

THE 1920 CENSUS

Canosia's growth through the early years was slow and steady. There were 205 persons in 1905, increasing to 242 in 1910, and up to 311 in 1920. The populations wouldn't dramatically increase until 1950.

In the 1920 Federal Census, there were 71 year-round dwellings, most of them clustered near schools and main roads. Many single men, some elderly, lived alone. The practice of sharing living quarters with in-laws was common, but a surprising number of families (about 15%) supplemented their income by taking in boarders. Housing was still scarce after the 1918 Forest Fire and several photographs from this period show people adding on to their "Red Cross houses."

The census-taker asked a dozen questions about ethnic background, parents' birthplaces, native tongue, year of immigration, schooling and occupation. By now, more of the younger generation were American-born, although their elders had immigrated from northern Europe or Canada. The township had more schools and literacy was common. Most Canosia residents considered themselves farmers, but other occupations were also listed: woodcutter, handyman, carpenter, truck driver, blacksmith at the County Tool House, and sawmill worker. One was a sailor on the Great Lakes and several said they were caretakers for summer cottages.

During these years, Canosia's population was larger than Fredenberg but smaller than the neighboring townships of Herman, Rice Lake and Grand Lake. Large sections of Canosia were still owned by investment companies but local people had some of the best farmland. The average family size was three to five children although some parents had up to ten.

In 1920 telephones were scarce but the Duluth Boat Club, using the Kendall property at Pike Lake, had a listing. Within the year, negotiations between the Duluth Auto Club and the Kendall heirs resulted in a new Pike Lake Auto Club.

A few township pioneers and their families from the turn of the century were listed in the 1920 Census:

Abrahamson, Anderson, Boquist, Burkhart, Butler, Clark, Daniels, Eckstrom, Engren, Falldin, Johnson, Killorin, Kolojeski, Lindberg, McCrimmon, Michaels, Moen, Olson, Paulson, Pederson, Peterson and Swanson.

Other families listed in 1920 were:

Balmer, Baxter, Bosiacki, Brinteson, Brown, Carlson, Castle, Cummings, Erickson, Gielarowski, Hanson, Harning, Ilenda, Klatzky, Kreminsky, Kubicheski, Lewis, Mattson, McGregor, Nelson, Nicholson, Nyhus, Ottinger, Persson, Smith, Sundell, Williams and Wilson.

There are additional family names in this Census, but poor filming has made some of the pages unreadable. The Soundex coding system may help researchers locate their families.

As we approach the year 2000, and another Federal Census, "country life" in 1920 might be idealized as simple and pastoral. Reality was much different. In 1920 many Canosia people were survivors of the 1918 Forest Fire and, still mourning the loss of family and friends, were struggling to rebuild their homes and farms. Some had also lost family members in the deadly 1918 influenza epidemic. Others, perhaps, had loved ones who never returned home in 1918 after World War I. In spite of all that had happened, the future seemed more promising in 1920... and Canosia people were here to stay.

Kathryn Adams and the Canosia Historical Society