

Lake Country Legends

Newsletter of the Lake Country Scenic Byway

www.lakecountyscenicbyway.com



EXPLORE THE ROAD TO ITASCA...AND BEYOND

Mitchell family history

For this article I would like to deviate from my regular format and write a little history about my family.

My dad's parents lived in or near Berlin, Germany. In 1857 they boarded the ship, "Jason" and immigrated to the United States with three sons. They arrived in New York in October and settled in Wisconsin. My dad was the first born in America on March 6, 1859. There were seven boys born to Franz and Franziska. Something happened to the first born son as he was never listed on a census after they came to Wisconsin. My grandfather and some of the boys worked in a large sawmill near Menomonie.

After years of wondering we finally learned where all of

our dad's brothers settled. We never thought to ask him. My dad took out a homestead of 160 acres in Clover Township in Hubbard County in 1897. This is the place where I live now. This homestead has been in the family for over 111 years.



By Frank Mitchell, Byway Historian

In 1907 he went to Canada with his brother, Manville, where they both took

out homesteads in Saskatchewan. After proving up on their homesteads there they sold them and came back to the States. Manville went to Montana and Dad came back here. Since my dad was older, we didn't question him about his family. He was 72 when I was born. I wonder if anyone else living in the United States can say that their father was born before the Civil War!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **August 7, 2009**
Monthly meeting at Park Rapids Chamber, 8:30 am
- **October 6, 2009**
Annual Byway Fall Color Tour
- **October 27-28, 2009**
Annual State Byway Conference, Walker

My mother was born on June 14, 1888 in Wichita, Kansas. She was the daughter of Jason and Arcelia Gar-

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The Lake Country Scenic Byway annual meeting was held Tuesday, June 2 at Douglas Lodge, Itasca State Park.



Mitchell family (continued)

wood. She moved with them as a young girl to the sand hills in Nebraska. Her parents took out a homestead, 160 acres, and developed a ranch. As soon as she turned 21 my mother also took out a homestead.

In the early 1900's, a U. S. Senator from Nebraska got an amendment to the Homestead Act and gave them 640 acres, since it was cattle country and they couldn't make a living on 160 acres. His name was Kinkaid, so these homesteads were called kinkaids.

My grandparents were able to change their homestead into a kinkaid. My Uncle Alfred also got a kinkaid next to my mother's. This is possibly another record. My mother, her brother and her par-

ents all had kinkaids. My dad had two homesteads and his brother had one. So with the six homesteads, this made a total of 2,400 acres of free land in the family.

My mother lived on her homestead until 1916 when she came to Clover Township with her family. Since the home they bought was only one half mile from where Dad lived, they got together and were married in April 1917. She was 29 and he was 58. They raised eight children, four boys and four girls of which I am the youngest.

After much traveling and research, I have papers to verify all of this information. I went to the National Archives in Washington D. C. two times. I traveled to Battleford, Saskatchewan

and got copies of my dad's homestead papers, also information on Manville's. I made a stop in Valentine, Nebraska to get info on the grandparents ranch. I have copies of three homestead papers and I have actually set foot on five of them. But only the one I own has stayed in the same family.

A person had to live on the land for five years and make certain improvements, including a house, a well and start breaking land for farming. After having it published in the local paper for five weeks and name several witnesses they could get their patent (title) from the U.S. Government signed by the President. I have the original patent on this homestead signed by President Roosevelt. Then the land was theirs to do as they wished.

Fall Color Tour

The seventh annual byway color tour is scheduled for Tuesday, October 6.

Watch for an ad in the Detroit Lakes, Park Rapids and Walker papers in September detailing the 2009 route.

The color tour is by motor coach bus with stops at attractions along the byway and lunch included. Byway ambassadors serve as tour guides to provide interesting trivia and historical perspectives of areas traveled on the tour.

The buses pick up in Park Rapids and Walker in the east and Perham, Frazee and Detroit Lakes in the west.

Sign up for the tour will be available at Citizen's State Bank, Park Rapids; First National Bank, Menahga; United Community Bank, Perham; and all three chambers.

What is the next Lake Country Scenic Byway project?

You most likely have noticed the two sided byway maps in communities along the byway. The area map on the front pinpoints the attractions noted on the back side. Another 50,000 maps will be printed so visitors and residents may take a free copy and explore byway attractions.

Membership Levels

- 88 Mile Benefactor \$88/year
- Scenic Sponsor \$25/year
- Friend..... \$10/year
- Ambassador \$5/year

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Mail to: Lake Country Scenic Byway Association
PO Box 249, Park Rapids, MN 56470

Benefits of Membership

- Newsletter subscription
- E-mail announcements
- Opportunity to attend monthly meetings
- Input in key Byway Association issues
- Stakeholder in sustainability of the Byway
- Opportunity to attend Annual banquet and State Byway meeting
- Stay abreast of latest Byway developments