

Area Highlights

The Dew Drop Inn
By Doc Williams

Back in the 1920's, if Dan & Lena Hierholzer wanted to

visit their relatives in the far western town of Annandale, they would take the train from where they lived in North East Minneapolis. While there, Dan would sometimes borrow their horse & buggy for a trip to near by Sugar Lake, where he said the water was crystal clear and the fishing was great. He also claimed the fish had a sweet taste. In 1927, at the age of 50, Dan retired from the Minneapolis Fire Department and decided to live on Sugar. He purchased a farm, which covered most of the north shore, for \$2000 and moved his family in. He built 3 rental cabins on the property, bought 7 wooden boats, and opened a resort. No one can remember what Dan called the place, but he did name the 3



rental cabins. One was called the Dew Drop Inn. He paid the neighbor kids, Don & Ron Peifer, a penny a piece for each clam they harvested from the lake, and sold them to his renters for bait. In addition to the resort business, Dan harvested ice from the lake in the winter. He stored it in his ice house and sold it to the locals in the summer months for refrigeration. Lena raised chickens and grew vegetables, which she also sold. The lake was so clean that all their water needs, including drinking, were as easy as a walk to the end of their dock. Life was good! Now, it became known in those parts, that if you were to mosey by the resort, for "two bits" you could get yourself a shot of whisky and some company while you drank it. As Dan and Lena grew older, they decided to sell some of their farm as lake shore property. When a potential buyer showed up, Dan would "pace off" 100 feet of land and offer it to him for 100 bucks. If the buyer agreed, they would close the deal with a hand shake and a shot of whisky. The property lines were so poorly defined, that to this day there is 16 feet of land that surveyors can not determine who the rightful owner is. When most of the land had been purchased, Dan sold the resort to Charley Johnson who added more cabins and even converted Lena's chicken coop into a rental place. Dan, wanting to continue to live on the lake, hired 2 carpenters to build a house on one of the last pieces of land from the farm. While the men worked, Dan would sell them shots of whisky on credit. When the carpenters had finished, there wasn't a plum wall or a square corner in the place. Come time to



settle up, the carpenters owed Dan money. In 1950, Dan decided to buy a fancy, new outboard motor. He purchased a 5 horsepower Atwater, which you could actually shift from neutral to forward or reverse. It was the first of its kind on the lake. With other outboards of the day, if the motor was running, the prop was turning. If you wanted to change the direction of the boat, you would have to swing the motor around. What is left of Dan's original resort is now Peifers resort. The Dew Drop Inn is being remodeled into a year-round home and the chicken coop is still a rental. Grand daughters Joan Rausch and Jean Urista still have homes on the north shore. The communicators for these areas are (B) John Rausch and (C) Chris Behm.

If you would like us to write an article on your area of the lake and know some of the history, contact the Sugar Lake Association and they will "get-er-done".