

CASS COUNTY CLIPPINGS

April 1, 2009

CASS COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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

Ah Gwah Ching “E” or Eagle Building

In 1934, the State Board determined that the maintenance of Indian patients would be paid through the Indian Bureau at the same rate as was paid for state patients. The care of the tubercular Indian is an important step in the Board's program for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis in this state.

Following this legislation, one acre was deeded to the Federal Government on which the construction of the Indian Building began. On Dec 29, 1934, the Indian Sanatorium at Onigum burned and all patients were brought across the ice of Leech Lake and housed in temporary quarters until construction was completed. The Indian Building, later known as the E or Eagle building, opened in August 1935 with a capacity of 117 beds.

The building had five floors. The basement included a diet kitchen, dishwashing room, and a dish storage room, the dental office, and five rooms for patients. The second floor included the main entrance. The third and fourth floors included rooms for patients, several wards, the nurse's station and a day room, a dining room and diet kitchen, utility and linen rooms, washrooms, toilet rooms, and bath and shower rooms. The fifth floor was used over time for storage, union meetings, and an employees' locker room. A museum was established on the 5th floor in 1984 with facility-related historical records, medical equipment, artifacts, and a collection of WPA artwork collected at the Sanatorium during the New Deal. The museum closed in 1997.

Due to the increased number of patients following the opening of the Indian building, additional nurses were required. In order to house these employees, an old cottage previously occupied by male employees was remodeled and converted into a nurses' home annex, in which 21 nurses were housed.

A classroom was built and furnished in the Indian Building in 1946, and all students began taking their classes there.

Between Jan 1, 1946 and Dec 21, 1946, 289 patients were under care in the Indian Building. During those twelve months, 207 patients were admitted; 184 were discharged, and 18 died. The average number of patients at any one time was 85.

With the introduction of the new antibiotic agent, Streptomycin in April 1947, the treatment of tuberculosis changed. The death rate for tuberculosis showed a marked decline from 1945-1950. In 1952, sixty Indian patients were served out of a total population at Ah-Gwah-Ching of 240. In 1953, 44 Indian patients were part of the total population of 193.

The Minnesota Legislature determined that the purpose of the Minnesota State Sanatorium should change effective Jan 1, 1962 from a tuberculosis facility to a geriatric facility. No new tubercular patients were admitted after August 31, 1961. All tuberculosis patients were transferred by Jan 1962 to the Glen Lake Sanatorium in Minnetonka.

Volunteer Projects

We have some really neat projects that we'd like to get accomplished in 2009. If you have any expertise or just would like to be involved, please let us know by giving us a call or dropping us a note.

Pioneer School house needs to be constantly checked for damage from weather and insects. It needs a new coat of weatherproofing soon. The courthouse and the school windows need to be painted.

We have scheduled three history walks through downtown Walker this coming summer. We need help with costume development and actors.

We would like to develop trunks filled with local history that can be used by county elementary teachers to introduce their students to local history. We would like to see a few retired teachers as part of a committee that would work on this.

Our work continues on our obituary index. We could use help in clipping, pasting, and writing out cards for our file.

Upcoming Historical Society Programs

To celebrate **Archaeology Week**, we will be hosting a program on work being done in our county by the Leech Lake Heritage Sites team. Colleen Wells will be our guest speaker. Colleen is field director of the Leech Lake Heritage Sites Program, and you may remember her from the Walker Hill site near Walker. This program is scheduled for May 11th at 7:00 p.m. at the Cass County Museum. This is free to the public.

On Wednesday, June 10th at 7:00 p.m. at the Cass County Museum, Bob Herskovich, Chief Conservator at the Minnesota Historical Society, will be presenting a program entitled **Preserving Family Treasures**. Participants are encouraged to bring a family heirloom with them to learn how to preserve it properly. There will be no charge for this program. Watch your newspapers or call the Museum at 547-7251 for more information.

Walker History Walk #1 is scheduled to take place on June 16th at 7:00 p.m. and we will be exploring Cleveland Boulevard in its entirety. Come and learn the history of your own backyard, meet some special guests, and see where Mary Welsh Hemingway was born. We are asking that you purchase your ticket in advance for a nominal fee. Contact the museum at 547-7251 for more details.

Cass County Historical Society Board of Directors

Dan Eikenberry, Pres.
Lois Orton, V-Pres
Cecelia McKeig, Sec
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Diana Kramer
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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 second Tuesday of each month in the summer at 6:30 at the Museum.

The next meeting is scheduled for April 7, at 4:00 pm

Photos from a scrapbook of pictures taken by Cecelia Shabaish Morrison while a patient at the E building of Ah-Gwah-Ching. Scrapbook donated by her daughter Roberta Morrison.



Earlier T. B. Sanatorium at Onigum for Indian Patients

On November 15, 1924, the U. S. Indian school at Onigum, not used, was adapted and opened as a trial TB sanatorium of 85 beds. Chippewa Indian nurses filled it quickly. Congress by Public Act No. 1033 authorized \$50,000 of funds on deposit in the U.S. Treasury to the credit of Chippewa Indians of Minnesota to equip and maintain the Onigum Sanatorium for a year to find out whether Indians would accept sanatorium care. U. S. Indian Service Physicians, and nurses, cooperating with State Board of Health public health nurses, State Board of Control, and State Sanatorium staff, made it a success until December 29, 1934, when the Onigum building burned. Patients were taken across the ice of Leech Lake to the State Sanatorium. Dr. Herbert A. Burns, Superintendent, cared for them there until its Indian Ward (the Eagle Building) opened August 1, 1935, capacity 125. At Onigum Sanatorium, 877 Indians were admitted between Nov 15, 1924 and Dec 29, 1934.

From: Tuberculosis in Minnesota January 1953, quoted by Karen Keener in 100 Years of Caring, 2007.

Now that's An Obit!

Old Soldier Dies

Last Thursday [May 2, 1912], Andrew R. Wheaton, an old soldier died at the home of his sister Mrs. Ruth Sawyer here [Cass Lake], after an illness of four weeks following a paralytic stroke. He was born in Lincoln, New Brunswick, in 1843, and buried Saturday afternoon from the Episcopal church, Archdeacon Parshall officiating.

Wheaton married Myranda Haynes in Pennsylvania in 1874. He left her in 1876, going to Custer, Montana, and assuming the name of John Nelson, giving as his reason that he could not bear to live with his wife any longer on account of some trouble, which he would not tell his sister. His sister at this time went to Portland, Oregon, and for thirty years had not heard of the whereabouts of her brother. Wheaton came to Grand Rapids in 1878 from Minneapolis where he had assumed the name Jack Quigley. In 1899 he came to Cass Lake. In 1907 his sister Mrs. Ruth Sawyer moved here from the west. At about that time it became known that Quigley was Andrew R. Wheaton. He denied this until his sister insisted and then he finally admitted that he was Wheaton.

He made application in 1907 for a pension. Then it developed that the government was paying a pension to a woman who claimed she married him in Escanaba, Michigan, in 1884. Mrs. Sawyer got a copy of the marriage license which was issued to an Andrew R. Wheaton at that place and it showed that Wheaton's age was 35 years in 1884, which would indicate that that person in

1865 must have been a mere boy. This man claimed to have been born in Albany, New York, according to the marriage record, but Mrs. Sawyer got the birth and census records for Albany, looked up and no man by the name of Andrew R. Wheaton appeared therein until the early seventies. She wrote the adjutant-general in New York and was advised that no man by that name enlisted from New York in the Civil War.

An inspector from the pension department came to Cass Lake to make an investigation of the pension claim of Andrew R. Wheaton, here. At this time it became evident that the government would go on the theory that Quigley was not Wheaton, but a person intending to defraud the government. He was arrested for trying to defraud and was released on \$1000 bail bond.

He had mustered in on August 9, 1862, aged 19, and mustered out June 16, 1865, as corporal in Co. H., Sixth Maine infantry. Wheaton's boyhood home was Milltown, Maine.

He went to Maine after his arrest and release on bail to get witnesses to prove his identity. He found two soldiers whom he had known all his life, having gone to school with them, enlisted with them, mustered out with them, and with one of them having slept under the same blanket for two years in the army. He found two other men whom he had always known and was identified positively by them. He found four men in Pennsylvania who identified him also. Judge Cochran, formerly of Milltown, Maine, but now of Wisconsin, also identified him. These witnesses were all brought to the United States district court at the January, 1910, term in Duluth.

George Lydick of Cass Lake, a nephew of Wheaton assisted him financially to bear this expense. The United States attorney, when the case was called, asked to have it put over six months, stating that he was not able to get expected witnesses from Maine. Judge Morris however thought the government ought to be able to get them in two weeks, as Wheaton was under great expense in bringing his that distance. When the two weeks were up, Wheaton and his witnesses appeared but there was no appearance on the part of the government and the case was dismissed.

Congressman Lindbergh was pressing for action on Wheaton's claim for pension when he died. It seemed difficult to get any action in his favor as by doing so the government would admit error in granting a pension to a woman who posed as the widow of Andrew R. Wheaton.

Three sisters and two brothers survive him: Mrs. Ruth Sawyer, of Cass Lake; Mrs. M. H. Lydick and Mrs. Ellen Frost, of Milltown, Maine; George W. Wheaton, of Milltown, Maine, and Wm. H. Wheaton, of Oceanside, California.

(Cass Lake Times, May 9, 1912)

Individual (\$10)

Judy Laverne Arens
Francis Bean
Bob Bean
Karen Kezele
James O. Mans
Diane Pitzen
Dr. Otto Ringle
Elizabeth Sauer
Erma Schantle
Glenna Tappe
Betty Zaffke

Family (\$15)

Dick & Donna Evenson
Bob & Betty Kangas
Bob & Esther Rupp

Business (\$50+)

Acorn Hill Resort
Anderson's Grand Vu Lodge
Anderson's Spirit of the North
Anderson's Cove
Anderson's Northland
Chippewa Lodge
Hummingbird Press
D. W. Jones, Inc.
Orton Oil Company
May Creek Senior Living Campus

Membership - 2009**Benefactor (\$20 - \$99)**

Virginia Abullarade
Charles & LaVonne Beckman
Clarence & Bonnie Byersdorfer
Audrey Chelberg
Tom & Sarah Cox
Leland & Dorothy Delger
Don Flyckt
Jerry & Renee Geving
Nancy Jacobson
Don and Karen Jensen
Bob & Shirley Jewell
Diana Kramer
Cecelia McKeig
Steven Mecklenberg
Pat Munkel
Chris & Dorothy Opheim
Oliver Opheim
Carole Sargent
Dana & Bev Sheldon
Dick & Kathie Stoneking

Friend (\$100-\$249)

Dr. Steve & Sharon Bilben
Jim & Shirley Dowson
Betty Hutt
Jerry & Greta Steelman
Tom & Doris Williams

Sponsor \$250-\$999

First National Bank of Walker
Bob & Nita (Eagle) Frink
Lois Orton

Cities & Townships

City of Chickamaw Beach - \$25
City of Lake Shore - \$50
City of Walker - \$500

Fairview Township - \$50
Powers Township - \$150
Salem Township - \$30
Turtle Lake Township - \$500

As reported in the February 25, 2009 issue of the Pilot Independent, "Cass County Board Cuts \$1.4 Million from Budget" by Gail DeBoer, the Board asked the Budget Committee to review three \$5000 contributions in the 2009 budget for 1) Cass County Historical Society, 2) the Pine River Fair, and 3) the Pillager County Fair. Calling this expense "nonessential stuff," the motion to deny all three contributions failed on a tie vote. Another motion referred the request to the Budget Committee which will make its decision sometime in mid-May. Now, more than ever, we need your financial support to ensure that the doors of the Cass County Museum will open this spring as scheduled and that we will continue our hours of operation at four days a week, as in past years. If you do not see your name on this list, please reconsider and send in your membership or donation to show your support of our efforts in preserving the county's rich heritage.

2009 Membership

The Museum depends on your membership and donations to keep it going. Please consider your pledge for 2009 in one of the following categories. We are a 501(c)3 organization and contributions are tax deductible.

Membership

Individual (\$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
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Museum Phone: 218-547-7251
Winter Hours: By Appointment