



THE BIRTH OF EMILY

Souvenir of the North Woods

by
Viola Zumault

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



VIOLA ZUMAULT

Viola Zumault is an author, poet and lecturer and president of the Kansas City Branch, National League of American Pen Women.

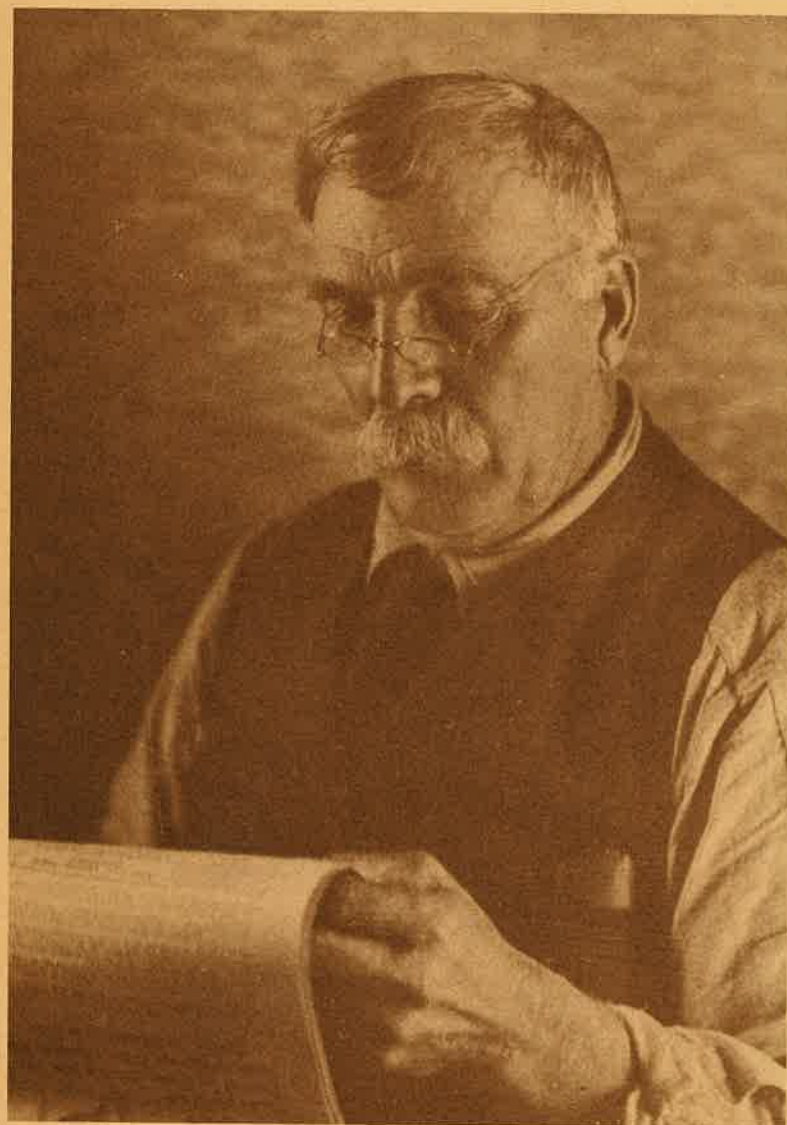
Her feature articles, poetry and short stories have appeared in Better Homes & Gardens, Radio Mirror, Farm Journal, Ideals, War Cry, Lutheran Publications, The National Kiwanis Magazine, Kaleidograph, Kansas City Poetry Magazine and many other national publications.

With her husband, Roy Zumault, she has been spending summer vacations on Roosevelt and Blue Lakes since 1930.

She has carefully checked family, state and government records to secure accurate information for this booklet.



Amelia Cooper Lambert



John Lambert

THE BIRTH

OF

EMILY



The little resort town of Emily on highway 6, eighteen miles north of Crosby, Minnesota, in the heart of the 10,000 lakes region, had its beginning back in the spring of 1899 when a man named Lambert moved in.

Lambert, christened John Morris, was born in New York City, October 6, 1857, but moved with his parents to Silvercreek, Minnesota when he was a small boy.

He learned to love the emerald depths of the wilderness where

majestic pine trees mirrored lacy branches in the peaceful, silvery waters of the lakes; where black bear, wild moose and fleet footed deer threaded trails through tangled ferns and thick underbrush to the lake fronts to drink in the cool of evening.

It was in this great pine forest country that John Lambert grew to young manhood, tall of stature, with strong broad shoulders and skin suntanned as brown as the Indians that once camped on Ogema Beach.

In 1882 he married his childhood sweetheart, Amelia Cooper and they established their home in Silvercreek.

For a number of years he worked for a lumber company felling timber in Crow Wing County, north of Crosby. Here he was a logger in the spectacular operation of the picturesque old time industry, the spring log drive, down the fast running Little Pine river.

During the winter months logs were cut by hand with axe and cross cut saws, loaded into logging

sleds, pulled by oxen or horses, and hauled through the wilderness to the shores of Lake Emily or Lake Mary.

At that time there were no roads other than the winding trails made by the loggers in their trek to the lakes.

When the ice broke up in the spring, booms were made by rolling long pine logs into the water and fastening them together with heavy chains. Then a stack of logs was rolled onto the boom. The logs were marked at the ends with



the private identification marks of the companies purchasing them. When the wind was in the right direction, the flow or run of floated logs, guided by the "drivers," was taken across the lakes and dumped into Little Pine river. On they floated to the Mississippi river and thence to the mills at Brainerd or Little Falls.

Essentially the drive was, and still is, a simple operation. In the spring of the year swift water fills the river banks and the current carries the winter's cut of timber down to the saw mills. But conditions are seldom ideal. The logs

get caught on snags and rocks in the fast water and pile up in jams. It is the river men's job to get out on the slippery, shifting timber and work out the crossed logs to disengage or tear the jams apart.

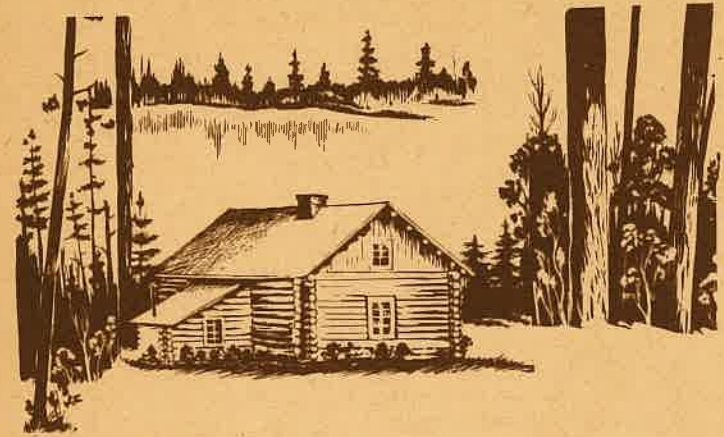
The driver uses a peavey, the river man's indispensable tool, to aid him in this task. The peavey is a log-turning tool with a "broomstick" handle manipulated by means of a stout lever and hinged hook at the end.

The spring log drive requires a crew of husky, fearless men willing to risk their lives in the operation. In this industry, John Lambert had a thrilling part.

The men were fed hearty meals of venison, bear meat, wild berries, sour dough bread and an assortment of doughnuts, cookies and pies for dessert. The food was prepared in the "wanegan" or floating kitchen, built on a raft and floated across the lake or down the river, wherever the loggers were working.

On his back each man carried a sack containing two lunches, the midday and evening meals. The men were at work by daybreak and returned to camp at night. When there were log jams the crew sometimes worked twenty to twenty-four hours, without relief. For this perilous work they received the sum of \$2.00 a day and board.

When the log drive was over John went back home. Each year,



when the ice began to thaw on the lakes and tall tales of the loggers floated down from the timberland, he was gripped with nostalgia for the old days in Crow Wing county. Every fall he went back to fish and to hunt moose and deer. One fall he killed 57 deer and hauled them, by team, 150 miles to market at St. Paul.

In those days there was no limit to the amount of game one could kill nor was it necessary to buy a license. The hunter was limited only by his inclination or his lack of ammunition and tackle.

In the spring of 1899, after convincing two friends of the golden opportunities awaiting them there, John, with Ernest Andrews and George Stirewalt, went back to Lake Emily to stay.

On the site where the town of Emily now stands, John Lambert filed a claim to homestead 160 acres

of surrounding land. The other men homesteaded nearby and built homes for their families.

John's new home was completed by June 1st of the same year. It was quite a structure in those days. One long room, built of peeled pine logs, it had two small windows and one door. The cracks were chinked with moss from a nearby swamp.

He provided a place for the children to sleep by adding a low ceilinged loft which was reached by climbing a narrow ladder.

There were Indian camps scattered through the wilderness and a few years before Mr. Lambert built his home, Jim Garbo, a white man, had married an Indian squaw and they, with their six children, lived in a shack on the flat between Lake Emily and Lake Dahier.

One winter they all fell ill with diphtheria. The woman and all the children died and were buried near the cabin on the shore of Lake Dahler. For many years the Lamberts watched the Indians come regularly to place food and water on the graves. Fire finally destroyed the rough hewn wooden markers and now the exact spot is unknown.

It was quite an event when the Lambert and Andrews families left Silvercreek for their new homes. There were seven children in each family. The two covered wagons were loaded with wearing apparel, bedclothes, dishes and a few cherished pieces of furniture for the new houses.

Coops of chickens were tied on the outside. Cows were led behind while dogs trotted alongside the wagons and cats curled contentedly on heirloom linens.

At night all eighteen people slept inside the prairie schooners! It took about five days to make the 100 mile trip. They had to stop along the way and prepare the meals, being careful to choose a camping site close to water so they would have it to drink as well as

to wash the children's well smudged faces and hands.

They arrived at their destination the middle of June, 1899. After the inconveniences of that trip, the new homes must have looked like palaces to the weary travelers.

For the first year they had to go forty miles to Brainerd to the trading post and fourteen miles to Cross Lakes to the Post Office. It took three days to make the trip to Brainerd. There were only three or four houses between the two places but all of them kept overnight travelers and had barns where they fed and cared for the horses.

When anyone was unfortunate enough to become ill, he had to be placed in a wagon or sled and taken the long, rough route into town. If the patient was too sick to be moved, a driver made the three day trip to town to bring a doctor.

The first year the families picked blue berries, raspberries, strawberries and cranberries which grew wild in great profusion. Part of the berries were taken to Brainerd and exchanged for staple groceries and the remainder canned for winter use.



Fourth of July celebration in pioneer days

They also harvested wild rice which grew thick as pine needles in the shallow waters. A fish dinner could be caught as fast as a hook could be lowered into the waters of any lake in the region.

Mrs. Maude Martin, the daughter of John Lambert, who still lives in Emily, vividly recalls their first 4th of July celebration when they all drove to Fifty Lakes for the gala occasion. There were as many Indians present as whites. There were foot races and swimming, both events being won by the Indian participants.

Mrs. Martin also remembers going down on the shore of Eagle Lake to visit a squaw who lived in a birch bark wigwam. Her name was Shinn. She had three daughters, all married to white men.

There were four little Indian boys whose names so impressed Mrs. Martin she still recalls them. They were Tucky, Shucky, Sobby and Bisha-Coka.

The next year, and every year thereafter, on the 4th of July, Emily held its own celebration. People came from miles around to the big social event. They brought well filled baskets and everyone joined in a picnic lunch at noon.

In the afternoon there were ball games and later the crowd went down to the lake front to watch the swimming, diving and log rolling contests.

The big day was climaxed with an old fashioned "hoe down" or square dance on the outdoor stage. It was a large platform constructed of rough hewn logs supporting a





John Lambert and a prize deer



Trophy of an 1899 hunting party



John Lambert looking over the lake



John Lambert's first car



Emily's present school house



Logging in pioneer days

pine bough roof and heavy plank floor.

In the fall of 1899 Mr. Lambert added a lean-to, a room about fourteen feet square, to his original one room structure. Then he applied for the right to establish a post office to be named Lake Emily. Since there was already a post office by that name, the new office was granted under the name of Emily. It was established on February 20, 1900 and John Lambert was appointed the first postmaster.

For several years mail came by stage coach from Pequot twice a week but later six days a week service was established. Passengers and small freight also came by stage.

Soon a small stock of goods was secured and a store was opened in the extra room at Lamberts.

The following years brought other homesteaders and log cabins began to dot the wilderness. Numerous logging camps sprang up. One of the largest was located on Ogema Beach on Lake Roosevelt, 4½ miles northwest of Emily on the spot where Mr. and Mrs. Elgin Lapp of Lincoln, Nebraska, now have their summer home.

In 1901 Lambert and Andrews built a large log building and moved the grocery stock there. They went into business together, adding farm machinery, hardware, and loggers' supplies. The post of-

office was also moved into the new building.

Mamie and Frank Anderson who still live in the town were the two first clerks hired to work in the store.

Groceries came in large quantities and were hauled from Brainerd by wagon teams. Salt pork and corned beef came in barrels and old fashioned hard candies were packed in large wooden pails.

A few bolts of bright calico were kept on the shelves and women for miles around appeared at picnics and square dances in identical "mother Hubbards."

The store ceiling was festooned with iron skillets and brown bean pots. Customers sat on the row of nail kegs flanking the counter, chewed long green tobacco and spun yarns while sneaking a handful of soda crackers, a tasty lump of brown sugar or a dill pickle from the open barrels alongside.

Many of the families walked miles to town every Saturday while some of the more prosperous drove ox teams hitched to a lumber wagon.

Bobsledding was one of the most popular sports. On cold winter days when the thermometer hovered around 30 below zero, the youngsters in woolen ski pants and bright mackinaws, piled on, fifteen or sixteen to a sled, and went bounding down steep hills onto the ice covered lakes below. Their



First log home in town of Emily, John Lambert's

gay, carefree laughter would echo joyously through the wilderness.

In 1900, Mr. Lambert donated two acres of the homestead for the purpose of building a small one-room schoolhouse. It was built of the logs which were so plentiful, chinked with moss and lime at a cost of \$200.00.

Miss Luverne Van Fossen, daughter of the pastor of the Methodist church at Monticello, was Emily's first school teacher, receiving \$30.00 a month. Out of this salary she paid \$8.00 a month for room and board.

Three of the first pupils who attended the school are still living within a stone's throw of the original site. They are Vernon Stirewalt, Maude Martin and Vernon Lambert.

In 1911 the second schoolhouse was erected at a cost of \$2,000.00 for material and \$400.00 for labor, at the rate of .25 an hour. This

building is still in use. It has been divided into two rooms and a third one added. Six grades are taught. The Junior High and High School students go, by bus, to the consolidated Crosby-Ironton school.

Three school districts have been consolidated into the Emily district and plans are now under way for a new, modern school building.

In 1908, Mr. Lambert had two blocks of lots surveyed and offered for sale. In 1909 he donated two lots for a Methodist church site. The new building was dedicated in 1911. The Reverend Barker was the first minister.

Many of the natives remember Old Doc Mallory, Emily's first physician. Old Doc was handicapped in two ways; he had a wooden leg and an overly generous heart. He bought a new buggy and a fine driving team which stayed on the road most of the time since he never refused to

answer a call, regardless of the weather or the likelihood of collecting his fee. Old Doc made a lot of friends and did a world of good in the community. He never made much money but St. Peter probably met him at heaven's gate with a star-studded crown.

The first telephone in Emily made its appearance in 1908. People for miles around came in town to see the funny contraption. Ruth and Esther Bowman were the first day and night operators, followed by Mrs. Dell Robinson. Mrs. Robinson, with the assistance of her husband, Bill, has given a quarter of a century of service to the telephoning public. She is a bulwark of strength to the townspeople and an encyclopedia of information to the annual horde of tourists, answering everything from, "Where can you buy frogs?" to "How much does it cost to call Timbuctoo?"

Dell is one of Emily's most beloved and unforgettable characters. Although confined to a wheelchair as a result of polio in childhood plus a severe operation in later years, the warmth of her welcome comes out to meet you.

A large, sandy-haired woman with candid blue eyes, she has a broad grin and a wealth of Irish wit. Like a landmark or a cornerstone, she is an integral part of the town.

On July 4, 1911, during the an-

nual celebration, Ray Anderson startled the town by driving in with a brand new Ford touring car, a magnificent vehicle that ran up the street at the unheard of speed of 15 miles an hour! All the remainder of the day Ray kept the road hot carrying those persons brave enough to venture out on mile long rides at .25 per passenger. It was a great day in Emily.

It was not until 1918 that a ribbon of highway connected Emily and Crosby.

In 1937 the Rural Electrification Association ran a network of power lines through the countryside and Emily became illuminated.

In the fall of 1951, Mr. E. A. Bloomquist financed a small ice skating rink for children of the community and in February, 1952, the town went modern with scintillating Ice Follies. Fancy figure skaters came from the Twin Cities and put on an exhibition show. Proceeds were donated to the Parent-Teachers Association to help support their hot lunch program. About eighty school children are fed balanced meals daily at a cost of .15 per child.

Mr. Bloomquist is the owner of a wild rice plant in Emily. It is the best equipped, and only completely modern, processing plant in the state of Minnesota, where wild rice is a million dollar industry.

Rice harvesting is begun the lat-

ter part of August and is quite interesting to observers unfamiliar with the work. Until recently the harvesting was done largely by Indians. A license is not required for Indian rice pickers but must be purchased by white men. The harvesting is accomplished by two persons in a small boat or coney. The person in back pushes the boat through the rice beds in the shallow water with a long pole. The person in front pulls the stalks of rice into the boat from first one side, then the other, striking the heads a sharp blow with a stick to remove the ripe grain, letting it fall into the boat. Later, the green rice is sold to Bloomquist at approximately .50 per pound. It is placed in a large room where it is turned daily for ten days to two weeks. The rice is then placed in a parching machine. The next step in the processing is done by a machine called the huller. Here it is cleaned and the husks removed. When it comes from the huller it is ready for public consumption.

It is boxed by hand in 4, 8, 12 and 16 ounce packages. The finished product costs the consumer from \$1.90 to \$2.50 per pound, depending upon the size and quality of the grain. Wild rice has a distinctly "different" flavor and may be served in countless ways.

The numerous lakes that surround Emily have an abundance of crappies, blue gills, sunfish, walleyes, northern pike and bass. The friendly, peaceful little hamlet is the center of activity in the area. Each summer outdoor enthusiasts come from all over the nation to cast plugs into sky-blue waters and find contentment in the northwoods around little Emily, God's pine covered footstool.

The townspeople remember with gratitude and affection, John Morris Lambert, the pioneer who staked a claim in Crow Wing county and played a major role in establishing and developing the town.



