

BIGFORK

MINNESOTA

CENTENNIAL



1907 - 2007

Note From Dave Erickson: This publication includes a reprint of the book "On the Banks of the Bigfork" beginning on page 141. On page 169 of the publication there is a photo entitled "1932 Flock of 1,000 turkeys on Tom Erickson farm. Forerunner of the modern commercial operations." It looks as though Tom, Harvey and Allen are pictured with the turkeys.

War With the Stumps

Natural low meadows along the rivers and larger creeks furnished the first hay stumpage but the hay was so coarse and low in feed value that efforts were soon made to open up higher ground.

As potatoes and vegetables were cultivated by hand it was almost as convenient to plant them among the stumps.

"Grubbing" was the term applied to the attack on a stump by a man armed only with an axe, a "grub-hoe" and perhaps a shovel. Acres of stumps were eliminated by the process of digging down and cutting off roots until the main body of the stump could be rolled out.

Near 1910 some mechanical stump pullers powered by horses were introduced and medium sized stumps could be pulled. But a green stump with a large root system on heavy soil would bring much soil with it.

After the end of World War I the government made available to farmers for land clearing purposes many tons of war surplus explosives. Farmers pooled their orders and this so called "dynamite" was shipped in by the carload at some times. This explosive besides removing the stump quickly broke it up into convenient pieces and left it quite free of soil to dry out.

Bulldozers next attacked the stump land on large scale in the 1930's with power enough to remove and windrow stumps, standing timber and boulders. However quite often so much soil was windrowed with the debris that it was difficult to dry out and burn without extra work.

Along in 1940 came the land clearing machines built on huge caterpillar tractors, some with vertical teeth on a bulldozer blade and others with "teeth" in a horizontal plane on the bottoms of a very much reinforced "V" type snowplow. This machine shears off at ground level all brush, stumps and trees within its power and also windrows the debris on each side as it passes.

There still remains much to dispose of, pick up and level off after clearing but with the introduction of the heavy timber disc with large cutaway blades much small trash can be cut up and covered. A crop can be planted and harvested while the roots are left in the soil to decay.

Rural Power

Loggers were usually in a position to select the best horses available in the early years. It was often necessary to make a trip to the cities or elsewhere to secure a good team of horses. Consequently a few of the early settlers used their ingenuity at home on



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