

**TWIN SISTERS CAMP MYSTERY SOLVED BY READER
RESPONSE
3/05/96**

Thanks to the help and cooperation of several different people the mystery of “Twin Sisters Camp” is solved.

If you remember in the January 30 edition of the *Express* two photos of a hunting camp and hunter with a deer were displayed along with my column. I asked for help in identifying the hunter, camp and location of same.

Tim Fitzgerald of Boonville was the first to give me answers to the mystery. I met with him on February 22, and he filled me in on much of the history of the camp.

The same day I received a most welcome letter from one of the present owners, Bob Thomas of Ballston Spa. He supplied some more photos of the camp and a complete history, as he knows it.

The man on the porch was probably Erva Hamblin, who owned the camp in the 20s. It is thought that it was originally built as a logging camp and Erva’s wife, Mary, cooked for loggers through at least two winters.

A sad entry in the camp log reads as follows: “This space is reserved for one who passed away February 9, 1931, our old friend and owner of camp, Erva Hamblin – Never to Be Forgotten.”

Mary continued to visit the camp throughout the 30s. She lived in Port Leyden until 1970 and her red cottage now stands empty on River Road.

Walt Thomas and four hunting friends from West Branch bought the camp in 1939, along with 200 acres of land for \$300. He said it was the best \$60 he ever spent.

His partners were Paul Potter, Hal Hurlbert, Erwin (Red) Jones and Herb (Uncle Slug) Rebe. Walt Thomas hunted out of Twin Sisters Camp for 49 years. The camp is located in the northwest corner of the McKeever topographic map in Lewis County. Access was originally by wagon road along the Moose River from Fowlerville, or perhaps from the “Iron Bridge” at the old village of Moose river.

During the 20s, a cable was strung across the river and access was by cable cart via a trail off the Boonville-McKeever Road.

Bob Thomas and his cousin, Carol Noble of Verona, made their first trips into camp in the fall of 1939, via cable and trail in their father's pack baskets.

The camp is known as the Hamblin Camp in the Cooper Creek Association and the current owners are: Frank Krzewinski of Ava, Bob Thomas of Ballston Spa, Jim Brand of Little Long Lake, and Bob Houser of Verona.

I wish to thank Bob Thomas for sharing his memories and recollections with us. I look forward to learning more about the history and legacy of Twin Sisters. I envy the experiences and happy times shared by these many people over the years in what has to be a fascinating place.

Such people will ensure that the entry in the old camp log is indeed a prophecy – “Erva Hamblin, Never to Be Forgotten.”