

**"Semi-Autobiography—
And Call Of The Wild"**



by **CHESTER ANGSTMAN**
Ogema, Minnesota

\$1.50

To Law from
Alvin

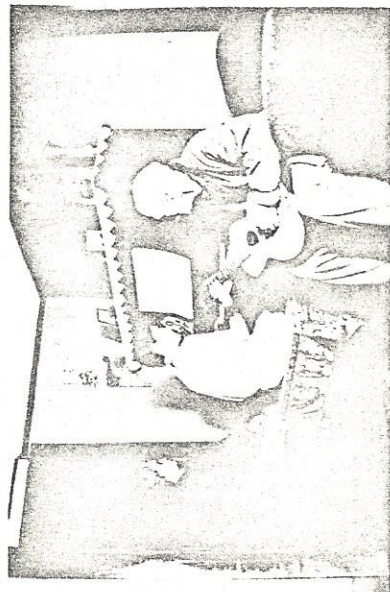
A few adventure stories and game conditions of the past, by Chester Angstman.

I was born in July of 1905 in a farm house three miles east of Farmington in southern Minnesota assisted by a country doctor whose name was Doctor Dodge. They registered me as boy number four because no name had yet been picked for me. I spent most of my young life playing alone in an orchard near the house. This was where I kept my toys. These consisted mostly of small iron horses and cows, horse drawn fire engines, manure spreaders and threshing machines. I would mix a cement of woodashes and clay and build little houses and barns of it. When I was five years old I was playing horse with my older brother Everett as the horse, while I was on a small wagon with a spring seat. He was too much for me, and I had a runaway. As he turned a corner the wagon tipped over and when I opened my mouth to yell I got the rim of a regular farm wagon in it. It tore my mouth on both sides, and I still have this scar today. When I was six I climbed an eight foot fence to watch a veterinarian work on a colt. I had been told not to, so I cautiously peeked, but something scared me and I slipped catching my leg in a barbed wire that was hanging on the side of the fence. It made a cut a foot long and this scar too remains today.

THE TREK TO THE NORTH

In 1913 my folks decided to move about two hundred and twenty miles north of Minneapolis to Ogema, Minnesota in Becker County. It was a lumbering town and my three brothers and I were enthused as we had heard lots of stories of trapping, wild ducks, geese, bear and prairie chickens.

My older brothers, Harvey, Everett and Alvin went with dad on the stock train where they rode in a box car with the horses. A few days later my mother and I boarded a Soo Line passenger train and went to join them. Dad had hired a contractor to build a two story house of cement blocks in the north east corner of Ogema. We had bought an eighty acre farm adjoining the east side of Ogema. My mother and I arrived at the depot at 6:05 p.m. in October. It was dark by then and dad met us with a kerosene lantern. We walked to our home one mile from the depot. There was a boardwalk through town, but the last quarter mile was dirt road. Ogema had a population of about four hundred people at that time all of mixed nationalities. I remember walking down the board sidewalk with father and mother where about every tenth board was missing. There were three kerosene street lights in town. Dad was telling mother that there were three stores in town, a post office, six saloons, two pool halls, four hotels, three livery barns, two blacksmiths, two shoe shops, two drugstores and one doctor. A dentist moved in later. There were also two butcher shops and a cement block factory. The blocks for the creamery and school were built in this block factory on the west shore of



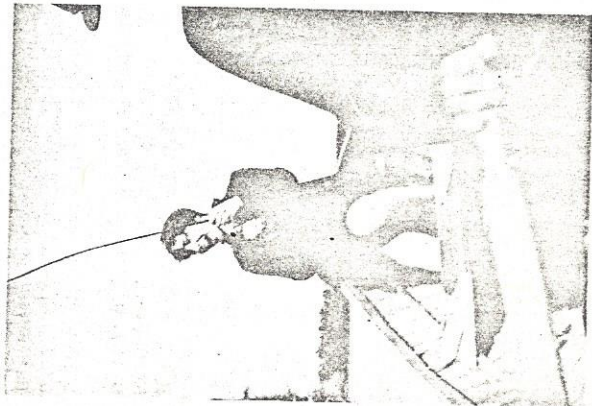
My dad and mother and hired girl in our home at Ogema



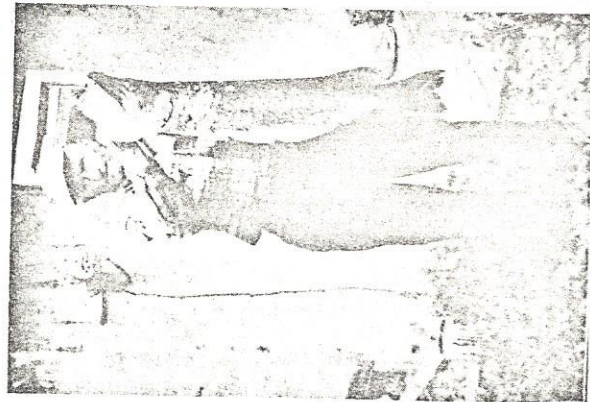
Chester — age 14

Ogema Lake, then known as Uran Lake. I started school that fall at the age of eight. I had not gone to school in Farmington as the country school was one mile away and too far for me to walk. My dad could not take me as he was too busy in the winter hauling hay to south St. Paul by team and sled. It was twenty-five miles and took two days to make the round trip. So, now in Ogema I went through the usual routine of school, some scraps, some foes, some friends and a cracked collar bone playing football when about fourteen. I graduated from eighth grade at sixteen.

I enjoyed the summers and was fishing and hunting by the time I was twelve. My dad let me hunt ducks and prairie chickens as much as I wanted to, as long as I went alone. I was not allowed to hunt with other boys until I was sixteen. By that time I had shot lots of prairie chickens and ducks. It was nothing unusual to shoot fifteen prairie chickens with a single shot shotgun in one hour's hunting half a mile from home. I was around seventeen I think when I shot my first deer. This was on a hunting trip up thirty-five miles from Ely, Minnesota. I went with two companions, Norman Wyvell and Herb McArthur. This was the first time I got lost in the woods. I was hunting alone and crossed a swamp two miles wide to get back to our camp. I was lost for a couple hours but heard a truck on the main road that went by our camp and followed the sound until I hit the road only half a mile from our location. A couple of years after we arrived in Ogema my father and brothers worked in the cement factory besides running the farm. I used to go there to catch rides on the little railroad cars. One of the workmen, Jake Loring, used to give me rides on the my chores to do on the farm, but also spent many days swimming in the lake with the other kids. I nearly drown once when I fell out of the back end of a boat. When I was eleven years old a man named Ed White taught me how to snare fish in a fish house. This man could not afford a fish spear, so he snared the fish with a stovepipe wire. I too snared fish for several years until I acquired a spear. It is very simple to snare them, and I have done it in recent years to show how it is done. There was lots of fun when I was a kid. There were the silent movies twice a week in town, and my dad gave me money to go to nearly all of them. Then once a year the circus came to town.



Here I am rowing the boat, guiding for a Milwaukee girl

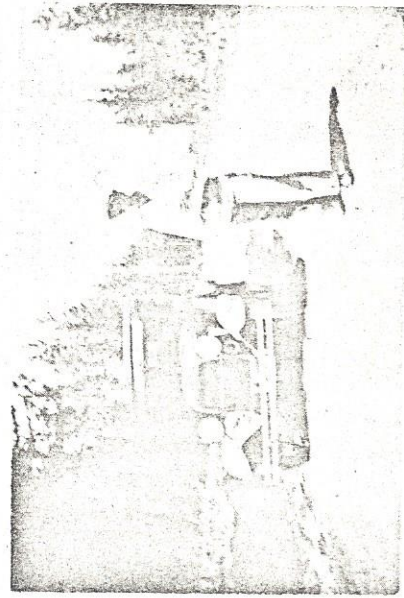


One I got in White Earth lake

When I was very young I would go with my mother to Sunday School. It was held in a dance hall above Bisson's Pool Room. Living on the farm made it nice for me to trap muskrats and weasles. They were plentiful, and weasles brought three dollars each and muskrats as high as five. There were thousands of muskrats, but the trappings were short as there were few cars and people divided up the trapping territory because of the problem of covering too much distance. No one stole traps or animals. They would kill the game in your trap if they thought it had a chance to get away. Then they would leave it there for you. There were quite a few otter and lots of mink. Mink were worth about ten dollars each. People did not use dogs to get mink until I was about eighteen years old. That started a decline in the mink population.

You didn't need an alarm clock in those days. The prairie chickens would wake you with their cooing, and wolves howled all night. There were bears to the east. I hunted wolves a few times but never shot any. My brother Everett had a pulp camp about twenty miles east in the timber in about 1926. We hunted there some, and trapped a lot. There were only dirt roads, and transportation was slow with horses. I remember in those first days in Ogema there were sometimes ruts in the mud two feet deep in town right in the main street. In the grove where I now live, a band of Indians camped the year round in birch bark teepees. Some of them wore feathers the year around. There was a stage coach hauling mail from Ogema to White Earth and an Indian village five miles east. I used to take the stage to the White Earth Indian celebration when I was around fifteen or so. They had an annual celebration the fourteenth of June. Hundreds of Sioux came from South Dakota with buggies and camped for several days at White Earth.

There were lots of ducks in those days as not too many people had good guns. There were very few cars, and the roads were bad all over. For this reason they did not chase the ducks out of the country as they do now. I remember when I was about twenty years old one morning I walked down to the lake which was about 400 feet from our house. I heard lots of ducks splashing and quacking on the other side of the lake. I walked around the lake and sneaked up to the ducks at daybreak. I decided there were too many to shoot alone so I crawled back and went to the edge of town and woke up the Standard Oil man, Clyde Farley. We were also joined by Clarence Warren a lumber scaler. We walked right up to the ducks before they started to get up. We had two pump guns and an automatic, and emptied them once. Clarence said, "don't shoot anymore, we've got our limit now." (I think the limit was thirty-five each at that time). Anyway, I was left with the job of picking them up because Clarence had to go to work at eight, and Clyde had to deliver some gas to a farm. I took Clyde's boat to gather up the ducks and had to finish off quite a few of the wounded ones. I picked up one hundred nine Redheads and one



Me with my model A pickup on 110 mile minnow route I made twice a week for six years. The picture was taken on CC short cut road from Tulaby lake to Twin lakes

Mallard. These were all from a pot shot. I must admit that it was a little better than the average, but it was nothing to get from thirty-five to fifty in an afternoon hunt. Nowadays people might think that was wasteful, but it wasn't because we canned them and ate them all. It was nothing to see ten thousand ducks in a flock those days. Everyone who hunted could get all they could carry in a couple hours. There would be that many today if there were no more guns than there were then. Most hunters only had a single shot, or a double. Shells were a dollar a box, and most people could afford only three or four boxes a year.

That was what I call "in the good old days". Wages were a top of three dollars a day and the average was a dollar. Most people were really honest. The young people today would not believe this, but I remember when you could shoot a deer any place in the woods, ten miles from home, or fifty. Hang it up in a tree and come back ten days later at the end of season and get your deer. They were never stolen. When I am writing this in 1965, there are quite a few old timers who will swear this is true, but in a few more years there will be no one who remembers those days. In fact, though I don't recall the year, I remember seeing in the headlines in the Minneapolis paper the following: "Deer stolen from hunter". A man had hung a deer in the woods and went back eight days later at the close of season to get the deer and it was gone. It made headlines. It used to be common to see fifteen or twenty deer hanging in trees for a week with no hunters camped within miles. When you put your tag on the deer it was yours and no one would think of touching it. Us old timers have seen lots of changes in the times. However, I did not live back in the really uncivilized times. My dad saw the days when they had only candle light and did their field work with oxen. But, when I was a kid we had kerosene lights and even a kerosene mantle light in the dining room. I do remember old man Jirava coming to town with cream driving oxen and plowing and building roads with oxen. Today his sons are among the best and biggest farmers in this territory. I also remember the first indoor toilet put in this area. But, civilization, as happiness, is whatever you think it is. I like young people and get along with them good, so I would not say much about the way they do things now days. Sometimes when I get in an argument I end it by saying, "well, I lived in the civilized days when people ate indoors and had their toilets outside." Of course, that's just a joke, I'm all for inside bathrooms - especially when it is forty below zero outside!

This was supposed to be a story of my life, but I find I am talking mostly about the times and days of good hunting and fishing. I was a fishing guide for years and caught many thousands of fish. I was also a taxidermist, and mounted fish for people all over the United States. But, as far as my life is concerned, after I get started to write I decide there is a heck of a lot I wouldn't want in print. Isn't that the way with most people my age? WOW, if I see some of these young people doing things like that, I think they are nuts. We didn't have the fast automobile then. I think that is a cause of lots of the trouble now. As a whole though, the kids are



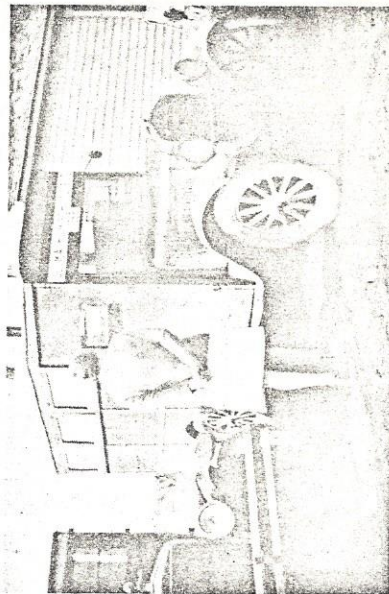
My shack on Bass lake

pretty good. I had quite a lot of experience with them as I was janitor at the Ogema school for four years, and I found some good in all of them. Maybe you had to look a little harder in some of them.

When I was about twenty - five years old I was working for Louis Beckman, a trucker. We hauled logs, lumber, potatoes, hay and pulpwood. We usually loaded these articles into box cars. One fall we decided to go in partnership on a pulp camp. We bought a fifty acre swamp with very good timber on it. It was about thirty miles east of Waubun, Minnesota. Clyde Farley said he would lend me new lumber to build a shack, and help me build it. So, Clyde, Lou and I built an eight by sixteen foot shack and equipped it with two beds, stove, table and other necessities. We hired a few men, including Walt Knoth and Lloyd Doty. One day when we were about out of grub Walt and Lou took a truck load of logs to Detroit Lakes. This was about fifty miles and quite a ways in those days when the roads weren't too good. They had a big grocery list as we had run a little too low on groceries and used up the last for our dinner. Beans Polak and I were cutting timber and Lloyd Doty was skidding with one horse on a go-devil. It had been snowing lightly all morning and by the time we had finished dinner it really was coming down. I reminded the boys that we were out of grub and that it would be possible for the storm to get bad and our trucker not get back. If we went out and cut timber we would get hungry and weak if we didn't get food. I suggested we stay right in the shack and save our strength. We played cards most of the day. We had a one tube Crosley radio with earphones and kept in touch with the weatherman. They were predicting a big



Me and a friend about 1930



Ogema's first school bus, about 1925

storm. The roads were already blocked on the prairie, and our trucker did not get back until the fourth day. That first night we did not mind going without supper. We were out of cigarettes and we all smoked. We smoked up the last pound of tea. (Very poor smoking). We had no coffee, no milk, in fact no more food. We had to cut a hole in a little lake or pothole we camped on for our water. This little pot hole was twelve feet deep, so I thought it just might be possible for a few fish to be in it. I cut a hole about twenty inches in diameter, made a decoy out of a piece of wood and a snare from stovepipe wire. I layed a blanket over the hole, then crawled under it and lay on my belly about two hours hoping to see a fish, but there was none there. By that time it was about noon and the boys were getting pretty hungry. I told them I would shovel in the snow and try to find some of those big pork rinds we had been throwing out in the yard the last two weeks. By that time the snow was three feet deep on the level in the woods. I found a few pork rinds, and told them we would have pork rind soup. We had no salt and when I cooked them it looked like dish-water. You couldn't eat it or drink it. Then toward supper time I said, "we'll have supper tonight, I just happened to think we've got half a gallon of oats left for the horse and we'll make oatmeal." So, I cooked the oats thinking it would be like oatmeal, and we could eat it to keep from starving even without milk or sugar. But, it was poor oats and after it cooked a little it was nothing but a bunch of chaff. There were no cottages or resorts along the way at that time. We only had light jackets so could not walk the thirty miles to Waubun as it was forty below zero. The

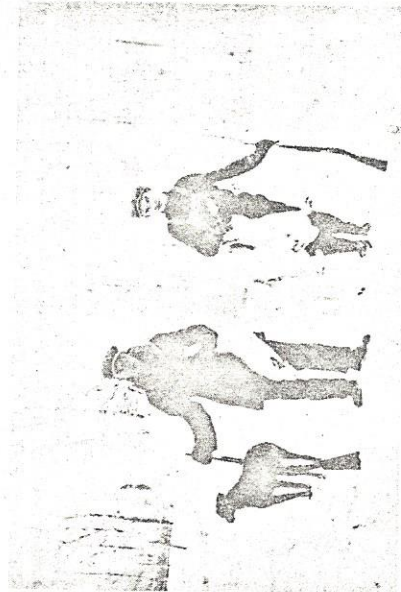


My pal William Morrison



Earl Groth planting spuds on his farm near Ogema. This is the team I always drove when I worked for him

afternoon of the third day I told the boys I thought I could get a snowshoe rabbit as there were quite a few, and we had lots of brush piles. But, it was hard to get from one pile to the next through three feet of snow. I did manage to jump on about seven or eight brush piles, and finally out came a rabbit. I got him with the 22 cal. rifle I had. It was a big snowshoe but pretty skinny. I took it to camp and Beans dressed it. I threw it in a kettle and boiled it. When it was about half done they took it out and Beans and Lloyd ate it in about five minutes. I didn't even taste it, in fact, I didn't care to. That night the storm let up and they decided to walk out in the morning. We only had half a bale of hay left, and the snow was too deep for the horse to pick any dry grass. Actually, a horse can hardly walk in three feet of loose snow anyway. About eight o'clock in the morning I told the boys I didn't care to strike out walking as it was still thirty below and I had only a light jacket. So I told them I'd stay and take care of the horse and cut a hole in the ice everyday so he could drink. I told them I'd stay if they promised to come back as soon as the roads were snowplowed, and if they weren't back in three days I would turn the horse loose and attempt to get out. They took off and in an hour I noticed it was pretty quiet and I was beginning to think the next few days might be awfully lonesome. In about two hours I was just sitting in the shack when I thought I heard voices. I went to the door and there was Walt Knuth, (one of the truckers), and Beans Polak. Walt hollered, "Lou says to put the good mattress on the go-devil and tie the kettles and



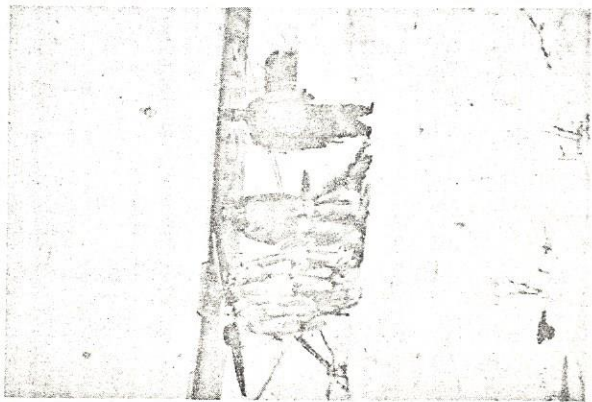
At age 14 I am next to dog. My partner is Norman Wyvell



John Mankedick and I with some of the 60,000 feet of logs he and I cut one winter on Bass lake

everything you can on the horse, we are pulling out for good. Boy, was I glad to see them! The boys had walked the two miles to the road. There they found good old Louis Beckman building a campfire to keep warm while Walt walked in to tell us they'd come after us. He had the truck running though, it was thirty below zero. They shoveled a place out by a bank to back the truck against so that we could load the horse. I had to leave a good mahogany table that my mother didn't want me to take to the woods and also a round oak heater and lots of other equipment. Lou had been in touch with the snowplow all the time and as soon as they went out he was right behind them all the way. We loaded the horse on the truck, but only got about half a mile with the go-devil. It kept tipping over in the deep snow. We all five rode in the cab of the model A truck. We arrived in Ogema okay. The horses' nose was frozen, but it came out of it without any trouble. I then stayed with my folks. It was sure good to sit down to one of those good suppers my mother cooked, and to have a nice warm bed at night. When spring came I got a friend of mine, Lawrence Kraker, to take his dad's red pickup and we went out to get some of the stuff we'd left at the camp. The two mile swamp we had to cross was full of water. We got within about one mile of the camp and walked the rest of the way around the edge of the water. It was a nice spring day, so we enjoyed the walk. Well, when we got there we found the cabin and everything else gone. Nearby was a lath mill and an old guy was in his shack cooking coffee. He offered us some. I was looking around for the table I had left. I asked him, and he claimed to not know anything about the shack. That crew had come in from a different direction and set up the lath mill. We'd had quite a few loads of timber cut and scattered around in the swamp when the storm hit, and of course it was covered with water in the spring. We lost all that and also the timber we had not cut. The whole project was a loss to all of us, but we had some experiences we never forgot.

Life in the woods was rugged those days and there was very little money in it. It was just a matter of making a living. I had spent many years in the woods. I would work on farms in summer and in winter I would cut cord wood, posts, and logs. At one time I bought the timber stumpage on the Wyvell eighty near Ogema and cut logs with other men. Another time I had seven men working for me. Clark and



Herb McArthur is the pilot. One winter he and his helper shot 224 fox at the Badlands

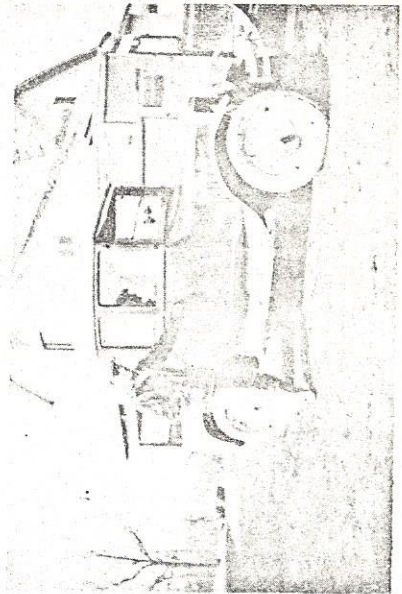


Here I am dragging out a deer I had shot at noon on opening day hunting alone

Cleaves Bisson hauled logs for me with horses. My brother Alvin trucked some timber for me and my dad hauled quite a bit with his mules. John Mankedick and I stayed in a tar-paper shack on Bass Lake one winter and cut sixty thousand feet of logs for Rinaldo's between Bass Lake and White Earth Lake. I also dealt in wild duck food and spatterdock root for about 10 years. I dug lots of it myself and hired other men to dig for me, most of it was Sago pond weed and Wild Celery. At one time during the depression I had three hundred acres of timber land including a mile of lake shore. I had a small resort and rented out boats in the summer and also did some house painting and cut wood and pulp wood in the winter. An entire winter I cooked for A.J. Bisson's logging camp. Another winter I built with the help of Harlan Royce, John Mankedick and Dutch Groh a crude log cabin about twenty four feet square. We cut the logs in a thick patch of timber and carried them to the building site. We lived in this cabin all winter and cut timber. A farmer, Christ Humbert, hauled one cord of oak cord wood per day to Ogema for me all winter. I sold this and gave him half for hauling. Later I sold this land and went more into the painting business. I had started my painting working for a contractor in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I also worked in an airplane factory in Milwaukee. It was the Hamilton factory where Lindberg's metal propeller was made. I worked on the same bench making these propellers. This was in 1929 at the start of the depression. I think Lindy's prop was made in 1927. I soon left Milwaukee and went to Minneapolis and there painted the Rose Hill Nurseries in mid-way. I also painted my brother's barber shop and house on Carpenter Avenue. Then I painted



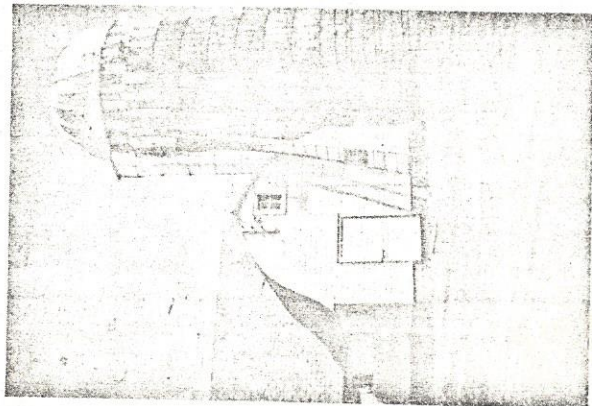
My friends over for a Sunday afternoon



My 1924 model T coupe

my cousin James Stevens house about three miles from Farmington, Minnesota. After that I came back to Ogema and worked at many different jobs. For several winters I baled hay for a big hay king by the name of Fred Baker. I also ran a baler for Ole Voss a few winters. In the summer I would paint buildings and dig basements. I was very good with a shovel and would dig an average basement by hand in about four or five days. Now it is done with a dragline. I did a few years of trucking with Louis Beckman, hauling hay, potatoes and pulp wood. We loaded it in box cars. This was still in the days when they put pulp wood in box cars. You had to shoulder a stick of pulp and walk up a plank into the cars. The pulp was twelve to sixteen inches in diameter. This was better than the saw logs they get now in Minnesota. I trapped some, but spent most of my later years painting. I painted for about thirty - four years mostly in the summers. I started in the mink business but became disabled and had to sell the mink and quit working. I've still been able to do some fishing in the summer. I used to enjoy winter fishing and have caught a goodly number of fish in the last forty years. You could get your limit in Walleyes anytime of the day in the 1930's. White Earth Lake was wonderful fishing at that time.

I've had many strange experiences while hunting deer. One trip I will never forget was the time I went with Emil Mischke. He was my brother's father-in-law. I had shot a few deer so he thought I would be a good guy to take along on a hunting trip. We used his school bus and drove about twenty miles back in the woods on old trails and across a swamp for a mile. Then we camped on a ridge. It was raining when we left home so we took along hip boots and rain coats and lucky we did for it rained for eight days. Hunting was very poor. We thought each day would bring snow so we stayed. After a few days we found out we couldn't leave anyway as water had come up in the swamp and it would be impossible to get out until the water froze, so that we could go over it. We were both a little green about camping out at that time. In fact very much so. We took a pile of corn husks along to use as a mattress on the bus floor and found out that the stubs all work to the top and poke you all night. We also forgot to take a lantern along and the only light we had was the dash light, and the battery soon wore out. It was lucky that the trucks still had a crank those days. So, we sat in the dark evenings for about six days - or nights. We didn't camp near a lake like we should have, so we had nothing to drink

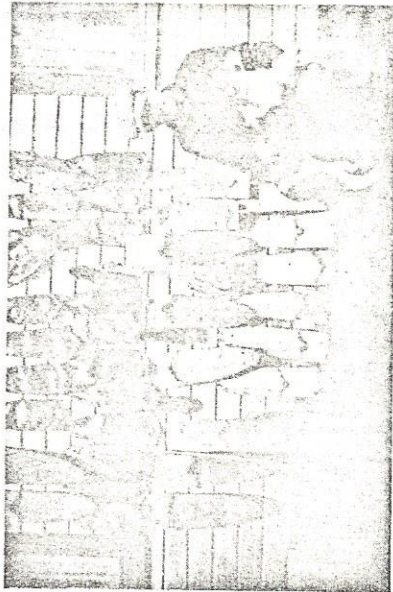


Chester Angstman painting Edgar Ballard's silo



Little Mike Kraker at my resort on Net lake

for eight days but rainwater that we caught at the end of the running board. That's the step that used to be on trucks and cars. We made coffee out of it and drank only coffee. We were out of food in about five days, and had intended to go home at that time but being we were flooded in we couldn't. The last two days we had food we rationed ourselves to one pancake each per meal and one cup of coffee. Mr. Mischke was a heavy Prince Albert smoker and was out of tobacco, so he picked all the corn silk out of our mattress and smoked that. We also forgot to take two elbows instead of one and were one stovepipe short, so we just stuck the stovepipe straight out the window. One night the wind changed and we nearly burned up the bus. After that we had to turn the bus around every day to keep up with the changing wind. We had an extra supply of gas in a five gallon can and we lost the cap from it. We kept it setting under the front fender back of the front wheel. One time we turned the bus around at night when a storm came up and forgot about the gas can and backed over it. It was then flat as a pancake - and our gas tank was nearly empty. Why hadn't we filled the tank? I suppose it was because we were greenhorns. All we'd thought about was tramping around in the rain hoping to see a deer. Well, we got no deer, and the eighth day it got real cold and froze the six inches of water in the swamp and we drove out. We went cross country and came out at Kays store with the gas gauge on zero for the last mile. So, we got gas and tobacco and food and struck out on the old road by Net Lake. It was the only road at that time. On the shore of Net Lake it was not wide enough for two cars to meet, and we got stuck in that spot in ruts twenty inches deep. I crawled under the bus on



Some of my muskrats in 1928



White Earth Indian celebration in 1914

my belly and cut a ditch in the middle of the road for the housing to follow. Then we burned our mattress for a light so I could see to cut a few poles to put in the rut. It was then about eleven P.M. The bus slipped off the poles. We took a log chain we had and wrapped it around one wheel on the side that was muddy. The chain tightened up and blew out the tire. We gave it up and started to walk the eight miles to Ogema. There were very few cars yet. We had walked three miles in the mud and snow. The snow was coming down hard and as we just got to White Earth we met another hunter, Ole Voss of Ogema. He had a model T coupe and was on his way to a deer camp two miles from where we had camped. He knew us, so he stopped. We were carrying our rifles as we didn't care to leave them in the bus. We told him it was impossible to get by Net Lake as our bus was in the middle of the road. He said, "I have to get by as I have a bunch of groceries that the boys in camp are depending on." We told him it was impossible as we had worked about four hours trying to move the bus. He told us to get in because the bus absolutely had to be moved even if we had to tip it over. So, we went back with him. We cut two good poles and also changed the flat tire by light of his headlights. Then we put the poles under the back end of the bus and both lifted up while Emil raced the bus motor. Somehow we got it out. We drove to Ogema and arrived at my folks home at four A.M. We had been on the road since nine A.M. trying to go twenty miles. Emil Mischke still had about nine miles to his place so he went to bed with me and slept until noon. My mother had a good dinner for us. Then Mischke drove home. He often talked about this hunting trip until he passed on.

I had many wonderful hunting trips after that. I joined up with a hunting party from Detroit Lakes. I bought my share of a 16x16' tent, and all equipment. Four mattresses and springs, dishes, kettles, two heaters and a cook stove. In the party was Louis Beckman, Arnold Schroeder, Les Bridges, Morris Rudolph, Wane Rudolph, Edy Weim and myself. We would haul all our equipment on Louis' truck and have one car along. We had cream cans along and would drive to some well or lake and get the water. We always camped for the whole season, which was eight or ten days at that time. We always filled up with deer. I myself shot nearly thirty deer at that one camp near Long Lost Lake. Most of the hunters have passed on now, or have moved to other states.

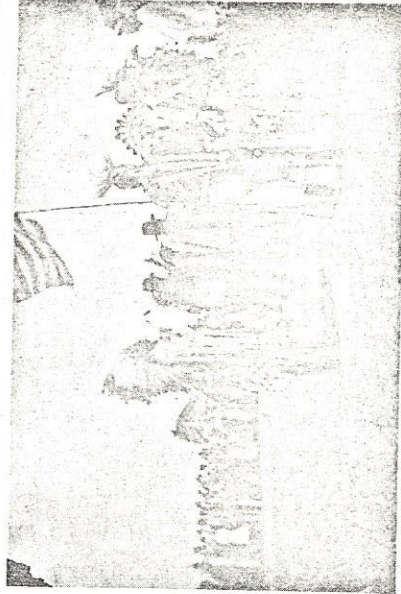


My friend Bud Jirava with two of the timber wolves he shot

All I have are the memories and not even a picture of our nice strings of deer or our wonderful camp site.

One year Norman Wyvell and Herb McArthur and I hunted up by Ely. We only got one deer. Hunting was poor, the weather was real warm, and no snow. We had poor luck the whole trip including a car accident in Duluth on the way up. No one was hurt however.

I had one nice hunting trip at Northome, Minnesota. We stayed at Dick Bender's hunting camp just as it was getting dark. I did not recognize the house and rapped on the door intending to tell them I was lost. When Mrs. Bender opened the door I was dumbfounded. I shot a buck on that trip. We hunted mostly in big cedar swamps. There was lots of cedar timber there at that time. Some of these hunters were Louis Beckman, Arnold Schroeder, Ole Voss, Cliff Groth and sons Dutch and Fritz, Butch Beyers, Everett Henderson, Conrad Clifman, Gerome Harrington, Purn Harrington, Dick Bender and a few not so well known in this territory. We had a wonderful time and organized a hunting club known as the Island Lake Hunting Club. When World War Two came on we sort of broke up. I moved to Minneapolis and some of the boys moved to the west coast. In these later years most people drive out each day to do their hunting. It is not nearly so much fun. However, there are still a few who camp out. Not many use tents in this area. Camping in a tent is the most fun if you do it right.



The 14th of June celebration at White Earth, Minn., in 1914

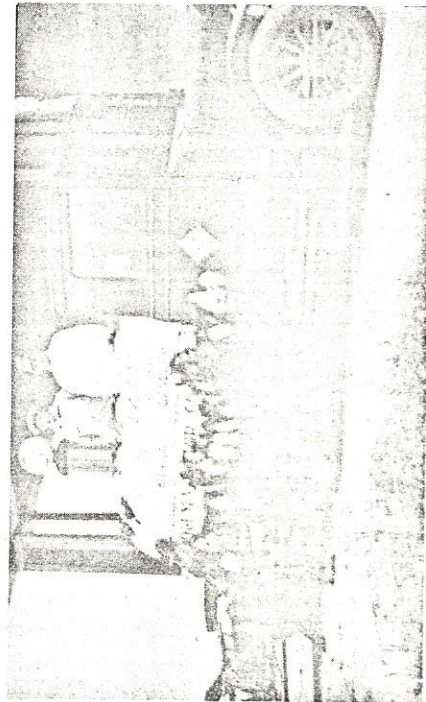


My cousin from Milwaukee visiting at our farm

One year I gathered wild rice at Star Lake near Perham. I hauled my boat on a trailer behind my car and took a boy along to pole the boat. He was young, about fourteen or fifteen I think. But we didn't do so good. I had followed a friend of mine all the way to the lake from Ogema. Charlie LaDoux, the barber from Ogema. We put our tent about two feet from their tent. He had his whole family along, and his wife told me to dump our groceries in with theirs, and she would cook for us. That was fine, we all ate together. At night Charlie would thresh rice with his homemade barrel threshing outfit and they would parch it in an iron kettle and stir it with a boat paddle. We sold some green, as a buyer came there every day with a truck and scales on it. The price was twenty-five cents green at that time. There were about two hundred and fifty Indians camped on that small point. Most of the Indians knew me as I practically grew up with them. I lived on this reservation fifty-eight years. I thought it was about time to pull out. I wasn't satisfied with the luck we were having. But, riceing was good then as there were no controls and you could go out about nine A.M. and stay until dark, or until your boat was full. If the weather was good you would rice every day and not much blew off or went to waste. At that time most Indians finished their own rice. So, we pulled out and came back to Ogema. After riceing was over and duck season began I was invited over to Charlie LaDoux for a good duck dinner. She had a blue bill stuffed with wild rice for each plate, and all the trimmings. A wonderful meal! I



At home on the farm, age 18



My brother Alvin (Skelly Angstman) and a few ducks we shot

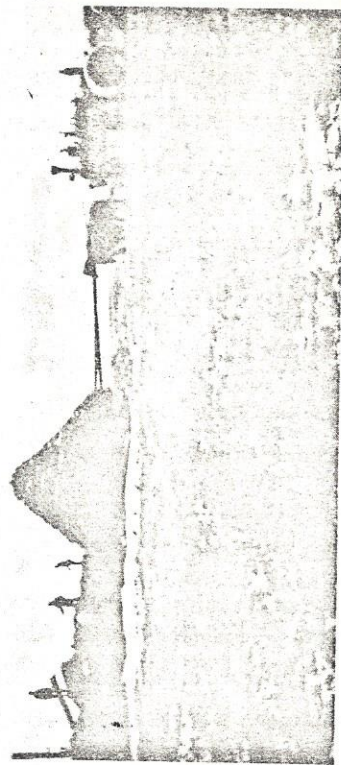
gathered rice a few other times, but stuck mostly with painting after that. During World War Two I spent four years in Minneapolis, there joining the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and the Teamsters Union. I worked most of the time as a machinist specialist for Heidbrinks Arco Co. making airplane instruments and anesthesia equipment for the Navy and the Air Force. Ten percent of the products going to civilian hospitals and for stratosphere flying. We also made baby incubators for the Army and Navy. I also worked for the J.R. Clark Co. in Minneapolis making anti-aircraft nose blocks.

In 1945 I came back to Ogema and sold my lakeshore property to three different parties. I began painting in Detroit Lakes, Callaway, Ogema, Waubun, Voss and Mahnomen in summer, and in the winter I fished in fish houses. I got a few prize winning Bass in the summer, ranging from six to seven pounds. The last one I won a prize on was in 1968. I won a casting reel, Rapala, artificial mouse, hook remover, doll fly and daredevil.

In 1966 I had a back injury, and had to quit hunting deer and winter fishing. In 1969 I was able to do quite a lot of fishing, but now in 1970 I hurt my back again, so I decided to wind this little story up as I just got out of the hospital again. I hadn't



My brother Everett with checked jacket and cousin Lloyd Rowel



Threshing at the Angstman farm in April

written anything on this book since 1965. Originally I had planned it to be much longer and going into the modern things of life. Most of this story is about the days before the problems of pollution, and other difficult situations brought on by progress and the modernization of the machine age, as well as the expansion of population, which is a natural thing. In closing, I do hope that during this space age we can soon turn our attention from trouble with other countries, and spend more time and money on health and a more peaceful and fairer world for our young people who are rapidly growing up.

I do not know if this story of some of my little experiences will be of much interest to the younger generation, but maybe some of them will get pleasure out of reading it and looking back to a time when things were so different from what they know today. For most of the older people I know it will bring back memories because many of them have lived these same experiences.

I also have hunted and fished a lot with Robert Riebhoff. We once shot forty Mallards in one afternoon and caught wash tubs full of Bass in Strawberry Lake. We caught our limit of Walleyes dozens of times in White Earth Lake fishing out of Nemecs Resort, which is now Cedar Crest Resort.

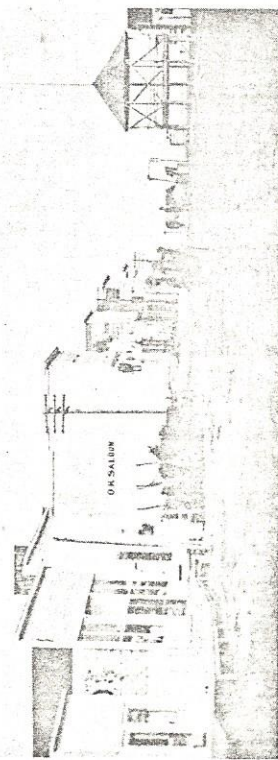
Herb McArthur, whom I mentioned previously, was Standard Oil delivery man in Ogema. I would go with him on deliveries and we would shoot prairie chickens on the farmers fields where we delivered gas. Once we shot lots of chickens on Falshaws farm, then shot fourteen Mallards, all drakes, on Horse Shoe Lake - also called Mud Lake.

One fall Herb McArthur joined up with a deer hunting party from Detroit Lakes. I did not hunt with Herb this trip. His hunting companion was Fred Darko. It was on this trip that they shot the big wolf known as Old Three Legs. I will herewith enter a story taken from the Northwest Resorter, a supplement to the Detroit Lakes Newspaper.

THE STORY OF OLD THREE LEGS

This story was written by Ken Prentice, and is reprinted with his permission. This is the story of a timber wolf that became the most famous wild animal in the history of Minnesota and whose fame spread across the nation. Every method of trapping, poisoning, snaring and hunting known to man was tried on the animal and letters poured in from all over the country describing other "sure fire" ways to catch him.

They called him "Old Three Legs" and he terrorized farmers in a five-county area from 1916 to 1926. He slaughtered sheep, chickens, pigs, calves and deer with a pure love of killing. Fantastic tales about this fabulous creature grew with each telling until they reached the super-natural. There is no way today of separating



Ogema about 1910

fact from legend, but the following is as close to the truth as it is possible to get.

It starts in April, 1916 when "Dynamite Bill" Foster, an expert hunter, watched a mother wolf kill six of her seven pups near Ponsford, and go into the woods with the seventh. For two years, tracks indicated that the mother taught her son well and then the wolf turned on its own mother and killed her! Ole Ystersund, a rural mail carrier, came upon the mother wolf's body.

The big wolf began his reign of terror alone. Dogs by the dozens of known courage and fighting ability were literally torn to pieces trying to defend the barnyard. Wardens, trappers and farmers all got on his trail.

When Elmer Cox, a farmer in northern Otter Tail County, found sixteen of his finest ewes dead one morning, he realized he was ruined. He made a solemn vow then and there that he would rid the countryside of this killer wolf, no matter what the cost!

With a pack pony, traps and camping outfit, he tracked the wolf from Otter Tail County, up into Clay county and over through Becker, Mahanomen, Itasca and Hubbard counties. The story of Elmer Cox versus the wolf became a legend in the north woods.

Time after time the wolf eluded him, but the determined man continued. At the Lou Fegner farm he made his last-ditch attempt. Tying a fat lamb to a tree on a knoll, he ringed the tree with three staggered rows of traps. Carefully and skillfully he concealed all evidence.

The next morning he couldn't believe his eyes. The wolf had made his way through the maze of traps, seized the lamb in his mouth and then retraced his steps. But, when the rope grew taught, it threw the wolf off balance and its forefoot came down into a concealed trap.

The lamb was torn to bits in fury and, turning on the stake that held the trap, the wolf chewed the end of it into splinters. When he leaped outside the circle of traps, the stake pulled out, and the wolf was gone, dragging the trap and stake with him.

Cox quickly organized a party of six neighbors and a pack of fierce wolfhounds. All day and into the night they followed the wolf's trail. Another day and another night -- and still there was no indication they were gaining on the wounded animal.

At noon on the third day the men unleashed the dogs in hopes that they would catch the wolf and hold him at bay. At intervals during the afternoon the men found three of the dogs dead with their throats torn out and at dusk the other dogs, strangely cowed, slunk into camp.



Herb McArthur at home at Mesa, Arizona, in 1970

Early the next morning they found the trap and stake with the remains of the foot neatly clipped off. That very night the wolf killed a calf on the John Grammer farm and from that time on he was known as Old Three Legs.

Experts claimed that a wolf will never attack a human being. They received so many documented reports about Old Three Legs attacking people that they finally ruled that the wolf had rabies or brain infection and therefore was not a natural wolf.

Local trappers and hunters wise and experienced, but now they finally admitted defeat. The people offered rewards which at one time totaled \$500, but to no avail. The State Conservation Department was called and asked for help.

The state hired two Indian trappers, John Red Blanket of Mahnomen and Jesse Mason of Red Lake. After several long months, during which time they had dozens of chances at the wolf, they returned shaking their heads. Old Three Legs could vanish before their eyes, they claimed, and was a "spirit wolf." He could not be captured.

The next expert the state hired was Julius Skauge, a wolf hunter and professional trapper known to every rancher in the Dakotas and Montana to the Mexican border. He averaged \$20,000 per year in those days just from his trapping.

The famous trapper arrived in Detroit Lakes with nine hunting dogs, two tough western ponies, bags of traps and jars of poison. Refusing all offers of help, he simply said, "Just show me where this varmint was last seen and I'll do the rest."

Weeks turned into months and he tried traps and poison and every trick he knew. At the end he finally tried running down the beast with relays of ponies, men and his pack of hounds. They pressed Old Three Legs for thirteen days and nights, making frequent changes of fresh men and horses and hounds - but Old Three Legs was still going strong at the end of that time.

For the first and only time in his career, Skauge was forced to admit defeat. But, he suggested that the state hire the services of John Holtan of Lammers, Minn., who was an expert in snares, the one device that had not yet been tried on the beast.

When Holtan arrived, he was just like the others. He set his snares with great care and then announced that Old Three Legs had less than seven days to live! But he, too, was forced to admit defeat and had to leave after trying every trick he knew.



Picture I took at Northland Resort on Mitchell lake near Brainerd. Ord Campbell is at the far right

As age crept up on Old Three Legs, he lost his lightning speed, but the killing power in his jaws remained as powerful as ever. They say in those final years he had two coyotes (brush wolves) driving game toward him and he would kill and then let the coyotes share the food with him. As far as is known, he never mated. On November 29, 1926 during deer season, fate moved in. Old Three Legs, who had defeated everything that humans could throw at him, came to the end of his rope on that fateful day.

Five deer hunters camped at the Jerry Wetles place on Bad Medicine Lake in northern Becker county. They were Fred Darko, Harry LaDue, Jack Robbins and George McCarthy, all of Detroit Lakes, and Herb McArthur of Ogema. McCarthy and Darko took posts about half a mile apart and the others began the drive.

Suddenly McCarthy spotted Old Three Legs on a hill about 200 yards away and excitedly fired his rifle twice and missed. The shots startled a doe that jumped up and began to run. The wolf took off after the deer and came right past Darko, who at that time was the best shot in the state of Minnesota.

Darko did not miss, and the most famous wolf of all time lay in the snow at his feet.

OLD THREE LEGS HAS BEEN FOUND

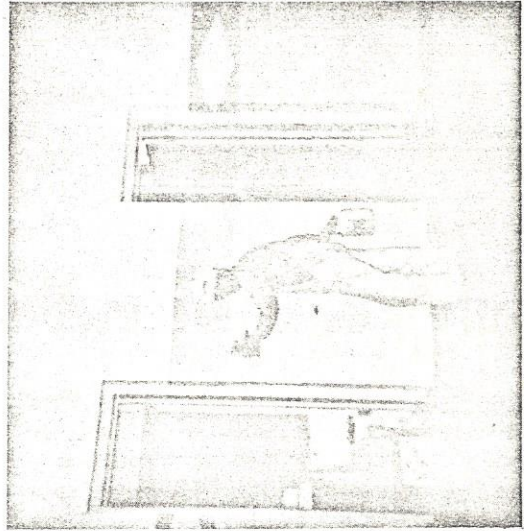
by Ken Prentice

Old Three Legs has been found!

The big timber wolf that killed hundreds of sheep, cattle and deer in the area from 1916 to 1926 has survived age, abuse and a bad job of taxidermy and soon he will be once again the object of scrutiny by residents and visitors.

I was taken to an attic in a home in rural Detroit Lakes and there, dusty, lacerated, dog-eared and moth-eaten - but still fierce and unconquerable with that vicious snarl of defiance on his face - his stubby left leg raised - Yes, there was Old Three Legs himself!

And then I knew how those grizzled veterans of the traplines must have felt when they came upon the animal suddenly and unexpectedly face to face. I had read and heard so much about the wolf in my research that it was a feeling of awe that I stood there in that attic and stared, as dozens of stories and legends raced through my mind.



Chester painting the Ogema dance hall

Hunters and trappers told of seeing Old Three Legs put a paw into a trap, spring it, withdraw the food and then, trotting to the next trap, repeat the performance. Two expert Indian trappers told of how Old Three Legs suddenly appeared from nowhere and stood fifty feet in front of them. Both men emptied their rifles at the beast, but the wolf never moved. The monster kind of grinned at them and then he vanished right before their eyes. A "spirit wolf" they called him.

When the killer visited the homestead of Grover Amundson, he killed forty sheep, one cow and one heifer, all in one night. Mrs. Amundson was a frail, sickly woman and the neighbors always said that the shock of the loss was too much for her. At any rate, she died less than four months later.

Amundson sent his two small children to relatives in Minneapolis and then he, like many others, got on the trail of Old Three Legs. Weeks and months passed. His face became gaunt and hollow and his eyes took on a wild staring look. He ignored farmers' pleas to give up the chase and eventually he became insane.

One day Oscar Nesbitt, a trapper, found Amundson's body, frozen to death out there on the trail. Nesbitt said that around the body were tracks of the three-legged destroyer who must have come back to sneer at this poor mortal who had tried so long to destroy him.

Timmy and June Ystersund, children of Mr. and Mrs. Ole Ystersund, were attacked by the wolf on their way home from school. Their dog, Sport, a courageous airedale, was torn to pieces by the wolf as he tried to defend the boy and girl. But he stopped Old Three Legs long enough to enable the children to reach their home in safety.

George Klemmer left his wife and his mother in their log cabin in Itasca County one night to fetch the doctor who lived eight miles away. The stork was making a visit two weeks early.

George's mother assisted in the delivery a few hours after George had left, and she swathed the infant in blankets when she heard a scratching at the door. She unbarred the door and almost fainted at the sight of a huge timber wolf, jaws agape, glaring at her!

Slamming the door and barring it, she leaned against it weak with terror. Then she heard the terrifying noise of the wolf as he lunged against the door in an attempt to crash it open.

She could now hear sniffing and scratching at crevices as the wolf circled the cabin. Finally there was silence. She began washing the newborn infant - then suddenly she heard the crash of breaking glass and at the same time the blood-curdling scream of the mother from her bed!

The older woman turned around and there, through the broken glass of the window, was Old Three Legs, his face hideously distorted into a snarl, fangs bared and dripping. She ran to the gun rack, snatched George's shotgun, swung it around

and fired at the wolf. Then she fainted. George and the doctor found her, still unconscious on the floor, but the wolf was gone; and only his tracks were seen around the tiny cabin.

Earl Ratcliffe, a teamster for the Duluth Logging Company and about as rough and tough a character as you could find in the logging camps. One day he was on his way back to camp with an empty sled drawn by two horses. He rounded a corner and came upon Old Three Legs beside the road, tearing at the flesh of a doe he had just killed.

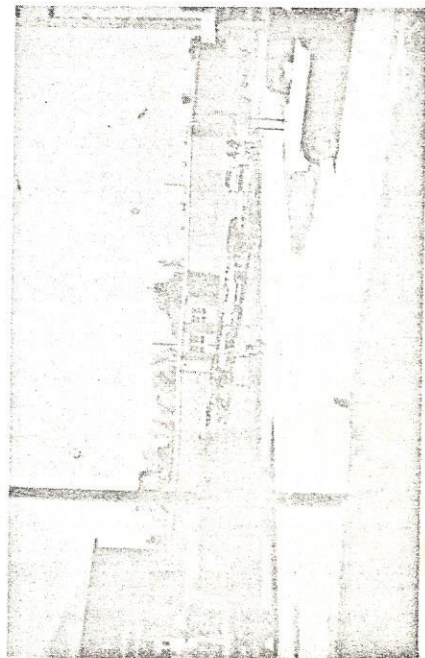
Although Ratcliffe stayed to the far edge of the road as he passed, the animal leaped for the throat of the nearest horse! Luckily, as the horses bolted, the collar of the near one caught the wolf in mid-air and bolted him over in a swirl of snow, but he came right back and gave chase.

Ratcliffe was unarmed, but now he picked up an axe handle and as the wolf leaped at him, he diverted it with the crude weapon. In his excitement, he threw the handle at the wolf and missed.

Frightened, Ratcliffe yanked a heavy stake loose and grimly awaited another attack. The wolf, however, gave up the chase at this point and returned to the doe. When Ratcliffe reached camp, he rounded up a dozen men and guns and they went back, but the wolf was long gone.

Fred Darko was a pioneer in the mink raising industry in the Detroit Lakes area and, in fact, was the first mink rancher in the state of Minnesota. But, his real claim to fame was that he shot Old Three Legs on that cold November day of 1926.

People flocked to Detroit Lakes from all over the five-county area to see the wolf and the man who had killed it. Some heaped presents on him and others broke into sobs of joy and relief. Of course, there were some who claimed that the wolf was not Old Three Legs. How could one bullet from a Winchester 30-30 kill a phantom, a ghost wolf that traps could not hold nor bullets harm? And they say that even now when Minnesotas winter moon is just right and the pines crack in the cold north wind, and if you're wise in the ways of the wild - you might just happen to catch a glimpse of Old Three Legs, running with that odd gait of his through the snow. And he'll turn and grin that terrible grin - and then vanish right before your eyes.



Opema school while I was junior



Load of logs I cut while working at Bloomington logging camp. I was in front with the first cut, a big one, and the rest of the load.

TO THE EDITOR

I remember the day the wolf picture first appeared in a Detroit Lakes paper, and when the wolf was on display just inside the door of the Proctor Hotel. At that time there was a write-up telling the names of the hunters. I remember Herb was disappointed when they could not locate him for the picture.

The article in the Resorter stated that Fred Darko was the last member of that deer hunting party still alive. Herb McArthur is very much alive. He is 73 years old, still working and is today a painter in Mesa, Arizona. He and I correspond regularly.

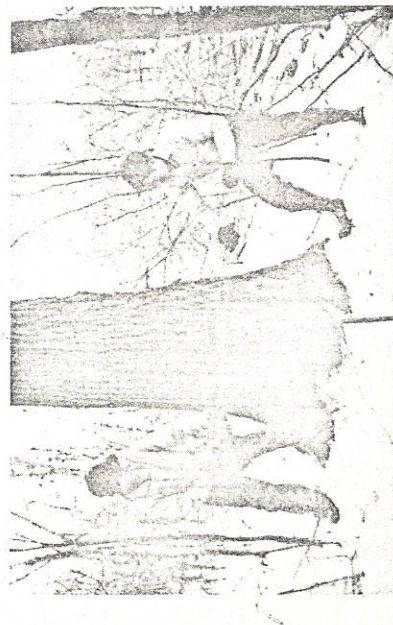
I used to hunt with Herb and he was a very close friend of Fred Darko. He was a mink rancher in Ogema and Valley City, N.D.

It was Herb's shot at a snowshoe rabbit with his 250-300 Savage that scared the doe out of its hiding place and the wolf also. Then Darkow shot them both. If Herb had not shot at the rabbit, the men would have walked right by the hiding animals. I hope the wolf is placed in the Detroit Lakes Museum and I also hope that Herb McArthur is not forgotten as being a member of the deer hunting party.

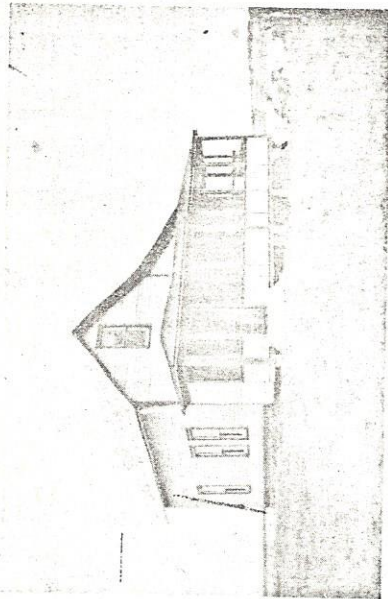
CHESTER ANGSTMAN
OGEMA, MINNESOTA



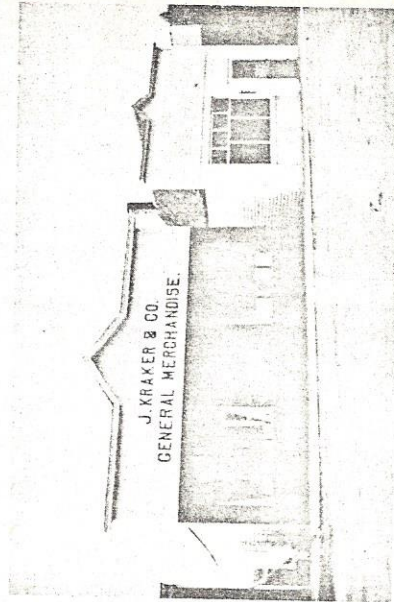
My model T trapping car



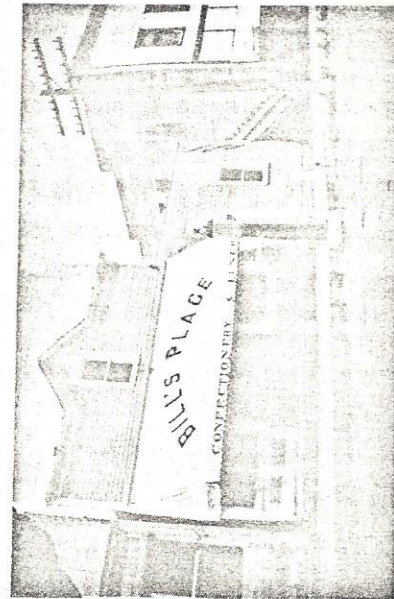
John Mankedick and I cutting logs



Our first house in Ogema--1913

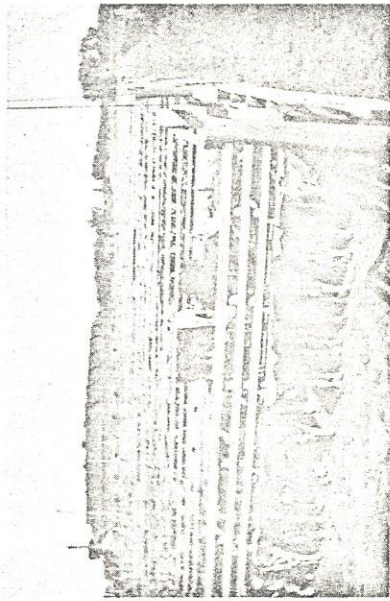


Ogema in the good old days





Dutch Groth and John Mankedick cutting timber on my land



Me (white shirt) in center of big corral



My shack on Bass lake