



THE VERY EARLY YEARS OF GRAND BEACH (1920 - 1930)

I tell my grandchildren and great grandchildren that living at Grand Beach in the 1920's and 1930's was like living on an island. Instead of going to the Island by boat, people took a train.

The Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) did a magnificent job of creating Grand Beach as a self-contained holiday resort. The backbone of the resort was the coal fired electric generating powerhouse, located at Grand Marais. Along with a water tank for the steam locomotives, it provided electric power to the large, three storey hotel, a huge dance pavilion, a dining hall, all the boardwalks and corner lighting in the campsite.

The campsite had lights at every corner and also in the washrooms. The campsite was designed originally for tenting only. Campers rented a site for the summer, and had to dismantle their tents, and as most campers did, store them in the "TESSMER" lumber yard and general store at Grand Marais.

It is very hard to comprehend the difference in life-style then, as compared to the present. Campers got their water from water taps at the corners of each block in the campsite. They used the public washrooms in the day, and all had "potties" at their campsite for night-time use. It was truly a great camping experience and a wonderful family building activity.



Chuck Guarino



What was it like, Papa?

The streets in the campsite were very heavily treed with large oak, maple and elm. In the center of the undeveloped streets were well worn pathways made by campers walking to the beach, the washrooms, or coming or going to meet the trains.

The wonderful large dance pavilion was the center of all activities. All campers knew each other, both young and old. It was the meeting area for everyone.

There were no radios, but many people had small gramophones, which they played all day long. Since there were no telephones, the only way that campers could send a

message was by going to the station and having the operator send a telegram.

People had a wonderful time, and were good at creating their own entertainment.. Most of "The Guarino Family" played an instrument. My mother played her "fiddle", I played my Piano-accordion, and my father "PAPA-JOE" strummed his guitar. There was always a lot of singing. My father had a great "tenor" voice, and his favorite song was "O SOLE MIO". They were very wonderful years, dearly treasured and remembered.

See you again in our next issue.

"Papa Chuck" Guarino