

history



CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST "CELEBRATING 100 YEARS" 1908-2008

Log Headquarters

Hidden in the notched logs and hammered iron of this historic building, beyond the whirr of computers, lies the spirit of the Civilian Conservation Corps. Sharp-eyed visitors to the Chippewa National Forest Supervisor's Office will spy the handprint of men like Ike Boekenoogen, Nels Bergley and the boys of Company 705, Pike Bay Camp.

Using a Finnish-style log construction, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Work Project Administration (WPA) laborers created a log structure that would be difficult to duplicate today.

Ike Boekenoogen, a master woodsman, supervised the technique and construction. Logs were traced, notched and grooved by hand. Each layer of logs was tightly fit and required no chinking or nailing, an art of log construction uncommon today. Craftsman such as Ike earned \$100 a month.

Made from 100-year old native red pine logged from Star Island and Lake Thirteen near Cass Lake, the 8,500 square foot building equals the size of four average-size homes. More than 16,000 lineal feet of red pine logs 10 to 16 inches in diameter were used for outer walls and partitions. Heavy wooden pegs set into drilled holes allowed the logs to settle without shifting.

Early visitors walked beneath a huge log arch to reach the entrance, while a large wooden fire tower rose behind the building.

Hand-hammered ironwork on the doors and hinges still greets visitors today. Gnarled stair way railings, constructed with frost-damaged

maple, lead visitors up hand-hewn split log steps. Birch, oak, and white pine were also used as finishing materials.

In the center of the building stands a 50-foot high fireplace and chimney made of split and matched glacial boulders, native to this area. Measuring 14 by 14 feet at its base and tapering to 10 by 10 feet at its top, the massive fireplace used 265 tons of rock. Nels Bergley of Walker, Minnesota, was the designer and builder. Look closely to find his carefully selected rock shaped as a Forest Service shield.

When the log headquarters building was completed in 1935, the cost totaled \$225,000. Today, one could not mark its value. Originally designed for use as administrative offices with a museum, and reception area, the Chippewa National Forest Supervisor's Office still serves its original purpose.

On January 31, 1976, the Chippewa National Forest Supervisors Office was entered on the National Register of Historic Sites. Visitors are welcome to tour the building Monday through Friday during regular business hours. Displays detail the unique character of the Chippewa National Forest Supervisor's Office and its place in Forest history.

"Minnesota will boast a 'log palace' as an attraction for visitors this year when the new headquarters of the Chippewa National Forest supervisory force is opened at Cass Lake April 1."
Cass Lake Times, March 1936