

1919  
INTERVIEW WITH MRS. HELEN CALLAHAN

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Helen Callahan came to Pokegama Lake in the summer of 1919 to join her  
husband, Dr. Francis Callahan, who was the director of the Pokegama Lake Tubercu-  
culosis sanatorium. She came by rail to the village of Braham from St. Paul. Helen  
found it difficult to believe that St. Paul was a city. It looked so primitive  
compared to the city of Philadelphia where she was born and raised. Imagine this  
young married woman of twenty-eight continuing on to the little hamlet of Braham  
to be met by horse and buggy to complete her journey to Pine City and the Sanatorium.

Her first impression of the wilderness area was one of being overwhelmed by  
trees and water. Helen had been an assistant head nurse in Philadelphia and prior to that an  
army nurse in the 1st World War in France. She and Francis Callahan were married  
in France and the next day he was shipped back to the States. They were unable  
to live together for some months, until she was able to rejoin Francis at the  
sanatorium at Pokegama Lake.

There was an established home just East of the hospital on the high ground  
for the director and his wife. The hospital had a compliment of one doctor, ten  
or twelve nurses, and upwards of 40 to 50 patients. The patients were housed in  
small summer cottage-like cabins along the lake shore, facing north.

Travel to Pine City, the nearest town, was over narrow gravel roads and logging  
trails by horse and buggy. In winter little or no plowing was done and the lake  
and river became the thoroughfare. There were only two farms--Stumne's and Stoffel's  
between Pokegama Lake and Pine City. Logging was still one of the dominant  
industries in Pine City.

Accident cases were taken care of by either Dr. Weisman in Pine City, or  
transported to the hospital at Pokegama and left in the care of Dr. Callahan and  
the nurses.

As time went on the Callahans had three daughters who were subsequently  
raised in Pine City. The sanatorium was a private enterprise owned by a Dr. Taylor  
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1419

Callahan moved to the sanatorium at Walker, Mn where Helen became active in medical work again and was hospital administrator for four years.

In later years the family returned to Pine City and resided in the old Bede family home on Cross Lake. During these years, Dr. Callahan commuted to the cities for his practice and the family remained in Pine City.

After moving to Pine City, Helen became active in Civic affairs, She hired a Red Cross Swimming instructor for the cities to teach swimming and life saving at the Pine City beach down by the old armory.

There were two passenger trains per day thru Pine City and Helen and her friends would travel to the Cities to have dinner and attend the theatre, returning on the late train after the performance. Helen also started a study club in Pine City.

Another leisure activity was riding horse back. Mr. McEackern was generous with the use of his ridinghorses. His farm was then on the West side of Pokegama Lake.

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