

REGION TEN WILDERNESS CANOE TRIPS RECORD OF PADDLE AWARDS

NAME	MILLER, ROBERT L.
ADDRESS	1145 East State Street, Mason City, Iowa.
COUNCIL	Winnebago Council
DATE OF TRIP	August, 1943.
GUIDE	Chas. T. Kendall

PADDLE AWARDS : DATE	
BRONZE	x - Through Regional Office - 1/19/44
GOLD	
SILVER	

In the Month of August, 1943, I was fortunate enough to realize an ambition I had looked forward to for at least three years---

On Tuesday, August 10, 1943, in company with Docter Miller, his son, Bill Miller, Ted Stewart, and John Vonberg, all of Charles City, Iowa, Frank Ahrens of Osage, Iowa, and Relf H. Kruse of Rockford, Iowa, our party boarded the Rocket at Mason City, Iowa, at 5:15 Tuesday afternoon. At about 7:35 that same evening we were in St. Paul, Minnesota. We all walked from the railroad station for a dinner of chicken chowmein with egg subgum, which we all enjoyed.

After a little recreation seeing "White Savage" at the RKO Orpheum theater, about 11:30 we double-filed back to the station where at 12 midnight we boarded a much slower train than the Rocket for Duluth, Minnesota. We arrived in Duluth at 6:30 the next morning, Wednesday, and went straight for Miller's cafeteria for breakfast.

Inasmuch as our next train ride didn't start until 9:50 that morning we decided to take in a few interesting Duluth sights, so we hurried to the waterfront where we saw the large elevator bridge, loading docks and several big iron ore ships. We were told that this bridge is over the entrance to the Duluth harbor, which leads into Lake Superior. On this morning the lake was like a mirror and off into the distance faded into the sky. First time in my life I had ever seen a sight like it---a horizon of water.

Natives of this interesting industrial city told us the "Skyline" drive was really the trip to take in order to see the entire city and all of the wonderful sights it afforded. The "Skyline" drive is so named because it is taken on a highway on top of a bluff surrounding the city. But we didn't have time to enjoy this sidetrip so we headed for the station where we all boarded a train headed for Ely, Minnesota. However, while in Duluth we were fortunate enough to meet two

Scoutmasters whom we enjoyed a visit with.

The train from Duluth to Ely moved very slow compared to the others we had been on. It seemed to go backwards about as much as it did forward, but it finally got us to Ely at about 2 o'clock Wednesday afternoon.

On this ride from Duluth to Ely I saw but one field---a hayfield---all the rest of the scenery was trees and small towns and many iron ore trains. The rivers between Duluth and Ely were wine red and small.

Shortly after arriving in Ely we meant our guide, Chuck Kendall, and Swampers Orland Thornsjo, and one christened the same name as myself---Bob Miller. After a good meal at the Forrest Hotel cafeteria we went to Winton where we registered with custom officials and immediately set out for Moose Lake. We saw a doe and her fawn on the way to the lodge. At the lodge we meant Bob Burnette and Bill Grigsby, both of Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

We decided we would quickly pack our personal belongings into the large Duluth packs and start out that afternoon, Wednesday. Consequently 4 o'clock found us paddling our way for North Bay, our destination for that night. We were almost there before our guides told us we had passed the Canadian border line. All along the way I saw more trees and beaver dams than I had ever seen before. We reached an island spot camp in North Bay in time to start supper and lay out our bed rolls for the night, before dark.

I SHALL NEVER FORGET THE FIRST NIGHT I SPENT IN CANADA. It was the only night the mosquitoes were really bad, but this one night was enough for most every one in our party. I guess we were really initiated in true Canadian style, because the night had just gotten nicely settled into real pitch black, with these pesky mosquitoes peppering us from all sides with all they had when Canada's weatherman decided

to prove to us that it also rains in Canada---and, at night as well as day---something I wasn't any too well prepared for, especially during this FIRST night.

I didn't sleep very much because I couldn't seem to find shelter room under any canoe nor in the tent, so I stood under a tree which afforded me some shelter, with the result that breakfast the next morning found me warm and comfortable on the inside---delicious hot prunes and oatmeal---although quite badly soaked on the outside.

We dried some of our things while we fished that morning. Then about 10 o'clock we started across North Bay into Isabella Lake.

Leaving this beautiful lake we ran into a little difficulty finding the portage from Isabella toward Sarah Lake. The trouble was we started to look for it too soon. The portage was supposed to start over a large rock hill of which there are many and they look very much alike. We went through Lake Sarah, portaged into McIntyre and camped on a peninsula jutting into the lower end of McIntyre---Thursday night.

It was early evening so we had plenty of time to go fishing and swimming. I took a good bath first and then Bill Miller supplied the power for my attempt at trolling. I didn't catch anything then, but Rolf Kruse and John Venberg got some frogs and caught a nice string of black bass and Walleyes, while some others in the party caught some Walleyes and Northerns. That night some of the fellows tied their canoes to trees and slept in them, on the lake, but their sleep was interrupted several times because the wind came up and miraculously untied the canoes, only to find their occupants had to paddle back to shore.

Next morning---Friday---Doctor Miller steaked the fish while Chuck Kendall cooked oatmeal and prunes for a breakfast starter. The best fried fish we ever tasted came next on the menu, thanks to Doctor Miller.

After cleaning up the camp we left as early as possible, paddling due north and it was nice going through McIntyre lake, but going into Brent lake we were forced to buck the wind which rolled up white caps. Our destination for that day was Painted Rock on Darky Lake, but the waves were rolling so high and the wind was so strong we were afraid we couldn't make it. When we stopped at noon on the northwest point of Brent and looked at our maps we decided that we could save a lot of paddling into the wind by breaking a trail across to the extreme western tip of Brent. Our attempt at breaking a trail proved a little more difficult than we had anticipated and we came into a new unnamed lake. Our party name for that lake was "Grigsby and Miller" lake, because they were the acting guides for that day to get their gold paddle.

After paddling across "Grigsby and Miller" lake we again portaged to Lake Brent. From Brent the portage toward Darky lake followed a long stream. Most of our party followed the portage because the stream wasn't deep enough to paddle. However, Frank Ahrens and I followed Orley and the other Bob Miller down stream, paddling wherever we could, but most of the time we had to carry our packs on our backs and lift the canoe over logs and rocks. There were many waterfalls in this stream, and at the base of one I stepped into water up over my pack. The stream was very clear and ideal for trout.

Orley and Bob scared up some deer down in front of us around the bend of the stream. The bottom of this stream was all rock, no sand or clay or mud of any kind, and it wound its way through very thick brush and woods. About three-quarters of a mile down stream Frank and I got tired because there were entirely too many trees across stream which we had to lift the canoe over and between.

We found Orley and Bob's canoe on the bank of the stream so we left ours there also. From there we did not know where

the portage was so we put our packs on our backs and broke a trail down stream a ways where we meant Doctor Miller who showed us where the portage was. After arriving where the rest of the party was we left our packs and went ~~back~~ back after our ~~canoe~~ canoe. There being several trails toward the stream I took one while the rest followed the main portage. Ted ~~and~~ Stewart, Bill Miller and Chuck Kendall started back with Frank and I after the canoes. On my trail I flushed six partridges and they flew right over towards the other fellows. I found the canoe first and started carrying it back when I meant the others. Ted then helped me carry mine while the rest took the other canoe.

When we got back the beachhead wasn't large enough to set all canoes down so some of the party started out towards a small portage into Darky Lake. Once into Darky Lake the body of water was larger and no trees to break the wind---the waves and the wind made it very difficult to paddle. It was growing dark so we hied for a camp spot about three bays from Painted Rock on a peninsula, where we put up for the night on a large rock with water and its big white caps on three sides of us. The waves being as high as they were some of our blankets and packs had gotten wet from the splashing waves. Most of us were soaked. The wind was so strong we just lifted our blankets into the air and let the wind take them into the limbs of the trees where they soon dried out.

After all beds were made we went into the hills and picked blueberries. The acting guides, Bill Miller and Bill Grigsby, had to be cooks that night, so our menu consisted of macaroni, coffee, hardtack, and very strong blueberry pudding, purple in color and not exactly what I would call delicious, but we all were very hungry so everything went down tasting good. Sleep that night found me under a canoe.

Our weather-predicting guide, Chuck Kendall, forecaste

clear sky and no wind as soon as the sun set, and it proved as he said, but this wonderful weather only lasted for about one hour. And then the wind and the rain and everything else they have in Canada came down upon us. The next morning---Saturday--found a cold, weary, gray, and very windy day facing us.

After a breakfast of oatmeal, prunes and raisins, we packed and started for Painted Rock. The wind, fairly strong, was to our backs and the sky had started to clear. By the time we reached Painted Rock the sun was shining. We trolled all the way to Painted Rock and some of the fellows cut some poles, hung their blankets on them and sailed.

I caught three Northerns trolling, while the rest---all together we caught 12 Walleyes and black bass, on artificial bait. Most of the paintings were weathered from the rocks but I took the paintings to be the story of a moose hunting party.

From Painted Rock we went south toward Argo Lake. The portage between Darky and Argo Lakes was one of the most beautiful on the entire trip. It took us over all kinds of rocks and through hand-sawed logs, cut from fallen trees across the trail.

Arriving at Argo we found a note left by fellows who had been there several days before. We also left one for any who might follow us. I, was here we came to the first sand beach on the entire trip, all others being rock. So we decided to take advantage of this beautiful spot and partake of our noonday meal, which consisted of cold meat and peanut butter sandwiches. No hot meals at noon. Just before dinner we all went swimming. Some of the party took baths with soap and others washed some of their clothes, as the water in this lake was the cleanest and clearest of all we had seen.

After dinner we set out for Curtain Falls on Crooked Lake, our destination for the day. This afternoon's trip found us paddling many potholes and hiking several portages. In one of

the potholes, which was clear water and not very deep we could see what looked like hundreds of nice black bass. We tried every way we knew to catch some of them but no luck.

At the start of the last portage into Crooked lake we came upon a seine which we borrowed and seined minnows for that evening and the next morning. While the rest carried the canoes and packs across this portage into Crooked lake Doctor Miller, Rolf Kruse and myself steaked the fish. Then we paddled across the bay of Crooked lake and saw a big hill with lots of blueberries on it. We picked enough blueberries for three pies. From the hill you could see an old abandoned lumber camp, which some of the party went over to inspect, while the rest of us paddled on towards Curtain Falls which was roaring so loud we could hardly talk to one another. Crooked Lake marks the borderline between Canada and the United States and Curtain Falls is half in Canada and half in the United States.

Arriving at Curtain Falls we pitched camp on the south side of the falls in Superior National forest back in the U. S. A. A little bronze nun in the center of our camp site marked the borderline. A trail which followed the river the falls flowed into also went through our camp. An interesting part of the falls was two huge logs lodge in rocks and balancing themselves across the falls.

Chuck Kendall cooked a nice supper of steaked fish, hard-tack, bean and barley soup, coffee. After supper we gathered a large supply of campfire wood and made a reflector oven for a delayed dessert of blueberry pie, three of which Chuck made later that evening. They were very large and deep pies. Chuck and Orley made their bed and slept (or maybe I should say "tried to sleep") on the large rock in about the center of Curtain Falls. They "enjoyed" a very noisy "rest" that night ---spray of mist from the falls and what a time they had getting "in bed" and out the next morning.

The rest of us made our beds under canoes on nice soft, spongy reindeer moss. From our camp across the bay of Crooked Lake we could see a tourist camp which had approximately ten cabins. Along about 7:30 that evening from that camp came a very nicely dressed young man, equipped with some brand new fishing tackle. He asked for a good spot to fish and I showed him one below the falls where I had been trying with a red and white daredevil for some time, and, without even getting as much as a small nibbling strike. I naturally thought he would have the same kind of luck---no bites---no fish.

Consequently, with a chuckle under our belts we set back to enjoy a little fun---yeah? We watched him put on a red and white daredevil, same size as the one I had been using in the very same spot, giggling to ourselves all this time. With his new fishing tackle, and, possibly a different twist of the wrist than I had been using, he made one cast and gave a big yell. Yeah, that yell stopped completely our inside giggling. Our new found ~~fisher~~ fisherman landed a large Northern. But we returned to our giggling again when he hung the fish on a brand new stringer, price tag and cellophane still on it, up in a tree, instead of putting it back into water. However, that was all the luck he had although he tried until dark. I ~~also~~ tried again and caught one small Walleye.

Later that evening I learned for the first time in my life that barley soaks up lots of water. We put the soup back on the fire because Chuck's good blueberry pie---the first one---came out of the oven at approximately eleven p. m., and it sure did taste good. I stayed up long enough to enjoy a piece from the second pie a little later and then I went to bed.

This camp site was the dirtiest one we had come to on our entire trip. There was an estimated three to four hundred

tin cans and bottles scattered about---and, as our pledge was to keep our own camp sites clean and try to find one to clean up, we were right in the middle of our pledge, that was for sure. We filled a large hole full of rubbish taken from this camp site, and left it as an inviting spot for others to come that way later.

In as much as our itinerary included a trip from here to Rebekah Falls, after a snack for breakfast the next morning---Sunday---we hid our packs in a cache, and started down the river into Iron Lake, where we missed the right route off Iron Lake which holds Rebekah Falls. After considerable paddling on Iron Lake, in large white caps whipped up by the wind, we went to Lac La Croix cabin where we got our bearings and headed for the right bay.

At these falls we found initials carved on the rocks by others ahead of us. Rebekah Falls are two beautiful waterfalls with an island between them. These falls are longer than Curtain Falls but the fall isn't quite as steep. On the island between the falls we found what seemed like millions upon millions of very large blueberries, and we picked---and eat and eat until we were more than full. Truth is our guides had quite a time trying to convince us it was long past time to get ~~going~~ going---it was a hard spot to leave. It was paradise for food of all kinds. Haws, wild strawberries, raspberries, and several others. I shall never forget it.

With the wind to our backs 11 o'clock that morning found us back to our packs. We decided that inasmuch as the wind and waves were to our backs if we paddled for about six hours we could make it to Lower Basswood Falls on Basswood Lake, about 20 miles away. Crooked Lake was so large it was the first time we had to use a compass and follow our maps real close. Our guide said it was his sixth time through Crooked Lake and it was the first time he didn't have to

backtrack in order to find his way out.

However, we did not make our destination that day because it clouded up and started to rain and we were forced to stop around the point on Thursday Bay for the night. Still in Superior National forest this camp site---a very pretty one---was also made by the U. S. government. It included two tables, seats, etc., all made from very large logs.

Shortly after getting into camp it stopped raining and John Vonberg, with Bill Miller as his "outboard" went out to troll with the result that the large, very large Northern John caught and tried to carry with his bare hands---well, his hands were cut and scratched quite deep by the fish's mouth and gills. They were so large a canoe paddle would almost slip through it gills. What a catch!

After a supper of fried canned meat, bean soup and bacon, Orley furnished the power for Bob Burnette and myself across the lake, trolling---but without any luck. Because... well, when we started out under a big orange full harvest moon, before we got across the lake it was covered with clouds and raining and we had to beat it back to camp.

I believe I was the fortunate one for a bed that night because I pulled a lot of quack grass---you see we were back in the ^UUnited States---laid it on a rock, then I carried reindeer moss, put it over that and did I sleep, boy, I sure did.

Under a cloudy Monday morning sky we enjoyed a breakfast of bacon, bean soup and oatmeal. Then with no time wasted around camp we started paddling early because our destination for this day was Wind Lake, some distance away. So with the wind to our backs we all stayed close together until we got to Lower Basswood Falls, when some of the canoes pulled ahead of us and Doc Miller. We found the portages here well beaten

and well marked, with lots of small portages between Lower Basswood Falls and Basswood Falls, which we had to take. Around Basswood Falls we came upon the longest portage of our entire trip. The name of it was Horse portage, one and one-half miles long. Quite a hike, especially with our canoes and all the luggage we had to carry.

We stopped at American Point in Basswood Lake for a dinner of peanut butter and hardtack. Here most of the other fellows decided to pass tests for their first year bronze paddle, inspecting the various kinds of plants and trees at this particular spot. While we were eating dinner a large white speed boat came by tooting several canoes, loaded with rich people, who canoed until they got their full and then the speed boat would tow them back to their cabins. We thought that would be the thing for us.

From American Point we headed due south into Wind Bay where our guides ran into considerable difficulty locating the unused portage into Wind Lake. Inquiring from a man in a houseboat we found Wind Bay was really two bays and we were in the wrong one to get into Wind Lake. We had to paddle back into the right bay, then portage into Wind Lake. This portage took us into a small winding stream, clear as crystal---we could see the bottom---filled with old logs, some with spikes in them and chains about them, possibly left years before. We learned that it was in 1903 and 1904 when loggers was last known to have worked around there. We had to go very slow to keep from tearing holes in our canoes.

About 8:30 that afternoon Orley and the other Bob Miller, both swampers, paddled across Wind Lake, portaged into Moose Lake, and stayed there Monday night to find out just how soon we had to have our canoes back into Moose Lake. They got up at 5 o'clock the next morning and came back to us, informing us we had to have our canoes back Tuesday for another party

to use.

For the rest of us this was one of the longest, if not the longest paddling trips we had, and we made record time down to Wind Lake, where we intended to camp Monday night, then into Moose Lake the next morning.

By 4 o'clock Monday afternoon we had our camp set up for the night and decided that if we would all go out and pick a cupful of wild raspberries we could have raspberry pudding for supper. I was the first one to have my bed made and the first one to start after raspberries.

However, after a two hour hunt, all by myself, I came back into camp with but a half cup of raspberries.

I found this said piece of land we were on~~g~~ was an inland and not a peninsula. Within half to three-quarters of an hour after I started to walk I had a cupful of raspberries. I found most of them along the shoreline among rocks. Walking along~~g~~ the shore, close to the water, with my cupful of berries, still picking and eating more berries, I stepped on a rock that really wasn't supposed to be where it was, and down I went into the water while my cupful of berries went into the air and water. I picked myself ~~up~~ and empty cup up and started out again. I soon had a half cup, only to have the same slipping and falling experience, with the same result---coming up once more with no raspberries. However, I managed to have another half cup of berries by the time I reached camp, where I found the rest had already eaten, and were searching and hollering for me. When they found I was safe and still very much alive, although somewhat bruised from my falls, they started fishing, while I went swimming and then ate supper.

John Vonberg caught the only fish, a small Walleye which he left on the stringer in the water to get some more the next morning to go with it....'twas there the next morning but not very much alive---in fact nothing but its bones were hanging

on the stringer.

I slept good that night. Tuesday morning was really cold. Dew was all around my bed and my bed was wet with the exception of the center where I was comfortably curled. My clothes were hanging on limbs of trees where I had put them the night before. I jumped out of bed, & grabbed one piece ~~of~~ of clothing and right back into my bed to get warm. Out again, cat-like, another garment of some kind and right back into bed until I finally got all my clothes on in bed, with most of the other fellows already dressed and standing around watching me trying to get dressed.

Our guide told us all to clean up good so I decided that inasmuch as I had never taken an early morning swim I would on this nice cold morning. I run down to the waterfront, quickly snatched off my clothes, jumped in, swam out just a short ways, jumped out, put on my clothes while the rest of the fellows stood shivering watching me, with their heavy shirts and other warm clothes on.

Our two swampers we had sent on ahead the day before, arrived back into camp and we had breakfast of oatmeal. They came while we were eating and helped us finish our oatmeal, and all the time we were warming our inside and satisfying our morning appetites with oatmeal these two swampers had a lot of fun telling us about the one grand, swell meal they had at a cafeteria in & Ely the night before. They told us after they get back to Moose Lake they took a car and went into Ely--- where they had fried chicken and all of its trimmings, borrowed an alarm clock from a waitress so they could get up early to get back to us. It all sounded very good.

With all in our party cleaned up simply spic and span, we paddled across Wind Lake and portaged into Moose Lake. Then coming back into camp---our starting point---we followed our guide's instructions, formed a muskrat line, as he called it---

one right behind the other---we marched into camp at about 11 o'clock Tuesday morning.

We got everything all put away and all packed to start back home and then had dinner there. That afternoon we laid our bedrolls out in the sun and then just set around and visited with each other and getting better acquainted. We took naps and then watched the next party come in. Then the two parties had supper and took tents, went back into the woods where we pitched them and stayed in them Tuesday night---yes, I had finally completed an ambition I had looked forward to for at least three years. A trip I shall always cherish in my memory, and, a trip I intend to take again some day.

Wednesday morning we took our tents down and laid them away and after breakfast we watched Bill Miller and a merchant marine take off in a canoe in an attempt to set a three-day canoe-trip record. I have never heard wther they made the record they set out to make or not.

Hed Ludlow, canoe trip director of Camp Charles L. Sommers, took us into Ely and on the way we saw several deer. At Ely we intended to take a Finnish bath, Doctor Miller had told us so much about, but we found the bathhouses did not open until evening and our train left in mid-afternoon. With quite a supply of fruit to eat on the train that afternoon we arrived in Duluth about 8 o'clock. We enjoyed a good movie, "Oxcart Incident," at the State theater. We left Duluth around midnight, arrived in St. Paul about 6 o'clock the next morning. We had breakfast at Mickey's cafeteria and then spent the morning visiting and sightseeing in Sr. Paul and Minneapolis. With dinner in St. Paul we took the Rocket back to Mason City, arriving home at 3 o'clock, ~~Thursday~~ Thursday afternoon, August 19, 1945.

NOTES---Guide Chuck Kendall, St. Paul, and Ted Stewart, Scout-
master from Charles City, and one feed pack, were in one canoe.
Mr. Stewart left for the army 5 hours after arriving home.

Swampers Orland Thornsjo and Bob Miller, Minneapolis,
were in one canoe.

Doctor Miller and son, Charles City, one canoe.

Bob Burnette and Bill Grigsby, Sioux Falls, S. Dak.,
in one canoe.

John Vonberg, Charles City, and Relf Kruse, Rockford,
in one canoe.

Frank Ahrens, Osage, and myself, one canoe.

On a large map in the office of the camp at Moose Lake they
have a large map, and on this map they have pins with different
colored yarn following the route of each canoe party that is
out. By this means they can tell each hour of each day and
night just where the various parties should be, so that there
isn't much danger of getting lost and staying lost for any
length of time.

----- ROBERT L. MILLER,

15 South Ohio,
Mason City, Iowa.

formerly 1145 East State.

OCT 11 1943

Date Aug. 17, 1943

Boy Scouts of America
Region Ten,
1112 Minnesota Building,
St. Paul, Minnesota.

Please Print

I hereby apply for the

BRONZE Award

I have completed all requirements for this award (see evidence attached).

My height is 5'6".

Scout or Scouter Robert L. Miller (Robert L. Miller)

Address 1145 East State Street, Mason City, Iowa

Approved by Guide Chuck Kendall

Approved by Director Ed Lullow

Approved by Scout Executive Earl K. Behrman

COUNCIL Minnesota

Approved by Region Ten Executive

Rolf Kruse - Rockford Iowa
Robert L. Miller, 1145 East State St., Mason City, Iowa

OK
Send back
RECEIVED
JAN 19 1944



Ranger cabin near the base.
Notice the flag.

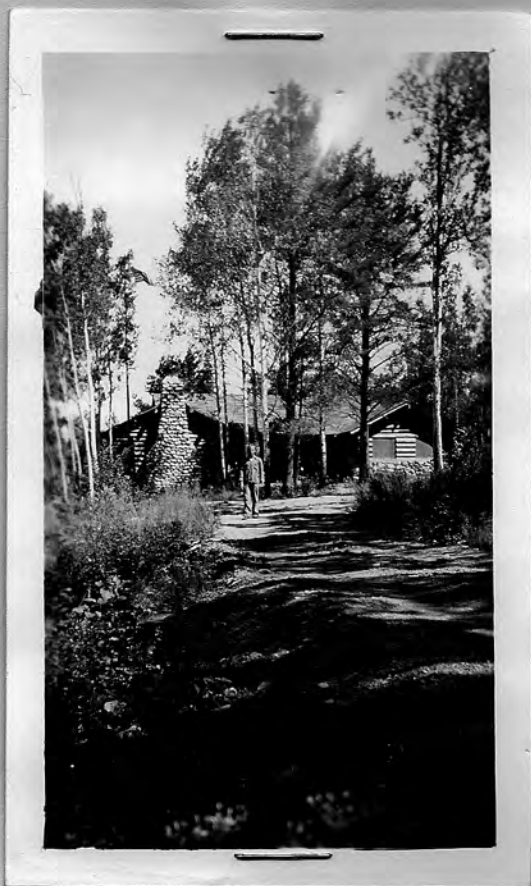


Just leaving the Base
about 4:00 P. M.

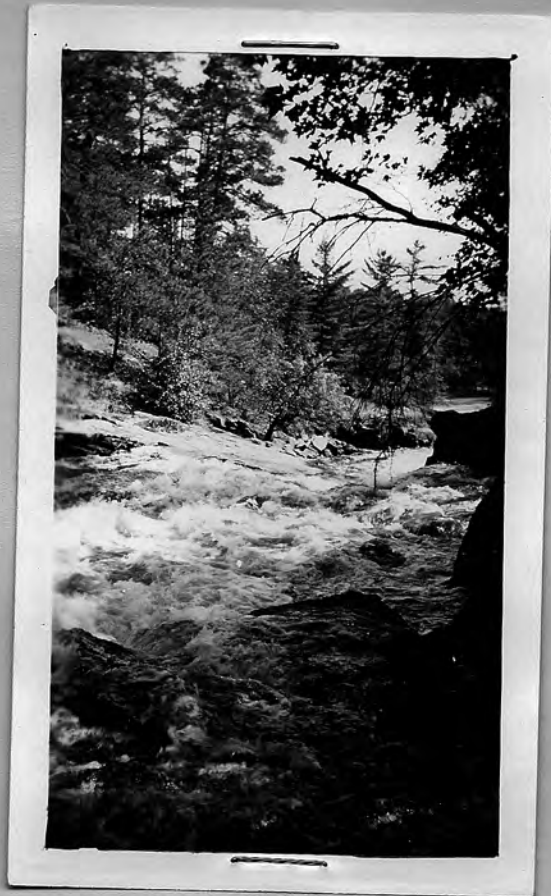


The group in front of
ranger cabin on lower
Basswood Lake.

Bob Miller
Mason City, Iowa
Minneboys Council



John Vanberg in
front of house



Rebekah Guller



Dr. Miller near
Rebekah Guller.



Bob Miller
Mason City, Iowa