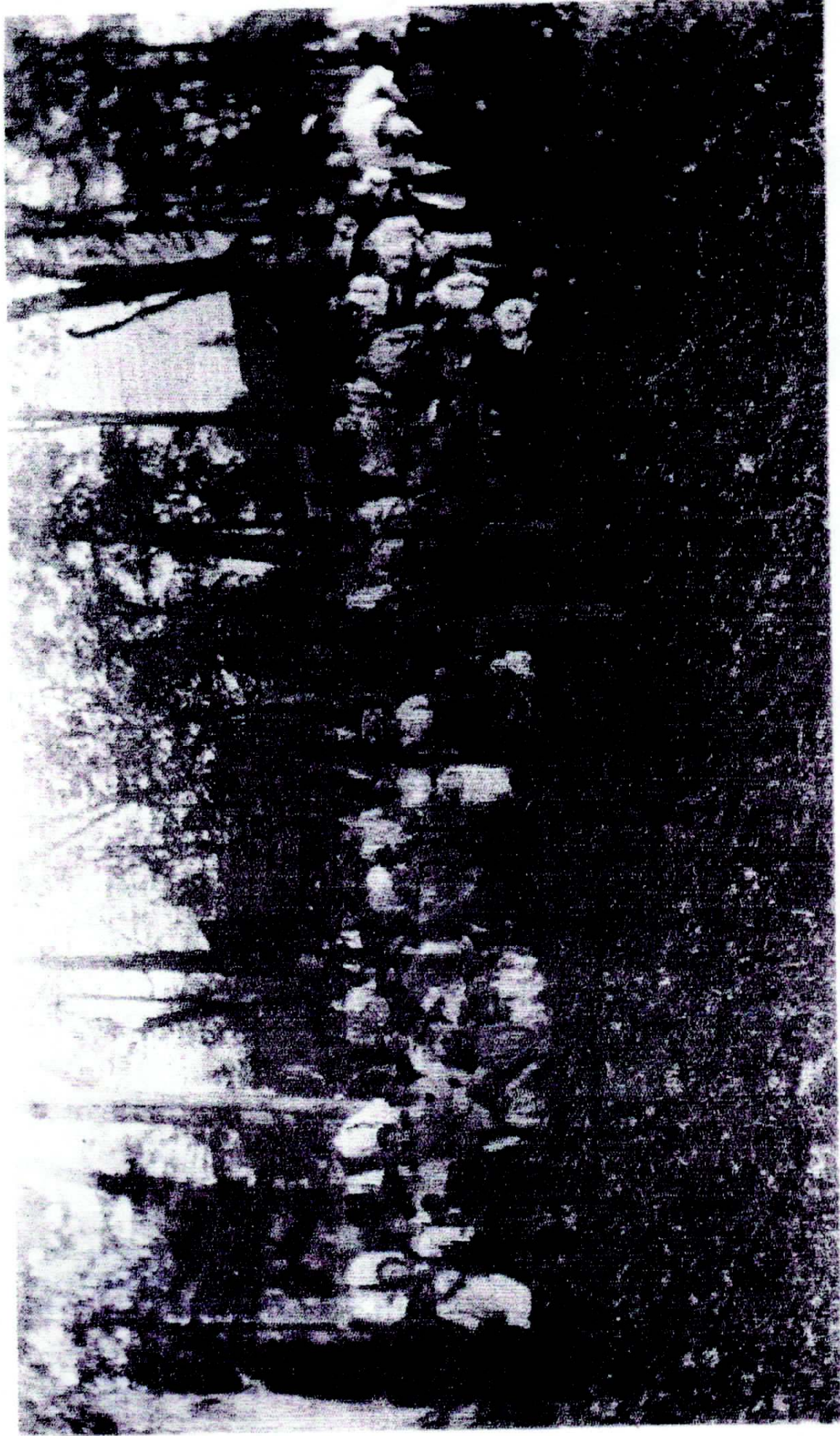


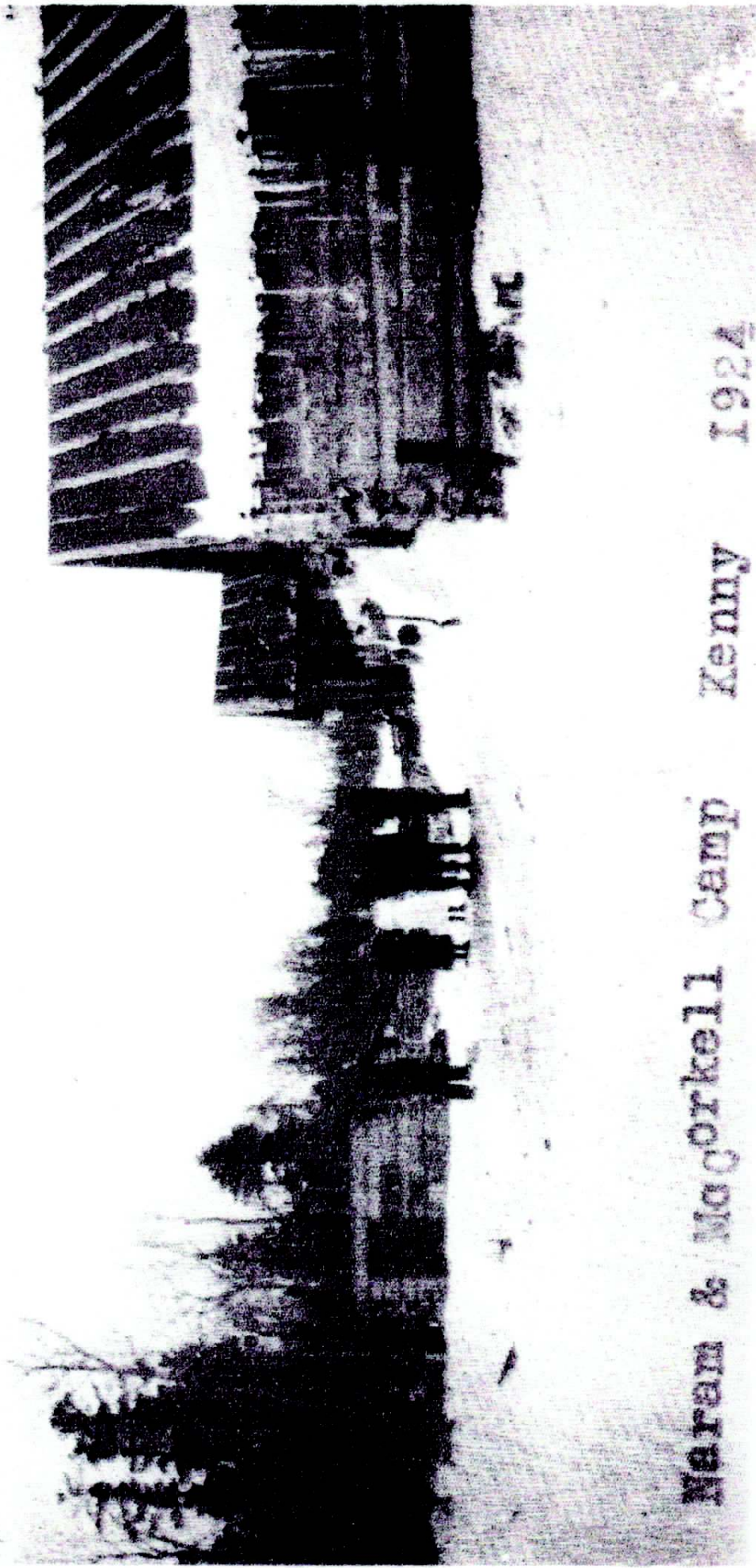
## LONG AGO

Before the Sioux and the Chippewa were here, an ancient Woodland tribe of Indians inhabited what is now North Central Minnesota. We know little about them, but from about 100 B.C. to 800 A.D. they built magnificent burial mounds at the mouth of the Bigfork River, the biggest in Minnesota. After this culture disappeared, the Sioux moved in. Vikings possibly crossed through here in the mid 1300's; if not, then almost certainly the first white men in this part of the world were French. Other adventurers had come before him, but in 1731, 45 years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, Pierre La Verendrye established a trading post on the West end of Rainy Lake, about 55 miles due north of here, and the fabulous fur trading era began. Without a doubt, traders from that post and others came up the Bigfork River to bargain with the Indians. By 1747, the Chippewa, equipped with guns from the French, had driven the Sioux from this immediate area, although skirmishes between the two tribes continued for more than a hundred years afterwards.

About the middle of the 19th century Chief Busticoggan and the Boise Forte tribe of Chippewas moved South from Canada, and repelled Sioux invaders on at least two occasions - on the Rice River South of Bigfork and at Battle Lake, east of Effie. By the Treaty of April 7, 1866, with Chief Busti in Washington as one of the signers, the tribe relinquished all of the land in this area to the government except for "one township at the mouth of Deer Creek at the Grand Fork River", where Busti made his home. This township was formally given to them by executive order of President Chester A. Arthur on June 30, 1883. In the 1870's and 80's large logging operators moved in (many of them cutting illegally), and in the 80's and 90's the surveyors came too. Towards the end of the century a few adventurous souls, like "Uncle Tom" Neveaux who built a cabin at the junction of the Bigfork and Rice Rivers, moved in and "squatted". Time moved on into a new century, and then came -----HOMESTEADING!



Farmers Picnic at Orin Patrow's, 1913.



Naram & McCorkell Camp Kenny 1924

Naram and McCorkell Camp at Kinney Landing, 1924.

from it's old location on the Kinney trail in 1918, and four miles North of Effie the town of Craig sprang into being.

The pine stands eventually began to fade, and the "Gut and Liver" would fade too, finally halting operations in 1932 and becoming only a tale of yesteryear. Indeed it must have been a real sight as the homesteaders rode the "Gut and Liver" down the crooked tracks of time.

Today State Highway 38 follows the old railroad grade just a few feet to the west, and terminates in Effie, where it intersects with State Highway No. 1, which runs East and West.

The river, the old Kinney Trail and the Gut and Liver line are no longer used for transportation; but the memories of those old days still linger, and will for a long time to come.



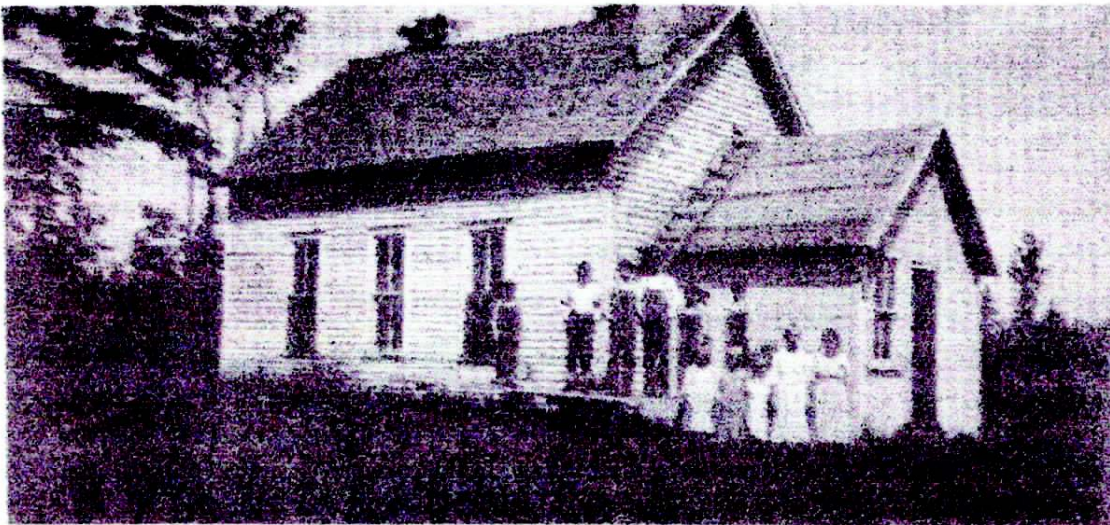
8th Grade Class, Rahier School, about 1920. Left to right: Jack Rahier, Ruth Randall, Blanche Guthrie-Teacher, Vincent Rahier, Margaret Randall and Clifford Merrifield.

The Christmas program was the highlight of the year. Everyone in the community came to sit by lantern light to hear each pupil recite his "piece" and listen to the plays and singing. The last day of school picnic was always a big event, too.

Pupils brought their own lunches, but in the late teens and early 20's cocoa or soup was prepared on a kerosene stove by the older girls. Money to provide these "extras" was raised by basket or pie socials.

Supervisors came around once a month (or less in the real early schools) to help the teachers communicate with the School District number one (now #318) office in Grand Rapids. Edna I Murphy, a supervisor in the teens and twenties, often traveled by means of a hired team and driver. Melvin Krueger was the last supervisor and did much for the schools of our area, serving through the forties, fifties, and sixties.

Our community can be justifiably proud of the quality of education we have offered, and are offering, our young people.



Freidheim Lutheran Church, 1913.

## **CHURCHES BRING GOD'S WORD**

The homesteaders who came to Effie-Busti were at first without organized churches, but this situation was soon

east side. St. Theresa's became a Mission Church of Bigfork in the early sixties after Our Lady of Snow's Church was constructed there.

As you come into Effie from the East on Highway #1 you now find 3 fine church edifices standing in a row, - Lutheran, Catholic, and Presbyterian -, a testimony of the community's faith in God. Though the citizens attend different churches, they have a common heart for community concerns.



Freidheim Lutheran Aid, about 1922.



Effie 1938

"Steel to Wheat" Highway (now Minn. Highway #1); established the first electric company in Effie; developed one of the areas first plats of lakeshore lots; and was an early backer of the Bigfork bank.

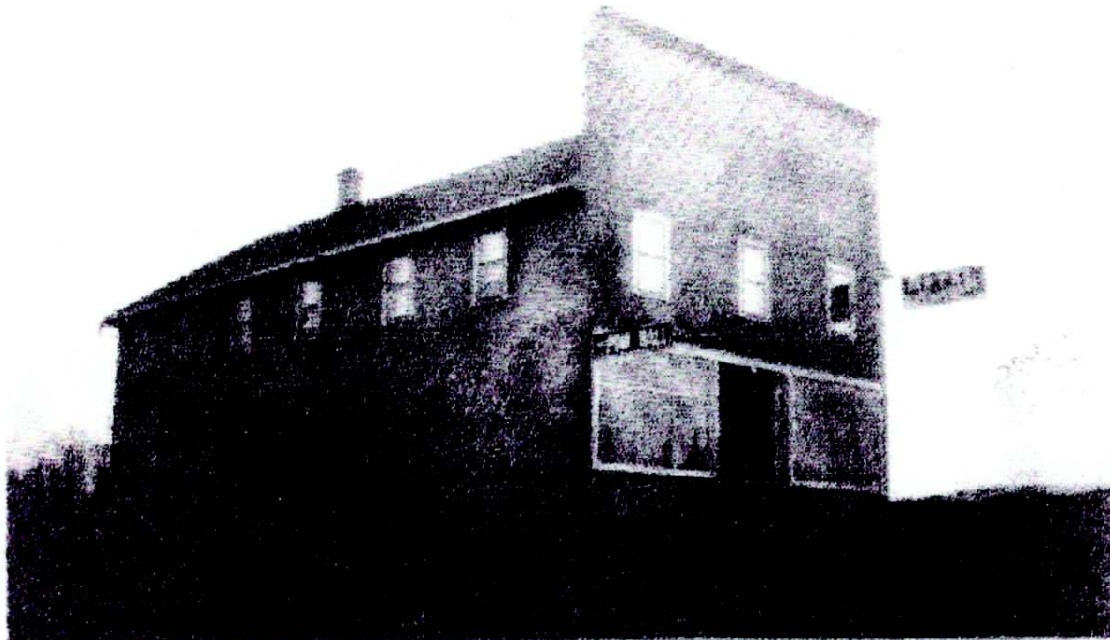
Logging camps operated near by and right in Effie in the early days, and the importance of the "woods" is still reflected in business done in Effie today. Forestry offices of both the Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources and Boise, Canada Corporation are also located in Effie.

Many homesteaders came into this area to escape life in the city, and people are still coming to enjoy our lakes, our woods, and our steams. Deer Lake developed into a prime recreational area, with early resorts built by Ed Kutina and "Deer Lake Charlie" Blackmer. The Deer Lake area now abounds with both seasonal and year-round residences and has become a community by itself.

A lot of things have changed since Homestead Days, but the love of the outdoors - fishing, hunting, berry picking, hiking, canoeing, camping - continues, and modern area businesses continue to supply the needs of the people who work and live here, and of those who visit.



Early boarding house (later Mattson's Store).



Opsahl Hotel in Effie, early 1920's.

## DOC SMITH

He never had a license to practice medicine in Minnesota. With occasional tobacco stains on his wrinkled face and sometimes on his clothes, he was not the image of a modern day surgeon in a white uniform. But to homesteaders far from medical services in Bigfork or Deer River, he was a God send. When salt pork poultices or mustard plasters failed to cure the ill, the homesteader sent for Doc. He came with his little black bag and stayed right there as long as he was needed. Often folks had no money to pay him, and he would come home with a sack of potatoes or a chunk of venison. No one seemed to know his whole name, and those who knew his initials suspected that C.C. stood for Cal-Cidene, the little grey pills he passed out for most everything, from a chopped foot to a heart attack. They usually worked. (Actually his name was Christopher Columbus Smith, born on October 22, 1859, in Farmin County, Texas.) He moved here from Salix, Iowa, in 1919, with his beloved wife Emmidi Meravia (1854-1939), known as Mary to Doc and as "Grandma Smith" to the rest of the community. Their home about a mile east of Effie burned to the ground in the early thirties, and grateful neighbors built them a new cabin in Effie. The Department of Health finally



stopped him from practicing medicine, and he passed away on June 12, 1945. Memories remain - memories of Doc binding up wounds, delivering babies, pulling aching teeth, and sitting by the bedside of a sick patient, hour after hour, day after day, if need be, until the crisis passed. In those days before antibiotics, pneumonia was a dread killer, but Doc Smith never lost a pneumonia patient.



Ethel Helm,  
off to deliver a baby?

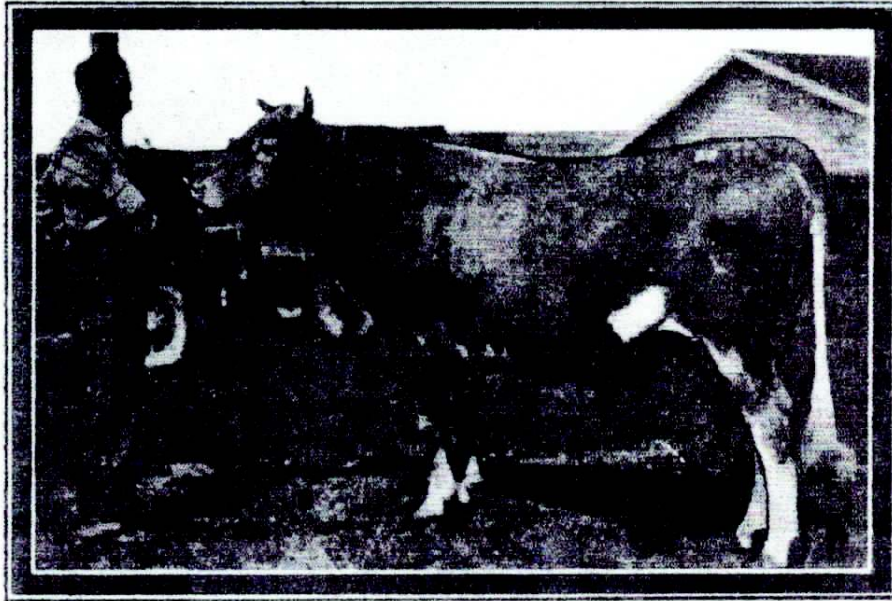
Some of the settler's wives were trained nurses or midwives. Mrs. Louis Applegate, Ethel Helm, Sadie Byrne, Ethel McMahon and others delivered countless babies, and nursed the sick to health throughout the community, too.

To them and to Doc, as we think of Homestead days, we breathe a heartfelt thank you.

## THE DEPRESSION

A sense of responsibility for one's neighbor, a way of life for the Effie pioneers, continued into the depression and drought of the 30's. This area became a haven for families who could no longer sustain life on a parched farm, or continue employment in a bankrupt industry. Families moved into every vacant house that could be restored to liveability. Local residents offered food and assistance until the newcomers were self-sustaining. These new families were not freeloaders or misfits. They were dedicated, skilled

# 1930 Premium List



Ninth Annual Northern  
Itasca County Fair

Effie, Minnesota

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY  
SEPTEMBER 5th and 6th, 1930

For many years Ward Johnson's Hall on the main street of Effie housed the agricultural and domestic displays, with livestock stabled in a building on the rear of the lot. The lunch stands and midway were on the surrounding grounds.

The products displayed at those early local fairs were astounding in quality and quantity. They rivaled the displays at any present county fair. A 1927 Northern Itasca County Fair bulletin lists 17 garden vegetables in addition to potatoes, grasses and forage, grains and seeds, and stock vegetables. The Itasca County Boys and Girls Club (later to become 4-H), had displays only slightly less in quantity than the adults. The ladies brought in the best of their canned goods, jams and jellies (mostly wild fruit), baked goods, needlework and flower gardens. To anyone who attended one of those superb fairs, he must forever remember the smell of the clover and grass samples mingled with vegetables and baked goods, and the sight of the crepe paper artistically draped about the ladies aid and farm booths.

The livestock exhibits were also of outstanding quality. Many of the animals had been shown and won honors at much larger fairs.

The county extension office personnel usually served as judges and competition was keen in all departments.

As important as the exhibits was the program. A speaker led the events, followed by sports. In 1927 the booklet lists high jumping and broad jumping, and racing events on Effie's main street - foot races (including a fat man's race), bicycle races, horse races and automobile races, all on the dusty or muddy dirt road. A baseball game was the big event, and a contest with the Bigfork team was sure to draw a crowd to the Fair.

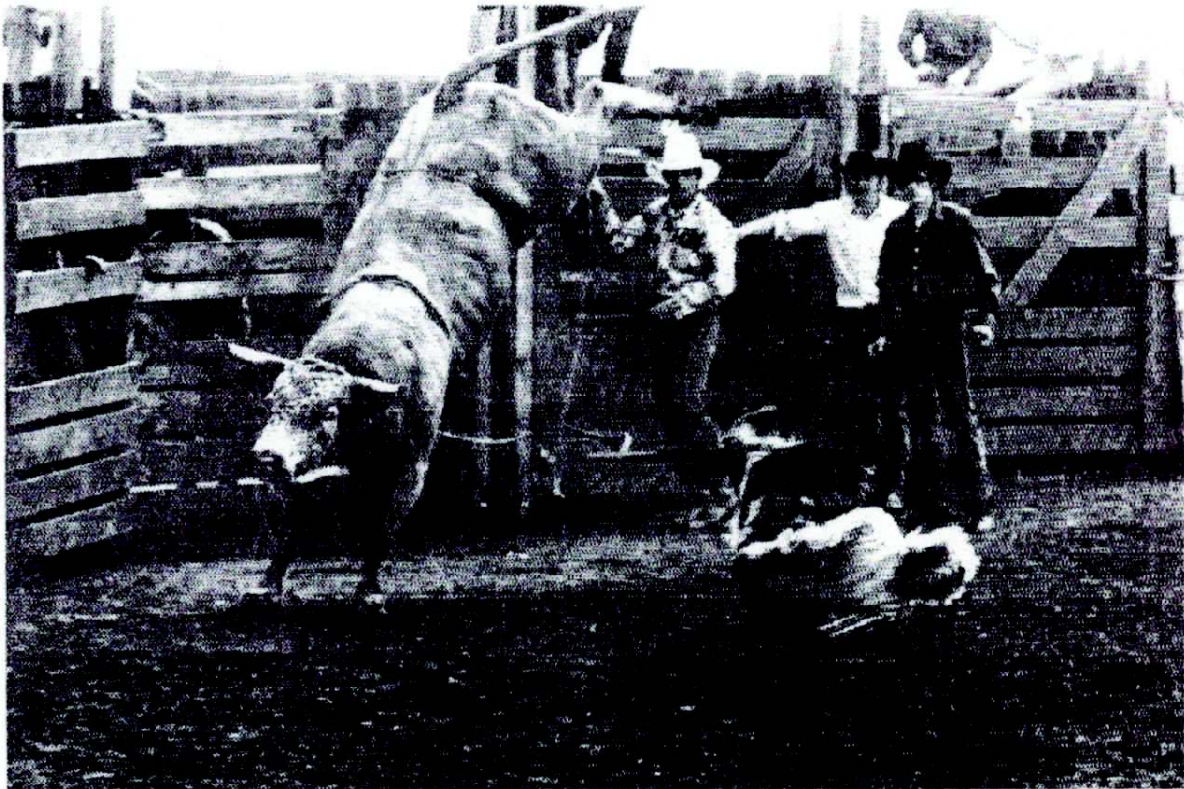
After the new Effie School was built and the grounds developed, the Fair was moved to this location. The location was changed once more to a new building and grounds built

up by a public works program. Here the Northern Itasca County Fair was held annually until its demise about the time of World War II.

Much credit goes to those who worked on this Community project and to all those who exhibited the best their farms and kitchens had to offer. It was great!

Talk to revive the Fair after the war never got off the ground, but another big community attraction came along shortly - the North Star Stampede. Rodeo is an American sport that grew from the communities that "made their own entertainment"

Here in Effie the sport of rodeo got underway in 1956 when Howard Pitzen produced the first annual North Star Stampede on his ranch two miles north of town. Howard had moved here from Browning, Montana to start a ranching operation, but having acquired the rodeo "bug", he decided to bring rodeo along with him. He gathered up some bucking horses and leased others to put on a three event rodeo. From this beginning the Stampede has added events and prize money until it became and is the largest open contest Rodeo in the State of Minnesota.



Action at the North Star Stampede.

musical talent, with many playing the fiddle, mandolin, banjo, accordion, and piano/organ. These instruments were prized possessions, often the most valuable single item one owned.

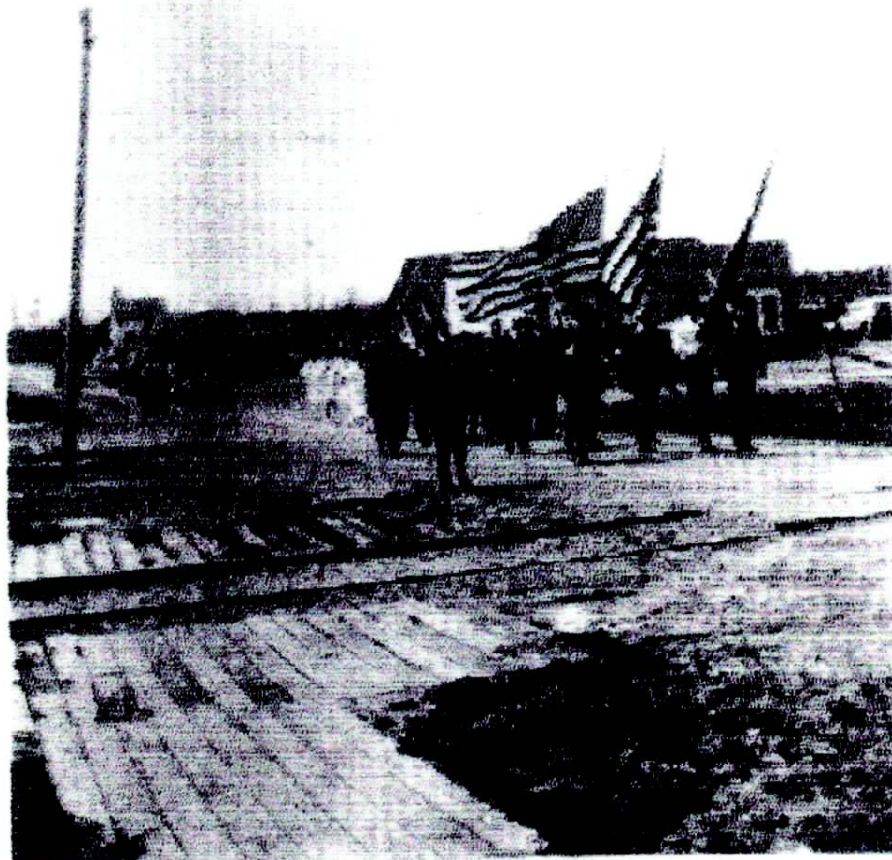
Dances were frequently held in individual homes, school houses or barns. An open air pavillion existed in Effie for a short time. Probably the last stronghold for country dancing was the North Busti Hall which remained active on Saturday nights until the building collapsed of old age. The two-step, waltz, polka, foxtrot and square dance were skillfully mixed by the musicians to keep the crowd from becoming either too inactive or exhuberant. Children were generally taken to the dances, and those who became sleepy or could not yet walk were bedded down on tables along the wall. These dances were sometimes combined with a basket or ice-cream social where the women brought food to be auctioned. The donor shared the delicacies with the successful bidder. Proceeds were used for some civic project. Regardless of the event, food was essential and plentiful. Square dance competition was a real spectator event.

Some of the old timers who provided the music for these events were: Sander Kyllonen, Jack Niemi, Herman Johnson, Jake Schmallenberger, John Thompson, Joe Palmer, Jim Rahier, Charlie Swanson, Tom Gunderson, Ben Knuteson, James Knight and Frank DeShaw.

Baseball was a prime sport, even in the early days. The teams were composed of local men who often had to walk many miles to practice or play. Sunday afternoons were baseball hours. It was pass-the-hat financed, and the spectators gave every nickle they could afford. Only those directly behind the catcher and about 30 feet to each side were protected by a screen. A foul ball outside of first or third often removed a windshield or window from a spectator's car. Kids had the job of retrieving foul balls landing off the playing field. These youngsters understood their job and would humble a good bird dog in their persistance. That ball hit into the timber would be needed before the game ended. Effie was consistantly high in league

standings, despite playing towns with 10 to 20 times the population. In 1955, the Effie team, then managed by Pat Harrington, battled its way into the State Tournament held at Little Falls.

During the 30's boxing matches were held in Effie under the promotion of James Knight. It was generally a local fighter pitted against an outsider. Few of the local fighters ever lost. The hard work done in farming and logging kept the men in superb condition. They feared no one and were strong as bears. There were few decisions because most of the matches ended on a 10-count. One didn't dare miss the dance after the boxing matches, as some of the fights outside the hall were better than those in the ring. It was not unusual to see someone holding the sheriff off with one hand, while a kerosene lantern held in the other provided the desired atmosphere.



American Legion unit at early Effie fair parade.