

Lake Country Legends

Newsletter of the Lake Country Scenic Byway

www.lakecountryscenicbyway.com



EXPLORE THE ROAD TO ITASCA...AND BEYOND

Nevis: Home of the Tiger Muskie

Nevis was named by some early settlers, when the town was first settled. They named it after Mount-Ben-Nevis, the highest mountain in Scotland.

The town was started along the Great Northern Railroad tracks. The pioneers were mostly farmers, however many of them went to work for Walker and Akeley, either in the woods or in the large sawmill at Akeley. The first crops raised were clover and potatoes. Later beans were raised for a cash crop. It is said that at one time there were three potato warehouses and one bean storage warehouse along the railroad tracks.

Another important industry was a sawmill owned by F. B. Cannada. Other early

businesses were W. D. Cary's barbershop, the Star Theater by Fred Giesel, a millinery shop by Lena Geise, a clothing store by A. H. Lewis, The Herb Café, also by the Geises, the John Bender Meat Market, Halverson and Thompson Land Agency, Bill Pritchett's blacksmith shop and a shoe repair shop owned by Carl Rusten.

Nevis Township was organized on the 19th of July, 1898. There were 140 legal voters when they petitioned the County Commissioners to organize the township. The name chosen was Nevis. This was signed by Commissioner, O. Todd, chairman of the board and Ferdinand Mueller, clerk. Nevis also had a newspaper which was published from November 1908 until October 27, 1927. The Hubbard

County Journal and the Northwoods Press have also been published in Nevis.

When Mr. Cannada had his sawmill operation, called the Nevis Lumber Company, he was known as the "grain door king." It was estimated that he had paid out over \$1,000,000 in Nevis in the past 10 years for labor, lumber and timber. During this time he had specialized in making grain doors for railroad cars and grain wagons. He had shipped out hundreds of thousands of grain doors as well as large orders of lumber of all kinds. In 1917 he announced that he was moving his headquarters to Akeley but he would maintain his retail yard at Nevis.

Other businesses in Nevis included a Post Office, a drug store, the Nevis Mercantile Company, a general merchandise store, a dray line, a garage



By Frank Mitchell, Byway Historian

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **March 6, 2009**
Monthly meeting at Grace Community Church, Osage, 8:30 am
- **April 3, 2009**
Monthly meeting

and an undertaking business, a hardware, furniture and a jewelry establishment all owned by Oli and August Erickson. This establishment burned in 1945. There were also many other fires in town due to the wood buildings having improper or poorly constructed chimneys or stove pipes.

The Heartland Bike Trail which goes from Park Rapids to Walker goes right through Nevis. There is also a horse back trail and a snowmobile trail.

In the early days there were three

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Nevis: Home of the Tiger Muskie (continued)

churches in Nevis. There was a Christian Church, a Catholic Church and a Lutheran Church. At the present time there are four churches, the Lutheran Church, the Catholic Church, the Church of

Christ and Bible Baptist Church.

The large muskie in Nevis was built by Mr. Ballard about 1950. After this was built, the Minneapolis Tribune dubbed the town "The Home of the Tiger

Muskie." The fish measures 30 feet long with a girth about the same. In 1933 the brochure from Fuller's Tackle Shop shows there were 13 resorts on nearby lakes with a Nevis address. In it visi-

tors were invited to stop at the Nevis Ice and Fuel Company, where fish packing was a "specialty."

Nevis is still a thriving little town right on the Lake Country Scenic Byway.



SO LONG JIM KELLER! The Kellers are moving south. Many of you have been greeted with Jim's smile and warm handshake at Douglas Lodge at Itasca State Park. The members of the Lake Country Scenic Byway Ass'n will miss Jim's enthusiasm and can-do attitude as well.

Byway awarded grant

The Federal Highway Association announced the funding of nine 2008 projects in Minnesota through the National Scenic Byways program.

The application for Lake Country Scenic Byway's Interpretive Plan—Phase 3 was selected for funding. The \$35,000 project calls for development of a storyline that would be interpreted at initial sites along the

byway. These sites would be featured on Byway maps. Other components of the grant include erecting a historical sign face. Federal funding would cover \$28,000 of the project, with the remaining \$7000 a local match. Once completed, the project will assist travelers in locating sites of interpretation and gaining new knowledge about Lake Country Scenic Byway.

Why become a member of the Lake Country Scenic Byway Association?

"As a newcomer to the state, I have learned much about the many places to go and varied things to do that are available here. I also enjoy the camaraderie of the other Byway members."

Mona Mitchell

Membership Levels

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

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