
The Ethnic Voice

The Newsletter of the Moquah Heritage Society, Inc.

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Fall 2018

The Farm at the End of the Road

An interview with Frankie Pagac

By

Irene (Zurian) Walter

I remember when our farm was at the end of the road. We were the last house north of the South Fork of Fish Creek. The road originally came from Highway 137 to Old US 2, past Skulan's and through Pagac Rd to our house. The road crossed the Chicago - Northwestern Railroad line, which later became the Omaha. The big metal trestle was put in when US 2 was built in 1939. Sometimes we couldn't get out when the road was muddy in spring, so we would leave our car across the tracks by our neighbors, the Fusek's, until the road was passable.

My parents came from Červany Kamen (Red Rock) in Slovakia, then a part of Hungary. They came to America in 1910, first to Milwaukee then to live in the Benoit area in 1929. Frank's father, Jacob (Jakub) Pagac was born 25 July 1881 in Mikušovce, Hungary (now Slovakia).

Jacob was a member of the Hungarian Reserve Army. At age 24, he left from Bremen, Germany on the

Company. While clearing land near the present location of Pagac's Tavern, Steve was killed by a delayed charge of dynamite leaving his widow, Susanna with their four children. In 1925, Jacob's wife, Mary died while in childbirth, leaving their six children. Then on 29 August 1929, Jacob and Susanna married in the Dauby church. They had a son, Frank, born 31 January 1930. (information in previous two paragraphs from Misun Family History book.)



Photo of the original Pagac Tavern, ca. 1939, with Steve Pagac pictured. Photo from the Frank Pagac collection.

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S.S. Breslau on 15 May 1905 and arrived in Baltimore, Maryland on 29 March 1905. Both Jacob and brother Steve worked in Milwaukee for a while. Jacob worked in the foundry for International Harvester. Both brothers married while in Milwaukee: Jacob married Mary Misun and Steve married Susanna (Zuzana) Prekop.

Steve and Jacob bought adjoining forties of land in the Dauby area in 1910 from the James W. Good Land

I recall as a child going down to the (Fish) creek a lot. That was a big thing for us kids - to go and play by the creek. In the spring there was the marsh and all the frogs would start croaking and the suckers started running. We would build a bonfire and after fishing come home all wet. We'd take the suckers and pickle them like herring. They had a lot of bones, but after pickling, the bones

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A Message from the President

by
Irene (Zurian) Walter

The Lost Arts

In early June I had planted potatoes, hoping the late planting, weather and ground soil temperature would prevent an infestation of potato bugs later in the summer. We had several extras and were searching for someone interested in planting potatoes, but had real difficulty finding people who still planted gardens!

This past winter, when the Moquah Homemaker's Club was planning speakers for our meetings, I had hoped to find an "older" member of the community who was willing to share how to make wind breads and the Slovak version of kolache with poppy seed. Again, we only found one person willing to show us the old way of making these delectable pastries.

A few weeks ago, in church, my sister and I were looking at our hands as we sat quietly in the choir loft. Both of us had dirty nails; I from picking and canning beans and hers from weeding the flower patch. Of course, we scrubbed our hands after working outside, but there is only so much that can get clean unless we use bleach. Later, she recounted a dinner meeting where the wife of a couple was asking about making pickled beets. Barb explained that with a bit of work and care in planting and harvesting the beets, the process of pickling and canning the beets was relatively easy. However, the lady turned to her husband and said that maybe it is something that he should learn to do. Of course, she had nice nails...

So, why am I telling you these stories? More and more I am observing that we are all losing the ability to do for ourselves. We are forgetting how to make things, do things, fix things. When was the last

time anyone sewed a garment, even something simple, like curtains? Do you remember how to "spin out" lettuce in a pillowcase so it is dry enough to last for weeks in the refrigerator? Does anyone chop and split wood anymore? If something is broken, do you try to piece it back together with glue, nails or even duct tape, or do you just throw it in the garbage? Someday, all the reliance on electronics, gadgets and knowing we can "always find another one" will catch up to us. Those of us who learned how to do things "from the ground up" will be the new internet source. We need to keep the knowledge and practices our parents and grandparents taught us, things we don't learn from an iPhone or You Tube, and pass this information to others. I just hope there is a new generation out there willing to learn.

Irene

Readers Respond



"I stopped my subscription to the Ethnic Voice at the end of 2016. From talking to family that still get it, I'm finding that I miss it. If you could please restart me at the beginning of 2018 I would be grateful. Thank you." — **Marlene Fisher, Minooka, IL.**

Editors note: Thanks for coming back!

Thank You!

We would like to thank **Stephen Bartek of Deer Park, WA**, for his recent donation to the Moquah Heritage Society. We appreciate his generosity and thoughtfulness. His gift will be used for research about the Moquah area. Thank you again, the staff of the Ethnic Voice.

The Ethnic Voice is published quarterly to aid communication and promote the pioneer spirit between members and friends of the Moquah Heritage Society. Your ideas, articles and comments are always welcome. Please submit them or any questions to:

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Thank You!

Civilian Conservation Corps The Boston Camp

By

Dave and Irene Walter

Not much is known about the Boston CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) Camp. According to a hand-drawn map by Lillian Ottman (ca. early 1990s – drawn on the back of a Jeno’s pizza box) the camp is located about one-half mile north of Cherryville Rd. on the south-eastern border of Section 27, Town of Barksdale, just off the present-day Moquah Spur ATV Trail. Recently, Irene and I ventured to find the base of the camp but came up empty handed. Jerry Servinsky stated that he had only heard of the Boston camp.

In Bayfield County, CCC camps included Camp Brinks, 14 miles west of Washburn, Camp Twin Lakes, six miles east of Iron River, Camp Horseshoe Lake near Ino, Camp Delta, ten miles north of Drummond, Camp Pigeon Lake, five miles west of Drummond, Camp Taylor Lake, 12 miles south of Grand View, Camp

Cable, ten miles east of Cable and Camp Drummond, three miles east of Drummond.

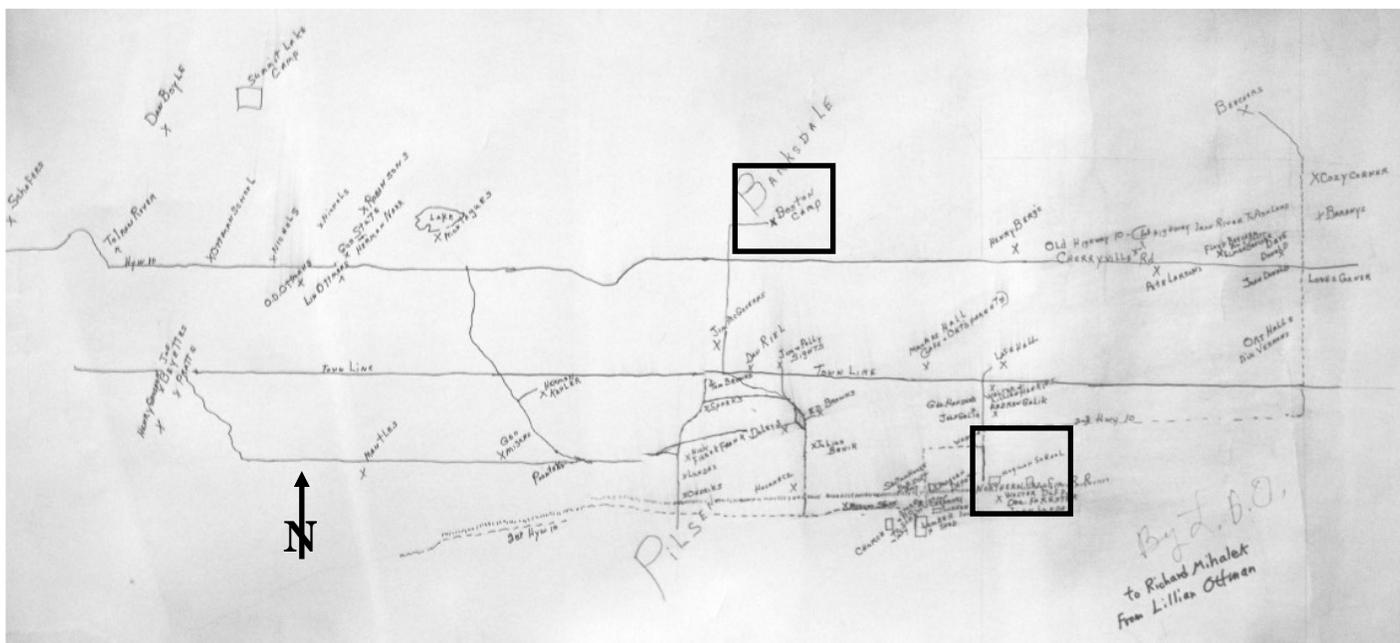
In many areas, the camps were primitive and often consisted of tents or plywood barracks. Camps included a mess hall, an infirmary and a recreation hall. No alcohol was allowed in the camps and bed check was at 10 p.m.

CCC members worked out of doors unless the temperatures dropped to 20 degrees below zero. The work was all done by hand with many young men being taught to use axes, jack hammers and dynamite for the first time. *(Previous three paragraphs from The County Journal, June 28, 2007).*

The CCC was a public works program that operated from 1933 to 1942 for unemployed, unmarried men.

A part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, the CCC provided unskilled, manual labor jobs related to the conservation and development of natural resources in rural federal, state and public lands. During the nine years of operation, three million young men participated in the CCC which provided shelter, clothing, food and a wage of \$30 per month—of which \$25 had to be sent home to their families. The early camps were set up with tents and unimproved roads, which may explain why it is so difficult to find the Boston camp today.

The CCC improved the men’s physical condition, increased morale and employability during the war years. They built wildlife refuges, fish-rearing facilities, water storage basins, and animal shelters. They fought fires, re-seeded grazing lands, implemented soil-erosion controls and planted more than three billion trees. They constructed trails and shelters in more than 800 parks nationwide. The CCC became a model for future conservation programs and led to a greater public awareness and appreciation of the outdoors and the nation’s natural resources. Source: Wikipedia and CCC Legacy Home internet sites.



Copy of Lillian Ottman’s map with highlight of Boston CCC camp location. The box at right is the location of the Moquah School and the upper box is the location of the Boston Camp

Pagac Interview

(Continued from page 1)

would get soft and you could eat them that way. It was a good source of food at the time.

During the summer we would walk everywhere. We would take off our shoes and walk barefoot all summer. We didn't have many toys, but I remember making toys out of mud. Then, finally Ann and Pauline (half-sisters) bought a bicycle with balloon tires while in Milwaukee and brought it here. Back then bicycles were a big thing. We were riding around all the time on the bicycle, even at night and the bike had no lights. We got into a collision on the hill by the house and he (half-brother Steve) got bumped on the head and knocked out. Ma was madder than hell and threw the bicycle away.

At home we were always building and fixing things. Fixing fence was always a job. In them days, you hauled the manure out by hand, you didn't have a manure spreader. Same with firewood. You didn't have a chainsaw, you built racks to cut the wood. We fixed everything by hand. We had those old wooden wagon wheels since we didn't have rubber in those days. Eventually I had a rubber tire that was nice and light. We used to play with it, rolling it around the yard. When we were butchering a piggy, my father asked, "Where's the tire?" Well, we ripped up the tire to make a good, hot fire for butchering.

In the winters, we'd go skiing. We didn't have any TV or radio. We'd make skis out of pine wood or barrel hoops but they didn't work as well as the pine skis. It was all we had, and we couldn't cut off a good board, because maybe you could sell it. By 1936 we had a battery-operated radio and would listen to Jack Benny and the Joe Louis boxing fights.

We used to travel to Ashland in the Whippet (a small line of cars

introduced in 1926-1931.) Frank and his siblings would get in the back seat. His father would roll down the window and spit out the window and the spit would catch the kids in the face. They never said anything, they were happy they were riding!

Of course, we had to walk to school. We would bundle up in our shawls and walk to Dauby school. By then it was combined with the Unity school. Of course, no indoor plumbing. Eventually the Ondossagon school bus came through here and picked up the farm kids. My first-grade teacher was Elmer Fusek. I had a poem I had to say called "Simple Simon." I don't remember it now. I used to roll a pencil back and forth between my hands. The teacher told me to "cut it out." "Frank come here." And he made me roll the pencil on the floor with my nose. Well, that taught me a lesson! I remember taking agriculture for two or three years at Ondossagon high school. Mr. Stuber was the ag teacher. I graduated in 1949.

My folks had built up a small farm as I was growing up. At first, they had 12-13 cows, mostly Guernsey, then eventually 20 cows, and mainly Holstein because they gave more milk. Many of the local farmers sold cream, some even had cream separators. They would feed the pigs the skim from the milk and the pigs grew like crazy. When the war came (WW II), Benoit decided to take whole milk (at the creamery). They had a butter churn right there. Instead of every farmer having a cream separator, you would just ship your milk and it would get separated at the creamery. Then they started drying milk for war production. Now, most of the farmers are gone. I think the Town of Eileen had about 130 farmers, now there are only three left. And Keystone township is the same with about 110 farmers, now only two or three left.

When US Highway 2 went through in 1940, everything became older (referring to the farm and the farm machinery) and everything was changing. My father figured he would put up a little business. He built a

tavern, not the present one, but one close to the present site. He cleaned out a bunch of pines from the land and he had some lumber, so he built a little building. So, he started to run the tavern. I was still going to school at the time. About the time I graduated from school, my dad became sick. He was paralyzed from a stroke, so I stayed home and helped run the farm and tried to modernize things with a newer tractor and by selling hay bales. I started to make a little money, but then couldn't sell the bales, so I rented the farm out to Bill Johnson. My half-brother Steve took over the tavern business until 1989. He started talking about starting a little camping business, so we worked together. We always worked together, sometimes I would tend bar. Eventually we put in septic tanks, a bath house and sites for overnight campers in the area north of US 2. But it didn't go over very well. It seemed that the rich people with the Airstreams would be the ones to do business with, but they were so particular. So, we gave up on camping and then mobile homes started to move in. We added more units and then my brother passed away in 1989 and I had to decide what to do. I had to make a big investment in putting in a new septic system, but it turned out ok. The present site, with 15 units, provides water and sewer and is going pretty well now.

I've run the tavern since my brother passed away. My niece, Sue Sandor helps with cleaning and paperwork. Sometimes I don't know where she puts things. During the interview, Frank failed to mention that he served the famous wrestlers "The Crusher" and "Dick, the Bruiser" at the tavern back in the early 60's.

Frank is very proud of having visited Slovakia twice in his lifetime. The first time in 1992. He decided to write to a cousin of his mother's in Cerveny Kamen. He put on his cowboy boots, shirt, pants and went on a tour for six days and then five days on his own. He rented a car and driver at the end of the tour and

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Pagac Interview

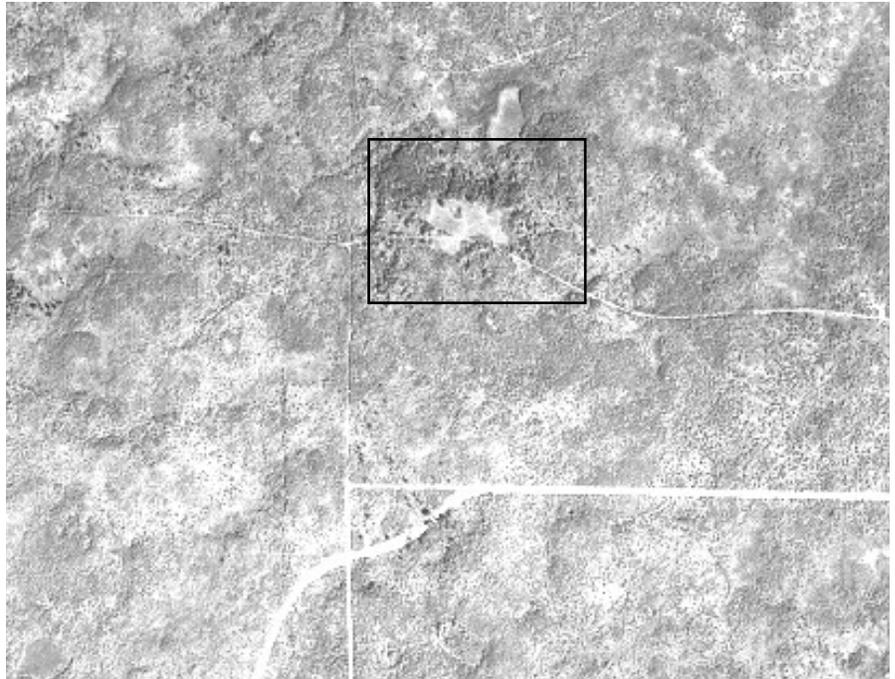
(Continued from page 4)

found a cousin he had written to. He stayed with the cousin and the taxi driver drove him all over the area, touring the capital, the palaces, churches and even the house where his mother was born.

The second time Frank went, the village of Červany Kamen was celebrating its 500-year anniversary. He became acquainted with a guy named Pagac who was a school teacher. But he was unsure if he was an actual relation since many people in that area had the surname Pagac. This teacher had paintings on the wall and he invited Frank to take one of the paintings. So, Frank took a painting, but he had to hand-carry it all the way back to America! A picture of the village of Červany Kamen.



Frank passed a way on December 25, 2017. Sue Sandor continues to run Pagac's Bar and Norway Trailer Court with help from son Steve. One of the tables is covered with old photos, sealed in varnish and preserved for all time. Although Sue has remodeled the interior, one can still imagine seeing Frankie sitting at a table and playing smear with his friends.



Copy of 1938 aerial photograph showing a clearing in the forest as the likely location of Boston Camp. The white line is the extension of Cherryville Road, Forest Road 238. This location is seven miles west of Highway 13 and correlates almost exactly with Lillian Ottman's map on page 3.



2. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29

The Moquah Heritage Society received a donation of a Slovak Calendar from the Frank Pagac estate through Sue Sandor and it will become a part of our collection. The above photo is a representative example of the pages in the calendar for the year 2000. This calendar was sent to Frank from Ing. Jozef Prekop of Trencin, Slovakia on 29 December 2000 (after Jozef had used it during the year). The photo is of Krasna Horka, a castle near the town of Roznava in the south eastern part of Slovakia. It contains photos of castles including Spis, Orava, Bojnica and many others throughout the country. The Moquah Heritage Society is happy to receive this treasure. Thank you, Sue.

In Memoriam . . .



Robert E. Miller, 88, of Minneapolis, MN, passed away December 24, 2017. He was born in Moquah, the son of Peter and Agnes Miller. He was preceded in death by his parents, Peter and Agnes; 11 sisters; 1 brother; and his wife Bonnie. Bob is survived by sons Jeff, Bob, and Bill and daughters Mary and Kris. A funeral was held at Southtown Baptist Church in Bloomington, MN.

Agnes E. (Sommers) Dymesich, 92 of Benoit, WI passed away August 29, 2018 at Northern Lights Health Care Center in Washburn, WI. She was born at home near Benoit, the daughter of Paul and Amelia (Anich) Sommers.

On Oct 4, 1947 she was united in marriage to Thomas S. Dymesich at Saint Peter Catholic Church in Dauby, WI. Agnes and Tom owned and operated the Avalon in Benoit for many years. She was a member of Saint Pater Catholic Church in Dauby and its Altar Society. Survivors include her children: Thomas (Susan) of Denver, CO, Donald (Nancy) of Mason, WI and Bonnie (Michael) Brasic of Montgomery, TX and Benoit, WI; and her brother, Jack Sommers of Ashland, WI.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Tom, son, David & two brothers and four sisters. A Memorial Service for Agnes was held at Saint Peter Catholic Church in Dauby. Interment was in Saint Agnes Cemetery, Ashland, WI.

Anne M. (Opatik) Sznaider, 95, of Brule, WI passed away September 25, 2018 at Northern

Lights Health Care Center in Washburn, WI. Anne was born in Moquah, the daughter of Thomas and Mary (Michuda) Opatik. She was married to the late Isadore C. Sznaider.

Survivors include her children, Thomas (Trina) of Waukesha, WI, Salomea "Sally" (Terry) Lee of Rock Falls, WI, Loretta (Mike) Rinzel of Bloomer, WI, Ronald (Michele) of River Falls, WI and Raymond (Tuula) of Brule, WI.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, Isadore, grandson, Joshua Sznaider, great-grandson, Vinny Lee, a sister, Mary Veda and brothers, Thomas, Frank, Joseph, Edward & Rudy Opatik.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Anne was celebrated at Saint Michael Catholic Church in Iron River, WI. Interment was in Saint Michael Cemetery, Iron River.

Joseph M. Pocernich, 94, of Ashland, WI passed away September 27, 2018 at Court Manor Health Services in Ashland. Joe was born in Benoit, WI the son of Daniel and Mary (Basic) Pocernich.

He was united in marriage to Lucille L. Leciejewski in Ashland. She preceded him in death. In 1979 he was united in marriage to Mildred G. Foley in Ashland. Mildred also preceded him in death.

Survivors include his children: Joanne (Bernie) Brinker of Ashland,

Karen (Richard) Sandor of Menomonie, WI and Ronald (Susan) of Colorado Springs, CO; and his sister: Katie Augustine of Moquah, WI.

Besides his wives, Joe was preceded in death by his parents, daughter, Marie Kaseno, brothers, Steve, Dan, Ivan; and sisters, Helen Hecimovich, Lou Cobb, Ann Ziman, and Mary Bonovich.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Joseph was celebrated at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church in Ashland. Interment was in Saint Agnes Cemetery, Ashland.

Irene (Podolan) Glass-Neuman, 98, of Washburn, WI, and formerly of Delta, WI, passed away, October 2, 2018 at Northern Lights Health Care Center in Washburn.

She was born in Delta, the daughter of Stephen and Elizabeth (Visocky) Podolan. She was married to the late Herman Glass. Irene later married Ed Neuman and he preceded her in death as well.

She is survived by three children, Dennis (Liz) Glass, Delta, Dawn (Craig) Stinebrink, Hillpoint, WI and Sherry (Kevin) Smith, Delta; three sisters, Eleanore Bizub, Milwaukee, WI, Theresa Vlasaty, Washburn and Catherine Wuennecke, Ashland, WI.

Besides her husbands, Irene was preceded in death by her parents; son, Gordon Glass; grandson, Dale Glass; sisters, Elizabeth Horstman, Ann Fetsko, Agnes Gazdik, Helen Johanik and Frances Bednarik; and brothers, Albert "Pudy" Podolan and Frank Podolan. No services were held at this time.



Moquah Heritage Society Items for Sale

Slovak-American Cook Book — \$12.00

Published by the First Catholic Slovak Ladies Association on the 60th Anniversary of their founding in 1952, this is the 19th edition. The cookbook includes the favorite Slovak and American recipes collected through the years by the members. Includes recipes for paprikas, halusky, klobasky, studenina and pastries like roshky, fanky and kolacky. (hard cover 439 p.)

The History of the Moquah Area —\$10.00

This is a reprint of the original book compiled by Jerry Novak in 1966. We have recreated, to the best of our ability, the original format and content. We did, however, make a few corrections and added some names to photos from the original book in an addendum. **The price includes shipping and handling.** (42 pages)

The Volumes of the Ethnic Voice — \$15.00 each

The Ethnic Voice in five-year sets. Each book contains 5 years of area history, news and local happenings. Issues from 1987-1991, 1992-1996, 1997-2001, 2002-2006, 2007 to 2011 and now **2012-2016** included in volumes 1 through 6. Please add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

Getting Ahead, From Love of Reading to Love of Healing—\$17.00 (plus \$2.00 shipping)

An autobiography by Dr. August Jurishica, this book traces his early life from growing up in Slovakia, his immigration to the U.S. and all the obstacles he encountered on his way to a medical degree from the University of Wisconsin. An inspiring story of struggle and success.

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This old photograph is of a CCC camp somewhere in the National Forest. The annotation states that it is in the Moquah National Forest, Washburn, WI. The problem is Company 640 of the CCC was stationed at the Pidgeon Lake Camp west of Drummond, WI. The Boston Camp mentioned in this newsletter could have looked very similar to this. This photo is from an unknown source.