

## Person Note for Lee Andrew DeLack

1879-1973 Lee was the son of John DeLack and Lydia Babcock and had two brothers, Clifford and Enos and two sisters, Laura and Florence. In 1886 Lee's mother died of cancer and in 1888 his father died of typhoid fever. Lee and his sister Laura went to Rochester to live with their aunt Clara, Lydia's sister. Lee married Laura McNeil and together they had seven children, Margaret, Archie, Florence, Vern, Raymond, Grace, and Glen.

The DeLacks, Babcocks, and Rineharts all left Wells, Minnesota in 1910 to find land that they could own. The Babcocks and Rineharts went to Glendive, Montana and took homesteads there. The DeLacks, Lee, Clifford, and Enos went to Littlefork, Minnesota. They loaded freight cars with livestock, machinery, and household stuff and headed north. They left during the summer and bought land that had been logged but still needed a lot of clearing. The women and children stayed in Wells until October. They had to stop in Saint Paul and wait most of the day for the train to Littlefork. Laura and Ethel each had three children, and they had never seen such a building as the St. Paul depot. They had a high old time running about. They boarded their train in the evening and arrived in Littlefork at eight o'clock the next morning. Clifford and Enos were there to meet them with a team of oxen and a sleigh with hay in it. They had also brought blankets because there was snow on the ground and all the girls were wearing sandals. They had left the nice weather behind in Wells.

The Oxen were so slow, it seemed to take forever to get to where they were going. The woods were so thick the trees came right up to the edge of the road. First they came to Lee's place where he was hauling logs to finish their log house. Lizzie cried when she saw it. Then another mile down the road they came to Clifford's place (the Vanderwalk homestead). Now Ethel was crying. It had been a logging camp and the house was used as a bunk house. It was a four room house with two rooms up and two rooms down.

All eleven of them stayed in that house with no running water, no indoor toilets, no electricity, no telephone, and a house full of bed bugs. Vern was born there in January. The closest doctor or dentist was in International Falls, 25 miles away. Up by train in the morning and back by train at night. No wonder the women were crying. Enos lived with them until they moved to Littlefork in 1924.

Lee's family moved the following year, 1911, after the log house was finished and Lizzy was careful not to move any of those bed bugs to that new house. This was the Ole Olson homestead and the DeLack's lived there for many years. This was near the Promersberger homestead and was later owned by Darlene and Rudy Lueders. The home was saddened the winter of 1920 when Mrs. DeLack died of the flu.

There was much hardship connected to early day living many miles from town with just trails for roads. The farming was pretty primitive in those days, planting wherever possible between stumps and using horses or oxen to do the work. Hay was cut where ever it could be found for winter food for the animals. School was a one room log building. The teachers usually stayed at the school to keep the stove going or it would be too cold to hold classes. They all walked a mile or 2 from each direction. Later on the school was consolidated and they were hauled to the Littlefork school. The first school bus was horse drawn wagon in the fall and covered sleigh in the winter.

From the history of Koochiching Co.- When the Minnesota and International Railroad was extended north from Bemidji to Northome in 1903 and finally reached International Falls in 1907, the same year that the Duluth, Winnipeg and Pacific reached Ranier after being extended north from Virginia, the railroad logging era began in Koochiching County.

There was a story that the cattle couldn't be transported on the train beyond Northome, so they walked them to the homestead. The first night they all went back to Northhome and the men had to go back and get them.