

QUAMBA

A sidetrack was built here in 1882, when the railroad came through but no buildings were built for many years. The only structure was a watertower for the railroad's steam locomotives. It was known as Mud Creek after the creek the tracks cross here.

In 1901, O.O. Whited* of Minneapolis platted the village. The name was changed to Quamba by the railroad officials. On March 11th of that year, it got its postoffice with Andrew J. Edstrom as postmaster. This postoffice was discontinued and re-established several times but has been in steady operation since March 2, 1917.

Quamba got its first bank, the Quamba State Bank, on May 25, 1917. This was in operation until March 21, 1932, when its interests were moved to Mora to become the prominent Kanabec State Bank. At one time Quamba had two general stores, a cheese factory, and in the early years of its existence, J.B. Sutton had a sawmill there.

In 1952, it was incorporated as a village with Emil Oslin as the first mayor.



A group waits at the Quamba Depot to greet the train.

"Quamba" is an Indian name for "Mudhole."

The trains that went through Quamba to Hinckley, at first got water for the engine through hoses laid out to pump from a nearby creek, just east of Carl Johnson's home, before the water tank was put up on the John Hagg farm (Black John Seline farm) on the upper side of the track at the northwest corner. Here was a small shack for the telegraph operator. Anyone wishing to board the train, let the telegrapher, operator, Huet, know and he would telegraph the train to stop and pick up passengers who wished to go along.

When the railroad through Brook Park, via Grasston & Braham, through to Minneapolis was laid in 1899, the water tank was then moved to Brook Park, where it remained for many years. Mrs. J.O. Lundquist

*Oric Ogilvie Whited, after whom the village of Ogilvie and Whited Township were named, was a large land holder in Kanabec County at that time.

(then Mrs. Dan Norrel) was a passenger on the train when it made the last trip through. Mrs. Norrel was bound for Isanti.

Abraham Selander was one of the first settlers near Quamba. The family bought cutover land for 50 cents an acre the fall of 1895 (the year after the Hinckley fire of 1894). They found no place to live, so the family moved into an old logging camp on the Brody Edlund farm, which would now be just east of the Ella Hintz farm. The family lived in the camp while Selander built a house on what is now known as the Erick Erickson farm. Selanders lived there for several years.

John Hagg of Milaca built a cabin for his family in 1898 on the place where Dale Peterson lives.

Dan Norrel from Isanti built a cabin on the Andrew Edstrom farm near Quamba in the fall of 1898. The following spring he married Helena Munter who had come from Meeker County in the fall of 1898 to Mud Lake to stay with her brother, John Munter, who had bought land from a railroad company. He built a small house on what is now Hinde's farm near Quamba. That house now adjoins and is part of the Hinde home.

Dan Norrel later sold the land and cabin to a cousin of the late Andrew Edstrom.

Other early settlers were the John Sandin family. They came in the fall of 1898 from Kansas in a covered wagon, in which the family made the long trek to Mora. In the spring of 1899, the Sandin family came and settled on what is now the Joel Hallstrom farm. In the spring of 1907, the Sandin family moved to Eagle River, Ontario, Canada.

Other nearby settlers were Per Hanson, who began to build on the Meyers place, now the Harold Hallstrom farm; Sandstrom on the Winterfeldt place, where Stanley Erickson lives. Per Hanson was the father of P.H. Peterson of Quamba, Mrs. Anna Meyers, living in the old home near Mud Lake, and Hans Peterson of Mora.

In the winter of 1898-99, Sutton of Stillwater, and Gall of Malmo operated a logging camp and saw mill located on what is now the Carl Hintz farm. These men logged both on leased and non leased tracts. Sutton, according to stories, so cleaned his partner Gall, that when the logging season closed in the spring of 1899, Gall was minus his nicely matched dappled gray Percheon team, and not a cent for the winter's work, as Sutton had everything placed in his wife's name at Stillwater.

Seymore & Co. had a logging camp on the intersection of highway 23 and the road that used to go past the Oslin Lumber when it was in Quamba.

The first school (1900) was held at one of the Seymore camp buildings or bunk houses by a Miss Seymore from Brook Park, who brought along a few children from Brook Park on the railroad handcar in the morning, then back home in the evening. Miss Seymore had these Brook Park children along so that the Quamba children could get to learn to speak English quicker, as most of them could talk only Swedish. A wooden school house was erected a little later and was used until 1921, at which time the brick school house was erected on the present site. The first wooden building was then sold to the Quamba Baptist Church and was moved to the site where the church now stands. It is still part of the original building.

The unincorporated village of Quamba, Section 35, was platted by O.W. Whited of Minneapolis in 1901 and filed that year. Additional plats were filed later by P.H. Peterson, J.O. Lundquist, and John Oberg.

The terrain around Quamba was very swampy and well nigh impassable, with no roads excepting old logging roads that came in across

the country. One running across Section 28 and the corner of Section 33 towards Quamba was still visible in the late 1930's.

These first settlers got their food from either Brook Park or Mora and that by walking, carrying the supplies on their backs in a pack sack. It carried easier when they walked along the railroad tracks, as there were no roads yet; just tote roads and Indian trails.

The first store came to Quamba in 1905, when Jonas Olson from Stanchfield opened and operated a small store. He also operated the post office, which had been established in 1901.

The first school house was a wooden building, erected about 1902. The first officers were W.M. Seymour, John Hagg, A.J. Edstrom, Mrs. O.P. Meyers and Richard Hinde. Some of the early teachers were Lydia Hansen (Hinde), and Frances K. Bongaarts. Then in 1917 construction was started on a larger school which was made of brick, constructed at a cost of about \$11,000. In 1921 the Weidendorf school, district no. 40, consolidated with Quamba, and the first school busses started to operate that fall. Two routes were established and the district purchased 2 horse drawn busses. In the winter when there was plenty of snow for sleds, the bus bodies were transferred to sleds. There was a small stove on the outside of the bus in which a fire was made early each morning out of briquet coal. This provided heat for the bus. Joe Harris was the first bus driver to be hired for route no. 1 and continued to drive until 1948, a period of 27 years. In the morning, it meant getting up as early as 4:30 to do chores, feed the team of horses that pulled the bus, get them harnessed and start the long route out through the countryside in darkness to pick up the youngsters. School then started at 9:00 a.m. During the winter months it was dismissed at 3:30 so the kids would get home before dark. In the spring and fall, classes would continue until 4:00 p.m. When Joe would get to the end of the route in the evening, he would tie up the lines and the horses would head for home so he could just lean back and relax. In the 1930's sometime when trucks became available, Joe purchased a used truck and hired Herman Weidendorf to build a school bus body on it, a far cry from today's vehicles.*

*See pictures on page 137.



Quamba State Bank in the 1920's. Pictured are Frank Powers and Mary Woodbeck.

Quamba also had three potato warehouses which did a big business every fall, as the farmers harvested lots of potatoes in those years. Also Quamba had a shipping association, a cattle corral and loading schute in the east part of town by the east railroad crossing. The farmers herded their cattle to town to the corral to be loaded in cattle cars.

P.H. Peterson operated a grocery store in Quamba in the early '20's. It later was operated by Ole Edstrom, and then his brother Nels Edstrom.

The farmers of the area banded together and sold shares to open the Farmers Co-op Mercantile Company. This business venture did not prove too successful and it was sold in the early '20's to F.B. Lund. He leased it to "Hap Price" in 1945 and sold it to Elwood Ostrom in about 1947.

There was also a lumber yard in Quamba which was first owned by S.S. Patterson of Princeton and later operated by M.K. Rudd until Emil Oslin purchased the business. In 1953, Mr. Oslin moved his business to Mora.

Quamba began to develop as a business center. In May, 1917 a bank was organized with Frank Powers in charge. This bank later moved to Mora to become the Kanabec State Bank.

John Lilienthal built the first blacksmith shop in 1920. A farmer west of Quamba was the next owner, Andrew Peterson. In 1925 the shop was

purchased by William Foust. He continued to operate it until his death in 1972. The shop was then sold to Albert Koskela.

Ole Nystrom built a hardware store in Quamba in 1920. He operated the store until he sold it to Harry Sandin in 1927. Sandin sold the business to Herbert Lidstrom in 1936. He is still serving the customers.

John Oberg operated a hotel and pool room in Quamba about 1920. It was just south of the hardware. He sold it to Walter Peterson who came from the Iron Range. Just before the Petersons were going to take possession, the building burned to the ground. Mrs. Peterson's father, August Zellman, then built the present hotel for the Petersons in 1923. The lower floor housed a restaurant, bar and pool hall, a barber shop and living quarters. On the second floor were sleeping rooms and a recreation hall.



The "Whited Red Sox" of 1917. Left to right: First Row: Gust Zellman, Louis Kruse, Second Row: David Johnson, Otto Alexander, Joe Johnson, Art Zellman, Standing—Carl Johnson John Graber, Paul Kruse, Oscar Peterson.

Quamba has always been noted for its participation in sports and had a ball team called the "Whited Red Sox" in 1917. There have been several ball teams since.

Carl Johnson built a frame building in Quamba in 1920, starting the Quamba Auto Company. By 1921, the larger building, a stucco structure, was completed and the business was moved to this new building. The first frame building was then used as a feed store and mill. This building burned years later and was replaced by a new tile building. Later, one of the potato warehouses was moved next to the new building to be used for storage. Mr. Johnson passed away in 1970 and his family continued to operate the business until the fall of 1975, when they sold it to Dick and Don Lilienthal.

A cream station which was located just south of the hotel was once operated by Pete Stromberg. He was also a shoemaker. Later George Holst operated it. Henry Hallstrom was the next owner and bought cream from the farmers. The building was finally purchased and made into a home. The most recent owner was "Hap" Price.

Farmers from the area formed a Farmers Co-op Creamery about 1916, and a building was erected. Cheese was made at first, with Emmet Stucky as the first operator. W.E. Mittlestadt was a part-time buttermaker therein about '21 or '22. Then a Mr. Wahlstrom purchased the creamery and in 1927, Joe Schluck came to work for him. Mr. Schluck purchased the creamery in 1932 and continued to operate until 1944 when he sold it to

Maple Island. Joe continued to work for them for another five years. The creamery is no longer in operation. The building is now owned by Cougarville.

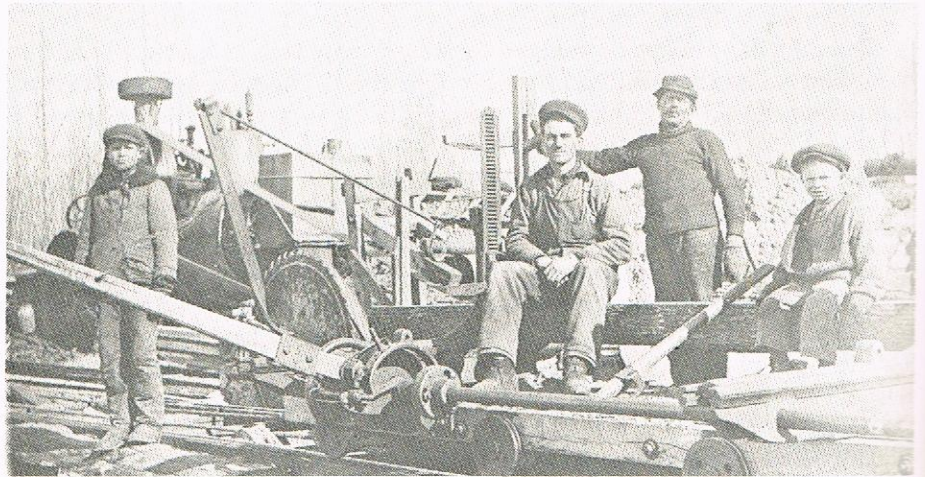
The building which housed the Jonas Olson store has now been remodeled and made into a supper club which is known as "Cougarville", owned by Mr. and Mrs. George Hoffman.

A small frame building just south of the Quamba Auto Co. housed a cream station in the early days, operated by William Ostrom. Then F.B. Lund used it for storage for flour for his grocery store. The building has long since disappeared from the scene.

The Quamba Baptist Church and parsonage are an important part of the history of the community. The church was begun in 1892, it had a building in Comfort township, which was known as the Comfort Baptist Church. The congregation then purchased the old frame school from Quamba and moved it to its site in Quamba in 1921. The church has been growing ever since with several additions to the building and many members added. Rev. Robert Osell is the present minister, and the church stands as a guiding light to the community. Quamba also has another church called the "Brethern Meeting Hall" which was established years ago.

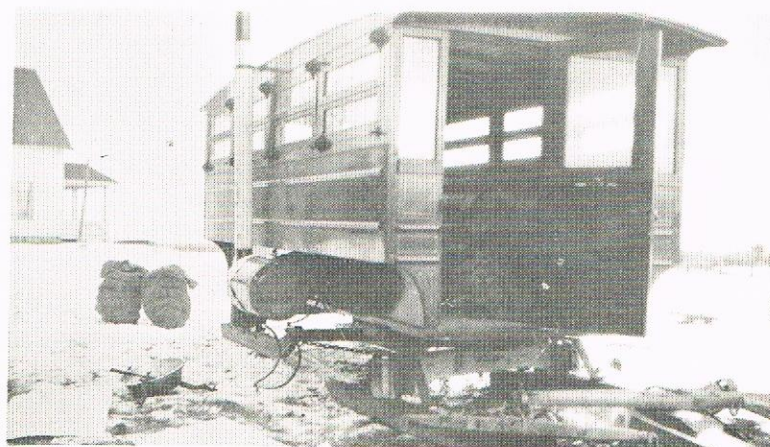
*History compiled by Mary Lucht, revised and expanded
by Gladys Hallstrom*

The Weidendorf Sawmill which was located on the farm near Mud Creek north of Quamba. Left to right: Herman Weidendorf, Joe Harris, Henry Weidendorf and Albert Weidendorf.





The interior of P.H. Peterson's store at Quamba around 1920. The clerk is Victoria [Peterson] Johnson.



This is the first Quamba school bus. It was horse-drawn and featured a wood-burning heating stove.



Vaguely reminiscent of an armored car is the first automotive Quamba school bus. It was home-built.



This is a pioneer farm of the Quamba area. The house was built in 1899 by Henry Weidendorf. Appearing in the picture, taken in 1908, are l. to r.: Albert, Otto, Mrs. Weidendorf, Martha, Mary, Herman and Henry Weidendorf; George Crabb and his son W.L. Crabb.



The Quamba hotel as it appeared in its prime. It was constructed in 1923 and housed a restaurant, bar, pool hall, barber shop and living quarters on the first floor. On the second floor were sleeping rooms and a recreation hall.



Interior of the Quamba State Bank about 1920. Mary and Frank Powers visit with a customer.



The Quamba Creamery in the 1920's.