

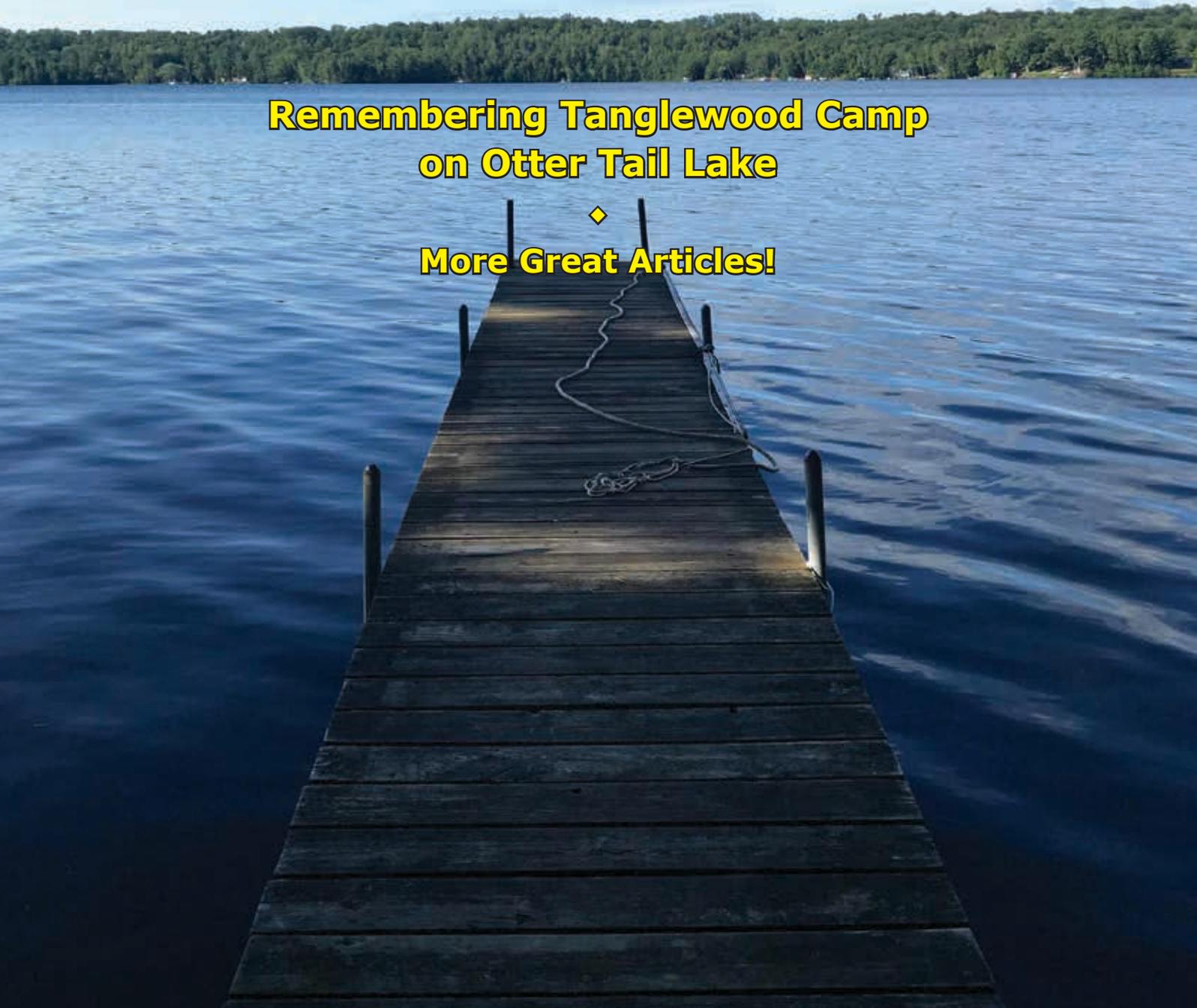
OTC

Otter Tail County

Summer 2023

**Remembering Tanglewood Camp
on Otter Tail Lake**

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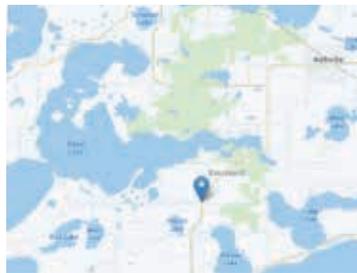


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 Summertime on the Lake

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Otter Tales

I'm sure summer means many different things around the world, but here in good old Minnesota, it usually means some hot weather finally. Sometimes so hot you usually want to stay in the air-conditioned house, car, or up to your neck in lake water enjoying the opposite of winter. Most days though, it is just plain nice out and you get to enjoy the sun, the breeze and the sunburn that comes with it...aaaahhh, or is it ouch?

As you can see, Boomer is working on his summer look. He really enjoys all the seasons but summer is his favorite. With all the swimming and retrieving balls off the dock, he truly is a water dog. He has visitors that show up for a weekend now and then, which turns into a major tournament of retrieving the most balls thrown. No trophy is awarded except the ball itself. It only ends if we wrestle the ball away to stop play. I'm sure he is very happy to have visitors, but like his owners, it takes two good days of sleeping after everyone leaves to get him back to his old self.

Our summer issue of *OTC* has some great reads. Minnesota had so many resorts that cater to folks that wanted to come to the lake for summer vacations. Tanglewood Camp on Otter Tail Lake is one of those first resorts in the area and a memory maker for many people over the years. It is sad that many resorts are disappearing now, along with many other things of memory.

Next up is a quick day trip to see Munsinger and Clemens Gardens. We have come to realize flowers are only here for a short time.

We also have another tasty summertime grilling recipe from the Lakeside Gourmet.

Then we finish with the Basswood story (part two from last issue) about an area of Otter Tail County we never knew. The history is rich in these parts.

As always, grab a good cup of coffee and enjoy this issue of *OTC*...and of course, Summer. See you on (or in) the lake.

— Ed Pawlenty, *OTC* Publisher

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Remembering Tanglewood Camp



Otter Tail Lake, the largest lake in Otter Tail County and the 10th largest lake completely within Minnesota's borders, stretches 10 miles diagonally southwest to northeast along what is now MN Hwy 78. The lake's 24-mile shoreline is almost exclusively filled with large single-family homes. But that has not always been so.

In the late 1860s, Ottertail City, on the northeastern shore of Otter Tail Lake, was the county seat and a booming town of 1,200 residents with a weekly newspaper, sawmill, flour mill, five hotels and 28 saloons. While the northeast shore was burgeoning, the opposite end of the lake was largely undeveloped.

In 1867, perhaps considering development on the northeast shore at the time, Michael Corbitts from the U.S. Government purchased a stretch of land on the southwestern shore of the lake. Although it took 30 years, the land with gently lapping waves slapping against wide sandy beaches turned into one of the first resorts on Otter Tail Lake. Tanglewood Camp opened to summer visitors in 1895.



From its beginning, the comings and goings at Tanglewood Camp were apparently of great interest to area people as they were reported in local newspapers. The June 28, 1901 issue of the *Battle Lake Review*, for example, reported: "G.T. Propper of Wahpeton Sundayed at Camp Tanglewood and declares it the prettiest place and has the best fishing in Minnesota." From the *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*, July 17, 1931: "Mrs. Harold Featherstone and son, Robert, are spending a few days at Tanglewood Camp on Otter Tail Lake."

One of the first families to summer at Tanglewood Camp was the R. E. Lincoln family from Fergus Falls. Daughter Eleanor, writing many years later from her home in Massachusetts, remembered those early years: "[W]e carried water from a central well in pails. Then each cottage had its own shallow well and pump. For over a decade food was kept in an insulated wooden box about 3 x 4 ft, one half

of which was occupied by a large chunk of ice, dug out of the common ice house (filled every winter with ice from the lake by a local farmer). [We had a] kerosene stove and lights, an iron stove with open front for warmth." (*Eleanor's memories are courtesy of Otter Tail County Historical Society.*) From reading her account, one can only imagine why the family returned year after year.

left: Tanglewood Camp, Otter Tail Lake, 1909

Photo [#4375] from the collections of the Otter Tail County Historical Society.



*Tanglewood Camp, Otter Tail Lake, Everts Township, 1908
Photo [#4808] from the collections of the Otter Tail County Historical Society.*

Fred Meis, owner of the property in 1902, was one of the first and longest running owners of the resort, which consisted of the farm, a resort lodge, and four cottages. (See photo at top of next page.) Meis and family farmed land on the southwest shore of Otter Tail Lake and operated Tanglewood Camp until about 1940, at which time he became ill and could no longer manage the property.

During the forty years Meis owned Tanglewood, he made many updates. In 1909, he had telephone lines brought in "for the accommodation of his guests." In 1916, he moved the original resort lodge (a log cabin) down to the lake and ordered an American foursquare from Sears Roebuck & Company for his home.

Tanglewood, like so many early resorts, became the stuff of memories. From Eleanor: "We stayed all summer until we were out of high school. In later years, stays depended upon our grown up programs and became more sporadic, but until this date there has never been a summer when the cottage was unoccupied."

She tells of 4th of July celebrations where cottages were decorated with bunting and flags and each owner contributed to fireworks over the lake at night; sailboat races; berry picking; and "summer nights where all the children gathered near the open common to play run-sheep-run, kick the can, and other hiding games, until it was too dark."

Writing from the perspective of many years later, Eleanor wrote, "I remember all of the first cottages. Many of those camps are still owned by the second or third generation of the original builders."



Tanglewood Camp, Otter Tail Lake, Everts Township, circa 1911

Photo [#9747] from the collections of the Otter Tail County Historical Society.

“In fact, I have realized over the years in Minnesota and all over the U.S. that families, as they disperse, move, and sell homes but keep the summer cottage as a place for reunion, a family center.”

Sadly, those summer cottages have not been a place for reunion for many years as Tanglewood Camp closed in 1959 when a turnover of the property resulted in the privatization of the lodge and the sale of individual cottages. But Eleanor, as do many across the United States who vacationed in Minnesota resorts, has her memories.



Tanglewood Camp, Otter Tail Lake, Section 4, Everts Township, circa 1890s

Photo [#11101] from the collections of the Otter Tail County Historical Society.

Boom and Bust of Minnesota's Resorts

Resorts are disappearing across Minnesota, and with their disappearance come changes to what many consider Minnesota's way of life as well as changes to many rural economies.

Two excellent accounts that trace the trajectory of Minnesota resorts are on the web.

From MNopedia, a web publication of Minnesota Historical Society, comes Mark Haidet's: "Tourism in Minnesota, 1835 – 1940." He reports: "The number of resorts increased from about 200 in 1917 to 1,275 in 1931 and then to more than 2,500 in 1940."

From MinnPost comes Greta Karl's article: "Last resorts: The Slow Disappearance of a Northern Minnesota Tourism Institution." She reports the number of resorts in Minnesota has dropped by nearly half since 1985: from about 1,400 then to 760 in 2015. What's next?

Poet Laureate of Otter Tail Lake

(Really? Self-proclaimed?)

For more than a century, the 14,074-acre lake with its sandy bottom and long sweep has been a vacation paradise. In 1910, Joseph Gunn, the Poet Laureate of Otter Tail Lake, penned a ditty about the lake, its fish, camps, sites, people, and even geological beginnings.

The Lake of the Otter's Tail

by Joseph Gunn

*Ho, Ho: Let us a voyage take,
On the Lake of the Otter's Tail
Where pike and pickerel may be caught,
And "smallmouth" without fail.*

*There's perch and bass and whitefish too,
And lamper-eels that trail;
There's muskellunge with mouth so large
The fisherman doth quail.*

*There's Midway Park – Gunnvilla Camp,
With cottage lots for sale,
The beauty spot on Mother Earth,
With timber all but frail.*

*There's Balmoral, once known so well,
Where farmers took their grain;
The old dam's gone, likewise the mill,
Though the ancient wheels remain.*

*There's Inglewood and Tanglewood,
And Thorn Park o'er the lake;
There's Jimmy Jones, who reigns supreme,
Where anglers rusticate.*

*There's Larson's Farm and Gleason's Grove,
There's Hektner's place, where clergy rove,
There's Kaiserville, with Scandia shore,
There's Aspinwall's and also more.*

*There's Schwalen's place where fishermen rest,
Beneath the clear blue sky.
And drink good milk from Frisk and Bess
And eat good berry pie.*

*There's Buzzard Bay on the southeast shore,
The pelican's home in days of yore;
With fish and fowl its waters teem,
The sportsman's paradise as seen.*

*There's Stonybrook at Balmoral,
That once did turn the wheels so well,
A rivulet of note and fame,
Since glacial days remains the same.*

*Helkoski's place of St. Paul fame,
Which lies beside the infant main,
Where once the famous Otter's Tail
Was cleft in twain by Indian's trail.*

*The River Dead on north-most shore,
With Walker lake and many more,
Are famous grounds in Indian lore;
For those who seek there's much in store.*

*There's Stonypoint midway between,
With bluffs on high and foliage green,
From any place along the stream
This promontory may be seen.*

*There's Maple Ridge at Kaiserville,
A new camp site on the old side hill;
For health and comfort it is fine,
And the sweetest place in sugar time.*

*The Beaver Club at Tanglewood
All come from North Dakota,
They've found the lake where fishing's best,
In the state of Minnesota.*

*A ginseng farm of acres ten
At Thorne Park may be seen,
A dead line's drawn, around the place
And strangers must not step within.*

*Camp Nidaros on the river Dead,
Or Parsonville might have been said;
Six clergymen of Lutheran faith
And Norse descent, there rusticate.*



Minnesota has long been a draw for family lake-vacations. With so many resorts closing, I truly hope families find other avenues for enjoying Minnesota lakes and the pleasure and memories they bring.





Take Time to Smell the Flowers!

STORY & PHOTOS BY PAM LARSON

Munsinger Gardens with Mississippi River in background

Walking through colorful gardens on a nice summer day can be a very relaxing activity. One needn't drive far to find such a diversion. Across the Mississippi River from the St. Cloud University, you will find the two adjacent floral displays of **Munsinger Gardens** and **Clemens Gardens**. The winding trails and brick pathways present a delight for the senses as you stroll along. Although they are neighboring gardens, they exhibit distinct styles. The Munsinger Gardens are informal with winding flower-lined paths under tall pine trees along the river. The six sections of the Clemens Gardens are planned in a formal European fashion with American plantings and fountains.

Munsinger Gardens

In 1880, a sawmill was located on the future site of Munsinger Gardens. Close by was **Riverside Park**, a tourist spot with six cabins for camping. In 1915, the City of St. Cloud bought Riverside Park, planning for a future city park. In 1926, local Campfire Girls planted the Norway and Scotch pine trees that continue to provide dappled shade today.

Joseph Munsinger became the first Park Superintendent for the City of St. Cloud in 1930. His great love of flowers led to the Park Department's first greenhouse, established in the area that became Munsinger Gardens. This greenhouse, a rock garden, lily pond and fountain were all a result of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Works Progress Administration. Because of the New Deal Program, CCC and WPA workers developed some of the garden's first pathways, as well as planting flowers and trees. The gardens were expanded and refurbished in the 1980's.



Perennials at Munsinger Gardens



above: WPA Era fountain in Munsinger Gardens

left: Paths at Munsinger Gardens



The **Perennial Garden** features cold-hardy Minnesota perennials, offering a new look as the seasons change.

right: Coneflowers



below: Perennials along the path

bottom: Perennial Garden Fountain, dedicated 1993. This 12-foot-tall cast iron fountain is a replica of a pre-Civil War fountain located in front of the State House in Columbus, Georgia.



above: Perennials in Munsinger Gardens

left: Phlox

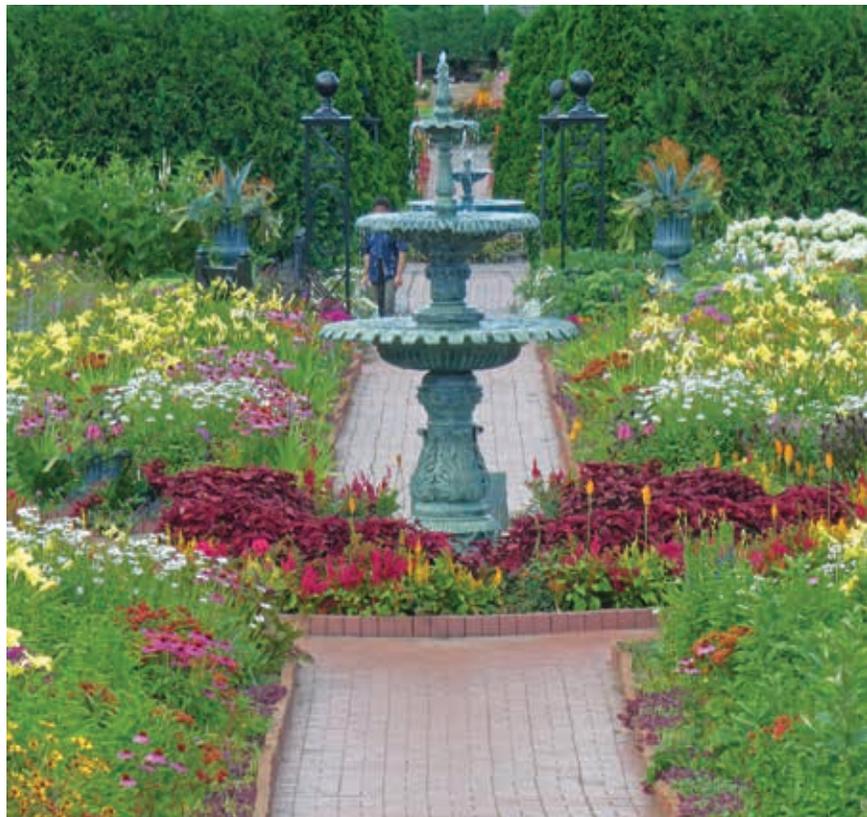
bottom left: Butterfly weed

below: lily



Clemens Gardens

Up a hill from the Munsinger Gardens are the Clemens Gardens. The Clemens Gardens began when a plot of land came up for sale across the street from the home of Bill and Virginia Clemens. They purchased it and donated the land to the City of St. Cloud Parks Department. In 1990, Bill Clemens funded the construction of the Virginia Clemens Rose Garden in honor of his wife, Virginia, who battled multiple sclerosis for many years and loved roses and flowers. She was able to enjoy regular garden visits and could see the Rose Garden from her window. In the 1990s Clemens Gardens began an expansion east from the Rose Garden, made possible by a large additional donation from the Clemens family. In the six sections of the Clemens Gardens are formal red brick paths, extensive ironwork fencing, urns and benches, as well as many beautiful fountains.





The **Rest Area Garden** has full sun, featuring vibrant annuals and the Renaissance Fountain with Cranes (above), one of the tallest outdoor fountains in MN.

The **Trellage Garden** focal point is an arbor trellis, with a fountain under the dome, surrounded by four single-color gardens: yellow, blue, red and purple. (Purple section shown below.)



The **White Garden** was inspired by the white gardens in Kent, England. The effect of white flowers and gray or green foliage is very soothing on a hot day. (Sorry, no photos of this garden!)

The **Formal Garden** has granite outlined brick paths, with the Windsor Court fountain in the center (right).

The **Virginia Clemens Rose Garden** has as many as 1,100 roses and over 70 varieties which bloom from June through September. The roses are labeled, so if you like roses, this is the place to pick a favorite.



Virginia Clemens Rose Garden

above: Candy Cane Cocktail Roses

*right:
Fountain in the Rose Garden*

below: Ketchup and Mustard Rose





Whether rambling through the winding paths of Munsinger Gardens or strolling along the brick walkways of Clemens Gardens, visiting these gardens are a wonderful way to slow down and be refreshed.

Both gardens are open 6 am to 10 pm, spring to fall, and there is no admission fee. They are located at 1515 Riverside Dr. SE, St. Cloud, MN.

OTC

Pam Larson, a retired school librarian, lives in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, with her husband Larry. They enjoy traveling both near and far. In fact, they like being wherever they are!





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Looking for a flavor bomb to serve with your grilled chicken, steak, or burgers? Here it is — grilled mushroom skewers will add pizzazz, both for your eyes and for your taste buds. Serve as a side (right) for any grilled meat or fish or as an appetizer (lower right) with grilled bread, goat cheese, and arugula.



Grilled Garlic Mushroom Skewers

1# Baby bella mushrooms, sliced lengthwise in half (look for the package with the biggest baby bellas)

Marinade:

- 2 T. olive oil
- 1 T. soy sauce
- 1 T. balsamic vinegar
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1/2 tsp. thyme, chopped
- 1 T. fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. red chili pepper flakes, optional

Mix the marinade and add the sliced mushrooms, letting them marinate for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, soak the wooden skewers in water to prevent burning.

Skewer the mushrooms (a twisting motion makes it easier), grill until tender, about 3-4 minutes per side. You could do this on a gas grill, stovetop grill/griddle, or even in a skillet. Transfer the grilled mushroom skewers to a serving platter and sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve. The extra marinade is delicious over your grilled meat as well. Enjoy!



"Sharing recipes is part of our culture, enriching each one of us and binding us together."

Sandra Thimgan lives on Silver Lake with her husband/photographer/taster, Daniel.





Could an injection of your own plasma help you heal?

Understanding PRP treatment for tendinitis and Arthritis

BY AARON LINDSTROM, FNP
Lake Region Healthcare Orthopedic Team
PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAKE REGION HEALTHCARE

You may have heard about athletes like Tiger Woods, Kobe Bryant or Peyton Manning who have tried Platelet Rich Plasma or PRP as a non-surgical regenerative treatment to recover more quickly from injury. The good news is this low-risk, natural treatment isn't just for professional athletes or the rich and famous. PRP is helping people from all walks of life recover more quickly from acute and chronic tendon injuries, osteoarthritis and acute ligament and muscle injuries.

I am an Advanced Practice Provider offering PRP treatment at Lake Region Healthcare, and I wanted to offer some background on what PRP is, how it works, and when it might be something for you or someone you know to consider.

What is PRP?

Platelet Rich Plasma, or PRP, is the concentrated platelets taken from your own blood. These cells promote clotting and healing. They contain specialized growth factors. The growth factors send signals to the local cells in the area of injection to stimulate a healing response and can reduce inflammation in the area.

How does PRP treatment work?

The general concept behind this treatment is that the increased concentration of growth factors in PRP potentially speed up the healing process. One way this can work is when an injury site is carefully injected with PRP.

For example, Achilles tendinitis is a condition that causes the heel cord to become swollen, inflamed and painful, and PRP can be injected directly into the inflamed tissue to aid in healing.

Another way PRP can work is by treating the injured area during surgery. In this example of the heel cord, if it is torn and surgery is required to repair the tendon, PRP can be prepared in such a way that it is stitched into the torn tissues during surgery to potentially speed up the healing process.

While we aren't using PRP in the operating room at Lake Region Healthcare yet, we are working to bring this option to patients as well.

When might PRP help?

In general, tendonitis and arthritis are the two most common conditions treated with PRP. This would include chronic tendon overuse injuries to the Achilles, patellar, rotator cuff and forearm. Low to moderate grade knee osteoarthritis and acute ligament and muscle injuries like pulled hamstrings and knee sprains may also show potential benefit.

Of course, every patient and condition is unique and response to treatment will vary between individuals. Treatment has been shown to be safe with few documented complications, so if you're wondering whether PRP might be right for you, I'd recommend scheduling a consultation to discuss your personal situation and options.



About Aaron Lindstrom

Aaron has been a member of the orthopedic team focused on providing better access to orthopedic care and excellence in orthopedic treatments and surgeries at Lake Region Healthcare since 2013. Originally from Frazee, MN, Aaron received his Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota. He earned his Doctor of Nursing Practice at North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota.

Aaron is married to Kasey Lindstrom, who is also from Frazee, MN, and they have two children. His personal interests include spending time outdoors with family both on the water and in the woods, mountain biking, and skiing (on the water and snow).

Aaron sees patients at the clinics in Fergus Falls, Battle Lake and Elbow Lake.

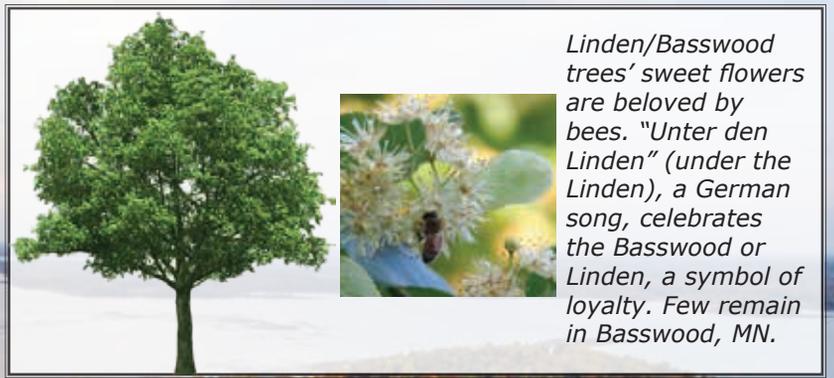


Basswood: 1848-2023

BY BECKY TIGHE

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIANE DONLEY,

PHOTOGRAPHY BY SARAH JEAN, TAFFY SONJU,
BECKY TIGHE, WERNER FARMS & KATHY ZIEGLER



Linden/Basswood trees' sweet flowers are beloved by bees. "Unter den Linden" (under the Linden), a German song, celebrates the Basswood or Linden, a symbol of loyalty. Few remain in Basswood, MN.



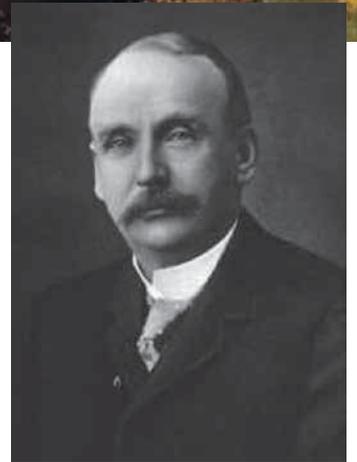
Dead Lake: Photo courtesy of Photography by Sarah Jean

Dead Lake

Before explorers, trappers and settlers ever saw Dead Lake, the Ojibway (Chippewa) and Dakota (Sioux) people camped there. The lake called "dead" is full of live fish; northern pike, largemouth bass, crappies, walleye, bluegill and green sunfish, and muskie, to name a few. In 1843 a Dakota war party attacked and killed 30-40 Ojibway. For the many "roofed" graves, like tiny houses, the Ojibway named it "dead" in their language; Dead Lake, now, in English.

Dead Lake Township

"Northwest of Otter Tail (Ottertail)," wrote early historian John W. Mason (right), "are several lakes of irregular shape, surrounded by forests ... Approaching Dead Lake from the south, near its outlet, a fine growth of native forest trees ... sugar maple, basswood, oak, elm, ash and ironwood, are especially noticeable. The lake itself is divided by bars and points into several distinct basins and bays. The bottom is as irregular in shape as the shoreline. The shores are full of boulders, both granite and limestone ... a lake of the woods, difficult of access, but wild and picturesque, (full of) water-fowl and other game."



John W. Mason

Some of the fish found in Otter Tail County lakes



Pumpkinseed



Sunfish



Tullibee



Smallmouth Bass



Black Crappie



Bluegill



Walleye



Shorthead Redhorse



Brown Bullhead



Largemouth Bass



Northern Pike



Yellow Bullhead



Yellow Perch



Common Carp



Black Bullhead



White Sucker



Fathead Minnow



Burbot



Bluntnose Minnow



Rock Bass

Background photo by engin akyurt on Unsplash



left: Minnesota Stage Company stagecoach traveling in West Central Minnesota in 1876. The old stagecoach trail ran near where the Stoney Arches were later constructed.

Photo courtesy of MNOPEdia/ Minnesota Historical Society Public domain

below: Taffy Sonju said, "I believe, when I was a kid, the family lived in the back of the building. The front part was a store. I traded pop bottles for licorice (LOL)!"



Basswood Store when still open

1848? Before statehood, the Basswood stage stop existed!

Just before Basswood intersection on county road 14, Dead River leaves Dead Lake, runs under Stoney Arches, across a field and under the road. Soon a battered white wood frame building appears, BASSWOOD boldly lettered on it. You're very near the likely location of Basswood's pioneer-era stage coach stop in Dead Lake Township. It's likely the stage company that stopped in Basswood (of Otter Tail County, not to be confused with Basswood Grove of Washington County) was Allen & Chase.

Its founding date was not available; but it was well-enough established to be "desired and acquired" by Burbank Stage. It **is** recorded that Burbank Stage Company acquired it in 1859, eleven years after Minnesota was declared a territory and one year after statehood. Burbank called its merged business Minnesota Stage Company. It's known the route ran from Perham, taking loads, mail, sometimes passengers, through Maine, toward Fergus Falls, in 1857, the year Otter Tail County was named. Settlers had come; some, near the Maine stage station, had established a church in 1886.

At the Basswood station stood a private home, with sleeping rooms for travelers, similar to the Maine stop. The 45-mile Perham-to-Fergus Falls run was a rough 2-day trip. A place to change, eat, sleep, perhaps buy necessities, was important. Families had come. They built a school and a church. Locals Jack Sawyer and Carl Nelson were stage drivers. J. Eckert built the store at the stage crossroad for Jim and Freda Bowman. Basswood had an official post office from 1900-1904, and likely an unofficial place to pick up mail before that. The stage still ran in 1900.

1897: Dead Lake Township established

"Dead Lake Township lies in the Red river basin and is drained by the waters of that river [writer note: In those days the Otter Tail River was believed to be the Red River. It is a Red River tributary] ... (it) enters this township on the east in the southeastern part of section 13 (and) makes the land exceptionally good for farming" (from John W. Mason's history). Dead Lake Township was the last township to organize in Otter Tail County.

Did you know...?

...Otter Tail County has more lakes than any county in the U.S.

The array of lakes in the Richville/Basswood area includes: Henry, Round, Rice, Rush, Dead Lake (33rd largest lake in the state: 7900 acres) Davies Lake, Lake Alice, Marion, Head, Long, Star, Boedigheimer Lake and others.

...Minnesota occupies the exact center of the continent of North America, midway between the Atlantic and Pacific (and) midway between Hudson bay and the Gulf of Mexico? (It) derives its name from the river (called) "Min-isota" by the Dakotas ... (Mason)

1907: Hay shortage means a close call for Dead Lake!

Attempts to drain lakes were legalized in 1907



Stoney Arches

Picturesque landmark Stoney Arches, built 1907-08, had an urgent purpose. It bridged a ditch dug to drain, or draw down, Dead Lake in order to increase farmland. A resident shared this account: In 1907, during a severe hay shortage, the Minnesota legislature gave Minnesotans permission to lower lake levels, exposing more farmland for raising hay. A plan was made to dig "Ditch #28" to drain water from Dead Lake.

Workers were hired, the ditch dug and a stone bridge constructed over it. The project ceased after two years (1907-08), but the natural outlet dried up, so Ditch #28 became the "new" Dead River outlet. "Good thing they didn't finish," said a lifelong resident. The drawing-down projects "ruined a lot of lakes."

The 115-year-old "Stoney Arches" bridge has become a treasured landmark. Now on privately-owned land, it's posted by its owner for preservation. Photo buffs can get a sharp picture from the road with a good lens and a camera set to high resolution. And beautiful Dead Lake remains full of fish.



left: view of Indian Lake from top of Stoney Arches



*right: close-up of Stoney Arches
Photo courtesy of Taffy Sonju*

Basswood Baptist Church history

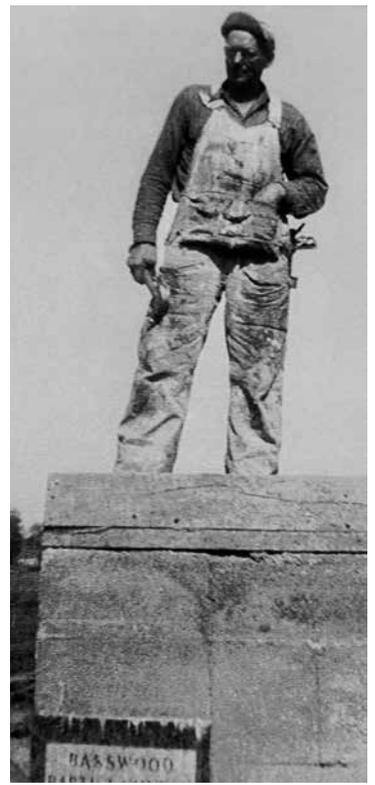
The Basswood community got its name in 1900. The story of Basswood church started when: "... already in 1898 a few Basswood pioneers determined that their children should know ... the Word of God and the salvation which it offers, (and) organized a non-denominational (Bible-based) Sunday School."

The Sunday School meetings were first held in a schoolhouse, but then disallowed. A community church was started, but was unfinished for lack of funds. In 1904, the Methodist Church's board offered to provide funds to finish the community church, taking out a mortgage ... (but) eventually (the) members moved away, leaving the building to the community. Too dilapidated to repair, (it was still owned by the previous) ... congregation.

Temporarily, the community congregation shared the building with a Seventh Day Adventist group that worshiped (on) Saturdays. After WWI, Red Cross volunteer ladies of the community... pitched in to repair the church and cemetery. ... The American Sunday School Union, a mission group, helped with supplies ... (children's programs). Their ministry and some good fundamental teaching grew the church, but the building, too impractical to repair, was too expensive to replace.

Rev. Vern Slater came (1941), and invited an evangelist to preach. Revival ensued. On Sept 1, 1942 they took the name Basswood Baptist Church. Near Amor a Swedish Baptist congregation moved away, leaving their building to the Basswood congregation. To build a church on the Basswood land, they acquired and dismantled both buildings, creating the Basswood building from the old churches' materials.

Basswood Baptist Church (Dedicated May 12, 1946) is Basswood's single public gathering place. Having survived a savage storm in the 90s, this congregation repaired, and enlarged their building, beautifying its interior with storm-salvaged damaged wood. Basswood Baptist is known for the inspiring music programs it offers to churches and care facilities in the region.



Ed Pulford building the Basswood Baptist Church, 1945

Photo courtesy of Diane Donley



above: Basswood Baptist Church, pre-storm
Photo courtesy of Taffy Sonju



above: Mrs. Eva Olson giving orders for marching in at VBS
Photo courtesy of Taffy Sonju

below: Today, Basswood Baptist Church is Basswood's single public gathering place



Basswood Baptist Church, 1946
Image courtesy of Diane Donley



From dedication program: "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the House of the Lord.'" Psalm 122:1

Sweet Surprise

Researching OTC's Spring 2023 Richville story, I stopped in Rockin' Horse Café and asked patrons enjoying dinner if I could take pictures. A party of five (below) were especially friendly. On Sundays they came after Alliance Church in Perham or Basswood Baptist. They gave me their names, and a good tip about Basswood's historic Stony Arches bridge. I attend Hawley Alliance, and knew Sarah and Richard from Fergus Falls and Battle Lake Alliance Church. Sonju was a familiar name! These were Richard Sonju and Sarah McClure's family and friends. I'd met Sarah in Fergus Falls, and Richard when they moved to BL, where we both attended BL Alliance. He so loved her name that he asked her to keep it when they married.



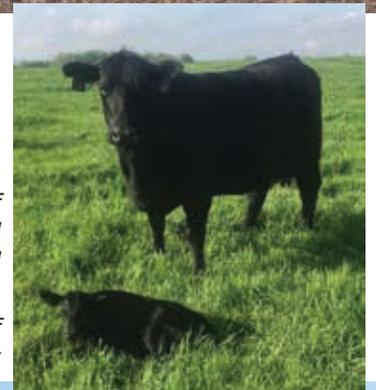
*Aerial photo of Basswood: Basswood Baptist Church, Basswood Store and Russell Lind house
Photo courtesy of Photography by Sarah Jean*



Clockwise from right front: Chris Conant, Taffy (Stephanie) Sonju, brothers Mike and Al Sonju, and Heidi Studer.



*above: Harvest time on Werner Farms
Photo courtesy of Werner Farms*



*Black Angus mama & calf (right) and Farming near Basswood (below)
Photos courtesy of Diane Donley*



*Stephanie aka "Taffy" Sonju (front) with her sister, Irene Sonju (Sarah McClure's mother-in-law)
Photo courtesy of Taffy Sonju*



Recollections

By Diane Donley Lund

Christmas

Written in love for my mother and father, sisters and brother: without you, these memories would never be.

*When I was a little girl, I grew up on a farm.
We had a farmhouse, some sheds and a big red barn.
My parents still live there, in a bigger house now
and I love to go visit them, away from this town.*

*When I was a little girl, I'd look up at the stars
Lay on the green green grass and wonder how far
How far they were up there, shining so bright
From where I was lying, and breathing in the night.*

*Breathing in the cool air, that smelled of fresh cut hay
Wondering how long in that spot I could stay
Just to count the stars and breath it all in
Was all I cared about, way back then...*

*My Mother stayed home with us kids all day
We had a resort too, where we would work and play
There was so much to do, seemed to never end
But I also remember way back when...*

*Dressing up in play clothes, and Mo's high heels
Or riding bikes on the gravel, away we would steal
Down to Stoney Arch with our bamboo poles
There sure were a lot of highs between the lows.*

*Like Annie, Annie over or just playing ball
And holding our breath until we would fall
Horseback riding down the maple syrup trails
And carrying milk to the milkhouse in pails.*

*I remember the barn, and its cobwebs and smells
And all of the milk that my Dad would sell
With a silo, and 2 rows of big black and white cows
Some calves in the back, and up above a haymow.*

*We'd play in the hay, in the dark with flashlights
Go running in cut fields, trying to fly some kites
Skate on the pond, slide down Bob's Hill
Or behind the snowmobile on a saucer we'd spill.*

*I remember the toboggan of wood we would pull
to the old house, down the chute it would go
And dressing in the early morning, so cold
By a register, warm from the fire Dad stoked.*

*We'd ride in a car bus to the one-room school
Made up of six grades, one teacher, it's true!
We made forts out of snow, our bats were our guns
And visiting the man with polished rocks was fun.*

*Mom would pack our lunches with some soup and a sandwich
Like peanut butter and banana or tuna with chips on it
I remember the library and the big black boards
The small little desks, and the brown hardwood floors.*

*Every Saturday morning we'd have to clean our rooms
Before we could watch any cartoons
Later on with the resort we'd go down to clean cabins
Mow both yards, dump fish heads and wonder where Dad was.*

*Dad was home in the barn, or out in the fields
Where the big money was made, yet the bills were concealed
Us kids never knew if we were in trouble or not
So many memories, will never be forgot.*

*The initiations into the neighborhood gang
Trapping gophers, throwing a knife in my foot, what pain!
Tractor driving, and raking, dragging and bailing
Sometimes I'd pretend I was just out sailing.*

*Sailing in a swing, hung from a high tree
Pick flowers for Mom that were really just weeds
We'd cut flowers for Dad too, but leave them lie by the Jeep
He always told us the thistle fine was not cheap!*

*Us girls would sing in church, and receive a lot of praise
And hear people tell our folks how good we were raised
Brought up on a farm, on some beautiful land
I'll always feel proud to be a part of that clan.*

*I remember the big sky up in God's Country
Imagining shapes in clouds,
But there isn't a bit of sadness in me
As I breathe in the past and search to be free.*

*The meaningless tasks we do every day
Are part of this journey, not made out of clay
But woven together like strands of a tapestry
In colors of love and a whole lot of honesty.*

*So paint your portrait any way you feel
But just make sure your feelings are real
Be with those you love, and those from the past
And live each day as if it were your last.*

— Diane Donley

A Basswood kid comes home!

Diane Donley, a Basswood "kid," left in the 70s. She loves being back. "I loved living (on the farm in Basswood). I can't believe I've moved back home!" For decades she visited home only in the summer "when my folks were back from Arizona ... I love this land of the lakes!" Knowing the upkeep would be too much for her, she let the beloved farm go when it was sold in 2019. But she's "blessed to have found a little rambler on the Ottertail between Rush and Otter Tail Lakes" and loves the view. We hope her "Recollections" strike a chord.



above: Donley (partial) Family Photo, 1965
 Back: Duane Donley, Martha Donley, CA cousin,
 Mel Donley, Marion Donley, Millie Donley
 Front: David Donley, Diane, Pam and Julie Donley
 with collie dog "Timmy"



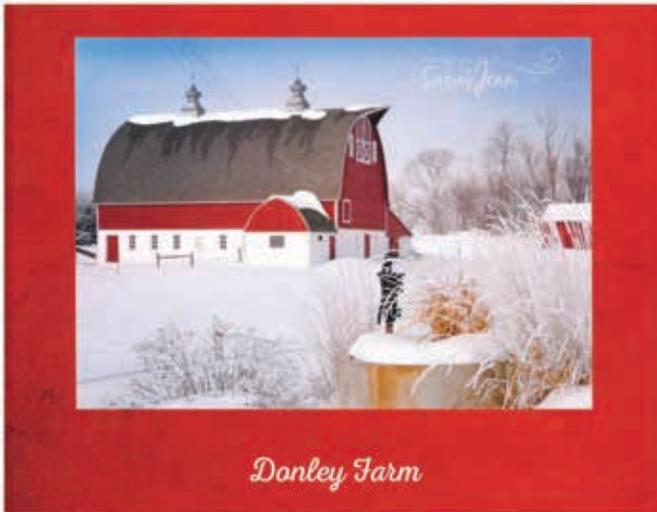
above: Diane Donley Lund

left: *Grandma Martha Donley Tjaden*

below:
Donley Family by Dead Lake at Donley's Sunrise Resort, 1980
 Back: David, Marion, Duane and Diane
 Front: Cindy, Janice, Julie and Pam



Donley family photos courtesy of Diane Donley



Donley farm barn

Photo courtesy of Photography by Sarah Jean

Thanks to:
Sarah Pearson for photos,
Taffy Sonju for her knowledge of Basswood
and to others who helped with information
(you know who you are!)

Today, with remote devices, cell phones, dash-installed internet and Zoommeetings, people can return to their roots, enjoy nature's beauty and work at the same time!



Writer Becky (Loge) Tighe has 3 children and 10 grandchildren. She lived in Battle Lake (2012-21), but moved near family (health reasons) in 2021. Healthy again, she will stay in Hawley, MN, but misses Battle Lake!



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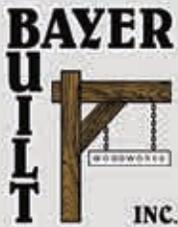
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