

Mousseau Bay's Early History

By Dr. James D. Henderson

Although some Minnesota DNR maps call it Moose Bay, the body of water that once was the entrance to Little Pelican Lake should officially be called Mousseau Bay. In the early 1900s one could easily boat between the two lakes and a bridge on County Road 4 carried Model T Fords over the channel just south of Breezy Point.

Sometime prior to 1913 Frank and Sophia Mousseau purchased 151 acres of shore land just north of where the old bridge once stood. Frank was born in Minneapolis in 1876. His father David worked as a cooper (barrel maker) for the Borm Company. Frank married Sophia Daigle in 1902. He worked as a Northern Pacific railroad switchman in Minneapolis until he retired.

When Frank registered for the draft in September 1918 during World War I he listed Sophia as his nearest relative living in Pequot Lakes. They seemed to have maintained a residence in Minneapolis as well as in Pequot Lakes.

Just when Frank and Sophie built the small restaurant and skating rink on their Mousseau Bay property is not known, but it was likely around the end of the war. During the 1920s and 30s it had a gas pump out front and catered to the tourist trade that motored by on their way to Captain Bill Fawcett's Breezy Point Lodge.



The gas pumps are long gone from the front of the old Mousseau cabin now owned by Laura & Oscar Shogren.

Once such infamous customer, according to a local Pelican Lake Outing Club history written Marjorie Wilson Richison, was the Chicago gangster George "Bugs" Moran who bought lunch at the restaurant for himself and his boys. Moran was born in St. Paul, but moved on to Chicago at age 19 to live a life of violence and crime. He was the archenemy of Al "Scarface" Capone and was nearly killed in the 1929 St. Valentine's Day massacre when a bunch of his boys were machine gunned down in a warehouse by Capone's gang.

After Frank Mousseau's death in 1950, Sophia moved to California to live with her son David. The building was then purchased with funds raised by friends of Mrs. Taylor, a

long-time waitress at Breezy Point Lodge who had seven children, since at the time she apparently had no other place to live.

When Mrs. Taylor left, the home sat empty for several years and was finally purchased by Laura and Oscar Shogren in 1989. In 1935 Oscar's father John served as a cook for 6 months at CCC Camp Pelican that was located on the southeast side of the lake. Laura said when they moved in they found a hidden area behind the basement stairs where coins were stored. I guess Sophia Mousseau had a good place to hide her money from the likes of "Bugs" Moran.

The author is collecting information and old photos of resorts and lake views around Pelican Lake for future articles in the PLA newsletter. If you have a photo of the old Mousseau restaurant please email Jim Henderson at james7122@gmail.com.