April 1, 2011

CASS COUNTY CLIPPINGS

CASS COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

P.O. BOX 505 205 MINNESOTA AVENUE W., WALKER, MN. 56484

The Walker Hospital



Our first hospital was located on the shores of Leech Lake next to P. P. Johnson's logging headquarters camp, complete with tavern, in the area of the present Northwoods Condominiums. A second story was added to the building in 1896, which made it the largest building in our new city. In 1898 soldiers of Company C, Third Regiment U.S. Infantry that were wounded in the 1898 Battle of Sugar Point were taken here for treatment. In 1900, P.H. McGarry, in partnership with Dr. Rodwell, set up a hospital in this building. In December of that same year, the building was totally destroyed by a fire of unknown origin.

P.H. McGarry began building a hospital on Fifth Street near the water tower in October of 1903. Walker was chosen to be the headquarters for logging operations on the Leech Lake Reservation in December of that year. Dr. Wilcox had two rooms for his offices there. He operated the hospital, which also served as a residence for the county poor for nearly 30 years. Dr. Wilcox was found dead in his office in the late summer of 1931 of an apparent heart attack. Dr. Otto F. Ringle took over operations and continued there until 1934 when he built a new hospital just across the street. The hospital continued on into mid 1940's with Dr. Hector Brown in charge before it was closed down. The building was leased to the Welfare Office in 1969 and eventually Cass County Social Services purchased the building in 1989 where they stayed until their new building was built.

History Walk

The second annual History Walk took place on July 20th and on August 24th. This year's walk covered the historical development of Front Street from 1896-1920. The walk started at 7:00 p.m. from the Cass County Museum and explored Front Street history. Twenty-three people attended each event.

Cass County Historical Society
Calendar of Events 2011
April 12, 2011 - Board Meeting at the Museum, 4:00pm

Week of May 2 – Museum cleanup in preparation for season opening May 9

June 14, 2011 – Board Meeting at the Museum, 6:30pm

July 12, 2011 – History Walk along Minnesota Ave, 7:00pm

August 9, 2011 – History Walk along Minnesota Ave, 7:00pm Board Meeting (time to be determined)

October 11, 2011 – Annual Meeting at the Museum, 7:00pm All members encouraged to attend

December 13, 2011 – Board Meeting at the Museum, 4:00pm

Cass County Historical Society Board of Directors

Dan Eikenberry, Pres.
Lois Orton, V-Pres
Karen Keener
Elsie Nelson
Sue Eikenberry
Don Beadle
Martha Winter
Alexis Hadraya - 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, obituary indexes, newspaper microfilm, and other archival materials are accessible for a \$10 research fee for non-members.

MIRACLE CURES OF YESTERYEAR

The miracle cures of today are old stuff to the folks who came to Cass Lake before the turn of the century, when there were doctors like Dr. G. A. Christensen.... The greatest cure for many years around Cass Lake was Dr. Christensen's famous Norwegian Butter, which could and did cure anything from ingrown toenails to dandruff. In fact, the Bemidji doctors at the hospital told Al Potvin, the barber, that they would have to cut off his toe to save his foot and his life. But Al, a stubborn Canadian Frenchman said, "No, you won't!" He went home and put some "Norwegian Butter" on it. He passed away years later with two sound feet, and all his toes.

Charles Hansey got his hand mangled in a corn sheller at the farm. The doctor was out of town, but Doc's son Hjalmer better known as "King" and his chum Leonard Peterson were taking care of the office. They cleaned up Charlie's hand, smeared "Norwegian Butter" over it and gave him some of the butter. Charlie went home and doctored his hand himself. He saved his hand and fingers.

During the flu scare of 1918, Dr. Christensen cured Ed Ittner with castor oil and sulphur and molasses, while folks were dying all around the state with what was known as the "best medical care available." There were stories told about laymen who arose to the occasion and doing surgery when called upon "to do their best." Jim Quinn, who was known as an honest man, told about how he had to cut off Frank McDonald's hand, when they were making hay on the Nuska Meadows. All he had was an ax and a hay knife, and a couple of bottles of Hostettler's Bitters. Frank, who was a relative of Jim Corrigan, verified the story of how Jim Quinn did the job. Frank will be remembered as the tough old lumberjack with one hand, who swept Cass Lake streets in the early days of the pavements. (*Cass Lake Times*, Feb 21, 1974)

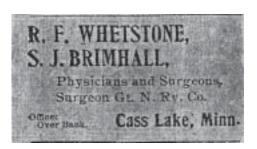
St. Michael's Hospital, Cass Lake

The hospital was first opened by the Benedictine nuns from Crookston in 1904. It was largely financed by the sale of hospital tickets from \$1 to \$5, which every jack in the woods was charged for against his wages as a sort of insurance against accidents in the woods. This entitled him to hospital care for a full year, provided his injuries were not related to the use of alcohol or a fight in a local bar. Typhoid fever was a constant fear in the lumber camps, and many men received care for this disease. Accidents in the woods were frequent, and many a lumberjack was indebted to these nuns for his life. Sister Amata sold these insurance tickets. Known as the Lumberjack Sister, she weighed over 200 pounds and was over six feet tall, and



she often traveled from camp to camp where she also darned the men's socks and listened to their "lonesome" tales about their wives and children.

The hospital was located on the site of the parsonage of the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in Cass Lake. It was a two-story frame building, with a porch. The nuns were dedicated and kindly nurses. Its reputation as a home for the sick and the indigent was of such character that few such institutions gained as much sympathy for its admirable management, but the hospital's support was never equal to the expenditures. It could not be expected to remain in commission without patients. It closed in November 1908 and was demolished in 1915.



Ad from the *Cass Lake Voice*, March 28, 1903.

We have not been able to locate a hospital named St. Gregory's. The plans were certainly made, but when it was built, it was named St. Michael's.

Mrs. Mosely, the colored nurse, has opened a private hospital in the P.J. Keating residence and is now ready to receive patients. Phone 127. Cass Lake, Oct 30, 1913.

Mrs. F. Senyohl, a professional nurse, offers her services to those needing them. Her age and experience render her services of great value to the sick. Mrs. Senyohl may be found at all times on the south side of the railway track, opposite the *Times* office. She will answer day or night calls on reasonable terms. (June 14, 1901)

Cass Lake St. Gregory's Hospital (1904)

Prominent citizens of Cass Lake have organized a hospital association in that town, and have elected the following officers to serve one year. President, J. D. Jones; Vice president, E. L. Warren; Secretary, N. P. Leisen; Treasurer, Samuel Sutor; Manager, H. R. Allerton.

The Scanlon-Gibson hotel property has been purchased for the purposes of a hospital and will be immediately fitted up for its intended use, and will be known as St. Gregory's. The building, which is a three-story frame structure is to be removed to a more desirable location and alterations made, both inside and out. As now built it is well adapted to its new needs, but will receive many modern improvements, so that when in complete condition for use, will be one of the best-appointed hospitals in Northern Minnesota. (*Bemidji Sentinel*, Feb 24, 1904)

The Wardner building next to the Endion Hotel, which was damaged by fire some time ago is being repaired for Dr. H.W. Smith, a former resident, who spent the past year in Michigan. (Sept 30, 1911)

Dr. Rodwell resigned his government position and returned to Cass Lake in 1911 to engage again in his profession.

Cass Lake Hospital (1914)

Dr. D. F. Dumas became the owner of the Fitger building opposite the Bay View hotel in April 1914. The doctor moved the building to the lot north of the post office and south of the *Times* office and fitted it out as handsome new quarters. The building was finished in hardwood and finely furnished. The ground floor of the building was occupied by L. H. Burns as a drug store; the upper floor of the building was used as the Dumas dwelling and a hospital. Besides the reception room, office and kitchen, there were six guest rooms and an up-to-date operating room. The doctor planned to employ sufficient help for his patients and also those who desired a temporary abode during illness. Rooms were provided for six patients. Dr. Samuel R. Fraker, physician and surgeon, came to Cass Lake about 1916 and purchased the hospital and practice of Dr. D. F. Dumas, and spent about five years at Cass Lake before moving to California. Dr. Dumas moved to Deer River and eventually to Bemidji where he had a practice on Beltrami Avenue until his death in 1933.

Coombs Hospital, The Cass Lake General Hospital

This hospital building was built as a hotel at the turn of the century, when speculators began buying land in and around Farris, where they expected James J. Hill to establish a railroad shop. But Hill moved the railroad repair shop to Cass Lake, where an entire complex was built along the railroad tracks. As Hill's plans changed, so did the destiny of the hotel, which was then moved from Farris to Cass Lake. The large building was likely moved in the winter, while the ground was still frozen to ensure safe travel. Once moved to Cass Lake, the building was known as the Cass County Hotel. Dave Foster owned it in its early days. Later the building became a hospital. It was used in that capacity for decades under the direction of Dr. Campbell and Dr. Coombs.

Dr. Coombs married Genevieve Simser on September 22, 1935 and graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1937. They both worked at St. John's Hospital in St. Paul before arriving in Cass Lake in February 1939, where he entered private practice. In Sept 1, 1939, Dr. R. W. Campbell and Dr. C. H. Coombs consolidated their hospital and office equipment and facilities into one unit. The Coombs hospital was discontinued. The Cass Lake General Hospital, only recently incorporated, could supply the needed facilities for better surgery and general care. Dr. Coombs took over the management of the hospital, as Dr. Campbell wished to be relieved of that responsibility. Mrs. Coombs, a graduate technician, and Miss Hiebert, a registered nurse, both joined the staff serving the hospital and doctors. Doctors' offices were maintained in the hospital, a portion of which was especially constructed for that purpose.

Dr. Carl Coombs joined the U. S. Navy in November 1942, as a Lieutenant j.g. He returned to his practice in 1946. Years later, Ileane Allen recalled giving birth to her third child, Bonnie, on Mar 8, 1948 in that hospital during a "raging blizzard." 'The furnace broke down," she remembered, "so the nurses filled all the hot water bottles they could find to pack around me to keep me warm. It worked." Paul Reimer also recalled



being born at that hospital in 1946. It was located just across the street from the Cass Lake City Hall just off Second Street. The hospital was closed sometime in the 1950s.

In September 1952, Dr. Coombs built his clinic. The village purchased the three-story building after assurance from the Minnesota Department of Health that it could be opened as a hospital. The citizens of Cass Lake voted overwhelmingly for its purchase. Then the Department of Health changed its mind and refused to issue a license for its use as a hospital, citing as one of the reasons that, "There were adequate hospital facilities only 13 miles away." The building was sold in June 1955 to Mr. and Mrs. Louis Stirewalt, who operated it as Stirewalt's Boarding House and later as Stirewalt's Apartments. Still later it became the Village Inn, also an apartment complex. Eventually, the building was condemned by the state fire marshal. It did not meet state fire codes, specifically due to its narrow stairwells on the top floor. The city purchased the building soon after it was condemned. A wrecker then leveled the old building, and when the wrecker was finished, the Cass Lake Volunteer Fire Department burned the building's crumbled debris. The area was then backfilled and landscaped into "green space." (*Cass Lake Times*, Dec 11, 2003)

Public Health Service Indian Hospital, Cass Lake

Superintendent Mark Burns of the Cass Lake Consolidated Chippewa Agency proposed a new hospital for Chippewa Indians in 1933. Funds in the amount of \$100,000 were placed to the credit of the Indian department by the National Industrial Recovery Administration to build and equip this hospital. Dr. Z. E. House, whose recommendations for a hospital supplemented Mr. Burns' suggestions, said, "It is significant that this \$100,000 is a gift from the federal government to the Chippewa Indians of Minnesota. No Indian funds will be taken for its construction and equipment. The sum of \$100,000 is adequate to construct and equip a very fine hospital." Construction of the new Indian hospital at Cass Lake began in April of 1936. Upwards of forty men provided the labor on the project and all were assigned through the NRS office in Walker. Officials of Grant Construction began pouring cement on the new hospital on May 10, 1936. Mrs. Irene Holes came to the Cass Lake Indian Hospital on June 21, 1941 as a Staff Nurse. She became Head Nurse on Oct 4, 1944 and in 1948 became Director of Nursing. She retired March 19, 1971 after thirty years of service at the hospital. James W. Tibbetts, Buildings and Grounds Manager, also worked at the Indian Hospital for thirty years. Mrs. Elizabeth Rowlette retired Nov 30, 1965 as the Administrative Officer of the Public Health Service Indian Hospital after 32 years of government service. She had served in the administrative capacity at Cass Lake since September 1956. Jerry Fagerstrom filled the position after Mrs. Rowlette's retirement.

Dr. Philip A. Klieger was one of the first doctors at the hospital. In March 1949, he warned that there was a mild epidemic of virus' pneumonia among the infants of Cass Lake. There were between 20 and 30 cases at the Indian Hospital. The oldest patient at the hospital was 10 months old, and they all were getting the benefit of the new drugs.

Individual (\$10)

Patricia Abraham Vi Blackburn Lori Gamache Karen Keener Karen Kezele Elsie Nelson Frank Olson Tom Salwasser Arthur Shenk Glenna Tappe David Yde

Family (\$15)

Bob & Dodie Burdick Don & Karen Jensen

Sponsor (\$250-\$999)

Bob & Nita Frink Lois Orton

Harry Winter Memorial

Membership - 2011

Benefactor (\$20 - \$99)

Virginia Abullrade
Audrey Chelberg
Leland & Dorothy Delger
Richard & Joan Downham
Dick & Donna Evenson
Tom & Lori Gamache
Jerry & Renee Geving
Nancy Jacobson
Bob & Shirley Jewell
Cecelia McKeig
James & Leona O'Neal
Chris & Dorothy Opheim
Carole Sargent

Richard & Elizabeth Sauer Erma Schantle

Gary & Margaret Trimble Martha Winter

Business (\$50+)

Acorn Hill Resort Steve Bilben

Friend (\$100-\$249)

Willard Arends
Carl & Judy Berg
Don & Margaret Brown
Dan & Sue Eikenberry
Betty Hutt
Gramma Jo's House
Kelly & Jeanne Nelson
First National Bank, Walker

Cities & Townships

City of Lake Shore - \$50
City of Walker - \$500
Blind Lake Township -- \$100
Fairview Township - \$200
Gould Township - \$100
Powers Township - \$150
Rogers Township -- \$50
Salem Township - \$30
Shingobee Township - \$1,000
Smokey Hollow Township - \$100
Turtle Lake Township - \$500
Walden Twp - \$50
Wilkinson Township - \$250

Please remember us with your renewal of membership for 2011.

The Museum depends on your membership and donations to keep it going. If you haven't done so yet, please renew for 2011.

Membership			
Single (\$10) Family	(\$15)	Benefactor (\$20-99)	
Business (50)			
Friends (\$100-\$249)	Sponsors (\$250-\$999)	Patrons (\$1000))
Memorials in any amount are als	so welcome		
Name			-
Address			
City, State, Zip			