

big launch was named "Fanny" in honor of his wife. The big boat was used for towing the log booms down the lake in the spring.

When the mill closed after the 1906 cutting, it was dismantled and taken to Rice Lake and set up again. It was known as the "Little Mill" which operated for several years.

When the camp broke up Iver Hugdahl the bookkeeper purchased the property in 1907. The many buildings were torn down and the lovely big square house was built in 1914. A bit later the big red barn was built. There had been 320 acres in the deal. He sold off 80 acres to Ludwig Tronstad.

Ida Hugdahl graduated from the Rice Lake High School and spent two years at the college at Superior. She taught the elementary grades for 23 years. While teaching in Eau Claire she married Clarence Peterson who was a widower with two sons. The old folks were failing in health and they came back to the farm to take care of them until their deaths. The Petersons bought the Hugdahl farm in 1942.

While the Hugdahls lived there the big house was always full of old folks, guests, helpers and especially homeless old men who worked for their keep. Then the grandchildren grew up and loved to return to it. Mr. Peterson died in 1960, but his wife Ida stayed on at the farm until the fall of 1970.

Anyone traveling on Hiway D & M on the west side of Long Lake will be surprised to see a neat brick town hall surrounded by thick timber. We believe it was built in the early 1920's.

There came a time when a law was passed forbidding the use of school houses for election purposes. That put an end to the use of the Nobleton schoolhouse. The town built a shack up the road which was used for a few years. The new one was made of brick as a means of fire protection. But we are told that some of those town meetings got so hot the sparks flew fast enough to burn it from the inside. Back in those days the men wanted to serve on the town board or school board so they could run things right. It is the only brick building in the whole town.

The Long Lake stream passes through a narrow valley with high hills on both sides, especially to the east. The first road was so steep teams had difficulty hauling a load either up or down the grade. The first cars could hardly make it. Then as faster cars came on the market, they went so fast they often missed the curve to get on the bridge and flipped into the creek.

After several bad accidents at this spot the county remade the road in 1960. The hills on both sides were cut down and the dirt used to raise and widen the road bed in a long sweeping curve.

Instead of the old-fashioned bridge, a very large steel culvert was placed in the stream to carry the water and the hiway built over the top of it. It was placed nearer the dam than the first bridge. Hiway D is now a very good road. Its entire length is surfaced with blacktop, a great change from the trail of 70 years ago.

Chapter XIII

The Town of Madge

William Henry Todd of English Canadian extraction came up from Eau Claire county in 1885 and built the first frame house on the shore of Long Lake. (It still stands there altho much remodeled.) He chose a site on the north side of the narrow part of Long Lake. The first story was set into a hill with a southern exposure. He added two stories above ground. The lumber was hauled from Rice Lake by team and wagon over the tote road. It was then loaded onto a 16x16 flat boat and pulled by the logger's steamboat up to his place.

His wife's name was Harriett Donaldson Todd. There were six sons: Henry W., James A., George, Monroe, Nathan, and Charles R. The three daughters were Mrs. Henry (Ed) Bell, (Charlotte); Mrs. Frank Young (Emma); Mrs. J. McCormick (Amanda). Many were grown up and some married but they all came and either filed on homesteads or bought land outright from the railroad or logging companies. Some of the descendants still live in Madge.

In the 1880's John R. Mullen and Reuben Donaldson came from Sand Creek. Both were logging camp bosses. Anthony Christie and James L. Pepper were Civil War veterans. The latter peddled linament and similar remedies and supplies.

Mr. and Mrs. Ole Soholt, sr. were married at Rice Lake June 9, 1886. They lived in the town of Oak Grove until after Ole, jr. was born. They went north into Washburn County before the southeast corner was set off from Bashaw in 1889. They took up a homestead in section 22 of what in 1915 became the town of Madge. Ole, sr. was a woods cook and formerly a salt water sailor, he served as school treasurer, town assessor, postmaster and county coroner. He died in 1930 and his wife in 1923. Like many others they remained on their homesteads because they loved it.

In the 1890's came Robert Potter from Perley; Oscar Weideman, sr. from Eau Claire; Caleb J. Parker, a Civil War veteran, and his two brothers-in-law, Charles and Bill McKie and their families from Dunn County.

Up in the north end were W. H. Williams, a taxidermist; Tom Max, Fred Seymom and George Hughes. In the northeast corner a settlement of French-Canadians by the name of Akey came from Stillwater. There were Frank, Peter, and Dick and Charley, the son of Frank. They came in the early 90's.

A colony of Bohemians came into the southwest corner at about the turn of the century. Jim Vonasek, Frank Kasper, Frank Johncheck, Charles Cipra, Mike Pavlas, Ed Janecky, and Joe Moravec. Some of these families found themselves living over the line in Long Lake after the town of Madge was formed. Also Wm. McGraw, Ed Sankey, Ellery McCullough and Bert Craven. Many of these names are still on the map. Much of this was good farming land and once these settlers got it cleared of stumps they wanted to remain on it.

Many more came in later but this takes in the first 15 years of pioneering as remembered and told by one who lived during that time.

The St. Croix Lumber Company logged the white pine off the north end of the town of Madge in the early 90's, floating the logs down the Yellow River to Stillwater. The Daniel Shaw Lumber Co. logged off a fine stand of Norway pine in section 16. These logs were hauled over to the Omaha railroad and shipped to the company mill at Shawtown in about 1900.

The Knapp, Stout & Co. did some logging in the south end of the town. When the Rice Lake Lumber Co. started operations around Long Lake in about 1882 there was an agreement between the two companies that the latter could have what the K.S. did not care for. All these logs were sent down the Red Cedar River.

It did not take long before the world heard there was wonderful fishing in Washburn County as well as pine trees. Soon the summer tourists started coming to Long Lake.

The following are portions of the early history as written by Bill Bloom of Rockford, Illinois:

"In mid-April of 1905, our family, Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Bloom, daughters Florence and Eda arrived from Rockford, Ill., and stayed at the Hotel Rockford which Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Curtis were operating. Our new home on the lake was occupied by a crew of Norwegians from Nobleton who were finishing the building of a two story log cabin each for Col. A. E. Fisher and Col. Wm. Nelson



Eda Bloom and pet lamb at an old logging camp where the family lived until "The Resort" was finished in 1905.

of Rockford. The crew was in charge of a Mr. Larson and his daughter acted as cook. What a crew of hardy men and eaters! Five meals a day. They also built cabins for Abrahamson, McQueen, Lundberg and the Winnebago Club. I arrived in May and got a job of peeling logs for the Club building.

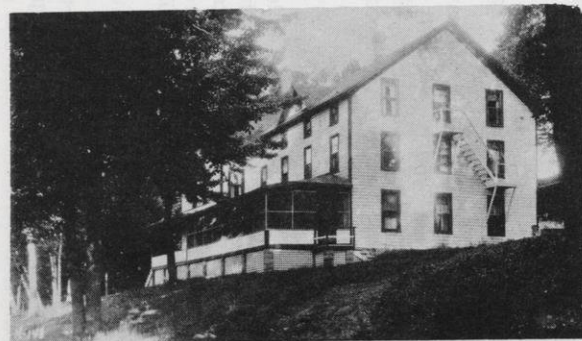
"Other cottages on the lake shore were Lindenaugh, owned by Walters, Schwann and Goethals from Eau Claire. In order on the lake was Smith's



Hotel Rockford in background, store and saloon to the left, with open air rest cottage between them. Taken 1915.



Oscar Bloom's resort on upper Long Lake, 1914.



Hotel Rockford on upper Long Lake. View of the east end.



Winnebago Club, north side of upper Long Lake.

cottage on the island, L. Marsh, H. Cutting, Tim Tracy, Tip Holland, Bill Buske and the Rockford Hotel. Curly Nelson built a two story frame building, consisting of a store and apartment above. Next was a small cement shack built by George and Gust Jorgensen, then Harmon's cottage and store. On up through the Narrows the Winnebago Club. Across the bay was a colony of Belvidere people, Dysart, Loop, Winne and others.

"At the head of the lake was an Indian settlement which contained an old Indian cemetery with wooden covers over the graves. Pipe and tobacco were placed in a hole near the graves for the departed spirits.

"Hermit Charley Parsons had a shack just across the bay from the Winnebago Club and old Indian Joe and his family (six or seven) lived on a flat near the entrance of Mud Lake. A feud developed between Parsons and Indian Joe over trap lines. First the Parsons shack was blown up and later Indian Joe was burned out.

"Mention must be made of the 3000 acre island across the lake from our home which was owned by Charles Elver, a hotel man from Madison. Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Weideman were in charge and they had seven or eight ranch hands from around our neighborhood, plus a Finn and a Dane and my brother-in-law, Nels Pedersen. To see them cross the lake on the treacherous ice in the spring and fall was a circus. They carried planks, boards and even saplings or ladders.

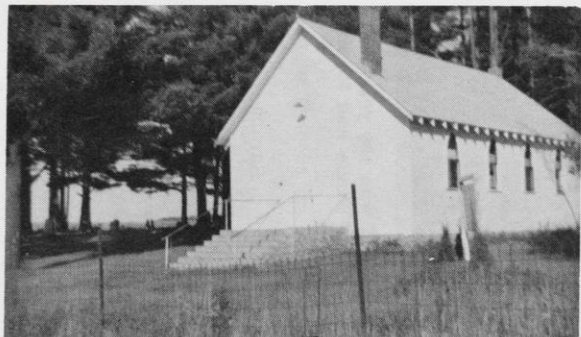
"In the early years farmers would plow around the pine stumps and plant oats, hay etc. Gus Soholt and brother Ole jr. attended the agricultural short course at the University of Wisconsin from 1909 to 1912. Shortly after new methods of planting were used. A man by the name of Ole Holverson (Dynamite Ole) and the farmers were soon blowing up stumps and the farmers were then able to plow whole fields. Hybrid corn was planted. Milch cows supplanted beef cattle, and a cheese factory or creamery were considered. There were big changes in the farming methods.

"Mrs. A. B. Curtis and Mrs. Oscar Bloom were prime movers in organizing a Ladies Aid Society in the town of Madge and were able to establish a church and a cemetery beside it. (Many of the people mentioned in this chapter were most friendly and helpful on this project, space does not permit the listing of many others.)

"Back in those early days it was thought that the air in North Wisconsin would cure tuberculosis. It often failed but my boyhood pal Francis Croon of Rockford was sent up to stay with us. His doctor having pronounced his trouble "tuberculosis in the final stages." He spent two winters and one summer with us at the lake. Then he returned to Rockford, and after examination the doctor pronounced him as fully recovered.

When I arrived at the lake I was using two crutches and a wire extension on one shoe. An early injury having resulted in a tubercular hip. Plenty of fresh air, good food and exercise started me on the upgrade. I had chores to do, care of a small garden, chickens, pigs and cows to take care of. Very soon I was able to discard one crutch and gained pounds and good health."

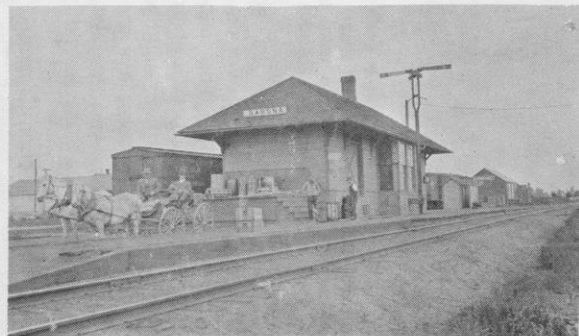
(Thanks to Bill Bloom for this real life story of the early days in the town of Madge).



Madge Church. Cemetery located under the trees.



Cottage built by Arno B. Winne in 1908 on east side of the Narrows. Taken in 1936.



Waiting for the train at the Sarona depot.



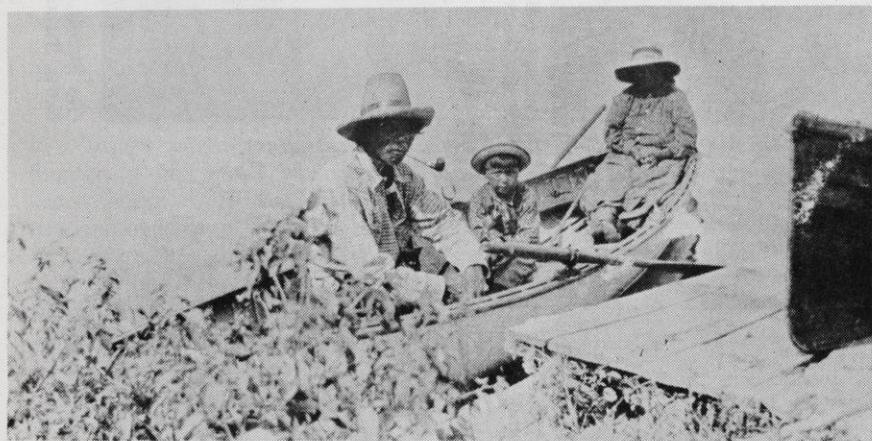
Ole Soholt, Jr., and his mother with Leif, the white fawn. Taken in 1907.

Mrs. Eva M. Sheaf of Rockford, Ill., reported that their first trip to Long Lake was in 1906. There were no paved roads and they were driven from Sarona to the Rockford Hotel in a top buggy (by an Indian) and it poured rain all the way.

"Upon arrival we found it so crowded we were sent to a third floor room. Most of them were Rockford people on vacation. At that time fish were plentiful and every day we started off early in the morning with a lunch packed by the hotel people. We cooked a fish dinner in some favorite spot and returned at sundown, always with two stringers of fish.

"The Indians sold blueberries at 10c a quart and we picked cranberries near the hotel. The Curtis people owned the Hotel and the meals were out of this world. Homemade bread, cake, pies, etc. Hotel rates were \$8 a week meals included. Some of us drove to the Madge P.O. each day to get the mail."

Mrs. Neva Maynard told us that her father Arno B. Winne came first to Long Lake in 1906 when he purchased land on the east side of the Narrows. He built a nice cottage in 1908. He had a 16 foot launch which had been built



Bill Naviach, his mother and her great grandson. Grandma was 100 years old in this picture, taken 1923. They were selling baskets. Mrs. Winne had to pay them a dollar for permission to take this picture.

at Elgin, Ill., and their furniture was shipped up in a box car to Sarona. Curtis and Bloom brought the things over on a wagon, then had to build a raft to get the furniture to the cottage. The launch took care of itself. Della Biglow of Belvidere built a cottage beside theirs and John Hale and wife had a log house nearby. Otherwise their neighbors were across the water. What Mrs. Maynard remembers the best are the numerous wildcats they would see on the trips between Sarona and the lake.

On a 1938 map we find just two schoolhouses, one in section 8 named Hillcrest, and one in section 22 named Madge. This indicates where the center of the settlements was located. The Roosevelt school was located just over the line into Beaver Brook on Hiway B which may have served the children of the Bohemian settlement.

About 1895 a Star Route out of Shell Lake was established out to the lake. William H. Todd was the first postmaster in his own house. It was named Madge after Mr. Devereaux's daughter. (He was the S. L. Postmaster). The Ole Sohols' house was the next one used for a post office and lastly Mrs. Anna Donaldson took it into her home, altho the Rockford mail was delivered to the hotel as a special favor for one season. When the R.F.D. was established the rural post offices were discontinued.

Ole Soholt, jr. was a member of the county board for 10 years and acted as chairman for four years. He won the primary election race for county clerk in 1930 and won every race until 1966 when he retired.

The town of Madge got on the map nationally on May 1, 1954 when the National Audubon Society acquired a large tract of land for a camp on the south shore of Devils Lake, where the buildings have been erected. Much of the land extends over into the town of Long Lake. Mr. Arthur C. Andrews and his daughter Frances of Minneapolis had been in the habit of spending parts of the summer vacations on this property which he owned. He deeded it to the daughter in 1925. She offered it to the Audubon Society because she



Guide board to Hunt Hill Audubon Camp.

thought it to be an ideal site for nature studies. After due consideration they accepted the deed from her in 1954. A beautiful camp has been established and people from all over the country come here for study and relaxation.

More should be told about the Rockford Hotel. Asaph B. Curtis came from Rockford in 1902 to start building a huge hotel on the north end of Long Lake. He brought two supervisors with him, the crew was made up of local men. The lumber was hauled from Shell Lake and Rice Lake. During the summer of 1904 the two-and-a-half story hotel was finished. Also another building for a store on one side and a saloon on the other. For an added convenience for the ladies he built an open air parlor between the store and the hotel. The sides were screened in and it was furnished with tables and chairs and kerosene lamps. There was a cord they could pull which rang a bell in the saloon. A waiter would come for their order and deliver the same. The men frequented this parlor in the evenings.

Chapter XIV

The Double Town of Birchwood

The leading men who had settled in the village of Birchwood went to Shell Lake in 1903 and asked that the east half of the town of Long Lake be given to them. Mr. Loomis insisted that it be named after him. In due time the name was changed to Birchwood the same as the village.

The traffic was almost entirely on the two railroads, as roads were non-existent. The only way to get out of the village by team was to cross on the narrow platform on top of the dam, go through the Old Camp, turn to the left and follow the logging trail over the "Floating Bridge" which the loggers had laid across a marsh. Then up to the highland where "T" now joins "D" on the section lines. From there the old trail wound around Balsam Lake to Angus corners. It was soon changed onto the section lines.



**Old wooden dam built by the Rice Lake Lumber Co.
on Slim Creek, where it flows into upper Long Lake.**

As heavy loads were not allowed to cross over the dam, a bridge with high steel support structure on each side (painted red) was built in 1903 over Birch stream. It was known as "The Red Bridge."

The old logging trail from Edgewater area joined these other roads at the corner making what was called The Four Corners for several years. Bear this in mind as we travel over the town of Birchwood.

The land agents were busy. Joe LaPointe up at Washburn was attracted to this area. He thought the lay of the land was good and purchased 240 acres in the corner north of "D" and west of "T". He built a house and barn which were considered very modern at that time. He also bought an 80 west of his place for his father, Louis LaPointe and daughters, who moved down from Washburn in 1903 to live in a small house far back from the road. Later a good frame house was built near the road. Harry LaPointe joined the family in April 1904 and made his home with them when he was not working in the sawmill business.

Herman Kleiman married Alice LaPointe and they lived there for a year. Then Harry married Rose Cyr in 1916 and they farmed it until 1920 when they moved into the village and went into partnership with Frank Cyr in a mercantile store.

Louis Neau who had married Ina Lockwood bought the Joe LaPointe farm of 240 acres in the spring of 1918. Wm. Rohlik bought the farm from them in 1920 and moved his family from Seaforth, Minn. onto it in December. Louie moved into the village.

After LaPointe left his farm many people lived on it. Among them the Lloyd Olmstead family and the Charley Saxby family who moved up from Angus. Fred Funk who had married Lucile Saxby lived there several years. It is now owned by Bill Petersen.

Back in 1919 Carl Olson of Prairie Farm came into the town of Birchwood and bought 160 acres where Hiway T from Angus joins D. He built a good house and barn. His brother Alvin came to live with him. In 1922 Carl gave up being a bachelor, and married Lucy Harms, who lived on the Brill road. Carl's father, Magnus, and wife bought an acre from Carl and built a small house on it and sons Leonard and Albert lived with them until they were married.

Carl opened up the land and farmed it until 1933. Like many others he was not able to keep up the payments and the high interest. Elma and Pauline Johnson of Loveland Corners took over the farm. Elson Saxby who had married their sister Gertie moved up from Illinois and lived on this farm for several years. Next came George Gunderson and son Delbert who ran the farm for six years. Then Delbert married Hannah Rohlik and they stayed two more years. The Francis Kemp family came next, then Henry Plain of Mikana bought the farm in 1945 and moved onto it the next year, where they stayed until 1960. Those are a lot of changes on one farm.

Albert Olson bought 40 acres off the east side of Carl's farm and put up a very nice house and small barn. Then he married Ethel Wood, the little English lady who had come to visit her cousin Mrs. Hartley at Angus. When Albert retired and moved into the village he sold his place to Pete Asmussen of Mikana. Pete raised acres of strawberries and raspberries. When his wife's health failed they retired to Mikana, Alfred Mayer bought the farm in 1948 and still lives there.

Now let's turn around and go west again where the road weaves back and forth to get around big ponds and little lakes. We come to the Victor Hartl home. They were late comers, it being 1929 when they moved here from N. Dakota. He had invested in 40 acres of wild land. He shipped a carload of goats to Angus, where they were locked into the stock yard beside the track. That fence was made of boards. Old Billie Goat took one look at it and proceeded to walk right up and over. The nanny goats followed his example. Some of the women who were living at Angus were out hanging up the washing and saw them swarming over the gardens, etc. They screamed and ran for cover. It was quite a chase before the flock was headed out to the Hartl place where they cleaned up the brush and everything else they could find. This earned for Hartl the name "The Goat Man."

We soon come to a road leading north where Grant Olaf opened up a place on the west side of the road, followed by Mike Walrack and he by Ed Strohmeier. The house burned while the family was away. A mile north lands up at the Berry farm. In 1903 Dr. James Berry came up from Chicago to

look over the country. He bought 430 acres in section 17 which was loaded with small lakes. He put up very good buildings and sent his son James up here to run the place. He was so lonesome out there all alone that he spent much of his time riding horseback into town to find someone to talk to. He was rewarded for his efforts when he courted Mabel Bemis and they were married June 3, 1908. It was a great lark for the village young folks to go on a sleigh ride with a potluck dinner in the sled and land at the Berry farm for a good time. Summer travel was almost impossible, especially in rainy weather.

Now let's go back to Hiway D and go west and dodge more water holes and hills. If you are looking sharp you will see an opening in the trees on the south side. Turn there and go one-half mile. You behold an open field of 80 acres surrounded on all sides by forest crop land. When old man Brown and wife and bachelor sons, Tom, Oscar, Elmer and Charley came in from cutting wood in Wilson Valley they bought this place and cleared the land and lived there until they either died or moved away. But their bodies were all buried in Woodlawn Cemetery. Later Jake Geiger bought the place and enjoyed it for several years.

We will go back to the hiway and a half mile to the west we will come to another road that goes north through the woods. We are approaching the W. W. Vincent property. Vincent had married Dr. Berry's daughter and had become interested in this lake country. He wanted "Berry Lake" and bought about 600 acres all around it, in fact all that the owners would sell to him. In 1928 everybody was talking about the mansion Mr. Vincent of Chicago was building out in the timber country. The beautiful barn for the Jersey cows and riding horses. The three car garage with a place upstairs for the chauffeur and maids to sleep. The tennis court and big lawn where their young folks had great fun. All high above Berry Lake. It is the most beautiful home in the town. It is now owned by George Bard and Jim Dodson of Chicago who employ a caretaker whose family lives over the garage.

This brings us to the edge of the town of Long Lake and we will retrace our steps to the Four Corners where one trail goes to the village of Edgewater, one into Birchwood and one north which we will travel this time.

Mr. Rohlik sold his east 80 of wild land in the corner to Louis Frosli in 1923. A summer cottage on the Anton Frosli farm on Cedar Lake was moved up for them to live in. Additions and alterations have been made on it, but it is still there as part of the home today. Frosli moved to the Ford Garage in 1929. The farm was rented to Olaf Olson who had married Dora Funk of Angus. This added another member of the Olson family on this road. Louie Haas had married Mamie Rohlik and they bought this farm in 1935 and are still living on it.

On the hill to the east is where Adolph Setterlun settled in 1915. His brother Frank joined him the next year and established a blacksmith shop out by the road. They cleared a part of their 58 acres and built a lovely home so high it overlooked the village to the south. Adolph built some tourist cottages down by Birch Lake. He had a fine collection of Indian artifacts, precious stones and guns. Their brother-in-law, Frank Fohr, followed them in 1917 and took the 40 acres joining them on the north. They too built a nice home and barn. It is now occupied by B. L. Thompson.

Jim Gregory had opened up 160 acres on the west side of the road, but he wanted to move to Stone Lake where his brother Sam had moved and was then

a land agent. N. E. Forward, Stella and Ernest happened along in 1914 looking for a farm and made a deal with Gregory. By 1922 they decided they'd had enough of it and moved into the village. Joe Blaha lived there for several years and still owns it.

Joe "Pop" Evans who owned the Star Bottling Works in Eau Claire purchased five 40's as an investment and an excuse to get away from his labors and have a good time with his pals such as Charley Wilke (the boys called him Charley Wildcat). Joe always brought along several cases of his "Pop" to treat his friends. He sold one 40 acres to John Grasley and another to Charley Amy who sold it to C. H. Haynie in 1924. Haynie and his wife and son Fan lived there until their deaths. Evans built a good-sized house on his land but his wife refused to come to this wild country to live. His daughter Bertha Holman lived there for a time. Ray Kemp restored the house fit to live in and moved out there a few years ago.

The next farm north of the Fohr farm was first owned by John Matson who worked at the mill. John Grasley moved his family to Birchwood in 1909, lived in several places, then followed Matson on this farm before moving farther up the road. John Parkos bought the farm in 1921 and lived there until his death, and his wife many more years.

The land next north of this was first owned by Hank Knapmiller. A house was built on it and in 1913 Foster Soper moved his family onto it and cleared a part of the land before he moved back to the village in 1917. "Jake" Parkos purchased it in 1921 and lived there until he moved to the Leary farm after Ed Leary moved away.

Charley Wilke owned the next 40 altho he lived in the village. L. K. Haynie brought his family from Iowa in 1920. He purchased the next 40. One acre in the corner was set aside for the Lakota Club House which the community built after the new folks moved into the neighborhood and wanted a place to gather for recreation. Later was used as the town hall. Many wedding dances were given in it and always a big crowd attended.

Now we come to another three corners and we turn to the west. James Leary came in 1905 and settled on a large tract of land on the north side of the road. The next place was logged by Leland Soper, then owned by Doc Goddard, a veterinarian at Barron. He sent Charley Fegan to operate it in a big way, but he got tired of the deal in 1935 and moved off. Then the Bowers family took it over. Next came Melvin Nelson in 1939 who stood it as long as he could then moved into the village in 1946. Goddard was a hard man to work for. The farm has now been vacated.

We will drive along the shore of Nice Lake, which is well named as it is shallow with a sandy bottom and shore which makes it an ideal spot for picnics, and was a favorite place for family gatherings in the early days. Wm. Yusas bought an 80 acres north of it in 1914. He had been a cabinet maker in Chicago. He built a nice home and other buildings and lived there for many years.

In 1926 Frank Zemaitis of Chicago purchased 320 acres of cutover land north and west of Nice Lake and came to live on it the following year. He became town chairman in 1941 and served as County Board chairman for 12 years. He then resigned to accept the post of County Highway Commissioner. He has now retired from public life and built a home on the shore of Nice Lake.

We come to another three corners and turn to the north. Wm. Deraitus, sr. moved his family here in about 1914. He was accidentally shot while hunting. His wife Agnes could not run the place with the help of young boys. George Lenouskas was sent up from Chicago to help her operate the farm. He purchased an 80 acres joining it on the north. Soon George and Agnes were married. When William Deraitus, jr. was married he took over the home farm. Mr. and Mrs. Lenouskas moved up onto his place.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Lewis came along in 1944 and bought the Lenouskas land and lived there for a few years, then sold it to Walter Vischulas and returned to Rice Lake. The Lenouskas' established a new home on 160 acres on Hiway D east of the Al Mayor farm.

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Vischulis came from Chicago in 1914 and took a large tract of land in Section 9. He was a tailor by trade. All of these who came in 1914 were natives of Lithuania. They worked hard and cleared a lot of land and stayed on it.

This trail continues up into the north part of Birchwood which if you followed it you would come back into the four sections surrounding Bass, Red and Loon Lakes which were first owned by Albright and Hoffman. Part of it is now owned by Lapcinski Farms.

We must now return to the Club House corner and go north. The first house we see is owned by Worthy Grasley set on 40 acres of wild land. He established this place in 1936 soon after he married Luella Garthwait. Her mother was a sister of John Stowe and the family came here in 1934, she died a couple of years later and soon her family returned to southern Wisconsin. They had lived in the "Red House" west of Spjut Lake, where the Dixon family lived in the earliest days on that road.

Mr. and Mrs. Mannie Erickson came in 1921. They now have 280 acres which lie on both sides of the road. In 1951 they purchased Crystal Point resort on the south end of Spider No. 5. Carl Landgren was the founder of this resort in 1920. Many cottages have been added since that time.

We have now reached what the map calls Spjut Lake. But in the early days it was named Little Hemlock because a cluster of three hemlock trees were growing there. They are still there and are very rare in this area.

The first owners of the 80 acres east of this lake were Rollin Herrick and son Warren, who on April 1, 1907 came to live there and stayed three years. Many others lived there. Oscar Spjut who was a captain on a boat on the lakes brought his family in 1920, but moved away in 1937. The last owners were Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Freeman.

This road we are following looks straight and pretty on the map today, but, oh, in the early days it was almost impassable. It wound around hills and lakes in dangerous curves for even a team and wagon. Our next stop will be at the Spider Lake resort operated for many years by Alfred Brandt and family. Mr. and Mrs. Brandt were married Mar. 17, 1895 in Germany and came directly to America. They heard about northern Wisconsin and lived at Meteor for a time. He scouted around for a place he wanted to buy. He found Spider Lake with its many projections named Spider No. 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5 with a small stream connecting one to the other. He purchased a portion of land on the north end of Spider No. 1.

They loaded their belongings onto a freight car at Yarnell and came to Birchwood in the spring of 1906. It was hard picking to make a living those first years. They gave up in 1912 and moved to a farm near Campia, where they were closer to a school. By 1920 they decided to come back and start a resort as the children were big enough to help. They built a few log cabins and a lodge with a big dining room and kitchen.

In the early days many of the lakes had been found to be barren of fish. Martin Lake had black bass and many other kinds of fish. Brandt and Warren Herrick had worked independently at stocking the barren lakes.

One day Warren had taken seven adult bass out of Martin Lake and carried them rapidly to Ole Lake. Six years later Ole was alive with bass. The first tourists came in 1924. Warren made maple syrup for Brandt that spring



Spider Lake Resort lodge, built by Alfred Brandt in the early 1920's.

in three big iron kettles. He returned the next spring to repeat the project. It was then that he hired out for the entire season to act as guide and handy man and stayed there for five years. He would take the team and wagon loaded with men, women and kids and a picnic lunch and trail off through the woods to one of their well stocked lakes. Wow, how they pulled in the fish!

The Brandts operated this resort until 1943 when they sold to Alfred and Pearl Mayer. They in turn sold to Mr. and Mrs. Robert Weeks of Racine in 1947. Twenty years later they decided to retire. Their daughter Jean could not see the place go to strangers, so she and her husband Du Wayne Neison bought it. Mr. and Mrs. Weeks live there in a trailer home and keep an eye on the establishment.

We must back track and follow the trail into the northeast corner of the southern part of our town. Andrew and Emil Matson bought a large tract of land and put up good buildings and lived there until Emil's death in 1939. A lake on it has been named Matson. Harry Brandt was the next owner.

Thomas Bowden who had studied for the ministry decided to go into seclusion and purchased a large tract of land in 1913 up next to the borderline. He lived by himself until he died in 1943. Harry Brandt bought that place also. One of the lakes was named Bodins. This trail goes a half mile into the upper portion of the town where Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Thayer went to live. They cleared

quite a portion of their land, but he was far more interested in politics than farming. When he was an assemblyman he had reached the top rung of his ladder. Their elevation was very high; they could look down on Lake Chetac.

The Luther Park Bible Camp called "Outpost" is located on the half section west of Thayers.' We must now retrace our steps back to the main highway. Robert Weeks has an 80 acres north of the resort. Then comes the property around the lake named Trowbridge in the early days, but now known as Vollmers. Norman Brandt has a summer home on this land.

Going west we go through a large tract of land formerly owned by a bachelor named Peufald, now owned by F. W. Schmidt of Chicago who was a frequent patron who put his feet under Ma Brandt's resort table. He has a nice summer home beside one of the many lakes on his property. In the spring of 1952 he planted 6,000 pine "Trees for Tomorrow." More were added later. They cover a lot of waste land and are beautiful to look at .

In 1929 Mr. and Mrs. John Stowe and their grownup family came from southern Wisconsin and purchased large tracts of wild land from the American Immigration Co. It is located west and south of Martin Lake. (The plat book gives it the name of MacRae but the people still call it Martin). Donald and Marion Stowe live on this farm. Later Mr. Stowe purchased the property which Ab and Robert Tribitt had started to improve. Harold Stowe now owns it. This is the last wild land to be opened for farming in the town of Birchwood.

Mrs. Neva Maynard has a summer home on Pollywog Lake. In the early days she and her parents, the "Winnies," had a cottage up on the east side of Long Lake. Perhaps the earliest settler in this area was William Denison, sr., who brought his family into this wild country in 1915. He picked out a good site in section 29 where they raised their children. George Denison and sister Edith Kinsey each maintained a summer home for 30 years on the upper arm of Long Lake. Ross Denison married Rose Rohlik and remained on the old farm after the death of his parents. In 1943 they moved to the farm at Loon Lake in south Birchwood to be nearer the school. After the deaths of Mr. and Mrs. Jake Parkos the old Leary farm was vacated. The Denisons purchased it in 1959 and are still farming it. The old Denison farm has been owned for many years by Edwin Pawlisch.

Evelyn Crippen and her husband "Bud" owned a half section on the east shore of Lower Mud Lake. She returns each season to her summer home. Up in section 20 we now find LaForge resort. A hermit named Charlie Parsons lived there in a log hut. He quarreled with the Indians and everyone else. Tory and James Engebretson lived up at the top of the lake. Around the bend we find Long Lake Park and the Sunflower resort which is now owned by Mrs. Bobby Schmidt. The north side is lined with parks, resorts and summer homes until you reach The Narrows. Then you follow "B" into the town of Madge.

But we can turn around and follow "B" northeast and join "70." We find quite a settlement up in this corner around Slim Lake which empties into a creek and big flowage and on down to the tip of Long Lake. The names of Connelly and Gallagher are indications that it is an Irish settlement. The Pine Knoll schoolhouse was located in section 3. When it was disbanded Charley Roark purchased it and turned it into a nice home for himself and his wife. That was the only schoolhouse outside of the village in the whole town of Birchwood with the exception of a wee building for the Brandt children which operated for two years.

In the early days Robert Sturgeon bought a half section north of Slim Lake. He lived there for nearly 50 years. After his death it was sold to August Radtke, the present owner. Mr. Ruddick opened up Sec. 1 for a cattle ranch. Harvey Hendricks, the present owner, is a salesman for farm machinery. Several cottages are down by the lake.

The Rice Lake Lumber Co. cut the pine in the northern part of the town. One year the water was so low in Slim Lake they could not float the logs down stream, even tho they had three dams on the stream. In desperation the crew was ordered to dig a ditch from the upper end of the lake over to Big Sissabagama, a distance of about a mile. That did the trick and the logs were delivered to the mill. But the state got wind of it, and ordered that they fill up the ditch. You can still trace it through the woods.

Edgar Loyhed, a millionaire from Faribault, Minn., bought nearly a section of land on the east side of the town. He had thought that the fresh air and smell of the pines would cure his son of T.B. He put up some nice log buildings and tried many stunts such as boring for iron ore deposits. He went to a depth of 236 feet and found nothing. The boy died. His million was spent and he died of a nervous breakdown.

We have heard much about Sawmill Lake which was found suitable for trout. A campsite has been established beside it. It is evident that a sawmill was located near it in the early days.

Camp Lake nearby has a bit of interesting history. Back in about 1915 a group of hunters joined forces to build a hunting shack on the north end of it. They were Frank Newby, John Lackey, Ed Zittsman, Bill Carey, Louie Westphal, Ed Leary, Ed Owen and Warren Herrick.

The Algoma Panel Co. had cut the good timber out there, but a lot of dead tamarack was left which they gave to these men. They built a 16x24 cabin, and furnished it in a style to suit them. This they used without a miss for 16 years. In those days the season ran from Nov. 10 to 30 and each hunter could take two of anything. This was reduced to one of any kind. Then there came a fire which a rain put out before it reached the cabin. But the cabin was burned even tho it had a slate roof and was banked four feet high with dirt. When the ashes were inspected not one sign of any of the furniture was to be found. Louie Westphal of Rice Lake and Warren Herrick are the only survivors of this group and furnished the details of this story. Louie told of shooting a 200 lb. buck and having to pull it two miles back to camp.

A wandering gravel road goes up around numerous lakes. It joins "B" at the north and "T" on the south. It is a convenience for the county to inspect the forest crop lands. No settlers in that area.

We must retrace our steps to the Four Corners, which have been changed to Three Corners. The first road to the south from this point went down over a steep stony hill. Horses could not pull heavy loads over it. Another trail was made several rods to the west which skirted around the hill down to Birch Stream and back to the floating bridge.

We now will go east from the corner. The first place on the south side was built by H. P. Nelson (the young fellows called him High Power or Horse Power). He had the reputation of being the meanest man in town. But we have met two men who put light on this subject and reported that his meanness was brought out by pranks played on him by other men and boys. Nelson was

born 50 years too soon and folks made fun of his activities. He built a high fence where he kept several deer. He built terraces on the hill south of his house. He had several kinds of beautiful pheasants in cages for people to enjoy, and some trout ponds. His fence was cut just before hunting season and the deer set free to be shot at close range. The pheasants were shot "just to tease him." But when he saw two men fishing in his trout pond he filled the seat of their pants with lead. They had to go to a doctor before they were able to sit in a chair. But when he laid barbed wire covered with leaves in the path used by barefoot children who crossed his land on their way to school, that was what people could not forgive.

Across the road was the Setterlun home which they sold to Mr. and Mrs. Albert Hanson in 1944. Joe Blaha purchased it in 1960. John Drnek lived back from the road on the north side until he built a new house beside Birch Lake. Frank Suran now owns the little farm formerly owned by Richard Hanson. Now we come to the McCord place. Most of the land is on the north side of the road. The house is on a point extending into Big Birch. The McCords came in 1914. It was purchased by Howard and Lucille Soper in 1945. They erected many cottages and operate a busy resort.

Another projection of land was owned by Mrs. Dale Webster who lived there for many years. It is right on the county line.

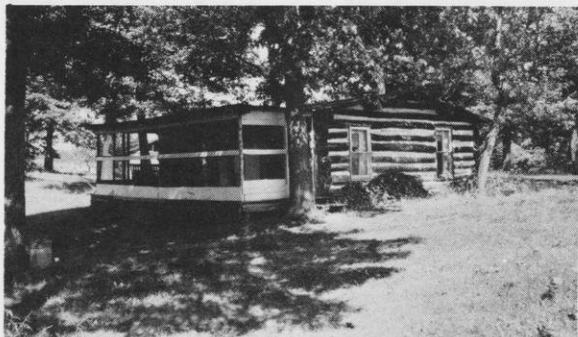
The bridge down at The Narrows which had been built in 1911 was condemned in about 1919, forcing all travel to the north and west to pass over the floating bridge which had been made of logs bound together and anchored over a bottomless marsh. A corduroy road extended from it at both ends. When loads passed over it, the bridge would sink a foot or more into the marsh. And yet the people endured it until in the early twenties when the bridge was condemned.

The hill south of Fernwood resort was cut down to make a road hardly wide enough for two carriages to meet and it was pretty steep. Then it circled down around to the Red Bridge. It was a dangerous road but finally the county crew came over in 1969 and made the whole area over into big sweeping curves and cut down hills.

It is believed that the Fernwood resort was built by Mr. Touchton in about 1925. It was the first resort built on Big Birch and located at the northwest bay. He sold to Oscar A. Johnson about 1932. Floyd Ross bought it in 1943 and sold it to Leonard Carlson in 1948. During that time five cottages were built. Mrs. Rose Walsh of Chicago bought it in 1956 and she sold to George Wood in 1962.

The Setterlun cottages are now called Silver Dawn Cottages and owned by Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Sabol. At the top of the hill overlooking Little Birch we find Shore Acres resort which was started by Lawrence Doolittle.

Joe Robotka, jr. purchased the Stout land north of Birch Stream and a bit of Balsam Lake. This joins the H.P. Nelson land to the east. He is making a success of trout ponds. He has one stocked with trout and next spring will have two more. These ponds cover four acres of spring-fed land. People are free to fish in his ponds providing they pay a small fee per pound. He has a lovely two-level home. The first level faces onto Birch Stream, the second looks out to the hiway.



One of the first cottages at Spider Lake Resort.



The old floating bridge.



Sunflower Resort on upper Long Lake, recently owned by the late Bobby Schmidt.



W. W. Vincent's summer home on Berry Lake, built in 1928.

Chapter XV

Allison Stout's Story About the Indians

There was a good sized wild rice bed on Birch Creek just above where it empties into Balsam Lake. Every fall the Indians came down from the Reserve to gather the rice and camped on the north bank of the creek just east of where the old Birchwood north road wound along the creek.

They stayed there for some time as they came down in time to tie up the green rice stalks in bundles, and waited for it to get ripe. Then they gathered and parched it before returning to the Reserve. I venture they camped there about a month as it probably took a week or so to tie the green rice into bundles about the size one could reach around with both hands.

It took some two weeks for the rice to start to get ripe; gathering would take about a week or more depending on the weather as rice does not come ripe all at the same time. It was harvested by bending the bundles one by one



Birch bark canoe and rice bed.

over the canoe and striking the rice heads lightly with a stick so the ripe grain fell in the canoe and the unripe one stayed in the head. This was done every day until the harvesting was completed.

Parching was done every day as the rice was gathered. Done on any piece of metal they could get, pieces of sheet iron, old stove lids, etc. over a tiny open fire. The squaws parched about a cup at a time, stirring the grains slowly around until the right color was had; they then called the brave and he poured that batch into a buckskin bag which he kept buried under his sleeping blankets.

Father had a deal with the Indian Chief, Elec Moose, that the Indians could come and gather all the rice they could and camp as long as they wanted,

if he would sell us what rice we wanted at the market price. I remember well the cries of outrage when the price went up to 7c a pound. (I just saw a pound package in the market marked \$6.45).

Father or Harry went up daily to check on the harvest and frequently took me along. The Indians hated to sell their rice. Every day Elec Moose would say they had not gathered enough to sell but that we could have our 50 pounds "Tomorrow." Then would come a day when they had picked up and gone back to the Reserve without saying a word. This necessitated the long trip for those days up to Reserve by auto. As I recall we always got what we wanted when we went up there but it required no end of hassling and threatening.

At the same time another batch of Indians went on down to Rice Lake to harvest rice on the southeast end of the lake. We used to see them coming down



Camping for the rice harvest.

the chain of lakes, but we never saw them go north again. Maybe they went by night so they'd not have to sell their rice. The Island was a favorite camp site for the Indians before white people built on it.

Della Schenck recalls memories of the Indians at a later date when they came down from Reserve on the "Blueberry" or with a team and small wagon with quantities of birchbark baskets, beadwork and mats made from pondlily stems. They were sold at George Kringle's store and were popular items with tourists. Also Indians on the "Blueberry" when they were "high" on lemon extract. At that time they were not permitted liquor.

Chapter XVI

Tragedies

In the early 1890's when the Birch Dam Camp was in operation, Arthur Ritchie of Loveland Corners was the supervisor. His family spent part of that time with him at the log cabin. One day three of their children, a girl and two boys ages 7, 9 & 11 went up the hill where a small pot hole would collect water and freeze over. They were sliding on their feet down the bank and for some distance across the pond. As so often happens on such ice, there was a weak spot and one by one the children broke through the ice. No one was there to rescue them.

An early tragedy in the village was the mysterious disappearance of Wilbur, the six year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Elwood Soper. The story goes like this: Jim Morey who operated the lumber yard was going out to the farm he owned northwest of the village to fix some fence. Little Wilbur liked to ride with him in the wagon, so Jim took him along and told him to stay in the wagon until he came back which would be in a few minutes. When he returned no Wilbur was in sight.

He searched everywhere and drove back to town and every man and boy went out to search, no trace could be found of him. Bloodhounds were brought in, they sniffed a candy wrapper the boy had handled before he left the lumber yard. The hounds followed the scent to the end of Birch Lake where Fernwood now stands, but it was all woods at that time.

The lake was dragged but no boy was found. It was known that a man with an old rattletrap truck had come down the road from the east and turned that corner late that afternoon. Relatives still believe that this man had struck and killed the boy and disposed of the body as nothing was ever seen or heard of him again.

On Caucus Day in 1905 a terrible accident happened at Mikana. Charles Brooks, only son of Mr. and Mrs. Gil Brooks, aged 14 years, went out rabbit hunting with Paul and Robert Lyons. They were in the woods and while climbing over a log Charles put the butt of his gun on the ground. When the gun was lifted it discharged in his face.

Back in 1908 when Orwell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Foster Soper, was 14 years old he and his dad went out into the woods east of the village to cut a load of wood. They were felling a tree, but as so often happens it did not land as was planned. One branch hit Orwell in such a way as to break his knee and the bone above it. His dad brought him home in the wagon.

Dr. G. F. Andrews was called and he in turn called a doctor from Rice Lake. The Sopers were living in the house now occupied by Hud Soper and wife. Just one rough floor had been laid upstairs and a square cut out at each end for the stove pipes to go through.

The children crept upstairs to watch the operation. Orwell was laid out on the kitchen table with Mr. Loomis to assist the doctors and he fainted away. Viola Soper told me that she was the only one of the kids who stayed by the

hole to watch. As she remembers it, Dr. Andrews used a surgical bone saw and cut the bone between the knee and the hip. The flesh and the bone were so pulverized it could never have healed otherwise. As it was it took a long time for recovery. This was Viola's introduction into the nursing profession, as she was the doctor's assistant in the dressing of Orwell's leg until it was healed. With the aid of a crutch he got around as fast as many of his friends. The doctor advised that he wait until he was 18 before getting a wooden leg. He became a clerk for the Northwestern Railroad.

On the morning of Dec. 10, 1916 Ole Skar, the 11 year old son of Mr. and Mrs. Mike Skar, went skating with Ted Cyr. Starting out on Little Birch they made their way past the mill to where the Doctors Moldenhauer houses now stand. Suddenly Ole dropped through a weak spot in the ice (they were too near the channel). Ted rushed away for help. Home folks dragged the lake with no success, then secured a diver from Duluth. Twenty-four hours passed without a trace of the body. Ole's mitten had caught on the limb of an old tree which held the body to the bottom of the lake. This was a terrible blow for the Skar family as Ole was the only son and there were seven daughters.

Little is known about the death of Joseph W. Jones who was the first settler in the town of Wilson. His house burned down and the neighbors found his body behind the door where he had dropped before he was able to open it. It is recorded that he was the town chairman for the year 1914-15. Also 1921-23, so the date is soon after that. His wife had died and he was living alone.

Morney Monroe purchased the place and as the foundation of the house seemed to be in good condition he built a house on it. He had married Anna Wagner and they had a little girl.

The morning of Oct. 17, 1942, Morney got up early and built a fire, went outdoors to do chores, came in and there was no fire. He grabbed a can of a mixture of kerosene and gasoline which he used in the engine of his saw rig. He tossed some of it into the stove, where a "dead spark" ignited it. The explosion filled the whole house. Anna and the girl were in bed, but managed to get out the door. Morney had jumped into a barrel of water. They were picked up by one of the Egerstaffer boys who lived nearby. He brought them to Dr. Ainsworth who wrapped them in sheets and sent them on to the hospital at Rice Lake. They all died before noon. The old superstition is that it is bad luck to build a house on the foundation where a life has been lost in a fire. It proved true in this case.

Friday evening April 5, 1929, a tornado swept through eastern Barron county touching down on the Louis Reed farm in the town of Doyle, seven miles east of Rice Lake. Not a building was left standing and the trees were leveled. Mrs. Reed was almost instantly killed, her husband and sons, Jay and Neil, were injured.

Wednesday, Jan. 19, 1944, Mrs. Richard Cronholm died of heart failure as her husband's car plunged into the waters of Red Cedar Lake. They were driving across in search of fire wood. About 500 feet from the east shore he came to a smooth place and started to cross when the car slowly started to go through a section of ice about two inches thick, hardly larger than the car. Ice on all sides of the hole was about 20 inches thick.

Mr. Cronholm believed that his wife died as the car started into the hole and this was borne out by later examination. He tried to force the left door open but the weight of the water pinned him between the partly open door and the car.

About 20 feet down the pressure eased and he slipped away from the car and rose to the surface. He struck his head on thick ice, saw a light spot nearby and swam to it and reached open water. He grasped a small chunk of ice which had frozen to the main bed of ice. With this grasp he was able to swing himself out of the water. By this time two men, William Harms and Harry Anderson who had been cutting ice nearby arrived and gave what assistance they could.

Leon Plante, the conservation warden in the Birchwood district and his family were living in one of the "Mill Houses" on Big Birch. The children had attended a birthday party July 29, 1944, and in the excitement afterwards they did not miss four year old James Leon. He had wandered to the pier and fallen into seven feet of water. All attempts to revive him were futile.

Out in Wilson Valley the Robert Janda family of Milwaukee had come to live on the Harry Anderson farm. On Friday morning Dec. 15, 1950, Mr. Janda went out early as usual to do the chores not knowing that a fire was burning in the second story of the house.

When he came out of the barn he saw smoke pouring out the roof. He found Mary his wife unconscious by the bed and the children, Susan 16 months and Robert five months, in their cribs. He wrapped them in quilts and took them to the car, then had difficulty in starting the car. He drove to the W. C. Jilek home (Mary was the Jilek's oldest daughter).

Mr. and Mrs. Jilek took the two little folks in their car and they stopped at the first hospital they came to which was Lakeside, and Janda took his wife on to St. Joseph's. By Sunday all three had died, the children from smoke inhalation and Mary from the smoke and severe burns.

It was a story-and-a-half house. They recalled that it had been struck by lightning the year before, and perhaps some electric wire had been exposed. It caused all electricity to be off in the valley that morning, the neighbors saw the smoke and rushed to the scene but it was almost gone before they got there. There were no telephone lines out there then.

Roy Dakins and son Dick were logging east of Lake Chetac on the farm of Romeo Wolff. On Jan. 29, 1952 a tree they were felling did not go as expected, hit Mr. Dakins in the back and then crushed his leg. A vertebra was also cracked. Mr. and Mrs. Joe Skinner who lived nearby assisted in getting him out of the woods. He was then taken to Lakeside hospital. He seemed to be doing well, then a blood clot hit the heart and he was gone.

The evening of June 4, 1958 will be remembered by many as the date of the terrible tornado which hit Colfax. A small section of that wind dropped down in the Mikana area. It blew down the antenna at the Allen Musil home, which landed in front of the door. Mrs. Musil, the former Valma Jones of Angus, was alone with her four children. She stepped out to remove it from the door, not knowing that it had crossed an exposed electric wire and was

full charged. She died instantly, when the storm was over neighbors came and learned the sad story.

Tory Engebretson, age 87 years, left his home in the north end of the town of Birchwood Sept. 21, 1961 for a walk over to his favorite spot at Ole Lake. His eight year old Pekinese dog was at his heels. He did not return that evening. Searching parties were out for days and could find no trace of either him or the dog. Two months later during the hunting season, some Rice Lake hunters spied the dog in the brush and looking closer discovered the old man as he had fallen evidently of a heart attack. How the dog had lived all that time will always be a mystery, but it stayed guard over its master to the end, and was difficult to catch and take home. It recovered and got its picture in many papers. They were found about two miles from the home.

Jan. 4, 1963 a big oil tanker rolled over into the ditch between Angus and the Narrows bridge. It took nearly an hour to free the driver from the cab with a wrecker. The driver was Fred Fahrkammer, who was taken to a hospital in St. Paul where he died a few weeks later from his injuries.

In 1963 Glen Olmstead was working at the mill. His sleeve became caught in the machinery which drew his arm towards the saw. By sheer strength he pulled it free, but the arm was badly torn. He recovered the use of the arm. In the early days Clinton Galvin lost his left arm in a similar accident.

Now this near tragedy has a happy ending. It was a beautiful Sunday morning Aug. 14, 1960 when Richard Halverson, the Birchwood high school band director was preparing to take his family to Dallas to celebrate his and his wife's sixth wedding anniversary with his parents.

He had parked his car on the street back of the house located on the east shore of Big Birch. He took Rickie, age three, and Debbie, two, and placed them in the car. He then went back to get Kathy, age nine months, and his wife when he heard a "whoosh," looked out and found the car was gone.

The auto had rolled 150 feet down the hill, avoiding several obstacles and was drifting away some 40 feet into the lake. Swimming out to the car, he was able to force open the door and get the children out only moments before it filled entirely with water and sank in about 15 feet of water.

The father held the children on the car roof until a nearby fishing party, Mr. and Mrs. Ward Esterdahl of Rockford, Ill. picked them up.

Mrs. Esterdahl told her version of this story. She and her husband were fishing, he at the oars and she with the hook and line. She was facing south towards the mill and saw the whole incident. She was an expert swimmer, and told her husband, "Row hard, I must get there." She reached the group in the nick of time, jumped into the water, caught one of the children and placed it in the boat where Halverson placed the other. They clung to the boat while it was rowed to shore. When she got them safe on shore, she and her husband vanished. After some clever investigating it was learned that the couple was staying at one of the Shore Acre cottages on Little Birch, where Mr. Halverson went to thank them. She did not consider she had done anything spectacular.

With this happy note we will close this chapter of Tragedies.

Chapter XVII

Early Years at Birchwood

Mrs. Clara Mikula Brashier of Ladymith supplied much of this information. The John Mikula family came from Doon, Iowa, May 3, 1903. She was 13 years old and can remember events and dates remarkably well. They had shipped some household goods and while they waited for it to arrive they stayed at Ole Olson's hotel which was a good-sized building. The front part was a saloon operated by Ole. Mr. Mikula rented a tent for them to live in while he built a house of rough lumber covered by tar paper, held in place with silver colored tintags.

The August Wagner family, also from Doon, Iowa, came in June, 1903. Wilbur Loomis had a store called the "Wigwam" and the post office. An addition on the south side was for living quarters. There was another general store, north of Ole's hotel, owned by Carl and Albert Spalding of Lamberton, Minn. who were in the lumber and cord wood buiness. They put Bert Zeff



Looking from north hill at the old Knapp Stout & Co. camp, showing houses on Euclid Ave. Taken about 1917.

in as manager of the store. They had purchased some woodland out in the corner of Rusk county. They brought the Adam Raddatz family to manage "the farm" and feed the crew which was building a large house, but they had to live in one of the old K.S. & Co. logging camps nearby. The roads in summer were terrible and the old camp was worse. Raddatz didn't stay long but went to work for the Soo with two teams, building the railroad.

Spalding hired Mr. Mikula to move out to the old camp and manage the cutting of the timber. Soon the new house was finished and they were in possession. One half of the upstairs with an outside stairway was for the lumberjacks. The corresponding space downstairs was for dining room and kitchen. Mrs. Mikula cooked for the men. Mr. Mikula and two sons hauled

the cordwood to Birchwood to be loaded on cars for shipment. Bert Zeff resigned as store manager and Conrad Hess came to take his place. Mikula sold his house to him.

While they were out in the woods the children were missing school. After a year of it the parents decided to move back to the village. They rented a ramshackle hotel building from Mrs. Peterson, mother of Frank and Bill Cyr. Soon the veneer mill was being built and Mrs. Mikula was again cooking for men.

Now back to the woods. The Spaldings next brought Mr. and Mrs. Fritz Reineke from Lamberton to take care of things. A flock of sheep was shipped in to clear the brush. There was no shed for them. The Spaldings seemed to



Euclid Avenue in 1914.

think their wool would keep them warm whether dry or wet. With the hazards of wolves added to the task Reineke soon was tired of his bargain. As soon as the mill was finished he moved to the village where he built a home and worked at the mill.

A mysterious fire started in the basement of the Spalding Store. No attempt was made to put it out. The store burned, also Ole's hotel and the Peterson building. This was in the spring of 1906. The location was about where our present post office is and south including the Gate Bar. The Spalding Bros. pulled up stakes and left the country.

In those first days at Birchwood, very few residents had a well. If so, it provided water for neighbors several blocks away. The Olson hotel had a well, but we presume they did not invite the public to use it.

A man named Murphy came to town looking for work and he was given the job to supervise the windlass raising the dirt from the well being dug on

the corner where the village hall now stands. It was the town pump and became the gathering place for the young folks in the evening. A girl would be anxious to get water for Mother, and grab the pail after supper knowing full well her boy friend would offer to carry the full pail home for her. But mother might have to wait a long time for it to arrive.

In 1905 when the first mill was in operation and the boarders had left, the Mikula family moved to a house which in later years was known as the Monroe house.

This first mill burned in April, 1906 a few weeks after the fire on Main street. A much larger mill soon replaced it.

End of Clara's stories.

Gus Freitag and wife were the first residents at Birchwood. He had heard of this place where two railroads crossed each other and was sure that would bring in settlers. He came to look things over and stayed at the Log Cabin Hotel. As he was a carpenter, brick layer and stone mason he saw prospects of plenty of work. The Soo section house had been built, he rented it with the provision that he board the section boss to pay the rent. He helped the newcomers build their tarpaper shacks and often got the job of building the permanent house. The pay was slow in coming and some of it never did arrive.

The two story brick house one block west of Main street on 48 was his home. His wife was a seamstress and hat maker. Her hats were displayed in the plate glass window in the parlor. Bell Bayless assisted her in this work. After Freitag moved to Mikana in 1915 the house was sold to James Morey. His son Howard has restored the house to its former beauty.

Mabel Wise operated a hat shop in a small building next to the Wise home on lower Euclid Ave. (now Geo. Robotka's vacation home). She visited relatives in Minneapolis and learned how to trim hats and also the wire frames which were covered with silks, velvets and flowers. She had a big opening day and many ladies came to buy her hats. She made herself a hat and covered it with red poppies. One day a bird lit on it, thinking it was the real thing.

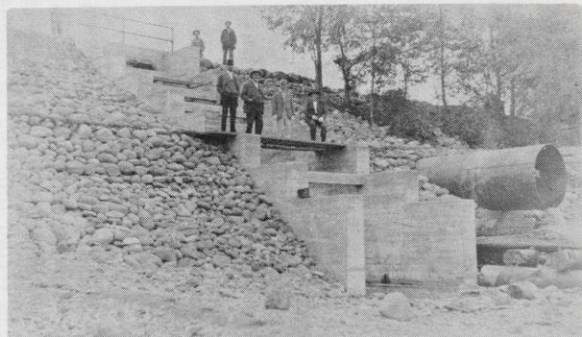
Mabel was also a lovely seamstress and made stunning outfits for her mother and sisters, Ann and Josie, before their trip to Fullerton, N.D. to visit relatives. Josie's was a maroon red suit with fancy pleated skirt; the jacket came almost to the bottom of the skirt. Her hat was red with loops and streamers of ribbon down the back. Ann's suit was brown, tan straw hat with a wreath of grapes around the crown. Mabel kept her mother well supplied with beautiful clothes and sewed for other women, too.

Mrs. Ed Escherich was also an excellent seamstress but she too moved away when her husband got tired of running all kinds of liverys. Alice Kleiman stayed by her post until the "ready-mades" became popular and she took the job of cook at the hot lunch room at school.

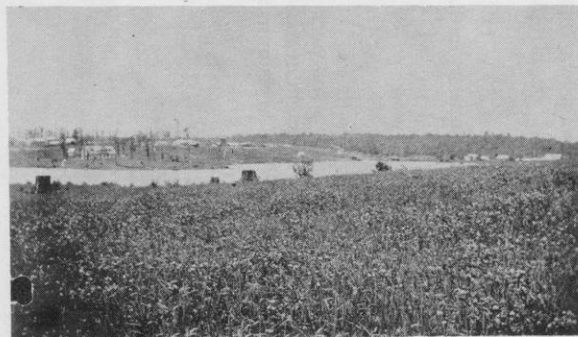
Mrs. Foster Soper had a different talent. She baked a sack of flour into bread each day and shipped it on the steam boat up to the railroad camps around Lake Chetac. She had a double range with a firebox on each end where a boiler was busy helping do washings for tourists and railroad crews. The big oven full of bread was located in the middle of the stove.



View from Euclid Ave. towards Omaha depot, 1902.



Last dam built on Birch Lake in 1911.



From north hill, looking across Birch Lake pond. Log cabin hotel to right. First residence of G. M. Huss, left, June 1902. Later this house burned and he built another.



Euclid Ave. in 1954.

Then there were Mrs. Dupree and Mrs. Blaha who were kept busy helping mothers with their newborn babies. In time of sickness the neighbors brought in food for the family and helped all they could.

Do you remember when Ed Zitsman operated the first dray service? The sieboards were so high on his truck, the guys called it the Flying Woodshed. He was also the first man to deliver ice to the stores and homes. John Galvin took over the ice business and ran it for 14 years. He filled two ice houses each winter. As his sons grew up they helped him do the delivering. How the kids did follow that truck to eat the chippings made when the block was trimmed to fit a small ice box.

The farmers and resort owners harvested ice each winter. When the electric and gas refrigerators became numerous, the ice man's job melted away.

Do you remember when Charley Williams was the village cop? He was pretty free with that billy club. When he let go with one of his war whoops the boys would run for cover. There were times when men of his own size got the better of him. He was also the dance inspector. When William Sander took over the job he added some dignity to the office. All he had to do was look a mischiefmaker in the eye and he would vanish.

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Whyte came to Birchwood in 1919. He was a cattle buyer. His wife drove him about with a big horse on a buckboard. When she was 65 years old they bought a Model A coupe and she learned to drive it. She could turn it around on a dime and take a corner in record time. As he purchased the cattle he kept them in a pasture south of town. When it came time to ship them out, they'd round up some boys (some on horseback) and drive the cattle down Main street to the stockyards. Each railroad supplied a yard out west from their depot. The Omaha was the one most often used. When John Wormet returned to Birchwood he bought cattle also. He and Ben often shipped them out together.

The A. Wise Land Company became very active. Scipio Wise of Hayward told us that the first real estate sale he ever made was to J. A. Arnette in 1907. The transaction consisted of 80 acres in exchange for a carload of shelled corn, presumably shipped from Iowa where Arnette came from.

William Dewey, who was a taxidermist and boat maker, came in 1906. He was a widower with four children: Orin and Ernest, Florence who married William Sander, and Alva who married Jake Geiger.

Fannie Bemis came in 1906. She taught in the school for several years. The Frank family, Harvey, Ethel, Phillip and Lloyd came in 1907. Ethel taught in the school for many years.

William Carey moved his family here in 1911. George Dupree in 1912. George Edenharter in 1914. Ed Vine in 1918. James Kramer and Frank Suran, sr. located here in 1919.

Walter Samson moved here in 1920. He was bookkeeper at the mill, village clerk and high school clerk for many years. Mark Hayes with his family of small children whose mother had died, came in 1924. Mr. and Mrs. Gustav Weber and grownup children came in 1925; also the Elmer McVean family.

Do you remember the Fireman's Street Dance in 1949 when John Lackey, aged 87, and E. Kirch, aged 94, demonstrated their jigging abilities? Mr. Kirch lived to celebrate his 100th birthday.

Electric Power at Birchwood

The third and last dam on Birch Lake was built in 1911 by the Chippewa Light and Power Co. This one was made of concrete. In 1915 the Wisconsin Minnesota Light and Power Co. purchased the dam and built a power house. They installed electric service in the village of Birchwood in 1916. Henry Bunce operated it for four years. The street lights were only small bulbs, but were wonderful after the darkness of the early nights.

In 1920 this was all transferred to the Northern States Power Co. who built a high power line out from Rice Lake. The controls were still at the power house. Someone had to go night and morning to throw the switch for the street lights. Later it was installed at the village hall and controlled by an electric eye. The power house was torn down in 1939.

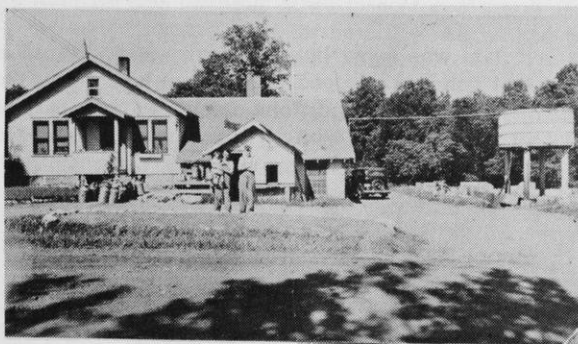
While this last dam was being built the water was lowered in Chetac and Birch lakes. A lot of fish had dropped into a deep hole below the dam. When Warren Herrick, Frank Newby and John Lackey learned of this they netted them into a lot of tin cans and with a team and wagon drove to some of their favorite lakes and dumped them.



Electric Power House, built in 1915



Fish Hatchery was an early day project



Cheese factory, built by Fred Ludy, now operated by Eddie Weiss as the Birchwood Dairy.



The old Red Bridge over Birch Stream, built in 1903. On Thursday, September 1, 1960, it buckled and fell into the stream. By Saturday, September 17, traffic was resumed over a culvert bridge.

Fish Hatchery

A rod and gun club was organized in the early days. They took as a big project the building of a fish hatchery down on Birch Stream. The labor was all donated. Under the direction of the state it was fully equipped and operated for several years. Warren Herrick operated it for five years. Ed Zitsman and Frank Newby were other local men who helped with its operation. It was discontinued in the 1930's. The building was torn down and hauled away in 1955.

The Dairy Business

In the first days of Birchwood every family had a cow which ran at large. In fact, the horses, mules and pigs did the same. The residents had to build a woven wire fence around their lots. Each animal had a bell and when they bedded down at night in the village, the gentle tinkling of the bells drove the sleepy people to desperation. One man went out to the cow near his bedroom window and took the bell off the strap around the cow's neck and threw it down the toilet.

Each family had their own supply of milk and made their own butter. Ed Nilsen told how he started the first delivery route in 1917 when he was seven years old. He carried the milk in syrup pails on the way to school to a few families who had become tired of milking a cow. Soon his business had grown so he used a push cart. By 1923 he purchased his first Model T and delivered all around town. The boys loved to ride around with him at night and help him, but he was out too early in the morning for them. He discontinued the route in 1941 having delivered around the lakes for four years.

The farmers increased their herds as fast as possible as pasturage was good. The hand cream separator was used. A cream receiving station was built and operated by the Culbertson family near the site of our present dairy. The cream was shipped on the train to Rice Lake.

Next a farmers' co-operative creamery was established. Leslie Thayer and Ed Owens were the buttermakers. This organization dissolved. The Olson Bros. took over the plant and made butter and powdered milk.

Next came Jim Yarish and he also made butter. Then one night in 1932 a fire laid the whole building low. He and his family returned to Rice Lake. Fred Ludy who had previously operated a cheese factory in Wilson Valley, purchased the empty lot and built a cheese factory and an apartment to live in. A Mr. Jenson ran it for a short time. Then Ludy sent Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Weiss up from Clayton in 1933 to run it. They continued until 1946 when they built the dairy up on Main street. Then Bill Ludy ran the cheese factory for two years.

Mr. and Mrs. Art Schneider moved here in 1947 and joined Weiss in the dairy. The next year Weiss purchased the factory and moved back. He remodeled it for a pasteurizing plant and later installed a homogenizing machine. They went into partnership and established a delivery route to the country stores and to the school houses for the noon lunch program.

By 1950 electricity had been installed in many of the farm buildings and the electric milking machines were in use. The dairy business was booming. Creamery trucks from Barron, Cameron and Rice Lake made daily trips through the area. That brings this story up to 1950.

The First and Last Bridges in Birchwood

"Man, did it rain!" Six inches fell from Sat. morning, Aug. 27, 1960 to Sunday morning, the 28th. Birch Stream became a raging torrent fed by high water in Chetac and Birch lakes.

Traffic continued over the old Red Bridge as usual. Thursday, Sept. 1 at 5:15 p.m. Ed Weiss who lives next door to the bridge saw a gravel truck pass over it going north. Next thing he heard a cracking roar and rushed to the bridge. He found the southeast corner had dropped into the creek. The whole east side had buckled in the middle. He was able to walk across on the west side and hail an oncoming car. It happened to be a conservation car with a two-way radio. The man put in a call to Spooner for the Washburn County Highway department to put up road blocks on County Trunk T. They arrived in short order.

The school bus full of students had passed over the bridge at about 4 p.m. The flood of the previous week end had weakened the supporting embankment. During investigations under the bridge, Weiss found a plate bearing the date of 1903. This had been the date set by some of the pioneers' memories. It was the first bridge built in the village.

The highway department did some fast work in removing the old structure. A steel arc measuring 11 feet across at the bottom and 7 feet across the top and 9 feet high was placed in the stream. Tons of rock and gravel were trucked in from both the north and the south to make a two lane roadbed. By Saturday, September 17 travel was resumed over Birch Stream. Guardrails were soon installed. Later the road was blacktopped.

During the summer of 1957 a two-lane bridge was built on Hiway 48 over The Narrows between Balsam and Red Cedar lakes. All traffic from the west for four months was detoured over Hiway D and into Birchwood on T over the old Red Bridge. It had served the community for 57 years. Every road leading out of Birchwood now has excellent bridges and good blacktopped roads with the exception of the south road which is in Barron County and a small portion of it is in Washburn County including the road into the cemetery.

Chapter XVIII

Birchwood Hotels and Restaurants

Before the two railroads had their steel laid into Birchwood, Tom Vance had taken over the buildings at the Knapp Stout & Company camp down by the dam. He ran a hotel and fed everyone who came along. He soon sold out to Livingston. Next came Coffin. In 1911 when the concrete dam was built, the Foster Soper family lived at the hotel and Mrs. Soper fed the crew.

During this time Ole Olson had established a large hotel and saloon on Main Street where the bait shop now stands. Another hotel was built on the corner northeast of the ball park, called the Robarge Park Hotel. He sold it to Guibord who had an Indian wife.

When Mrs. Minnie Kincannon first came to Birchwood she operated a private boarding house on Euclid Ave. in the house vacated by S. A. Windus as he had moved into one he had built just east of Birch Lake Inn.

Dr. and Mrs. Jacob Senty who had been living at Prairie du Sac got the idea of establishing a large hotel up here and also that he might practice dentistry. They had Birch Lake Inn in operation by 1906. The regular trains tied up here while the crews ran over to the hotel for dinner. The extras were doing



Log Cabin Hotel.

the same thing. After a few years the railroad business decreased. But the tourists were flocking to this area as the news spread about the wonderful fishing on our lakes. Many of them got their room and board at the hotel. It took several maids to wait on the long tables.



Log Cabin Hotel dining room.



Log Cabin Hotel sleeping rooms.

This hotel was not modern as we know it today. It was heated by wood-burning stoves. The water was pumped from the well, or perhaps hauled from the lake for the laundry. Because of its beautiful location on the bank of Little Birch people enjoyed staying there.

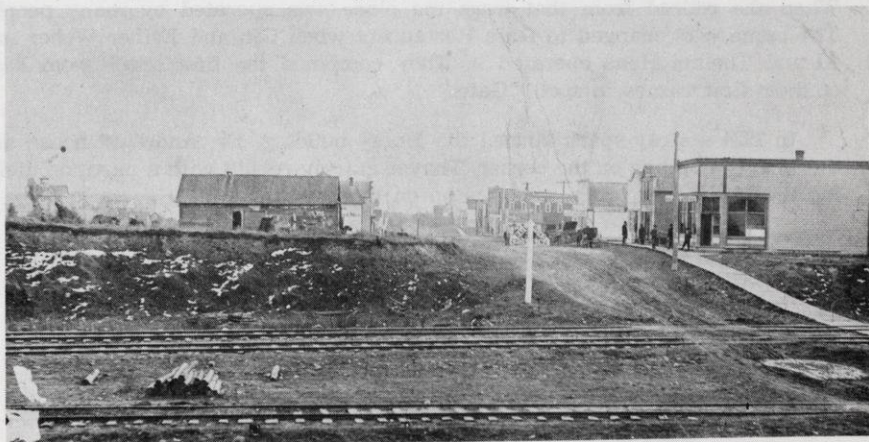
Dr. Senty set up his dental office in the reception room, but the commotion was just too much so he soon gave up his practice and settled down to being a hotel manager.

After his death Mrs. Senty found it difficult to operate the hotel alone and sold it to H. L. Kelly in 1945 who spent two years modernizing it.

Kelly sold to Hugh Picaman in 1947 who added a bar on the north side of the dining room. After twelve years they sold to Art Stolk. By this time the old reception room and office had been taken over by the dining room, and the entire hotel is now very modern. Richard Parenteau bought out Stolk in 1965 and is still there now in 1970.

But let's return to Main Street. Tom Vance erected a large building which he used as a restaurant while the railroad crews were building the lines to the north and east. Then Sam Gregory used it as a harness shop. Then Charley Dupree, the man who had suffered brain damage during a serious illness, played he was operating a store in it until Einar Skar tore it down and built the first part of his garage in 1928.

Mrs. Charley Lowell ran a restaurant in the white building owned by Morey. She also baked bread and sold it for ten cents a loaf. She stayed at



Main Street looking south, with old Vance restaurant on left. Corner building across the street was a restaurant when it was not a saloon. Taken 1911.

this job during 1915 and 1916 when the crew was installing electric lights in the village and they boarded with her. Train crews also ate at her table. Mr. Lowell was section boss on the Soo until his death. Then the family moved back to Cameron in 1921.

Mrs. Foster Soper ran a restaurant in the Thayer building on the corner from 1916 to 1919. It was so close to the railroad tracks that the crews could run over and get a bite and back again in a hurry.

When Bertha Cyr was operating the Dew Drop Inn, which was a variety store, she also had a quick lunch counter. Then the fire of 1943 cut that off until she was reestablished in the remodeled dance hall which escaped the fire.



Birch Lake Inn, built in 1906 by Dr. and Mrs. Jacob Senty

When she retired from that work the place was operated by many people. The name was changed to Gate Restaurant when Gib and Esther Weber and Al and Thelma Haas operated it. They combined the first letter from each of their first names to spell "Gate."

In 1924 a stray spark burned the Morey building, Dr. Andrews' house and the Thayer building on the corner. Thayer quickly rebuilt with a partition dividing it and the post office was located on the north side.



Restaurant side of the laundromat building, 1962

After the post office moved out in 1940, locating in the former La Pointe store building, Royal Rustong used the Thayer building for a feed store and his wife operated a restaurant in the south part. After a year they moved the restaurant into the Hittner building. From then on many people tried their luck at feeding the public in that building. Fire gutted the kitchen in 1955 which ended the business while Laura Evans was the manager.

Soon after the launderette was opened in 1962 a portion of the building was fitted up for a restaurant. Many good cooks tried their luck at operating it and although there was a good trade they could not make a go of it because the rent was so high. A fire in the ceiling caused so much damage that the business was closed down.

Now in 1970 the building has been remodeled and a very modern restaurant has been opened to be operated by Dick and Doris Jones.

An A&W Root Beer stand has been in operation during the summer months for several seasons. The tourists are good patrons at all the eat shops.

In 1954-55 Helen Blaha put up an apartment building on Hiway 48 west of Main Street. A portion of the basement was fitted up for a restaurant which Al and Pearl Mayer operated for some time.

Chapter XIX

Birchwood's Lumber Yards

The first yard was started by Anthony Wise, who shipped a sawmill from southern Wisconsin in January of 1902. It took him 30 days to transport it from the flat car to a location about 60 rods to the west of the depot. Big stumps and frozen down logs made the job slow and painful.

There had been a big land auction in the fall and Wise had attended it. He had a vision of a booming business center. Settlers were flocking in by the time he had his mill set up, a few horses and mules were imported, and all the men had to do was go out anywhere and trim up the treetops, cull logs which were scattered about, and haul them to the mill. The next day a shack would appear. Wise built several small houses for rental as many families came and had to stay somewhere until their shack was ready to live in.

In 1904 Mr. Wise sold his mill to James Morey who gave it the classy name of "Birchwood Lumber and Manufacturing Co." He built a little office up on Main Street near the location of the present Lampert office. He hired Cora King, his wife's niece, to be his bookkeeper and the big high desk behind which she had to perch on a high stool is worth describing. Of course she faced the



Howard "Monk" Morey with the delivery truck

door and a small man could hardly see her over the top, which had a flat part a few inches wide, then slanted for her working area. There were many drawers and cupboards in the thing. It was given to Herb Chappelle when the new office was built; he used it when he ran the bean receiving station.

When Cora quit, Maggie Soper took the job. It was a good place for the young folks to gather, but they soon learned to beat it when Jim Morey appeared. There was a big dog who kept the clerk company and chased off the undesirables. Maggie stayed behind that desk for several years, until a young fellow from Chicago persuaded her to change her name to Mrs. Ralph Hauss and go to live in Chicago. Her sister Vic took her place until Morey sold out to Carter.

It is evident that Morey had purchased quite a portion of land south of the Soo track and depot. Better lumber was in demand so he built a shed near the sidewalk, ending it up at the side track and high enough so the lumber could be slid from the car into the shed and out the other end onto wagons. This shed was for sash and doors.

To the west of this shed he built another for feed and flour followed by another for machinery and feed. Morey was having to ship good lumber from Rice Lake and decided to build a large shed in which to store it. To show how fast business was picking up we learned that it was 1906 when he built the first portion of the big lumber yard, far to the west end of the lot.

The center portion was built high with a lot of small windows under the eaves. It was 14 feet wide, and to each side of this driveway was built a 20 foot wide section with roof slanting up to the windows. The whole structure was 80 feet long, divided into bins for the different grades of lumber.

By 1914 Morey was prospering to the point where he thought he could buy a car, and the one he chose was a big Buick touring car. Then he feared the people would make fun of him and think he was too lavish with his money, so he parked it in the driveway of the shed. Now Morey had two sons, Orin who was 12 years old, and Howard one and one-half years younger, who had some ideas of their own. Orin was mechanically minded, so he made a key which would start and stop the car. They learned to drive it to the far end, then back up and go it again. They thought their dad knew nothing about it, not realizing that they were leaving tracks behind them. He never said a word, until he thought they had learned how to drive. Then he said, "Now that you have learned to drive, you will have to drive me everywhere I want to go."

Another story on Mr. Morey before we leave him. On the Halloween before he sold out to Frank Carter, the young fellows around town put a hay rake on top of the machine shed. Much to their disappointment he never said a word and left it there all winter. But before he turned things over to Carter, he told some of those boys, "You put it up there, now you can take it down." They later admitted it was not half so much fun and much harder work to take it down than to put it up.

In the spring of 1922 he sold out to the Frank Carter Lumber Co. In the meantime he had sold the old sawmill to J. A. Arnett. The Carter Co. soon doubled the size of the lumber yard with the front corner finished off for an office. The old office was moved back near an alley, and all the small sheds were disposed of. The main reason why Morey sold out was because his sons Orin and Howard had lost interest in doing the trucking with an early type International Harvester truck. They had left for greener pastures.

Herb Jones became Carter's first manager followed by a Mr. Stewart. In the early thirties Al Buscher took over and stayed until Lampert bought out Carter in 1942. The Carter Co. built a nice house for their managers to live in; this they sold after they sold the yard.

Bert Olson, better known as Ole, was Lampert's first manager. After a few years he quit to be a carpenter. Harold Heidtke came next and was transferred in 1952, then came Bill Schaller who was transferred in 1954, followed by Wayne Sweet. He has been on the job for 14 years and business is booming. Many improvements have been made, the reason for one being an accident.

During the big windstorm of October 10, 1949, the roof of the first section of the shed became weakened at the joints. Then a heavy wet snow loaded the roof and on the night of February 14, 1950, the high center portion went down with a roar, taking almost the full length with it. No one in town heard it but Mr. Vine who lived nearby.

When the roof was repaired it was built without the center lift and small windows were placed in the south side wall. In due time the whole portion which Morey had built was torn down. Lampert had used the old Soo depot for a warehouse until it was torn down and carted away in 1951. A large new office was built in 1950 out beside the sidewalk, followed by a two story warehouse just north of it which was ready for use in 1954.

After the Soo Railroad was disbanded in 1936, the Omaha took over the side track and spotted cars beside the warehouses. On August 1, 1965, the last train on the Omaha pulled out of Birchwood. Since then all deliveries have been made by truck. An open-faced shed was built in 1962 which extends partly onto the old Soo right of way.

The whole front of the old Carter building was changed to conform with the new roof. A connection between the new office and the large warehouse was made for general convenience.

While Al Buscher was manager Louie Beffa started trucking for the yard. He retired in 1970. Lampert now owns a truck and has a full time driver. Herb Chappelle started being general handy man in 1945 and continued until December, 1964. His specialty was window repair. When the repair work was started on the buildings at the Tagalong Golf Course after it had been hit by vandals, windows by the dozens were delivered and stored upstairs where Herb had a special corner fitted up for his work which lasted for weeks.

For many years coal was shipped in by carload lots and stored in a shed across Main Street to the east. The schoolhouse, churches, stores and many homes burned coal instead of wood. Since the Omaha pulled up its tracks no coal has been delivered. Everybody has converted to oil or gas unless they have a wood lot handy by, a truck and a man to work at it, or hire someone to deliver a load.

Years ago the yard discontinued handling feed and flour. It has always sold quantities of paint, building hardware and window glass.

Chapter XX

Birchwood Churches

The first religious services conducted in this little village were by three women in the ladies' waiting room at the Omaha depot. Eager little children came to hear the Bible stories taught by Mrs. Huss and Mrs. Wise. Mrs. Loomis carried her folding organ to the depot and taught them little songs. No bit of early history about this place has been told so many times as this one.

The land companies were anxious to have a church built so they could advertise to prospective buyers that there was a school and a church. People were too busy getting shacks to live in and sheds for the livestock to think much about a church.

Our authority for saying that no church building was erected earlier than 1904 comes from Mrs. Nettie Windus Rasmussen who was 25 when she came with her parents in 1903, and from Clara Mikula Brashier who was 13 when she came here the same year.

Several German immigrants were among the first to settle here. The land agents, knowing they would make hard-working settlers, put on the pressure to get them started on the project. Gus Freitag and S. A. Windus were carpenters and August Wagner furnished the steam. They got others to help and up went the frame for a 20 by 36 foot building, located across the street west from the schoolhouse. It had three windows on each side, each containing four large panes of colored glass. A pointed section at the top had red-colored glass. There was a small entrance on the north end which faced towards Main Street. The church was organized under the name of "Slovak Zion Lutheran Church."

At first they depended on mission ministers who might come once a month and call the people together for a service which was conducted in the German language. Rev. Bierman took charge of the parish in 1905 and served to about 1907. All the records of this early church were written in German script and have not as yet been translated into English. Many of the German people such as Spalding and Hess and others left town.

Some of the next settlers were Norwegian Lutherans and they wanted to worship in a church but they could not understand the German language. When their pastor either walked into town or came by train they would gather in the homes for a service. Rev. Nord served from 1907 until about 1914, followed by Rev. John Ritland until 1918.

As the German parents became more acquainted with the English language and their children forgot the German language, there seems to have been a change of heart. By about 1920 English-speaking ministers filled the pulpit. Some of the Norwegians started to attend these services. Several ministers from Rice Lake served this parish. When Rev. A. E. Berg took it over in 1933, the first thing they did was to change the name to "Trinity Lutheran" although the name "Slovak" had been dropped long before that. He encouraged the people to remodel and enlarge their church.

This project was started in the fall of 1939. The building was raised and excavation made for a basement, furnace room, kitchen and dining room. An addition was built on the south end for the altar and pulpit.

A large entrance was added to the north end, making room for a cloak room and stairs leading to the dining room. The colored glass in the windows was replaced by panes of white frosted glass, but the point at the top still has the red-colored glass. The dedication ceremony was in the spring of 1941. During the winter when everything was torn up the services were held in the Methodist Church on Sunday afternoon.

In 1946 the Birchwood congregation asked to be allowed to join with Long Lake for a new parish with one pastor serving both. Soon they found it necessary to provide a parsonage. They purchased the former Reineke house and added another room to it. Rev. Arthur Gronberg was the first resident pastor.

In 1949 Rev. John Ritland returned and served until August, 1952. There was need for a more suitable parsonage. On Friday, September 15, 1950, Rev. Ritland at a ground-breaking ceremony took the first shovel of dirt on the lot west of the church. When the parsonage was finished Rev. Ritland and his wife were the first to live in it.

For years they had a very active Ladies Aid, which raised a lot of money for much of the furnishings in the church. The men's suppers or dinners were the great event of the season.

Several people had settled here who leaned toward the Methodist faith. They held services in the school house. Rev. J. N. Mills came out from Rice Lake Saturday on the train, stayed around among the people until Monday, then went back on the train. He organized the church in 1904.

George M. Huss who had donated the lots for the Lutheran church, did the same for the Methodists and the Catholics. By donation labor the church was built in 1905, without a basement. The first chimney was built on the east side, and the long stovepipes from the wood stoves dripped creosote. At last excavation was made under the church for a basement and a furnace was installed. The chimney was then moved to the west end. A roaring furnace failed to heat the large room. Nice pews, which some church had discarded for a new fashionable type of seats, were purchased, and little by little improvements have been made, the best of which was remaking the stairs to the basement. When the big door which closes off the north room is raised it is possible to seat a large company of people.

Most of the first ministers were young men. Some boarded with Mrs. Metchem, while others batched it in a tarpaper shack which was built south of the church. Some stayed a few months, others lasted out a year. Rev. L. Sund came in 1916 and stayed five years. The parsonage was built in 1910, but even then the ministers did well to stay more than two years until Rev. Abbie Burnett lasted it out eight years until her age forced her to retire.

The exterior of the church has changed very little. The belfry was enclosed to keep out the storms and the birds. Cement steps and a porch were added and new doors installed.



Free Methodist Church, built in 1933. The parsonage, which was the Wilkie Store, was moved across the street. The Dupree house is in the far background. View from Euclid Ave. towards Omaha depot, 1902.



September 15, 1950. Rev. John Ritland broke ground for the Lutheran Parsonage. Pictured from left: Gordon Kleven and Sam Dinga, directors of Long Lake church; A. O. Johnson, Ed Weiss and John Wormet from Trinity church.



Remodeled Trinity Lutheran Church as it looked in 1960. The bell from the Wilson Center school was given to the church.



St. John's new Catholic church, built in 1950. The old church had stood on this corner and faced north.

For years the Lutheran children attended the Sunday school and young people's meetings. Mrs. Anna Knapmiller was the superintendent for more than 30 years and she mothered everybody and was loved by all.



Methodist Church before the porch and new doors were added in 1958

Weddings have been numerous in this church and also funerals. One week there were three funerals and one afternoon there were two. People from all areas surrounding Birchwood were free to use the Methodist church.



Mr. E. Kirch, one of the charter members of St. John's church, who lived to celebrate his 100th birthday.

The big event of the year was the Washington Birthday Supper put on by the men. Mr. Talbot was the cook who could make the best meat balls. Paul Carah cut and served the pies, Clyde Hinman made the coffee, Hub Knapmiller brought the big dishpans from the boarding house, and a crew of helpers made the dishes rattle. All the water, both hot and cold, had to be brought from the mill. The man who sold the tickets and handled the cash was Ed Wells. The guests sat on benches at long tables. Yes, it was primitive but the spirit was wonderful.

The formal name of this early church was "Methodist Episcopal." A faction who called themselves "Free Methodists" grew in numbers until they felt strong enough to branch off by themselves. They held services in an old building south of the Wisconsin Land Co. office. After the Arpin land office building was moved across the street from the Lutheran church they held their services in it. After Joe Skinner closed his butcher shop in the Riley Maines building the Free Methodists moved into it and were able to get a minister who lived in the apartment upstairs.



The old St. John's Church was purchased by a Pentecostal mission group on Rice Lake's south side. On October 3, 1950, the church was moved out of Birchwood by way of highway C east to the Legion Hall, south on F over Breakneck Hill, through the Blue Hills country on N into Rice Lake to E. Barwitz street. The structure was 38 feet tall on wheels. The move took two days. Five crews cut and spliced telephone and electric wires as it passed through four counties. Its route included bad hills, curves and bridges. The move was considered a great feat of engineering and cooperation.

The year the brick schoolhouse was being built, the old building was so crowded that Phoebe Arnett took the third and fourth graders over to this building for their classes.

Rev. J. A. Griffin was a bachelor who came to preach in this church, and lived upstairs. Miss Arnett was then teaching in the high school but she attended his church. After school was out in June 1926, they were married and moved away.

When Rev. Eberly and family took over the apartment, things began to pick up and with his help the congregation decided to build a new church. First they had to become an organized church which they did in 1929. A nice little church was built in 1933 on the lot south of the one they were using, and the Eberly family lived in the basement.

Then they moved the Charley Wilkie store across the street and remodeled it into a parsonage. All went well for several years, but so many of the parishioners moved away or died that the church was closed in the early 1960's. Jane Graham purchased the property, tore down the church and remodeled the house into a modern home.

As early as 1905 there were 10 Catholic families living here. Whenever a priest could come out from Rice Lake they gathered in private homes or the schoolhouse for mass. Fr. Beaudette of Rice Lake came in 1908 and organized the parish. The first trustees were John Martin and Engelbert Kirch, the latter being credited with naming it "St. John's."

The lots which had been donated to them were covered by huge stumps, one of which was six feet in diameter and required 14 sticks of 45 per cent dynamite to jar it loose. The first church was completed by 1909, at a cost of about \$1100, the Arpin Lumber Co. donating generously to the fund. Fr. Beaudette now scheduled a Sunday mass once a month. The parish was knit together and began to grow.

Fr. H. Teuwisse established residence here in 1918 when the church had an extension added to the south end. In 1919 the rectory was built. Fr. Tabencki was here from 1923 to nearly 1943, the longest of any priest. No resident priest was here for 2 years but Fr. Boshold provided mass every Sunday.

In September, 1944, Fr. Gerald Mahon was installed at St. John's. Drives for the erection of a new church were intensified. A lovely new church was dedicated in August 1950. Additional lots to complete a half block were purchased for a parking lot. In 1953 Fr. Clarence Ludwig succeeded Fr. Mahon. A large garage was built which Fr. Ludwig used as a carpenter's shop while he constructed a beautiful altar of intricate carvings. After that was completed and many other things, he built beautiful houses for the birds.

Chapter XXI

The Birchwood Post Office

In 1902 Wilbur Loomis moved his store from the corner where the Texaco station now stands to higher ground on the north end of Main Street. He named it the "Wigwam." It is now the front entrance portion of Don's Outlet Store. He applied for a post office and he became the first postmaster.

When he sold this store to L. L. Thayer in 1911 he moved the post office into the Dr. Andrews building. Soon Thayer was appointed postmaster and the office was moved back into his store. Loomis moved out of town.

In 1914 when the Democrats elected Wilson as president, James Morey got the appointment as postmaster. The office was moved into the white store building he had purchased from Mrs. "Money Bags" Peterson.

In 1922 the Republicans were back in power and a bunch of them were striving to get the job as postmaster. Now L. L. Thayer had purchased the corner building and the Masonic Lodge had added a second story on it for



New Post Office building, built in 1960.

their lodge rooms. After much maneuvering he manage to get his son Leslie appointed to be postmaster so the office was moved into the corner building.

On May 28, 1924, a stray spark and a high wind burned these three buildings north of the bank. It had been built of brick in 1918.

Mr. DeKeyser let the post office operate in the back room of the bank until Mr. Thayer got another building erected, which is now the Fair Store. The north half of it was to be used as the post office. Ere long Roy Knapmiller was appointed to be the postmaster, but he soon got other ideas in his mind and resigned. Irene Knapmiller was appointed and took over on April 1, 1933. She retired May 15, 1970, after 37 years, 1 month, and 15 days of service.

In 1939 La Pointe moved into his new store which he had built north of the Opera Block. The people urged that the post office be moved up nearer the center of the business district. It was agreeable to all, so it was soon set up in business in the store vacated by La Pointe.

But on the fateful date of February 25, 1943, it suddenly moved out when fire started four doors south, in Nap's Tavern. The equipment was saved and moved over into the village hall where it dispatched the mail the next morning.

LaPointe quickly erected another building south of his new one which matched it in design. He rented the front part of it to the post office department. This double building is now the Peoples Store.

The Christmas season of 1947 was the greatest up to that time; 18,000 one and one-half cent stamps were sold. The price of post cards rose to 2c in January, 1952. Oh, those good old days.

At last we got a new 24x52 foot post office building which was ready for the 1960 Christmas mail. Since October 1, 1937, Marie McLeod has been following this post office on all its travels as the postal clerk. She is still on the job from morning to night.



Robert Mingaye and John Drnek, the first R.F.D. carriers.

Robert Mingaye was the first mail carrier on Route 1, starting October 1, 1924. It was 17 miles of travel for 45 boxes. He used horses in the winter for four years and a snowmobile for 11 years. The route was extended to go through Edgewater, Yarnell and Wilson areas. When he retired September 30, 1960, after 36 years on the job, the route had a total of 54 miles per day. He had used 16 different cars.

John Drnek started Route 2 in 1933, with 24 miles tri-weekly, then increased to 36 miles daily. The route goes northwest to Long Lake, near Brill and Mikana and through Angus. He had used horses, skis, Escomobile, and also taken the mail on foot where roads were too bad for the car. He had used 14 cars when he reported his work in 1951. He died of a heart attack April 14, 1955. Leslie Roppe was appointed to be carrier on Route 2. Fred Thibedeau was appointed to take Mingaye's place on Route 1.

Muriel Herrick acted as substitute postal clerk for about 25 years. She came to the age of retirement in 1961.

The first regular mail delivery by train was in May, 1902. A man with a two wheel cart brought it from the depot to the post office. Now all transportation is by bus.

Birchwood Banks

In 1906 a Birchwood State Bank was organized with a Mr. Moe as cashier and James Morey as one of the directors. The office was located in the southeast corner of the Loomis store. After one year Mr. Moe decided he'd had enough of pioneer life. He paid back all the money and left town.

A Mrs. Peterson had come over from Red Lake Falls, Minnesota, to make her fortune in this highly advertised village. She knew how to do it, too. She established a boarding house and confectionery store and anything else which came her way. She always kept money on hand to cash the checks the lumberjacks brought in from the camps. When she got a good bunch of them she would take the train for Rice Lake and deposit them in the bank, always bringing enough back for the next round of checks. She always took out a good commission for her trouble. She became known as "Old Money Bags" Peterson.

Mrs. Peterson was a builder. In 1904 she built what is now our hardware store. The first floor was used as a saloon and upstairs was a hall for the public to use. Community suppers, dances and parties of all kinds could rent it. It was greatly appreciated by everyone. She also built stores and houses. Her first husband's name was Cyr, and they had two sons, William and Frank. She induced them to come to Birchwood and we've had Cyrs in the town ever since.

In 1914 another Birchwood State Bank was organized with Harry Lockwood as president, Frank Newby, vice president, Clarence Wise, cashier and Scipio Wise, assistant cashier. It was located in the Opera Block. R. K. Foley became the cashier in 1921 and Gladys Bemis, assistant cashier in 1923.



Citizen's State Bank building, built in 1918.

Mr. and Mrs. J. W. DeKeyser moved here in 1914 and purchased the Loomis store of L. L. Thayer. By 1918 Mr. DeKeyser and others had organized and received a charter for the establishment of the Citizens State Bank, with J. W. DeKeyser as president, Pat White, vice president, and Walter Tweenen, cashier. A brick building was erected north of the DeKeyser store for the bank. The State Bank sold out to the Citizens State Bank in 1928.

Melvin Newberg of Rice Lake became the cashier in September, 1927 and remained with the bank until June of 1940. June Kommerstad Holbrook of Shell Lake became the assistant cashier in November, 1937, and remained at that post until July 8, 1942.

On the night of November 21, 1936, the bank was robbed. It was evident it was the work of experts. They left a path of destruction behind them. This worry was thought to have hastened Mr. DeKeyser's death on September 1, 1937.

Another robbery was attempted the night of September 29, 1938. It was unsuccessful because the robbers set off the gas which had been installed. They made such a hasty getaway that they left their tools and loot behind them.

At the time of Mr. DeKeyser's death the board of directors were Ed Wells, president, Ira Holdridge, Henry Knapmiller, Harry La Pointe, and Mrs. De Keyser.

Mr. DeKeyser was always very properly dressed during banking hours or whenever he appeared in public. He always wore a black bow tie and a black broad-brimmed hat. He was a very dignified man and he thought his word was law on all subjects.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation sent Lee Becksted and A. E. Buttrick on June 19, 1940, to inspect all the records at the bank. By October, 1940, Mr. Buttrick had been appointed to be the cashier. Later he became very ill and spent a long period in the hospital. Lloyd E. Hull of Lone Rock was sent in to be the cashier in November 1942. He could not type so Gertrude Forward was hired to assist him. Business was not brisk during all these changes.

L. T. Weeks bought Mrs. DeKeyser's controlling shares in the bank in 1943. At the same time Gladys Bemis bought the insurance agency of Mrs. DeKeyser.

L. T. Weeks became the bank president, Ed Weiss, vice president, Gladys Bemis, cashier, and Carroll Bemis, Ed Weiss, Elmer Petersen, Gladys Bemis and Peg Bemis, directors. The exterior of the bank has not been changed, but the interior has had many improvements. The basement was remodeled into office rooms. Many clerks are now kept busy behind the bars.

Birchwood Telephone Service

Ed Horsman, who was the secretary of the Barron County Telephone Company and also a stockholder and the manager of the Rice Lake exchange, influenced the company to extend a line to Birchwood before 1910. It was located in the Taylor confectionery store in the Opera Block.

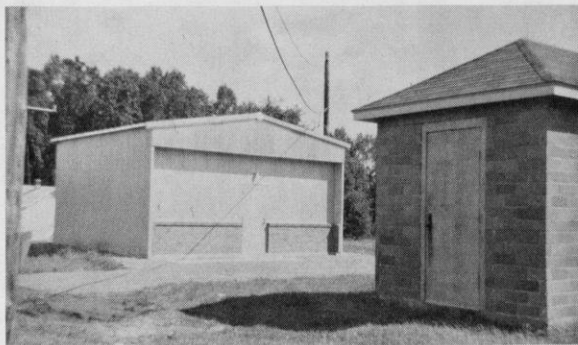
The Wise family organized the Wise Telephone Company in 1910 and took over the line connecting the village with Rice Lake. A line was built to Edgewater, by attaching the insulators to trees, and poles where there were no trees. The same method was used for a line out into the Pribram settlement. Numerous residents of the village also got phones. A small switchboard was installed at the Taylor store.

In the year 1913 Mrs. Minnie Kincannon purchased Mr. Taylor's business. She operated the central which gave her a good excuse to listen in and disconnect when the call was ended. She served ice cream to customers at little tables. People just loved to come in to eat and chat, knowing that by clever questions they would hear all the latest happenings on the phone lines.

When the fun and excitement died down many people found they had little real use for the phone and no money to pay the rent. The Wise Company

was ready to fold up by 1930; then they merged with the Commonwealth Telephone Company. At this time the central was moved to the Forward House where Edna became the Hello Girl. More people in the village got phones from then on.

In 1948 a concrete block building 15½x9½ feet was built to house the dial equipment. It was not until April 17, 1951, that the switch over to the dial system took place. Birchwood was the first community in this area to have dial service. We no longer heard the familiar voice saying "Number, please." Subscribers now heard only their own ring.



New telephone exchange, built in 1962. In foreground, the first building to house the dial equipment, built in 1948.

On January 22, 1958, a new call system was given us, "Elgin 4" followed by four digits. We also got free service to Rice Lake. We now had 194 patrons. In the fall of 1958 the patrons around Long Lake, Angus and north of Minkana and Brill joined the Birchwood central. A new central building was needed. By 1962 a 24x24 foot building covered with corrugated steel was erected just off Main Street to the east of the former central. The new equipment costing \$93,700 was placed in it in June, 1962. Now we had a three digit prefix of 354 which is dialed the same as "Elgin 4". More modern dial phones were installed. The General Telephone Company bought out the Commonwealth Company soon after the dial phones were installed at Birchwood. It took some time before the name was officially changed.

Lines have been built out from Birchwood in all directions. Cables were sunk across Lake Chetac to reach the homes on the northeast end of the lake. Once again the people south of the village got phone service. In 1969 crews were working on the project to have all wires run through cables.

In the 1968 directory 500 patrons were listed for the Birchwood exchange. Many farmers have installed a phone in their barn and many homes have extension phones. More patrons are added each year. Private lines are becoming very popular.

In November, 1970, an addition measuring 28 x 28 feet was added to the east end of the exchange built in 1962. More equipment was needed to handle the load of 571 customers, with a total of 745 telephones, installed in homes, places of business and barns.

Early Garages

Back in the Model T days Ed Escherich operated a repair shop and livery. He continued his horse and buggy and boat livery for several years. If he could not make the trip with one outfit he could with another one.



Einar's crew in 1945: John Shuran, Einar Skar, Fred Vreeland and Victor Walhovd.

It is claimed that Mr. Wise had the first car, but John Martin came a close second with a Buick chain drive. The date given was 1906, but knowing the condition of the roads at that time, we are sure they did not make long trips.

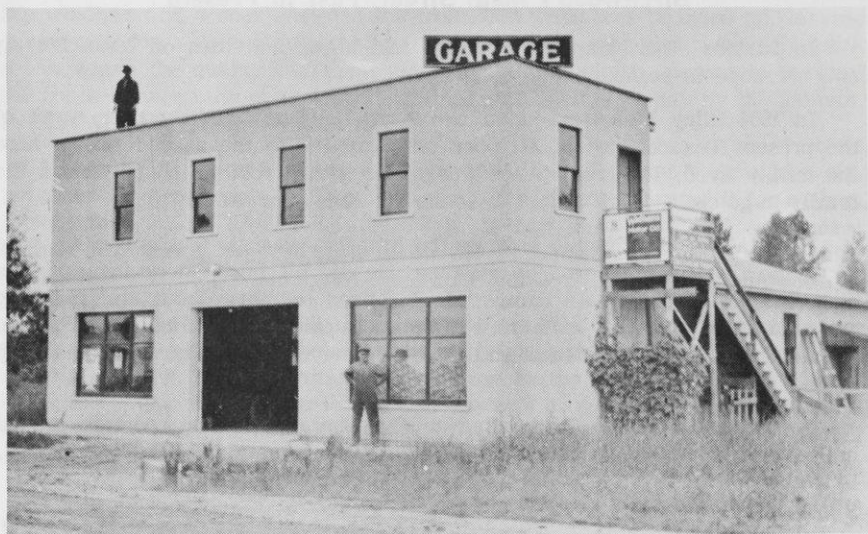
About 1918 Harry Lockwood built a large garage with a three room apartment above the showroom. It was located at the south end of the Main Street business district. His son-in-law, Otto Walley, ran the garage for several years. William Weiller purchased it and took over the Ford agency. Einar Skar was his mechanic for seven years.



Einar Skar's Chevrolet garage and Standard Service station.

Weiller erected a service station across the street from the bank in 1927. Gib Weber operated it until it was purchased by Einar Skar in 1928. He erected a garage beside it, which was soon enlarged to a 42 x 98 foot structure. He had the agency for Chevrolet cars from 1929 to his recent retirement, on May 1, 1967, when Bill Cyr's Auto-Marine took over the building. Fred Vreeland started as a mechanic there in March, 1938, and is still on the job.

Now let's see what was going on at the Ford Garage. Louie Frosli purchased it from Weiller in 1929. He ran it about ten years. Clarence Bilodeau came next but he dropped the Ford agency. Beffa Brothers purchased it in



First garage in Birchwood. Operated by Otto Walley.

1945 and removed the showroom and apartment above it. They made the front to conform to the corner so that cars could drive in to the Texaco gas pumps. In 1948, the Beffas sold to Larry Magneson who sold it to Larry and Jane Graham in 1952.

The Standard Oil bulk station was run by N. F. Catman for 15 years. Then Parker Samson ran it until Francis Thomas took it over in 1939 and operated it for 27 years. He retired in 1966. Robert E. Skar is now the delivery man.



Standard Oil bulk station beside Omaha track. Taken June, 1944.

Chapter XXII

Birchwood's Main Street, Past to Present

In various other chapters we have told about activities on Main Street; now we hope to complete the picture.

In 1904 Riley Mains put up a two story building on the corner north of the present Texaco station. An open stairway led to the second floor where the family lived. The front porch was made with a roof which permitted the family to go out through a door to shake the rugs over the railing.

He established a butcher shop on the first floor. As was customary in those days, the floor was covered by sawdust. He did his own butchering and furnished meat for the Arpin camps. He got tired or starved out and the shop was sold to the Mathews brothers. Frank did trucking with his team and wagon to make a living. L. G. Bemis and C. J. Skinner took their turns in this shop also.

Across the street to the north Nap Cyr operated a pool room in an old building which was torn down when he built the Dreamland Pavilion in 1933. It is now owned by John Hutera where he operates the Gate Bar.



Main Street, looking south. Visible at far south, the first Catholic church and the two-story Riley Maines butcher shop.

Bertha's Dew Drop Inn with living rooms upstairs came next. The next old building we believe was first used as a saloon by Mike Skar. It eventually became Nap's Tavern where the big fire started from faulty wiring in 1943. It had also been used by the Lake Region Honey Company for a storehouse. Henry Egers, his brother John and their father planned to go into the honey business in a big way but it was a flop.

The vacancy between this saloon and the Wise Opera Block was filled in by placing timbers across from one building to the other for the slant roof. Big windows and a door enclosed the front. The back was boarded up, leaving an opening for a door onto the alley. A small room was partitioned off for a cooler where the quarters of meat were hung. Through an opening in the roof the space between the meat and the ceiling was filled each day by the iceman. Presto! We had another butcher shop.

Kenneth Danielson was the first operator. John Wormet bought him out, but when the depression hit he moved away. Mr. Horne operated it for a short period, then John Telitz bought him out. It had now graduated to a meat market, the meat being shipped in on the train. Soon the stores were also selling meat, so to get even with them John put in a line of merchandise.

After the fire of 1906 Mr. Wise and others put up three buildings close together. Wise faced the whole thing with brick, which made it appear to be one big building. He put a marker at the top on the front which said "Opera Block 1907." The first door took you into Taylor's drug and confectionery store, the second to the Wise bank and the third door to the stairs leading to the hall over these two places.

On the north side of the hall were the apartments where the Wise family lived for a few years, over the general store which Mr. Wise operated until Ole Stenejhem bought him out. L. G. Bemis and son Erwin came along and



Main Street looking north. Beyond the Opera Block is the Arpin Land Office, Morey's Lumber Yard office, Loomis Store, and hotel at the far end.

bought out Ole and held forth for several years. Frank Cyr, Leo Cyr and John Hittner made a deal with L. G. and took over the place.

When Harry LaPointe gave up farming in 1920 he went into partnership with his father-in-law, Frank Cyr, and they bought out Leo and Hittner. Ruby Cyr became the ever faithful and cheerful clerk. After Frank's death Ruby even-

tually became a partner with Harry. They built a new store north of this one in 1939 which became known as The Peoples Store. They sold to Joe Jevert and Arthur Clausen of Chicago in 1946. Jevert sold to Clausen in 1950.

Let's step back and see what happened to this section after the big fire on February 25, 1943. All that were left on this block was the dance hall to the south and the new store to the north. Nap put up a partition lengthwise in the dance hall and remodeled the front entrance. He established his tavern on the north side and Bertha's Dew Drop Inn on the south.

On the spot where Nap's Tavern had stood Eddie Weiss built the dairy in 1946. He sold the building to Bud Soper in May 1956 who turned it into a bait & tackle shop. In a short time he built a nice addition on the north side. Because of ill health he sold to Hudson Soper in 1968.

Ready for the Christmas mail in 1960 was a nice new post office building with plenty of space on all sides. Now we are back to the addition which LaPointe had erected on the south side of his new store. We must admit these buildings are a great improvement over the ones which burned.

Lampert's office, warehouse and storage sheds come next. The last of the Soo tracks were torn out several years ago, and the old depot departed



View south from hotel about 1907. At far left is the Lutheran Church, and at the edge of the picture is shown the one-room first school house.

in 1951. The next stop is at the oldest building in town. The Loomis "Wigwam" was built in January, 1902. The front door takes you into the original section of the Loomis store.

L. L. Thayer bought him out in 1911. De Keyser moved into town in 1914 and took over the store. He sold the stock of goods to Charles Koschke in 1925 and the building to J. Boehmer in 1928. Koeschke moved away and John McLeod was manager for Boehmer from 1929 to 1934 when Elmer Petersen took it over. In due time he owned it but during the second war he closed it in 1942.

The morning of February 25, 1943, he unlocked the door to let Telitz move his stock of goods in with a rush as the fire was licking at the partition between his store and Nap's Tavern where the fire had started. Telitz increased his stock and held forth there until his retirement. His son Stanley continued until recently when he sold out to Don's Outlet.

The Citizens State Bank was built of brick by Mr. DeKeyser in 1918. The next was a white store building put up in the first days by Mrs. "Money Bags" Peterson which housed everything which came along. We believe it was where Ole Stenejhem had his first store. Morey bought it, and after that it carried his name. The next building was put up by Dr. Andrews for his office and apartment. The building on the corner became known as the Thayer Building. The last three burned in the fire on May 28, 1924.

Thayer put up another building immediately so the post office could return to the space on the north side, and a variety of things went in on the south side. In January, 1940, the post office moved to the building vacated by La



Main Street as it looked before the fire of 1943.

Pointe. In about 1944 Ted Neau bought the building and installed a pool table which he operated with more or less success until 1947 when he sold out to John Freis. It took John several months to get things lined up for a general store. Due to his wife's ill health he sold out in 1950 to "Dopey" Falstad. All he tried to do was sell off the stock of goods.

Mr. and Mrs. Harlow Grilley purchased it in 1952, ran a good business, then sold to Leonard Carlson March 1, 1957. Somewhere along the line it was name The Fair Store. Don and Joan Fuller returned from Chicago and purchased the store in 1965, also took over the Matt Till's Trading Post just south of it. They built a connection between the two and laid in a much larger stock of goods.

We will now go across the street and journey to the south. Einar Skar built the first section of his garage in 1928, and also ran the filling station which

Bill Weiller built in 1927. Einar retired in 1967. Bill Cyr runs a repair shop and automotive and marine business in this building now.

The Standard service station was built in 1952. Dick Cyr was the first to operate it. Joe Jeverst came next, then Bill Cyr. Leonard "Tubby" Haynie leased the building in October, 1961 and is doing such a good business he is still on the job.

North of where the village hall now stands there was a large building with large letters which told the world "Theo. Hamm Brewing Company, St. Paul." It was their storage house, and they carried a liquor license. It was later turned into a potato warehouse and the lettering was changed to "L. C. & R. Potato Warehouse." A lean-to was built on the south side. This was the last potato house to fold up, after a flourishing business back in the twenties.

After Royal Rustong used it for a feed store it was torn down and carted away. On that site now stands the shelter house and benches which friends donated as a memorial to Gerry Allard.

The new village hall was a WPA project which was built in 1939-40. A large fire hall was added to the east end of it in 1970. Across the street to the south is the big building which Mrs. Peterson put up from money she had collected in her "Money Bag." A covered stairway on the back end led to the hall on the second floor which was used for many purposes. It was built in 1904. John Mikula moved a saloon into it which he ran until 1913. Now here comes Stenejhem again. We think he has been in the old Thayer building since he left the Wise store. But we will bid Ole goodbye for he got tired of the town in about 1917 and moved to Park Falls.

At about that time the steers were being fed on the Stout range, and this empty building was used to store the earloads of ground feed which were shipped in from the mills in Minneapolis. By 1920 it was empty again and N. E. Forward and son Ernest moved their second-hand things into it and added a line of hardware.

"Push" remodeled the whole front of the store and made many other improvements before he sold out in 1962 to Gerry and Bob Allard. This included the barber shop which Forward had purchased from Herman Biel just before the latter's death in 1956. Allard turned it into a shoe store with a connection into the main store. After Mr. Allard's death the business was sold to Guild McLain, who made many more improvements.

Now we come to the early history of the barber shop which was used for that one purpose for 60 years. It was built in 1902 by D. O. Morse, and sold to Frank Newby in October. He was a barber when he wasn't hunting or fishing. (Bert Kirch and his father kept the shop going). The family lived upstairs. It was sold to John Hisenfelt in January, 1916, then to Herman Biel one year later. He operated it until his health failed in 1956. Other barbers kept it going until Howie Colbert took it over and ran it until Allard turned it into a shoe store.

The next shop had quite a different history. It was built by Bert Howard in 1902 for a hardware store. He sold to John Monteith in February, 1904. John was a Jack of all trades, he cobbled shoes, mended tinware and repaired guns.



Interior of Skinner's butcher shop. Joe Skinner, proprietor, behind the counter; Jerry Kincannon and George Dupree in front. Boy is Ole Skar.



Nap's Apartments, built in 1946.



Hud's Bait & Tackle Shop, built by Eddie Weiss for the dairy.



Laundromat, opened for business in 1962.

He and Lodosca put in a pool table and confections. It was the social center of Main Street. Later John Hittner established his shoe shop there, and his sign, "Shoes made to Order" remained on the place for many years. In fact it is still called the Hittner building by the old timers. The Pentecostal church people held services in it for some time. Hud Soper established a tavern there and when he moved out it was converted into a restaurant which changed hands many times. It was recently torn down and carted away.

The next building was put up by George M. Huss for his headquarters. On the front windows was painted "Wisconsin Land Company." John Martin was one of the agents for the sale of Knapp, Stout land. When that activity died down the building was used for various businesses.

The village was incorporated in 1921. Up to that time it had been in the township system, and the town meetings had been held in the Wise Hall. Now the village wanted a hall of its own. It purchased this building for official meetings and rented it out for other activities.

When the Wise bank sold out to the Citizens State Bank in 1928 the village purchased the beautiful big table and fancy chairs for their council meetings. The vacated rooms were used by Earl White for a tavern. By 1940 the new village hall was ready and Hud Soper bought the old one and moved his tavern into it. He reduced the size of the front windows and put on a stone front. He sold out to Bob Soper who remodeled it and built an addition. The present owner is Bettie Bjorklund. The name is Bluegill Bar.

Mr. Matson had his little shoe repair shop out near the street. The whole back part of the block was used as the village dump. In the very early days there stood on this spot a large dark-colored building where people lived while their own house was being built. It was very undesirable.

In 1962 Roger Grimh held open house in the Laundromat he had built. Although the dump ground had been cleared off years earlier, the excavators ran onto many buried articles, even the remains of an old Ford. This had been a swamp hole. The building is attractive inside and out. The washers and dryers are kept busy the year round. The remainder of the building is now an up-to-date cafe owned by Don and Doris Jones.

Across the street to the south is where the Tousley store stood until it burned. The lot stood vacant until 1931 when Ed Blaha built a combination filling station and dwelling. He sold Shell oil. Those who followed him in quick succession were Johnson, Jack Hauss, Nap Cyr, Howard Kringle and Barney Rhoda. Some one changed it to Mobilgas. Business was poor and no one has cared to use it as a station for many years.

Farther up the street was Charley Wilkie's store. We would not dare to tell all the stories we've heard about that place. The A&W Root Beer stand does a big business during the summer on the next corner.

Across the street to the south stands the apartment house which Nap Cyr built in 1946. There are now six units of various sizes which have been occupied almost constantly. It was sold to A. O. Johnson in 1954. Howard Busse purchased it in 1968.

Birchwood Doctors

Dr. Andrews who was a civic-minded man and a true booster, practiced medicine here from 1904 to 1910. He was loved by everyone. Dr. Hedges came in 1911 and stayed until 1918. He liked to be out with the young folks and played for the dances.

In December, 1917, Dr. Hobart moved his family to Birchwood. When the flu epidemic struck in 1918 he traveled day and night. He had a bronco pony which he either drove or rode. Often Charley Williams would take him with the team and sled if the trip was far into the country. He did not lose a flu patient, neither did he contract the disease. After a gall bladder operation in 1924 he overworked and passed away in January, 1926.

Next came Dr. Ainsworth in 1926 who opened an office in his home on the north end of Main Street. He was an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist. Many a child got his first glasses from him. He died in 1944.

Since that time patients were taken by car to the doctors or the hospitals in Rice Lake and the roads were not very good. When County Highway C was taken over by the state and named Highway 48 in 1956, improvements in the roads became permanent.

The fire department purchased a second-hand ambulance in December, 1960. From then on patients have been able to reach a doctor in a matter of minutes.



First ambulance, purchased in 1960. By 1965 it was replaced by a larger and better one.

It had so many fast drives that by 1965 it was replaced by a larger and better one. They purchased a resuscitator in 1952 for the ambulance and now have another one in the fire truck.

In the fall of 1958 Dr. R. P. McNamara of Rice Lake opened a dental office in a room at the village hall where he practices two days of the week.

Secret Societies at Birchwood

The Modern Woodmen claimed to be the first society organized in the village. The Masonic Lodge was organized about 1914. In 1915 they built a second story on the Thayer building for their lodge room. It burned along with

two other buildings in 1924. They were able to save a part of their records and equipment. They decided to put up a long lodge building on south Main Street, where they held their meetings until about 1937 when it was sold to John Telitz who remodeled it into a nice residence. Then they moved their equipment to the hall over the hardware store. After a few years they decided to disband because so many members had either died or moved away. Those who wished transferred to the Rice Lake lodge.

The Woodmen of the World, Red Oak Camp 205, was organized July 17, 1917. It flourished for a time and then died.

The Royal Neighbors were a group of women who kept things humming. A favorite location for picnics was out at Watkins Spring on Lake Chetac, where people would go in motor boats. One day in 1910 the following ladies gathered there and had their picture taken; Mmes. John Martin, Josie Kirch Prigge, Stenejhem, Bacon, Ida Bemis, Fannie Bemis, Bohnenkamp, Loomis, and Reineke. We are unable to recall all the other members. They remained active until the early 1930's.



Old steam engine at one of the Bluegill Festival parades. Gomer Evans, the owner, and Bill Fuller at the controls.

Community Clubs

For years the PTA was the popular get-together club and did a great deal for the school and parents as well.

In April, 1947, the Community Booster Club was organized and H. L. La Pointe was the first president. Its main object was to encourage more tourists to come to our lakes. The great event which they sponsored was the Golden Jubilee of the village in 1951.

The Lions' Club was organized in 1961 and still going strong, assisted by the Lionettes. They sponsor the Bluegill Festival each July.

A 4-H club was organized by Mrs. Spjut. When Mrs. Chappelle was leader she had the biggest club in the county, 60 members, in the 1930's.

Birchwood Newspapers

W. H. Noyes came to Birchwood in 1903 and soon became the agent at the Soo depot. He set up a printing press in the depot and put out the first newspaper, which he named "The Birchwood Press." Then followed the "Birchwood Independent," "Birchwood Bulletin," and "The Birchwood News." One editor was called "Ding Bat" and his print shop was later converted into a woodshed. N.E. Forward did job printing all the years he was in the hardware business.

Birchwood's Early Golden Weddings

The first golden wedding was celebrated at Birch Lake Inn in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Gottlieb Grasley. Their married children had moved up here and they followed in 1915 driving a team of mules on a covered wagon. We are setting the date of the celebration as being in the early 1920's.

Mr. and Mrs. Oram Galvin whose married children had located here, decided to come too in 1922. They celebrated their fiftieth in 1928, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Arnett in 1930, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Tuttle sr. in 1937, Mr. and Mrs. Willis Cannon and Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Denison in 1938, Mr. and Mrs. Nels Walhovd in 1951, and Mr. and Mrs. August Muehe in 1952.

Mr. and Mrs. George Thomas lived beyond their sixty-fifth, Mr. and Mrs. L. L. Thayer and Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Brandt their sixty-second, and Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Sabol and Mr. and Mrs. John Monteith their sixtieth.



The Cornet Band. Left to right, front row: Gladys Newby, Mary Craig, Clara Mikula, Clare Newby. Middle row: Goody Brooks, Frank Mikula, Ed Escherich, Earl Tuttle, Erwin Bemis. Back row: George Mikula, John Craig, Fred Mikula, Jim Mikula, Emil Schenck and Frank Newby, the director.

The list is too long to name all those who in later years made it to their fiftieth, and many others almost reached their sixtieth. This must go to prove that life in this area was not all hardship.

Music and Weddings

Some of the parents who came here in the early days had grown-up children who had been playing in bands back home. They brought their instruments along and were soon gathering together for a tooting session. There was nothing like music to drive the lonesome blues way. This chapter will show what a wonderful mixer an orchestra and a dance floor can be.

The first public hall was over Mikula's saloon which was built in 1904. A much larger one was provided when Wise built the Opera Block in 1907. Part of the second story was used for town meetings, etc. and dances.

The first orchestra was George Bitney with violin, Charles Tuttle, sr. with the bull fiddle and his daughter Rose at the organ. A new one was organized



A trainload of logs on the side track, and a man with a camera inspired a picture of this group taken while they were out for a Sunday afternoon stroll. Pictured are Pat O'Connel, Maggie Soper, Anna Wise and Norris Catman in the first row. Behind them are Joe Poole and Vic Soper.

with Frank Newby, cornet; Dr. Hedges, violin; Trix Plumleigh, the drums, and Gladys Newby at the piano. Yes, a piano soon replaced the organ.

The last local combination was Newby and Krause, cornets, Gladys at piano, and perhaps either Henry Eidsmoe or E. Kirch on their violins.

A band was organized and went around by team and wagon to fairs and celebrations. It operated for a number of years, some members dropping out while others joined or visitors stepped in to help them out.

Some nights the young folks at Mikana borrowed the hand car and pumped it up the Soo tracks and danced to the wee hours and pumped it back again. Some fellows had horses to ride.

After World War I a group of musicians from the Campia and Mikana area came up to play at the Wise hall. Cletus Wickens was the leader and arranged their music which they called "homemade." They traveled by Ford truck around over the Floating Bridge. They often went out to the Pribram hall to play.

On Sunday nights the young folks would gather at the Methodist church for a Young Peoples Meeting. The kerosene lamps on brackets on the side walls were not very illuminating. The couples held hands under the song books and sang to the top of their voices. The young fellows had to be there to see that the girls got home safely in the dark. But the old maids had a more reliable guide. They carried a lantern so they could see the cows lying in the path or worse yet, what a cow may have left behind her.

Soon the couples were getting married. The following list will show how they paired off up to 1925. Almost every family is named on the list. Of course the first teacher, Blanche Jordan, caught the eye of the Soo agent, Ted Sellers, and they were married as soon as school was out. Others were Anna Bacon and Hub Knapmiller, Mabel Bemis and James Berry, Catherine Kleiman and Mike Dier, Alice LaPointe and Herman Kleiman, Ann Wise and Bert Leasure, Mae Tuttle and M. F. Damon, Olga Goffin and Lawrence Wise, Myrtle Drinkwater and Ed Klinebrook, Rose Escherich and Ed Drinkwater, Hattie Drinkwater and Joe Klinebrook, Nettie Kirch and Walter Klinebrook, Kate Escherich and James Moore, Rose Cyr and Harry La Pointe, Esther Goffin and Chester Winter, Margaret Bohnenkamp and Vern Dupree, Jennie Hart and Bert Kirch, Mabel Wise and Ole Nelson, Neva Soper and Leo Cyr, Lou Soper and Frank Mathews, Gladys Newby and Erwin Bemis, Louella Bayless and Frank Krohn, Ina Grigsby and Charles Westphal, Jeanette Westphal and Ellsworth Frank, Laura Bayless and Max Groth, Alice Craig and Herbert Bloxem, Edna Craig and Alex Villard, Lucy Smith and Dexter Russell, Lila Bacon and Rev. A. D. Lehman, Amy Floberg and Oscar Melby (both were teachers), Essie Galvin Grasley and John Lackey, Rose Tuttle and John Galvin (this was a double wedding), Lilas Soper and Caddy Catman, Bea Wood and Louie Kramer, Irma Eby and Art Bayless, Bertha Cannon and Nap Cyr, Wilma Grasley and Delbert Olmstead, Stella Olmstead and Harry Grasley, Irene Due and George Winter, Esther Lindegren and Orville Soper, Cora Fossum and Charley Tuttle, Lola Eby and Robert Monteith, Elsie Muehe and Henry Schlieske, Louise Schlieske and Ed Moore, Alyce Cyr and Louie Befffa.

Some of these men came to work at the mill, others spent their week ends here and thus got acquainted and called Birchwood their home. We hope we have not missed anyone up to 1925.

Chapter XXIII

Going West from Birchwood

The road leading west from the village has been described in other chapters. It was a gift from F. D. Stout for he wanted a way to get his teams over to his land east of Cedar Lake. A wee bit of the town of Birchwood is on the south side of that road and the former railroad tracks.

Three former Wilson Valley residents have summer homes near The Narrows, Ingwald and Alfred Edwardson and their sister Edna Baum. Alfred also has a resort. Across the water in a wee corner is Tamarack Lodge where Goodie Brooks built his log cabin. Elmer Petersen purchased all the land north of this road and east of Balsam Lake, which had been owned by F. D. Stout.

The people of the village were getting tired of driving out to the north and around to get to Angus and Rice Lake. In 1937 when the WPA projects were popular, pressure was put on to have another bridge built at The Narrows. M. F. Damon was the superintendent of the construction. The road still wandered through the woods at both ends of the bridge. It reached the county line on the east side of the A. O. Johnson house.

This farm of 120 acres was first owned by Frank White who put up the buildings. The house was designed for keeping boarders.

Chris Olson was the next owner; his son O. K. operated the farm. Then A. O. Johnson bought it in 1918. He retired from farming in 1954 and purchased the Nap Cyr apartments in the village. His son Ossie moved onto the farm.

This brings us to the Angus Four Corners where we will turn and go one mile north. Sever Olson owned land on both sides of the road. In 1915 Reeves Ryan bought the land on the east side and put up good buildings. They lived there until 1949 when they retired to Rice Lake.

Charley Matts bought the land on the west side from Olson. He moved a house from Angus onto it to live in. When he wanted to sell, A. O. Johnson purchased the farm. Then his son Alger bought it and many improvements were made such as enlarging the house. Later the farm was sold to Eugene Busick, the present owner.

The Pete Walrack farm joins it on the south. We find a long history connected with the farm in the corner. Lou Welker was the first owner. He was killed in an accident on the farm. His wife sold the farm to Warren U'Ren. Carl Snell of Spooner seems to have taken over the place and George Amans rented from him for many years. Lloyd Kringle now owns the farm and also the Walrack farm with the exception of two acres on which the buildings stood. Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Kringle have retired to this home.

George Amans had married Martha Olson and A. O. Johnson had married her sister Anna. They were daughters of Magnus Olson who with his many sons had settled on Highway D two miles north of the county line. It was quite an Olson settlement.

We are now going west three miles to the town line. The first buildings we find are on the Kuznar 80 acre farm. Mrs. William Kerber tells us that she and her husband set up housekeeping there in a two-room tarpaper shack with a shanty roof in 1929. Their four children were born there. It was a bit cold in the winter but they enjoyed life there until 1936. Old Man Martin took over the place and built a new house. Later Virgil Martin lived there and operated the Bunny Bar. The tavern burned down and he erected a dance

hall with a bar. He sold the place to Frank Kuznar. Recently the dance hall was sold to the Town of Birchwood to be used as the town hall, community center and patrol storage room.

A road leads north one half mile to the Edwin Dalen 200 acre farm. It was started by Charley Lance who built a good-sized house. John Coleman and family lived there for a few years. Bill Smith and family were there in 1918 and 1919. The Charley Saxby family came next and stayed five years. It must have been vacant for a time for the house was in bad shape when Edwin Dalen purchased the place in the spring of 1927. They fixed it up and lived there for 27 years, then retired to Rice Lake.

Coming back to the county line road we come to the Emil Thiefs' 80 acres. We have learned that when Lettie Brooks married Marvin M. Hudson in 1910 they set up housekeeping on this place but stayed only a short time. He preferred railroading. Nap Amans moved onto it in 1925 and lived there three years. Leonard Olson lived there from 1933 to 1940. Then came the Thiefs family.

Next west is the Alvin Johnson farm of 80 acres. George Amans seems to have owned this place until he sold it to Slinger. Johnson bought it and has called it home since 1936.

Harvey Greenfield owned the next farm of 200 acres. It was he who put up good buildings in 1938 which are still in good condition. Several families lived there for short periods. Emil Schultz bought it in 1954 and is still on it.

Lee Rothe opened up a farm of 80 acres in Section 31 back in the early thirties. He erected good buildings, then his wife became an invalid and died. Lewland Olson rented the place for two years. It lay idle for a time. Ray Corbin bought the place in 1945, added 240 acres and now raises beef cattle.

Lewland and Leonard Olson are not related to the other Olsons in this area. They are from the Campia Oleson family, who dropped the letter "E."

Well, at last we have reached the southwest corner of the Town of Birchwood. We find John Coleman again. After he left the Charley Lance place he lived a while in the "Tin House" over the line into the town of Cedar Lake. Then his father gave him about 40 acres in the corner and a house was moved onto it. He ran a sawmill for many years in that corner.

John Coleman married Ella Glaze of Mikana November 3, 1913. They moved onto this little place in 1919, she died in 1966 and John called it home until his death in 1969, making a record of 50 years on the same place.

We have just one more farm to report. Peter Helgeland came from Harmony, Minnesota in 1904 and purchased a large tract of land from a land company in Section 30. He erected buildings, but being a bachelor was not to his liking. He returned to his old home and after a time he persuaded a young lady named Julia to be his bride. They set up housekeeping in this wild country in 1915 and stayed there until 1952 when they moved to Rice Lake. The farm was sold to Everett Coleman who still lives there. Mr. Helgeland was chairman of the Town of Birchwood for many years.

Knapp, Stout & Company had a logging camp on the Corbin land, and floated their logs down the Long Lake stream. Another camp was on the Lloyd Kringle farm. Those logs were rolled into Cedar Lake. This indicates that a wonderful stand of pines covered this valley. Those stumps would discourage most folks from opening up the land. They simply could not pay the high price asked by the land companies and also the high interest. Many of them lost everything they had and moved on to something else. This is one of the reasons for so many changes of tenants on these farms.

The last call of "Timber" was heard in this area in 1964 when Joe Robotka, jr. cut the last grove of virgin pine around Mud Lake east of Balsam. The diameter of the stumps was 45 to 46 inches. Each tree scaled 16 to 17 hundred board feet. They were delivered to the Birchwood Lumber and Veneer Mill. Back in 1900 these trees were not big enough to cut when the Knapp Stout & Company pulled up stakes.

We must tell one big fish story before we leave the Birchwood history. Our old friend Goodie Brooks saw two big sturgeons in Birch stream below the dam. He found a big stick and clubbed them to death. One weighed 96 pounds, the other, 112 pounds. Where they came from no one knows. Goodie was a very small man. How did he carry them home???

East Road from Birchwood

According to the Washburn County Atlas of 1914 we would have found when we turned east off from Main Street a sign on the south side of the road which stated "City View Farm. A. Wise Land Company." There were 190 acres in this field. After Lawrence Wise married Olga Goffin they lived in the big house now owned by Jim Jilek. He opened up and farmed several acres of this farm. Then it was sold off by portions. Nils Nilsen bought 40 acres north of the cemetery. Hank Dittburner took the east 80 in 1935 and put up the buildings. He sold it to Delbert Gunderson in 1944. Ernest Forward purchased the remaining portion in 1940 and moved a house from Wilson Valley onto it.

Next to the Sawyer County line the 40 south of the road was first owned by "Papa and Mama" Noah Schultz who built a house and barn and lived there until 1936 when they sold to John Wormet who modernized the house.

To the south of this were two 40's owned by Ed and Frank Blaha. Do you remember old Frank driving out to the 40 every day to do a bit of farming? Gunderson added that land to his farm.

Mr. Kirch loved to tell the story of the stranger who came into town and loitered too long in the saloons before starting out for an Arpin camp where he hoped to get work. He was trying to follow a trail but the booze made him tipsy and he fell and froze to death. As he had not checked in at a hotel or camp no one knew his name. The men dug a grave where he had fallen and buried him with his boots on and the bottle beside him. The location was marked for many years by a board stuck in the ground. It was about on the line between Wormet and Gunderson and quite near the road.

Another tragedy in the early thirties was when Fritz Reineke hanged himself from a tree out on the Wise 40. He had been in very poor health after the death of his very good wife and just could not take any more of it. The Lutherans refused to bury him from their church, but Rev. Maddock of the Methodist church and the lady singers went to the house and gave him a Christian service.

On the north side of this highway stood the house which Mike Damon lived in until he traded with Mike Skar. The first house burned; the new one is now owned by Al Haas. A portion of the Louie Neau farm extends to this road. Next came the land first owned by Carl Tousley. We believe a family named Walters came next. The oldest son, George, was a carpenter, Laura was a teacher. Ben, Hulda and Reuben graduated from the eighth grade before the family followed the Wise Land Company to Stone Lake after the Soo Central railroad

was built through to Superior. The farm was rented until Frank Rattunde moved his family from Exeland onto it in 1925. The house had several additions built onto it. He lived there until he retired in 1954.

Birchwood's South Road

We have to guess at when the first trail was made south from the village as well as when the Arpin Lumber Company started their operations out in the town of Wilson. We believe we are safe in saying 1902 when they took over three camps left by the Knapp, Stout Company.

Old trails indicated they followed the valley from Camp 12 cutting across between the house and barn on the farm now owned by Richard Scott, across where the cemetery now stands to hit the south end of Main Street of the village.

After the cemetery was established in 1905 on a beautiful high spot in the middle of Section 36 of the town of Birchwood, the powers that be tried to lay out a road straight north from the cemetery's east side. G. L. Lyle, the undertaker, told of taking a casket in a wagon on that trail. To hold back the team going down one steep grade and get up power to go up the next grade was most difficult and dangerous.

During this time people were establishing farms on a straight line south from Main Street and demanding that the new road should go past their land. In due time this plan was carried out. We will follow this road and try to mention the early settlers on it.

On a small plot of land on the west side Frank Blaha built a house in 1908, which burned down after a few years. On the next plot "Old Joseph" Robotka who came in 1915 built a home and lived there a few years. In 1905 Nils Nilser settled on his farm, worked at the mill 10 hours a day and dug out stumps in his spare time. It was a long hard pull but he made a fine farm out of it and his son Edwin still operates it.

The last land before we reach the Barron County line was purchased before 1903 by Alva Viner as well as many acres on the other side of the road. He put his son Jay on it and put up good buildings but Jay did not take kindly to farming and soon gave it up. Bill Kincannon bought some of it and he and James Moore, his step-son, lived there for many years. Joining them on the south was the Jay Jones farm now owned by Alex Widiker.

Now we step across the road to the east. J. A. Arnett had come from Iowa and bought up a great tract of land. He gave 80 acres to each of his five children. Mary and her husband Richard Hanson got the land where the road turns to the east. Across the corner was Mabel's land, next, east of Mary's was Roy's 80, and Phoebe's was where the Fuka brothers now live. Lottie, the oldest daughter, was married to Levi Doty and they got the 80 on the west side of the road going south, with Sucker Creek at their back door.

Mr. Arnett put up a log house on Roy's land where they lived at first, then he bought the 80 acre farm which Kumbrah owned and lived there until he and his wife died. It is now the Scott farm and extends to the corner where the four counties meet which is the center of this bit of history. It is corner-wise in section 36 of the town of Birchwood from the home of the writer of this book.

Mr. Arnett purchased the Wise sawmill and moved it to his farm where he operated it for many years assisted by Frank Hall. Levi Doty had 50,000 feet of lumber sawed and piled at his farm ready to build a new barn. In the

early fall of 1912 a forest fire came up from the southwest. The tall pine stumps scattered sparks in all directions, and log barn, 20 tons of hay and the piles of lumber all burned. Mr. Hall and Mr. Drinkwater came and helped save the house. No neighbors were living nearby.

When Doty was road supervisor he laid out this south road on straight lines in such a way that each one of the 80's belonging to the Arnett children would have access to this main road, which accounts for a peculiar jog in the road. A bridge was built over Sucker Creek in 1912 which was replaced by a much better one in 1957.

At the corner south of this bridge was the farm of Jacob Macek who put up good buildings but got discouraged and moved away. Then a mysterious fire took the buildings. Going east again we come to the Alex Widiker, sr. farm which he moved onto in 1922, then the place John Guggemos built up, but which Dave Widiker purchased for a summer home. That brings us up to the county line road which we described in the Town of Wilson stories.

Mr. Arnett was a practical geologist, but among his friends he was referred to as the man who witched for water. He could take a green forked branch from a tree, hold the forked ends in his hands and walk back and forth over the land, and when the long end moved up or down he knew he had found water. This was not hard to do out in Pribram for they hardly dared to dig a post hole for fear they might set off a flowing spring. He located many good wells in this area.

The use of dynamite was becoming quite common and although Roy Arnett was afraid of the stuff he was blowing stumps for his dad and the neighbors. One day in the spring of 1921 he was working on the Jacob Macek farm where he had loaded several stumps. All but one went off as expected. He was alone and evidently waited as long as he thought necessary, then went to investigate. At that moment the blast went off killing him instantly. He was 39 years of age and the only son in the family.

Mr. and Mrs. Doty made quite a record. They lived on the same farm 62 years. He died in 1959 at the age of 93. She stayed on for 10 more years and was 85 years old when she died.

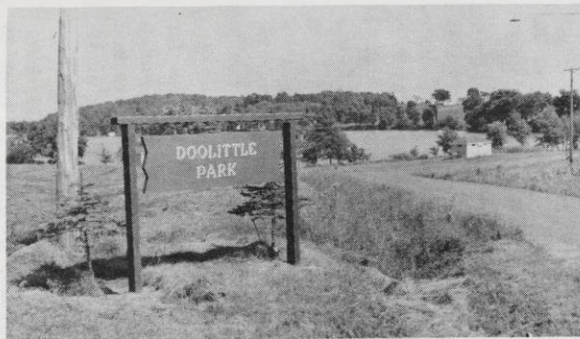
Cedar Lake was another town divided by a big lake. The town hall is located at Mikana. The voters on the east side have to come through Birchwood to get to Mikana and when there was no bridge at The Narrows they had to drive away around to the north to get there.

The first Knapp Stout camp on the east side of Red Cedar Lake was set up in Section 12 in 1875 at the foot of Downs Meadow (Archie Downs was the last boss). By 1903 E. A. Smith, the banker, had his name on Sections 12 and 25. After that it was called Smith Meadow and good wild hay was cut there for many years. It is now grown up to brush.

"Mulvaney's Last Stand" was the last camp built by Knapp, Stout in 1899-1900 and operated by Mike Mulvaney. It was located in Section 23, east of the lake. A lot of ancient history is wrapped up in this portion of the town of Cedar Lake.

Big and Little Birch Lakes

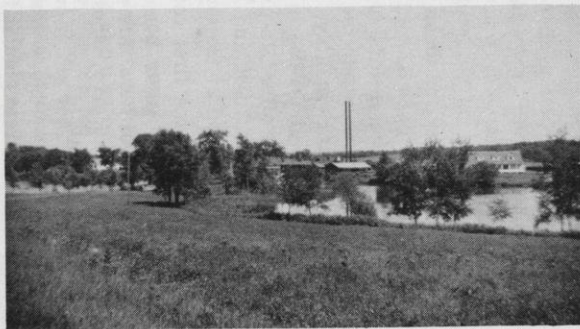
Just imagine you are back in about 1930 taking a motor boat ride up the east shore of Big Birch starting from the mill houses. First we will see a small cabin owned by Edna Rickle who taught many of the kids how to swim. Next we see the two large homes built by Doctor Gus Moldenhauer and his



Doolittle Park



Looking from Boarding House at Doolittle Park on the Point.



Doolittle Park on point between Big and Little Birch Lakes, showing Mill and old Boarding House in background. Taken 1954.



Little Birch Lake and the old dock.

brother, Dr. William from Chicago. Old Bill Hoyt was the caretaker and they had flower beds all over the place. They owned several acres of wooded land up the hill which were fenced in with high woven wire. They kept several doe and a handsome buck in this enclosure.

The Goedke family spent their summers at a cabin a bit farther on. Rounding the bend we enter the Narrows where the water from Lake Chetac enters Birch Lake. To the left we see Penny Island where the boys loved to camp. Up the high bank to our right we spy the cabin built by Minnie Farrington's father in the real early days. He laid the foundation and built his cabin floor on it, then put up the tent on it for the family to live in while he finished off the cabin over the top of it. Minnie spent her summers there for many years, almost to the time of her death.

The Adams family built the next cabin. Soon Curly Eleeson bought them out. Next we will see the Robert Darrah and the Walter Doolittle cottages. The latter used the same method as Farrington had used. Clay Shaw and Helen Blaha's cottages will come into view next. All of these are perched on high ground close to the steep bank down to the water. But it was cool and delightful in the summer.

We are now rounding another bend which was called Honeymoon Point. We find a plain cabin which was built in 1906 by Carl Miller. He brought his bride there on their honeymoon. It was later purchased by Henry Long who remodeled it into a lovely summer home. Up on the hill we spy another cabin which belonged to Barney Gibney.

We are heading straight for Joe Littlefield's resort for he had chosen a spot beside the Soo tracks south of the railroad bridge over the narrowest part of the water. Across the water from Joe's we now see two more cottages, one built by Leo Howland, the other by "Jim and Ma" Fyfe. They generally used their motor boats for transportation. Their cars were parked over at Joe's. They had to row across the channel if they went by car. The trail was so rough and crooked it was no pleasure to drive on it. After years of pressure on the Edgewater town board some improvements were made in the early forties. They had a big celebration at Joe's place and named it the "Long Little Road." Many of these men worked on the railroad.

Let's retrace our steps and dash across Big Birch to the west shore which was owned by Lawrence Doolittle. Away back in a cove his brother-in-law, R. B. White, built a cute little log cottage. Later on he built a beautiful one out on the point. As we come to the Narrows between Big Birch and Little Birch we see Doolittle Park. In July, 1952, Mr. Doolittle offered more than five acres on this point and up the hill to the village for such a small bit of money that we could not afford to turn it down. His only request was that it be named "Doolittle Park." Mr. and Mrs. R. B. White gave a redwood sign in his honor which was placed at the entrance to the park.

We will speed along to the first cottage built on Little Birch in 1924 for Grandma Hinman. The next year her nephew, Joe Moss, built a log cabin some distance to the east of hers. After his unexpected death his father and brother Harry took it over. Harry, whose voice could be heard a block away, spent his summers here until his recent death.

Across the lake to the south Ira Holdridge started a resort in 1934. After his death his son Clarence operated it for many years. We must go back to our starting place and leave our boat, and turn our attention to the beginnings in the mill area.

About the time the first mill was being built in 1905 a lot of people were moving into this area. Among them was L. H. DeLong who purchased 10 acres of land which extended from Birch Lake east to the county line and 40 acres over into Sawyer County. He built a shanty to live in on the lakeshore north of the mill where he was employed. He hired M. F. Damon to build a big house on top of the hill which the family moved into in 1916. The barn was built across the road in Sawyer County.

In 1921 De Long sold out to Henry Knapmiller and he and his family moved to Ironwood, Michigan. Walter Knapmiller lives on this farm now. The road between the house and barn on the county line leads back to the cottages we have just seen from the lake on our trip up the Narrows.

For many years a dock was located near the south shoreline of Little Birch. A narrow sidewalk connected it to the shore. The people from up the lakes would tie their boats to the dock and go uptown for their provisions. In the winter it provided a rest shelter for the skating parties. One by one the boards were taken from the walk for their bonfires. The authorities got tired of repairing it each spring. As the roads became better more cars were used to come after the mail and groceries. The dock was sold and moved away.



Air view of Birchwood in 1962. Birchwood village is located in the southeast corner of Washburn county, only $\frac{3}{4}$ miles from the corner post marking where the "Four Counties" meet. Highway 48 appears in the left corner, and beside it the Omaha railroad which was operating at the time. The Chappelle home is on the first street, second house from the left. From the south door one can see the Blue Hills. Cornerwise across Section 36 the view encompasses Barron, Washburn, Sawyer and Rusk counties at one glance. Birchwood Lumber & Veneer Mill is located on the shore of the Narrows between Big and Little Birch Lakes. Garbutt's Island is in the middle of Lake Chetac.

Chapter XXIV

The Birchwood Lumber & Veneer Mill

The Birchwood Mill dates back to November 7, 1903, when M. W. Perry and Haney Brothers of Algoma, Wisconsin, came here and bought a seven acre tract of land on the east shore of Big Birch. Early the next spring they sent in a crew to build a large boardinghouse.

The mill building was started shortly thereafter, consisting of a two-story structure, housing the veneer mill on the ground floor and the sawmill on the upper floor. Operations started early in 1905. This company was known as the Ahnapee Veneer and Seating Company.

With the exception of the boiler and engine room built of brick and steel, the entire mill was destroyed by fire in April, 1906. It was rebuilt at once and was operating by late summer. This time the veneer and lumber mills were in separate buildings.

In 1911 the name was changed to Algoma Panel Company and again in



The first mill, built in 1904-1905, known as the Ahnapee Veneer & Seating Company. Picture shows the rough land barren point between the lakes which is now Doolittle Park.

1931 it was changed to Algoma Plywood and Veneer Company. Shortly after the latter date the mill was sold to the U. S. Plywood Corp. of Chicago, who without changing the name operated the mill here until January, 1943. At that time they ceased operations and moved the veneer machinery to Algoma.

John Culligan came from Algoma and looked after construction and logging operations until November, 1904 when Emil Klatt took over as manager. He remained through December, 1907. P. M. White also of Algoma, replaced

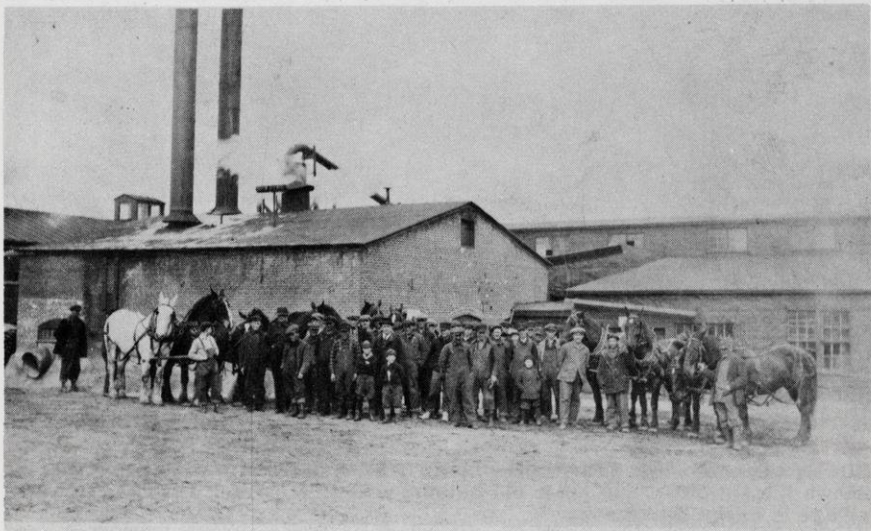
Klatt as manager in January, 1908, holding the position until early spring of 1922.

News of the hardwood lumbering business in northern Wisconsin had spread far and wide, and people were swarming into Birchwood. Among them were two brothers, Henry and Hubert Knapmiller, who lived at Kewaunee, a few miles south of Algoma. They came to Birchwood in 1904 and got right in on the first construction work.

For the first year or two the logging had been done near the mill. By 1908 they set up their first logging camp located near Spider Lake. "Hank" Knapmiller became the boss of logging operations, "Hub," boss of the mill yard where he tended to the decking of the logs as they were hauled in on sleds from the first camp. As they moved their camps farther away the logs were shipped in on the trains.

In those days they washed the logs in the lake before pulling them up into the sawmill. Therefore when the lake froze over the sawmill closed down and the men went to the woods to log all winter. A small crew was left behind to operate the veneer mill. The logs were boiled in huge vats before skinning off the sheets of veneer.

The kind of trees they wanted for the mill were birch, elm, ash, hemlock and some pine, if a big tree happened to be in their path, but they did not



Yard crew and teams plus P. J. Carah, one of the bookkeepers and his sons, Paul, jr. and Bud. At right is Ed Wells, the engineer and small son Edward.

cater to pine. The Knapp, Stout & Company had cut the big pine in this area but great tracts of hardwood were left untouched. (As a usual thing pine and hardwood did not grow hit and miss together).

The second camp was located on the east side of Lake Chetac. Next they moved on to the Hauer area, loading their logs onto the new Wisconsin

Central railroad and transferring them to the Omaha at Lemington. When the camp was located at Yarnell, the logs were loaded at Lona Spur one and a half miles northeast of the Yarnell boxcar depot, and shipped directly to the mill yard.

People from the village often rode out on the train to visit the camp and wait for the return train. The Ladies Aid Society even did that one day and thought it was a lark to eat at the camp. When a camp was located at Wood-dale it was the shortest distance from the mill, and the logs came in on the Omaha. Each spring the mill yard would be full to overflowing with high piles of logs.

The last years of their logging was out east of Winter and the loading was at Overland Spur, a few miles east of Draper. This was the farthest east they logged. The last camp was called Rice Homestead, eight miles east of Winter, landing at Overland and Stinson's Spur.

At the main camp near the cutting about 105 men were employed. The



Birchwood Lumber & Veneer Mill in 1957, when LaPointe sold out to Bloom. Shows the old office and other old buildings. Railroad track is to the left and village is in the background.

small camp at the landing employed 25 men. Herman Talbot was the cook at this camp.

In about 1920 the company purchased a steam hauler for their work out on the flats east of Winter, where streams run in all directions—you hardly knew whether you were going up or down. Nap Amans was the driver for a number of years and Stan Knapmiller was fireman and brakeman. Sometimes they might drag as many as a dozen loads of logs. When they came to a grade, it was Stan's job to go back and unhook the chains leaving about half

of the train to come back and get, after the first half was delivered. (Thus he was called a brakeman). Although they were dealing in wood products they shipped in coal to fire the steam hauler with, as it made a faster, hotter fire. Frank Suran was another local man who drove the steam hauler. George Winter operated a caterpillar tractor hauling the big loads out of the woods, also coming to the aid of the steam hauler when it got into trouble. The tractor made frequent trips to the blacksmith shop. There were two hauler crews, one for day and one for night.

The winter of 1929 was the last of the loggin' days for the mill. After that they depended on the logs being shipped in. Hank Knapmiller would travel the country during the summer buying logs, which were shipped in by train. Both the Soo and the Omaha had access to a spur track which went up into the mill yard. Hub Knapmiller as boss kept a big crew hopping at the unloading and decking job. He seemed to have eyes in the back of his head and knew if any man was lagging on the job.

There were factions in the mill and the community back in those days. There was what was called the Mill Gang and the Town Gang. Mr. Bemis



Hank Knapmiller was a big man, but he was dwarfed by the logs in this picture.

had a grocery store and so did Mr. Loomis. The mill gang traded with Loomis and the town gang with Bemis. Woe to a mill man who was seen in the Bemis store.

Now Joe Cmeyla was a very close friend of Bemis and he was also the engineer and a good one, too. But he got the axe. A message was sent to Ed Wells at Stevens Point that a marvelous job was open for him at the mill and for him to please come and look it over.

When Ed got here and heard all about the factions he was about to leave the town, but the upshot was that he rented the Cmeyla house. And Joe

seemed not to mind it at all (maybe he was glad to get out of the town). Ed started work August 10, 1912, and stayed with it until the mill closed in 1943.

Ed Wells who gave me this information, told also of the tornado which hit the village soon after he moved into the house, now owned by Mr. Di Ulio. It sucked everything out through the windows or up through the trap door into the attic, but was over in a few seconds. He found Mr. Windus who lived



Trainload of veneer logs on the Omaha, backing into Mill yards. Picture was taken to show railroad officials that the line was being used. It did no good; the steel was carried away in 1966. Now all deliveries are made by truck.



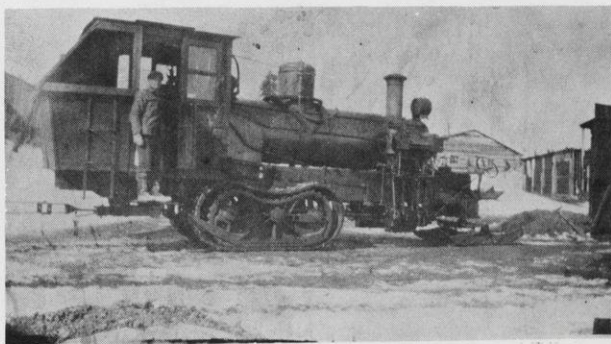
Birchwood Lumber & Veneer Mill, 1970. This new 150x80 foot building replaced the old mill in 1970. A new 72x40 foot engine room was also built. There are now eleven buildings (many of them out of sight) which have been built since 1957, when the Blooms purchased the Mill. The old boarding house, the top of which you can see, is now the office. It was built in 1904, the first building to be erected and the only one of the early days buildings left. The smoke stacks have never been changed.



The camp at Winter. At left is the tank for icing the roads. The large building is the cook shanty. Right foreground is the steam hauler shed.



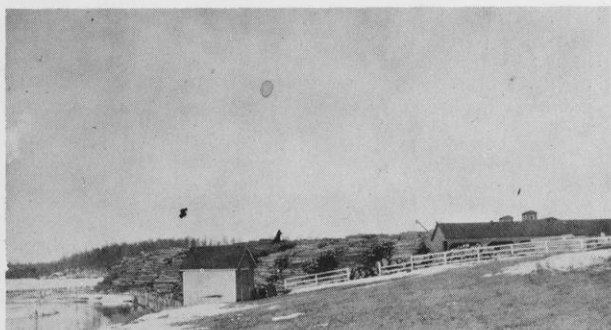
Mill yard, full of decked logs, after a winter of logging.



The steam hauler used by the mill.



Tractor shown pulling the trainload of logs out of the woods to be hitched to the hauler. George Winter and Henry Culligan on the tractor; John Mitchell, the foreman, standing.



Mill pond shown at left, the mill on the right, and logs decked everywhere.



The second house built by George M. Huss after the first one burned.

up the hill outside looking for his chimney which had disappeared. In the morning he discovered the mill stacks down, grading platform down and also damage to the mill roof.

P.M. White left the mill in 1922. Henry Knapmiller became the manager



Big Hank Knapmiller, boss of logging operations, feeding the tame deer at the camp.

and held that position until 1932. An office building had been built between the mill and the boardinghouse. P. J. Carah and W. L. Samson had become bookkeepers.

In 1932 L. H. DeLong, better known as "Punch," became manager, being



Pat White, the manager of the mill from January, 1908 to the spring of 1922.

succeeded two years later by P. J. Carah who was manager when operations ceased here in 1943.

Four houses were assembled or built on the lake shore beyond the mill for the officials to live in. George Winter, the veneer foreman, lived in the first one, Pat White the second. When he left Carah moved into it. The third house was occupied by Hub Knapmiller, and the last one by Ed Wells.

The Boarding House was a busy place. A long table was filled with hungry men three times a day. They slept upstairs. Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Bacon operated it from 1904 to 1908. It changed hands several times. Bessie Jenkin and sister Irene ran it for a time, then George Winter married Irene so someone else moved into the Boarding House. The last years it was operated by Herman and Faye Talbot, who were both excellent cooks.

Frank Blaha started at the mill in 1908 as fireman and stayed by that job until his retirement. Louis Stock started in 1909 as a foreman and became chief engineer before his retirement. Ed Evans was scaler for many years. Mike Skar was bull cook at the camp at Winter.

The news that the mill was going to close down hit the Birchwood people a hard blow. Many families decided they must follow the mill to Algoma in order to have employment. Many of the sons and also daughters were off in World War II. Then, on the night of February 25, 1943, one whole block of buildings on Main Street burned to the ground. How could the village survive after such misfortunes? Of course the farm trade continued but it was slow going for the merchants without the steady pay checks from the mill people.

Harry LaPointe sized up the situation and did something about it. In his early life he had worked in the lumbering business until 1920 when he joined his father-in-law Frank Cyr in the mercantile business. He decided to start that mill going again. He appealed to M. W. Perry who had founded the Birchwood Mill, also P. J. Carah who had been the manager when the mill closed down. Together they formed the Birchwood Lumber and Veneer Company. By October the company started repairing the buildings and moving in new machinery. Full operations began in January, 1944. LaPointe became sole owner of the mill in 1946. It employed an average of 90 persons.

The strain was too much for La Pointe and his health broke in 1957. Again the village was saved when Abraham and Jerome Bloom of the Lakeland Door Company of Minneapolis became interested and purchased the whole mill. La Pointe was retained as a general manager as long as his health permitted.

One building after another has been added to the plant. A portion of the original veneer mill and the engine room are all that is left. Plans have been made to replace them in the near future. About as many women as men are employed by the company now; well over 100 persons are on the payroll.

The Birchwood Manufacturing Plant started operations in a portion of the Birchwood Lumber and Veneer Mill in September, 1948. They employed 16 men and turned out 1,000 golfing woods daily. By June, 1951, they were ready to expand and moved to Rice Lake.

Chapter XXV

The Stout Range

Shortly after F. D. Stout established his summer home on the island he erected a high woven wire fence around his vast holdings on the east shore of Red Cedar Lake. Starting at the west edge of the Village of Birchwood, it went straight south about seven miles to Hemlock Lake, then back on the east shore of Red Cedar and followed the railroad track on the east side back to the village. This area as well as the land around Balsam Lake was posted as a game reserve. No one could hunt for anything there except berries which grew in abundance.

Quantities of grass had sprung up after the pine had been cut off. We do not know what kind of a deal the stockmen had with F. D. but by 1906 Garey and Tasker shipped in 4,000 head of sheep from Montana to feed in this pasture. Albert Lalan was the head herder; John Monteith and Ed Escherich were the shepherds. At the same time Bill Fuller was caring for 500 to 800 sheep north of the village on the Wilkie and McCord land. Joe Skinner and Stenaback were helpers. The idea was that the sheep would clear off the brush, but sheep wanted grass, not brush. Later flocks of angora goats were brought in. They



Sorting the sheep for market.

ate the brush, but could not stand the rough weather so that project failed. Wolves were a constant threat to the flocks, and the herders carried guns most of the time.

When shearing time came five experts were sent in from Montana to use the gasoline-powered clippers that were set up in a shed in the corral. Can

you hear the sheep bleating, and see the men and boys hanging around to watch the performance?

In the fall the good sheep were shipped to Chicago. Bill Fuller and Jim Berry accompanied them one year. After the sorting in the fall the poor sheep were driven to Barron by three dogs and four men, taking three days for the trip. They were wintered at the pea factory and fed on pea silage, straw and cull peas. Another year a bunch of sheep was fed at the lower Stout farm and housed in a very long shed. Goodie Brooks was the cook for the men who cared for the sheep. John Craig was one of the men who spent the winter hauling feed for them. This program was carried out with more or less success for three years.

The next summer Tasker Brothers brought in 100 steers. Mr. Wise was the caretaker. Bob Hailton shipped in 200 head for Clay Shaw to care for the next season. A local man, Jim Jackson, thought he would take a chance with 200 head of steers the next year, but after 18 head were killed by lightning in one night, he sold out to Bill Tasker who added 450 more.

The success and methods used in this venture were described by Herman Kleiman, who was the caretaker with Joe Skinner as first assistant for the next three years.

"Six hundred head of top notch Herefords and Durhams were shipped in from Montana. They were divided into three pastures so arranged that water was supplied by Sucker and Pigeon creeks. The best steers were put in the upper pasture and fattened for market. They were fed one carload a week of such stuff as hominy corn, cottonseed meal, screenings, shredded cocoanut, breakfast foods and anything else including worms to be found on the floors of the Upton Milling Company. The Bemis potato warehouse and what is now the hardware store were kept full of loose feed. When roundup time came for shipping the steers to market Monk Morey and his pony were always on hand and several others were pressed into service.

"Eight cars with 18 head in each car were shipped out each month and always an equal number of fresh feeders were shipped in, until the end of the season. One carload of extra prime steers averaged 1900 pounds each. The top price on the hoof was 17½ cents a pound."

Old timers still refer to this pasture land as "The Range." When the Tagalong Golf Course was being completed it brought an end to this project.

Now what do we have "Down on the Range?" The Red Cedar Lake Country Club with the Tagalong Golf Course, the 2,600 foot hard surface air strip, also "The Woods" beach club which has platted out much of the old pasture into lots for sale. The entire east shoreline of Cedar Lake is lined with cottages.

Chapter XXVI

First Wagon Bridge at the Narrows

To the best of our knowledge the first wagon bridge at the Narrows was built in 1911, which opens up a new story. The early settlers had great difficulty getting in and out of Birchwood. By train was the shortest way and by far the fastest. By team they were forced to go out north over Birch Creek by way of the Red Bridge, built in 1903. Earlier than that it was over the dam. From there they crossed the floating bridge which was made of small logs bound together and placed over a marsh. Then they followed a trail up the hill to where the present "T" meets "D." From there the trail went around Balsam Lake and back to the Angus corner.

Some of the men got together and talked up the plan to condemn a portion of Stout's land next to the woven wire fence, so they could get a road to Hemlock Lake and cross it at the south end. This would have made a direct route to Rice Lake.

When Mr. Stout got wind of this plan he was quite upset, for he did not intend to part with any portion of those sections on the east side of Cedar Lake. He suggested to the men that the county build a bridge down at the Narrows



The first wagon bridge built at the Narrows in 1911.

between Balsam and Red Cedar. He would grant them a road on the north side of the tracks as far as the big bend where they could cross the tracks, then follow the tracks on the east side and come into the village from the west. Eventually that is what did happen, so when you travel up and down those hills east of the Narrows you can thank Mr. Stout for his generous gift.

Now F. D. was a man who made plans for the future. He was wanting a road made in that area for his own convenience so he could take teams from the Upper Farm around into the woods to gather the wood supply for the numerous stoves and fireplaces on the island. Also he may have been

dreaming about that golf course. When the road was completed he installed a large gate in the fence near where the road crossed the tracks. He put a padlock on the gate. A trail led back through the woods to Sucker Creek and a temporary bridge put across it. The workmen on the golf course from Birch-



Bridge built by Stout at north end of Hemlock lake, built high to allow boats to pass under it.

wood used this trail and for many years afterwards, it was used by the caretaker.

After the golf course was completed a tight fence was built around it and a big gate installed which had a padlock on it. At one end of the gate posts were set in such a way that a person could wiggle through, providing they were slim and slender. The carriage or car was to be left on the outside.

The first road east from the bridge was not where it is now, but wandered through the woods before it came back to the crossing. After a number of years someone got up the excuse to condemn that first bridge and forced the travel to go out north over the hills again.

In the year of 1937 when the WPA became the fashion and all the men wanted a job, it was decided to build a new bridge at the Narrows. It was to be a single lane bridge built of lumber. M. F. Damon had the contract, the piling had been driven and work was progressing rapidly.

Mrs. Stout came up in her big launch to investigate the project. She said that the piling were set in such a way that she could not pass through with her launch on her tours to Balsam lake. She demanded that it be changed. This delayed the progress by many days. Later the road was laid out up over the hills.

The Soo railroad had been removed by this time, so our highway took over the Soo right of way from the crossing into the village. This was called County Trunk C. The village paid \$1,000 and the town of Birchwood paid the balance.

Later the state took it over and named it Highway 48. In 1957 the state built a two lane bridge at a cost of \$28,000. Again all traffic had to go over the old red bridge and up over the north hills for four months. We now have a good blacktop road and all the railroad bridges are gone at the Narrows. Quite a change since the first wagon bridge was built in 1911.

Chapter XXVII

Fires

The first fire recorded in this area happened September 28, 1898. The account was written by John Bracklin and printed in the Wisconsin Magazine of September, 1917. John was the son of James Bracklin who was for over 30 years the Superintendent of logging and log drives for Knapp, Stout & Company.

Things were getting very dry which worried Bracklin about the camps up around Birch and Chetac lakes. He sent John and three other men up to look things over and prepare the camps against fire. John had a camp on the south side at the head of Big Birch in Section 19, town of Edgewater. Mulvaney's camp was two miles east in Section 21, both in heavy timber. They made their way to the latter camp, were filling barrels with water and rounded up some oxen to plow a back break around the buildings. One man on top of the barn spotted a cloud of smoke and in less time than it takes to tell it, the fire was upon them.

It was one of those hot, bright and calm days. The fire had taken a course similar to that of a cyclone and acted much the same. The starting point was four miles south and west of Cedar Lake Dam, crossing the Narrows between Cedar and Hemlock lakes, up the east shore of Cedar Lake to a point about opposite Stout's Island and then northeast to the shores of Big Chetac. It had extended about the full length of it when a sudden downpour of rain calmed it down, followed by a heavy rain through the next day.

When John and his companions realized they were trapped, they flung themselves on the ground. They scooped out a hollow of dirt near the trunk of a tree, hoping some moisture would be there. Each man buried his face in a hollow; no one spoke for two hours. They could hear and feel the fire as it passed over them. Their flesh was almost cooked but the quick downpour of rain revived them and they got up and staggered off to view the damage.

Jim Bracklin heard about the fire and rushed up the next day, not expecting to find anyone alive. He said to his son, "You're a liar, no one could live through such a fire." But their appearance told him otherwise.

They feared Birch Dam was burning, so rushed down there just in time to rip off some timbers and stick them in upright in such a way that the water hitting them would make a spray over the log dam. The haystacks and perhaps some of the buildings burned.

In the records about the camps it gives "Mulvaney's New Camp built in fall of 1898" which coincides with this story. In all, the area burned in this fire was about 17 miles long and two to four miles wide. Any timber scorched by such a fire could be saved if cut within two years. That is what the company tried to do. Little has ever been told about this fire.

Mrs. Ida Roen of Mikana, the oldest daughter of Anton Olson Frosli, the first settler, who lived in the corner of what is now Highway 48 & V, told this story of the same fire. She and the younger children had just returned home from school when the fire started and evidently came part way up the west side of the lake. There happened to be a man with a team and wagon from the Knapp, Stout farm going by. He picked up all the people from the homes nearby and raced north to Pickerel Lake. By the time the downpour of rain hit they had taken refuge in a log house on the west side of the road

(it still stands there). They met up with Cap Bull who had been up the road and he was running and yelling, "Where is my wife?"

When he got back to his home which was at the K. S. & Company farm, he found the house had not burned and his wife was safe inside. Some of the other buildings had burned. When the Frosli family returned to their home their frame house was still standing, but the log barn and the straw stack made the day before had burned, and the hogs and chickens were all dead.

Dr. Knapp who happened to be at his island home, feared that someone had been injured and wanted to come to the rescue at once, but the lake was so rough his folks would not let him get into a boat until it calmed down.

Old timers tell that forest fires were very common, hitting every fall and spring. We wonder how they were checked when there was no organized fire protection and such vast areas of forests. Many homes of the early settlers were wiped out and lives were lost during those fires.

At last the government decided that our forests must be protected. They ordered fire towers built on high hills where watchers lived by day in a small house on the top with windows on all sides.

The first tower in the area "Around the Four Corners" was erected in 1932 in the town of Wilson, Rusk county, on section line between nine and 10. This one was 50 feet high. G. E. De Jung was the watcher until 1951 when it was taken down and a 100 foot one erected on a hill in section 19 where it has a much greater view. You have to climb it on a steel ladder. (From my home I've viewed these towers since their erection).

In 1934 the Meteor Hills tower was constructed. It is in section 15 of the town of Meteor, Sawyer county. Clifton Beyer watched it for the first two years. In section 19 in the town of Atlanta, Rusk county, the Blue Hills tower was erected in 1935 with Jens Sieck as watcher for two years.

East of Hauer in section 2 the Sand Lake tower was erected in 1939, with Harry Mutimer watcher for two years. It was near this tower where the B-52 bomber exploded and crashed November 18, 1966, with a loss of nine lives. Mr. Langham, a part time watcher, rushed to the tower, located the spot and directed the rescue party.

Mr. De Jung with a record of 19 years, far exceeded the other watchers. We've had no bad forest fires since these towers and many others have been erected. We also have conservation wardens and crews with equipment.

Buildings at Mikana were frequent victims of fires. The following is the account of one which happened on Palm Sunday, April 13, 1930. This was during the depression when folks were living wherever they could find a roof to cover their heads. "Shortly after dinner Sunday the former Flugel store building owned by Herman Thalke caught on fire and not only was this destroyed but inflammable material from the tarpaper roof blew across the street and destroyed the building of Mrs. Ole Kringle as well as a garage. It also set fire to a swamp and woods which burned nearly a half mile before being put out. The Thalke building was occupied by three families: L. H. Funk, Jess Everson and Harm Funk. They saved about half of their household goods. In the Kringle building, Mrs. Kringle and son Alfred lived downstairs, Jack Snyder and wife lived upstairs. These buildings had tarpaper roofs and tin siding. The few telephones in the village were knocked out of order as soon as the fire started."

George Kringle had bad luck with his store buildings at Mikana. The first one which he and Henry Lee opened April 1, 1902, located near the Soo depot,

had a second story where the Kringles lived and also Elmer McGinnis and wife. A few years later it burned to the ground soon after Christmas, in the middle of the night. The people barely escaped with their lives. He rebuilt on the same site and it also burned, but it did not have apartments upstairs. Again he rebuilt, once more his store burned. Nothing daunted George. He immediately built another store and it still stands and is operated by Tom Howard.

The Village of Birchwood suffered many fires. In April, 1906, fire destroyed the Ahnapee Veneer and Seating Company mill. The company rebuilt at once. A few weeks earlier the entire block of business houses on the west side of Main Street burned. Anthony Wise erected what was called the Opera Block, which was brick faced but had tin sheeting on the sides and back. There were apartments and a big hall upstairs. Several buildings sprang up south of it. Then again in 1908 fire swept out everything but the Opera Block. It was saved by hanging wet blankets on the south side. The Tousley furnishing store located across the street to the south burned down on a cold blizzard night in 1910.

The worst scare of all came during the dry season of 1911. The wind was blowing a gale from the south. Suddenly the people saw smoke and flames roaring up the valley from the south. It was leaping from one pine stump to another fed by tall dry grass. All the men from the mill and village fought with buckets and wet sacks. The whole village was in danger. They brought it under control before it reached the John Craig buildings, now owned by the Chappelles. We have recently learned that the origin of that fire was from a spark fanned into life by the wind, from a supposedly dead stump pile fire of the day before away down the valley.

In the early 1920's the Frank Blaha house burned to the ground, nothing saved. All that remains of the place is the pump out in the field north of Olaf Olson's house.

A fire on the north end of Main Street on May 28, 1924, took Mrs. Soper's restaurant with the Masonic Hall upstairs, post office, Forests' residence and one vacant building. The bank and buildings to the south were threatened because of the strong north wind.



Backdoor view of north Main Street fire, showing the Masonic Lodge which was built on top of the Thayer building.

The Wentland house which stood east of the Forward house burned to the ground in 1930. Mrs. Wentland was coming home from the hospital on the train.

He built up a good fire, then went to meet her at the depot. The house was red hot when they got back to it.

Mike Skar's house burned the morning of August 4, 1931. Mrs. Skar was up early. She put the coffee pot on the gas stove and went out to milk the cow. When she returned she found the pot had boiled over and put out the fire. Not realizing that gas fumes had filled the house, she struck a match to the burner. BANG! The whole first floor was a mass of flames. The sleepers upstairs miraculously escaped down the stairs. They lost everything. In a matter of minutes the whole house was a heap of charred timbers.

Jim Yarish was operating a creamery down by the creek where the Dairy now stands. The family lived upstairs. One night in the winter of 1932 the whole thing burned. The family escaped and returned to Rice Lake.

For many years a small white house stood on the lot where Gene Guggemos' house now stands. In the late thirties L. G. Bemis lived in the front part and Charley Saxby in the back part. Charley came home from a visit with relatives. He built up a good fire in his kitchen stove, then went out to work in his neglected garden. Upon his return to prepare a dinner he found the whole room on fire. The dry wood stacked near the stove had ignited. Neighbors rushed in and were able to save his garden tractor from a back room. L. G. was in the hospital but most of his furniture and his box of early snapshots were saved. His hobby was photography; many of his snaps are in this book.

Several changes had been made in the block where fire had twice destroyed many buildings. La Pointe and Cyr had erected a fine brick building north of the Opera Block and moved their dry goods into it. The post office had moved from the Thayer building on north Main Street into the vacated building. White's Rustic Tavern occupied the old State Bank apartment and Mrs. Kincannon's confectionery was the last one in the supposedly fireproof brick block.

Next south was Jack's general store, then Nap's tavern, the Dew Drop Inn and the new dance hall.

In the early morning of February 25, 1943 fire broke out in Nap's tavern,



South Main street as it looked before the fire of February 25, 1943. Picture taken before LaPointe's new store was built in 1939. The dance hall to the left was the only building standing the next morning.

presumably from faulty wiring. It spread both ways; folks had time to save most of their possessions. No adequate fire-fighting equipment was available. The new Peoples Store on the north and the dance hall on the south were all that were left standing when the fight was over.

The mill whistle had always been the fire siren, but the mill was closing down (leaving town) and the steam was so low the feeble whistle could hardly be heard. The signal was given by runners shouting "Fire." Edna Forward at the switch board roused everyone she could. By the time they tried to get outside help the wires on Main Street had been burned off, so no message could be sent.

Most of the post office equipment was saved and moved into the village hall, where it distributed the mail the next day. La Pointe wasted no time in getting a new building erected south of his new one into which the post office moved as soon as it was finished.

John Telitz moved his salvaged stock into the empty Petersen store.



Morning after the fire. LaPointe's new store was saved, but suffered some damage. Carter's Lumber shed is shown in the far background.

Bertha Cyr moved her confections into the south side of the dance hall and Nap put up a partition the full length of the building and established his tavern on the north side. The Cyr family who had lived over the Dew Drop moved into the Wise house. The Earl White family moved out of town. Mrs. Kincannon retired from business.

Gladys Bemis who occupied an apartment upstairs in the Opera Block had time to move her furniture down the back stairs into a vacant house on the next street where she has lived ever since.

These were black days for the village. Many families had moved to Algoma where the mill machinery had been shipped. Our young men were fighting in World War II. After the fire folks said, "Birchwood will now die." Some of us braver souls said, "Birchwood will rise again."

It took five years before a volunteer fire department was organized, December 13, 1948, to be exact. A siren was installed on top of the village hall. The equipment was meager but it worked and so did the men. At present there are two fire trucks and an ambulance which serve a large circle around Birchwood.

On November 5, 1952, fire was discovered in the timber west of the W. W. Vincent summer home on the shore of Berry Lake. Bill Jordan, the caretaker, called the Spooner ranger station, Cliff Freeman, the conservation warden, and Ed Weiss, the village president. A crew of fire fighters was organized. Bulldozers, tractors and plows arrived from Spooner. They battled the blaze for 20 hours and patrolled for another 24 hours. It was blamed onto squirrel hunters. The beautiful buildings were saved.

A fire was spotted in October, 1953 in rubbish deposited in an old gravel pit east of Lake Chetac. It jumped the road and forced on by a strong wind, endangered the Joe Skinner residence, the Sandstrom resort and the George Busse farm buildings. The conservation departments from Hayward and Lady-smith plus 40 volunteers fought it for three days before they cornered it in a swamp. It had burned over 15 acres of wooded area.

A roaring grass fire pushed by a stout west wind gave the Birchwood firemen a battle the afternoon of April 17, 1954, before it was quelled and the farm buildings of Frank Rattunde were saved.

The blaze caused by a woman burning rubbish on the east edge of the village sent three men to the hospital, Rattunde, Elmer Petersen and Tony Egerstaffer.

The firemen strung 700 feet of hose, newly arrived the week before, and set up an auxiliary pump at a pond behind the barn to pump a steady stream to the fire truck. The men working by the fence on the west side of the house were reportedly driven off by the intense heat of the fire as it raced across the hay field. They dropped the hose, but the heat burned holes in it and the spray from it was credited for saving the house and subduing the flames as they reached it.

A large stack of baled straw near the barn was ignited. The men battled and saved the barn. The corn crib was charred on the inside, the adjoining machine shed full of machinery was saved. The flames were halted before they reached a heavily wooded area. A guard was kept at the straw stack



Birchwood Volunteer Fire Department's first truck in the parade, July 4, 1949. Wilferd Beffa is the driver. The first officers of the department were: Ray Tills, chief; George Evans, assistant chief; H. H. Chappelle, secretary-treasurer.

until midnight. By one a.m. fresh flames were spotted shooting from the stack. The firemen rushed out again, tore the stack to pieces and drenched it a final time. Many men and women aided the firemen on this job and they won the battle.

On March 11, 1955, a fire in the Cafe kitchen was spotted by Bud Soper at two a.m. He rushed to blow the siren. The firemen got there in time to avert a major fire.

The morning of April 4, 1955, the former Tuttle house occupied by Lowell Martin was evidently filled with gas fumes and burst into flames. The firemen used the fog nozzle and snuffed it in a hurry. It was later torn down.

At midnight January 22, 1956, passersby noted that flames were coming out of the Angus Store. No one was at home so they called the fire department, it was too far gone to save.

The next morning Lortie's machine shed was found to be burning. It was thought that sparks from the store fire had blown over there and lay dormant until daylight. Neighbors arrived and shoveled snow on the blaze before the departments from Rice Lake and Birchwood arrived. The barn and house were saved.

On a cold January night in 1957 Veno Jilek discovered his house was burning. There was no telephone, but they saved a few things. He dashed into town and roused a few firemen who went out with chemical equipment to protect the barns from the fire. This was the former Ervin Dakins house built in 1912.

In March of 1957 the Bunny Bar burned at night, the firemen were called and saved the other buildings.

February 12, 1958, Fred Funk and wife were in the barn doing the morning chores. When they returned to the house they found that a fire was burning in the wall upstairs around the chimney. The fire department was called, a strong wind was blowing and it was four below zero. The hose froze up. The



The best fire truck. Bluegill Festival parade, 1964.

men saved some furniture. One man raised a ladder to an upstairs window where Carol's wedding dress and gifts had been stored. Fortunately the door to the room had been closed. He and the men below saved everything. The Funks have been unable to learn who the men were who did the deed. They lived in a trailer someone loaned to them until they moved into town. This house was built in 1905 by the La Pointe family.

The evening of January 31, 1959, the James Martin family at Wooddale discovered their dry kiln was on fire. It contained 8,500 feet of hardwood lumber. It was too far gone to save but neighbors and firemen were able to save the other buildings. It was a bitter cold night.

"Dead ashes" caused a blaze at Sunset Beach on Lake Chetac April 15,

1958. The ranger station at Hayward spotted it and sent out a crew. The fire department had been called and had the fire out before the ranger crew arrived. It was on the edge of a wooded area and quick action was needed.

Early Sunday morning January 31, 1960, soon after Art Stolk had gone to bed he was awakened by the sound of clanking water pipes. He opened the basement door and was met by heavy smoke. He awakened the five guests while his wife called the fire department. The fire was caused by a defective electric heater in the basement which ignited paper and other debris located near its base. The fire spread throughout the basement causing extensive smoke damage to the bar room directly above it. The fire had started up the west wall. The crew opened sections of it on the outside to extinguish the fire. But a liquor wall cabinet got so hot that the floor under it weakened, causing it to topple over. The contents were completely destroyed. The hotel was closed until carpenters and painters put things back in order.

The day John Glenn circled the world, February 20, 1962, and folks were glued to their radio or TV, a fire of unknown origin burst through the roof of the Garland cottage on Lake Chetac. Everett Dalen and Art Garbutt spotted it, but the phone wire had been burned off so Dalen rushed into town to blow the siren. The department got there in time to save the other cottages.

May, 1962, fire overhead in the boiler room at the mill was discovered soon enough so that the department put it out before it spread farther.

Early one morning in December, 1962, fire gutted the basement of the Dittburner house. It was so hot the linoleum on the kitchen floor melted in spots. Firemen got there in time to save the house.

Sunday, April 7, 1963, the siren blew as men were leaving the churches in their good suits. Away they dashed to a grass fire north of the McCrindle cottages. By back firing they kept it from reaching Hildebrandt's timber and house. Before that was accomplished a neighbor spotted a rubbish fire at Dad Bright's cottage. One of the fire trucks rushed over there and sprayed the fire which had caught into the straw banking around the cottage and was eating into the siding. A strong south wind was blowing. That was a busy Sunday with late dinners for the menfolks.

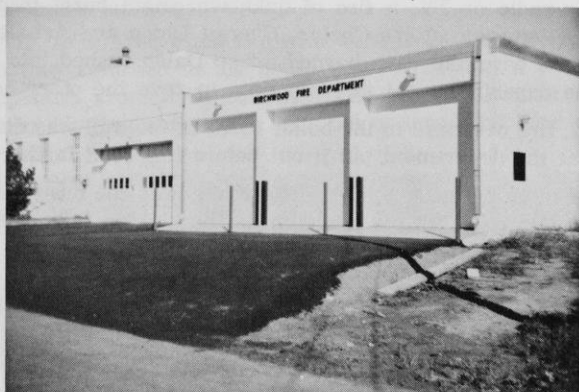
December 26, 1963, the Harvey Petersons who are caretakers of the W. W. Vincent estate and live in the apartment over the garage, had a close call. They smelled something unusual, then discovered that the big chimney had burned out. They called the fire department who lost no time in arriving. The chimney which extends down through the garage was so hot that when the men hit the paneling on the wall with an axe it burst into flames. The walls are highly varnished; the fire would have spread rapidly had not the firemen been there to extinguish it.

In the olden days a long blast from the Birchwood Mill whistle meant a fire somewhere, and their small equipment was the only means of protection and they seldom used it away from the mill yard. But times have changed as the villagers learned at 2:15 a.m. one night in March of 1967. First the fire siren started blasting off, then the mill whistle kept a steady blow. Everyone knew where the fire was located and half the town turned out to watch. It was in the shavings bin, caused by an overheated electric motor. It had been discovered by Veno Jilek, the night watchman. The firemen ran hose to the nearby lake and kept a steady stream going. It took some time to smother the flames. The damage was confined to the one building.

The town of Doyle has had its share of fires. I found this story in the History of Barron County. Aristide Mero was a very industrious man, who took one piece of land after another. He would put up good buildings and break up some land, at the same time working for Knapp, Stout Company or someone else to bring in cash. Then he would sell and move on and do it again. He took a homestead of 180 acres in section 19, town of Doyle, put up buildings and fences and stocked it well, everything going fine. In 1890 he lost it all by fire, including \$125 in cash which he had saved by hard work and frugality. He moved over into the town of Rice Lake and started all over again.

Mr. and Mrs. Reason Ruch in the town of Meteor lost their home by fire February 7, 1952. The parents and three youngest children were returning from Rice Lake and saw the fire from a distance of three miles. The oldest boy, Robert, and three sisters were able to save most of the clothing, beds and one stove before the roof caved in. It started from a defective chimney.

One night in February of 1933 when the temperature was 30 below zero,



New Fire Department Hall, built in 1970. The building houses two fire trucks and a truck with a tanker. The new ambulance is housed behind the big doors in the Village Hall.

the Chris Zercher family at Wooddale was awakened by smoke which had filled the house. They escaped through the bedroom windows and all they had to protect them were some quilts. They were using an airtight heater in the living room, which if filled too full and shut off had the habit of lifting the cover, sometimes tossing it off. That is what they think must have happened. The minute fresh air entered the house it burst into flames. They found refuge in a shack nearby and the neighbors provided them with clothing, etc.

Found in an early Birchwood newspaper, "Severe Loss by Fire:"

"About 4 o'clock Tuesday morning the barn belonging to Elwood Soper was discovered to be on fire. It had gained such headway, nothing could be done to save it or any of the contents, 6 cows, 2 head of young cattle, about 2 ton of hay, some ground feed, a quantity of mangles, corn fodder and 25 chickens. The building was insured for \$100 but nothing on the contents. So great was the sympathy of the entire community that before night of that day \$78 was raised by friends to buy a cow and feed. The donations ranged from 50c to \$1.00 or \$2.00."

Chapter XXVIII

The American Legion

Bemis-Hunter Post #379, The American Legion Department of Wisconsin, was chartered June 2, 1923, under the name Birchwood Post #379.

After World War II the decree went out that each post should be named for the first veterans in the area to give their lives. Kenneth Bemis and William Hunter were the first from the Birchwood community.

The charter members are listed in the order they received first membership cards: Commander N. F. Catman, Adjutant C. J. Danielson, J. E. Cook,



The American Legion contingent heading the Memorial Day parade.

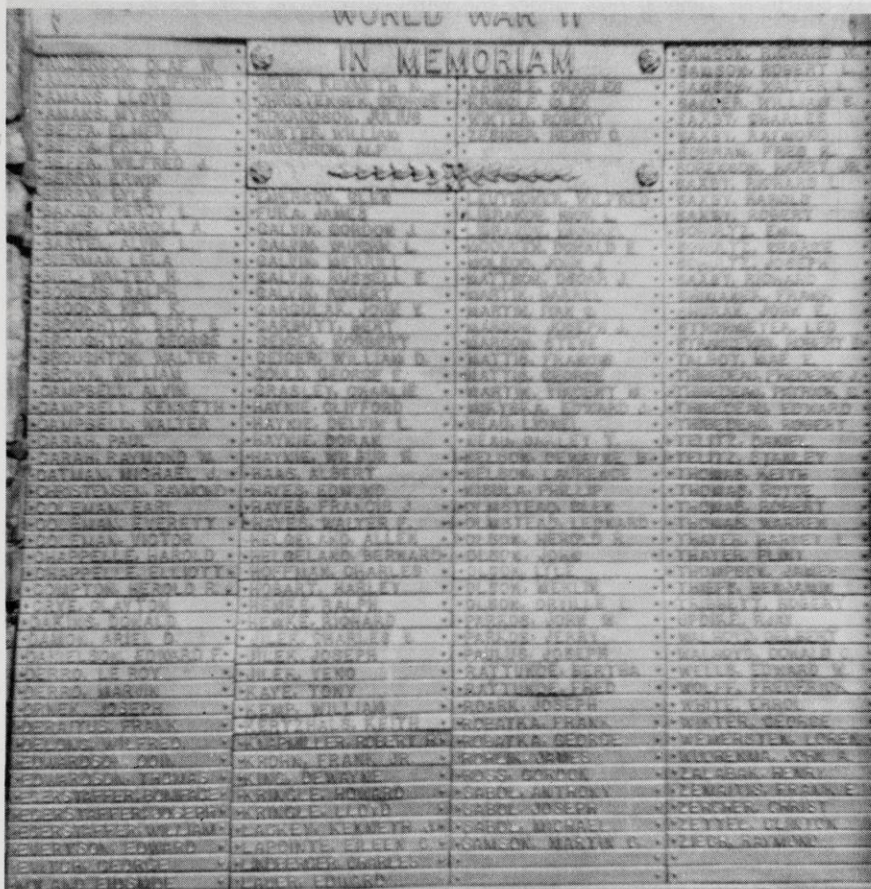
C. W. Evans, J. W. Drnek, C. E. Soper, B F. Soper, Einer Skar, John F. Wormet, E. E. Garrington, L. C. Frank, Lewis Haas, N. E. Cyr, C A. Westphal, J. R. McGinnis, W. E. Brown, Robert H. Mingaye, Louis T. Kramer, Joe Funk, Al Basty, Olaf Olson, Howard Busse, Walford Anderson.

The American Legion Auxiliary

The Legion Auxiliary was organized January 5, 1924. The names of their charter members were sent in to headquarters in May and the charter was received on December 15, 1924. The following list is of the charter members: Mrs. N. E. Cyr, Mrs. Foster Soper, Mrs. N. F. Catman, Mrs. J. E. Cook, Mrs. Tom Skar, Mrs Ray McGinnis, Miss Myrtle McGinnis, Mrs Louie Kramer, Mrs. C. J. Danielson, Mrs. J. F. Wormet, Mrs. J. J. McGinnis, Mrs. James Kramer.

Their first president was Mrs N. E. Cyr and secretary was Mrs. Ray McGinnis.

Very soon these organizations teamed up to observe Memorial Day. The program has always been held at Woodlawn Cemetery with music and a speaker. In the first years the Methodist organ was loaded onto a truck and



A closeup of World War II plaque, listing a total of 190 names.



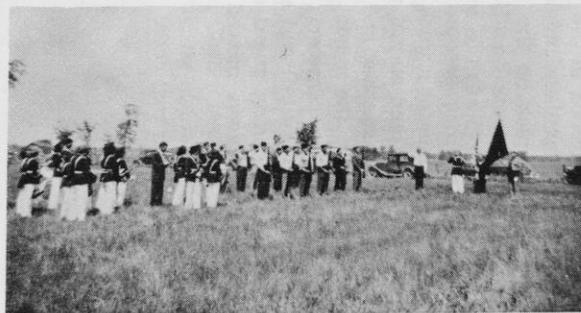
Dedication of Memorial to World War II service men and women, July 4, 1946. M. F. Damon, village president, gave the address. The Marines, Navy and Army were represented by the Honor Guard.



Band playing under the direction of Richard Halvorson. Village of Birchwood in the background.



Funeral procession entering Woodlawn Cemetery for T/Sgt. Kenneth Bemis' funeral. A veteran of 50 missions over enemy-held territory, he died at the age of 30 of malaria at Ft. Snelling hospital on October 21, 1943.



Band and Legion squad at a cemetery service. Charles Conselman playing taps.

also some singers and an organist. It was also the platform from which the speaker addressed the people. After the band was organized, they furnished the music and marched in the parade with the Legion, Auxiliary, Gold Star Mothers, Junior Auxiliary members and Boy Scouts. At the church corners the school busses pick up the marchers and many, many people drive out to the cemetery.

Memorial Day has become the homecoming day for former Birchwood residents. They come for a week or more before the date to decorate the graves of their loved ones, and stay if possible for the observance. The Legion builds a platform for the speaker and provides a desk and a loudspeaker, and the band is close by for the music, all under the big trees which have grown up since 1905 when the cemetery was first plotted. One lone elm out by the fence has grown very tall and straight with a cluster of branches at the top. It seems to be standing guard over all those who sleep. The cemetery Association keeps the lawns mowed all summer, and it is a truly beautiful and peaceful place.



The Memorial, built of red quarry rock.

After World War II ended the community teamed up with the Legion to build a memorial to the nine men who gave their lives, namely, Kenneth Bemis, William Hunter, Julius Edwardson, George Christensen, Glenn Kringle, Charles Kringle, Robert Winter, Henry Zesiger, Alf Anderson, also to honor the 181 men and women who served in many parts of the world and returned to their homes. Some of them were here for the dedication ceremony July 4, 1946.

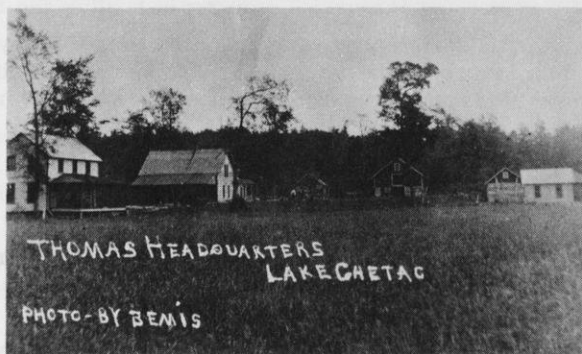
Chapter XXIX

Early History Around Lake Chetac

While searching through the records of the Knapp, Stout & Company camps we discovered that their first camp on the shore of Lake Chetac was built and operated by Ben Keyes in 1882-83. (Sawyer County was created out of Ashland and Chippewa Counties in 1883). This camp was located in section 8, lot 2, where Indian Beach Resort now operates. Another record states that the Birch Dam was built in 1882-83 by John McCullom. But stories were told to old residents by Lon Smith of how he walked up from Menomonie to work on preparations of timbers for the dike in 1881, and also by Nels Everson who hewed timbers, one of which was removed later and measured three feet square and 42 feet long.

This dam backed up the water in Birch and Chetac lakes and also created Little Birch Lake. This was the beginning of activities of the white man around these lakes and also Balsam Lake. It was in the 1890's that the logging business on the east shore of Lake Chetac was in full swing.

It was at this time that Ben Keyes decided to open up a farm and raise produce to supply these camps. He built a log house on the land now known as "Andy's Place." The log house is still in use although covered inside and out so the logs do not show. They were the only white people in the area when Charley Thomas arrived from Palmyra in 1895 to look over the lakes to see if the big stories he had heard about the abundance of fish were true.



Indian Beach Resort. Sleeping annex at left; log house, which became part of the main lodge; at right, the first cottage on the lake.

He had brought along a blacksmith to keep the wagon in shape and the horses shod.

Joe Garbutt who had been Thomas's partner as commercial fishermen in southern Wisconsin was ill at the time so he stayed behind and came up later. It seems that Charles Kunze was in on the deal also. The three men scouted around fishing and hunting. Kunze decided he would locate at Long Lake, and claimed the big island as his own. The other men found such ex-

cellent fishing for walleyes in Lake Chetac that they stayed put. They built a small log house to live in. They shipped fish by the barrel to Chicago, having to take them to Rice Lake by team and wagon on the old logging trails. It would take two days for the round trip.

Now Joe took a bit of time out to do some courting. Annie Williams was employed by Mr. and Mrs. Keyes to do housework and chores and was the only young white woman in the area. Soon they were married and went over to the big island which Joe had taken as a homestead and lived in a small log cabin.

It did not take Charley long to learn that Mr. and Mrs. Sam Cornman and several grown-up sons and daughters had moved in, on the upper part of Lake Chetac. They were in the logging business. He rowed up the lake and made their acquaintance. Daughter Blanche appealed favorably to him. After he built a large two story log house they were married. (He did not intend for Joe to get ahead of him).

For more on the life of Charley Thomas we appealed to his nephew, Fred Thomas, to give some details. The land he had squatted on belonged to the Indians whose chief was Alec Moose. He paid very little cash for it but gave the Indians lifelong camping rights, which to the best of our knowledge were never used.

Fred Thomas and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Thomas, became the first tourists to visit the Birchwood area. In the fall of 1900 when Fred was eight years old they came by train to Rice Lake where Charley met them with a team and wagon which was supplied with spring seats. Their partners in business, Mr. and Mrs. William Vick, were with them. All were impressed by the beauty of the trees and enjoyed a few weeks of hunting and fishing.

The next fall this same party came again, but this time by train as far as Tuscobia Junction where they transferred to the train heading for Birchwood. That rough ride must have been worse than the wagon with spring seats.

Thomas and wife met them with rowboats, each one towing a boat behind his boat. Each man guest took a boat and the passengers and luggage were divided up. Who today would think of rowing a boat from Birchwood up the lakes to Indian Beach Resort?

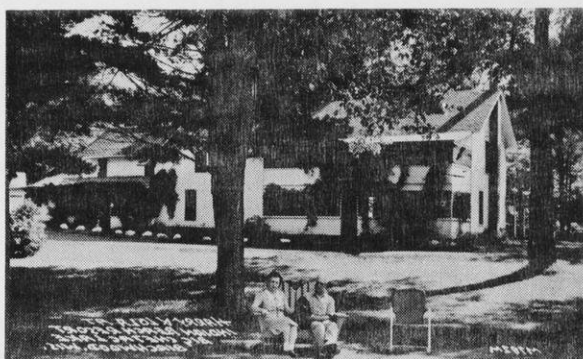
As soon as it was possible to get motors for their boats, Thomas got them and he was doing such a rushing business that he built a huge launch with seats around the edge and he met the train every day.

Lake Chetac was a "man's paradise" in the early days. They would grab their fishing tackle and slide out the back door at home, board a train and leave the wife behind. Then came the advent of the Tin Lizzie, when the wife said, "Two can go as cheaply as one." He would find her in the back seat. Many of them brought their tents along and loved the rough life. The women soon tired of it and demanded more conveniences at the resorts. But the men could no longer go out in a shady cove to take a dunk, for fear some female might be lurking behind the bushes. Blame it all onto the Fords.

Charley Thomas tried to keep up to the demands of his guests. He built a large kitchen with sleeping rooms upstairs, onto the north side of his house. Then came a large annex just for sleeping, some distance south of the house. He built six housekeeping cabins up the lane and one on the south lawn. As business increased he built a huge addition on the south side of the original

log house. It had two large recreation rooms and a smoking room (for men only) downstairs and many bedrooms upstairs. The portion made of logs was turned into a dining room. There were also large screened-in porches.

By 1922 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas were tired of it all and sold out to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Sorenson of Racine. They moved back to Edgewater and retired. Sorenson now had two launches and the "Big Jumbo" propelled by motors, and many rowboats, also a big barge which was propelled by a motor boat attached to each side, which was used to bring in supplies from Birchwood. The highway had not been improved very much since the first days. It took a lot of help to operate such a resort. The Sorensons had four small daughters when they arrived and a son was born later. As they grew up they helped with the work, but soon went to the cities to work in the winter, and eventually were married. After Harry, jr. returned from World War II he did not care to operate the resort, so his parents sold out to H. Picaman in 1946. The next year he sold the resort to Harry E. Lutes, but he has sold the string of cottages up the lane to Curtis W. Thomas. Mr. Lutes discontinued serving meals as have most of the resorts around the lakes. There are now three cottages to the south of the annex. The first cottage built on the lake shore near the lodge is still there and used each summer. It is also the first cottage built on Lake Chetac. There is a good sandy beach and the Indians had named it "Indian Beach" before a white man ever saw it.



Main Lodge at Indian Beach as it looked in 1970. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lutes are shown in foreground.

By 1900 the Knapp, Stout & Company logging operations closed down around Lake Chetac and the next excitement was the building of the Soo railroad up to the head of the lake. That was a major operation to get around or over the swamps, and either cut through a hill or go around it. We do not know how long it took to reach what was named Edgewater by George M. Huss, the superintendent. He established camps along the shoreline, and the Mabel H. steamboat transported supplies from Birchwood. We now believe that it was the boat used by the K. S. & Company to pull the booms of logs down the lakes to the Birch Dam.

In 1902 a young couple, Nels Walhovd and wife, came up from Orfordville to spend the summer among the pines. He was a carpenter and started building log cabins for other "tourists." In 1908 they decided to live at Edgewater,

and built a cabin on the upper east shore of the lake. They had three sons and Victor was of school age. A schoolhouse had been built over at the settlement and it was so difficult to cross the lake in all kinds of weather that they built a house next to the store. It was large enough that the teacher boarded with them.

Mrs. Walhovd's mother had married Ed Flugel and was living at Peoria, Illinois. They were induced to come up and operate the store and she became the postmaster. Mr. Walhovd was kept busy doing carpenter work.

Among the teachers listed at the school are Laura Hudrie from 1914 to 1917 when her sister Clara took over for one year. She had nine pupils. Edgewater was another school which Annette Windus taught. We run onto her name often in the town of Edgewater.

The Warren Beaver family is listed as one of the earliest to make their home at Edgewater, and took in boarders. Fred Hungerford opened a resort in 1914 and continued at that post until 1944.

William Renner of Mansfield, Ohio, built a one story log house on the upper east shore of the lake in the very early days. It was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. The fireplace remained so he had a very large frame



The second summer home built by Bill Renner on east side of Lake Chetac.

house built around it. Over the fireplace he placed a heavy white ash plank on which he wrote "This house was built in 1908." It was the first nice summer home built on the shore of Lake Chetac.

Tom Haye purchased a large tract of land on the east shore and built a cottage which he named "Haye's Hermitage." He loved to live there all summer. About 1904 or 1905 Bert Watkins purchased a few acres of land at the south end of the lake and built a good house and barn. The loggers had used this area for decking their logs and had discovered a wonderful spring on the shore line. Because of this cleared spot and the spring the Birchwood people would go out in their motor boats and picnic at the "Watkins Spring." In 1936 he sold to Axel Olson. It is now beautiful Whispering Pines Resort.

In 1912 Charley Grouchenour started a resort south of Indian Beach. He did very little to improve the place. By 1920 he was ready to sell out to a

group of men called the Grandview Club. They built several cottages and named the place "Nashoba the Beautiful." They went broke and sold out. Henry Meyer and his relatives are listed as owners, then Ernie Fox was the owner until 1951 when Frank Jilek purchased it. He sold it in 1969.

When Gouchenour sold the resort he moved down the lake to the farm opened up by Ben Keyes (but followed by a man named Hines). He kept cows and sold milk to the resorts. He then purchased a plot of land on the east shore and erected a small house and two log cabins.

His wife had gone back to Indiana and he was out tending his traps. Evidently he had a heart attack and dropped face down on the ice. In a couple of days it was found that he was missing. A dog kept barking and running out towards a black object on the ice. The searchers found that the object was Mr. Gouchenour. The abstract gives the date of 1932 when Ray Dieterich purchased the property, built more cabins and established a tavern, and named it Sportsman's Lodge. In 1952 Ray sold out to Harry Davis. In 1959 Davis sold to Herb Kraimer.

In the early thirties Hans Zwahlen took over the Keyes farm and established a factory where he made Swiss cheese. He had a herd of Holstein cows and would not use milk from any other breed for fear it would be too rich.

Back in about 1904 a group of railroad men from Baraboo purchased some lakeshore lots from Frank Hines and built a large cottage. They took turns bringing their families out for a summer vacation. Later they built a better cottage which still stands there, located south of Andy's cottages. They called themselves "The Baraboo Club." About 1935 Mr. Haven, the last living member of the club, sold the property. E. J. Humphreys has owned it for several years and made many improvements.



Edgewater depot in the first days, with water tank and windmill. Portions of the windmill is all that remained in 1970.

The Hines place became vacant, Robert Kringle moved his family there, and his children were in the Garbutt school the year of 1934-35. Next in line was Andy Haas who purchased the whole place, established a tavern and dance hall and built several cottages. It has been known as "Andy's Place" ever since.

Now a few words about the Garbutt school. Living on an island made it

difficult for children to get to school. When Arthur became of school age he was sent to stay with friends at Altoona until 1910 when more Garbutts were old enough. The Edgewater school district extended the full length of the lake. Mr. Garbutt petitioned for another school house to be built near him and he offered to give a bit of land on the west shore near the railroad track.

There were four Garbutts and Walter Cornman who was living with his uncle, Charley Thomas. Little four-year-old Grace had to go to make children enough to be able to get a teacher. Getting across the lake in spring and fall and during storms was no joke. More children moved into the area so the school operated until 1942, when the older ones were going to Birchwood high school and the younger ones were transported also.

One teacher, Grace Brown, boarded in Birchwood and walked the Soo track each day to the school. That suggested the idea to Mr. Garbutt to build a cottage for the teacher to live in next to the schoolhouse. Annette Windus was the first one to use it. Bertha Larson taught there for five or more years and later became Mrs. Bert Garbutt. Neva Knapmiller was the last teacher. The schoolhouse still stands beside the highway.

After Fred Thomas became a grown man he became a professional baseball player. He came back to Indian Beach on vacation in 1919. From then on he could not get Lake Chetac out of his mind. In 1922 after he was married they visited Uncle Charley at Edgewater and looked the shore line over



Edgewater schoolhouse. Now the community center building.

carefully. He picked out the point on which he wanted to build a cottage. He thought he was getting a bit old for baseball. In the summer of 1924 he purchased a tract of land and that fall built what is now Cottage #3 at the Thomas Resort.

The trail to Birchwood was so bad they could not haul a load of lumber over it. They borrowed Garbutt's scow and brought the lumber up the lake. That fall Sawyer county went over the road and flattened down the ridges. After that a truck of lumber could get through. In the spring of 1925, Fred, his wife Connie, and sons Robert and Warren, came to live in that cottage. Fred said, "What a place away up here in the woods, brush, stumps and rocks.

It looked like I had made a great mistake to quit baseball. But we had made our decision and have never regretted it."

There was the month of May without a drop of rain; the woods was on fire. They had brought in lumber to build two more cottages and the main lodge. They backfired to save the lumber, then almost got caught in their own backfire. They tied the babies in high chairs while they fought the fires.

Connie told of the time they bought a cow so they would have milk for the babies, but they didn't know the art of getting the milk from the cow. Their first phone was installed when the wire had to be strung from tree to tree and pole to pole where there were no trees. The mail delivery came on a Star Route three times a week, carried by an Indian on horseback. He had to change horses at Mrs. Benson's because the route was too long for one horse. They bought blueberries for five cents a quart from the Indians, and fed many of them a free sack lunch as they walked from the reservation to Birchwood. Then there was the time when roads were blocked with snow (no snow removal in those days). Warren had pneumonia, and by phone she got instructions from a doctor in Rice Lake on what to do for him and he recovered.

One stormy winter day when the Thomas boys were returning home from the Garbutt school they were walking the railroad track because it was shorter and better than the road. The engineer stopped the train and offered the boys



Edgewater Store and Post Office, operated by Mr. & Mrs. Flugel. Big Bill Renner on left, and the Walhovd boys, grandsons of Mrs. Flugel, in front.

a ride in the cab. They said, "Thank you but we can walk it, for it is not far." (Now don't ever make fun of the Blueberry Special again).

Years and years ago a colony of blue heron chose a location on the west side of Lake Chetac. It is back in a wooded area not far from the Thomas resort. They build in poplar trees, one to a dozen nests to a tree, which causes

the tree soon to die. They return about April first to build and repair nests. The young stay in the nests until almost full grown or until August. It keeps the old folks busy feeding the young; they wade out into shallow water to catch fish. They are tourists who have never missed a season.

Lake Chetac is fed by Squaw Creek which flows under highway F. The walleyes swim up the creek each spring to spawn. Folks go up each night to watch them tumbling over each other to get up the creek.

Charley Beaver contributed some interesting sidelights. His father, Warren H. Beaver, was a railroad man who was a member of the Baraboo Club, which started to come to Lake Chetac as soon as the railroad went up the line. He became interested in the village site which George M. Huss had laid out and named Edgewater. He purchased several lots on the lake shore.

His wife Ellen and the family came in 1906 and also fell in love with it. In 1907 they built the first cottage, adding several more as time went by. Son Charley ran a store but soon turned it into a saloon (where women never entered and neither did they hang around outside smoking cigarettes).

By 1912 Charley built the main lodge. Help was hard to find. Ed Vine who lived between Hauer and Stone Lake came and gave him a lift. This was the first resort established at Edgewater.

Warren Beaver's daughter Grace became a teacher who married A. W. "Bert" Lewis, who also was a teacher. They spent summers at the resort and in due time took over the ownership. They passed away in recent years, but it continues to be known as the Lewis Lodge.

George Baxter was the section boss. He and his family lived in the new depot and took in boarders. Charley Johnson set up a large sawmill at the southwest edge of the village. Harry Glaze was the sawyer. They operated it for several years. Local men brought in the logs.

When Charley Thomas sold the Indian Beach resort he promised not to run another resort on Lake Chetac. They moved into the former Cornman house at Edgewater. One year of retirement was all he could take. He built several cottages on the lake shore where the mill had stood. He put it into the name of his adopted son Harry. This did not hurt the trade at Indian Beach. We were also told that all the good buildings at Indian Beach were erected by Charley's father and brother George who were expert craftsmen.

The people around Hauer and Edgewater wanted a Sunday school as there were many children in the area. By 1942 they started one in the Hauer schoolhouse. Now and then there was a minister who gave them a sermon. It increased to a service every Sunday. They knew that the Hauer school would soon join with the Birchwood district and the building would be closed.

William La Bar offered them a plot of land just off Highway F north of Edgewater. They heard of an empty church up at Chittamo and purchased it. The roof was taken off and laid flat and an expert mover was hired to haul it a distance of more than 40 miles. A full basement was put under it, and additions made to both front and back. It is now a very pretty worship center with Rev. Robert Thrasher as its pastor for regular services. It was named The Wayside Chapel and the first service was conducted in it on Easter Sunday, 1957.

Chapter XXX

Garbutt's Island

(Herewith are portions of "History of Garbutt's Island Resort" written by Bertha Larson Garbutt as told to her by Mrs. Annie Garbutt. It was printed in the Sawyer County Historical Review, April, 1953).

In the spring of 1895 Joseph Garbutt journeyed to northern Wisconsin from Palmyra, in the southern part of the state. His purpose in coming up to this wild country at that time was to make a living by hunting, fishing, and trapping. For a time he lived with Charles Thomas in a log cabin on the shore of Lake Chetac in Sawyer county. Later he took steps to homestead an island in the center of the lake.

In the course of time Joseph Garbutt met Annie Williams who worked for Mrs. Keyes and on August 17, 1897, they were married. They went to live on the island where Joe had built a log structure to live in. It was heavily forested but as he cut off the trees he broke the land and raised produce to sell to the camps all around the lake. There were nearly 24 acres on the island. Later 80 acres were purchased on the mainland.

The soil on the island was very fertile and produced abundantly. In the fall Mr. Garbutt would load the flat boat or scow (which he had built himself) with barrels of sauerkraut, dill pickles, potatoes, beets, onions and carrots.



Main Lodge, built by Joe Garbutt on Garbutt's Island. More than a dozen cottages dot the island.

He was a tall and powerful man and he had need of it because he would row this scow to the various camps that bought his produce.

He received about \$4.00 per barrel of kraut or dill pickles; \$7.50 per ton of cabbage and 45 to 50 cents per bushel of onions. Potatoes were about 50 cents per bushel although he did get as little as 10 cents per bushel.

The outboard motor was not in use until 1911, when Garbutt became the agent for the sale of the first Evinrudes in this territory.

Joe Garbutt had to travel a distance of 25 miles to Rice Lake by team and

wagon to buy the things they could not produce themselves, also to ship barrels of fish to Chicago, and furs and ginseng. They conducted a sort of trading post with the Indians. They gave tobacco, thread, salt, flour and salt pork for ginseng, wild rice and wild berries. They conducted it by sign language.

Mrs. Garbutt dug rocks out of their island and rip-rapped the whole shoreline to save it from washing away. By 1902 the Garbutts realized that their island had possibilities for resort purposes. They built their first cottage that year, also a two story 24x16 house to live in. A large addition was put onto it later and it became the main lodge of the resort.

By 1917 there were three log cabins and three frame cottages. Most of the fishermen arrived by train at Birchwood, where Joe would meet them in his motor launch. The family had grown to four boys and four girls, some of them able to be of great help.

In that fateful year of 1917 Mr. Garbutt suffered an acute attack of lumbago which he had had before and he went to Turtle Lake to seek help from Dr.



**Bert Garbutt about to give guests a tour of the lake.
Taken about 1917.**

Till who turned out to be a quack. The doctor had put a big croton oil plaster on his back which blistered it severely and Garbutt was a very sick man. His condition worsened but he refused to seek the aid of another doctor. Seventeen days after the plaster was put on, Mr. Garbutt died. The rest of the family were getting sick in the same way. Dr. Dawson of Rice Lake was summoned. He diagnosed it as black diptheria. He made haste to procure some antitoxin to administer to the rest of the family. Little Lehman, aged seven, was already beyond help and he died the next day after his father. (Dr. Dawson said the germs must have been picked up at Dr. Till's hospital).

The deaths had taken place in October, and it was difficult to find men who would risk their lives to bury the dead. Memorial services were held the next spring.

With the aid of her children Mrs. Garbutt continued to run the resort business and it flourished. One by one they married and moved away. She hired help and stayed on her island until May 1952 when she sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Milton Garland who renamed it "Cast-a-Way Island." From the time

when she and Mrs. Keyes were the only white women in this vast area, she lived to see summer homes, resorts and permanent homes line the shores of all the lakes.

Art Garbutt contributed this story about the Indians on the island.

In 1911 when the water of the lake was dropped some seven feet to build a new dam at Birchwood, the receded shoreline revealed about 60 gun barrels. This served to prove the truth of the ancient story that a large contingent of Chippewas was trapped on the island by Sioux who lay in wait to shoot those who attempted to swim to shore, and so starved them to death. It is presumed that the useless guns were thrown out into the lake to keep them from falling into the hands of the enemy. The gun barrels were 42 inches long and about the size of a 20 gauge shotgun barrel.

A sequel to the story of the island siege was told by a Chippewa squaw at Radisson several years ago. She said, "One Chippewa got away to New Post where a war party was organized. They surprised the Sioux in the midst of a big victory dance, and nearly all were wiped out."



Signal bell at mainland landing. When Garbutt's Island guest arrived they rang this bell for boat service. Later a telephone was installed.

A large sandstone remains on the island. It was used by the Chippewas of the area for sharpening spears, knives, tomahawks and other cutting tools and weapons. They called it the "Spirit Rock." The old bucks would sit for hours beside it and smoke long-stemmed pipes. There are deeply worn spots on the surface of the stone, indicating long years of usage.

Chapter XXXI

Drinkwater-Lincoln School District

Many of the first settlers coming to Birchwood purchased land east of the village and lived in the southwest corner of Sawyer county. Harry Lockwood was the first to go there in 1902. The family lived in one of the K. S. & Company camps near Sucker Creek. Many others lived in this camp until they could build for themselves. When three of his children should be in school he was obliged to move to the village.

Tom Drinkwater and Ed Evans (had married Escherich girls) came from Iowa in 1905, and also Ed's brother-in-law Jack Evans, a widower. They all built cabins on the trail to Stony Hill. Then they turned their attention to a schoolhouse which was ready for school in 1906-07. The first teacher was Miss Daniels. Eli Eby and family from Indiana came in 1907 and settled on land west of the trail going north from the schoolhouse. They had a nice little lake at their front door. Myrtle Bacon from the village was the teacher that year.

The Tom Skar family came directly from Norway and settled over the line in Rusk county. They went to this school until one was built in Wilson Valley. The Mike Skar family moved many times but when they were in this district they attended this school.

The Willis Cannon family purchased land on the west edge of the county in 1911. The house was set close to the road, and still is there. Mrs. Cannon had been a teacher in Illinois. She served on the school board for many years and introduced many improvements.

The schoolhouse was too small for the influx of pupils and the children were freezing with the big heater which was encased in a metal jacket, which circulated the heat to the ceiling and it never came down to the floor. They decided to move the building a few rods to the north. A basement was dug for a furnace, and large enough for an addition on the back end for the stairway, and at the front for a cloak room and indoor toilets. A new well was drilled. The building was turned with the front end facing the west.

This reconstruction took place in 1925. After the Drinkwater family moved away from the corner near the school, the name was changed to the "Lincoln" district. Others who lived on the corner farm were August Muehe, Henry Eidsmoe, and many others. Now John George has retired to that house. (The first house burned down). He started in 1914 to carve out a farm next north of the schoolhouse. He built fires for the teacher for many years.

The second house on the west side of the road going north was built by George S. Jackson, then Art and Irma Bayless rented the farm for several years. Next A. S. Peters rented it, but he was so indifferent to work that he soon starved out. When in 1933 Henry Eidsmoe lost his farm on the corner by foreclosure he rented the Jackson farm while he built a log house on 40 acres out towards Stony Hill. Hubert Galvin purchased the farm in 1938, built a barn and tried to farm but found he was not cut out for the job. He sold out to Clarence Diederich in 1946 who doubled the size of the barn, remodeled the house and made a real farm out of it.

The Eby family got discouraged and left their place. Several others tried it and failed. In the spring of 1938 Mr. and Mrs. John Sengpill from Adams county purchased the place, which did not have a decent building on it. Years of toil brought about many changes. They recently sold out and retired.

In the fall of 1938 new owners took over the farm across the road. Stanley and Neva Knapmiller purchased it from Jim Cook. Stan had been in the logging business with his dad much of his life, but decided to try farming. They named the farm "Dun-Loggin Dairy." They built good barns and enlarged the house, and have managed to make a modern farm out of what others had failed to do. Homer Hobbs was the first one to open up this cut-over land, gave it up and sold out to Matt Shimanek who borrowed the money, was charged high interest and lost everything he had by foreclosure. Soon Jim Cook took over the place but spent too much time in the saloons in the village.

The next farm north of Stan Knapmiller's was owned in the early days by Roy Upham whose father, J. P. Upham, lived in the corner where the road turns to the east. Romeo Wolff, another early settler, bought a tract of land east from Whispering Pines.

Frank and Joe Tragle were bachelors who first lived out on Stony Hill. They tried to dig out the stumps with pick and shovel for a garden plot. They never got rid of the stones and gave it up as a bad deal. Soon they purchased land east of the Cannon farm and put up a small house. Later they built a nice home and kept it as neat as most women would have done.

In November, 1918, a new family bought 40 acres of land west from the schoolhouse. Albert Marcon sr. and wife, and sons Matt and John, had migrated from Yugoslavia to Eveleth, Minnesota, where he worked in the mines. He was induced to come to north Wisconsin, but now they had Albert jr. and Mary in the family. He got work in the Birchwood mill and built a shack out there to live in the first winter and the children, who could scarcely speak English, went to school. As soon as possible a large house was built, for their family had increased by doubles. Two sets of twins were born on that farm. As the children graduated from the district school they like many of the others walked into the village to go to high school. There was no bus service in those days.

How did these people make a living? The pine had been harvested by the Knapp, Stout & Company. The hardwood was still there and the large logs were hauled to the mill. The smaller stuff was made into cord wood, and sold to the schoolhouse in town and the stores and homes. After they got a few acres cleared they discovered they could raise fine potatoes. Soon there were buyers and many carloads of potatoes were shipped from Birchwood for many years. There was always road work to be done, although little funds were available until after the town of Edgewater was created out of Couderay in 1913. Yes, life was rugged in those early days. The boys supplied venison, rabbits, squirrels, birds and fish for their families and they did not starve.

We want to mention two ambitious boys who graduated from this school. John Marcon had a burning desire to get more education. He walked to the village high school and made it in three years instead of the usual four. He also walked in for basketball practice and games. Each of his classmates had a wrist watch, but John scarcely had money for clothes. The class chipped in and gave him a watch for graduation.

He worked his way through two years at the Eau Claire Teachers College, then went out to teach for nine months and then to summer school, a plan he carried out for 12 years. He taught in Meteor, Wooddale and at Edgewater. He was married by that time so he lived there for several years. One year the Garbutt school and the Edgewater one were each so small that he packed his students in his Ford and took them to "The Lake Chetac School." (Someone had changed its name). That made it more interesting for everyone. Then he joined the conservation department and now he is the mayor of Rice Lake.

The other boy is Nolan Eidsmoe, who after graduation from Lincoln school (the name had been changed) walked more miles than John did to get his high school education. Then he spent three years in C C Camp. It was there he got his ambition to become a doctor. He was assigned work in the dispensary and showed such aptitude for that work that his supervisor suggested to him that he should take up the study of medicine. There were no funds available so he worked his way through seven years in the medical school of the Wisconsin University, and served one and a half years in the Navy Medical Corps. He opened a doctor's office in Rice Lake in 1946 and is still there.

These are just examples of the kind of people the little district schools turned out 40 to 50 years ago.

Those were the days of hot town meetings. The first official meeting for this new town was held in 1914 at the Edgewater schoolhouse. The voters elected J. P. Upham of the Drinkwater district to be the first chairman. The voters at this time were only men. Big Lake Chetac lay right across their town. To get across it in the spring when the ice was getting weak around the edge was surely difficult. The men one year met with Joe Garbutt at the island where he had a team hitched to a sled and hay rack. When they got to Edgewater they dared not drive up the bank. Joe had brought along some hay and he tied the team to the rack and let them eat hay while they spent the day at the meeting.

At other times the men had to drive around through Birchwood and up the lake on the north side, or over a winding trail through the woods at the east side of the lake. Their first interest was to get better roads but it took many years. There were two factions, the leaders of which appeared to be Joe Garbutt and Charley Thomas. The old record books show that the votes were divided 12 to 13 on many issues. They were now rivals in the resort business. Many tricks were pulled to import men to work the required length of time so they could strengthen their side of the issue. Fred Hungerford made a good referee. Years later the polling place was moved to the Wooddale schoolhouse and the people on the north side had to come around through the village to get there.

Since highway F was changed to extend from Andy's Tavern south over a new bridge at the Narrows between Birch and Chetac lakes and a short cut road made over to highway 48, the town has been more connected.

Chapter XXXII

Wooddale District

It seems strange that settlers did not come into this area at an earlier date. The railroad was built through in 1902 and had provided a side track and boxcar depot.

A. C. Thompson, the land agent, had plotted 10 acres north of the track into lots for a village and named it Wooddale. Someone had put up a large building to include living quarters, store and post office.

Washington Campbell was tired of living in North Dakota and moved his large family to Wisconsin where there were trees for firewood. He bought 80 acres north of Wooddale and quickly built a large pre-cut house. Then he traded for the 10 acres of plotted land and the large building. All this took place in 1916.

Charles Librande purchased land northeast of Wooddale in 1914, came a bit later to live on it, then moved in 1918 onto land he had bought in the southeast corner of the town. His brother Nick brought his family to live on the first place. In 1917 John A. Johnson settled on a place near Nick. To distinguish him from the other Johnsons he was always called "Wooddale Johnson."

George Mattis, sr. arrived in 1915, followed by Andrew Sabol in 1917. They took land south of Wooddale. There was nothing but a logging trail anywhere near them. They never dreamed of highway 48 going past their door as it does today. All these men established homes and lived there for many years.

A frame schoolhouse built by Nels Walhovd and Ed Flugel soon was not large enough. By 1920 a very modern one was built by M. F. Damon. It is now the Edgewater Town Hall. The first teacher was Dagna Britton.

Albert Zettel opened up a farm over near Charles Librande and a few others did the same but did not stay long. Frank Perfect lived north of Wooddale and Leonard Campbell's family lived there for a time.

The Milady Stock Farm has quite a history. He was a cattle dealer in South St. Paul who purchased a half section of land east of Lake Chetac. He put up some buildings and shipped out stock to fatten on the cutover land.

Art Emerson was the manager for several years. It was hardly a successful venture. Milady wanted to sell out, and by 1936 Lee and George Busse bought him out and moved over from Meteor. They had two houses to live in. The Busses added more land until they had 538 acres.

George got tired of the deal and sold out to Lee. He purchased the Mattis farm out on the highway and moved onto it in 1950. Lee likewise got tired and sold to Lloyd Kelling in 1956. Now both men and their wives have retired to lovely homes on the east shore of Lake Chetac.

Mr. and Mrs. James Martin who lived in Chicago had spent a few vacations on Lake Chetac, and decided they wanted to make a home near it. They

moved up in 1941 and built a sawmill near the side track at Wooddale. They were doing quite a business when fire started in it about midnight November 25, 1944. A carload of Birchwood young folks were coming home from a dance at Weyerhaeuser and as they came over the hills they saw the blaze and drove up and woke the Martin family. They were able to put out the fire but not before it had destroyed the tool shed. Martins got things going again in a few days. By 1956 they decided to establish a wood-working plant and erected buildings on the east side of the road near their house. Their first dry kiln burned January 30, 1959. The following summer they built a large double kiln and have expanded their business so that it keeps Mr. Martin and his two sons busy. Everything now is shipped in and out by truck.

Chapter XXXIII

The Hauer School District

The Hauer school district was located in the town of Sand Lake. The earliest settlers were William P. Howard and sons Edgar and Claude, who took up homesteads in this area. They needed a school for their children. Claude donated the land on which they built a log schoolhouse.

In order to have enough pupils to get a teacher for their school, Edgar's four year old Viola had to start school, making four from that family and three from Claude's. It was called the Hay Creek school; the first teacher was Lela Eaton. In a couple more years little Willis Howard was old enough to go.

Five more children were added in 1909 when Oscar Strand of Hayward bought what was known as the Newt Eytcheson place. This was a stopping place for loggers coming through from Rice Lake going to their logging jobs. The horses were put in barn and fed. The men slept in the bunkhouse and had meals at the house. (The place is now owned by George Sherlock). Other teachers in the log school were Reuben Walters, Jennie Bradley, and Annette Windus.

In 1907 the Wisconsin Central railroad built a line through, cutting the district cornerwise from southeast to northwest, leaving the school house on the east side.

Soon Claude Howard got the idea of building a house and store on the west side of the track beside the highway where it crossed the track. He applied for a post office and when asked for a name he derived "Hauer" from the name Howard.

In 1916 a new schoolhouse was built south of the store. Annette Windus moved over with the children and the equipment. Her salary was \$45 per month, with \$5 a month additional for janitor service, such as building fires, carrying wood and water, sweeping and keeping the premises in a clean, sanitary condition.

February 4, 1946, this schoolhouse burned to the ground, a complete loss. The teacher was Amanda McLean. Marie Langham preceded her in 1940 to 1944.

The board met with the Jordan school district on February 7 in view of obtaining temporary quarters (this school had been closed for a year making it possible to be taken over by February 11). Roger Langham was hired to transport students. He was duly covered with liability insurance and bond in compliance with state regulations.

The board found the empty Rainbow schoolhouse up near Hayward. They had it moved to Hauer. It took a lot of work to put it in shape, but school resumed in September even though there was lots of noise going on.

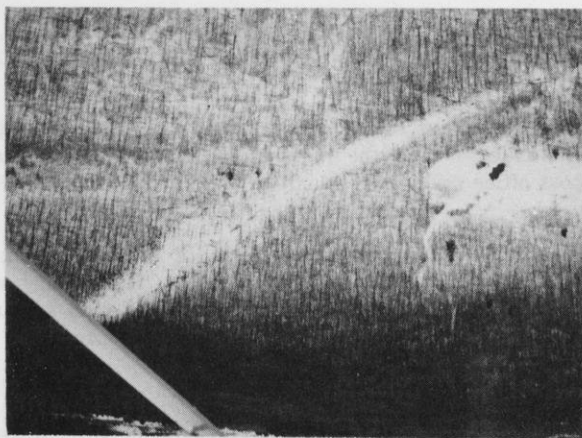
Amanda McLean was the teacher for eight years. Then came Elizabeth Wakefield who taught until the children were transported to Birchwood for a year, and the final consolidation was made in 1958.

The building was put up for bids. The Lloyd Updikes are the present owners. The old log schoolhouse was moved and is now the main room of the Harold Strand house.

The community of Hauer got a lot of publicity on the fateful night of November 18, 1966, when the supersonic jet bomber B-52 crashed at about 6:30 p.m. The ball of flame which accompanied the explosion of the plane a mile east of the Hauer fire tower was witnessed by many people. The noise was heard many miles away.

It was on a training mission which required the plane to turn north over Ladysmith at an altitude of 2900 feet, enter the bomb run over the Stone Lake area, thence to Grantsburg and to St. Cloud, Minnesota, at only 800 feet above ground level. Something went wrong. It came into the dense wooded area from the southeast and mowed a swath about 100 yards wide and approximately one half-mile in length. Nine men perished in the accident. Roger Langham rushed to the fire tower and pinpointed the location of the wreck. He was able to direct the investigators, also the bulldozers which cleared an emergency track into the heavily wooded and swampy area.

This picture was taken by Allen Cooper of Hillsdale who was a passenger in a light plane traveling at a height of 1200 or 1500 feet.



The swath mowed through the timber by the crash of the supersonic B-52 jet bomber, November 18, 1966.

Hold the picture with the top to the east showing the plane was going west, northwest. The body of the plane came to rest at the narrow end of the swath in the left lower corner of picture.

In the clearing nearby is the log cabin built by Chief John Butler and four large pines he must have planted. He was well thought of by his own people and his white neighbors also. He sent his children away to be educated. The narrow trail to the northeast leads back into the reservation.

Chapter XXXIV

Yarnell

The Yarnell community was started after the Omaha railroad passed through the towns of Edgewater and Couderay very near the point where the corner of the town of Meteor joins them. A passing track and a boxcar for a depot established the center which was named Yarnell.

Ernest Coolidge of Vermont, a blacksmith by trade, was one of the first settlers in 1914. The family stayed at the Henry Busse home in Meteor until they could build a cabin for themselves up near Yarnell.

Jake Crye took over as section boss and moved his large family into the section house December 14, 1917. Glen Filkins and parents of Tracy, Minnesota, came and built a nice grocery store and established the first post office. After one year they decided they could not stand the rough life and sold out to William Libby who came in 1918.

Rev. Charles Shrock, Carrie, his wife, and children who lived in Indiana, had heard of the wonderful hardwood timber in north Wisconsin. He purchased 80 acres at \$20.00 per acre from the Thompson Land Company. It had a fine stand of hard maple trees. In April, 1918, the family landed at Lona Spur logging camp where his friend Sigel Hunter was in charge. This was one and a half miles up the line from Yarnell. Their car of furniture and machinery had been shipped to the wrong place. They had to live at the old camp for several weeks until it was found. He had built a cabin when he purchased the land. He found someone had crossed over the line and cut some of his good trees.

Hank Knapmiller and his crew from the Birchwood mill had a logging camp there for several years. He loaded the cars on the side track for direct shipment to the mill. He cleaned up in 1917.

John Shrock and wife followed his brother Charles in 1921.

Soon there was need for a school. A tarpaper shack, dimensions about 14x24 feet, was built on the Edgewater side of the north-south road. There was a wonderful spring nearby where the settlers got their water. Mr. Libby bought the land where the spring was located, so he then had the water rights and only allowed "his friends" to get water. Fortunately they found other springs. Aside from running a store and post office, Bill Libby was station master and operated a little sawmill. It was a lively shipping station for freight. Cutting and shipping logs and cord wood and doing section work were the main sources of income for the families.

By 1920 a good school building was erected across the road in the town of Couderay. Rev. Charles Shrock conducted religious services in it for 20 years. Mr. Libby and several others enforced the rule that neither dances nor box socials could be held in the schoolhouse. The young folks had to travel to Couderay village for their "good times."

James Van Gilder and family moved into the area in 1919. There were three brothers, Ray Harris, a barber, Basil Harris, a teacher who went over

to teach the Meteor school and married Bernice Ruch, and Virgil Harris, a minister. There were three German men who lived north of Yarnell who were called the "Three Musketeers," Schones, Schael and Schram.

Mr. Libby's first wife died. The widow Norton moved into town and became wife number two. She brought three sons, Don, John and Hugh McLean, also two daughters, Ruth and Mazie Norton. Other early names mentioned are Harley Stanten, Charles Stahle, a bachelor who taught at the Wooddale school, and Ralph Stump. In 1919 Mr. and Mrs. Charles Peterson moved onto their place north of Yarnell and are still living on it. They have been married 60 years.

Wild fruit grew in abundance. Rev. Paul Shrock told of selling blackberries for 15c a quart to the railroad crews. A bushel of high bush cranberries brought him \$4.00.

The schools were getting smaller, and by 1945 it was voted to have the Yarnell children transported to Edgewater. Soon Yarnell wanted the school to be held in their building. Poor teachers and mismanagement caused friction. In 1952-53 the combined district consolidated with the Birchwood school and came in by bus.

The majority of the first settlers came from Indiana.

Chapter XXXV

Town of Meteor

In the area we now know as Meteor the early settlers were perhaps more isolated than any other settlement in this circle of counties. There were no waterways, railroads or even roads on which a wagon could travel. It was walk or go horseback for many miles to get provisions and the mail. But it seems it was the only place left where one could take up a homestead.

The first settlers we have record of who took up homesteads near Deer Lake were Gill and Goodie Brooks from Minnesota. Their cousin had established a store out there, which indicates a few settlers may have moved in before they did in 1891 when the whole of Sawyer county was known as the Town of Hayward.

Gill's daughter Lettie who was about seven years old was left with an aunt to finish out the school year. On a pre-arranged date she was put on the train in care of the conductor to be delivered into the hands of her father at Rice Lake.

Gill and Goodie went to Rice Lake on horseback to meet her, a distance of 30 or more miles. On the return trip Lettie rode with her father. The trail at that time was a tote road used by the Knapp, Stout & Company. It went



Henry Busse's sawmill and the house he built with lumber shipped from Rice Lake to Yarnell.

out around Balsam Lake, across the Birch Dam and through the virgin pine so thick and tall one could not see the sun through the tree tops. Goodie was our neighbor for several years and told many strange stories to our children. He had often walked that distance with a pack of provisions on his back and he was a very small man.

As soon as they proved up they sold out and moved to the town of Cedar

Lake, locating near Loveland Corners where the children could attend the school which had been established.

When Bert Zettel was 25 years old he took up an 80 acre homestead northwest of Deer Lake and brought his family there to live in 1897. He carried the mail and his provisions on his back from Apollonia, a distance of 19 miles.

By about 1900 new life was injected into this community. The Weyerhaeuser Lumber Company had finished its cutting in the northwest corner of Rusk county. They extended their little railroad up past Deer Lake on the west side to about a half mile north of what we now know as the corner where "C" crosses highway 48. At that point the line divided, one line going northwest to near Yarnell and the other east to a big bend in the Chippewa River where they decked their logs from that area. The others were taken by train to a lower point on the river. Camps were established for the crews. The few settlers either raised crops to feed the men or worked for the company.

Zettel was permitted to use a special type bicycle on the railroad. It had flanged wheels and an extension wheel to the other rail. He brought in the mail and groceries from Apollonia on it. People were allowed to ride on the flatcars or in the cab of the engine. One woman rode on the cowcatcher as she was so anxious to get to a dentist because she had a toothache.

During this time a sawmill was established near the "Corners" by a



The first crop harvested on the Busse farm after plowing was rock. Smaller rocks were thrown into the wagon, the larger ones rolled onto the stoneboat and hauled out by tractor. This was the usual pattern followed by all area farmers.

Mr. Brandenburg, and a large boarding house and a sleeping shanty were built. Then Zettel delivered the mail to a wee post office at the camp. It is believed that the branch railroad leading towards Yarnell was taken up at this time.

Sherman Ruch moved into Meteor in 1910. He had a team and wagon and hauled lumber from the mill to Yarnell over the roadbed of the logging railroad. The Omaha railroad had a long side track at Yarnell where the lumber

was loaded onto cars. At this time the Omaha was the only outlet for these settlers. They could board the train and go to Birchwood and back the same day, or even on to the big city of Rice Lake.

For a local story on land transactions we've taken a vast acreage in the town of Meteor. It started back in February, 1869, according to the deed when John McGraw and Jeremiah Dwight got 4,000 acres from the United States Government. It passed through several hands until the Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company got it in 1881. They managed to get rid of it in 1902. It passed quickly from one man to another. Then three women seemed to have inherited the land in 1904. But it took them until September of 1910 to get it off their hands.

There were 4,000 acres scattered here and there in what is now the town of Meteor. They insisted that every acre of it had to go in the one deal. J. S. Prichard, H. C. Enger, J. P. Ott and son George teamed up to buy it in September of 1910. Prichard and Enger each took 1,000 acres. J. P. Ott and son took the remaining 2,000 for \$24,000. Now that was a lot of money in those days. Mr. Ott persuaded his son-in-law, Henry Busse, to go in with him and son George and divided the 2,000 acres equally.

In the portion which Mr. Busse got in sections 9 and 10 there happened to be four 40's joining each other. He picked out a building site up on a hill. He hired Sherman Ruch to log some of the hardwood and haul it to the Brandenburg mill and have it ready for him to put up some rough buildings when he returned. The family did not move until March 1, 1913.

He wanted better lumber for the house. He ordered a carload shipped out from the Rice Lake Lumber Mill to Yarnell. It was then hauled by team to the building site. Of course they needed a large house as there were six children. But it became a haven for many of the newcomers, who stayed with them until they could find or build a place for themselves. They also operated a little grocery store, until so many folks were indebted to them that a halt was called to the enterprise.

When the Busses came in the spring of 1913 the Weyerhaeuser railroad had been torn up and carried away. The portion of the roadbed to the south became a trail for the settlers to use if they wanted to go to Apollonia or Bruce.

Mr. and Mrs. Busse lived on this place until their deaths. Now their grandsons live there, Malcolm Zesiger in the old house, and Ralph Zesiger in another house on the same farm. In due time a good road was laid out past their home north to Lemington, where the Soo railroad crossed the Omaha.

It is now County Trunk C and extends to Exeland. From the "Corners" north to State highway 70 it is bituminous, but to the east through Meteor it is a good gravel road.

Among other early settlers on the road to Lemington were the Henry Englebrecht and Chris Zercher families and several others. They found their land full of stones and about two and one half miles from the Meteor schoolhouse. Soon Zercher decided to call it quits and moved over to Wooddale very near to the schoolhouse. The only outlet from Meteor towards Birchwood was a trail over Stony Hill.

All the voters had to go to the village of Couderay to vote, the best method of travel being by foot or horseback. Nothing was being done for the south end of the town. The men got together and set a ball in motion. On

May 17, 1919, the new town of Meteor was created out of Couderay by a total of 26 votes. Supposedly a meteor had fallen in that area, so that was the name given to the new town.

Here are the names of the first officers: Sherman Ruch, chairman; Dave Senesac and William Beebe, supervisors; Bert Zettel, treasurer; Roy Hunter, clerk; James Poland, assessor; John Gossard, justice and U. Warsop, constable.

At the first meeting of this new town board a road levy of \$1,000.00 was voted and a general fund levy of \$1,500.00. But it was many years before decent roads could be found in Meteor. Two families who had cars when they moved in, had to put them up on blocks until roads were made good enough to travel on. Hills and swamps made road construction very difficult.

June 1, 1956, the road between Birchwood and Exeland became a part of State highway 48 and bituminous all the way. It joins highway 40 east of Exeland, which is the original tote road up from Chippewa Falls.

After the logging railroad was taken out a post office and grocery store was set up in the home of Ed Rice near the Meteor Corners. The mail was brought over from Yarnell by a Star Route. That house is still there.

The first schoolhouse was built of logs and located between the Sherman Ruch and Bert Zettel homes. About 1913 a frame building was put up south of the "Corners" as more children had moved into that area. It burned to the ground and another was erected in a hurry. The school was conducted in the sawmill boarding house during the building program. That schoolhouse is now the town hall. When enough settlers came into the east side of the town a new schoolhouse was built on the main road and called the Valley View. Samuel Prilaman came in 1916, also many others about that time.

Almost in the center of the town of Meteor is one of the four highest points in Wisconsin, altitude 1770 feet. From this spot one can see for many miles to the north and east, over the valley through which the Chippewa River flows. To the north and west are the rolling Meteor Hills and the fire tower is set on one of them.

By 1926 the town boasted a telephone line between a few neighbors. It did not last long. A few years ago a line was extended out from Exeland, one of the first lines to be laid underground.

About 1930 the first electrical lines crossed the town. Power was provided by the Radisson Power Company which still supplies the area, but it is now known as North Central Power Company.

Several farmers have established sugar bushes and produce several hundred gallons of maple syrup for commercial market. Others do logging on a small scale to supplement their farm income.

The two one-room schools lasted until 1957 when they were consolidated with the Birchwood school district and the Bruce school district.

As in many other communities, some of the people opened their homes for Sunday school on Sunday. Or they may have walked to Weirgor to attend Methodist services.

At last the people got together and decided to build a church of their own in about the center of the town. First they made a good basement and put a good cover on it. This they used for services until they got enough money collected to erect a nice building on top of it. This was completed in 1959. It was named The Meteor Hills Bible church.

Chapter XXXVI

The Village of Exeland

The year of 1907 marked a time of many changes in the southern portion of Sawyer county. First of all the voters petitioned to have a new town created out of Radisson. They asked for the equal of two townships and it took the name of Weirgor. In 1918 the eastern half of it became Meadow Brook.

The only way to enter that area was by the tote roads and then came the news that the Soo railroad was cutting across the town and the Arpin line had beat them to the crossing.

We believe the first settlers were Leroy Veness and wife, and sons, Archie and Wesley, who drove with a covered wagon from Pepin county. They became permanent settlers.

Otto Taylor and family were tired of the hills and gullies of Pierce county. When they learned that the Omaha railroad had reached Radisson they loaded all their belongings into a boxcar and set out for the end of that line. On October 26, 1903, they arrived. They unloaded the team and wagon and hitched them together, loaded the wagon with their worldly possessions and with the cows following behind, Clarence and Harry keeping them in line, they set out for the Old Joe Russell Stopping Place. Counting all the curves on that old tote road which followed the Chippewa river it was a distance of about seven miles. There they lived for some time but tried some other places before moving into Exeland in about 1911.

Other early settlers were W.H.B. Campbell, Orval Etters, Henry Rhodewald, Gordon Fowler, Richard Bowen, Old Man Bauchen, and John and George Houg who operated a saw mill for at least 50 years.

The Arpin Company did this area a good turn when in 1907 they rushed an extension of their logging railroad across the Soo right-of-way. This secured for them the first rights to the crossing and forced the Soo trains to pause at the crossing; even the Limited had to halt. The people soon caught on and had produce there to be loaded on the train. The Soo wanted their business and provided a platform for their convenience.

The Soo had planned to set up a depot a mile and a half farther north. The people circulated a petition asking that the depot be erected in the settlement which was developing near the crossing. The Soo consented and the depot was built where it stands today although like many others the doors are closed.

The town board called a meeting to discuss what name they wanted their settlement to be called. After due deliberation and arguments a smart guy stood up and said, "Our railroads have formed an X at the crossing, why not call our village Exeland?" The idea was quickly accepted. The village was platted with Main Street going east and west on the section line. It was incorporated in 1920. The depot was built in 1914, with Earl Wiggington the first agent.

When State Highway 48 came through from the west it crossed the Soo track

at the place where the Soo wanted to place the depot. There was a little settlement at the corner where the highway turns to follow the track into Exeland. A schoolhouse was built out there and also one in the village and one at Windfall lake. The settlement up at the corner is called Weirgor.

Mrs. Lydia Bowman was the first postmaster. Harry Bartlett brought the mail from Bruce three times a week on his motor car. August Pehrson built a two story store on Main street. His wife Anna became the postmaster with the office in the store. They lived upstairs.

A mile and a half east of Exeland Highway 48 meets with Highway 40 which is the remodeled tote road of the early days between Bloomer and Radisson. About five miles farther east is State Highway 27 which makes a straight line from Ojibwa to near Cornell.

It should be recalled at this point that it was J. L. Gates who laid out the first section of that highway directly north of Ladysmith. Gates headed a big land company and wanted to make a good impression on the people, and begged the people to name the new county after him, which they did. It was changed to Rusk a few years later.

Chapter XXXVII

Stopping Places and Pine Logging

Quotations from "Early Rusk County" by W. A. Blackburn

"A few settlers came into the present Rusk County before 1884, coming by way of the stage road from Chippewa Falls. In 1882 the Omaha had built its line up from Eau Claire thru Chippewa Falls towards Spooner. This brought an influx of curious people into this area. Every few miles some one had built a large "stopping place." The route followed the general direction of the Chippewa river. There were the Nine and Twelve Mile Houses, also the Campbell House on Long Lake; then on into the present Rusk county environs. Next came the Oak Grove Place. This was a 14 hour tortuous ride over miles of corduroy and multiple rutted roads which ran through pine forests. Many travelers preferred walking to riding, but loading their baggage onto the wagon.

"The next settlers were at the mouth of Devil's Creek, (now Trail's End 4H Camp) where Sam Johnson had established a stopping place. The tote road followed the creek a few miles then turned to the north, through what is now the towns of Atlanta and Murry. About five miles north was the Jim Walker Place, two miles further the Cy Pinkham Place. Three miles more and you reached the Sever Serley Place. This area was called the Murry settlement, named after John Murry who lived across the Weirgor river.

"Jim Murry lived at the mouth of the Little Weirgor; he built a dam on that river and operated a water power sawmill, the first lumber manufacturing plant in what is now Rusk county. There were also another John Murry and Sandy who lived south of Jim's place. This sawmill must have furnished the lumber for all the buildings for the settlers in this area.

"Near the site of this dam there is now a Catholic church, a town hall and a creamery. Highway 40 follows many of the curves of this old tote road. Some hills have been cut down and curves straightened.

"B. F. Brainerd purchased the Cy Pinkham Place, after which it was called the Grand Rapids House. Mr. Blackburn, father of the writer, became associated with Brainerd in it and the logging operations in that vicinity.

"At that time in 1884 the Grand Rapids Place was the hot spot on the Upper Chippewa. Here was a three story hotel building, a saloon, store, two blacksmith shops, several large barns with accommodations for a hundred teams of horses, a number of large warehouses for loggers supplies, and a ferry across the river.

"From this point centered the pine logging operations on Little and Big Weirgor, Couderay, Brunet and Thornapple rivers as well as that of the further up east and west forks of the Chippewa.

"They often fed in 24 hours, 300 to 500 lumberjacks, and the barns were always filled to capacity with tote teams from early fall until late spring. In the spring, day and night for weeks, one could walk across the Chippewa river on a solid mass of logs, so thickly crowded you could hardly fall between them into the water if you had tried.

"In late 1884 the Soo Line coming from the west was completed as far east as Bruce which became the eastern terminus for about a year. Things were booming in Bruce. The logging operators were able to get supplies shipped in on the train. The coming of the railroad had doomed much of the trade at the stopping places. The 90's marked the end practically of the pine lumbering, in what we now call Rusk county."

Chapter XXXVIII

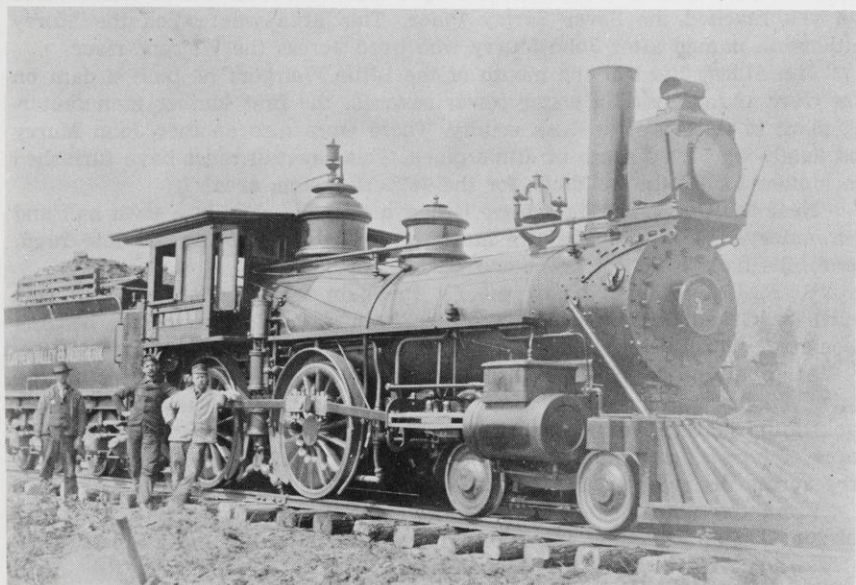
FOUR SHORT STORIES

First Railroad in Rusk County

The first railroad in what is now Rusk county was built by the Weyerhaeuser Lumber Company in 1884. It was called the C. R. & M. (Chippewa River & Menomonie Railroad). The first locomotive was called the Dinky. It was hauled from Bloomer on sleighs together with cars, rails, and other equipment. This railroad was used to haul logs from the vicinity of Weyerhaeuser, Potato and Island lakes to the big bend of the Chippewa river where they were driven to Chippewa Falls and other points south.

After the Soo Line was built to Bruce in late 1884 a new C.R. & M. was built northwest from Apollonia. The Dinky and four larger and faster locomotives operated on this line. The logs were landed on the Chippewa river south of Bruce.

It was their habit to build extensions out from the main line to shorten the hauls by teams. As they cut the timber they pulled up the tracks and



One of the four big locomotives.

moved them to a new location. One line was built to the northwest corner of what is now the town of Wilkinson. There a mill was established called The Champions (a large sawdust pile is still there) in the Blue Hills area. Evidently they believed it would be cheaper to haul it out as lumber instead of logs. The date on this has been given as 1899.

Their main line was extended up into Sawyer county past Deer Lake and the Meteor post office where it divided, one branch going almost to Yarnell,

the other to the east where they landed logs at the old Joe Russell place in lower Sawyer county from where they were floated down the Chippewa river.

Where the C. R. & M. crossed the Soo line one mile west of Bruce, Apollonia came into being and soon surpassed Bruce in population. The C. R. & M. operated several log trains daily and had a large machine shed repair shop for logging cars and locomotives, and a large round house with several locomotive stalls.

Bridges

(Portions of an article printed in the Milwaukee Journal June 1960)

As the C. R. & M. progressed in building their roadbed to the north and west the construction gang came to a low meadow high in the Blue Hills. After a discussion lasting days, it was decided to pile drive a trestle between the hills, rather than detour miles around the meadow.

When complete, several sections of the trestle towered 80 feet above the ground, with one section measuring 90 feet. This trestle became known as the "high bridge" and watchmen guarded it every hour of the day and night. It was 1,470 feet long. It had a 3% grade. Constructed in 1885 it was nearing its end in 1908.

"We had to stop the train at the north end of the bridge," recalled Perry L. Speed. "Generally, the engine was put in back motion with the cylinder cocks open. The bridge was too rickety to set the brakes while on it. Then the engineer, fireman and I (conductor pilot) would hold our breaths until we got to the other side, hitting up to 30 miles an hour where we used all the braking power we could to prevent the train from jumping the weak tracks."

Another trestle, called the "long bridge" was erected five miles north of the high bridge. It was perhaps a bit longer but only eight feet from the ground. This one was located just south of Deer Lake when they were constructing the line up through Meteor. It too became wobbly and unsafe.

Three other notable trestles existed on the C. R. & M. The "crooked bridge" snaked over a tributary of the Big Weirgor Creek. The "400 foot bridge" crossed a corner of a swamp. And the "floating bridge" would sink to water level whenever the logging trains crossed over it.

Cursed but loved, the C. R. & M. was given the apt nickname "Crooked, Rough & Muddy." It was beloved by many sportsmen who pumped handcars up its tracks to fish for trout or to hunt in the Blue Hills. The old roadbeds became town roads traveled by hunters and fishermen.

Now they are being converted into snowmobile trails.

Apollonia

The following are quotes from an article written by Mrs. Russell Cameron in August 1970.

"In the year 1888 Mr. Frederick Weyerhaeuser selected a location west of Bruce on the Soo railroad as one of the headquarters for his lumber interests. His right-of-way was surveyed for a railroad to run from the Chippewa river south of Bruce northwest into the Blue Hills area. The C. R. & M. was soon nicknamed the "Crooked, Rough & Muddy."

"The Weyerhaeuser organization constructed a saw mill, logging road, lumber yard, round house, boarding house, and a few homes. It was first

called Vernona Junction. In a short time the population had grown to more than 500 and the name was changed in 1894 to Apollonia in honor of Mr. Weyerhaeuser's daughter. Every kind of a business set up shop here, along with two churches, Congregational and Catholic, and two cemeteries.

"Dr. G. G. Gobar was the physician and his wife operated the Drug Store (the first drug store in Gates County started in October 1899). The first newspaper in the county, "The Apollonia Weekly Budget," was started by F. E. Monroe in April, 1895.

"When Mr. Weyerhaeuser closed down his logging business here, many other businesses closed also or moved away. In 1933 the post office was discontinued. It is now what we call a ghost town. But the Congregational church which was dedicated August 11, 1895, still stands there. The Ladies Aid which is still active put on a 75th anniversary celebration in August 1970. They have Bible study in conjunction with their meetings."

(Mr. Weyerhaeuser was very particular about keeping the original spelling of his name as we have done in these notes, but the village has dropped one of the "e's").

Other Towns Along the Line

It was the habit of the railroads to place passing tracks about every six miles along the line, also a section house and perhaps a water tank. There were section crews who worked in those days, who replaced poor ties and ballasted the low spots. They worked the old hand cars up and down the tracks looking for broken rails.

Lehigh and Strickland for some time were but side tracks for meeting and passing trains. Weyerhaeuser developed into quite a burg. The land agents were doing a big business, and dairying was getting to be popular. Many railroad men established their homes there, among them Martin Anderson who had a general store and later operated a sawmill. Associated with him was Ezra Hess. They gave employment to from 30 to 60 men.

BRUCE

The Soo Line tied up for a year when they reached the Chippewa river. They had to build a bridge across it before they could proceed. The town of Bruce grew like a mushroom. It was named in honor of A. C. Bruce, a large land owner in that vicinity. That was late in the year of 1884. It was incorporated as a village in 1901 and soon had a population of near 700.

A letter from William J. Phillips of Clear Lake who is 89 years old, tells of his experiences when at 19 years of age he went to Bruce to find work. The Beldenville Company from Pierce county was moving its lumber and veneer mill to Bruce. He got a job clearing land until the veneer mill was ready. The Monday after the Fourth he started work at the mill. The wage was 15 cents an hour, ten hours a day, six days a week, winter and summer. The sawmill worked just during the summer. They had a good planing mill which operated the year around.

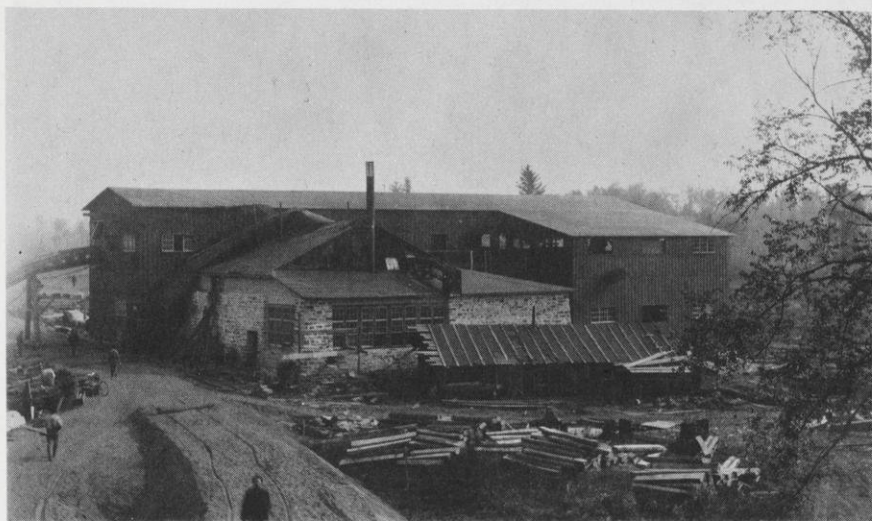
The company had a boarding house, a big horse barn and a blacksmith shop, also a number of houses built in two rows. The larger ones rented for \$6.00 a month, the small ones for \$4.00. There were two dug wells with hand pumps for the renters' water supply. Board at the boarding house was \$3.50 a week, kept out of your \$9.00 a week check.

He and four other young men found an elderly couple who lived in an old logging camp. She boarded them for \$12.00 a month and did their washing on a washboard. She gave them good board for working men. Two partitions had been put in the old cook camp. The boys all slept in one room, kept warm by an old wood heater.

The Beldenville mills gave employment for a lot of men, and a chance for the landowners to sell their hardwood logs as they cleared their land.

ARPIN MILL

Mr. Phillips told an amusing story about the Arpin Mill. When they were building the smoke stack they riveted it together a section at a time. When it was finished it was full of scaffolding. They foolishly decided to burn it out. The smokestack became red hot to the top and they could not put out the fire. Pretty soon the stack buckled and fell across the engine and boiler building as seen in the picture. They had to fight to keep the mill from burning down.



The Arpin sawmill at Atlanta.

The Arpin Mill ran two crews of 40 men in each crew. An 11-hour day was put in by each man. It operated day and night for 11 months, closing down for repairs during the 12th month. They had a large boarding and sleeping house, a store and a schoolhouse which were all heated by steam from the mill. Many of the workmen brought their families and built homes. When the mill closed down the settlement vanished.

Bruce farmers built the first creamery in the county in about 1900. It was known as the Bruce Co-operative Creamery Company with a capital of \$4,500, the Abbots Dairy Inc., Creamery Company being the outgrowth of that little effort. The Bruce area became a fine agricultural community.

Chapter XXXIX

Loggin' in the Blue Hills

It must have caused the Arpin brothers some worry about how they could get the timber from the north side of the Blue Hills to their mill at Atlanta. They waited until the Soo railroad was built from the main line at Cameron to Birchwood in 1901. It passed close to the west shore of Cedar lake. At the same time something new had been invented called the steam hauler.

From an article published several years ago I got the following information about it. "Phoenix Manufacturing Company in Eau Claire originated the hauler and was the only firm ever to make them. After 1900 the invention was put on the market. This was a horizontal steam engine with a locomotive cab,



Arpin's steam hauler, Ed Skar driver. Notice the wide sleds at left.

propelled by caterpillar treads and with logging sleigh runners in front. An automobile type steering gear was located in front of the engine. A man sat out in front and straddled the steering column to guide the runners."

This seemed to be the answer to their problem and they purchased one of the first haulers put on the market. Strange though the steam hauler may have looked, it was well adapted to its purpose. It could haul up to six or seven sleighs at a time. It was a logging locomotive which did not need a railroad.

But there was Cedar Lake between the timber and the railroad track. The solution: knowing that the hauler was too heavy to put on the ice, they set up a small camp near the railroad in the south corner of what is now Highway

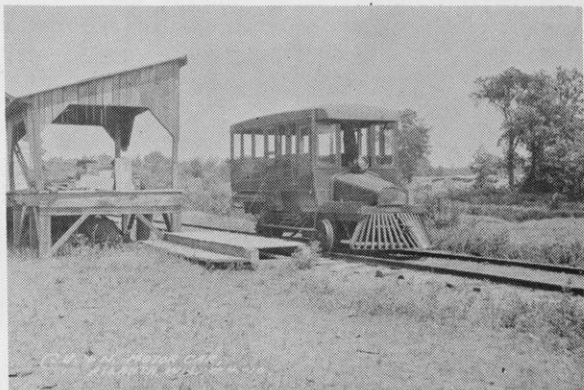
48 and V and had a side track built. They kept several teams and men there to handle that end of the process.

Now let's go across the lake and see what has been going on over there. If you have been following events in this story, you will know that the Knapp, Stout & Company had camps in that area, in fact the last one in 1900 was in section 18 of what is now town of Wilson but at that time was town of Atlanta. The Arpins took over that camp on Pigeon creek as well as two others up at the head waters of the creek. They were named Camp 3 and Camp 5.

The Arpins called their camps by numbers, the K. S. & Company by names.

Ed Skar of Mikana worked there and gave me the following stories of his experiences. He was 17 years old when he started in 1904. After about two years he graduated to be driver of the steam hauler. The main camp No. 12, located where John V. Gargulak formerly lived, had the office and one of the blacksmith shops. Lafe Griesbach was the general superintendent.

The crews with their teams went out into the woods, loaded up the sleds and brought them back and lined them up ready for the hauler to hook onto, get their empty sleds and go out again. But they must have proper roads for the hauler. In the fall roads had to be built, smoothed out with a drag and iced as soon as the freeze-up came. They kept on icing them all winter. The road monkeys hauled water all night in big sleigh tanks. During the winter



Harry Bartlett's motor car on the Chippewa Valley & Northern railroad (CV & N).

about 18 inches of ice was built up and could still be used as much as two weeks after the spring breakup. They made a trail across the lake and kept it iced also, for the teams bringing the empty sleds to exchange for full loads to take back to load by derrick onto the flat cars.

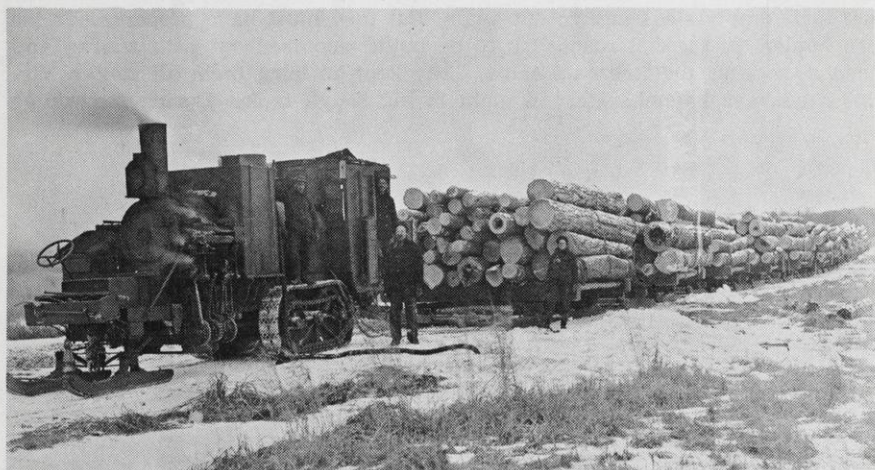
Ed Skar told how it took two men to keep enough wood cut and piled beside the road for the hauler as there was little room in the cab for fuel and it consumed a lot of it. The sparks would fly from the smokestack and once the coat was burned off his back.

One year there was an early breakup, and it was feared the snow would go before the logs were all pulled out of the woods. Griesbach got excited and kept the crews going for two days and three nights without sleep and with hardly time to eat. The men rebelled and took a mean way of showing it. On a night trip they hooked up the sleds behind the hauler, running the tongue

ahead under the next sled as usual. They were supposed to anchor cross chains from the back of one sled to the front of the next sled. But this time they only anchored one chain. Skar did not know this and was up front and had no way of knowing what was going on. As they progressed down grade to the lake, one by one the sleds broke away and rolled into the ditch. He knew something was wrong but dared not stop. When he got to the lake he had just one sled of logs left. The boss learned a lesson, but the men later had to gather up the loads and clean up the mess. Cold weather returned and the season finished with all logs to the mill. There was always an engineer and a fireman inside the cab.

Another Skar who worked for Arpin was Tom of Birchwood. He was a blacksmith who had recently arrived from Norway. He worked seven days a week, 14 hours a day for \$45.00 a month. If some work came in at night he had to stay by the job, regardless if he slept or not.

But we are told that life was not too bad when they sat down to eat for



Arpin's steam hauler taking on water with a hose from creek.

George Menning was a good cook. At the large camp a man was hired to haul out a hot dinner to the men in the woods. He used a horse on a small sleigh, packed the hot food in large containers well protected to keep it hot. But lots of times the food was frozen to the plate before it was all eaten. Food had to be good to hold a crew. A poor cook was soon sent down the road.

Della Schenck recalled going with her father who was delivering potatoes to the camp by the railroad track. She watched the cook frying huge doughnuts and throwing them into a barrel.

Stories are told of Tommy Thompson, a watch and jewelry salesman who traveled from camp to camp on a toboggan pulled by a big St. Bernard dog. His watches were good and many lumberjacks carried one for years. Once in a while a traveling preacher would visit a camp and give them a sermon.

The usual procedure on Sundays was for the men to wash their clothes. The hot water was provided by a huge iron kettle hung over a fire beside a

stream or lake. The camps were always located beside water for the livestock and camp use. The only way to rid the garments of lice was to boil them. Some fellows never changed their clothes all winter.

To provide the steam hauler with water, they extended a hose into a stream when they came near one and pumped water into the tank on the engine. This method was also used by the little railroad over at Atlanta.

Now let's follow those carloads of logs to the mill. The engines and cars were provided by Arpin, the Soo permitted them to use their tracks. The train traveled to Cameron where a transfer was provided to get it onto the main line. It then traveled east to Bruce where another transfer was provided to get it onto the Arpin track, then north one and a half miles to the Atlanta Mill. The last winter this program was carried out was in 1908-09.

Other crews and camps were operating north of the Atlanta Mill. They built a railroad as straight as possible up to the Big Weirgor River where they built Camp 9 in section 9 of the town of Murry (at that time it was still Atlanta). Many other camps were along the line. One extension was called Camp 4 on the Charlie Serley homestead. They tried a new trick for saving labor. A dirt ramp was built out from the end of the track. When the loads were brought in each one was lined up for a steam powered cable to be attached to it. Power from the engine drew each load up the ramp and placed it on a car. When the cars were filled the train rumbled down the tracks to the mill. They would hook onto another string of empties and back up to the camp again.

The problem seems to have been how to get the steam hauler over to the crews working north of the mill. The only man who can recall what happened next is Einar Skar whose father Tom was the blacksmith at Camp 12. He had been shifted back to Camp 5 and the crews were cutting the timber to the east, passing south of Deer Lake, heading for Camp 4. They were preparing a road for the steam hauler to pull this timber over to the ramp at Camp 4.

One Sunday Tom went home to see his family, a distance of about two miles. He was told the next morning that he was fired for leaving the camp. But the next day the boss came and hired him to go to Camp 4 to work in the shop over there.

There had been some extra excitement at Camp 9. Arpin had heard that the Wisconsin Central (later taken over by the Soo) had surveyed a line from Chicago to Superior, striking cornerwise across the state. It was to pass about three miles north of Camp 9. Knowing the rules of the game, Arpin quickly extended their logging railroad to the north and laid their steel across the Soo's surveyed right of way in 1907, thereby securing for Arpin first rights to the crossing which the Soo installed.

For many years Harry Bartlett operated a motor car powered by a four cylinder engine made by Mitchel Motor Car Company of Racine. He made three regular trips per week from Bruce to the end of the line. It would hold 25 passengers. He carried feed, hay, groceries and about everything but livestock.

When the Arpin line was extended to what later became Exeland the turntable upon which Bartlett turned his car was moved from Camp 9 to the end of the line. This was a great convenience for the early settlers as he made extra trips when it was necessary. He also carried the mail to the camps.

Ed Serley reported that his father Sever Serley had said that the Atlanta Mill was built in 1899 and the steel was taken up in 1919. The buildings were either moved away, torn down or burned. The Atlanta Mill is now just a memory.

Chapter XL

The Hermit

Out in the wilds of the Blue Hills in Rusk county there lived a man whose object it was "To live alone, away from the world." And yet more stories have been told about him than any other man of the early days.

His obituary was printed in the Birchwood News in November 1917. (Yes, Birchwood had a real newspaper in those days). Later it was copied by the Rice Lake Chronotype from which I received a copy when I started to collect this history, quote:

"After spending 31 years in the woods alone, seeing only a chance wayfarer, having his provisions brought to him at different intervals, David L. Tainter, an old soldier 74 years old, met death by his own hand, using a rifle to do the deed.

"Just when the suicide occurred is not known definitely, but no doubt happened on Thursday morning, Nov. 15. He was found dead in his bed on Monday, Nov. 19, by Jim Zalabak, the man who had been taking provisions to him. Mr. Tainter always marked his calendar to keep track of the date. The last date marked being the 14th. The weapon used was a rifle, and from appearances he shot his dog before turning the gun on himself. The bullet entered the neck and went through the head, badly disfiguring one side of his face.

"David Lowry Tainter was born at Prairie du Chien Oct. 14, 1843, and had always remained single. He was a brother of Capt. Andrew Tainter who was a member of the Knapp, Stout & Co. Tainter was an infidel and fought against all kinds of religion. The body was put in a plain wooden box and brought to Woodlawn cemetery where it was buried without a ceremony. Ezra Dakins said that Tainter was with him in the famous Iron Brigade in the Civil War. The inscription on his tombstone states "David L. Tainter Co. A, 5th Wis. Infantry."

The records tell us that the K. S. & Company had a camp operated by Pat Murphy near Murphy's Dam in 1882-83. The same year J. L. Nelson had one on the east end of the flowage which was only a mile or two from Tainter's Pond. Therefore a good tote road had been established before Dave went out there in 1886. The lumber for his one and a half story frame house must have been hauled from Rice Lake, also his furniture. He kept a few cows in the early days. He had his dog trained to round them up at night and bring them home. He stored the milk in the nice cool cellar under the house as well as canned fruits and vegetables.

But when the K. S. & Company built a big camp right under his nose on his "private lake" it made him furious and he took his spite out on the lumberjacks. Tom Losby was the boss in 1893-94 and Archie Downs in 1894-95. During this time Bill Kirkendall, boss of the ox barns, would often drive the team with supplies for this camp. His young son Paul accompanied him if the trip was on Saturday. Before his death Paul wrote his memories to me in many letters from which I quote: "Tainter would have nothing to do with the men

at the logging camp near his cabin. One of the lumberjacks went to call on Tainter, who came out with a gun and made the fellow dance by shooting the dirt all around his feet. Although warned, my dad did call and as Dave knew he was from headquarters he willingly talked to us. He let me look into the upstairs room where he had at least a dozen grey timber wolves of different sizes, stuffed and mounted on boards on small rollers. They were lined up around the room with the largest in the lead. It made the chills run down my back.

"He always had a rifle leaning against the table and two or three in the corners of the room, all loaded. He kept several wild deer in a large fenced-in area in the woods, the corner of which came up to the rear of his house. They were quite tame with him. He also had pet skunks, squirrels and chipmunks, and one or two ugly dogs."

The following is from Allison Stout's memory chest. His father, F. D. Stout, knew Dave very well but he called him Lowry. (On official records he is listed as David L. Tainter or D. Lowry Tainter. He was the 10th child in a family of 13 born to Ezekiel Tainter; nine of them were girls). Is it any wonder that he preferred to live in the wilderness away from women?

"We invariably went on one of our family picnics over to see him on Calista's birthday, August 1st. Several times each fall F. D. would take me over there partridge hunting as this was prime country and the open tote roads made hunting easy and pleasant.

"But to get back to the family picnics, we would stop and make a fire where the old tote road crossed Tainter Creek and make coffee and eat our lunch, arriving at Lowry's shortly after. We might stay an hour or so, leaving in time to get home before dark. We had gone by boat to lower Hemlock where Fred Boetcher and Gus Boll met us with the team and carriage from the Lower Stout Farm.

"I have quite a clear mental picture of the old boy; about 5 foot 11, rather stocky, bright blue eyes, and a wild looking head of hair, white beard of heroic proportions. I'm sure he was well educated as he came from a good family.

"Lowry delighted in going off on one of his religious blasts as he was a self-styled atheist or agnostic. He would fizz like a Bromo-Seltzer at anything to do with religion. Nature was perhaps his religion, he was positive that nature was being brutally raped by humans and who can say he was wrong in that attitude? Though a nature lover, Lowry was a top grade deer hunter. He lived almost entirely on deer meat and fish which he could catch almost from his house. He smoked the deer shoulders and such as well as drying "Jerky" in the sun (this is about as tough as a shoe sole).

"Lowry now and then shot a grouse if he was near enough to hit it in the head with a deer rifle. This would be his taste thrill of the week or month. We generally took him two or three sacks of sugar and the same of salt. I suppose the latter for salting down fish and deer meat.

"The squirrels and chipmunks had free access to the whole house, via a kitchen window that was left open a few inches and had an approach board slanting down from it on the outside. They would jump on the table and eat with him. (He had Mrs. Zalabak bake cakes just to feed his pets).

"Lowry always insisted on paying for anything brought to him, invariably in gold. We often took in large boxes of rifle shells. At least once a year we brought out a bale of furs, mostly wolf, coyote and fox and some of the more valuable varieties plus a package of scalps for claiming the bounties paid by the state. These matters F. D. took care of for him, evidently trusted him to that extent. It brought enough to make a very impressive stack of \$20 gold pieces. Must have amounted to far over \$1,000. Far beyond his needs for a year's supplies.

"One August 1st he handed F. D. six double eagles and asked Dad to buy him a new 30-30 Winchester and gave instructions for a gold plaque to be let in the stock. This inlay was to be a 2½x1½ inch oval and have a four line poem he had written engraved on it.

"F.D. followed all the directions and took the handsome new gun in on the next hunting trip in the fall. The price would have been about \$25.00 in those days. While we were sitting around admiring it, Lowry made a paste of salt and water and started rubbing the beautifully blued steel parts of the spanking new rifle. Naturally everyone was aghast and I at about 14 or 15 was sure that the old boy had completely left the rails. In reply to F.D.'s "For ——sake Lowry why do that?" Lowry calmly answered "——Frank, you might as well go through the woods beating a drum as carry a shiny gun, the ——deer would see it glitter a mile away."

"Whenever he wanted to pay F.D. for something he would disappear for a few minutes and come back with the necessary gold pieces. He was too much of a woodsman to hide anything so that it could easily be found.

"Lowry was pretty smart and his inventiveness surely is shown by his "Free and Easy" which was a sheep skin tanned with the wool on it. About an eight inch hole was cut in the center. This handsome hide hung on two nails on the wall near the stove pipe from his cast iron kitchen stove. In cold weather when he felt the call of nature, he took it down nice and hot from its nails, folded it carefully four ways, tucked it under his arm and departed for the frigid outhouse." (End of Allison's story).

It was toward the end of Dave Tainter's life that the Bohemians settled in Pribram and their big church bell rang out loud and clear three times a day. Dave would go into a tirade everytime he heard it. He threatened to burn the church down. But instead, he ordered Zalabak to bring down some of the young fellows to stay with him so he'd have some one to talk to. He had a big library of every book or magazine published against religion of all kinds. He would order his guest to read his books while he gave a steady lecture on the subject. They bluffed the reading but they had to listen. After a few days of that and eating with the chipmunks they would invent an excuse to go home. They were in constant fear of those loaded guns. This story was told by Joe Fuka and others.

Joe Zalabak, the adopted son of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Zalabak, was a small boy who often went with his dad to call on Tainter. The old man was quite fond of him and would take him on his knee and tell stories about the war and how some of his fingers had been shot off.

On a November morning they went over to see how Dave was doing. They found the dog which had been shot. Little Joe hurried into the house ahead of his Dad and this is what he saw, as told by Joe.

"Old Dave on the bed, the rifle beside him, his big toe caught in the trigger, the muzzle of the gun under his jaw. He had pulled the trigger with his toe and his brains were hanging from the ceiling."

David Lowry Tainter had become tired of living.

The preceding story was printed in the Rice Lake Chronotype during the summer of 1970. It brought forth many favorable comments from old timers. But one important story had not been told. Old Dave had a violin which he loved to play. When company called on him (especially the Stout children) he would play many tunes, and name each one as he went along. They all sounded the same to the children, just an old jig tune.

One day Bert Zettle was walking from Rice Lake to his home in Meteor, darkness overtook him. He turned in to Dave's house, hoping to lie down and rest until morning. Dave had another idea, he played his violin all night with intervals of lecturing against the Bible. At break of day he gave Zettle a cup of coffee and said "Now be on your way."

Mrs. Gertie Saxby told of her childhood days at Loveland Corners. One day her father Gilbert Johnson took his family and the Ritchie girls with the team and wagon over the tote roads to pick black berries. They arrived at Dave's place and he treated them fine. He took the children into his basement and gave each one a glass of cold milk. At that time he kept cows and made his own butter.

She recalls hearing the story that when Dave went away to the Civil War he was engaged to a nice young woman. When he returned he found she had married another man. That is what caused him to go far off into the woods where he seldom saw a woman.

Chapter XLI

Early Life in Wilson Valley

This area of Rusk county was in the town of Atlanta until 1913 when the town of Wilson was created. Joseph Jones became the first chairman. It is claimed that Jones came before the railroads had reached Birchwood in 1901. He took land in either section 4 or 5 next to the Sawyer county line. He erected a fair-sized house. The Spring of 1903 Mike Skar and family moved from Iowa and put up a log cabin near Jones. The Tom Skar family came directly from Ringerike, Norway, to Birchwood aboard the Soo train November 7, 1905. They were met by Mike with a team and wagon and taken over the worst road one could imagine. Mike had built a "lumber" house for Tom near Jones.

The first year the children walked through the woods to the Birchwood grade school. They could neither talk nor understand the English language. Mike soon moved his family to a cabin on what is known as the Telitz farm. He was so anxious for a school nearby that he gave an acre of land for the site. Before the building was put up Mike's family had moved to the village and Tom's children were the only ones in the school with Gladys Maddox as the teacher in 1908-'09. The next year Hazel Joiner of Bruce was the teacher



The Skar schoolhouse.

(now Mrs. Harry Bartlett of Exeland). The teachers boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Jones and walked more than a mile through the woods and must have built their own fires as there was no one living nearby.

Tom Skar soon purchased 160 acres in section 5 next to the county line. In his spare time he was building a house and barn. In the meantime he got a job as blacksmith with the Arpin camps.

The Carl Edwardson family came from Eau Claire in 1911 and bought land on the north branch of Pigeon Creek south of the school house. They raised a family of 11 children and built a house big enough for all of them. Someone of the family has lived in it ever since.

Louis Mykeska from Owatonna, Minnesota purchased 80 acres in section 6 in 1916; the youngest son George still lives on it. Joseph and Marie Ruprich and his brother Frank stepped over the line into Sawyer county and bought the Lou Jensen place.

Ernest Foster was a land agent from Stillwater who got his parents to take land in the southwest corner of section 4 where they built a large square house. After they tired of the deal and moved away, it was rented to many families until it burned down.

E. J. Walport of St. Paul was pressured into buying land by Ernest Foster. Walport and his son-in-law, John Egerstaffer of Mankato, came and took timber land in the northeast corner of the town of Wilson. They had hard picking and moved around a bit. Egerstaffer at last bought the Tom Skar farm which is now the Sauer place. Walport moved away. August Wagner also had land in that corner which he tried to clear.

Martin Papousek came from Iowa in 1915 and bought 80 acres near the foot of Break Neck Hill. He and his son put up good buildings and the family came to live there. But Mr. Papousek died in 1917 which changed the plans. His wife went back to Iowa to live with a daughter and Rose married Bill Sirek and remained in Wisconsin.

Now let's go west from the school house. The first farm was opened up by Frank Pojeta who was quite a dairyman. When Old John Jilek and sons "W.C." and John, jr. came in about 1912 they were taken out by the land agent, John Martin, who showed them the nice valley in section 6 where a K. S. & Company camp had been located and some buildings remained. They liked the looks of it and moved in. They put up buildings of their own at the north end. When "W.C." was married to Marie Pups in 1916 he had a new house built on his land down in the corn. When John, jr. was married to Ann Fuka he took over the home place and built a little home for his parents on his south line.

Frank Hall was living on the land in the far northwest corner of the town. For some reason he wanted to sell out and Charles J. Jilek was wanting to buy so they made a deal. Charles had married Marie Janisek who lived in the Lincoln school district and took her to live on that farm in 1927 and they are still on it. Their land is a part of the "Four Corners" around which this history is centered. We are told that many of the 40's around this corner are short by several acres due to a miscalculation of the surveyors. The west boundary of these farms is the Rusk-Barron county line.

Robert Mingaye brought his bride to a bit of woodland in section 7 in 1917, and became the first rural mail carrier out of Birchwood in order to make a living. The John Telitz family came from Chicago to live on their place east of the school house in 1920.

Here are the names of some of the men who went out in that area to cut logs and cord wood in the early 1920's. They built shacks for their wives and perhaps a few children to live in until they had exhausted the supply of timber, then they pulled up stakes and left. Squire, Johnson, Moe, Villiard, Craig, Boyd, Hathaway, Brown and sons, Severson, Burton, Baldwin and H. T. Heyer. Howard and Mary Brown came a bit later and stuck it out longer in behind Break Neck Hill.

This little community banded together to donate labor and materials to build a community hall on land donated by H. T. Heyer. They had merry times when they got together. The hall was later purchased by Fred Ludy of Turtle Lake and moved across the road and north of the schoolhouse where he converted it into a cheese factory and living quarters for the family. During this time they lived in one of the shacks left by the choppers. The settlers in Pribram and the valley had established small herds of cows and things went very well at the factory until a very cold night in the winter of 1926. The whole thing burned and the family narrowly escaped with their lives and made their way to the Telitz home where they found shelter. This factory operated about two years.

Chapter XLII

The Pribram Settlement

Before the Arpin Company had finished logging in Rusk county they were planning on how to get rid of their cut-over land. They had observed that the people from Europe made the best settlers, as they were used to hardships and would work harder to clear the land. They got in contact with the Catholic Extension Service at Chicago and a priest named Father Hynek who was looking for a chance to bring together people from his homeland of Bohemia and make a settlement. From what he was told he was sure this was the ideal place for the hills would remind them of the homeland, "Pribram."

Father Hynek's sister was married to a man named Jim Zalabak and they were to accompany him to the spot and help develop the project. It was agreed that the first thing should be to build a church, a rectory and a school-house, then advertise in all the Bohemian papers all over the country about the cheap land and these advantages.

By 1911 a site on high land surrounded by the Blue Hills was picked for the church etc. and carpenters from Birchwood were sent out to put up the buildings. At that time Jim Morey was operating a lumber yard and no doubt supplied the materials. A large house for Zalabak to live in was also in the project. He was given two teams and was to take care of the needs of the newcomers until they had houses of their own to live in.

In 1910 the Arpin Company sent old Ezra Dakins, a Civil War veteran and a stone mason, out to be the summer caretaker at Camp 12 on Pigeon Creek. He had two sons, Ervin and Victor, who became interested in the area. They purchased land up the valley east from the camp, and moved onto it in 1912. A small cabin was built for Ezra and wife on Ervin's land. Louis Schumann and family arrived about that time and chose land north of the Dakins. They were the only American families to go out there for many years. They were very kind and helpful to the Bohemian people as they moved in, teaching them the language and the laws of this land.

Charles Jilek, sr. who had lived in Dakota and Canada and had gone back to Phillips where he had been fooled into buying a "stone pile," read of this wonderful place where a church had been established. He came down on the train and was taken out by Eastman, the agent at Birchwood. He asked for a shovel so he could do some digging. He found it was pretty good in the valley but later found that where his land went up onto higher ground there were plenty of stones. He bought 80 acres for \$1800. The lower land was covered with big pine stumps, the high land with hardwood trees too small to suit Arpin loggers.

Jilek went back and soon brought his family. He hired Frank Mathews who had a team and wagon to haul his furniture and family out to the place. They lived in one of the buildings at Camp 12 until a small house and barn were built of rough lumber from the Birchwood Mill. The trip out there in May, 1912, will never be forgotten by the sons in the family. It was over an old logging trail and walking was more comfortable than riding. As there were no bridges over Pigeon Creek they had to wade it. In due time the land

was cleared and good buildings were erected. He lived there for 45 years when he retired to a home in the village.

Joseph Gargulak and family, also of Phillips, soon followed Jilek and lived in the camp office until he purchased land around the camp and put up new buildings. His grandson, John V. Gargulak, has lived on the same place until he recently built a new home across the road.

Anthony Evitch who was working on the Panama Canal read of this Garden of Eden in north Wisconsin. He traveled up here with his family in 1913 and bought land on the road towards Murphy Dam.

Emil Schultz who was working in the coal mines of Illinois got interested in this country and brought his family here in 1914 to live on the land next south of Evitch. Gus Freetag and Frank Mathews hauled lumber out for some of these families and built a house of two or three rooms for them.

Mr. and Mrs. Schultz celebrated their golden wedding on that farm in 1956. Mr. Schultz died in the spring of 1962 and his wife that fall, the only couple among those first settlers to stay on their farm together for 48 years. Their son Frank still lives on the farm.

Frank Haas who was working in the coal mines at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, also read in his Bohemian paper about this place where there was a church and school and lots of land. He put his family and worldly goods on the train and headed for Birchwood, Wisconsin in 1914. The understanding was that a settler could have free board with the Zalabaks until they found the land they wanted and had a house to live in. After a few days he was presented with a bill for board and lodging. That made him angry and he moved his family into a trapper's cabin he had found out in the woods. It was very small but the 10 children found a place to sleep on the floor. The older boys soon built a lean-to of poles onto the cabin and covered it with pine boughs. This was a wee bit better than the bleak outdoors.

Haas followed a narrow path through the valley to the end of Hemlock Lake where he crossed on the long, red, cattle bridge and on to Rice Lake where he purchased a team of good horses and a cow and a wagon from Herman Friess. To get home he would have to come up through Angus and across the first bridge built at the Narrows and through Birchwood. That was really a long way around to get home. He found land in a valley southwest of the church where he built a house all by himself. There was a flowing spring close by. He put many additions onto the house and built several small barns. There was snow on the ground so they could not see all the stones they had on their land.

Frank Fuka and Frank Paulus had been neighbors in Prairie du Chien. They too decided to come north. They bought land in the Lawler Creek valley east of the church and paid \$20.00 an acre. They managed to clear about half of their land. Mr. Cashman settled in that valley also after the death of the Hermit at Buck's Lake, for he fixed up one of the camp buildings to live in and in due time he owned most of the land around that lake. He was a white-haired dignified man whom everyone addressed as Mr. Cashman. Quite a different character from Old Man Tainter.

Joseph Robotka the "First" and Jacob Sirek were living at Tabor, Minne-

sota, which was prairie country with no fuel to burn and the wind blew all the time. They read about this marvelous land deal in Wisconsin and a church already on the location. The men came right over in 1914. Robotka purchased 120 acres away back in a lovely valley southwest of the church. Sirek chose his north of Murphy Dam. Neither came to settle for some time. Robotka lived in town and worked at the mill most of the time. His young folks tried to make a living out on the farm. Son Joe had a broken-down race horse and a two-wheeled cart which he spun around the country with. The fellows who had to walk to the mill to work sure did envy him.

Jicha is another family which lived down in that area. Freetag and Mathews built a house for Jim Glaser across the road from Camp 12. It was considered quite modern in that day. After it stood vacant for several years Mr. and Mrs. John W. Gargulak fixed it up so they could move into it in 1949. They kept right on fixing it until it is very comfortable and they are now retired and taking life easy.

Going east from the Victor Dakins farm we cross the main road and find where the Bastys families came to live in 1918. There were Victor and Frank who each had a small home and their mother, Mrs. Anna Basty, divided her time among her children.

Mr. Jansky lived around the bend on the county line road. He was a carpenter who built the new Wilson Center schoolhouse in 1916.

Now you will ask what became of the schoolhouse which Arpin built. It seems that Father Hynek had appointed two women to be the teachers. When the state heard about this they investigated and found that neither of them was a qualified teacher, so they said "no." During the first year very few children had moved into the area. A teacher kept school in Victor Dakins' house. The next year the men built a frame building in Victor's yard. It was big enough to accommodate the pupils until 1916 when a new site was picked in section 21 owned by Zalabak who sold the district one acre in the corner across from the church. A nice modern building was put up and soon was full to overflowing. At this time the name Wilson Center was attached to that school and Wilson Valley to the other one which up to this time had been called the Skar school. Many of the Bohemian families had settled in that district.

Now that the town of Wilson had been established they needed a town hall. They purchased an acre of land from Victor Dakins on the Break-Neck road. The little old schoolhouse was put onto rollers and some horses pulled it to the new site.

The church and rectory were built in the southwest corner of section 16. Across the section line and a bit to the east was Zalabak's big boarding house. Farther out but in a hollow was the building which had been planned for a school. Soon the young people wanted a dance hall and it became the social center. They did not like the location. Again the men used rollers under the building and by horse power it was moved and placed in front of the town hall with a connection between to enable the women to serve lunches at the parties. The young folks from the village joined them for a big time.

The first orchestra was composed of the Haas boys, Louie on either the violin or the clarinet, Frank on the trombone and Joe on the drums, also the Sirek boys on any instrument that came handy. These fellows could play by

note. As time went on others teamed up for the music, but most of them played by ear. It made no difference if it was by eye or ear, that music tickled the toes of the weary, lonely people, and made life a bit easier. If anyone put up a new building with a rough floor, the gang was invited to come and smooth it down, which they did regardless of the sole leather which it cost them.

They enjoyed baseball and would pick up teams of married men against singles or perhaps the young fellows against a girls' team. They used big rocks to mark the bases and pity the fellow who slid into base against the rock. There was an open field east of the Telitz farm where the Foster family had lived which they used, or any other field depending on the harvest of the crops. The team which lost had to buy a keg of beer and that night they would gather at the dance hall for a party and refreshments. Life was not all hard work out in Pribram.

A bit more about the church, which had taken the name "Our Lady of the Mount." Several of the families had come from the same area in Bohemia where a church had been set on a high hill. It had become a shrine where great pilgrimages went to pray. It became so famous that a painter from Rome came and painted a great picture of it.. Some of the Pribram families joined forces and sent for a copy of the picture "Our Lady of the Mount" and it was hung above the altar. It was an inspiration to all present.

A huge bell was hung in the high steeple. It was tolled at six a.m., at noon, and at six p.m. It could be heard for many miles. It saved the lives of many lost hunters or woodsmen. If someone did not return home on time, a man would go to the church and toll that bell until the lost man came out of the woods.



The old church bell.

The priest's housekeeper was Mary Basty. His secretary was Alvina Pups whose sister Marie came to visit her. W. C. Jilek, a dashing young man, fell in love with her and she with him. They were the first couple to get married in that church. And raised 13 children. The Frank Haas family numbered 12, but Mr. and Mrs. Frank Paulus beat all of them with 14.

The town of Wilson is not divided by a lake but by Break Neck Hill. It

is the farthest north division of the Blue Hills. The first trail was made around the east end of it and another to the west. The latter was alright in winter when it was frozen. Pigeon Creek which empties into Red Cedar Lake has two branches; one meanders around on the north side of the hill, the other on the south side. They join forces down in the Smith meadows. In a dry season it is a very small creek, but look out when it rains.

The most direct route into Birchwood was to build a road on the line between Barron and Rusk counties. After they had town officers of their own in 1914 the first thing they did was make roads. Frank Haas, the road supervisor, insisted that the only way to get across that meadow was to make a corduroy by placing small logs close together across the road and covering them with dirt. Horses on low scrapers called slushers brought in the dirt and at the same time made ditches on the sides of the road. That road is still passable although not used much now.

Then to accommodate the people living to the east, they made a road on the section line over Break Neck Hill. It was hard on the horses and far worse on the early cars, but fine for toboggan parties.

In late years the county changed the location of Hiway F from Break Neck Hill. They extended the road from the Edwardson farm southwest and cut a swath about 10 feet deep into the hill with an easy grade from each side and with a curve which joins the old road east of the Gargulak buildings. It has been blacktopped as far as the schoolhouse which is now the town hall.

Hemlock Creek and its many tributaries were connected years ago by the Knapp, Stout Company to aid them in getting the pine logs out of this territory. They named it Murphy Dam. (Pat Murphy had a camp there in 1882-83). In 1937 the State Conservation commission put in a much larger dam which created the Murphy flowage making a 180 acre body of water where an experiment is going on in fishing. There are no seasons, size or bag limits in effect. This is all in the town of Wilson. Tom Lawler had a camp in section 15. The creek is named for him.

Back in 1946 Rusk county hired Victor Basty to plant Norway pines on each side of highway F for a quarter mile leading north from the checking station. There are several rows of trees planted close together, in some places extending back for many rods. They are now tall beautiful trees which are being trimmed and thinned out. At the same time jack pines were planted on the north shore of the flowage where they later established a beautiful park.

The first fire tower to be erected "Around the Four Corners" was in 1932 on the line between sections 9 and 10. This one was 50 feet high. G. E. De Jung was the first watcher and served until 1951 when it was removed. A tower 100 feet tall was erected on a hill in section 19 where the watcher has a much greater view.

We were reminded that when the Pribram settlers were ready to build roads that more modern machinery was available. Do you remember the first road graders? Well, they had one where one man stood on a platform at the back end and controlled the big blade with a steering wheel. Another man sat on a seat up front and drove a six horse team. If he could not handle them as well as a two horse team he was fired. This was the method used to smooth out the road after the stumps and rocks were removed.

The Sirek boys had gone to Cedar Lake farms picking up potatoes. They told such stories about the fine crops being raised over there that the whole family moved and made a settlement of their own in the southwest corner of the town.

Joseph Robotka, jr. who was living in that far out valley near Bolger Dam was courting Agnes Evitch. They set the wedding date for May 8, 1923, at St. John's church in Birchwood. It snowed during the night, then turned to rain. Joe put on his new suit and a rain coat and new shoes but no rubbers. He had to walk the whole way and his shoes were soaking wet when he stood at the altar. They returned to the wedding feast at the Evitch home in another snowstorm, a day to be remembered.

The next year a forest fire came up from Weyerhauser and took his barn and hay stacks. The house was saved by his sister who climbed a ladder with pails of barrel salt and spread it on the roof. That was enough for him. He moved into town in 1925 and has worked at the mill ever since. Even now after retirement he still oils machinery.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Paulus decided they would be better off if they moved over to the Robotka valley and there they stayed until their children were either married or off working. They retired in 1946 and moved over to Haugen where they had many relatives and friends.

The Fuka family moved in 1928 to land north of the Sucker Creek bridge in the town of Cedar Lake. Joe told us that he bought the first Model T in 1916 and paid \$300.00 for it. It was a 1912 model, second hand. He also had a small tractor to pull a common plow, and another man had to hold the handles. The other farmers had beautiful horses and were willing to continue.

When a new teacher arrived at the Wilson Center School the young fellows always tried to see which one could win her heart and hand. Roy Dakins was the lucky guy when he married Mabel Christiansen of Luck, January 1, 1924. They set up housekeeping on the farm where their son Richard now lives.

It was the other way around when Ray Smith of Ladysmith came to teach and he picked Ruby Dakins for his wife.

The people lived high in the summer, as the woods were full of berries of all kinds. One year the bumper crop was the long blackberries. Folks from all the surrounding country came with wagons, buggies and cars loaded with milk cans and every bucket they could find and took them out filled to the top. So many vehicles crowded into the Haas yard that Mr. Haas could not get his team and wagon out.

Father Hynek's health failed and he left the community very suddenly. Then the church became a mission of the Birchwood parish until the start of World War II. Since then no service has been held in it. The roads were better and the people had cars and could get to St. John's church. The rectory was sold to Eugene Guggemos who wrecked it carefully and built himself a house out on the county line road. In 1944 the church was sold to Ray Schuman who dismantled it carefully and used the lumber on his farm. The painting of "Our Lady of the Mount" was sent to the Benedictine monastery at Lisle, Illinois. The huge bell was brought to St. John's church where it was placed on a standard and has been in use ever since.

The children in the community were growing up and moving away, and there came a day when it was decided to bus the Wilson Valley students over to the Center school.

During the summer of 1948 the Wilson Valley and the Center schools were annexed to the Birchwood school. The children were bussed in to the village that fall. After that the town of Wilson used the schoolhouse for their town hall. They sold the old building to Bob Widiker and he moved it onto a lot in the village as the starter for his home. Nobody seems to know what became of the old dance hall.

Excuse us if we have missed some old timer's name. Many people have been involved in the compiling of this chapter; we have done our best.

We are happy to announce that Mrs. Louis Schumann is now 93 years old and lives with a niece in Iowa. She is very alert and active. Her life in the early days of Pribram did not seem to hurt her at all. She is the only one left of the earliest settlers.

Let's close this story with the "happy time" they had while the first telephone line was in operation. A dozen or more patrons were on the one line which the Wise Company built through the Valley and Center. Imagine if you can the combinations of longs and shorts which buzzed over the bells on those big wall phones. It was some trick to turn the crank so they were spaced correctly. You could count the receivers coming off the hooks and you knew the neighbors were enjoying the conversation. But during the flu epidemic of 1918 that line helped to save lives.

Chapter XLIII

Rebuilding at The Island

Mr. Stout found to his dismay that he had made a grave error when he ordered all the first buildings on the island made with the bark left on the outside portion of the white pine logs. But he had wanted them to look very rustic. He never dreamed that worms and insects would get under the bark and eat their way through to the inside.

During the three years when a large crew of carpenters were working on the Upper and Lower Stout Farms, he was laying plans for changes to be made at the island.

He sent to Sandpoint, Idaho, for a train load of good cedar logs. They were of uniform size and peeled before shipping. Every article that has been written about these logs has called them red cedar. Allison tells us that "red cedar does not grow tall and straight. Those logs were just the best cedar logs grown in Idaho."

They were shipped on a special train to the Narrows, arriving just after the regular morning train went up the line. A big crew of men was there for the unloading. The men unlocked the chains and cut the stakes and rolled the logs one by one into the water. Another crew forced them through the passageway under the two railroad trestles. Another crew bound them into a boom. The engine was kept busy spotting the cars, as it took about half an



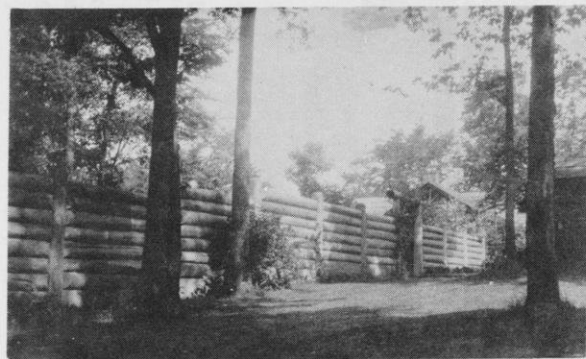
North side of Stout Island about 1918. Most of the living quarters had been rebuilt. The shops and big boat house are down near the lake.

hour to unload each one. The job was done before the regular train came back from the north in the afternoon. The Stout boys were there with big launches to pull the boom to the southeast corner of the big island, where it was tied up until after the first snow in the fall.

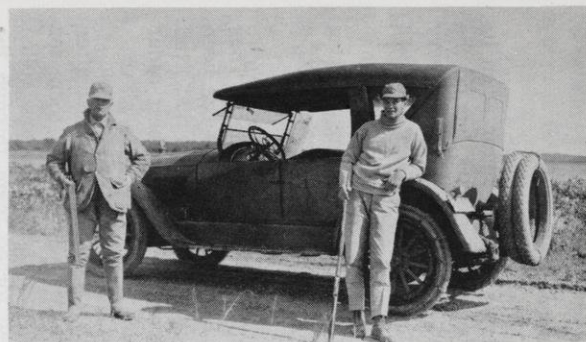
The reason for waiting for the snow, was so that no sand would be ground into the logs. Teams from the farm were brought over on a barge to pull the logs up onto dry land.



View from the South of old buildings on Stout Island, taken about 1914. Both the "Rec House" and the bowling alley extension, which can be seen on the right, were built of the new logs.



Log fence between front lawn and maids' quarters and laundry.



F. D. Stout and son Allison, ready for a hunting trip.



Allison's cabin, made of the new logs.

To our great surprise we learned from Allison that the first building erected with these precious logs was a bath house at the far western end of the complex. It contained two rooms and he well remembers waiting in line for his turn.

F.D. had a grand plan for the new dining room.. Much has been told about the 4-inch plank in the floor. But did you know that they were made from the logs taken from the old dam at Birchwood? When F.D. sold the riparian rights on his land around Balsam, Red Cedar and Hemlock lakes to the Chippewa Light and Power Company, he put in the proviso that he could have any of the white pine logs that he wanted from the Birchwood and Red Cedar dams when the power company built modern dams. The company did build the new dam at Birchwood in 1911. F.D. had the better logs hauled by sleds to the island to start the drying process.

About a year later they were hauled to George Glaze's sawmill one fourth mile north of Mikana. They were sawed into 4-inch plank of random width, along with no small amount of bickering and some hard feelings. To settle the matter F.D. agreed to buy or replace any circle saws ruined by spikes left in the old logs, and also agreed to pay medical expenses if any of the sawyers was hurt by sawteeth that tended to explode out of the rig when a square 1 inch spike was encountered. These planks were edge-ripped by hand. They were laid loose in the new dining room. As they were still very wet the floor was turned over every few months to allow them to dry without too much warping. It was not until 1917 or 1918 that these planks were fitted into the floor as it is today.. This goes to illustrate to what length Mr. Stout would go to get what he wanted, regardless of the cost.

To match that story here is another one. This concerns the two carloads of redwood timbers shipped from California to be used as beams and paneling in the dining room. These cars were spotted at the Angus side track. They arrived at the time of an early thaw and the snow was gone and the ice getting weak. The workmen had to use wagons instead of sleighs, because they could be stretched out longer.

The orders were that no sharp instruments could be used on those timbers. They were lifted by hand; ropes, not chains, bound them tightly to the wagons. When loaded the three wagons struck across the fields to where there was easy access to the lake. The boss told the drivers, "If you break through the ice, jump for your lives and let the teams go down, the timbers and wagons will float." Olaf Olson of Birchwood who was one of the drivers reported that they got across safely, but no money could hire him to do it again.

The fireplace in the dining room is a beauty. It is faced with carved gray stone imported from Italy. Allison explains that the beautiful carving atop one of the beams came from Germany and he believes the Black Forest. It would seem that Mr. Stout put the very best of everything into the dining room. It is truly a work of art.

In this rebuilding process the workmen removed the old foundations and built up with modern cement and stones. The dining room and living room were rebuilt to be the same dimensions and style as before only the windows are much larger. In the original living room a fireplace had been built of pink quarry rock from the Hardscrabble hills. It was left undisturbed and new foundations and walls built around it. Later Dick Cronholm laid an extension

of one foot of rock to the hearth. It is gorgeous. The old white pine beams in the original ceiling were used in the new. There is a wide breezeway between these identical buildings, the roof of which goes up to a point. On an iron plate on the back doorstep was inscribed "Isle of Happy Days." The front entrance is of cement with side walls and the elaborate bell tower of split cobbles.

The butler's pantry and the kitchen to the east of the dining room were among the early buildings to be reconstructed. There are places to store quantities of food and a huge refrigerator.. The large work cabinet in the center of the kitchen was covered with a solid slab of marble. To the south of the kitchen is the servants' dining room and also a room to store all the linens.

From the living room you step through a door onto a narrow screened-in porch which extends past the master bedroom and the daughters' bedrooms. (Two rooms on first floor and two upstairs.)

There is still another cabin, this one for guests. It also had two bedrooms upstairs. The stairway in the girls' cabin led to all the rooms upstairs.

Allison's cabin is a cute little two story house off a bit to the north of the complex, and Harry's cabin is off to the south.

To the east of the kitchen is another breezeway, beyond which is a large two story building for the maids. Attached to it is a huge laundry room. To protect the activities of the maids from the gaze of guests, a high log wall was extended from the kitchen to the south for several rods. It was made of hardwood logs, the only ones used on the island. This has now been removed.



Mrs. Chappelle visited Stout Island in 1968, and was thrilled with its beauty. On the left is the living room, front steps and breezeway; the dining room on the right. Note the high and wide windows in these new buildings.

A woodshed as big as a barn was behind the maids' cabin. Fred Boetcher had a log cabin near the east shore of the island. We must not forget the recreation hall, better known as the "Rec House." It is down by the lake to the south and east of the spacious front lawn. The large room will seat 200

people and often was well filled for church services. Mrs. Stout and some others around the lake were of the Christian Science faith.

Everybody was welcome to come and they tied their boats to the big barge which was anchored to the shore. It was the big social event of the week for the people around Mikana and they surely enjoyed it.

A billiard table alcove is off the main room. An extension was built out to the east side, just wide enough for a one lane bowling alley, which served double duty as a pistol range.

Indoor plumbing was installed in all the new buildings, but the pipes were not laid below the frost level, one reason why few folks visited the island after cold weather set in. Fred's cabin was winterized and the water pipes laid below the frost level. He was the winter caretaker.

There were at least ten bathrooms and as many fireplaces, and now there is steam heat.

The big laundry was a busy place. One woman was kept busy just washing and ironing. The first machine was turned by hand power. The water was heated on a wood-burning range, where the old style flatirons with the metal handles were heated. You had to use a holder while you ironed.

Electricity was generated at the island, but as time went on and more gadgets were used there was not sufficient power to operate them. It was at this time, after the new buildings were going up, that F.D. ordered a huge spool of cable to be delivered to Mikana by the Soo. It was loaded on a wagon by manpower and brought over by team to the landing at the Upper Farm. Again it was moved by manpower onto a barge and towed across the lake by two launches with Harry and Allison operating the motors. The cable was unwound from the spool and sunk to the bottom of the lake as they slowly made their way to the island. Allison described the proceeding as "F.D. giving orders right and left." After that they were connected with the power line from Rice Lake. The laundry was then provided with modern machinery.

In the year of 1917 lightning struck the big barn at the Lower Farm and burned it to the ground. The carpenters dropped the work at the island and went down there and quickly built another barn, which many years later also burned. It took at least six years before F.D. was satisfied with the island. Then he turned his attention to the golf course and sent the crews over to the east shore.

Chapter XLIV

Boats at Stout's Island

No story about the Stout family is complete without talking about the boats—big and small. The first launch was "The Sportsman" which F.D. purchased at the sports show at the old Coliseum in Chicago. They had need for a barge; the old steamer "Lou Tainter" which had towed the booms down the lakes for the K. S. Company, was half sunk on the shore near Hemlock Lake. They salvaged it, the cabin was removed and given to a farmer near Dobie to be used as a greenhouse. The hull was used to carry freight from the Narrows to the island.

Then a large barge was brought in which they named "Tiny" because it was 20 by 80 feet made of steel. A fancy launch named "Clara S." for Mrs. Stout proved to be too large to be practical, was scrapped in about 1918. The "Calista" named for the second daughter was a beautiful launch but was disposed of about 1925 and replaced soon afterwards by one named "Calistatoo."

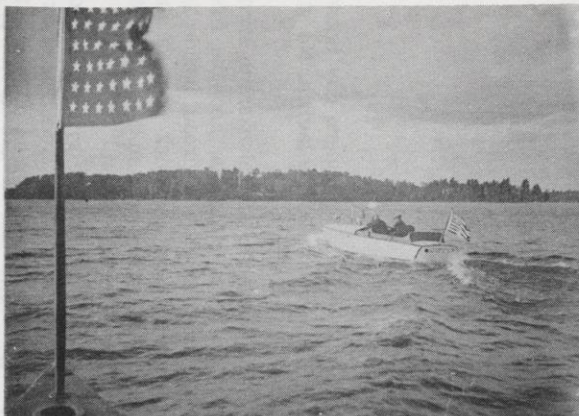
They needed a powerful launch to pull those barges up and down the lake. The fore and aft decks were square for that purpose. It was named the "Hurry-back." A friend of the family furnished the origin of that name. It seems that Mrs. Stout had the habit of calling after members of the family "Hurry back"



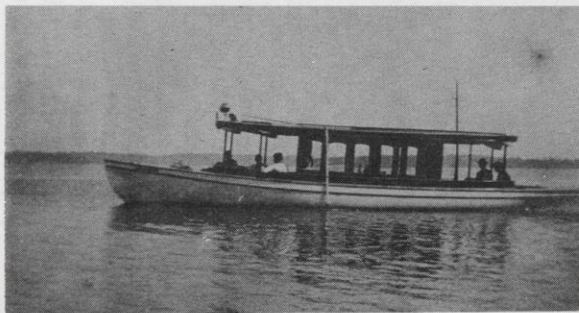
Boat house with office and balcony upstairs.

when they were about to leave with a boat. To tease her they gave this slow boat that name.

The apple of F.D.'s eye was the "Jiffy" which was new in about 1915. It was an early model of the popular and present day V bottom. It could make 32 mph, which was something in those days. When going at top speed it made big waves and F.D. seemed to enjoy teasing folks by rocking their boats when they were out for pleasure or fishing. Some people were frightened



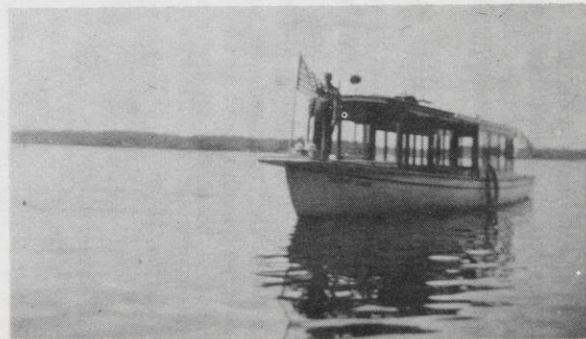
One of the Stout boats, "Jiffy" in 1917.



The Stout boat, "Calista."



Trap shooting on the Lou Tainter barge. Mrs. C. D. Moon, F. D. Stout and Allison.



Gus on the "Hurryback."

and said some strong words to him, even threatened him if he did not stop it. He was more considerate after that, but if he found a fisherman too close to his island he made a bee line for him, circled his boat trying to turn it over. He was told that he neither owned the lake nor the fish that were in it. When the Stouts purchased the Cedar Lake Inn they acquired the Neptune launch which they promptly dubbed "The Tub." There were also numerous row boats.

Boat Houses at The Island

The main island contains 16 acres. The banks are high on all sides but the east, the only place where horses and vehicles can climb from the water or ice. A small boathouse was placed at the east end. A good-sized one was built at the west end and stairs led up from it.

After they procured the fancy "Calista" launch they discovered it was too large for this boat house. This made it necessary to quickly build the elaborate boathouse on the north shore. The "Calistatoo" is up out of the



F. D. Stout's office. This huge desk is still there.

water in that house now. (I saw it). It is much like the modern day house-boat, with glass windows and seats around the edge inside the launch. No sun or wind need strike anyone.

To the east against the high bank are the carpenter and blacksmith shops and storage rooms. A big dock connects all these buildings, and the first wood stairway goes up from the shops, with the little railroad beside it, on which many tons of materials were drawn up to the back door of the complex on a little flatcar. In later years another stairs was built to the west of these. It has a steel railing and goes up in a zig-zag fashion.

Mr. Stout needed a quiet office for he had much business to attend to. He always had a fist full of letters and telegrams to send off from Rice Lake each evening. A second story was placed over the center section of the boat-house, and the front big room was his office. His mammoth roll-top desk and heater stove are still there. A balcony was built out on the front where he could put up his 20 power telescope on a tripod and view the activities on the lake and the mainland. Now, they had three slips for big launches.

Chapter XLV

Early Day Helpers at The Island

Allison Stout has given the following descriptions of the local people who worked at the island while he was a boy.

"Hans Haugen: One of nature's gentlemen if there ever was one. A very well-self-educated man. When he came to work at the island he had recently arrived from Norway and he never lost his heavy Norwegian accent.

"He had learned carpentry in the old country, and guided the men when they rebuilt the cabins, showing them how to fit the logs together. The dining table, many chairs, tables, etc., all of exceptional beauty, are the work of his hands.

"After Gus Boll died, Hans did practically all the maintenance work around the island as well as a great deal at Lone Pine Farm. He also became a good plumber and boatsman.

"Mrs. Hans started out as only an emergency maid or cook's helper. Gradually worked more and more and became head cook after Minnie's



Hans Haugen, Mrs. Stout's right-hand man, and his pets. The log fence and dining room for the help is in the background.

retirement. A job she kept very successfully for many years. A very fine woman.

"Minnie Kerber came to work at the island from a farm about a mile

west of Loveland Corners. Started as a helper in the laundry. Went on by steps to become a fine cook. Famous for her "Minnie Pickles" (tiny cucumber ones). Her brother Herman came to work for us, too. (The Stout children called her Minnie but her true name was Emelia).

"Fred Boetcher, originally a teamster for K.S. & Co., then farm teamster at Cedar Lake Farm until the Lone Pine Farm was built from 1909 to 1912. He came to the island around '15 as gardener, caretaker, etc. Fell in love



Ellen Nelson, the cook; Fred Boetcher, maintenance man. Maids' quarters are in background.

with Minnie Kerber the cook and they were married about five years later, and they held down the winter caretaker job. Fred had a deep suspicion of banks. He squirreled his pay away somewhere, perhaps under a stump, in cash. No matter how much cash anyone needed Fred could produce it at a few minutes notice. As he never spent a cent for anything but snooze he must have had quite a sum hidden by the time he and Minnie retired.

"Clara Folstad, a niece of Mrs. Haugen, came as a girl and worked up through the ranks. In her last years at the island Mother could not have kept house without Clara, Mrs. Hans, Hans and Herman. Clara married Dan Dinga and now lives north of Rice Lake..

"F.D.'s special crony was Gus Boll of Rice Lake. He spent most of his time winter and summer at the island. Originally a boss millright for K. S. & Company he came in the early 1900's. A genius at keeping machinery going, sometimes in a rather unorthodox way. Drove cars before the days of the "Chauffeur." Drove F.D. on his nightly trip to Rice Lake with the day's mail. Also trips all over northern Wisconsin. Chief cook and bottle washer for the ghastly family picnics that came up every two weeks or so, (several carloads of family, guests, etc.). The only person who paid no attention to F.D. when he felt like it, such as a disagreement about the best place to eat when on their trips. He would win out. One and all they were just a part of our great family."

During all the years at the island many men, women and girls found employment there. It is impossible to mention all of them. It was Carl Plain's special task to keep the lawns in shape.

The following amusing story about F.D. Stout was told by Henry Neck of Chetek. At this time Stout was driving a Buick six passenger sedan of about a 1921 model. Of course Gus Boll was at the wheel.

Now as to whether they were on their way to Rice Lake or home, is not clear, but a farmer by the name of Cook who lived near Long Lake came along driving an Essex 4 cylinder made by the Hudson Car Manufacturing Company.



Some of the staff employed at the island in 1918.

It was capable of higher speed than the old Buick and he up and passed Mr. Stout. This infuriated F.D. and he shouted "Gus, you pass that fellow." So Gus stepped on the gas and away they flew, but there was a sharp curve in the road, and poor Gus could not make it and into the ditch they went. Two of the wheels which were made with wooden spokes came to grief.

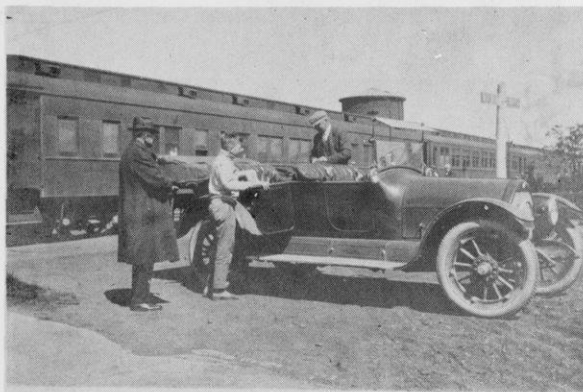
How they got back to Rice Lake was not explained, but F.D. had a way of getting out of his troubles. They arrived at Ted Field's garage where young Henry Neck was a mechanic, and F.D. asked if they had new wheels which would fit his car. Henry said "No." But said F.D., "I've had a wreck and my family must never know it. How long will it take to get new ones?" He was told that it would be at least two weeks. Henry was doing some fast thinking. He said, "I know a man down the street who has a car just like yours. Maybe he would lend you two wheels until yours arrive."

Henry was sent off on a run to see Harry Whitney who ran a clothing store. He dashed in and asked if he would lend two wheels off his car to Mr. Stout. He suggested that they could put the car up on blocks, and also that he was to charge rent for the wheels. Whitney asked how much. "Oh, I'd stick him up for \$5 a day," answered Henry. The deal was closed and Henry went back with the wheels and F.D. was delighted, and went home with a clear conscience.

Both Whitney and Mr. Stout became much perturbed when the time dragged on to more than two weeks without new wheels. But Henry told Whitney, "Never mind, that car is making you more money with two wheels than it would with four so why worry."

The new wheels arrived, F.D. paid the rent with a smile, and everyone was happy, and Henry has lived to tell the story.

It was not all play for the Stout children during the summer. A tutor was brought up each year to hold classes on the second island in a cabin which at other times was called the cook-house. Later, after they owned the Cedar Lake Inn they invited some of the neighbor children to join them with the classes being held on the big porch. The tales told by the children about these classes are quite hilarious.



F. D. Stout meeting evening train in Rice Lake with his private mail bag. Also pictured are Allison and Gus Boll.

Chapter XLVI

Tagalong Golf Course

I appealed to F. D. Stout's youngest son Allison for information on the development of the Tagalong Golf Course. The following are quotes from his letters.

"I went east to prep school in the fall of '18. Came back to the island the summers of '19, '20 and '21. One of these summers I helped shoot stumps for the Tagalong clearing operation.

"The big stumps on that land, some three feet in diameter, were unbelievably thick, running as high as 30 to the acre in some places. It must have been a fantastic stand of white pine before the loggers went through.

"We would load 12 to 15 stumps in the morning; shoot them at noon. Then repeat it in the afternoon. The pieces of stumps were then pulled with a team-operated puller and stacked in huge piles for burning.. Piling was done by another team to work a tripod stacker.

"F.D. had a carload of the straight roots shipped to the Chicago house; they made a fast hot firewood for the fireplaces and very aromatic.

"Although the course was formally opened August 26, 1925, I know that it was being played on in 1921 for I was there at that time and played on it.



Guests at the Dedication, August 27, 1925.

The buildings were not finished until later, this was probably the reason for the '25 official opening."

Allison also said, "Tagalong was always a 9 hole course. It was playable after the second summer of work but it was another two years or so before it came to maturity. The greens were first seeded to white clover as father said he just could not be bothered with having bent grass as he could not find anyone who knew how to grow it, and it was just too much trouble."

It is evident that it did not take long for F.D. to find out that if he expected to have experts play his course he would have to have it as good as other courses.

Allison kindly supplied the names of the men who were invited to be members of the Red Cedar Lake Golf Club, starting at the north end of lake on the west shore: Chester D. Moon, Eau Claire; Charles S. "Palmolive" Pearce, Chicago; John A. Dickson, Evanston, Illinois; Richard Howse, Evanston, Illinois; Paul E. Faust, (on Knapp's Island) Chicago; "Fountain Pen" Smith (F.D. gave Smith that name after he signed a sales agreement with a fountain pen as big as a horse syringe); A. J. Nason, southern Illinois; O. H. Montzheimer, Twin Cities; George R. Slocum, St. Paul; Ed A. Smith, Morrison, Illinois.

In a letter from J. R. Lindsay (lawyer for Stout) to George Roen, who became the superintendent of Tagalong Golf Course, dated July 29, 1925, these additional names were listed; E. A. DeCampi, William Irvine, H. C. Burnett and E. H. Olds.

Each club member paid \$100.00 membership, which included playing privileges for himself and wife. For other members of his family he paid \$25.00 each. This was the list for the season of 1925.

Calista Stout Kern supplied the origin of the name "Tagalong." F. D. was amused with a cartoon which appeared daily in the Chicago Tribune, under that title.

Oscar Oftedahl of Rice Lake offered the following information. The Tagalong Golf Course was not completed until 1923, as he well remembers because he was known as "Dynamite" Oftedahl and was the man charged



The Club House.

with the responsibility of blasting out the stumps and rocks and so forth on the site before Tagalong was laid out. He also recalled that the mason foreman was Richard Cronholm, George Roen was the carpenter foreman and Ray C. Hunt, the general superintendent. Alex Pirie of Old Elm laid out the course as conceived by Mr. Stout, patterned after the legendary St. Andrew's course in Scotland, the home of the game of golf.

The following is an account printed in a Chicago daily at the time of the

dedication. "Willie MacFarlane, American open champion and Jim Barnes, British open champion, have accepted the invitation of Frank D. Stout and the Red Cedar Golf Club to play exhibition matches on Mr. Stout's Tagalong course on Red Cedar Lake, Barron county, Wisconsin Thursday.

"Tagalong is unique from many angles. Its beautiful setting on the shores of Red Cedar Lake is in surprising contrast to the primeval surroundings of which it was a part only four years ago. It is a gem set in a wilderness. An occasional deer crosses the fairways and in following a slice into the rough one is likely as not to put up a flock of grouse.

"Access to the course is had by boat only, across Red Cedar Lake. The clubhouse is a beautiful affair, with portico and terrace, all built of native boulders to last a century. Seven miles of galvanized iron pipe, with taps every fifty yards, permit watering of the fairways. The turf is perfect and the greens a delight."

The stone buildings were roofed with ordinary sawed cedar shingles, over roofers on curved rafters to give the "thatched" look. The stone work was done by Dick Cronholm of local cobblers split and formed by hand. Arthur Henn of Chicago who was the architect for all the buildings at the island, Lone Pine



Waiting room or shelter on the left end, pump house on the right.

Farm and Tagalong had the idea of splitting the boulders and taught Cronholm the trick. After that most of his work was done by that method.

The pump house and waiting shelter down by the lake and the fireplace in the clubhouse were made by that method. A mammoth machine shed was built some distance north of the clubhouse. It had many windows on both sides. On each end were identical small buildings with large stone chimneys. The one to the west was the blacksmith shop, the one to the east to be used by the caddies as a rest shelter while they were off duty. The machine shed had the thatched roof as did also the pump house.

A large caretaker's house and a barn were built some distance to the east, also a bunk house about 40 feet long. The maintenance crew of five or six men lived in it. It took three teams to mow the fairways and the rough. This was before the day of the small farm tractor. F.D. was very proud when he got the first modified Ford model T tractor with fairly broad steel wheels. It could do the work of at least two teams.

Chapter XLVII

BASEBALL PARK

The first public gathering in the village of Birchwood was one day in October, 1901. George M. Huss had advertised far and wide "An Auction of village lots and farm land." Men by the dozens came from Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and southern Wisconsin by train to Rice Lake.

Getting from Rice Lake to Birchwood was a problem. Some came on the work train to the Narrows where the trestles were being built for the Soo and Omaha railroads. They must have been ferried across and walked the rest of the way. Others followed the tote road with a hired livery up around to the old camp which had been turned into a hotel.



Land auction, October, 1901.

At any rate this picture shows the crowd which gathered at the most open bit of land in the village. The big billboard is a drawing of the plotted village of lots 1 to 29. Sales were brisk. One man was there with a camera and took this picture which was sent far and wide for advertising purposes. Mr. Huss gave this whole block to the village to be used as a park.

By 1905 several young men were living here and organized a baseball team. They cleared the brush and stumps from a plot big enough to practice on. One by one more trees mysteriously disappeared and baseball became a popular sport. Of that first team the only one still living in 1970 in Scipio Wise of Hayward who was the bat boy.



Birchwood ball team of 1922.

The only ancient team we have a picture of is the one of 1922. First row: Einar Skar, Ted Cyr, Ray McGinnis, Norman Cannon, bat boy Hubert Galvin. Standing: Leslie Thayer, Robert Monteith, Bill Simpson the Soo Depot agent, Francis Thomas and Charley Tuttle.

In 1949 good bleachers and a better backstop fence were built and big crowds gathered on Sunday afternoons to watch good games. For many years we had some very good players and were a member of a league.

The field has now become the athletic field for the high school football and baseball teams.



Game on improved field, 1949.

LAND CLEARING

The first settlers were in such a hurry to get a house built they did not take time to dig out many stumps near by. Blowing them with dynamite was pretty risky although some men did try it, which resulted in broken windows in the house.



Removing stumps in preparation for opening a new street.

In this picture a crew of men and one team were trying to clear the stumps for a new street. It was a slow and painful process.

Note the Methodist church in the background. The tarpaper shack to the south of it was the parsonage for the bachelor ministers. Picture taken in 1907. The Blue Hills are to be seen at the sky line.

By 1943 the bulldozer had been introduced. Niel Samson who owned the land worked long and hard to clean out the roots ready for the plow. Petersen's woods east of Balsam Lake in the distance.

Chapter XLVIII

BIRCHWOOD SCHOOLS

After studying early pictures we have found that many families had moved into the village of Birchwood during the winter of 1902. The land companies were putting out very attractive advertising and sending it far and near. Many young couples who had a few children made up their minds to leave Iowa and southern Wisconsin where land was selling for high prices. Believing that this was the land of unlimited opportunities, they struck out with covered wagons or on the trains. What they saw when they arrived were huge stumps, stones and thickets of brush.

They were sturdy people, they had made their choice and they set about making homes and most of them stayed. Mr. Wise was running his sawmill and they could find cull logs most anywhere. In no time many tarpaper shacks were put together.



Second schoolhouse, built in 1903.

There were many children of school age. The men donated their labor and a one room school house was ready when September rolled around. George M. Huss, the agent for selling the Knapp, Stout & Company land, donated a

full block for school purposes. It was located in a central area one block east of Main Street.

Blanche Jordan, the daughter of one of the settlers, was found to be qualified to teach (she must have had at least an eighth grade certificate). Her salary was \$35.00 per month. Before the end of that first year the room was so full, the children were sitting around the teacher's desk. Ted Sellers was the lonesome young Soo depot agent who of course had been courting the schoolmarm. They were married and moved away.

The summer of 1903 saw more action. That building was moved up on the hill, (now the living room of the Leonard Haynie house). Carpenters were hired to build a two and a half story schoolhouse. E. R. Daniels was hired to teach the higher grades upstairs. The lower grades were downstairs. He stayed two years. The fall of 1905 the board hired George A. Walters as principal with a salary of \$70.00 per month. He stayed three years.

Mrs. Annette Windus Rasmussen told us the following story. "In 1905 I was asked if I would teach the lower grades of the school. The first floor was all one room and I had so many children I could not handle them. The county superintendent came to inspect my room. I told him I had 70 pupils on the roll with an average daily attendance of 50. There was hardly time for a 15



The entire school in 1915.

minute session for each class. He ordered the board to put up a partition in the middle of the room and hire another teacher. They were in such a hurry they made it only about head high. The noise went back and forth over the partition." During this time a partition had divided the room upstairs and another teacher was added.

A few families had moved into the area around Spider Lake. The roads were so terrible it was decided the best plan would be to build a small

schoolhouse on the Brandt property. It was just big enough for the teacher's desk and six for the children and the stove—four pupils from the Brandts and two from the Blattens. Hazel Trowbridge was the first teacher and she could board at home for her father had a sawmill and lived near the lake which carried his name for years. The second teacher was Marjorie Speed. She paid Mrs. Brandt \$8.00 a month for room and board and both of these teachers received \$35.00 a month.

After two years of this the board decided it would be cheaper to hire the Brandts to transport the children to the village school. Harry was 11 years old and he drove the team on a wagon. In the winter the sled had a canvas top to protect the children from the wind. Mrs. Brandt heated sandstones for their feet and gave each child a hot baked potato in each mitten. After they arrived at school little Harry had to put up the team in somebody's barn and he might be a bit late. His sister Hattie was older than he and looked after the children. The homeward trip was not so bad for the horses were eager to get home. The Dixon and Leary children and four Brandts rode that bus.



Mikana residents waiting for Soo train to return them home after attending a new high school building meeting.

Soon the district system was adopted throughout the state and much of the town of Birchwood was named District #4 which included the village which was not yet incorporated.

In 1912 the Brandt family moved to a farm near Campia to be nearer a school. The rest of the children walked to school or perhaps the parents took turns in bad weather to transport them by wagon.

By 1909 the rooms were bulging at the seams. The board arranged for classes to be conducted at the Methodist and Lutheran churches and Mrs. Peterson's confectionery store. The Arpin Land Office had been moved over across the street north of the Lutheran church. It was used by the primary grade.

M. F. Damon was the contractor for the addition which was the same size as the original building and extended to the south. It was rushed through in record time. It was possible now to add the ninth and tenth grades. Many of the children felt obliged to go out to work instead of going to high school. The junior and senior grades were added while A. W. Ball was principal. The

first senior class to graduate was in 1915. They were Ina, Maggie and Dewey Lockwood, Pearl Thayer and Anna Tousley. Ina would have graduated a year earlier but the other members of her class had dropped out so she waited for the next class to catch up to her. Mr. Ball received a salary of \$90.00 the first year and \$95.00 the second. It was now an accredited high school.

The janitors in this building had been Hi Santas, Sam Windus, F. Bacon, Ezra Dakins and Ernest Wentland, some of them Civil War veterans.

O. J. Melby became the principal in 1919 with his wage raised to \$125.00. More people were moving into the area and more interest was being shown in education. State inspectors were complaining about the heating system. It was not the proper kind, etc. All school entertainments were held at the Wise hall as there was no stage at the schoolhouse, and no auditorium.

Poor roads were a constant drawback to the educational program in this area. Settlers who were living far away from the village had no way of getting the children to the school. Such was the case for the Jim Berry sons. Miss Pearl Rice of the town of Stinnett was hired to come and live with the Berry family for one year. She taught the boys and helped Mrs. Berry to pay for her board. Later they stayed with the grandparents in town until a bus route was established or they transported themselves.

The parents were having meetings, the students had parades with placards proclaiming "We Want a High School." They meant that they wanted a modern building. At that time the union free high school district system seemed to be the answer. M. F. Damon led the campaign and had his troubles getting the petition cleared at Madison. Then the people at Mikana got up a petition urging that the new schoolhouse be built in their village. Their territory had been taken into the new district.

At last it was settled and a new brick building was erected in 1921-22 directly east of the old one. School went on to the rap-tap of the hammers. Melby stayed on until June, 1923 which gave him one year in the new building. Phoebe Arnett took the third and fourth grades to the Free Methodist church because of the crowded condition at the old schoolhouse.

The gym was located in the basement. Now the boys had a place to play basketball. The fans stood in the lower hall and leaned over the railing to watch the games. Directly over the gym on the second floor was the auditorium where the entire high school assembled for study. There were three rooms named science, English and commercial. The library was in a corner at the back of the auditorium. The seventh and eighth grades had the room next to the north stairway.

That wonderful large stage was a dream come true. Can you remember the first movable stage props with the swinging doors in the middle and a window on each side, with painted sunflowers and strings of what looked like hot dogs draped between them? The beautiful maroon velour curtains in front were really some class. The school raised the money to pay for them.

For years the senior and junior classes each put on a play, and they were well worth attending. The silent movies became the rage. A big cotton curtain was rolled down in front of the stage curtain for the picture to be thrown on. Neva Kleiman played appropriate music for each show.

Now the students had a place big enough for the Junior Prom. The seats were stacked away in one of the class rooms, and the auditorium decorated

in a beautiful fashion. And such a mob as would assemble for that performance. For graduation night, folks would try to sit two in each seat and on wooden folding chair in the aisles. The back of the room and the hall would be packed with folks standing. The people were proud of the students and their school; it was the central interest of the whole community.

The P.T.A. was organized in the year 1931-32. It did a great deal to help the school as it raised money for many needed improvements. It brought the people together once a month for a program; the people were hungry for entertainment. A lot of good talent was found or developed. The older people put on some extra good plays.

Mrs. DeKeyser's pet project was to get a band organized in the school. During the depression it was impossible to get the money to start the project. But by 1934 a band was organized with Paul Liebau of Rice Lake the director



High school students on steps of old building while the new one was being constructed. Mr. O. J. Melby, the principal, lower left; Mr. H. J. Kelley, teacher, upper right.

for four years. Second hand instruments were purchased as well as uniforms which were blue caps and blue capes with gold lining with one corner caught back to the shoulder. The boys wore dark trousers and the girls dark skirts. When they appeared in the parade at the tournament in Rice Lake they got a bigger hand than any other band, because the people loved Mr. Liebau so much.

The Band Mother's Club was organized. And how those women did work. Mrs. DeKeyser was a driver and what she set out to do generally got done.

E. G. Kromrey became the principal in the fall of 1928. He was very dynamic and brought about many advances in the school program, and welcomed the PTA and the Band Mothers Club. He felt the band was a fine addition to the school program. He left us after eight years of service, the longest term of any principal up to this time.

Mrs. DeKeyser did not let the grass grow under anybody's feet until she had raised a fund of \$614.00 (the district paid part) which purchased 32 red blouses and caps trimmed in white. White trousers and shoes were supplied by the parents. (The girls were then allowed to wear trousers). In 1939 three more uniforms were ordered, also the shoulder straps to complete the Sam Brown belts. Altho ill, Mr. Liebau paraded with the band in 1938 with the new uniforms. The next year in April they made a special trip to Rice Lake to play for him. He died a few weeks later.

Jean Fortier became principal in 1936 with Gerald Donahue as band director. In 1938 Herold Compton was the principal, and Charles Frailey the director from 1940 until the spring of 1942. Mr. Compton left us to enlist in the Navy in the spring of 1943. Blanche Soper supervised the school to the end of the term. During that year a Mr. Skinner from another school came twice a week to conduct the band.

The next year Charles Conselman of Shell Lake was hired to be the principal and also the band director. We were reduced to only three teachers in



First hot lunch cook, Mrs. Alice Kleiman, and her assistant, Mrs. Gertie Saxby. Taken on balcony overlooking the old gym.

the high school and four in the grades as usual. That was the year the mill closed and many families moved to Algoma, the war was on, and half of Main Street had burned to the ground.

In the early years much agitation had been given to the hot lunch program, but there seemed to be no place in which to operate it. Mr. Conselman dared to start it on a shoe string in November, 1945, with 100 pupils. The grades were served in their seats, the high school students at folding big tables set up in the lower hall each day. Many of the village students went home for lunch.

The kitchen was in the south end balcony overlooking the gym.. Alice Kleiman was the first cook. As time went on she had as assistants Hattie Weber, Gertie Saxby and Mary Brown. Pearl Mayer became head cook for 1950-51.

In the early 1920's many new families moved into the town of Birchwood and the Brandt family moved back to their place on Spider Lake. Some of the fathers took turns with a team and wagon or sled to transport the children to school until the roads got good enough and they were able to drive a truck. Each driver built a small house on the back of his truck with seats around the edge, and a small glass in the door. A stove was anchored to the floor to keep the kids warm in the winter. The drivers we recall were Happy Jackson, Andrew Vischulis, Bill Yusas and Norman Brandt.. The basketball team was transported in such a bus unless the parents were able to produce enough cars to take them to the games.

In 1938 a modern 36 passenger bus was purchased for the north route with Worthy Grasley the first driver. A new 48 passenger bus was ordered in 1950



It was a "red letter day" when the 8th grade class went to Shell Lake to receive their diplomas. This was the class of 1934. Front row: Joe Shimanek and Lyle Groth. Behind them: Evelyn Galvin; Miss Isabell Skar, the teacher; Lela Rattunde, (the boy cannot be identified), Adele Erickson, Edmond Hayes, Elma Chappelle, Cecil Snyder and Marian Catman. Most of these students later graduated from high school.

but did not arrive in time for the first day of school. The old bus had to go again and a careless driver with a truck on a narrow road rammed the front end tearing off the gas tank. Some of the children were hurt but the gas tank did not explode. Four big buses have covered the routes for years without a serious accident. There have been many drivers who have made long records. We believe we are safe in saying that Dale Van Gilder with 15 years to his credit holds the highest record.

Ernest Wentland was the first janitor in the new building, then John and Ladosca Monteith for one year. Cleon Carter came next. Charles Lindberger

took over the job in 1930 and left in 1943. Fred Wagner held it one year while the mill was temporarily shut down. Gomer Evans was hired for the fall of 1944 and kept the job until 1966. Ken Dudrey succeeded Gomar and left the job before Christmas of 1968. George Wood finished out the year and is now the maintenance man. (We no longer call them janitors).

Changes were taking place in the rural schools. The Wilson Valley children were being transported to the Center school. The Wooddale children were transported to the Lincoln school. At their 1948 school meetings they decided it would be better and cheaper to transport all the children to the village school. This brought about the first annexation of rural districts to District #4.

This made it necessary to hire one more teacher in the grades as there were 23 first graders and Bertha Cyr became their teacher. Four teachers were in the high school in 1948-1949.

This was a school being run by two districts, two school boards, and two principals all under one roof. At last they agreed that the time had come for action on the enlargement of the building.

The hot lunch program had increased also. A new dining room and kitchen were very necessary and also more classrooms. The first step in that direction was taken in 1950 when the entire east side of the second floor was converted into four classrooms. Eight feet next to the hall was partitioned off into storage rooms. (In the original building no provision had been made for storage rooms, with the exception of one off the gym). This meant that we no longer had an auditorium or a stage.

During the 1950-51 school year all public meetings, the P.T.A. etc. were held down in the old gym. The graduates of 1951 will never forget holding the prom, baccalaureate and graduation in the old gym. The class had to march through the girls' locker room and down the old back stairway to get in position to march double file down the aisle to a slightly raised platform at the north end of the gym for their program. They were good sports for they had visions of the changes that were to begin the minute school was out.

But before we say good-bye to the old gym we must mention the huge painting of a ship which was donated to the school by someone. The only place big enough for it was above the double exit doors on the east side. It has never been seen since the reconstruction.

The excavation for the new gym extended to the street on the south, with a large stage and service rooms on the east side of the gym. Another crew removed the much-worn old floor in the old gym and excavated about two feet of dirt before they poured a cement floor. This was reached by the stairway from the north end of the lower hall.

Then a floor was extended from the lower hall to the east making a ceiling over the cafeteria. This provided space for a large home ec room and two medium classrooms. Equipment was placed in the home ec room and a teacher hired to start this department that fall.

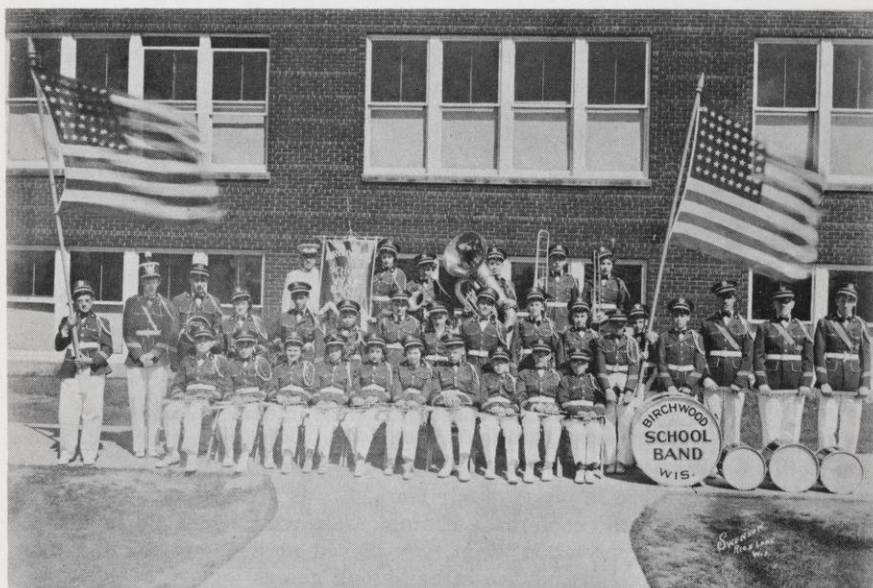
Furnishings were installed in the kitchen and dining room and Laura Evans became the first cook. This department was in full swing when school started. Laura was assisted by Ione Oberg and La Vaughn Dudrey from 1957 to 1959. Then with the aid of high school girls Laura and Ione carried the load until

the summer of 1963 when Laura retired. Since that time Lorraine Van Gilder has teamed up with Ione.

In January, 1952, the dining room was dedicated by a big community supper which the men served. My, what a crowd of happy people turned out that night. It was followed by a big dance in the new gym.

The fiftieth anniversary of the school at Birchwood was celebrated on May 30, 1952, at which time the new gym was formally dedicated. Alumni from far and near attended this joyous occasion. James W. Di Ulio who had just been hired as the new principal was introduced to the people that day.

Before we establish sports in the new gym, we must go back and talk about the activities in the old one in the year of 1922-23. The school board had been forehanded and hired a teacher by the name of Harold Kelly who



Birchwood School Band, 1938, in their new uniforms. Left to right, seated: Robert Samson, Erwin Berry, Lucille Newberg, Dorothy LaPoint, Frances White, Bertha Wormet, John Olson, Harold Olson, Delvin Haynie, Martin Samson. Standing: Robert Widiker, June Biel, Doran Haynie, Elma Earlfred White, Warren Thomas, Lela Rattunde, Rita Hartl, Keith Thomas, Alice Winter, Ardis Cyr, Wilferd Beffa, Delbert Walhovd, Donald McQueen, Edmond Hayes, Herve Mingaye, Bert Broughton. Back row: Director Paul Libeau, Althea Haas, Bessie Sorenson, Robert Thomas, Walter Samson, Gene Chappelle.

could coach basketball. They also purchased black trunks and white sweat shirts for the team. The parents provided for the shoes, knee guards and head bands. The style at that time was for the boys to wear their hair in a long sleeked pompadour. It was necessary to contain it or it would fall and blind their vision.

On the first team were Roy and Elmer Knapmiller, Jack Hobart, Gaylord Carey, Shorty Parkos, Joe Rohlik, Frank Tahlke, Semore Soper and Niel Samson. They won all the games that year. They went up to Winter on the

train, played that evening and stayed at homes around the village. Mr. Hinman at the depot contacted Winter and spread the news of their victory. They were heroes when they returned the next day. Then the Winter team came down on the train and the same program was carried out for them, only they lost the game.

Some years later when the Berry boys became involved in the game their rich aunt, Mrs. W. W. Vincent, supplied the team with new suits. By the year 1939 those suits were so worn out and shrunk the team looked like ragged urchins. Two women started a whispering campaign, drawing the attention of the public to the shameful condition of our team's suits. Herold Compton was then the coach and a plan was worked out to put on a community supper in the basement of the new village hall in February, 1940. The women from the three churches brought the dishes and silver, and everybody furnished the food. The money was raised and new purple (the school color) suits were



The marching band, consisting of 32 members, at the tournament parade in Rice Lake, 1938.

purchased and we were so proud of our team. It was Mr. Compton's ambition to have his team win the conference championship which they did in 1942-43. But it was only the consolation when they played at the tournament. There has always been a good attendance at basketball games.

Because so many home talent plays were being put on it was decided in 1941 that we needed new stage curtains and overhead drapes. The PTA raised the money and soft tan curtains soon replaced the old backgrounds.

Talking movies were becoming very popular. The old cotton screen which could be pulled down in front of the velour curtains was getting so dirty and thin that most of the picture went through it, making the picture very dim. Again the PTA raised the money for a beaded glass screen which also could be rolled. It was installed in January, 1949, and is now in use in the new gym. They also purchased two pianos and many band instruments.

Pressure was being put on by the state superintendent of schools for all rural schools to consolidate with some high school. At the same time the Birchwood school was trying to get the boundaries of their two school systems evened up to enable them to consolidate.

Many in the Edgewater-Yarnell district were not satisfied with their arrangement and petitioned to join the Birchwood district. It was a hard fight

but by 1952-53 they did consolidate and the children were bussed in to the village school. In 1957 the major portion of the town of Meteor joined the Birchwood district. The Hauer school was having its troubles for lack of pupils. They hired their students bussed to Birchwood one year, and in 1958 to officially consolidate with the district. At the 1953 school meeting it was voted to integrate District #4 and the union free high school district under the name of "Birchwood Public Schools." According to law five people were elected to serve as one board for this district, thus ending W. L. Samson's career as clerk of the high school district for 23 years and H. H. Chappelle's as treasurer for 18 years.

The new board elected consisted of Richard Dakins, Dorothy Mattis, Carroll Bemis, Walter Knapmiller and Thorvald Skar. Of this number Richard Dakins is still on the board, having served 17 years.



Basketball team of 1938. Front row: Gordon Galvin, George Galbraeth, Bud Hayes, Bob Knapmiller, Chuck Lalan. Back row: Walt Knapmiller, Bud Talkie, Doran Haynie, Bert Broughton, Ed Hayes.

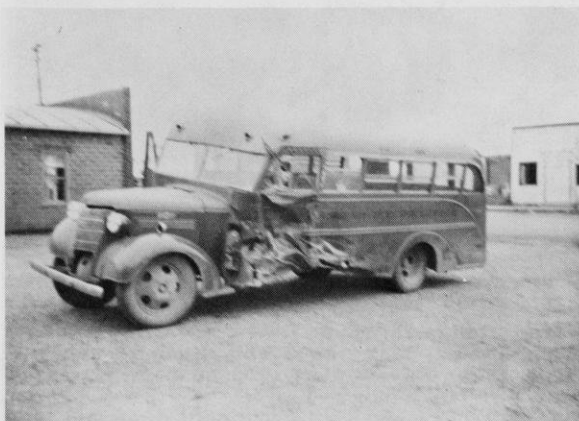
The difficulties encountered when dealing with four counties on this consolidation were many and lasted several years. In the early days the Angus district took in the lower part of the town of Birchwood, and the upper portion of Cedar Lake. The union free high school district went beyond Mikana. Those in Washburn county readily agreed to be transported into the Birchwood school along with the students going to high school. The battle was long and painful. In fact it lasted three years. Three families petitioned to be left in the Birchwood district: Robert Kringle, Earl Lorti and Loris Lande. The rest of the territory joined with Rice Lake district. The territory on the east shore of Red Cedar lake in sections 11, 12, 13, 14, 23 and 24 and the school house property were signed over to the Birchwood public schools. This action took effect July 1, 1957. Property on the east shore of Red Cedar Lake is now the popular Red Cedar Country Club and Gold Course and "The Woods" development company with many children attending our school.

The school colors were changed from purple and gold to red and white after the band got their new red and white uniforms. The name "Bobcats" was given to the basketball team in 1953 followed by "Bobcat's Roar" heading the school news in the Rice Lake Chronotype.

During these years in the "New Building" the principal's office was up in the corner over the south stairs. There was just room for a desk, two chairs and a file cabinet. Any conversation in this room could easily be heard by anyone nearby .

When Mr. Di Ulio took over in 1952 he soon found that it was far too small. He converted the room reserved as a kitchenette for social events at the far corner off the gym, into an office. He got good exercise walking across the gym. The high school girls helped out as typists. By 1956 he decided he needed a full-time secretary.

We must back up again and explain that Richard Halverson had been hired as the music director and came to us in January, 1953. The band had become disorganized during the building campaign and lack of a place in which to practice. Now they could use the new stage. It did not take long to get lined up again under his strict supervision. But Dick had his eyes on something more than just band instruments. A young lady with beautiful auburn hair had been visiting one of the teachers. Everyone called her "Ginger." It was not long before she became Mrs. Richard Halverson. As

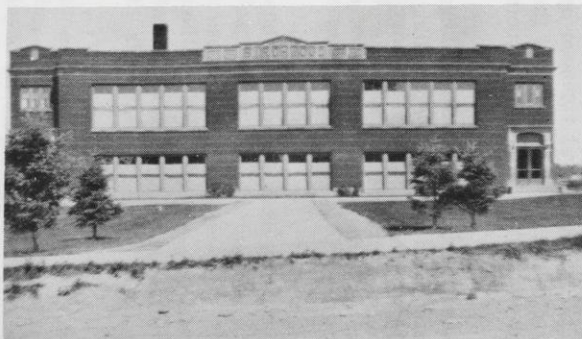


First school bus after encounter with a truck.

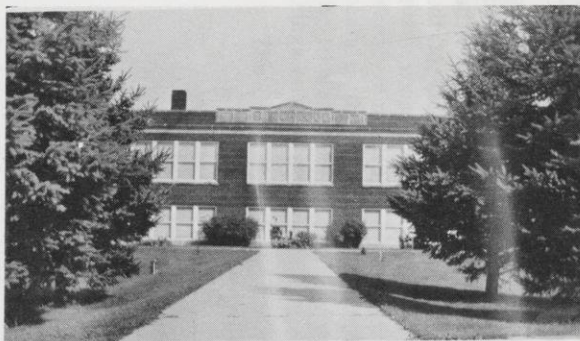
secretarial work had been her profession, she readily agreed to become the full-time secretary in the office for 1956-57. Then Stella Edwardson started in the fall of 1957 and worked through 1962. Millie Hess came that fall and is still on the job. In 1968 Phyllis Zemaitis was hired as another secretary.

When the basketball season started in October, 1952, an electric scoreboard was installed high on the north wall of the gym. The bleachers were built in 1953. During the Christmas vacation of 1953-54 a new oil furnace was installed in the old part of the building. The old coal room was converted into a storage room. During the following summer a remote sound system was installed in the entire building. The principal can contact any room in the building and they can talk back to him in the office.

During the summer vacation of 1955 the plate glass windows in the old part of the building were removed. They were replaced by glass blocks in aluminum frames for the upper two-thirds of the window and plate glass for



Birchwood school in 1940. The little pine trees had been set out by Charles Lindberger, the janitor.



The little pine trees as they looked 10 years later, in 1950.



Closeup of the band. Due to an error, red plumes were delivered. They were later replaced by white ones.

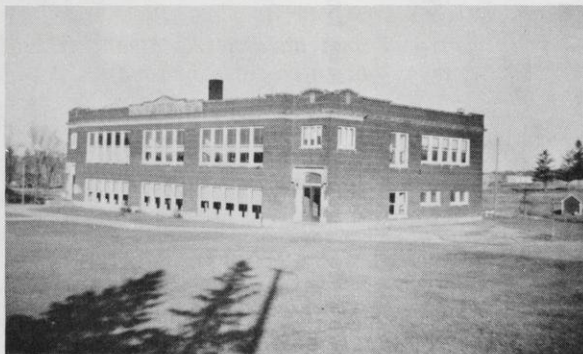


The Birchwood Band on special parade to show off their new uniforms, May 1957.

the lower third which can be opened for fresh air. The old windows let in so much cold air the children could not sit near them.

By 1956 all the old (much carved) desks had been replaced by modern blond ones. This had been a three year project.

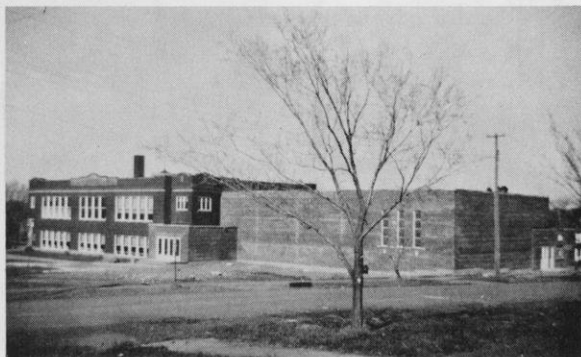
One thing which annoyed teachers and students alike was the squeaking floors in the upper story of the building. In the classrooms and hall one could not walk 10 feet without a board squeaking. The principal up in his little office could detect activities in all the rooms, much to the dismay of the students.



The school house as it looked in the fall of 1950 before the gym was added the next summer.

The project to rectify an error made by the first contractors was started in 1960. Carpenters were hired to remove the old flooring. It was replaced by sheets of plywood, then covered with pretty floor tiling. In the upper hall the ceiling was covered by acoustical tile. Now you can glide from room to room without being detected.

When the new classrooms on the first floor were constructed the ceilings were made of acoustical tile and the floors covered with attractive floor tiling. The room which had the most trouble in the old days was the one under the



After the gym and new entrance were added in 1951.

commercial room. Its ceiling has now been covered by acoustical tile. The typewriters and chairs can hardly be heard by the students in the room underneath. The old wooden stairs at each end of the building were getting worn out and they too squeaked. They were replaced by cement stairs.

The former classroom at the head of the north stairs was fitted up for the library. The walls are lined with shelves well stocked with books. Several blond tables and chairs make for comfort when the students go there for study.

Our maintenance men have known how to use the hammer and saw. In every room and the halls you will see attractive bulletin boards, cupboards wherever needed, and protectors over the hooks where the children hang their coats in the halls. Durable but pretty curtains are at the windows. In fact the whole school has a homelike atmosphere where children will learn many things outside of books.

The Band Boosters had been working on a project to raise funds for new



Birchwood Public Schools, 1970, showing the new office in the foreground and the addition to the north for the elementary department. On the right, but not in the picture, is the addition east of the gym, the south half of which is the Industrial Arts room, the north half for the music department.

band uniforms. In February, 1957, they were delivered, 60 of them, called the West Point: red coat with gray trim, chrome buttons and white belt, gray trousers with red stripe on the side, red plastic shako with white plume. The band made a special parade down Main Street in May, 1957. By an error red plumes had been sent, but later white ones replaced them. Pictures taken that day show the red plumes.

The first football team was coached by Wally Lindholm in 1956. Eight games were played. In 1958 baseball was introduced to the athletic program. They had an undefeated season. The boys were veterans at the game having played on the town team since they were big enough to pitch a ball.

The big improvement in 1964 was hooking up to the municipal sewer system. In February of 1960 a meeting of the citizens advisory board was

called to discuss the need for additions to be built onto the schoolhouse. We had 13 classrooms but the grades had become so large that two could no longer be handled in one room.

The following April a special meeting was called to vote on the project which called for an addition on the east side of the gym for a shop and a room for the band. (When the band occupied the stage the gym could not be used for phy ed and the noise echoed throughout the whole building). Three elementary rooms and rest room facilities were to be added to the north end of the old building, new office and room for school board meetings etc., and storage space to be added on the west side of the gym, with entrance from the hall leading into the gym. The vote was 190 in favor of the additions and 55 against it. The bids were accepted in September, the work to be done in 1961. It was an awful mess all summer but school opened on time that fall.

A kindergarten was added to the school in 1962-63 with Mrs. Ruth Clausen as the teacher. Most of the time there has been a forenoon and an afternoon class. A course in agriculture was offered for a few years, then dropped for lack of interest. Now we have industrial arts and driver's education. More emphasis has been put onto physical education.

In talking to some old timers we learned how and when the commercial course was included in the curriculum. Before the brick building was erected, two mothers, Mrs. Mike Skar and Mrs. Bohnenkamp who had numerous daughters, repeatedly begged the school board to add the course as they wanted their daughters to be able to do something more than just housework. At last in the year 1921-22 a four year course was started with Harold Kelly as the teacher. When they moved into the new building the students found the south room upstairs had been set aside for their use. Typewriters were provided in time for the last two years of the course. We wonder what those dear mothers would say today if they saw how eager the girls are to attend the home ec classes.

With all these many improvements the old much defaced classroom doors looked out of place. In 1966 modern doors with a small window in each were installed and also new door jambs.

With the increase of rooms in the building the maintenance work was too much for one man. Bill Cyr was hired to help Gomer. After two years of that it was decided that a woman was what they needed more than a second man. Pearl Mayer was hired to dust and scrub for one year, then Adele Bowers took over the job in 1965-66. She is still on the job.

James W. Di Ulio who had seen the school through the final stages of consolidation and the many improvements we have listed in this chapter, decided that 17 years was enough and he resigned in 1969.

Now in the year of 1969-70 Richard Thompson is the superintendent of schools and Dennis Hendrickson the principal. There are nine teachers in the grades and nine in the high school. The enrollment is approximately 300.

Good roads go out in all directions around the many lakes and over or around the numerous hills. The Birchwood school is located in the natural center of this area around the "Four Corners" of the counties we are talking about in this book.

