

CASS COUNTY CLIPPINGS

July 1, 2008

CASS COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

P.O. BOX 505
201 MINNESOTA AVENUE W., WALKER, MN. 56484

U.S. Land Office - Cass Lake



When Minnesota was young and settlers were eager to homestead or buy land, government land offices were opened in many parts of the state. Through the offices passed original transfers of millions of acres of land, some for farming, some for logging. The Cass Lake Land Office was established in 1903 and continued for thirty years. It was the last in the state to close. Mr. Larson, register, locked the office on January 31, 1933 and then sent the record books to central offices at Washington D.C.

The first entry to be filed in the Cass Lake Land office when it opened in 1903 was that of Joseph and Maude (Marshall) Karls, who opened a homestead north of Cass Lake.



On July 1, 1907, there were 100 people in line before the land office opened at 9 a.m. Lewis Larson of Fosston, who had been **first in the line since May 22**, filed on a valuable farm. It took him just two minutes to get through. He came out of the land office very much relieved, and remarked: "I will now reap the harvest of my six weeks' strenuous wait." John Olson filed second, Chas. Single, third, and Mrs. Bertha Kneely [Neely] of Bemidji, fourth, followed by many others. Perfect harmony prevailed on the line. No quarreling of any kind being reported.

WEBSITE

Visit our Cass County website: The site received over 500 visits during May. The obituary lists were the most popular part of the website and resulted in several inquiries to the museum for purchase of obituaries.

CASS COUNTY HISTORY BOOK

A new book of Cass County images was released in April. The book is a collection of photos from the Cass County Historical Society and covers a variety of topics. The book is being published and distributed by Arcadia Publishing. Books are available at the Museum and in local bookstores. Lakeland TV of Bemidji conducted an interview at the museum on June 25th for broadcast on the 10:00 pm news later the same day.

LEGACY GRANT

We have completed eight interviews with elders of the Onigum area and are eager to meet with other older residents who will share their memories of Onigum's people and places.

WANTED!

Volunteers to help with collecting obituaries from past and present papers. Many different jobs are available. One can cut and paste from a collection of current papers or read old papers and put the information on index cards to add to our database.

The goal is 25,000 obituaries.

WALKER HISTORY WALK

A history walk up Cleveland Blvd is being developed for the near future. This will be an evening walk with stops along the way to hear about a five-minute presentation by someone acting out a local character.

FIRST GRADERS VISIT THE MUSEUM

About 100 visitors from Walker's first grade visited the museum in May.

RESORT FILES

Jolene Safranek is organizing reams of information gleaned from county newspapers on the history of early Cass County resorts. The majority of information gathered so far is on northern Cass County. We have some information on resorts in southern Cass, but looking for volunteers to expand the collection. Also needed are photos and postcards as most of these resorts are no longer operating. Photos will be scanned and returned.

Cass County Historical Society Board of Directors

Cecelia McKeig, Sec
Audrey Chelberg
Sandy Pauly, V-Pres
Dan Eikenberry
Diana Kramer
Kelly Nelson, Pres.
Otto Ringle

Alexis Hadrava - Treasurer

Cass County Research Center

The research center is staffed by the Cass County Historical Society at the Cass County Museum in Walker. Through the winter, research help is available by appointment. The research library, obit indexes, newspaper microfilm, and other archival materials are accessible for a \$10 research fee for non-members.

One of our immediate goals is to expand the microfilm collection of newspapers and census records as we have the only microfilm reader/printer available for public use in the county.

The Cass County Historical Society meets on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 at the Museum.

The next meetings are July 15th, Aug 19, and Sept 16th

Romance in the St. Cloud Land Office for Two Cass County Residents -- 1900

There was a pretty little romance at the United States land office in St. Cloud yesterday. J. C. Vincent applied at Uncle Sam's branch office just before dinner for leave to file upon a homestead in Cass County for Miss Jennie Buck. He was advised that the lady would have to appear in person and she was soon forthcoming.

Mr. Vincent has a farm near Pillager and he has proved upon the property, and it is his in every sense of the word; but he said that Miss Buck's claim was next to his and that she was very anxious to file upon the land at once. The same Miss Buck being in the city it would be no trouble to produce her, but there was another difficulty that appeared almost unsurmountable. Neither he nor the lady had quite enough money at hand to make the filing. He had abundant cash in the bank of Monague, but through a misunderstanding it had not been sent to St. Cloud as per his instructions. The land office authorities advised the the papers be drawn and the application be made, but that the papers be held until the cash was received, which would be but a day or two at most.

But this would not help matters in the judgment of Mr. Vincent, and he opened his heart and explained all. And this was that he and Miss Buck had decided to be married and at once, too, but it was necessary for her to make the filing while she was still Miss Buck, for otherwise she would be incompetent to make a homestead entry.

A helping hand was extended later in the day, and the papers were made and filed, and just before 6 o'clock, Rev. E. V. Campbell, Presbyterian, made the happy couple man and wife, and their hearts, hands, and homestead claims have been joined for life. Vincent is a good appearing fellow of thirty-five, and his wife is an intelligent little woman.

More of the story:

We find Jerry E. Vincent and his wife Jennie with 8-year old daughter Mildred still living on the farm on the 1910 census. Sec 4, T 134, R 30 – Jennie Buck (Jennie Vincent)

Edna McGarry and the Cass Lake Land Office

Edna McGarry came to Walker in 1888 with her father, P.H. McGarry. In the rush of filers at the Cass Lake Land Office for government tracts, Edna attained celebrity status at age 21. She made her settlement upon the White City land at midnight, just before the tracts were to come into market at the Cass Lake Land Office. She was 22 miles from the office and to secure her claim it was necessary for her to be at the filing place when the doors opened. Edna hurried to the train depot at Walker and attempted to travel by freight train to Cass lake. The depot agent told her that she would not be allowed passage on the next train due to a law that forbade passengers, least of all women, to ride freight trains. A quitter would have given up at this juncture.

Her father, P.H. McGarry, squatted on 40 acres on a point of land in 1896 and began operating a fishing camp

with guests staying in 12 white tents, hence the name of this resort was White Tent City. In 1901 he added a large three-story hotel on what is known as Second Point today. Edna's father was disqualified from making a claim on this property because of a ruling by the Land Department that a "squatter" forfeited all right to file on property where he had been residing. Hence, Edna's mission to file a homestead claim on this property was of utmost importance to their future.

Edna's courage simply rose with the emergency. Two things were clear in her mind; she had to be in Cass Lake to file upon the land and the freight train must take her there. She skirted the long line of freight and logging cars until she reached the puffing and greasy engine. Grasping the pilot, (the cow catcher on the front of the locomotive), she swung herself up on it. No one had seen her and in a few moments the train was underway.

Soon the engine was bounding from side to side as it rushed along but the plucky girl held all the tighter to the rods and braces near her perilous seat. Her terrifying sensations diminished to some extent, and the wild ride brought a delight in its danger and risk and sent the blood coursing through her veins. When the train reached the Wilkinson Station, she was discovered and a second attempt made to put her off the train. The railroad men could not long deny the plucky girl with so worthy a purpose and eventually she won the day and came into Cass Lake on the train in ample time to make her filing on the land. Sheer pluck had won Miss McGarry a farm.

CLARA HOVELSON BYERSDORFER

Clara was born on May 1, 1886. She homesteaded in Section 29 of Turtle Lake Township in 1909. She built her little home and cleared the required acres of land to comply with government requirements. She received her patent in 1916.

The State Hospital for Consumptives, later renamed Ah-gwah-ching, provided employment. Clara became chief cook where her talents as cook, banker and ice cream maker were the delight of patients and fellow workers. Quitting time was when the work was done. On a day when lots of fresh vegetables came in from the hospital farm, all hands worked late until the canning of the produce was finished.

It didn't take long for Clara's reputation as a good neighbor to be established. She was there to help when the baby girl arrived at Conklin's. She often walked on narrow paths through the woods to go and help her neighbors.

By 1913 George Byersdorfer had homesteaded eighty acres next to Clara's home, and they were married. They chose to live on Clara's homestead where they raised four daughters. George and his brother Clarence improved the Onigum Road by hauling gravel with teams of horses to fill in the low spots. George died of blood poisoning in 1934, and Clara continued to farm by herself.

As the years went by, the big Leech Lake Lutheran Church picnics became a big event. Everyone came, regardless of religious affiliation. Clara would prepare food for days. Big tables under the pines were loaded with food and homemade ice cream.

Clara's evaluation of her life was, "I've tried to do my best!" Clara died June 28, 1975.



Photo: Longville Church -- under construction in 1920.

MARGARET CULHANE Homesteaded near Longville

In the spring of 1910, Miss Culhane went by stagecoach to Longville and became one of the original homesteaders in the area. She told of first coming up north as far as Pine River (the end of the railroad for northeastern Cass County) with a plan of going on to visit friends at Inguadona. When she and her traveling company arrived, they discovered all the rigs were in use. Someone told them about Ed Countryman and two companions going as far as Boy River. So she and Mrs. Manders persuaded him to also take them along. Stopover was made to rest the horses at Pontoria. When she finally arrived that night at her friends, the Devores, she discovered them living in a cabin without floors, with only one-half a window in the house and the beds made of popple poles and sweet clover.

She subsequently homesteaded on a beautiful piece of land set among the trees on the south end of Long Lake and named it "Gitchee Gumme". Here she built her cabin and lived for over fifty years. Miss Culhane housed and aided the mission priests who came to Longville by boat and ox team to say Mass whenever possible.

Membership - 2008

Single (\$10)

Henry Achermann
Margaret Dewey
Bessie Engebretson
Marcella Fisher
Nancy Jacobson
Karen Kezele
William Kline
Diane Kramer
Charlene Moore
Elsie Nelson
Frank Olson
Diane Pitzen
Robert Rogers
Erma Schantle
Jeanette Silbaugh
Betty Zaffke

Benefactor (\$20 - \$99)

Virginia Abullarade
Edy Asell
Tom & Sarah Cox
Gordy & Liz Dahn
Leland & Dorothy Delger
Don Flyckt
Jerry & Renee Geving
Peggy Godwin
Dave & Helen Hamilton
Dick Hein
Bob & Shirley Jewell
Patricia Jones
Harry Loger
Cecelia McKeig
David Nieman
Norbert & Rosie Ochs
Chris & Dorothy Opheim
Bob & Sandy Pauly
John B. Ristean
Carole Sargent
Dick & Kathie Stoneking
Gary & Margaret Trimble
Bob & Ann Winegar
Harry & Martha Winter

Memorials

Ardyce Achermann
Jeanette Fisher
Glenn Otteson

Family (\$15)

Phil & Gina Borland
Bob & Dodie Burdick
Dick & Donna Evenson
Rich & Krista Hansen
Steve and Kay Johnson
Tim & Shelli Johnson
Bob & Betty Kangas
Norbert & Rosie Ochs
Jocelyn & Glen Reus
Dana & Bev Sheldon
Art & Lois Shenk
Richard & Glenna Tappe
Bob & Germain Yochum

Business (\$50)

D. W. Jones, Inc.
Huddle's South Shore Resort
Hummingbird Press
Leer Title Services
Little Apple Book Store
Orton Oil Company
Ranch House Supper Club
Dr. Steve & Sharon Bilben

Friend (\$100-\$249)

Anderson's GrandVu Lodge
Anderson's Cove
Anderson's Spirit of the North
Willard Arends
Carl & Judy Berg
Don & Margaret Brown
Audrey Chelberg
Chippewa Lodge
Dan & Sue Eikenberry
Gramma Jo's
Betty Hutt
Leader Lions
Noel L. Mills, MD
Kelly & Jeanne Nelson
Northland Lodge
Jerry & Greta Steelman

Sponsor \$250-\$999

Acorn Hill Resort
Chase Condominium, LLC
First National Bank of Walker
Bob & Nita (Eagle) Frink
Lois Orton
Tom & Doris Williams

Patron

Ringle Family

Cities & Townships

City of Chickamaw Beach
City of Federal Dam
City of Lake Shore
City of Pine River
City of Walker

Blind Lake Township
Boy Lake Township
Fairview Township
Kego Township
Leech Lake Township
Loon Lake Township
Meadowbrook Township
Pine Lake Township
Ponto Lake Township
Powers Township
Rogers Township
Salem Township
Shingobee Township
Smokey Hollow Township
Sylvan Township
Torrey Township
Trelipe Township
Turtle Lake Township
Wabedo Township
Wilkinson Township
Woodrow Township

Other Donations

Jerry Geving: Nine upholstered chairs, one computer chair, misc. office supplies
Carol Sargent: Microfilm Purchase

2008 Membership Drive

The Museum depends on your membership and donations to keep it going. Please consider your pledge for 2008 in one of the following new categories.

Membership

Single (\$10) _____ Family (\$15) _____ Benefactor (\$20-\$99) _____

Business (\$50) _____

Friend(\$100-\$249) _____ Sponsors (\$250-\$999) _____ Patrons (\$1000+)

Memorials in any amount are also welcome.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Cass County Historical Society
PO Box 505
Walker, MN 56484

Staff: Renee Geving, Director
Assistant: Jolene Safranek

Website:
www.casscountymuseum.org

Email:
casscountymuseum@gmail.com

Newsletter:
Cecelia McKeig
Renee Geving

Museum Phone: 218-547-7251
Summer Hours: Tuesday-Friday
10:00 - 5:00