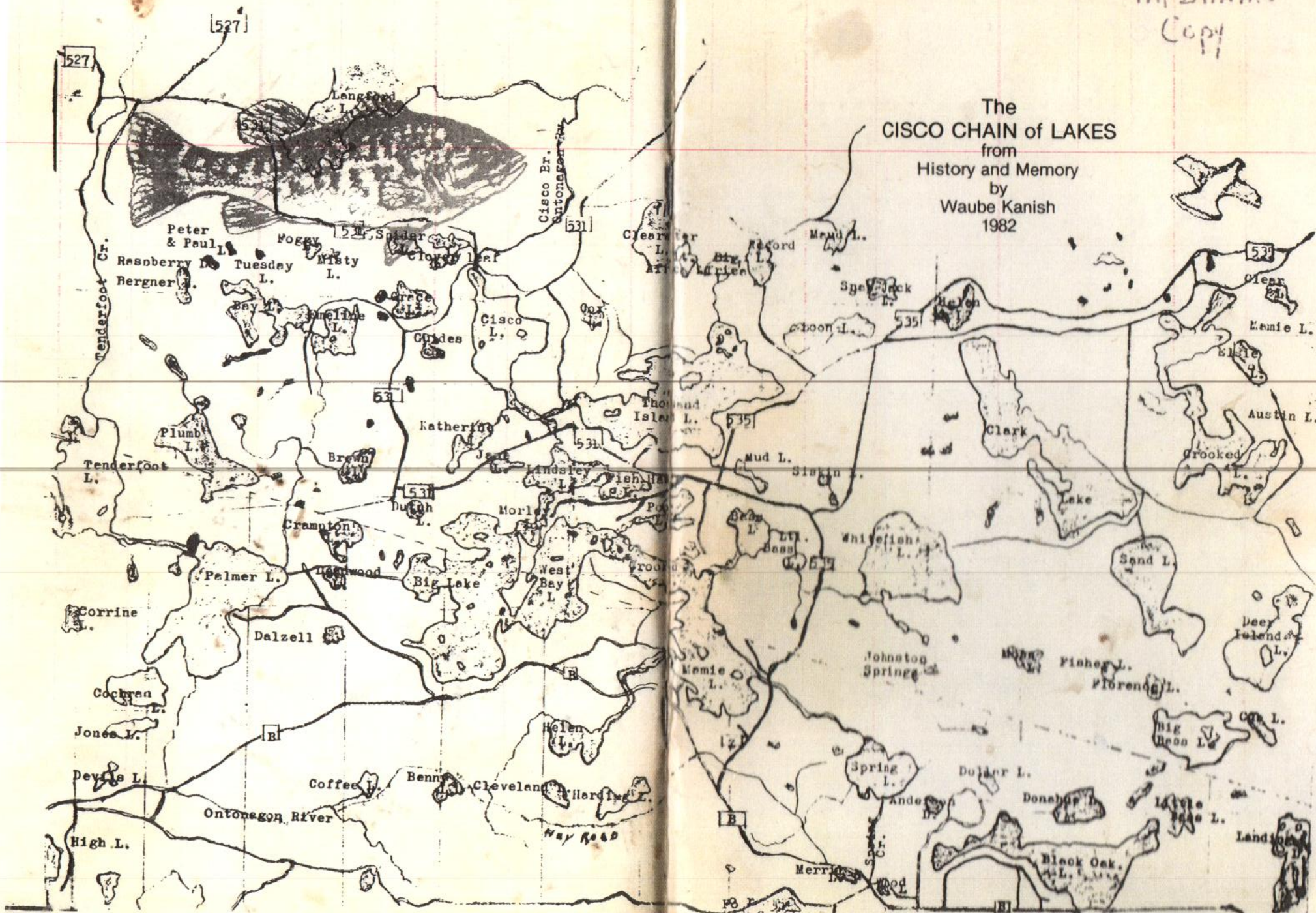


Phil Smith's
Copy

The
CISCO CHAIN of LAKES
from
History and Memory
by
Waube Kanish
1982





CISCO DAM — circa 1900

The
CISCO CHAIN of LAKES

from
History and Memory
by

Waube Kanish

and

"Dunny" Bent

1982

Dedicated to
CARETAKERS of the FUTURE

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INTRODUCTION

An early history of the Cisco Chain of Lakes was suggested by several friends who spend their summers on the Chain and also by some family members. Many of these people wanted to know about the 'roots' of early settlers on the Chain but had not found anyone connected with the past, and asked what my memory could provide.

Although my memories did not begin here, until 1910, my first visit was in the fall of 1907 when we lived at Marvin Hughlitt's Camp on Thousand Island lake. But, the Bents were story tellers, like the Indians. and also some pictures were taken, while others retained information about their ancestors. Much of the detailed information and dates were recorded by my sister Lucy Ann, which she pulled from our Mother, who never forgot a birthday or name of anyone she knew.

Even after searching memory, files, pictures and letters, ou will find many approximate dates, some very wrong. Names may be misspelled, Flora and Fauna could be to little and inaccurate, my apology.

This is a condensed version, about half of what it was on the first try, but was willingly cut. after my lifelong partner Gene, convinced me this should not be a family history. That's another story which is still being brought up to date, BENT TRAILS.

A forerunner of this story has also been written by Waube Kanish, trying to picture what this country was like about 1853--The GREAT SPIRIT COUNTRY.

THE BEGINNING

How was it possible for this beautiful Glacial lake country surrounding the Cisco Chain of Lakes to remain uninhabited until the 1890s? We believe the Chippewa Indians came through here annually to get Cisco fish at the Fish Trap in the rapids just out of Lindsley lake. (The Trap was a log and stick structure, similar to a modern minnow trap but open above the water. It was at the narrows where the Highway Bridge is now). They did not set up permanent villages as they did at Lac Vieux Desert, ease of waterway travel was perhaps the reason. From the Village they could go south down the Wisconsin River and its tributaries entirely by canoe, and with but a short portage, go north to Lake Superior and have access to miles of water.

When the whitemen arrived through the StLawrence in the early 1600s they too explored the area and wanted a waterway south. From close to Duluth, they followed the Brule river upstream to near its head-water and found a portage to the StCroix river which flowed into the Mississippi river and free passage south, and west. When Marquette came north, he came up the Wisconsin river to Lac Vieux Desert. The vast area between the rivers had no reason for settlement, it was too inconvenient.

Now think of the Chain, and try to picture a stream flowing through Cedar and Tamarack trees from Cisco lake over a rapids where the Cisco Dam was built, and visualize that Lake with the water level perhaps six feet lower, with green shores and many small islands. Another rapids in a stream coming into Cisco lake from Thousand Island and Lindsley lakes, winding its way through living green swamp, from a rapids at Thousand Island and another at the Fish Trap below Lindsley. There were other rapids out of Fishhawk, Morley, Big Lake, Gunlock (West Bay and Crooked lakes) Poor, Bass, Helen and Spring lakes. Cedar, Tamarack or Spruce swamps were in all areas, small islands were abundant, and Wild Rice grew in many lakes.

The untouched forest of Hemlock, Spruce, Cedar, Ash, hard and soft Maple, Yellow Birch, Basswood, Elm, and White Pine, with an occasional White Birch and lesser trees was marred only by spots of Lightning, fire or wind damage. The forest animals roamed freely in the woods by the fish filled lakes.

What a privilege for us to live in this enchanting wonderland on one of the worlds largest inland chain of lakes. Here we can relax and forget our daily struggles in the historical grace and beauty of one of natures unforgettable luxuries. All are equal here, and behavior is the yardstick, to respect this country, its rights and rights of others to come.

During those too, too short weekends we can all take time in our boats to slow to 'No Wake' for small boats, even those who may unwittingly be fishing in a narrow channel. It is not enough for us to preserve the Wild Life, we should teach our children and guests to also protect it. What a pity and waste for power boats to deliberately chase the rapidly disappearing marvelous Loon, until he drowns. Or to chase and run over whole flocks of beautiful helpless Mallard and Merganser ducks, helpless because the babies are too young to fly and the adults are moulting and cannot fly. Shame on us.

We need to save our water mammals, Otter, Beaver, Mink and Muskrat, although they are all occasionally destructive. Outweigh this by the pleasure they give us. The Otters playful antics in water or sliding down a bank. The wonderful sound of a Beaver tail slapping the night water. The Mink catching frogs or trying to get fish from your live box. And late in the fall to see the sturdy structure the Muskrat pushes up into the swamps for his winter home.

From legends and approximations, the Chippewa (Ojibway) Indians mined Copper near Ontonagon, Mich. in 1493 and the Tribe moved to Madeline Island in Lake Superior (Kitchie-Gami) in 1490 and grew to about 20,000 people. In 1610, after a hard winter with little food, their Medicere men turned Cannibal

and were destroyed by the Council. Because of fear of the Spirits they all left the Island. Most of them went to the Sault, a few came to Lac Vieux Desert (named by the French about 1700, and meaning 'lake of the desert, or deserted planting ground') and a larger group went to Lac Du Flambeau, Wis. (Lake of the Torch). The Potawatomi Indians settled on Tamarack Creek near Conover, Wis., and were later moved to near Laona, Wis. The Indians annual visits to the Chain were well known by early trappers because of the Indian Fish Trap. Here, in the fall. they caught Cisco fish for winter food and bait.

The tranquility of the area was lost when the railroad was built in 1883 through Eagle River to State Line (LOL) and on to Watersmeet, Mich. Logging of the great White Pine forest was at hand. A railroad spur was built from Turtle Junction, west of Watersmeet to Cisco lake. (North Shore Resort). In the early 1900s a logging camp was built there, and another on the east shore of Fishhawk lake. Only the best of the Pine was cut, and little care was given for the damage to other timber, for White Pine was "King". It was cut in the fall and decked on skidways. The White Pine is a delicate tree, it is limber but fragile, if fell on open ground it will shatter the trunk, making it worthless. The method used was to fall them into the thickest group of other trees, Pine, Hemlock or hardwood, and because they were limber they would not hang-up or lodge, but would softly come to rest on the ground.

In winter the logs would be hauled from the skidways on huge sleighs, pulled by Oxen over an ice road to another skidway and decked by the shore of a lake. Bare spaces and signs of those old skidways can still be seen on most lake shores. A Dam had been built on the outlet river from Cisco lake to raise the water level to float the logs to the Cisco landing in the spring. Some logs were lost where they were dumped onto the ice, forcing many into the mud at the bottom of the lake. Just below the Fish Trap was one such place. The logs remained

sound for many years and were recovered and sawed into lumber for early settler cabins.

What a mass murder of the Virgin Forest. Where the Pine was thickest, all the small trees were crushed to the ground and were left lying under the dying tops and discarded limbs. They were left to dry and rot and too often everything burned to the ground, the fire stopping only at the waters edge or a short way into the thick stands of Hemlock and hardwood. This is known as a 'slashing', 'chopping' or 'burning'. After burning, Fireweed would quickly take over and supply green, moist protection. Here and there, a patch of Oats, seeded from grain spilled by the Oxen, grew. Everywhere else, wild Red Raspberries would start and produce berries the following year.

Within a few years the area would be thick with White Birch and Poplar, this is nature's cover crop. As they grew, the stronger would survive, shading the weaker from the sun. Within about ten years the areas were thickly covered with Birch, eight to ten feet tall, with branches mostly at the tops. If unmolested they will continue to grow for close to a hundred years, sheltering the regrowth of all of nature's original forest. Wherever you see thick stands of large White Birch today, that area was either a slashing or burning or both. Nature in its way, slowly rebuilds the forest.

At the same time the lake shores of the entire Chain were brutally damaged. The raised water level of the lakes, from two to six feet, undermined the steep banks, killing the trees and they fell into the water to rot the bark and darken the clear pure water. The lowland Cedar and Tamarack swamps were completely inundated and died. Nature's recovery was gradual. The tree tops in the water at the shorelines deteriorated very slowly and many submerged snags are still there. They protected the shores against the most severe washing from normal waves for many years. With more speed boats and larger wakes, coupled with clearing of the unsightly snags, the shores were washed still more. When nearly recovered, the now high water levels are causing the

destruction to start all over again.

After the Pine loggers left, the Cisco Chain was not beautiful, as it is today, in fact it was a disaster. Many areas were burned to the ground, plus slashings with dead branches and Pine stumps. The trees on shorelines and in swamps were dead or dying, and the water level receded because the Dam was also falling apart and no longer holding the level. Adding to this, the Flying Black Ants destroyed the few Tamarack. It took until the 1920s before they started back, and how welcome and beautiful for fifty years. Now there are again signs of their demise from the higher water.

As logging started on the Chain it had also started the sawmill town of Donaldson, Wisconsin, a mile west of State Line Station, and centered around what is now 'Bear Trap Inn' on route 'B'. There were about thirty houses, a store, bunkhouse, Post Office, School and Town Hall with the Mill on Mill lake. A railroad from State Line went through Donaldson and past Black Oak lake to reach the Pine as far as Moccasin and Merrill lakes. That area was slashed and burned as it was around Donaldson and State Line. My first memories were of Pine stumps as far as you could see, and later picking Blueberries among them.

EARLY SETTLERS

Close to the end of this rape of the Virgin Wilderness, the Bent related, DeLano brothers from Abrams, Wis., farmers, but looking for ready cash, arrived by following the logging railroad west and a 'tote' road to Mamie lake on the Cisco Chain. They built two cabins and a barn on the lakeshore at the edge of about three hundred acres of burned forest, and started to fish and hunt for shipment to the Chicago market. The game was packed in ice, and hauled by wagon the then twelve miles to State Line Station. They hired men to fish from rowboats with hand lines, and caught Smallmouth Black Bass to fill the wagon daily.

In 1895 'Bill' Bent, age 57, and his sons, Charles 38, George 33, Horace 25 and Walter 17

arrived at the Delano Camp on Mamie lake on their way back from Hurley, Wis. They had just completed supplying fresh meat to the crew building the railroad to Hurley. They drove cattle and butchered daily until they ran out of meat. Then they supplied Venison. They all carried 45/90 rifles and wore Buckskins. The Bents stayed to hunt and fish for the Chicago market to get cash.

Charles Bent, a mild conservationist did not like marketing wild game and felt this country should be open to Sportsmen. In 1896 Charlie bought Delano's and called it 'Bents Camp' for sport fishing and hunting. He loved the country and did all he could in his lifetime to protect and improve it for others.

George Bent left the north, married Carrie Stoud and then went to the sunny promises of California.

Horace Bent started Camp Tenderfoot on Tenderfoot lake.

Walter Bent worked at both camps for a few years and then started his own place on Fishhawk and Lindsley lakes in 1909.

Charles Bent brought his family, wife Elizabeth (Lizzy), son Austin and daughters Elsie and Mamie (Polly) from Abrams, Wis. More cabins were built, mostly of Tamarack logs laid directly on the ground and because of their rot resistance may still be there. The first log cabin served as temporary home and dining area with Charlie chief cook.

A sawmill was one of the first things added. While the cabins were being built of logs, lumber was needed for roofs, shingles, floors, doors, Cupboards, bedsteads, barns, docks, boathouses, out-houses, ice house, etc. Land was homesteaded and bought, and for about twenty years logs were cut in late fall and decked in the woods, then hauled on ice roads to the sawmill and decked again, to be sawed into lumber in early spring, and piled to air dry.

As land was cleared the hauling of Marsh Hay for the animals over the Hay road from the Beaver meadows on Trout Creek near Harding lake, was not needed. Gradually they grew hay, corn and oats for the needs of horses, cows, pigs, chickens, turkeys

and Angora Goats, Lizzie used the the wool to make blankets for the Camp. For several years the Goats were taken to an island in Crooked lake for forage and to clear the underbrush. It was called Goat Island until the Klotz built there in 1926-27. (Forsythe Island). The Indians had a different name, 'Big Pine Island', and with a reason, as perhaps the largest White Pine in the North grew there. The legend of why so large and not struck by lightning, was that the Great Spirit placed normal Pines on nearby hills to be struck first. Few lonely tall Pines were left undamaged. The one on Belle Isle in Mamie lake was taller then, Walter Bent told of standing on Grassy Point in about 1904 and seeing lightening break the top off. It has been hit many times since.

A garden supplied nearly all the fresh vegetables for Bents Camp, including potatoes, sweet corn, rutabaga and rhubarb. Wild Red Raspberries, Blueberries, Blackberries and Cranberries were canned. One small Crabapple tree provided pectin. Although fences were gradually built, the cows, with bells hanging from straps around their necks, foraged in the woods.

One of the original DeLano cabins was used as a schoolhouse for the Bent Girls. It lasted about fifteen years. A Quoit and Horseshoe court took its place. Most people used it to play horseshoe, using shoes of all sizes, depending upon the size of the horse, Polly Bent became expert at both.

The Camp log dining room with a fireplace was lined with White Birch bark held in place with Cedar bark strips. It adjoined the kitchen which was on the lake shore, with screened porches above the water. The Bents summer home, the 'Kings Castle' was a two story log cabin in the center of the Camp with porches on all sides that had railings made of small round Cedar. Behind the dining room was the log Office building with Birchbark lining. It was connected to the Folly, a three story frame building with guest rooms up stairs and the Bents winter quarters on the ground floor, their first building with plumbing, built in about 1906. A large septic tank was built in the swamp.

Before 1900 Charlie Bent built a cabin on Grassy Point, opposite Belle Isle, across from his Camp and another cabin on Honeymoon Island in West Bay.

'Camp Tenderfoot' relates to the Cisco Chain because of the, one, Bent family and the only ones there at the time. It was connected by the Palmer portage to the Chain and the entrance was through Bents Camp or the Cisco railroad landing.

When Charlie started his Camp, Horace Bent started Camp Tenderfoot by building a winter Cabin. Their father Bill Bent and the youngest son Walter Bent went to help. Bill believed in the old ways, he had left S. Paris, ME in 1865 to come west as it was getting too closed in there, he could see smoke from neighbors chimneys. He believed you should live from the lakes and forests. Horace 26yrs wanted his own place. They spent the fall hunting deer for the Chicago market, not for fun but to live. The hunting was not sporting, they sold the deer.

The hunt procedure was to send a man with a Birch-bark canoe to each lake within the hunt, where he would paddle to the middle of the lake and wait. At the appointed time Bill would send Hobart, a wise old Bloodhound, into the woods. He was named for Pres. McKinley's Vice President. Hobart would pick up a deer trail and drive them until they took to water for escape, where the men in the canoes would kill them. It was only bucks they got, not because of later laws, but because the dog took the strongest scent.

Late in the winter, while they were still building, a storm prevented normal hunting for food. When the storm cleared, they went hunting Snowshoe Rabbits, their normal diet, with Hobart getting the heads. The first three were dropped by the trail as the hunt went on. Returning they found the rabbits less heads, Hobart was also hungry, couldn't wait.

Log Cabins of large White Pine were built on the Island in Tenderfoot lake. They were chinked inside with moss and split Cedar between the logs and outside with mortar. The roofs were shingled and the inside was lined with White Birch bark and Cedar bark strips, each with a stone Fireplace.

The main lodge was about 24' x 36' and many years later moved by son Larry Bent, to Helen Creek off Lake Mamie. More log cabins were built for guests. Later a winter home was built on the mainland.

While getting started, all supplies were carried on mens backs across the Palmer portage. These included the essentials for building and living, clothing, blankets, springs, mattresses, pots, pans, dishes, nails and food, flour, sugar, beans, and corn meal in 100 lb. bags. Soon horses and wagon were added to the portage, cows and chickens to the mainland.

Supplies came from the railroad, either State Line and by 'tote' road to Bents Camp, then boats or scows to Palmer landing on Big Lake or by boat from the railroad at Cisco to the portage. ('Tote' roads were trails through the woods built to tote supplies. Tote, meaning specifically, to carry or bear on a person.) (Scow was a small barge eight to twelve feet wide and fifteen to twenty five feet long. Some were open to the bottom with three foot sides, others were flat deck.) Boats and scows were unloaded at the Big Lake end of the portage and until they got horses, everything was carried, usually at night, to Palmer lake and then by boat to Camp Tenderfoot. In those years the days were spent guiding the paying guests. Walter guided at both Camps. After dark they all carried the supplies from Big Lake, using shoulder harnesses and a head strap, they handled heavy loads of 200 lbs. or more. When not finished at night they were back at dawn.

One cold rainy night, Walter saw movement beside the trail. He found a guide (Novice) from Bents Camp who had told the guests they would have to spend the night under the canoe as it was too dark to find their way to Camp Tenderfoot. Walter took them with him across the portage and by Bark canoe, over Palmer lake, down the river to Tenderfoot and the Camp on the island. The guests were Dr. Scott and his wife Mabel from Geneva, Ill. The guide was a guide no more. The Scotts remained lifelong friends and Walter built their Cedar and Pine Cabin on Fishhawk Point in 1912. Dr. Scott had been coming here with a friend, Frank Lenartz, but this was Mrs Scott's first trip,

1902. She missed but few years or trips after that and became a great fisherman, both lakes and steam. Her pictures, stills, and later movies, are wonderful memories. Walter's son Dunny married their daughter Gene 1/1/33.

Horace Bent took time in the spring of 1902 to go to Cleveland, Ohio to marry Amanda Holton. They had two children, Lawrence (Larry) 1903, and Dorothy 1904. Growing up they had a tutor and stayed at Tenderfoot the year around. In November of 1904 Horace was drowned in Palmer lake one night just before the lakes froze over. He was bringing two Lumberjacks into the Camp for winter work. He was an excellent swimmer, usually swimming a mile a day, but appeared to have drowned trying to save them, and failed to reach shore.

Walter Bent left the North and married 'Etta' Whitcomb at Abrams, Wis. in the summer of 1902. They tried farming but soon started logging at Metropolitan, Mich. When Horace died, Walter left Etta and son Harold at her father's farm and came back to run Camp Tenderfoot. He came back for them and another son, Ronald (Bud) July 4, 1905. They returned by Pullman car to Cisco landing, then went by boat to the landing and across the portage on the top of a heavily loaded wagon, amid many large mosquitos. They brought Lina, a nursemaid for Larry and Dorothy, and she drowned that summer. Everyone worked that summer and fall, then closed the Camp to spend the winter at Bents Camp. Etta Bent and sons returned to the farm in Abrams briefly and then back to Bents Camp for the winter.

Fred Miller had stayed to help close Tenderfoot and continued on to help Amanda Bent and her two small children, run the Camp for a few years, then he also drowned. Shortly Charles Lunberg came to work there and married Amanda. He ran the Camp for many years and did a great job. It was not easy for him, as the children grew, Larry became a problem. He was sent to Howe Military school but did not want to stay at Tenderfoot. Larry went to live with his Uncle George in California. He liked his Uncle and Aunt Carrie and their adopted family. Little was heard and then an announcement that Mr. and Mrs Lawrence H. Bent had a son, George Arthur Bent.

June 7, 1921, mailed at Prado, Calif. June 9, 1921.

Memory tells me, the Rahrs and Bilharz were the first families to build summer homes at Tenderfoot, shortly after the Camp opened. Bill and Anita Bilharz later moved to Big Lake on the Cisco Chain and the families are still there.

About 1905 Marvin Hughlett and Mr. Samson built on the NE shore of Thousand Island lake and although not settlers, they came close. Laun Lovelas and his wife were caretakers and spent many years there. Hughlett did some logging and was responsible, through his connection with the Chicago and Northwestern RR, to keep the Turtle Jct. spur open to Cisco. Memory recalls Greenhouses with, to me, funny plants and a Bird house with strange birds. Chinese and English Pheasants, and many colorful small birds, left a lasting impression. They also had, perhaps the largest and most beautiful launches on the Chain, but they were rarely used.

About 1909 John and Alma Frank built at the SE corner of West Bay lake. His brother Harry Frank had started the Maple Grove Resort on Lac Vieux Desert in 1898. John and Alma were a hard working couple and like others, they had to be to survive. John built enough Cabins for a Resort, Alma was an excellent cook and they prospered. Among their early guests were the Frankenthals. Being a good blacksmith and builder, John built a large building on the hillside, it was a lodge and home on the top floors and a Tavern at ground level. Most of the lumber was from Walter Bent's mill on Fishhawk, and was finished about 1912. At the same time the Town had the road improved by Walter, his first, to West Bay lake. The Tavern was the first and only one on the Chain and was frowned upon. Our families remained friends and their only son Martin and Dunny, the same age, were playmates. Their guests brought in huge Mahogany launches that were the envy of all, but could barely get through the channels. John Frank sold to Frankenthal (later Lamont) in 1914 and moved to the Vance house in Donaldson, where Martin went to school.

The Walter Bent family spent the winter of 1905-06 at Bents Camp where he logged and Lizzie Bent was cook. In the spring they moved to the Cabin on Grassy Point where Horace Bent was buried and the grave was there until Mrs McKinnon bought the point many years later. Walter 'boomed' (a boom is made of a chain of logs tied together, with loose logs in the middle) the logs, using his old launch, to the Cisco landing, and moved there in the fall. They lived in the 1898 Brooks and Ross logging camp that was still intact. He loaded the logs on railroad cars and then the Scotts and Lenartz with others came there to Deer hunt.

Early winter 1906-07 the Walter Bents moved to Hughletts Camp on Thousand Island and logged there. In mid winter they moved back to the Point in Mamie, for a short stay before Etta, her sister Blanche and two boys, Harold and Bud, went across the lakes and through the woods to Turtle Jct. and Watersmeet to go to Oconto, Wis. (Milwaukee RR). Arthur Bent (Dunny) was born there at his Grandparents, April 8, 1907. Grandpa Whitcomb was County Sheriff.

Etta Bent, now with three boys, returned in the summer, through Bents Camp, to Hughletts. The family returned to Bents Camp in early fall and lived in the Folly until late fall when Etta and the boys returned to Abrams for the winter. (Much RR Travel)

Walter, Wally by all, and Colonel to hunting friends, logged the winter of 1907-08 at Fishville, Mich., a mile north of State Line Station. He could not stand farming, but he did love this country and hunting, fishing and trapping. He could always drop everything to fish or hunt. Etta and the boys returned in the spring and that fall the family moved to the Indian Village on Lac Vieux Desert to log some Indian timber. They lived in tents until Christmas and then moved to the Senior Caskeys on Pine lake, near the mouth of the Wisconsin river. It was next door to an interesting Mr. Eby, a retired school teacher, and not far from the Sylvester Caskeys and the Louis Thomas Resort which was started in

1882 near where the first White settler built in 1852. This was a fun time for small boys, playing with Indian boys and afraid of Palefaces, and also with Elmer and Ethel Caskey, about our ages. But not fun for Walter as three of a four horse team drown when the sleigh load of logs, broke through the ice in the lake. As the ice broke, he quickly cut the tugs (traces) to free the horses from the sinking sleigh, but old Gyp was the only one to accept help and crawled out to remain in the family for many years, raising a yearly colt. The Indians later pulled the three out, two were Indian Ponies which they buried, the other was not and was eaten.

In early spring the family returned to Abrams and Walter went back to the Chain, guiding at both Camps and planning. Charles Lunberg was running Camp Tenderfoot. The Scotts and Lenartz were north and Dr. Scott bought the Fishhawk Point, most of it for Walter, who started at once to build a sawmill on Fishhawk. He lived in the old office building of the logging Camp on the east shore of the lake. It was here he developed a hearty dislike for Porcupines. Returning after a few days trip, He found a Porky had chewed the putty from a window glass and crawled onto a shelf. It pushed all his supplies to the floor, leaving a mixture of flour, sugar, salt and coffee trampled. They later made problems by chewing leather belts at the sawmill. Sorry to say, he destroyed many Porkys thereafter.

Parts of the mill were brought through Bents Camp and then by scow, the balance and heavier boiler were hauled by horse drawn sleighs from Donaldson to Bents Camp and across the ice and through the woods in the winter of 1908-09. Setting up the mill interfered with trapping but did not stop it as cash was needed.

The first Walter Bent family Christmas on the Chain, is well remembered. The family arrived in early November by launch to a partly finished Cabin, tarpapered outside, one sheet iron heater and a cook stove. Two of us had Scarlet Fever, a cousin had appendicitis and was hauled out to recover.

Supplies, other than food, were short. Nine deer and one hog hung under the porch. The barn was cold, the chickens roosted on the cow's back for warmth, but their combs froze and they stopped laying. Etta's sister Blanche came with us and was a big help.

We children did not expect Santa to find us in the woods. A Spruce tree was placed in the living room, and we made a few paper loop chains and strung Pop Corn before hanging our stockings. In the morning we were surprised, Polly and Elsie Bent had snowshoed over with packs. There were candles burning on the tree and Santa had left something for everyone. Our stockings were filled and we had roast Chicken for dinner. We loved our cousins everafter.

Amanda Bent Lunberg with Larry and Dorothy snowshoed over on New Years eve and we had a grand celebration. Everyone sat in the big kitchen watching the new eight day wall clock as its hands pointed straight up to January 1, 1911.

The second Christmas, 1911, we went from Fishhawk by sleigh to Bents Camp to be with the Charlie Bent family. They were in their winter quarters, the lower floor of the Folly. It was a fun time, plenty of food and many presents. The Tree was decorated and had lighted candles, its a wonder there were not more fires. Just after supper on Christmas eve everyone gathered in the big living room and Blanche had the three small boys recite prepared verses. Leo was a new baby and Dunny's piece was, "Hang up the Baby's stocking, be sure and don't forget, for the poor little dimpled darling, has never seen Christmas yet".

About then Charlie said, "Walter, the horses have to be fed". Shortly after he left we heard sleigh bells and then a white bearded face appeared at the high windows at the back of the room. There was no fireplace but soon Santa was heard in the upstairs hall and then arrived down the stairs with a HO-HO-HO and a pack of toys. He knew everyone by name and had presents for all. He stayed but a minute and then away he went, and as we listened in awe, we heard "Good Cheer to all and to all a Good Night" as the sound of sleigh bells faintly disappeared. As we sat in silent wonderment we were

aroused to hear Walter stamping the snow from his boots. All the children swarmed around to tell him of Santas visit.

Polly and Elsie returned with us to Fishhawk on a bright sunny day in a hayrack with sleigh bells on the horses and minds full of Santa. We crossed Mamie and Crooked lakes and Poor lake swamp to the woods leading to Fishhawk lake and home to a very cold house. Again we watched the clock hands go straight up to another Happy New Year to all, Jan. 1, 1912. The happiness ended soon, as Walter cut a foot very badly while splitting Tamarack, and we moved quickly to Donaldson and had spent our last winter at Fishhawk.

DEER HUNTING

In late November of 1898 the first of over forty annual deer hunts took place for the W. E. Clow party at Bents Camp. The first hunt included W.E. 'Dad Clow', his son Bill, Walter Knott and 'Frannie' Manierre. They came in from State Line in a single bobsled of hay. Charlie rode a little Indian Pony, Nixie the mother of Nigger, the black colt that that turned pure white. Austin walked and shot Partridge with a 22 pistol from the Spruce trees. They came past the Donaldson mill at Mill lake and on past Mary Otts deserted cabin on Black Oak lake (the only one on the lake), past the old log rollways on the west end of Black Oak, past the Goose lake trail, around Merrill lake and across Spring Creek on a log bridge, up the Sugarbush hill to the Hay road through the woods to the big burned area and Bents Camp. They hunted with Bill Bent and Hobart. The only time they hunted with a dog.

The first year Lizzie was the cook, and they loved her, and as the Clows said, "Charlie does everything else". In later years they rented the whole Camp, brought most of the food and their cook, 'Ole Black Joe' and he was wonderful, he helped 'Bring up' the children and grandchildren. While the Clows were there the Bents were guests, a yearly

vacation. After the hunt, as the Clows reported, 'Charlie managed his one man logging operation, this aided in his making a living. He was young, determined, and strong as a Grizzly Bear, and needed no Government help'. Years later Charlie told me, "I am not fat, I just never stopped growing".

During the early years of Deer hunting around the Cisco Chain, there is much to contemplate. At the time of Wildcat-Eagle the Chippewa Brave, there was a simple philosophy. The Great Spirit provided the deer in the woods as a part of the economy for them. Their Brother the deer provided food, skin for clothing, antlers and bones for tools, plus the use of brain for tanning the hide to Buckskin. The privilege was not to be abused, take only what was needed and must be used. The hunt was one of patience, stealth and creeping close to assure the deadly arrow would hit its mark.

The early Frontiersman with Longrifle felt the same. But then came the market hunter, dead deer, no matter how taken, was their only interest. Next came the Sportsmen, most hunted for the pleasure of the chase and a desire to get a Trophy. They were mingled with the early settlers who had to rely on game for food for their families.

Much has been said and written about the merits and demerits of hunting with dogs. Deer hunting with dogs was prohibited by law early in the 1900s. The Clow party, starting after their first hunt, would not use them. Most natives hunting parties did use Dogs.

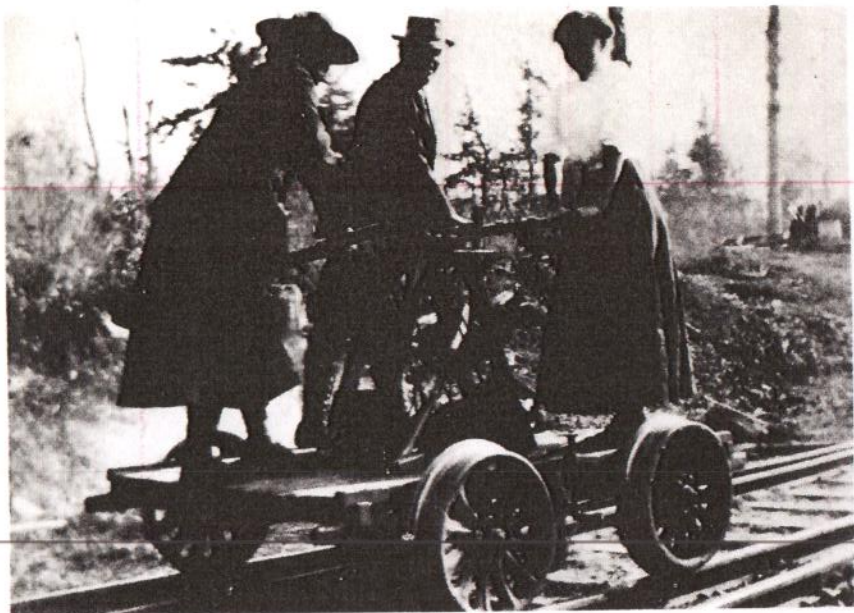
Let us take a birdseye view of a hunt with a small party of four. The leader will place three people on stands, one close to the shore of Lindsley near the Fishhawk channel, another stands close to the Thousand Island shore and the third in the middle. All are spaced so they cannot see or shoot the others but still see anything moving between them. The leader or driver then walks into the woods toward the river. If he starts a deer he will blow a horn or make other noise. The deer will move toward the stands, but slowly, stopping and turning to keep



BENTS CAMP — Mamie Lake - 1896



HONEYMOON ISLAND — West Bay Lake - circa 1900



'HAND CAR' — Cisco Landing - circa 1904

?



CAMP TENDERFOOT — (island) - circa 1905



TYPICAL LAUNCH — and Shore - circa 1905



BENTS CAMP — Mamie Lake - circa 1905



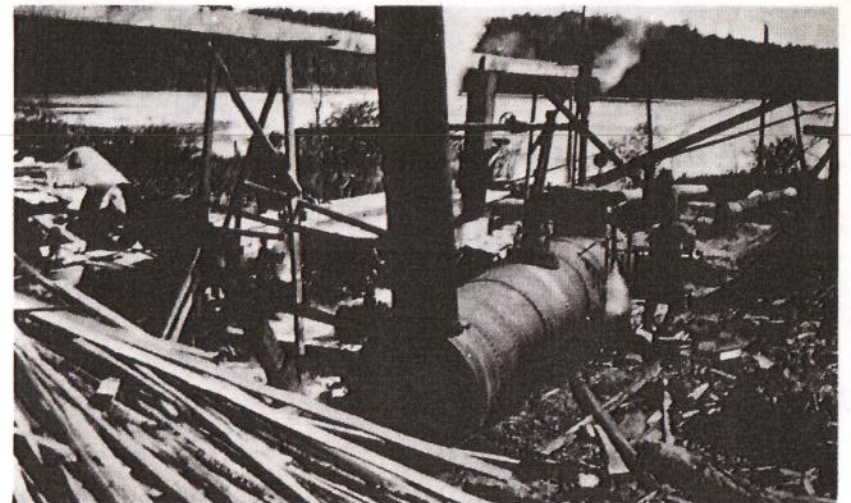
BENTS CAMP — Dining Room - circa 1906



OLD LOGGING CAMP — Office Bldg. - circa 1909



WATERSMEET, MI. — Railroad Station - circa 1908



Walter Bent SAW MILL — Fishhawk Lake - 1910



Walter Bent, Family, ICE BREAKER — Lindsley - 1910



SHATTUCKS — Morley & West Bay Lakes - 1911



HUGHLITTS — Thousand Isl. - 1911 — 1st Camp - 1906



JOHN FRANK RESORT — West Bay-(Lamont) -1911-12



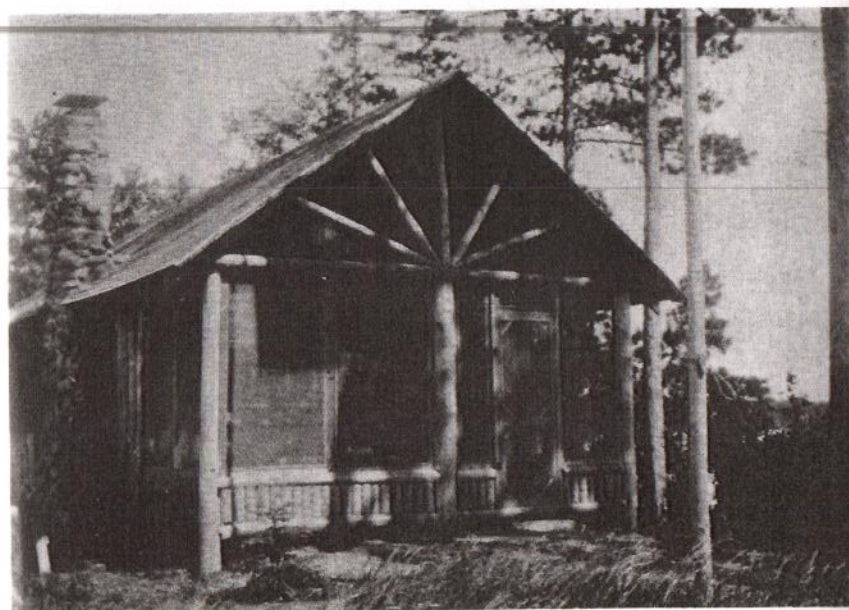
SCOTT CABIN — Seldom Inn on Porky Point - 1912



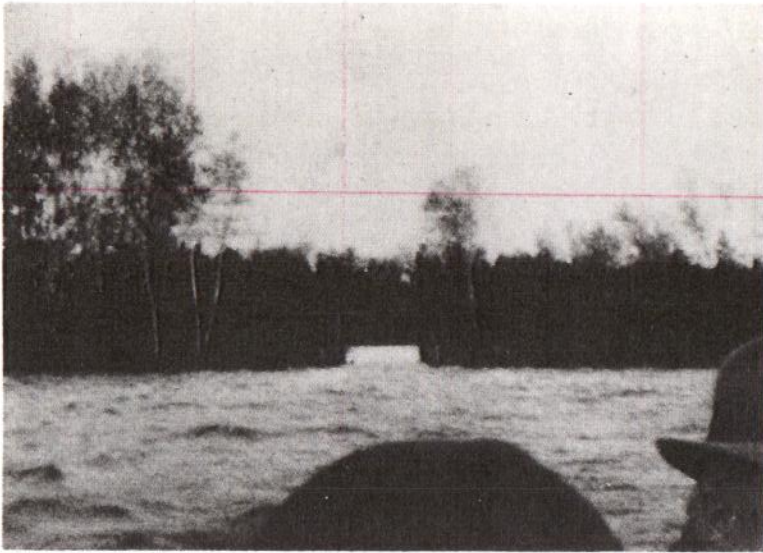
STUCK in a 'Slashing' - 1921



ROAD CONSTRUCTION — Black Oak Lake - 1913



FISHER HOMESTEAD — Big Lake - 1922



SANDCUT From West Bay Lakes - 1927



A BIT OF FLOODED SHORELINE - 1981

aware of where the driver is. In this fashion the deer is likely to stop close to one of the stands and be shot.

Now consider the same hunt but with the driver sending an experience Dog into the area while he walks out of range of the stands and lets the Dog work. When the Dog gets a scent and starts a deer it becomes a race and the way out is across the stands, but the person on a stand has little time. A sound is heard, a blur is seen and the deer has gone across the viewing area, which may have been fifteen feet wide. No shot fired, but the knowledgeable Dog goes back and singly brings three more deer across the stands. With all deer driven from the area the Dog goes back to the leader, who then calls the people from the stands. Should a deer be wounded the Dog can find it. Which method saves the most deer?

The early settler carried a rifle or shotgun as normal apparel, killing deer, partridge or ducks as their need demanded. Most were good shots and Walter one of the best, shooting the head from a bird with a rifle was normal. His regular hunting friends knew of his ability but newcomers had some doubts. One day beside a lake on the way to a deer hunt, one of them asked him to shoot a duck, far out from shore, with just a pause he fired and the duck disappeared. All but the novice knew it was a Helldiver, not hit but could submerge indefinitely.

Early GUESTS and Summer PLACES

In addition to the Clow Party, some of the early Guests at Bents Camp were;

Lennartz	Cloud	Followed by;	
Scott	Greenbaum	Ketchem	Saddler
Goodrich	Shattuck	Severn	Wagner
Knott	Bean	Fisher	Harding
Bullock	Kennedy	Rawlins	Klotz
Gedge	Bilharz	McKinnon	Bennett
Sherwood		R.W.Davis	C.S.Davis

Several made the "American Plan" Bents Camp their summer home for many years, others used the Camp as a base and built on the Chain later. A few had Private Cabins with Boathouses, Juliet Goodrich was the first, then Frances Bean (Mrs Vair) and the Sherwoods. They all had their meals at the Camp Dining room.

In 1902 the Bullocks built a log Cabin on the Northeast point in West Bay. About 1905 Marvin Hughlitt built on the Northeast shore of Thousand Island lake. About 1908 Greenbaum (Shilling-Vogel) built on the large island between West Bay and Crooked lakes. About 1909-10 Shattucks built between Morley and West Bay lakes and John Frank started a Resort on the Southeast shore of West Bay lake. (Frankenthal-Lamont), and Walter Bent built a sawmill and home on the Point between Fishawk and Lindsley lakes. (Gerry Davis). In 1912 Dr. Scott built on Fishawk Point. ('Seldon Inn on Porky Point' - Dunny and Gene Scott Bent). In 1922 Jim Fitzgerald, an old time guide, built a Homestead Cabin (proved) on the east shore of Big Lake just north of the West Bay channel, and George and Polly Bent Fisher built a Homestead Cabin on the large point or island on the Northwest side of Big Lake (Days ?). It was not approved and the cabin was moved to Mamie lake, a log cabin and is still at McKinnons. In 1923 the Fishers built east of Bents Camp on Mamie Lake. (McKinnon). About 1924 Frank Ketchum built east of the Fishers on an Island. In 1926-27 Charles and Laura Klotz built on an Island in Crooked Lake. (Forsythe). In 1927 C.S. Davis built on the East end of Mamie lake and Bob Bennett built on the island next to the Klotz in Crooked lake. (Saddler). About 1930 Ray Hook built a Resort on the SW shore of Big Lake. About 1932 Juliet Goodrich built on the North shore of Mamie. The Hardings built east of Goodrich in 1933. About 1936 George Severn built West of Goodrich. (Mrs Vair). Prior to 1930 Marathon Paper Co. built a Fire Station Cabin at the inlet to Cisco lake. (Palmquist).

ROADS

The first wagon road to the Cisco Chain was a 'Tote' road trail from the railroad Station at State Line, Wisconsin and Michigan, now Land O' Lakes, Wis. to Mamie Lake, where Bents Camp was built. It was two wagon wheel tracks past Donaldson and followed the logging railroad grade over the ties, past Black Oak lake, and then west across a wasteland of burned chopping and between huge Pine stumps, reaching nearly to Merrill lake. It was here the Virgin Hardwood and Hemlock began. Loggers had taken the few White Pine that had stood with them. The trail went around Dead Horse lake and north of Wood to Merrill lake (named for a man who had a Cabin there for many years) and along the north shore, then Northwest to a log bridge over Spring Creek. For about the next mile the tracks were mostly uphill through large Maple trees. This was known as Sugarbush Hill, and later was the center of Bent's Sugar Bush. Farther on and about a mile from Camp, close to the Hay road and still in the forest, but in sight of the burning, was a steep down hill, always wet and slippery and known as Slippery Hill. In later years was a real test for "Tin Lizzy" and driver.

The trail had been a tote road for the loggers prior to 1893, and was little improved until about 1912. By that time the road from State Line, through Donaldson and to StClair's Black Oak Resort, had been turnpiked, that is it had been widened and dragged, with shallow ditches in places.

In 1913 Walter Bent turnpiked the road, beginning about a quarter mile east of Black Oak lake and between Black Oak and Little George lakes, around Bates Point and straight past Heinig's place, through the burned chopping to near Wood lake. The road Camp was on the shore of Black Oak lake. His crew were all Chippewa Indians, they were families, camped on the hill across the road. That fall Walter built an improved road from Donaldson over Mill Creek and around the end of Landing lake. The family lived in the Lumber Company's Cook House. The

year before he had built his first road, it was from Bents Camp across Helen Creek to John Franks Resort on West Bay lake.

The early wagon roads throughout the area followed old logging roads and were, two well worn horse and wheel tracks. As more families arrived, buggies with one horse were used, and then a third track was worn between the others where the horse walked.

The second road to the Chain was from Watersmeet, Mich. to Hughlett's Camp on the northeast shore of Thousand Island lake. Built early in the 1900s, it could barely be called a road, and like most early roads it followed old logging trails where possible. Much of it was winding to avoid hills and get around lakes. There were many swampy places that required corduroy, which was made by laying logs side by side across the road. Through the Hardwood forest it was always damp and slippery, curving around and between the trees, often the wagon would jolt over roots close to the trees. A ride in a lumber wagon with no springs, was something to behold. Within the last few years, as the roads have been further improved, some of you may have seen old logs pulled out of the road by construction crews. The stand of open Hardwood timber along some sections is still there.

Recollections prompt a deserved thanks to the Watersmeet Township. When the Walter Bent family, with children of school age were living on Fishhawk Point 1910-12, the Township offered three choices for schooling. They would extend the road and transport the children to Watersmeet school; board them in Watersmeet; or supply a teacher at their home. For other reasons the family did not spend another winter there.

A road around Forest lake, it had been Goose lake then, was built by Walter Bent in 1926-27. It was his last as he died from a dynamite explosion while blowing the last Yellow Birch stump on a side road. The road was built for a developer.

The next year a road was built from present Rte B, along the old Hay road to Helen lake where

there was a logging railroad. Ray Hook was Camp Boss of the logging and the Camp was on railroad cars. A near catastrophe during Deer season, a tame three year old Buck was shot on the tracks by a hunter, in a NO hunting zone, when the deer walked up to him looking for food. This was Laddie, who had been raised from an orphan by the Fishers. The Buck had white ear butts and had become a special pet of the Lumberjacks. When Laddie was dragged down the tracks the Jacks were ready to kill. Ray Hook later started a Resort on Big Lake.

By 1929 the road to the Chain had been improved to gravel. Plans had been made to extend the road from Bents Camp, County 'B' to Boulder Junction.

About 1932 the road was built across Spring Creek and along Mamie lake to Goodrich and Severn.

About 1940-42 the road was extended from Spring Creek, by Marathon Paper Company as a logging road to truck Pulpwood from the Chain. It extended around the Chain and was later taken over by Vilas and Gogebic Counties to open the Lake Frontage on the Chain. It has been continually improved.

CISCO RAILROAD LANDING

The railroad landing at Cisco was a great convenience for those living on the Chain and the Camp's Guests. It avoided the twelve mile trip by lumber wagon over a rough tote road from State Line to Bents Camp. This lasted for over fifteen years, until the 'Tin Lizzy' Ford arrived and the roads were improved. Until then almost everyone on both Chains went to Cisco landing to pickup supplies and Sportsmen. The train crews were always accomodating, as in Partridge season, their passengers could ride on the Cow Catcher and shoot birds. They would stop the train to pickup the kill. On days the train did not run, a Hand Car, a four wheeled platform with a crossbar and handles to pump up and down, or a Pede, the same except with a small engine, could carry four people and their luggage from Watersmeet or Turtle Junction.

The flotilla meeting the train was something to see. Canoes, small and large launches, some with scows in tow for heavy loads, and also the 'Tar Baby'. Some of the largest of the launches were shiny Mahogany with canopies and deck chairs for many people. Their gasoline engines were of the two stroke cycle, from one to three cylinders, all used Dry Batteries for ignition and were hand cranked. For reversing, the engine ran in the opposite direction. All were slow speed and water cooled.

The TAR BABY was different, it was built early in the 1900s by Bill Bent while the Bent boys were busy building Camps. It was built of rough sawed planks in the shape of a scow. The bottom was flat with turned up prow and high straight sides. He was not a carpenter or ship builder but had determination. As the building progressed he took much good natured kidding. The planking was not matched tightly, and asked how he expected to keep the water out, he said, 'I'll Moss her'. That was the way they chinked the log cabins. It had an upright Steam boiler and engine, wood fired. When about ready to launch, he fooled everyone by sealing it with TAR, thus the TAR BABY. The boat did yeoman service for several years and was a normal sight at landings on the Chain.

This is when we should have had more Cameras and preserved pictures. It was mostly men in the early years with many in Buckskins, others had started wearing woolens, some homespun. Later, as more of the big boats arrived, there were women also, some with large hats, dresses and fancy coats. The Sportsmen wore Canvas pants and coats, the Sportswomen wore long Canvas skirts and jackets, and hats with Mosquito netting attached. It was about 1919 when the women started wearing khaki britches.

FISH and FISHING

The native game Fish in the Cisco Chain were Smallmouth Black Bass in all the lakes and in most

off Chain lakes, with Lake Trout only in Thousand Island. Yellow Perch, Rock Bass, Cisco and Suckers were everywhere. Jane lake had the largest Perch. The Tenderfoot chain had pan fish, Cisco, with Black Bass and also Largemouth, called Green Bass. Soon after the Bents arrived they caught Green Bass and carried them across Palmer portage in wet burlap bags, stopping at Deadwood lake and then continued running to turn them loose in Big Lake. About a dozen were planted and they flourished. The lakes on the Manitowish wates also had Muskellouge and Walleye Pike, as did Lac Vieux Desert. Black Oak was the only other lake in the area to have Lake Trout. The Ontonagon river had Brook Trout.

Charles Bent Planted Walleye fingerlings in the Cisco Chain as soon as they were available from Wisconsin Fish Hatcheries, about 1908. They were stocked annually and it took them a long time to mature and a lot longer before they were discovered by other than a few natives. By 1925 the word was out and by 1927 Pike fishermen from Lac Vieux Desert would drive to the Chain and go away with bags full. The Wisconsin Conservation Dept. started taking Spawn in Big Lake and found many large Pike, twelve to fifteen pounds.

The Great Northern came up the river from Lake Gogebic, after they were stocked there, and they grew rapidly. During the late 20s and early 30s, twenty pounders were common. We think they are the tastiest of all fish in the Chain.

Muskys were added by both Wisconsin and Michigan and have prospered to the detriment of Walleye.

The interested locals like Charlie Bent, lost control of fish stocking in the 20s and pan fish started to take over. For many years the States did a fine job of re-stocking and feeding but that seems to have stopped. The Cisco of the Whitefish family, always plentiful, were caught during the early years in gill nets at the Indian Fish Trap in late fall. They were usually frozen and used as Mink bait or eaten if needed.

When the settlers rebuilt the Cisco Dam a fish ladder was added, not perfect but it lasted until Marathon and Watersmeet Tws. rebuilt with a more satisfactory ladder.

Until fish stocking brought more kinds it was shore fishing for Bass. The guides paddled canoes for the guests to cast with Silver Spoon and Bucktail, then Frogs in July, and minnows or worms for some. Fly fishing was common and at the right time and place was successful. Small boys sat on Pine stumps and caught Perch, using worms on a bent pin hook, if not running along the shore to sell Frogs to the 'Sports'.

Over the years both Camps prospered by the growing Tourist business and they initiated many new friends to the Northwoods. Fishing and Hunting brought them here and the relaxed pleasure and beauty of the Chain kept them coming back. Accomodations were frugal and improving, food at both Camps was adequate and abundant. Guests were served their own catch when desired. No Alcohol was served as none of the Bent Brothers drank or smoked, Bill Bent had already taken care of all of it.

The fishing day started early for most, with a hearty seven o'clock breakfast of stewed dried fruit, hot cereal, sausage or bacon, fresh eggs, pancakes, fried potatoes, toast, donuts, cinnamon rolls, cake, fresh sweet butter, pure Maple syrup and coffee, tea or fresh milk. A typical lunch was packed, usually quite simple and to be cooked by the guide at a campsite. The guide carried a tin pail for coffee, made with lake water, and a Spider (skillet). Tin plates, cups, knives, forks and spoons were in the lunch basket with uncooked bacon to have fat for cooking the fish. Potatoes were to boil or fry, bread and fresh butter, canned fruit, coffee to boil over the coals of a Hemlock bark fire and from Bents Camp, always Lizzies famous pie, a real favorite, with many different kinds, often Rhubarb and cut into big wedges to be eaten by hand. It had the fluffiest top crust you could imagine but the bottom crust would stand handling and you

could keep the pieces together until finished. She baked them each morning before breakfast, perhaps two dozen, cut into five pieces. Good general cooks were hard to find and keep, but Charlie could take over and did very well.

The picnic lunches were cooked wherever the party happened to be. They could pick their spot, build a fire and cook. With woodsmen guides that loved their wild country there was no problem with fires or garbage. They were most careful for it was their country and they enjoyed and watched over it. They felt the same about the fish, take only what you can eat now, and a few to cover with sawdust, on ice, to take home.

Fishing was originally from Birchbark Canoes, then to canvas, and to small double pointed rowboats, until Outboard Motors appeared about 1913, when square stern rowboats took over. Both Camps had powered launches, and the fishermen were towed to the area they wished to fish. In the evening they were picked up and towed back to Camp. Twelve to fifteen canoes could be strung out single file behind each launch, with one person in each towed canoe, with the others in the launches.

ONCE UPON A TIME

John needed a little food and went fishing to a lake deep in the woods. As he returned with a burlap bag of fish a Warden stopped him and grabbed the top of the bag, John did not hesitate a minute, he simply took his sharp hunting knife from his belt and quickly sliced the bag between their hands and said, "No I'll take it", and that was all.

There were two fine Gamewardens on the Wisconsin side, Henry Oberhaulser and 'Mac' McKenzie (later State Warden). They were expert woodsmen and trackers and could follow a trail or scent almost as well as a dog. They were tolerant with the natives who lived from the land, extremely firm with the 'Game Hog' or visiting 'Poacher'.

Henry visited the Camps regularly and often came to the Cisco Landing by train. He knew that Charlie used venison occasionally for his family, but also knew he did not allow his guests to violate if he knew about it. Charlie and Henry were friends with conservation in mind. When Henry would arrive at Cisco Landing, Charlie would ask him which boat he wanted to ride, Henry's answer was, "You tell me because I always choose the slowest anyway".

One time going to the Landing we were short of sheep, entering Cisco after the other boats had arrived, the old launch was pushed ashore on a Birch point and Jim, a quiet Gordon Setter was put ashore first, very shortly there was a single shot and both returned to the boat and proceeded on to the Landing. Henry was there and meeting Walter asked if he had heard a shot, of course he could not hear above the engine noise. They knew they had fooled no one. The engine would not start so we were the last to leave and took the sheep home.

Many guests were always proud of the best catch of the day. Often the guides would have a side bet and weigh them. John rarely lost, his fish were always fat and heavy. As he came into Mamie lake he would drop the stringer overboard behind the motor, the stringer was hooked to keep the fish's mouth open and they filled with water until they looked as though they were wearing belly bands, heavy.

There were those that liked to compete for the largest, of a certain kind, or when fishing was poor, the most. It was men against women, often Josie Scott and Mil Hearther would fish almost all night, rain or cold, in Thousand Island among the sunken islands for big Walleye. Everyone worried and so Bill Hearther went with them one miserable night. When they got snagged, Bill would break the line and then they would have to reset their tackle in the dark and cold. He told us later, it had cost him a lot of tackle, but was worth it to stop.

Another time when the women came in 'skunked', they found the men around the kitchen sink with several fish in it. Mil immediately put her hand on them, were they cold from a catch in the Ice House?

In the early years this was a quiet, most friendly place with everyone always ready to help the others. All worked hard and played just as hard. There was hunting, fishing, swimming, camping and canoe trips. Many guests enjoyed the long day canoe trip through the Chain then leaving Thousand Island to portage through Loon, Clark, Sand, Deer Island, Big Bass, Little Bass, Black Oak, Anderson, Spring and back to Mamie lake. There were many variations. Another popular trip was to leave Cisco and go to Grace, Emeline, Bay, Plumb, Tenderfoot, Palmer and back to Big Lake. The canoe trips down the rivers to Lake Superior required more planning and an expert guide. The canoes were hauled to the river with camping equipment for three to five days, depending upon the water flow, and weather. There were many carry arounds and rapids. Then someone had to meet them to bring the canoes back.

Winter was for logging, trapping and putting up Ice. About everyone had a trapline for a cash crop. Some traded furs, Walter trapped everything, Polly was trying to get Weasel for a White Ermine muff. They swapped Weasel and Muskrat. Juliet Goodrich wanted a Mink coat with all matched dark fur. They all swapped until both Girls had what they wanted. Fishing through the ice and hunting provided food. Deer were hung in the woods and brought in to skin as needed. Some had gathered Cranberries and Wild Rice, which has about disappeared due to changing water levels and boat traffic. Winter dances were popular, mostly squares and waltzes. Walter did the 'Calling' for the squares and his wife Etta played the Organ and usually someone played a fiddle. Food was plentiful, especially sweets, home preserved wild berry jam and jellies. The children usually slept and for some, a late sleighride home across the lakes. The staples had been brought in, in the fall, mostly in 100 lb. sacks, including navy beans, flour, sugar, corn and oatmeal, potatoes, carrots, rutabegas etc. The sacks would be used later for dish towels or underwear. Then spring and the hard work and fun of Maple syrup making.

The spring 'breakup' started a hurry, hurry, time. Winter damage to repair, Cabins and boats to clean and paint and gardens to prepare. After Lizzie's brother Benny Twombly, from Boston, came to live at the Camp, he took over all painting, including the boats. Benny was a good painter, mixing his own paint for the color Lizzie wanted, usually close. He is mainly remembered for his sharp wit. Being custodian of the boats, he assisted all as they loaded and met them upon their return with a pertinent remark. Benny wasted not and wanted little. His pipe bowl was caked to a tiny hole for his 'short sharp smoke'. In the fall he had a trapline and kept daily account of how far South he was getting. When the price of a ticket to Florida was reached, he would leave, usually before Christmas.

REMINISCENCE

The first Sunday after Thousand Island lake opened in the spring, which was a week later then the ice went out of the other lakes, everyone on the Chain gathered to fish Lake Trout, trolling with Skinner spoons. The women and children were left at Picnic Point, where food was made ready, to go with the fresh Trout, brought in and cooked over Hemlock bark fires by the men. It was always a festive time and the last playday until fall. Then those that guessed right, would meet there the last Sunday the Chain was open before freezing. This would be about a week before Thousand Island froze, fewer people and very cold. Usually only enough fish were taken for lunch as they came from the spawning beds.

Another part of the early spring and late fall Trout fishing, was to take care of the Dam. The last trip in the fall, just before the lakes froze was for someone to pull all the planks from the Dam, to keep the water from getting too high from melting snow. Then the first day the lakes opened, whoever could get there first, replaced the planks to hold the water level. The local people would change planks as needed during the summer.

The original logging Dam had raised the water level, causing large flooded areas, called overflows, and killed the trees on the shores. The most damage was in Cisco and the rivers from Thousand Island and Lindsley lakes. The overflow areas had been the home of the Tamarack and swamp Cedar and most were killed. The dead trees were cut for timber and firewood, with a few Cedar snags still standing. The Hemlock and Cedar that fell into the lake shores on the entire Chain, made wonderful places for the fish to grow. The dark water in the lakes was pure and used for drinking for many years. Until the 1940s the water was not clear, you could not see your fingers if your arm was in to the elbow. The cause can be assumed, partly by the decaying bark, but perhaps more by algae and the many, fish filled, weed beds that developed as the water was maintained at a near constant level. That level, lower than now, was held to allow the large launches to be used. The channels were narrow but adequate, and still can be if used with care.

Many low islands were covered. A guess, 15 to 20 in Thousand Island. All the lakes lost some, Honeymoon Island in West Bay was about four times its present size with a large five fingered Pine. Northwest of there about 200 yds. was Hat Island, it was soon below the water line and has destroyed many propellers and is unheard of today. Another, was a nesting place for Loons for years on the north shore of Fishhawk where a few weeds now show. Many of the dead stumps on flooded islands stood through the 1920s. The higher water level now maintained, erratically, is causing material damage and will surely cause another cycle of the trees along the shoreline falling into the water, even though many owners are adding stone rip-rap along their frontage.

The 'Sand Cut', between Morley and West Bay lakes, was originally dug by the Bents, in about 1910. This narrows had been used for years as a 'pull-over' for canoes and small boats. It was cribbed with planks fastened to high Cedar posts, that were connected at the top, and large enough to accomodate all but the largest boats. It has been rebuilt many times.

During the First World War years, building on the Chain stopped. There was very little business at both Camps. Everyone pitched-in there as elsewhere to do what they could. The Cisco railroad landing had given way to slightly better roads and improved Autos. Bents Camp used seven passenger touring cars. Camp Tenderfoot had a car at Palmer portage and a Reo Speedwagon to meet State Line trains.

The railroad Station and the Town name were changed to Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin, through the tireless efforts of George StClair of Black Oak Resort. Before the name change there were a few years when the C & N W station building was moved from Wis. to Mich. and then back and forth as the Labor Laws changed. They wanted the one agent to work the longest hours.

In 1920 the Fauntleroy's bought the Walter Bent place on Lindsley lake. They rebuilt the Cabin, adding a fireplace, Cedar shingles on the outside walls and a new foundation. A boathouse was built on the Tamarack pilings that had been driven, through the ice, in 1911. The Walter Bent fall Deer hunt headquarters were moved to the Scott Cabin, 'Seldom Inn on Porky Point'.

Until a few people started to build on the Chain in 1927, the only additions were the Fitzgerald and Fisher Homestead cabins on Big Lake. The people that were there, were having a wonderful time, fishing, boating, swimming, hunting, and most of the families cooked their noon meal over Hemlock bark fires, at any place of their choosing as all the shores were open to use, thanks to Marathon.

During the late 20s and early 30s a few places were built on the Chain. R.P Lamont had bought the Frankenthal place on West Bay, Ralph and Geraldine (Scott) Davis had bought the Fauntleroy place on Lindsley. Carl Shilling was at Greenbaum Island, Goodrich, Harding, Ketchum, and Severn had built on Mamie lake. Ray Hook had started a Resort on Big Lake. Fine Inboard boats became common, Outboards became larger and better. The Aquaplane became a fun board.

As the War in Europe expanded into the '40s, the logging began on the Chain. Marathon Paper Co. did selective cutting, they left the shoreline intact back for approximately three hundred feet. Their log hauling was with trucks, resulting in a network of roads surrounding the Chain and later turned over to Vilas and Goebic Counties. The shorelines were divided into lots for sale. The summer population increased rapidly.

The logging Camps again brought the Black Bear to the Chain. They had been gone since White Pine logging. The Black Bear rarely attacks men, and can and did live from nature, but they prefer garbage and follow people.

More Cabins, some winterized, were built in the 40s and 50s. Electricity came in 1950, winter roads were kept open. There were fewer fish, but more noise, from Outboard Racing boats. The first Snowmobile arrived, Bud Bent's.

TORNADOS--HIGH WINDS

In late September of 1924-25 Gene Scott, and her cousin Raymond Wood, Grace Nelson a nurse and family friend and her friend Amanda Larsen a nurse, were vacationing at the Scott Cabin on Fishhawk Point. After lunch they walked across the log to the mainland and followed the 'blazed' trail through the Maple Sugarbush and along the Hemlock ridge toward the Sandcut. As they went by Shattucks and into the thick stand of small White Birch it was deadly calm, not a sound could be heard as they neared the Sandcut. Then a noise behind them and as they looked back into a yellowish-green sky they turned to hurry back to Shattucks Cabin. The noise increased rapidly, the stillness was gone and they could see a black funnel cloud to the northeast. They had barely left the Sandcut when the wind was upon them, the small Birches laid flat to the ground and West Bay turned into a Maelstrom. It was over almost as fast as it arrived. Frightened 'to death', but they could now get through the small Birches as they straightened toward upright..

Still shaking, they headed back on the 'blazed' trail. Through the Hemlocks there were many branches down, but when they got to the Maple, they were all blown down flat, large roots out of the ground, and mammoth trees piled one on another from Fishhawk to West Bay and a quarter mile wide. They were lost, their 'blazed' trail was gone and the windfall was too thick to get through. More frightened, and worried about the Cabin, they followed the edge of the fall to Lindsley and along the shore to the log and back to the Cabin. The wind had hit only the edge of the point, falling one large Hemlock across their canoe and Sponson rowboat, crushing both. Across the thorefare, where the Stop's Cabin is now, another swath was blown flat to Thousand Island lake.

Strong wind followed the big blow for about three days. It was still frightening, the only other cabins were on the other side of West Bay, and they saw no boats on the lake. When the wind calmed they borrowed a canoe from the Fauntleroy's cabin, it had been stored in their kitchen for the winter. No other damage was seen as they paddled to Bents Camp, the nearest road and phone. The Bents did not know a Tornado had hit the Chain but they had heard the town of Three Lakes, Wis. was nearly demolished. Gene phoned her parents in Geneva, Ill.

The Bents had seen old signs of windfalls when they first arrived, but this was the first in their memory to hit the Chain. For several years after this there were severe wind storms during that third week in September, but no Tornados touched down. Some years later members of the family have seen the queer colored sky and have heard the 'rail-road freight train noise' with much wind and some trees blown over, but the twister stayed aloft.

FIRES

During the '20s there were a few unnecessary fires. Non guided tourists unwittingly thought their campfire had burned out, not knowing a slight breeze could re-kindle it, or that the spongy top of the

forest floor was like tinder, and old hollow roots could act like a delayed fuse. One such fire was at the point west of the Wentlers. It came alive in the middle of the night and was seen. Mrs Catherine Fauntleroy, her sons Gaylord and Robert, Pink and Gerry Davis, Mrs Scott and Gene formed a bucket brigade to extinguish it. All were tired, a few burns and much smoky hair. Catherine talked to the Marathon Paper Co. about fire protection. Soon they built a Cabin for a Fire Station with Evinrude fire pumps at the Cisco entrance. (Palmquist).

The Davis boathouse (Lindsley) burned early one morning but was too far along to save, although Gene Scott hurried for help, at Cisco.

WILD FLOWERS and SHRUBS

The native wild flowers and shrubs have changed very little, they are still abundant and glorious. There is always something beautiful to see in blossom from early spring 'breakup' to winter when Cat-tails stand alone. The Trailing Arbutus has nearly disappeared. New people were too anxious to pick the small pink and white blossoms and unknowingly pulled long sections of the tender vines from the ground. Another casualty was the Prince's Pine, it is a creeping evergreen that grows under the Hemlock and was nearly destroyed in the 1920s by commercial picking for the Florist trade. Both can again be seen on the Chain. Ground Hemlock, a shrub, looks like Hemlock, but grows close to the ground, from two to three feet high. Deer would 'Yard' where the Ground Hemlock was plentiful, as they could dig through the winter snow for the food. It was the main winter food for them for centuries, but now it is almost entirely gone. Over population of the Deer and man's takeover of the ground area where it grew, may have been the cause.

White Water Lillies were nearly lost due to people not knowing they would be destroyed by pulling them from the bottom. They are now back and protected by law. A few flowers have been added

and have become wild. Forget-me-nots were planted by Mrs Scott along the shore by their dock in the 1930s. They liked it but were restless and some moved across the channel to the north shore and have since moved around Fishhawk's shoreline.

Many people miss the spring blossoming trees, such as the wild Crabapple, Pin, Choke and Black Cherry, whose fruit will be gathered later by birds or by Chipmunks who will bury them for winter food. The Basswood blossoms is where the Bees gather nectar for early honey. The blossom of the Hazel Bush is where the animals will gather Hazel Nuts in the fall. The bush is disappearing.

And now, my friends, it is time for somebody with a more accurate memory of the last few years, to compile the history of the Cisco Chain of Lakes, from the 1950s to the present time. A copy would be appreciated by,

'Waube Kanish'

Bajou, Bajou.

Finis-February 13, 1982

The
CISCO CHAIN of LAKES
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