

# CASS COUNTY CLIPPINGS

Oct 1, 2007

CASS COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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

## MY TIME WITH THE CCC'S

My name is Harry Loger and this is my story from almost 70 years ago.

On December 28, 1939, I ran away from a foster home. I was 14 years old at the time but big for my age. I went into Plummer, caught a freight train and headed south. I knew only one thing and that was, I was looking for a job. I still remember how terrible cold it was on that freight train. The first evening, the boxcar that I was in was parked on a siding in Bemidji. I tried to cover up with paper, but it didn't help much. I noticed a house not too far from the siding that had a light on. I went and knocked on the door. The couple living there invited me in, fed me and insisted I stay the night. I slept with their four children in one bed, sideways so we would fit.

The following day they told me what time the train left and scraped together all the money they had and gave it to me. My second day on the train, I stopped at Cass Lake. I jumped out of the car and walked over to a diner that was quite close. I walked in and ordered a sandwich and pop with the 50 cents I had in my pocket. I was talking with the waitress and she asked if I was looking for a job. I said, "Yes!" She said, "Well, I tell you what, you go over to the hotel on the corner and go into the lobby; tell the people there you are waiting for someone to pick you up. Stay there and my boyfriend and I will be there to get you when I finish my shift. He has a place to get you a job." I fell asleep while waiting for them. Finally they woke me up and asked if I was ready to go. I answered, "Yes, I am." He said we had to get going as we had two miles to walk.

As we were walking, I asked him where we were going; he told me a CCC camp.

The CCC camp was like a military area with the barracks and clothes they were issuing. The pay was \$30 per month. The individual got \$8 and \$20 was sent to a bank account as I didn't have any family. At that point he also asked if I was 17, because to work at the camp, 17 was the minimum age. He didn't think I looked quite that old, but he took me anyway.

When we finally arrived at the camp he gave me a bunk; they were military double bunks. He told me to stay put and he would get me some food. I was not to wander around while he was working. He kept me there for a couple of days, then told me he couldn't get me in at this camp but he had talked to the driver of a pop truck and learned that he was going to Walker and they were recruiting down there. I caught a ride with the truck driver and we headed to Walker. The truck driver took me to the building where I talked to the recruiter. They got me a bunk but were not taking new recruits until the 9<sup>th</sup> of January. They, however, did allow me to stay in the barracks. I was also directed where to go to get my food in the mess hall and so I waited until January 9<sup>th</sup> when I was recruited into CCC Camp #3709-F48 on the Breezy Point road. After I got all my paperwork done and provided information needed for my history, I got my clothes and was assigned to a barracks. They told me that the next morning they would be calling me and would assign me to a work crew where I would learn whatever job they were going to do. The first job I can recall was working on a ski slope in the Shingobee Hills area: keeping it fixed and working on a toboggan slide.

*Story continued on page 3*

## Cass County Research Center

Our facility has been quite busy again this season. Many people are viewing the 15,000 names in our obituary index on our website and have been requesting copies.

We've received a collection of old school records from around the county. Not complete, but nevertheless valuable for our research center.

Another item of interest is a small collection of photographs pertaining to the CCC Camp at Breezy Point, Walker Camp #3709. If you have any photos, which could be copied of the CCC Camps in Cass County, or were a member yourself, please consider contacting us and sharing some information on this period of Cass County history.

### COLD CASE ASSISTANCE

A call came in from the Criminal Justice Studies Department of the University of South Dakota from Director Steve Feimer. He was investigating the suspected homicide of a woman missing for sixty five years -- Mary Murray Everson-Dunn. Mary had been a resident of the Pine River area as a young woman. An article in the Sioux Falls, SD *Argus Leader* explains why this cold case file was reopened.

Mary Murray disappeared in 1951. She was divorced from her husband Harry and no longer lived in the area. When her son George visited his childhood home in South Dakota, he had a flashback of his parents fighting when his mother returned by train for a visit. His father Harry had a violent temper and he remembered at age 4 or 5 watching his father collapse the well, throw a load of rocks down it and tell the three kids to never go near it.

Mary's disappearance was never reported, and consequently there was never an investigation. We were able to supply information regarding the James and Mary Murray family to help establish a timeline of events surrounding the death/disappearance of Mary.

The son, George Everson, has hired a private company to bring in equipment and machinery to search for a 24-inch well in the field. The Hamlin County Sheriff acknowledges that there's no proof that a body is buried anywhere in the field, but he feels that the request for assistance merits attention. He said, "We would like to recover the remains and give her a proper burial for the family -- and bring some closure."

Searchers hope to get maps that predate the woman's death to determine where the well was located.

We are glad to help and hope for a resolution of the case to assist this family with Cass County roots.

### Cass County Historical Society Board of Directors

Cecelia McKeig  
Audrey Chelberg  
Sandy Pauly  
Dan Eikenberry  
Diana Kramer  
Kelly Nelson

### 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 at 6:30 at the Museum.**

**The next meetings are October 9th and November 13th**

A toboggan slide is an icy downhill ride. Every morning we would go down to Shingobee Creek, pick up spray buckets and then go to the top and spray fresh water to build up the ice on the toboggan slide, which if I remember right was 2 to 3 feet deep at the bottom and a couple of feet wide with a 3 inch gap at the bottom to hold the toboggan in a certain spot. We CCC's didn't have toboggans but we sure had a lot of fun after the water froze, riding down the slope on our snow shovels by grabbing the handle and sitting down on the shovel. What a ride! I don't recall how long I was at that site.

I was assigned to different types of work and different crews during the next few months. I was assigned to a crew that was cutting down certain-size pine trees and then cutting them into specified lengths and then taking them to a storage area. From the storage areas they were loaded onto trucks and taken into town. They were then used for telephone and power poles. One of the jobs I was assigned to was trimming pine trees. By that I mean we had to saw with a long pole. We would trim the lower branches of the pines so that more sun would get to the floor of the forest so other trees would grow. We would trim out the bad ones throughout the forest.

Another project I was on was to build roads and cut down the brush along the roads going to different areas that had either been burned out or were

without trees at all. We also built roads to areas where the Forestry would build fire lookout towers. I believe we did this in the Whipholt area. We would have to get a truck up against some place where we could pick up dirt. We would load the truck by hand to take dirt to areas where we put in pipes for drainage. This was quite interesting.

In these large areas where there were no trees, they would take a tractor and a single bottom plow and go through these areas. I forget how wide these rows would be, but they weren't always in a straight line. They pretty much followed the lay of the land and when the area was ready, we would have to plant pine tree seedlings. Each morning we would get a box of trees set down in different areas and then get a spade and dig an inverted hole. We would take the small planters, spread the roots, fill the hole back up and then move maybe 10 to 15 feet away and repeat the process. We would keep going like this all day long. I remember that I couldn't keep up with the older men. They were a little tough on me. The superintendents and the bosses of the camp (and there were a bunch of them) would be on your butt to plant faster and keep up with the rest of the guys. There were several times where I got kicked in the butt to hurry up. This went on for several days, and we planted a terrific amount of trees.

From there I went to fight forest fires. I'm not sure if it was a controlled

burn or after a forest fire but we would have a 10 gallon water tank with sprayer heads strapped on our backs and we walked through the forest spraying out the hot spots. We filled our tanks from the swamps in the area.

Another job I was involved with was helping to build small dams. We hauled in dirt and leveled and packed it down. They were more like diversion channels.

In the camp we naturally would have to keep the area clean. There were pool tables at the Recreation Hall in the camp. Sometimes a bunch of us would go to Leech Lake, especially on the weekend. We would either swim or play around. In the winter we would watch people ice fishing. No women were allowed in the camp, but there was a small dance hall near the camp on the highway to Walker. Locals know it as Fisher's Barn or the Silver Dollar Club. It got to where I would go to the dance hall occasionally and try to get involved like the older guys with the gals. I made a lot of stumbling mistakes but I enjoyed myself and it was a learning experience.

We would walk to Walker quite often, crossing over the bridges at the north and south ends of Shingobee Island. There were many things to do in town, but we mostly just walked around. It was a 3 to 4 mile walk from camp but we did it to keep busy.

Volunteers are urged to meet again on a regular basis at the museum to read newspapers and abstract the pertinent information and put it on 3x5 index cards. Obituaries from the Cass Lake Times have been completed from 1899 - 1980. Please call for information on dates and time.

Now to get into what I liked about the CCCs and what a great learning experience it was for me. I look back on it over the years and remember it as a very educational and great learning experience in life. I loved it. I was with different people with different ideas. When I was discharged, I remember it as something I was planning to go back to, but things happened in my life and I didn't get to do it. After I was discharged on June 25, 1940 and had picked up my check, the only place I had to go back to was the foster home. It took me several days to hitch hike back. Since I was actually not of age and knew nothing about my family, this was my only option. When I returned to the foster home, they notified the state that I was back and everything was ok. The people working for the State suggested that I put the \$123 check in the Orphanage at Owatonna's savings account and they would disburse it to me as I needed it since I was a ward of the State until I turned 18 years of age.

I'll never regret my time in the CCCs. I look back on my life and I know I used that experience; the first 18 or 20 years, it taught me a lot. I was pretty well educated about behavior in the military, so when I went into the service during WWII, it was extremely helpful.

I have been back to Walker quite a few times because all my life I had a passion for Camp 3709. I was directed to the Cass County Museum a few years ago where I met Renee Geving. She assisted me in finding the actual camp location, the ski slopes, where the bridges were that crossed the lake and other information pertaining to the camp. I truly appreciate all that Renee has done to help me get a very important part of my life back.

\*\*\*\*\*

On March 31, 1933 President Franklin Roosevelt signed Senate File 598, known as the Emergency Work Act which authorized the Civilian Conservation Corps. It cleared both Houses of Congress in three days and went to the president's desk. This program was born out of desperation during the Great Depression and soon became the most popular and worthwhile program of the "New Deal". Over 3 million boys were given a new start on life by working in conservation and forestry throughout the United States.

These camps had a significant impact on the local economy. Shoes and clothing, camp construction materials, beef, dairy goods and bakery items needed to be purchased. LEMS (local experienced men) were hired to help train the boys. The transportation industry flourished as well as movie theaters, bars and dance halls as many of the boys visited there on their weekend passes. Many a father kept his girls under close watch when the "Boys" were in town.

Camp Co. 1723 was located in Turtle Lake Township in the SW ¼ or NW ¼ of NW ¼ of Section 6, T141 R30W, one mile east on T.H. 34, now Hwy. 200 and ¾ mile north on a township road now known as the Breezy Point Road and was founded on November 7, 1935 with Captain Dietz in command. Construction of the 22 buildings began in September of 1935 and was under the supervision of J.C. Porisch, District Forest Ranger stationed at Walker. The camp would house 200 men who would work in the Chippewa National Forest. This was one of four national parks camps located in Minnesota. The men engaged in roadside beautification which included the territory between Walker and the State Sanitorium and cut down abutements overlooking Leech Lake.

A complete and detailed survey of Leech Lake, totaling 63,450 acres, was completed by Co. 1723 in March of 1936. This survey was the first of many to be used for extensive fish management in the Chippewa National Forest. The result of the compilation of all information was a contour map which we still use today, showing the depth at all points in the lake, the various types of soil and different species of vegetation.

In July of 1937 this camp was recognized as being the best tree planters in the Chippewa National Forest. Over 750,000 Norway and Jack Pine seedlings were planted during the year. In November of 1937, 150 recruits from Missouri arrived at the camp. Construction and landscape work at the 100 foot Whipholt Ranger Station was one of their first projects. Many worked on a survey involving 35,000 acres of forest land in 1937. That fall, 215 acres of Norway pine were planted and 450 acres would be planted in the spring of 1938. Improvements were made to

---

**Sponsor**

Acorn Hill Resort  
Anderson Family REsorts  
Carl & Judy Berg  
Don & Margaret Brown  
Dan & Sue Eikenberry  
First National Bank of Walker  
Jeanette Fisher  
Marcella Fisher  
Bob & Nita Eagle-Frink  
Grama Jo's House  
Betty Hutt  
Kelly & Jean Nelson  
Northland Logge  
Dr. Otto Ringle  
Spencer & Miriam Turner  
Tom & Doris Williams  
Underwood Family Foundation  
Walker Rotary

**Cities & Townships**

City of Bena  
City of Chickamaw Beach  
City of Federal Dam  
City of Lake Shore  
City of Longville  
City of Remer  
City of Walker  
Blind Lake Township  
Boy Lake Township  
Deerfield Township  
Fairview Township  
Inguadona Township  
Kego Township  
Leech Lake Township  
Lima Township  
Loon Lake Township  
Otter Tail Peninsula  
Pine Lake Township  
Pine River Township  
Ponto Lake Township  
Poplar Township  
Powers Township  
Salem Township  
Smokey Hollow Township  
Shingobee Township  
Sylvan Township  
Torrey Township  
Trelpe Township  
Turtle Lake Township  
Wabedo Township  
Wilkinson Township  
Woodrow Township

---

**Membership****Individual**

Amy Amando  
Frances Bean  
Bob Bean  
Vi Blackburn  
Margaret Dewey  
Bessie Engebretson  
Dick Hein  
Beulah Hendricks  
Mary Louise Isakson  
Nancy Jacobson  
Karen Kezele  
Diana Kramer  
Richard Myrha  
Elsie Nelson  
Frank Olson  
Mary Paskvan  
Diane Pitzen  
Howard Prushek  
Erma Schantle  
Bob Shelton  
Arthur Shenk  
Jeanette Silbaugh  
Sherry Wagner  
Betty Zaffke

**Patron**

Audrey Chelberg  
Tom & Sarah Cox  
Leland & Dorothy Delger  
Tony & Pat Doughty  
Don Flyckt  
John & Thelma Grimley  
Dave & Honey Hamilton  
D. W. Jones  
Cecelia McKeig  
David Nieman  
Norbert & Rosie Ochs  
Lois Orton  
Carol Sargent  
Jerry & Greta Steelman  
Dick & Kathie Stoneking  
Gary & Margaret Trimble  
Harry & Martha Winter

**Friend**

Cindy Alto  
Carol Bennett  
Gordy & Liz Dahn  
Sylvia Peterson  
Dana and Bev Sheldon

**Family**

Virginia Abullarade  
Henry & Ardyce Achermann  
Bob & Dodie Burdick  
Tom & Jennifer Coen  
Jim and Shirley Dowson  
Ken & Tanya Estabrooks  
Dick & Donna Evenson  
Jerry & Renee Geving  
Don & Karen Jensen  
Steve & Kay Johnson  
Robert & Betty Kangas  
William Kline  
Richard and Carol Knapp  
Molly MacGregor  
Eric & Dawn Myhra  
Patricia Oliver  
Chris & Dorothy Opheim  
Bob & Sandy Pauly  
D. Scott & Cindy Peterson  
Jim and Rhoda Pope  
Jocelyn Reus  
John Risteau  
Richard & Glenna Tappe  
Bob & Ann Winegar  
Bob & Germaine Yochum

**Business**

D. W. Jones Inc.  
Dr, Steve & Sharon Bilben  
Walker Animal Hospital  
Eric Myhra Ford  
Frizzell Enterprises, Inc.  
Heritage Arts & Gifts  
Hummingbird Press  
Huddle's South Shore Resort  
Leader Lions Club  
Leroy Strand Electric  
Little Apple Bookstore  
Norm's Auto Body  
Orton Oil Company  
Ranch House Supper Club  
Relative Research by McKeig  
Trapper's Landing  
Walker Rotary

**In Memoriam for :**

Dale Wilbur Geving  
Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Oliver

**Donation:**

Ron Libertis  
Cass County

the Stony Point picnic grounds. Two roads were slated for construction in 1938, one of which was built south of Diamond Lake off of Highway 34 (200).

In November of 1938, eighty boys from Co. 1723 formed a half-mile wide line and marched through a section in the Chippewa National Forest to participate in the Forest Service's annual deer tally. Information obtained from the tally assisted in a wildlife management plan to insure a perpetual deer population.

One of the most outstanding accomplishments of Co. 1723 was development of the Shingobee Winter Playground, which included a toboggan slide and a tow rope on the huge hill. The CCCs constructed a new forestry office building, garages, warehouses, and a home for the ranger at the Walker Ranger station. Current plans to replace buildings at the Walker US Forest Service and being developed. They also constructed the Walker lookout tower on the hill behind the city in the vicinity of the current Leech Lake Television tower. A skeleton crew was left at Camp Co. 1723 but Forest Service men were transferred: Henry Ziminski to Bena and Archie Cyr to Remer.

Co. 3709 was created at this site when 135 men from a camp at Grand Marais moved to this site on July 16, 1939 to fill the vacancy created when Co. 1723 moved to a location near Shoshoni, Wyoming on this same date. Enrollees from the Twin Cities arrived to fill up the camp which put the number of men here at 195. Verlyn Van Steenwyk arrived here and met his future wife, Dorothy Geving, at a dance at the Silver Dollar. He and Dorothy made their home in Walker where they owned several successful businesses. We have a camp photo dated Nov. 11, 1939 at the museum.

Look for a partial list of enrollees at camps throughout Cass and Hubbard counties in our next newsletter.

---

Cass County Historical Society PO Box 505 Walker, MN 56484
--

Staff: Renee Geving, Director

Website:

[www.casscountymuseum.org](http://www.casscountymuseum.org)

Email:

[casscountymuseum@gmail.com](mailto:casscountymuseum@gmail.com)

Newsletter:

Cecelia McKeig

Renee Geving

Museum Phone: 218-547-7251

Home Phone: 218-652-4377

Winter Hours: By Appointment