

**THE STORY OF THE CLOW
DEER HUNT**

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Dedicated and presented to

"DAD" CLOW

by the author

"FRANNY" MANIERRE

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Charlie Bent about thirty years ago, holding black bass in one hand and ducks in the other. The little bear was shot by Franny Manierre between Poor and Thousand Island Lakes.

Stories have been told for forty years of and on the Clow deer hunt, - some true, some untrue, some slightly exaggerated, - and I hasten to add that Dad Clow has always enjoyed this privilege without challenge, but no true story of the whole hunt has ever been told by mortal man.

The hunter is not unlike the fisherman "who riseth early in the morn and disturbeth the entire household * * * * He goeth forth filled with high hopes and returneth smelling of strong liquor and the truth is not in him," - the only difference being that we smelled of strong liquor after hot toddy time just before dinner, but Dad never; in fact Dad needed no "pump priming" for his stories, for they were always on tap.

As is apparent, Mr. Clow has already acquired the title of "Dad" in the dramatis personae, for by this appellation is he affectionately known not only to his own sons, Bill and Kent, and to me as one of his boys by adoption, but also to many other of his loyal and loving friends and employees.

Forty years is a long time for one party to go to one place for one purpose. Time, therefore, has almost made the Clow party an institution. The State of Michigan regards it as such, for the Conservation Commission always issues #1 license to Dad and the consecutive numbers following to the rest of the party. To be true, some members have not always been constant in their attendance throughout the years and others have gone Beyond, but Dad, with his enthusiasm and untiring energy, has unfailingly kept the crowd together and promoted his party every year but one, to the enjoyment of lifelong friendships.

In the absence of an accurate memory for dates or a diary such as Dad has always kept, I cannot, by necessity, be held to a strict accountability on matters of chronology, but I will make a conscientious effort in that direction in unfolding the story of the many amusing incidents and anecdotes of the hunt, admitting, however, right at the start, that the years in my memory have blended into one and that the characters in the play are as of yesterday, - and may they never grow older. So now my story's begun.

By way of historical background it might be necessary to state that the deer hunt is staged at Bent's Camp, Vilas County, Wisconsin. The railroad station, formerly "State Line" and now known as Land O' Lakes, straddling the State line between Wisconsin and Michigan some dozen miles east of Bent's, furnished the point of destination on the North Western Railway. From there, in the early days, it took about three or four hours to drive in with a team on a tote road winding through the woods, up hill and down dale, over corduroy and rough going, where most of the time it was easier to walk than it was to ride in a springless wagon.

Our first trip was made in the Fall of 1898 - forty years ago. Dad had invited his son Bill, Waller Knott and myself to accompany him on this momentous occasion during our Thanksgiving school holiday. The preparations were great and excitement ran high amongst us kids. Huge boots, thick socks, feltlike shirts, Mackinaw coats, were purchased from Montgomery Ward and away we went on a terrible railroad trip, for then we had to change trains at Appleton Junction, arriving in the early morning and waiting there in the station for the next train, and in one of those stations where the benches were merciless to the youthful in denying them the privilege of lying down in the presence of prohibitive arm rests. We travelled all the next day, as I recall it, in a stuffy day coach which was packed with lumberjacks, deer hunters and whatnot, all smelling equally bad or anyway the car did.

Some time late in the afternoon we chugged into our station. A wintry scene had presented itself all the way up the line during the day's travel. The ground was covered with snow. It was mighty cold.

Charlie Bent and his son Austin met us at the station with a two horse team harnessed to a two runner logging sleigh with a sort of a hayrack body and, fortunately, plenty of hay. Al Awalt drove the team while Charlie rode the famous little Indian pony Nixie, the mother of Nigger, the black colt known to all Bent's campers as the black horse that turned pure white in his old age. Austin trudged alongside in the woods, popping off a partridge now and then in a spruce tree, with a twenty-two Stevens pistol, before it got too dark. The sun set and the cold came on in earnest. Sleigh runners squeaked and snow glistened on the pines in the moonlight. The stars shone bright in the Heavens above. Feet got cold but only in mortal body, for the spirit of excitement in youth was running red hot. We passed Mill Lake (and there was a mill there then,) rode past Mary Otto's deserted frame cabin on Black Oak (then the only habitation on that lake) past the old log loading platform at the west end of Black Oak and then past the Goose Lake trail, now called Forest Lake, - the name changed, I suppose, by the State at the time they put a big highway around the south end of it, - up the hill along the shore of Merrill Lake, - then across Spring Creek on a log bridge, up the hill past the Sugar Bush, and through the hard wood to the Hay Road. It had been called the Hay Road because Charlie Bent had used it to haul marsh hay from the Beaver Meadow along the Trout Creek south of Big Lake for the purpose of feeding his team during the winter. All of the Hay Road country where we used to hunt has been logged within the past fifteen years and I have not seen it since, nor do I want to. We will hear more of the Hay Road later in our hunts. Finally we reached the bottom of Slippery Hill and came out into the burnings which then surrounded Bent's Camp. Contrast this trip as it is made today on a broad highway in an automobile in less than half an hour after an overnight ride in an air-conditioned Pullman running directly from Chicago to Land O' Lakes. Black Oak is now dotted with private summer homes and public resorts, - the roadside from Land O' Lakes decorated with taverns, casinos and filling stations electrically lighted and blazing with

neon signs. The new highway follows the old route in a general way on the old wagon trail, but is, of course, a much more direct and less tortuous one.

Only old timers of Bent's Camp will remember that a big fire burned off every stick on some three hundred acres back of the Camp in the middle nineties, so that the scene was one of black desolation, - an ugly scar burned on the face of an otherwise beautiful scene, for from this point all of Mamie Lake (named for Mrs. Bent) and part of Crooked Lake could be viewed with nothing but admiration. It is admitted by all that the chain of lakes in the Bent's country is by far the most beautiful piece of woods and waters in northern Wisconsin and northern Michigan. The camp then consisted of six log cabins, - a combination dining room and kitchen (now standing in part only), the Woodlawn sleeping cabin back on the hill from the dining room, the Bent cabin on the lake and the three beyond that, our little party occupying the cabin commonly known as the Tenderfoot cabin, which has since been torn down.

On the lakes reached from Mamie there wasn't a single human habitation beyond the lumbermens' cabins at the landing in Cisco Lake, where the Brooks & Ross Lumber Company was carrying on a lumber operation. The nearest habitation was the resort of Horace Bent, brother of Charlie, on the island in Tenderfoot Lake, many miles west of Mamie. Such a thing as a motor boat or an outboard motor was unheard of. There were none, - only row boats and canoes. The dam had been built, of course, at the outlet of Cisco Lake, for the purpose of raising the water in the chain for logging purposes, which meant that some dozen lakes could be reached by canoe without portaging, but there was no such depth of water then as there is now; in fact, I remember that a canoe always scraped bottom at the rapids in the Ontonagon just out of Lindsay on the way to Cisco. The shore line of the lakes, in the process of raising the water, has not changed much. As the summer cabins are deserted during the hunting season, and the lakes frozen over, with no motor boats put-putting or smelling, the woods are just as beautiful as they were forty years ago and we try to kid ourselves into believing that the country is the same and that times have not changed after all. The river courses have changed, however, as a result of the high water. Spring Creek and Bass Creek were little woodsy streams, hardly wide enough in places to paddle a canoe through. Helen Creek had tamarack woods right up to the edge of the stream which wasn't over ten feet wide until you got back to the meadow. Hat Island, near the mouth of Spring Creek, was a peninsula and not an island. The trails are more heavily trodden now, but they follow more or less the same paths through the woods that we knew in our boyhood. A few fires and a few logging operations have changed the country a little bit around Palmer and Tenderfoot Lakes. But now back to our deer hunt.

On the early hunts we didn't come leisurely into breakfast at eight o'clock. Dad had us up before daylight and when he spoke we jumped, for he was boss then and could not be kidded out of it. We had venison of course for breakfast, in fact at every meal, and maybe it was from those early days



Bob Thorne, "Monny" Waller, Andy McNally, "Dad" Clow, Harry Clow and Cy Young in front of the lunch fire about twenty-five years ago.



A group picture taken in Camp twenty-four years ago. "Pop" Clow, Andy McNally, Cy Young, Charlie Starker, Kent Clow, Joe Sheets, "Nigger" Joe, Bill Clow, "Dad" Clow, Charlie Blaney, Harry Clow and Bob Thorne.—1914

that I have carried my grudge against venison for forty years. Mrs. Bent was cook and no finer woman ever lived. Elsie, then a little bit of a girl, waited on the table. Charlie did everything, even including the washing of dishes. This was the beginning of Bent's Camp as a public resort. Board was \$8.00 a week. Charlie, some way or other, managed to eke out a living in this process, aided by his one man logging operations during the winter after the close of the deer season. There were times when the Bent family literally didn't have enough to eat. Charlie was young then, strong as a grizzly bear, determined and hardy, a true American pioneer who didn't need any help from the government. Mrs. Bent was an educated woman from New England (a school teacher) of fine old stock and a lifelong helpmate to her husband in the struggle for success. The camp was built on a homestead of 160 acres, but Charlie had neglected to take out his homestead papers. Later on a barber from Eagle River took out papers on Charlie's homestead and said he would dispossess him. Charlie said he wouldn't and he didn't. Charlie's father, old Bill Bent (the Bent family came from New England also) was at the camp at the time of our first trip. Tall, powerful, with tobacco-stained white beard, corn-cob pipe in his mouth and dressed in buckskins, he presented a picturesque figure with his old hound, Hobart, always at his side. Old Bill Bent was a great hunter and trapper and carried a Winchester lever-action repeating buckshot gun, the like of which I had never seen before or since.

The method of hunting then was more or less the same as we employ today, only we used dogs then, lawful or otherwise, instead of having two-legged drivers go through the woods. We would take a section of country between lakes and theoretically surround it by placing "standers" at strategic points. Charlie would put us out and Old Bill would go into the woods with his hound until he found a fresh track and then the music started. Strange as it may seem there were fewer deer then than there are today. Whether wolves, market hunters or the accepted practice of settlers getting their meat throughout the year kept the deer down in numbers, I don't know. I am rather inclined to believe, however, that the one buck law passed some twenty years ago has been a bigger contributing factor to the progressive increase of deer in each year since than the elimination of all other causes of deer killing.

The deer circled, to throw the hound off. It was fascinating listening to the baying, for it would come nearer and nearer to you and you would think "I'm going to get a shot" and then it would circle away again, for the sound would echo and in your imagination you would feel surely that the deer was coming your way again, but then the baying would become fainter and hopes were forlorn. Finally a bang-bang would tell you the end of the story and somebody else had the luck. A deer will run ahead of the hound a certain distance before taking to water. This particular year it was cold and the lakes were frozen. I remember one deer that took up the bed of Spring Creek. Bill Clow knocked it down with buckshot and ran up to finish it. In his excitement he had loaded his gun with bird-shot which he had in another pocket and the deer disappeared, to Bill's anguish and complete dejection. Dad, however, killed it at the next stand, on the rapids.

Oh how cold it was standing on those runways! The "standers" were not shifted as often as we do it now. They were allowed to build a fire, but only at the point of death. Of course, a deer with a hound in back of it disregards everything pretty much and in that process makes a fleeting target to connect with. Hence the buckshot guns and few rifles in those days when we used hounds. Old Bill, knowing his dog, deer and country, would circle within the hunt and get most of the deer. We didn't know then, in our ignorance, why and thought that it must have been just good luck, but the good luck took place in some very suspicious spots, looking back now in our infinite knowledge.

I had a little dinky sawed-off forty-four rifle which probably would not have connected if I had gotten a shot, which I didn't. Waller had inherited his father's ten gauge hammer Parker and one day we heard a boom from his direction, but all he had to show for it was a Canadian jay which he had shot out of a tree thinking it was a partridge. Poor Waller was near-sighted.

The trip ended without much to show in the way of game, but we had then become serious deer hunters and determined to try again. Frivolity was not in our souls in those days.

The next year the party enlarged. Uncle Bill Clow, familiarly known as "Pop", and Mac Shaw appeared on the scene from Newcomerstown, besides Kent Clow, then old enough to go for the first time. Uncle Bill was Dad's uncle and naturally the boys' great-uncle. He had run off as a boy to the Civil War and was, therefore, long on adventure and a little short on education. Big-hearted, good natured and loving, he doted on us kids. Dad called him "Star William" which the kids soon degraded to "Star Bacon" and later, even worse, to "Pork Chops." I can hear Uncle Bill now say: "W. E., are you going to let them kids call me Pork Chops? * * * Kent, I'll kick your pants!"

A new cabin had appeared that Fall on the hill in back of the lake row, later known as Wabash Avenue, as opposed to Michigan Avenue on the lake frontage. After coming in from hunting, one of the first jobs was to build a fire in the stove. There was something wrong with the stove in that new cabin, for the fire wouldn't draw. When we came in, Uncle Bill was sitting astraddle the top of the stove and smoke was coming out from every crevice. Boy-like, we asked what he was doing that for. His reply was: "To get the blamed thing warm."

Our hunts took us down the Hay Road in Wisconsin quite often that particular year. On one side of the trail there lay a huge white pine tree trunk, some four feet through. This was known for years as Pop's Log, for it was on this log that Uncle Bill sat and killed his first and only buck. The buck had come to Dad first but Dad had missed. It bounced over Uncle Bill's way and he knocked it down with his old 44 - 73 model Winchester, not to Dad's chagrin but highly to his delight. To say that Uncle Bill was excited and elated would not have done him justice. He simply went crazy. He was going to have the whole deer mounted, body and all, and, as he expressed it: "Wouldn't it look beautiful standing between the living

room and the dining room as if coming through the portieres?" But the buck gradually disappeared, - meat, hair and hoofs, and all Uncle Bill took home finally was the set of horns. The last time I passed Pop's Log on the trail was about twelve years ago. Decay had done its work and it had all but disappeared. This was Uncle Bill's favorite stand and maybe the old log had gotten lonesome for Uncle Bill, for he had gone before. Uncle Bill truly loved to eat and on occasions when he had stuffed himself too full he would have a violent attack of indigestion which would take on most disturbing appearances. One night he took on so that Waller Knott, an adjacent bed-fellow, get frightened and woke the entire camp with the alarm that Uncle Bill was "a-dyin'". As usual it was only a case of too many sausages.

Mac Shaw, a tall raw-boned Irishman, had been a hod carrier in his youth. He was then not much past forty and a perfect specimen of a man. We had planned a hunt at Goose Lake some five miles away and the lake being open it was necessary to portage a canoe in the event that a deer took to the water. Canoe carrying is an art to a certain degree but it is mostly grunt (not grin) and bear it. Mac, in hearing the more able-bodied men discussing their schedule of portaging, stuck his neck out with the blank statement that he could "carry that thing clean to State Line without putting it down." Well, that was duck soup for the crowd, for we thought here was a sucker who didn't know. Five miles, we thought, would be plenty to "bush" him in and take the Irish cock-sureness out of him, but the joke was on us. Mac carried it to the Lake without putting it down and when he did, upon arriving there, he said: "I'm sorry it isn't further, for it just served as a nice earmuff for me."

And now the deer hunt enlarges again. From Coshocton and Newcomerstown comes Denton T. Young, alias "Cy," the old ball pitcher, along with divers Clow employees, notably Joe McCloy, who has been with the party practically every year. Joe admits he is not much of a deer hunter and a worse woodsman, for during one of his early trips Bill had him "set out" in the woods and told him how to get back, but he got lost instead and got so thoroughly scared he would never thereafter move a foot off his stand unless called for, and made no bones about it. We "shot him in" that night, of course, but Joe didn't like his experience.

We will have to dwell for a moment now on Cy Young. Cy is everything his reputation has made him out to be. A great ball pitcher, a great sportsman, a great friend, a most lovable character, unselfish, simple and direct, Cy has been with the party for over thirty years, but failing eyesight and the depression bogged him down within recent years. Many are the stories told on Cy and he could take them and pitch them back good and fast. One day we had a game warden scare. It was during a year when they had passed a fool law prohibiting the shooting of fawns but not does. When a deer is on the jump, sometimes it takes a pretty good man to tell a fawn from a doe. Some member of the party had shot a fawn and some nice fellow had squealed on us. Game Wardens Oberholtzer and MacKenzie appeared on the scene. Hunting on both sides of the State

line, it had been our custom to take out half of the licenses in Michigan and the other half in Wisconsin. This practice had been countenanced, as I understood it, by the Game Commissions, although extra-legal. The Michigan licenses were more popular in the crowd because they cost \$25.00 less. We were down the Hay Road and Cy had a Michigan license, I had one, too, that year and we all knew we didn't want to get caught on the wrong side of the fence. A capable and canny Scotch gardener named Wilson, whom Harry Clow had brought up for some purpose, was in camp when the wardens appeared. Wilson was a good woodsman, so at the first opportunity he hid himself to the bonny dell to spread the word, which he sent through the grapevine in a hurry. Cy was on a stand at the big pine between Helen and Hardin Lakes. He saw the Scotsman coming and, being somewhat jumpy, something told him this figure was a little unfamiliar and thinking it the game warden, Cy took to his heels, looking back over his shoulder. He said he ran so fast in his excitement that he ran plumb into a tree, whacking his nose open, which he exhibited that night in camp. We "dogs" (i.e., the men who walk through the woods) became quite familiar with the tell-tale signs in the snow and could make a pretty good guess as to the identity of the man who had stood at a stand, should we come through a little behind schedule. The size of foot prints, make of a rubber shoe, the care taken in arranging a bough seat and number of cigarette butts thereabout (this was always a sure sign of the whereabouts of Freddy McNally) or perhaps the building of a modest fire could tell a story, but as for Cy, - you always knew him because of certain little brown spots in the snow. Cy did chew tobacco on occasions. We had to come home that night, as usual, on the State Line road. Rounding the bend near Slippery Hill at the entrance of the Hay Road, I spotted the game warden's Ford and soon saw a stranger coming out of the woods with the fawn over his shoulder. I handed my gun to Cy and said I would walk on ahead to investigate. It didn't look good and I was suspicious, of course, that these were the wardens. They nabbed me right then and there with my Michigan license and asked what I was doing in Wisconsin. I said I was hounding deer for some of the other boys, to which they "allowed" I should tell them "another funny story," MacKenzie remarking that it was some job to find that fawn, and that we must have walked out of the woods backwards in the snow when we had hung it up. MacKenzie is now chief of the Conservation Commission of the State. It must have been his ability which enabled him to catch us that qualified him for that high office. Meeting him years afterwards in a most friendly gathering at The Island Club, we had a good laugh together over the incident. The four men who had been with me stood out of sight around the hill, it being agreed that I would signal them to come on if everything was "Jake." I told MacKenzie I had to halloo some men out of the woods and with that excuse walked back the road yelling, in full sight of the wardens, of course, but inasmuch as they were busy loading the deer into the car I guess they didn't see me motion to the four men to "beat it," and beat it they did, scrambling up the hill and having to walk a mile through the country that we called Hell's Half Acre because of brush tangle and down timber. But the wardens didn't catch them with their Michigan licenses. Later that night, through the eloquence of Dad Clow, my Michigan license was restored to

me. It was on a Sunday. Waller Knott, being a good religious God-fearing citizen, would not hunt on Sunday, but he had walked back the road with his gun in hand right into the open arms of these same game wardens and with a Michigan license. He was more truthful but much worse off than I. He told them his story about not hunting on Sunday, but "Why the gun?" queried Brother Game Wardens. Waller, in his dumb dismay, said he thought he might see a wolf. "Another good joke," ejaculated MacKenzie, "Give me that gun." Waller, though outraged and frenzied, was thoroughly subdued by the arm of the law and taken shamefaced to camp. Dad's eloquence also released him in person and restored gun and license.

Before we used to have a monopoly of the camp for the hunt, a few outsiders did filter in. I remember one evening a Boston hotel man, who had been a great Red Sox fan, holding forth on the merits and singleness of class of Cy Young as a ball pitcher. It was in the living room of the Folly cabin and the lights were dim, for we didn't have the generating plant or high line then. Charlie Blaney, who will figure later on, was talking with the hotel man and drawing him out on Cy, in his ignorance that Cy sat over in a corner with his hat pulled down over his eyes. Finally, out of a clear sky, the hotel man said: "Isn't it too bad Cy is dead?" Blaney, the sharp Irishman that he was, never batted an eye, but quick as a flash, in order to keep the rest of the crowd shut up, said: "Yes, it is too bad. He was a grand old man. Ala's, I knew him well and was as great an admirer of his skill as you, and I had the extra privilege of knowing him personally." Charlie went on shaking his head and the hotel man with him, in their eulogy. Then again, with his devilish brain still working further cussedness, he turned to the man and said: "Do you believe in miracles? Do you believe in reincarnation?" "No," said the man, a little nonplussed. "What are you driving at?" "Well," said Charlie, "Suppose that by a wave of the hand or by some hocus-pocus I could stand Cy up in front of you, would you know him?" "Of course I would know him," ejaculated the man, "for I have seen him a hundred times." Charlie got up from his seat near the stove (Charlie always had a way of getting a good seat, particularly one on a good pancake runway in the dining room) and walked over and took Cy by the hand and led him over to his victim; then taking Cy's hat off, said: "What do you see before you?" The man got up, looking Cy up and down while his jaw dropped. He seemed to shake as with a chill. Finally he mustered himself together and said, "My God!" throwing his arms around Cy.

Cy loved to play poker and we always had to have a poker game once a trip for Cy's benefit. It was staged in a cabin we called the "Robbers' Roost" because there all men having no fear of God or respect for man would foregather. Such ribald and boisterous characters as Harry Clow, Bill Clow, Freddy McNally and Andy McNally always occupied the "Robbers' Roost." There the liquor was free and candy, pop-corn, and sweet tid-bits sent up by loving but unknowing wives, were displayed at all times in most tempting fashion. But, otherwise, the place was a pig pen. Empty toddy glasses, sticky spoons, deflated lemon halves, wet and smelly clothes, and other miscellany, were in all directions. mostly on the floor. The room was filled with

men and smoke, both tobacco and wood, and the language was terrible. No wonder it was called the Robbers' Roost. Charlie Blaney was a great bluffer at poker. Cy had dropped out and had walked around behind the players to take a squint at the hands. Finally all had dropped out but Charlie and one other and Charlie was going strong when Cy arrived in back of his chair. At the first look Cy let out a snort. The jig was up for Charlie Blaney and what he said to Cy on that occasion could not be put in print today.

And now while we are on Blaney for a moment, - Charlie was an engineering contractor from across the lake. We dubbed him the Mayor of Kalamazoo, but of course he never was. He, too, was an early addition to the party and only in recent years has dropped out. Keen, quick-witted, he was always a riot and of course a great kidder. I remember one day when we were going over the hill between West Bay and Morley Lakes after having walked quite a ways down the ice when he called to Bill and stated that he could go no farther for his license did not call for hunting in Canada. Charlie did not like to walk too well. Some of us let our beards grow during the ten day trip. Charlie had a gray beard which grew straight out. When we boarded the "Rattler" for Watersmeet, for during some years we used to go out by that junction, our old friend the conductor in the caboose would always visit with us. We were kidding Charlie about his beard, telling him that he looked like a porcupine. Mr. Conductor stated that he thought he looked more like an airedale dog. But Charlie took his kidding good naturedly like the rest of us had to. Uncle Bill floored him one night at dinner when he was telling some yarn that wasn't true. "Charlie," says Uncle Bill, "You remind me of Tom Pepper." "Who was he?" says Charlie. "Well, he was the fellow who got kicked out of Hell for lying," says Uncle Bill. Charlie holds the camp record for the largest buck - 235 pounds dressed - killed many years ago. Another member of the party got one later on which weighed 218 pounds but tipped the scale at over 235 pounds. Charlie was "on to us" and dove inside the deer to pull out a couple of big stones.

Now back to Cy again. Cy, of course, was a big heavy man and didn't like ice, especially thin ice. He said he didn't know how to swim, but we always assured him swimming did not make any difference, to which he always replied: "That's your notion of it, but not mine." In all the years that we have hunted at Bent's we have never had a fatal accident. Guns have been discharged accidentally, to be sure, - one time in the living room of the old Folly cabin, the bullet going through the wall and just missing Cy outdoors, - but the only really dangerous thing we ever did and the only thing I have ever worried about was the walking over thin ice. About half the time when we arrive at camp, about the middle of November, the lakes are partly open. As in later years most of our hunting has been done on the Michigan side, the open water is a most annoying and style-cramping affair. Yes, Dad Clow, amongst his many other gadgets, and we will hear more of them later on, built an ice-breaker we dubbed the Pere Marquette, which did a pretty good job, but it could not go off the chain of lakes, and there are always times, every Fall, when we have to take a chance and walk on thin ice, particularly the "dogs" (two-legged

drivers) for it is such a time saving and necessary thing to do on occasions in order not to disturb the woods. Dad Clow was going back one day across Hardin Lake to the agreed lunch ground. Hardin Lake is spring fed and treacherous. He knew it and took a chance but had enough sense to stay fairly near the shore. Joe McCloy was with him at the time when he went through. Cy Young was on the bank, wringing his hands and crying, "What can I do?" and there was nothing he could do. Joe would lie down on the ice and push his rifle out toward Dad. Raising himself up on his elbows and holding onto the rifle with one hand, Dad finally broke the ice down piece by piece until he could touch bottom at the shore. It was a close call and we were all scared for the moment, but soon went back to our old habits. I can see Dad now, walking up the lunch hill, soaking wet but not shivering from the cold as anyone else would, his hands bleeding from the cuts he had received from the sharp ice. But Cy had made his vow. He did not like it before and he liked it less then. He never went on thin ice if he could avoid it. Bill dubbed him "Little Eva."

Another time Bill had to leave the party early. We were over in the Bass Lake country across Crooked Lake which had just frozen the night before. We were having lunch in the Mud Lake portage when Bill bid us farewell. About an hour later I went down to Bass Lake to take a look at the ice. The hot sun had etched holes in the ice and at the least impact it broke up into square chunks, as Freddy McNally expressed it, "perfect highball ice." I was worried about Bill and had to lie to Dad on cross examination during the whole afternoon, but that night learned that Bill had gone across. He said the ice bent under him at every step. "He had a pole which might or might not have been of use to him. A couple of years ago two of the boys went through the ice in West Bay Lake, but it was off a rim of heavy ice where an open crack had frozen over and they had no trouble in getting out.

Harry Clow, Andy and Freddy McNally and Charlie Blaney have already appeared on the scene without formal introduction. I guess they need none. Paul Ivy and D. I. Miller of the Clow Company appear and Bob Todd a few years later. "Monny" Waller and Bob Thorne join us. Bob loved the woods and was quite an independent traveller. One day he was sitting near the Irvin Creek bridge on the Hay Road, smoking his corncob pipe, when he said a big buck walked right out in front of him. Bob raised his automatic Winchester, took careful aim and pulled but could not fire, because the safety was on. He took the safety off, shifted his pipe and raised the gun again, but this time he had shifted his pipe in the way of his vision, so he re-shifted and so did the buck, - yes, out of sight. Dan Jones, the brother of Kent's wife, has appeared. Dan's birthday was always an occasion for a riot and I remember one night that we felt the necessity of riding him down in state to the dining room in a trailer from the hill of the Robbers' Roost. Well, it was slippery and the trailer got away. Naturally Dan tried to get out before he ended in the lake, and it was his good luck that the trailer hove to against a tree. Dan happened to be in the middle but really was not much the worse for wear. Dan was a good traveller, too, and used to do "dogging" along with the experts.

Now come more employees from Ohio. Charlie Coutts, Milly Schurtz and Joe Sheets, the "wardrobe triumverate" as we called them, Bill Biers and others. Friends from Lake Forest, - Don Ryerson, Al Farwell, Mason Phelps, Howard Linn, and in late years, Red Haffner and Jim Oates, - and Eddie Frear from Chicago. Al Farwell got a shot at a big buck but missed it. In his excitement he ran over to Dad on the next stand and told him that the buck ran so close to him that it jumped right over his bullet. Two friends of Dad join us, Messrs. McWane and Batterton. Mr. McWane was a southerner. He frosted his feet during the deer hunt and never appeared again. I believe he died soon after. Mr. Batterton found it was no place for an invalid. Others came and disappeared, not necessarily minor characters during their stay or that they didn't like it, but there were those who "couldn't take it." Louis Betts, the great portrait painter, joins us. Louis was not much of a hunter and suffered from the cold. As a consequence he always lugged a lot of clothes and had a liking, therefore, for near-by stands. I remember his complaining good-naturedly one night that we didn't give him good stands, for the deer always went to others. That was too much for old Cy. He ripped into him with the statement that the boys running the hunt could not control where the deer went any more than they could the March wind and that it was bad sportsmanship to blame us for his bad luck and poor legs. But Louis qualified later on and became a most respected member of the party. Mason Phelps thought himself quite an amateur photographer. He had purchased a very expensive veriscope and to make sure no harm would come to it he had designed a harness that held the camera between his shoulders, maintaining that nothing could get at it there. The very first time he put foot on the ice both feet went out from under him and he came down on that camera so hard that he mashed it flatter than a tin pie plate and incidentally left a permanent dent in his back. He also had another instrument of perfection, - a long barreled bolt-action Ross rifle, which we told him was too clumsy and slow for deer hunting. We also told him that the big pair of leather fleece lined mitts which he wore on crossed hands over the muzzle on his stand were too clumsy. I had just left him at the end of a swamp and had not gone 100 yards when I killed a small buck, but as the trees were muffled in snow I knew the sound of the shot would not spoil Mason's chances and returned to so advise him, but he was skeptical and still stood, with mitts over the top of his old Queen Anne fence rail. I had hardly left him again when he said a deer came around the end of the swamp and before he saw it the deer saw him and stood motionless, looking at him. He began to slowly work off the mitts, but before he could get that gun in action the deer had disappeared without Mason's even firing a shot at it. Frank Wright, a friend of Dad's, has been with us now for some time. Mac Dickinson made his immortal record, for it was he who, with Louis Betts and the Clow employee named Red Stuart, bet with Bill, Kent and myself that they could go out in the woods in the dark to a spot on the south shore of Crooked Lake and bring back a big buck that Red had shot the day before. Red claimed that he was a woodsman and that there was not a chance of their losing the bet. Big money was placed on it and away they went with dragging rope and flashlights and one gun, as Louis expressed it, to "keep the wolves off." They floundered in knee-deep snow for hours and finally had to come out by compass to the West Bay

Road, completely beaten and chagrined. I heard Mac, as he came into the cabin that night, singing:

"Nobody knows the troubles I've had,
Nobody knows, but Jesus.
Nobody knows the troubles I've had,
Glory, Hallelujah."

In returning, while passing in back of the barn, they had found some of the internal economy of a hog which Charlie Bent had slaughtered the day before and picking up the what-nots of the frozen parts, had deposited them on the floor of Bill Clow's bedroom as visible evidence that they had found their quarry and won the bet. By morning the overnight heat in the cabin had melted the evidence to an undiscernible mass and mess on Bill's floor, not to his disgust but surprisingly to his great amusement. The worst he could say was that he didn't think a true southern gentleman would play such a trick on a friend as leaving a hog gut in his bedroom. He knew that Mac Dickinson was the culprit.

As the hunt became more populous and complicated, greater and more marvelous were the plans and gadgets that Dad brought up with him. Rules were printed, only to be disobeyed by the old timers. His youngsters were rapidly becoming self-determining. Snow shoes, sleds, boats with steel runners, dragging ropes that broke, mysterious-looking implements, one in particular, a copper double-deck chocolate pot which Dad had designed and had made with great pride. One day, on the State Line Road, Kent kicked over Dad's chocolate pot while on the fire, emptying the contents of said pot and nearly putting out the fire, much to Dad's disgust. "I'm sorry," says Kent. "But yes," says Dad, "and what the Hell good does that do me?" That was about the strongest language we had ever heard Dad use in forty years.

Yes, we hunted deer and got lots of them. The second year I remember I got my first buck over between Jane and Catherine Lakes. The head was mounted by the hands of the great Carl Akeley, now world famous as the father of modern taxidermy in all museums of natural history. It is hung on the wall in the den of my home with other trophies, and is, of course, in a perfect state of preservation and as lifelike as the creature in being.

Freddy McNally went for years before getting his buck. He possessed not a single attribute of a deer hunter but enjoyed the trip almost more than any of us. He would smoke, wheeze and cough on his runway and many a time I have sneaked up on him without his hearing or seeing me, but he did get one finally, and great was the rejoicing and surprise thereat. Freddy was not much of a walker either and hated to carry any portion or share of the lunch equipment or to drag deer. He would always pick up pots and pans and make a lot of noise with them, knowing that someone would take them away from him. We got him on a squeeze play one day where there was a crew dragging a deer both ahead of and behind him. We were on a trail and Freddy could not go through the woods. The forward team seemed to be taking forever, according to Freddy. and



Spring Creek at the log bridge of the old State Line Road.



"Happy" Hoy (left), husband of Elsie Bent, with his one-horse power tractor - Nigger, the Indian pony that turned white in his old age.

finally he was caught in the middle and put on a drag rope, only to learn later on that he had been framed and what he said, there again, would not bear printing in this story. I remember about twenty years ago we happened to arrive in camp a day before the deer season opened. I said I was going to take a look around through the woods and Freddy said he would like to go with me. We started by canoe, for the lakes were open then, and paddled in through the overflow from Bass Creek to a point between Big Bass and Little Bass Lakes. We travelled all through what we call our swamp country north of Mamie Lake and in all saw eleven deer during the day. To get to shore in the morning we had to walk over a series of down logs over a muddy bog, which in daylight was hard enough for Freddy but when it came to dusk in the evening, he was terrified, for there was no bottom to the mud. I had gone ahead to find the canoe, which I did and then signaled Freddy to come my way. Starting his uncertain trip on the jack-straws of down timber, Freddy would call: "Which way do I go now?" "This way," I would reply. "That way, Hell," would come back over the swamp. "A spider couldn't walk on those logs!" Finally Freddy got safely across without falling in, but he cursed me all the rest of the trip for his lameness which was the result of the hike. Before we leave our swamp country north of Mamie, which has always been one of our favorite hunting grounds, I would like to relate that on a narrow ridge between two of these swamps there hangs a coffee pail on a lower branch of a big hemlock tree. Though rusted through, it still hangs there and has for a period of nearly fifty years, for it was there, I am told, long before we came. We always call the spot the coffee pail runway.

Hamp Winston and Fred Cooper and other in-and-outers come and go and leave their mark. Time marches on. My son appears on the hunt. He has a record of four bucks killed with four shots, without a miss, during the years he has been with us, which is better than his "Old Man" ever did. Dad's grandson, Peter Clow, (Kent's boy) joins up and gets his buck.

The story would be incomplete indeed without a tribute to all our good friends in Wisconsin who made the hunt possible. There would have been no Bent's Camp without the Bents. Mr. and Mrs. Bent were ever tolerant and understanding of Dad's boys when we busted things up or made a midnight raid on the pies in the kitchen, - this deviltry perpetrated, perhaps, more in the summer vacations spent at camp rather than on the deer hunt, when Dad kept his eye on us, - but we were their boys, too, and never grew up any more than we do in the eyes of our own parents. Nothing but a fond memory can remain of their affection. Austin Bent, of course, grew up in camp. He knew the woods as an open book and travelled them with the stealth of an Indian. He was almost part of the woods. As a hunter he was unsurpassed. He knew more about what a deer would do than the deer itself. What we boys learned about the woods we learned mostly from him. Austin had charge of the hunt for years until he was married and put up his own little home near Black Oak Lake. Wally Bent, Charlie's younger brother and therefore Austin's uncle, often joined us on the hunt. His cheerful voice and falsetto laugh will forever echo through the woods of Bent's Camp. "Bud" and Dunry, his two sons, have hunted with us from time to time. Skillful hunters, happy and

enthusiastic, they are just like their father. Elsie and her husband, "Happy" Hoy, in recent years have been our host and hostess. Benny Twombley, Mrs. Bent's old bachelor brother, was part of the camp also. Possessing a keen sense of humor, he always had a good story and no one was smarter in appraising the true values in life. On that score I remember one night when Frank Wright and Bob Todd got into a frightful argument on probably something perfectly trivial, for I can't remember what it was, when we decided we would have to have a trial and submit evidence through witnesses, etc. Each contestant was represented by counsel. Benny Twombley, robed in a sheet, presided as Judge, behind the fire screen as the bench. He listened attentively to the evidence, then rendered his decision as follows: "It is the finding of this Court that the litigants in this case are guilty of perjury. I pronounce them both damned liars."

"Dutch" Dickman and his brother, Al, and Ray Bingenheimer, have acted as guides for us for years, and more recently Bob Wilde, the son of Harry Wilde, our good friend the station agent in Land O' Lakes. The guides were the more important members of the "dog pack", for on their younger legs and stronger backs fell the most walking and deer hauling. It was Ray and Bob who fell through the ice a few years ago in West Bay Lake and on the same night took Dad home over the ice on his sled and just barely made it.

John Knobel, a picturesque character of the north woods, has been with us in past years. Long on stories and cussing, he was short on wind and leg power but always amusing. We called him "Friar Tuck". John Lobermeier and Willard Hershey came over from The Island Club to hunt with us for several years. They did a good job of "dogging", considering that they were strangers to the country.

1932 knocked out every member but one, the humble author, who kept the chain intact by a five day visit. The camp grows in size and changes with the country, but so gradually that demarcation is impossible. We have learned every foot of the country and are almost as competent as the natives. The woods have become as friendly and familiar as our own backyards, but faces have disappeared. Charlie and Mrs. Bent, Wally Bent, Benny Twombley, Charlie's younger daughter, Polly Bent Fisher, and members of our party are dead, but the spirit of the deer hunt lives on in Dad Clow, who looks forward every year to the new hunt. Although he is not as young as he used to be, his eyes still sparkle at the mere mention of the hunt and his enjoyment is just as keen as ever. I have come upon him many times during a heavy snowstorm and found him sitting perfectly motionless but alert at his stand, never cold even though gloveless and the snow melting on his hands. I remember one night when we came out on Bass Lake just at dark and due to uncertain ice in Bass Creek we had to take a line of about a mile through the woods to get to Mamie Lake where we had left the boat. Dad and Frank Wright were in my squad that particular night. Dad never was a fast traveller, so dark overtook us before we had left the south end of Little Bass Lake. I would light a match and get my direction from the compass and then spot a tree in the skyline ahead and make for it, but in the



Lunch in the woods. Kent Clow in foreground.†



A stop at Spring Creek on the way out on the old State Line Road to fill radiators of frozen Fords. That was the only "streamlining" that Fords got in those days.

heavy going Dad and Frank could not keep up and would keep stopping me. Once Dad fell with a crash and Frank said: "Are you hurt?" and he replied: "Of course I am. Do you think I'm made of India rubber?" Finally Dad said, "But listen. I've just thought. I have a luminous dial compass." That compass took us out that night within a hundred yards of the boat, but it took three hours of rough and tumble going. Dad would tackle it again today if we would let him, but the old legs don't roll over the logs as easily as they used to, nor, for that matter, for the rest of us either. We must be getting old or I would not be reminiscing.

I have mentioned Dad's boat without special significance beyond its being made to break ice, but a book could be written about that boat. Dad had it designed by a plumbing engineer and made, I believe, in his own shop. It was terrifically heavy, the hull being made of heavy oak ribbing covered with one inch oak planking and that in turn covered with steel. Homely was no word for it, but it was the pride of Dad's existence. Like some plumbing fixtures this tub leaked and sometimes would not work (I didn't say Clow plumbing fixtures.) No inanimate object has ever been cursed or blessed as much as that boat. And oh how cold it was riding in it in the wintry blasts or worse out of it in a canoe or row boat trailing behind, ricocheting back and forth in the ice channel. The bow had a flat metal deck over the engine cockpit which was slipperier than greased lightning and anyway the whole bow was always covered with a coat of ice. Every time you went to shore or back you had to climb this slippery bow. Some fell in and got wet all over, including our own Captain Bill. Frank Wright was always puttering around with a pole and would sometimes climb up on said bow, when Freddy McNally would whisper: "Do you suppose he will fall in?" He never did, much to our disappointment. One night, coming back from Indian Point across Crooked Lake, we got half-way across through our old ice channel when the motor quit. There was nothing to do but to push it back through the channel to the shore. There it sank and remained frozen on the bottom all that winter. Anton Swanson, Dad's chauffeur, hoped it would never be raised, but it was and is still going strong (at times). During some years when the boating was fair we would travel a long way down the lakes in the Pere Marquette. Migrating ducks would fly by and much to the disgust of Dad some of the playful Nimrods of the party would shoot at the ducks on the wing with their 30 - 30 rifles. Returning home in the late afternoon the shots would always disturb Dad in his cat naps. It got so that it didn't take a duck to give Freddy McNally the excuse, but whenever he would bang off his gun he would always look with feigned surprise and indignation in demanding "Who dun that?", - but Dad knew all right.

The Thanksgiving dinner party, although staged a bit ahead of the actual day, was always a gala occasion. Dad would invite in the countryside, men, women and children. The table fairly groaned under the weight of roast turkey from Cy's farm, cranberries, pies, fresh vegetables, venison, Mrs. Bent's marvelous pastry, and everything under the sun that you could ask for in a feast. After dinner Dad would always make a pretty little speech and sometimes Bill, who acted as

toastmaster, would call on others. I remember Bob Thorne fighting over the whole war one night in his speech while unbuttoning his flannel shirt to the beltline, where he could go no further. Hot stoves and hot toddies work wonders. Singing in close harmony, dancing, Freddy McNally's antics and old Nigger Joe singing "Old Black Joe", furnished the entertainment. Old Joe was Dad's father's body servant, an old slave, and he came with us for years as cook. He always had the "miseries" at dinner time but they were rapidly cured by a wee drop in the tin cup he carried. "Ain't I a bird?" he would say, as he disappeared into the kitchen. Coming from the Robbers' Roost after a little extra pump priming, Messrs. Eddie Frear, Mason Phelps and Freddy McNally gave me a few moments' worry one year. All Eddie had on his plate was a hard shelled turkey drumstick, which he would pursue with his fork and knife but never did catch up to. He was a gentleman, however, and I had no trouble with him, but the others had to be "shushed."

I have called this the story of a deer hunt, but so far we have not heard much about deer hunting, except that we got lots of them. Well, after all, the deer hunting was only incidental to having a good time, but it might not be amiss to describe a typical hunt in later years.

We finish breakfast, - some later than others. Dad has coralled such members of his party as he can boss and control and has them herded in the Robbers' Roost, complaining to Bill of the lateness of the hour. He wants to start out first over the ice, if we would only tell him where the hunt is to be staged. Bill, while leisurely lacing his boots, says: "No, Dad, you will just get things all messed up." Dad resigns to the younger generation and sinks despondently into a chair, to roast in his hunting clothes. Finally we get started, - either in the good ship Pere Marquette or down the ice in single file, spreading out at fixed intervals so as not to concentrate the load. We arrive at the first stop, to count noses and give and take instructions. Sometimes it's on the ice and sometimes the ice cracks and then you should see the scampering. The "standers" are segregated and put in charge of Bill. The "dogs" are told their part, - from where to start, what direction to take, and where and when to meet for the lunch fire. The timing element is calculated so that the deer will not be put through before the "standers" arrive. Our drive invariably takes us through a beautiful piece of country of alternate hard wood and hemlock and spruce swamps. The trees are heavily laden with snow and all is a Christmas scene, especially the little Christmas spruce trees which, if you jiggle them too much, will precipitate a cold shower down the back of your neck. The woods are still and quiet except for the occasional whistle of a Canadian Jay, the croak of a raven or perhaps the knock-knock of a woodpecker or the scolding of a squirrel. A partridge may scare the "livin' daylights" out of you when it jumps up from under your feet. The "dogs" walk cautiously along through the woods out of sight of each other, keeping their line as nearly as possible. A deer may appear from any direction aroused by yourself or the other "dogs" so the eye has to be on the look-out every second. Suddenly you see whitish legs below the boughs of an evergreen. In a second a

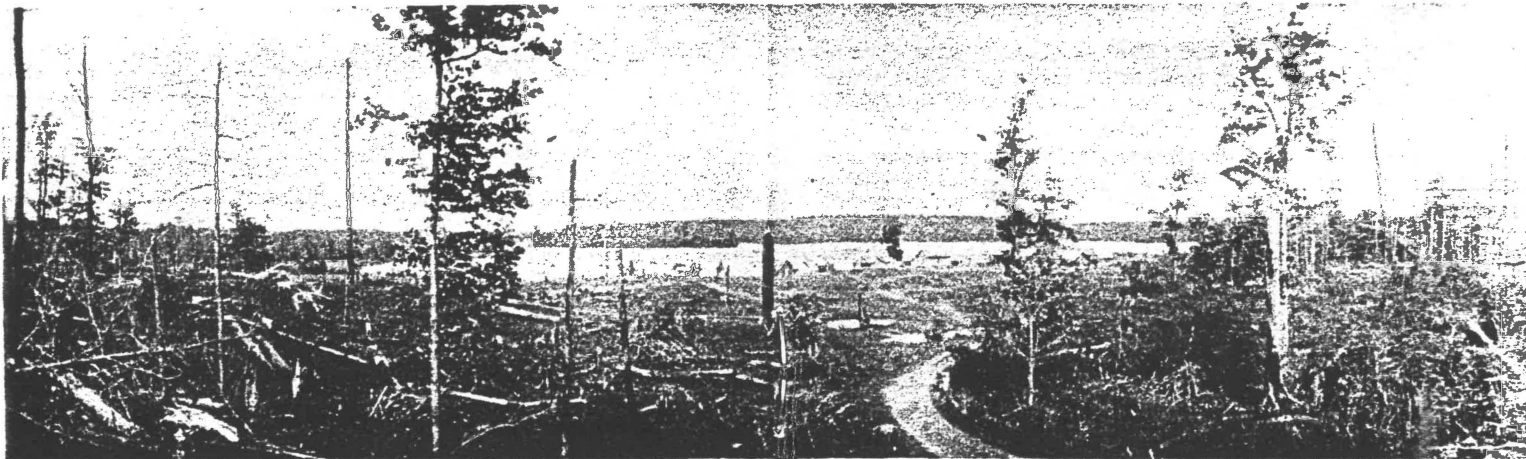
set of horns may appear and there is a big buck right in front of you. Your heart thumps and in the excitement the instinct to kill has done the deed without remorse. Someone later helps you drag the buck to the shore line and from there on everyone takes a turn. A shot is fired on the line or by one of the "dogs", - we can almost tell by whom from the direction, - and they are all accounted for later on. Dad hears more shots than any of us and always accuses someone of having missed and holding out. And how he loves to ride anyone who has missed. We meet at the lunch ground, - hot coffee, sausages, and maybe scrambled eggs and sandwiches glaze (for unless you toast one the butter is as brittle as ice) are devoured. The story and experience of the morning's hunt is told by all and the afternoon hunt is planned. A smoke and then we are off for the hunt again, - then back to camp and dry clothes, hot stoves, hot toddies, a good dinner, hunters' conversation or maybe a game of bridge, a smoke again and then to bed early.

So it has gone on for forty years. And now my story is done. Two score years have rolled by in the telling of a few minutes and Dad has the plans for the forty-first year.

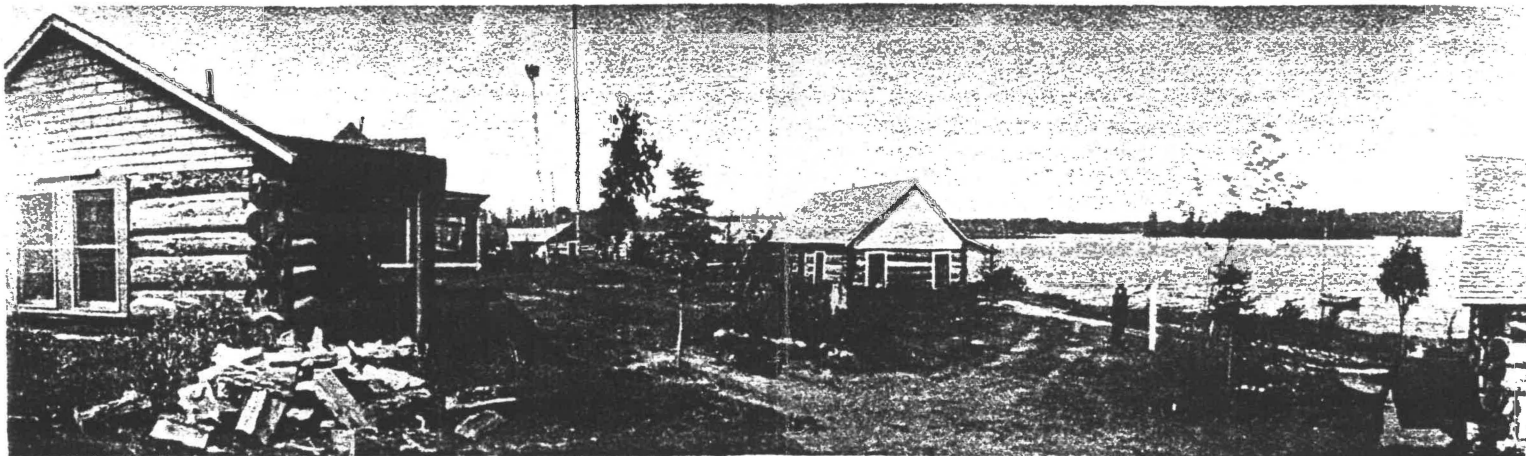
When Dad goes the hunt will go with him and when it comes time for those who are left to join the others in the Bent's Camp of the Happy Hunting Ground, we will see Dad there, waiting on the dock, flashlight in hand, counting in his last boy as he comes in over the long trail.



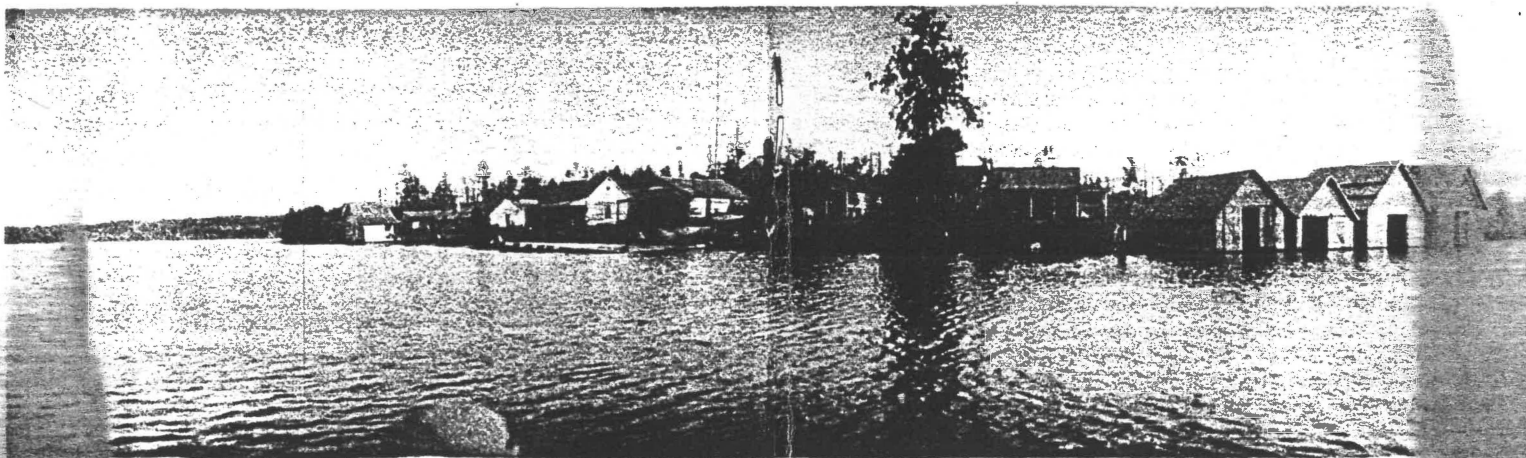
Left to right: John Knobel, Cy Young, Bill Clow, Willard Hershey, Kent Clow, Charlie Bent, "Dad" Clow, Franny Manierre, Joe McCloy, Freddy McNally, Bob Todd, Frank Wright, Bing Leighninger, Frank Paylen. —1927



Mamie Lake and Bent's Camp as seen from Slippy Hill in about 1900 or a few years after the big fire.



Bent's Camp in 1903 - Woodlawn cabin on the left, the Bent cabin in the center and the dining room on the right. The small balsam trees in front of the Woodlawn and dining room cabins are now over fifty feet high. Charlie Bent can be seen leaning against a lamp post on "Michigan Avenue." Kent Clow (left) and Hamp Winston sitting on porch beyond the woodpile. Don't worry. They didn't chop it!



Panoramic view of Bent's Camp in 1903 taken from Mamie Lake.