

LAKE ST. CATHERINE

A Historical Scrapbook



Compiled By
Iris Hopson Read



2nd Edition

*8 pages of new
material!*

“Lake St. Catherine is a large, long lake of 930 acres which begins at the Lily Pond in Poultney and drains south into Wells. The lake has a maximum depth of 68 feet, an average depth of 32.2 feet, and a volume of 29,945 acre feet. It is about five miles long and drains into a narrow channel which connects it with Little Pond.

Little Pond is a shallow lake of about 181 acres, with an average depth of two feet, a maximum depth of only four feet and a volume of 362 acre feet. The lake bottom is covered by a thick layer of silt and organic matter.”

Taken from “A Natural Resource Planning Study of Wells, Vermont”
Prepared by Raymond Lobdell, February, 1975.

The cover photo, taken from the north end of the lake, shows Lily Pond in the foreground.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This second printing of *Lake St. Catherine - A Historical Scrapbook* is dedicated to the memory of Iris Hopson Read. It is she who researched and published the first edition in 1979 and thereby captured some of the early days of this lake community. We salute you, Iris Hopson Read, and gratefully acknowledge your niece, Cherry Hopson, and your nephew, Lance E. Hopson, who have granted permission for the Lake St. Catherine Association to add to and reprint this copyrighted material in 1998.

No changes have been made to the original compilation, but new material has been inserted to bring additional lake history to light. Pages 40 through 43 feature "Landmarks That Have Disappeared." Pages 44 and 45 provide a brief history of the Lake St. Catherine Association. A photograph of Uncle Sam, the newest weed harvester, has been added to the inside back cover. The index on the back of this preface is also new.

The preparation of material and the arrangements for all aspects of this publication of the Second Edition have been a labor of love by Doris White, Sylvia Bingham, and Association President Phil Alden.

Proceeds from the sale of this second edition of *Lake St. Catherine - A Historical Scrapbook* will benefit the Lake St. Catherine Association and its weed removal program.

Telescope Casual Furniture Company of Granville, NY, has generously assisted with the printing of this booklet. The company was known as Telescope Folding Furniture Company at the time it printed the initial edition.



IRIS HOPSON READ
1911 - 1990

INDEX TO CAMP LOCATIONS

With the 1998 advent of street addresses and 911/emergency access for all lake homes, the old camp numbering system established in 1957 is now used principally for locating property from the lake. Home-owners are encouraged to place their camp names and numbers so that they are visible from the lake. This index based on cottage numbers can serve as a guide to specific properties or areas mentioned in this book.

Camp Numbers	Camp Names (1998 name in boldface)	Page Numbers
24	Loch Awe/ Vantage Point	18
31	Read Cottage/ Stronghold	20, 39
32 to 40	Peninsula Area	33
36	The Island	26, 33
41	Cox Cottage	39
60	Groh Cottage	33
67	Sunnyside	33
69	Potter Camp	19
71.	Seldominn	18
75	Rogers Point/ Camp Catherine Capers	21, 32
81	Chickagami	21
84	Camp Hortense/ Serenity	19
86	Winola Lodge*/ Inniscarra	19
87	Pinecroft Cottage *	26
91	Barb-a-Lew	21
94-A to 94-I	Idylwild Pavilion *	
94-G	Idylwild Camp *	16, 35, 42
97	The Crow's Nest	20
100	The Birches */ Birches	19
102	Forest House */ Lake St. Catherine Cottages	17, 33, 41
109	Woldmere	20
109 to 125	Lake St. Catherine Hotel Lake St. Catherine House *	10
128	Taylor Place/ Taylor Farm/ Bartholomew's Marina/ Marina	23
136 to 175-A	Little Lake	29
205	Cascade Inn/ Cascade	8, 9
212-G to 248	Cone's Point	27, 35
228	The Red Cottage/ Sunset Glen	27
255-1 to 255-21	Kinni Kinnic	38, 40
256	Dragon Retreat	40
259 State Park	Lake View in the Pines Hotel/ Lake View/ Camp Arrowhead *	11, 35, 38
263-A to 263-D 263-E to 263-F	Ferncliff Ferncliff *	15
286	Balance Rock/ Calvin	
288	Balance Rock/ Cool-Edge	15
276	Whippoorwill Lodge	35
293	Hammett Cottage/ The Pines/ The Oar House	15
295	Lyde Place/ Road End	14

* Site only

For several years I have felt there was need for some written material about Lake St. Catherine. As a Wells native whose early ancestors, both maternal and paternal, helped to develop the lakefront, I have been asked many questions by vacationers who had little knowledge of the area's past. The fact that my husband was a long-time summer resident, and it was because of the lake that we met, added to my desire to record something of the St. Catherine story. Finally, inspired by the Wells Bicentennial Scrapbook, I decided to try to compile some material in a similar manner. With the exception of articles with by-lines, all writing is my own. I know there are many omissions and probably some errors, in spite of all my efforts to avoid them, but I hope this little volume will help to fill a void and will be of interest.

The proceeds from the sale of this book, above the actual printing expense, will be divided equally between the Wells Historical Society and the Lake St. Catherine Association, earmarked for the weed removal program.

I have had marvelous cooperation in my undertaking and I am truly grateful to those who helped. I especially want to thank the following - - for written material submitted at my request: Ruth E. Barnard, Gladys Cox, Valoise Haynes, Stuart Park, Dr. Francis Reid, Morris Rote-Rosen, Cecile L. Vanderminden, J. Malcolm Williams and Walter Wood. For pictures and/or information: Dan Boone, Bill Burdick, Marleta Colvin, Corinne Eldredge, Clifford Ellis, Granville Sentinel (old files), Benny Hopson, Chandler Hopson, Harold Howe, Burton Jones, Hilda Lewis, Raymond Lobdell, Mac Manchester, Hortense Munson, Belle Nelson, Janice Potter, Poultney Historical Society, Levi Pratt, Jim Price, Bud Rising, Em Ross, Frances Sears, Malcolm and Ruth Shannon, Vermont Fish and Game Department, Vermont Historical Society, Wells Historical Society, Hugh Williams and Ray Williams. The above lists are in alphabetical order for it would be impossible to evaluate the various contributions in order of importance.

I also want to acknowledge the assistance of my "silent partner." Don has been wonderfully supportive and encouraging, especially at those times when my project seemed overwhelming, and his personal memories of summers spent at the lake since he was a small boy have been most helpful. We have enjoyed our reminiscing and researching and we hope that you will enjoy the result of our labors.

July 1, 1979

Iris Hopson Read
Wells, Vermont



Prior to the mid-1700's very few people had ever seen the lovely little body of water we know as Lake St. Catherine. The entire area surrounding it, for miles in each direction, was virgin forest and was known simply as "The Wilderness". For centuries Indians had roamed the dense woodland but about the only non-Indians who had ventured this far into the forbidding territory were scouts for the well-developed colonies nearer the coast, a few trappers and hunters and intrepid Jesuit missionaries who came at a very early date trying to convert the Red Men to Christianity. An old Vermont history states that these Jesuits established a mission station on the shores of the lake and it is generally believed that they were the ones who gave it the name St. Catherine. Still there were no permanent residents in the Wilderness.

In September, 1761, both Wells and Poultney were granted charters by Benning Wentworth, Royal Governor of the New Hampshire Grants, and preparations for homesteading filled the ensuing years. The glowing tales of the "Fair Wilderness" brought back to the colonies by the soldiers who came into the area during the French and Indian Wars added impetus to these preparations. The first settler in Wells was Ogden Mallory who came in 1768, while the earliest homesteaders in Poultney were Thomas Ashley and Ebenezer Allen, cousin of Ethan Allen, who arrived in 1771. These founding fathers were followed closely by others, nearly all from Connecticut and Massachusetts, who started clearing the forest and building log cabins, some quite near the lake. Thus the Wilderness with its Indian campsites, gave way to the earliest homes and little farms.



The collection of Indian artifacts in the East Poultney museum. These were found, many on the north end of the lake, by Kathleen Rowlands of Poultney.



Levi B. Pratt of Wells with his Indian arrowheads and other relics, all found in Wells, a great many near Lake St. Catherine.

The Indians left no written records so it is difficult to trace their history. It seems that various tribes have at one time or another held sway in this area. Probably the Algonquins were the original "owners" but around 1500 the Iroquois wrested control from them. Then about 1640, in a move which puzzles historians, the Iroquois peaceably, it seems, returned the land to the Abenakis, a tribe of the Algonquin nation. The Mohawks also laid claim to much land nearby. There are references in early records to the fact that the Indians considered the local lake a favorite fishing place. The great number of arrowheads and other artifacts, like those shown above, which have been found near the shore, prove this statement was true. As further proof, there are strange spots of very dark, seemingly charcoal-laden soil, still visible near the water, which those versed in Indian lore say are the sites of fires where squaws smoked the catches of the tribe for winter use. There can be little doubt that the Red Men did, indeed, consider our lakefront a favorite territory.

When the first settlers arrived, wildlife abounded in and around the lake. The fur-bearing aquatic animals furnished one of the few salable items of the early homesteaders. An old record states that in 1800 otter and mink pelts sold for 20 cents to 40 cents each.

We are also told about bears, wolves, deer and other animals that were numerous in the wilderness. One story tells about three deer being killed on the lake in winter by a party of four young men whose names are given. There are also written references to the fact that Ethan Allen often joined in the hunting parties. There are several tales of close encounters with bears and details of measures that were necessary to protect sheep from wolves.

Even the air above the lake area teemed with life in those days. We are told particularly about the great flocks of wild pigeons which "darkened the sky" each spring, from about 1780 to 1800. These birds were killed by the hundreds to protect crops from their pilfering and also to add to the food supply.



No one knows for sure how Lake St. Catherine got its name. To the early settlers the waters were simply Wells Pond or Lake Austin, also a term of uncertain origin but thought to have come from a family by that name at the North End. In Thompson's Vermont Gazetteer, the lake is called St. Augustine and at least one old map so designates it, while others, including Mitchell's Universal Atlas of 1854, give "Lake Austin." Some people think that the more familiar "Austin" is a contraction of Augustine.

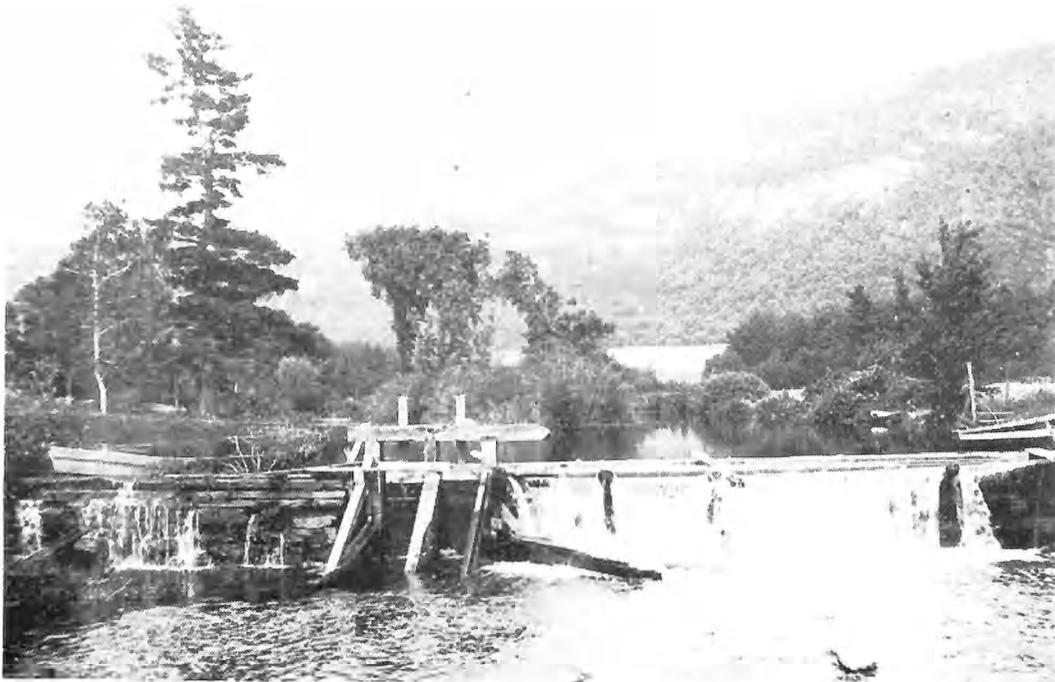
In 1869, Hiland Paul, the local historian, wrote "We are of the opinion that the name St. Catherine as applied to this lake is of New York origin, as the oldest inhabitants of the town, who are over eighty years of age, do not remember of hearing it called otherwise than Lake Austin or Lake St. Austin."

In her book Vermont Place Names, Esther Swift says that in 1771 New York patented a town named St. Catherine, in nostalgic remembrance of St. Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight, the last land seen by the British emigrants as they left England. She adds that when the Green Mountain Boys ran the Yorkers out, they kept the pleasant-sounding name for the lake.

There are other stories and legends but the accepted belief, locally, at least, is that "St. Catherine" was so called by the Jesuits, who came, perhaps before the eighteenth century, carrying on their daring missionary work with the Indians. There is one story which says that two Jesuit priests arrived at the lake on November 25, St. Catherine's Day, and for that reason bestowed her name upon the waters.

The first known written record of "St. Catherine" is on a survey map (see photo copy) which was registered in Albany, New York, in 1767. This document grants 5000 acres of land "in the County of Albany . . . on the west side of a lake called St. Catherine's" to one Col. Maunsell. Of course, all such New York claims were invalidated as Vermont history developed.

Most of the inlets and points around the lake are still known by the name of the one who first settled nearby - - Atwater's Bay, Hall's Bay, Cone's Point, etc. Obviously Ox Bow and Horseshoe Bays were so called because of their shape. The inlet commonly called Forest House Bay (though the term has little significance at present) was originally Bowe's Bay, for Amos Bowe, an outstanding man of the early era. He was the great-grandfather of Mrs. Philip Connell who, with her husband, now owns cottage No. 7. It is interesting to note that the land surrounding this inlet, at present a popular bathing beach, was mentioned in an early Wells history as a prosperous farm.



The "old" dam at the outlet of the lake.

The dam at the outlet of the lake has been an important factor in the St. Catherine story through the years for it has regulated the depth of the water and has made possible various industries. The Wells Historical Society has in its possession a petition (called a "memorial") of one Joseph Lamb, believed to have been written about 1800, asking the town to grant him permission to build a dam. This document, still beautifully legible, reads in part as follows: "Being situate on the stream at the outlet of the Great Pond in sd. Wells where your memorialist hath a larg Quantity of good white Pine, oak and other valuable timber for Boards, Planks and other Materials for Building . . . wherefore a good sawmill Erected on the stream aforesd. must be greatly to the advantage and utility of the inhabitants of the town in genral as well as to your memorialist in perticular . . . would humbly pray that he may have the liberty to build a dam to raise the water of sd. pond only thirty-seven inches."

We do not know whether this "memorial" was granted but it seems that soon after 1800 the first dam was built and it made possible not only a sawmill but many other small industries. One of these, also at the outlet but at a somewhat later date, was a wagon shop which did business for many years. On the stream which flows out of the lake, known as Mill Brook or Pond Brook, there were several businesses, including a wood working shop which made coffins and other articles. There were three successive woolen mills, all on the same site, the first built in 1795. The third and last, the famous Lake Austin Knitting Mill, was one of the largest manufacturing establishments in the entire area in the late eighteen hundreds. There was also a tannery, a cheese factory and a grist mill. The latter, built in 1808, is still standing. Today one seldom thinks of Lake St. Catherine as a source of energy but throughout much of the nineteenth century when industry depended on water power, the lake, with its dam, and the brook which flowed out of it, played a vital role in maintaining the small factories which were the life blood of the period.



INDUSTRIES MADE POSSIBLE BY WATER POWER FROM THE LAKE AND FROM MILL BROOK



The Wagon Shop at the outlet of the lake. Picture taken about 1880.



The Lake Austin Knitting Mill, the area's most important business in the late 1800's. Fine woolens were manufactured here. There was a dye house, carding plant and other branches of the industry which are not visible in this picture.



The Goodrich Grist Mill, built in 1808, is still in good condition though it has not been in operation for many years.



Above is shown the original waterwheel which was at the "Cascades" on the east side of the lake. At earlier times a vigorous stream flowing down the mountainside from the small pond at the summit, activated this wheel to generate water power. In the 1860's my maternal great-great-grandparents, Tracy and Amanda Castle, operated a chair factory here and the sturdy wooden chairs they made were a popular item for many years. A few are still in existence.





The Tracy Castle home, shown above, was directly across the road from the waterwheel. According to a map in the Rutland County Atlas published in 1869, this was the only structure, with the exception of the Beebe farm (now Kama Kanga Ltd.) then standing on the East Side. It was from this little dwelling that the Castle's only son, Charles, went forth to join the Union forces in the early days of the Civil War. Mr. Castle walked with Charles to Rutland, the departure point, waited to watch the trainload of frightened young Vermont boys start on their fateful journey, then walked back alone to the sad little lake-shore home. A few months later Charles died in the hospital at Windmill Point, Virginia.

This building, enlarged and improved through the years, has been in use for well over a century. During the 1930's it was operated by the Cushmans as a small inn and club, called "The Cascades." (see opposite page.) It is now Cottage No. 205.



**The Lake St. Catherine Hotel
By
Morris Rote-Rosen**

The Lake St. Catherine Hotel, an attractive four-story building, was erected in 1859 and by 1880 had become a popular attraction for prominent social, political and theatrical leaders from the New York City area.

A large dining room contained 2500 square feet of floor space and charges to guests ranged from ten dollars a week up. The hotel had a large office which contained a billiard and pool table for the entertainment of the guests, and there were many row boats tied at the dock for those who enjoyed fishing.

The popularity of the Lake St. Catherine Hotel, usually called the Lake House, is evidenced by the names of some of the guests who registered there. They included Lillian Russell, the world-famous beauty and Broadway actress, DeWolf Hopper, one of the great actors of the American stage, Lew Dockstader of the famous minstrel troupe, and the noted Ott family.

William K. Vanderbilt registered at the hotel on September 10, 1883, and requested to be furnished with fourteen horses for his party for an outing. In the summer of 1884 Jay Gould, the railroad magnate and reputed millionaire, registered, as did Charles Delmonico, well-known restaurateur, and Pierre Lorillard, the tobacco tycoon.

Probably the hotel's most famous guest was President Grover Cleveland who came during his first term in office. He gave his address simply as "Washington, D.C." Benjamin Harrison also vacationed here, but before he was elected to the presidency.

The popularity of the Lake House was of short duration, mainly between 1880 and 1890. This was partly due to the fact that transportation began to be revolutionized about that time, with the introduction of gasoline driven automobiles imported from Europe, very expensive at first but within the reach of the wealthier class. Then in 1908 Henry Ford came out with his Model T which took the country by storm. The horse and buggy days were near an end. Families took to the road and expensive hotels in summer resorts went out of business. The Lake House, which stood on the site of the present cottage No. 114, was torn down in 1909.

One of the prominent recent-day visitors at Lake St. Catherine was Cleo A. Noel, whose distinguished career in the U.S. diplomatic service culminated with his appointment as Ambassador to the Sudan. He was married to the former Lucille McHenry, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John F. McHenry of the Granville area. The Noels often visited and vacationed at the lake. On March 2, 1973, Ambassador Noel was assassinated by Palestinian guerrillas while on duty in the capital of Sudan. His tragic death was mourned throughout this section, especially so since he had visited here a few months before his murder, the guest of Mr. and Mrs. M.H. Manchester, and had expressed his intention of retiring to this area.



At the same time the Lake House was flourishing at the South End, an equally large resort hotel, Lake View in the Pines, was enjoying great popularity at the North End, on the site of the present State Park. We do not have the guest register of Lake View but we do know that it, too, entertained many celebrities. There was a chapel nearby, believed to have been part of the hotel compound, and cottagers came by boat on Sunday mornings to attend service there.

Esther Swift, in her book Vermont Place Names, writes that from 1913 to 1916, one of the state's most scenic post offices, St. Catherine, was located in the Lake View House. The office served summer vacationers and the mail was delivered to lake residents, other than hotel guests, by the Grace B. Underwood, the steamboat which was connected with Lake View. The big hotel, which was built in 1876, burned in 1916.

At a later date a smaller "boarding house," also called Lake View, was operated by A.C. Schmidt at the same location. The following is from one of his brochures: "Charming in its natural characteristics, Lake St. Catherine lies like a mirror framed in the glossy slopes of the Green Mountains of Vermont. Along its placid shores may be found tranquility, beauty and healthful surroundings - - a spot which has been fitly called "The Switzerland of New England."



The small building shown across the lake, the one nearest the shore, is the chapel referred to above. Part of the Lake View Hotel is also visible through the trees.

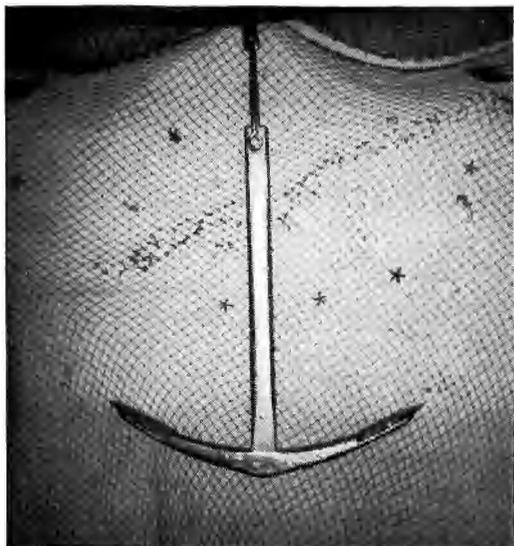


The Myra Morrow (photo above) was one of the two steamboats which plied the waters of Lake St. Catherine in the late 1800's. This two-deck vessel was built in nearby East Poultney, at the Dewey and Bliss Carriage Shop which stood a little south of the Village Green. After making hundreds of carriages and wagons, the operators of this active enterprise branched out into the boat business. At first they made rowboats only, then expanded to manufacture steamboats. The first and largest of these was the Arthur B. Cook, which was launched on Lake Bomoseen. Then came the Myra Morrow and the Grace B. Underwood, both of which steamed up and down Lake St. Catherine. "Captain" John Beebe was in charge of the Myra Morrow, which was bought in 1892 for \$3000. He mainly operated from the Lake St. Catherine House but would pick up passengers at any point along the shore and for a fee of 25 cents would take them completely around the lake. The boat was sold in 1901.

Lake St. Catherine has been described in many ways but seldom in language as flowery as that used in the 1896 prospectus for the Lake St. Catherine House . . . "The Lake is ever changeful. At sunrise, when the orb of day peeps over the hill-tops, its face blushes sweet as a coy maiden listening for the first time to 'the old, old story' from an ardent suitor's lips; at noon, it is an incomparable blue or an unsurpassed green, as the mood takes it; at sunset, it is a waveless banner of crimson and gold; while the moonbeams, as they fall upon its bosom with their silvery sheen, make an impression that is ineradicable."

Childhood Days At Lake St. Catherine

By
May Parker Jones



The anchor of the Myra Morrow, shown above, is still in existence, a treasured possession of Levi B. Pratt of Wells. This is about the only tangible relic of those festive days when resort hotels and steamboats were part of the St. Catherine scene.



"Captain" John Beebe standing near the dock of the Lake House, looking across the lake toward his home on the other side.

How well do I remember
The days of long ago,
When I was but a little child
And life was all aglow.

We lived down at that dear old lake,
"St. Catherine" now they say,
But then they called it just Wells Pond,
Where life was always gay.

The "Lake House" then was in its prime,
With boarders from the city;
And when they tore that structure down
It surely was a pity.

My Dad he was the engineer
On the Myra Morrow boat;
For years he shoveled in the coal
And kept her well afloat.

John Beebe was the captain,
Always full of fun,
And when he took the wheel in hand
He made the old boat hum.

Then when the day was over
We'd settle down for night,
And watch the ripples on the lake;
'Twas such a pretty sight.

Then Dad would get his violin
And rozen up the bow;
And play some old familiar tunes,
In the days of long ago.

He'd play the Fishers Hornpipe,
And never miss a beat,
And then he'd play the Mocking Bird;
I tell you, folks, 'twas sweet.

Sometimes he'd sing a funny song
And dance a step or two,
Or tell us of the thrills he had
In the War of '62.

Today we have the radio,
With music, some is great,
But none of it can e'er compare
With that music at the lake.

Now when the day is over
And the world begins to din,
In dreams I'm at the lake again
And hear Dad's violin.

(This verse was written more than fifty years ago.)



The Lyde Place, known as "Road End," taken in 1889.

North End Notes

By

Valoise Kintner Haynes

The First Known Road

The first road around Lake St. Catherine from Poultney to Wells was a Pent Road. In Vermont Statutes Annotated, Volume 6A, a Pent Road is described as "A public but not an open highway." It was a lane less than 3 rods wide.

This Pent Road began at the first body of water, known today as the Lily Pond. It intersected the highway from Poultney on the Thomas Griffith property and continued along the top of the mountains, past the old slate quarries and on to the Bull Frog Hollow road in the area of the Atwater farm and the bay on the lake, known as Atwater's Bay. Many evidences of this road remain today; some branched off to the slate quarries and some went to the lake shore.

As time went on and some land was developed near the lake, there was a need for a road along the shore. In the Poultney Town Records, Volume 5, P. 44, there is a record of a petition submitted to the Selectmen by petitioners then living in the area, for the laying out of a winter road beginning on the land of Thomas Griffith. The response to this petition reads as follows: "On the 7th day of Jan., 1887, at 9 o'clock in the forenoon, we the selectmen appeared upon said premises and said Thomas Griffith also appeared and made his objections to laying out this winter road, but we the selectmen after duly examining the premises were unanimous in opinion that for the public good and convenience of individuals, we did lay out the road. We awarded as damages to Thomas Griffith the sum of 25 cents. (Signed) Thomas Clark, Mark Lewis, Joseph Mears, Selectmen of Poultney."

Gradually more people built along the lake and the Poultney Town Records show that on Aug. 11, 1891 a second petition was put in for a continuation of this road on to what we know today as "Road End" or Lyde's line. This was done but the road was never carried further. Even today "Road End" is literally that for there is no highway further south. Between this point and the beginning of the road above Cottage No. 1 there is a rocky mass. Only the old Pent Road on the mountaintop has ever gone all the way around the lake.

Road End

Elsie Leslie Lyde, known on the stage as Elsie Leslie, was America's first child star. Born in 1881, she made her acting debut at the age of four. She starred as Little Lord Fauntleroy and as Editha in "Editha's Burglar", as well as in other productions. Her most ambitious assignment was the dual role of the Prince and the Pauper in the play of that name, a part described by Mark Twain as "Longer than Hamlet." This was a tremendous responsibility for a nine-year-old.

Her summer home was "Road End," a name she chose, on Lake St. Catherine, a place she described in her diary as "verry heaven." While there she and her parents entertained many prominent people of the day. Among her most "preshus" friends, some of whom visited the Poultney cottage, were Joseph Jefferson, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Edwin Booth and, closest of all, Mark Twain and his family. Helen Keller and Eleanor Roosevelt were playmates of Elsie's. In the cottage at "Road End" there are still evidences of the presence of the little actress, including the marks on the door casing where her height was measured each season.

Elsie Leslie Lyde's life is portrayed in a beautiful book by Jane Douglass called Trustable and Preshus Friends. It is a record of the little girl's diaries and correspondence, together with wonderful pictures, some of them of "Road End", which is now known as Cottage No. 295.



The "Swing Bridge" at Ferncliff.

One of the first developers of the lakefront was Norman Burdick, founder of the Burdick Manufacturing Company of Albany, New York. He was the nephew of my grandfather, Isaac Morgan, as his mother was Cynthia Morgan. He built, among other things, a cottage known as "Balance Rock." The timbers and lumber for it were drawn to the lake by my grandfather in Feb. 1877 and there are recorded in his diary for that year, references to three trips made to "Norm's place." This lumber was drawn from the old Morgan farm in East Poultney where the Morgans had saw mills on the Poultney River.

An interesting story concerning "Balance Rock" happened in the 1920's when a Lake St. Catherine Realty was formed. This company had purchased several pieces of property from what is known as Pine Point to the end of the road and beyond on the west side of the lake, "Balance Rock" was among those in the hands of the Realty Company and since it was so large, they cut the cottage in half, making two fair-sized houses. This was during the Coolidge administration and one half was named "Cool-Edge" while the other was "Calv-Inn."

Norman Burdick then purchased more land at the head of the lake and built what is still known as Ferncliff. He established a summer picnic area with swings, teeter boards and other amusement equipment. He also operated a bowling alley in this very popular recreation center.

He built a "Swing Bridge" from the point on the west shore of Ferncliff across "The Narrows," as the channel which connects the lake and Lily Pond, was known, to the East Side, a distance of more than one hundred feet.

This bridge was quite a feat of engineering for the period and it remained in existence until the 1930's, enabling people in the area to walk from one side of the lake to the other.

V.K.H.



The Pines is one of the outstanding cottages on the North End. It was built in the late 1800's by two brothers who fashioned it with a pair of identical ells. These were the quarters of the two men so, while they had their privacy, they also had exact copies of each other's living facilities. They ate together in the main part of the building. This place was early known as the Hammett Cottage. An outstanding feature of the place, now Cottage No. 293, is the twin turrets outlined with oars or paddles.



In 1914 Walter Brown built Idylwild Pavilion and in the following year his recreation center was opened to the public. The upper floor of the building was a fine dance hall, while the ground floor housed a bowling alley, billiard tables and a snack bar. Outside was a picnic area, bathing beach, with bath houses, and boats for rent. Mr. Brown operated the popular establishment until 1947 when he sold it to Clifford Ellis who carried it on in a similar manner. Mr. Ellis featured bingo parties and roller skating while the place was under his management. Finally the pavilion reached a state of disrepair which made it necessary to tear it down in 1969.



In 1912 Walt Brown and "Ace" Hayes built two unique boats which they called water wagons. They were launched on Lake Bomoseen where one was sold. The other was moved to Lake St. Catherine and actually furnished the incentive for the building of Idylwild. Walt wanted a base from which to operate his boat and since the owner of the Forest House was unresponsive to the idea, the ambitious Mr. Brown established his own amusement park. For many years the Water Wagon carried passengers around the lake, quite as the Myra Morrow did at an earlier date. The picture above shows Walt in the pilot's seat of his popular craft. The wheel was mounted so that it was between his legs and the Ford Model T engine was within easy reach in front of him . . . in 1959 Mr. Ellis sold the famous boat which was showing the effects of its nearly fifty years of service.

To many of the earlier cottagers on the West Side, Walt Brown was much more than just the manager of Idylwild and the skipper of the Water Wagon, he was their friend in need, the one to whom they could turn with any problem. The spring at Idylwild furnished drinking water for much of the lakeshore, the telephone was freely used by those who did not have phones of their own, and Walt's "emergency shelves" had a miraculous way of coming up with the items needed by harried hostesses with unexpected guests. He was always watchful over the youngsters swimming and the almost-constant crowds on the picnic area. Places such as his, with a dance hall and amusement park, often get "taken over" by a rough element but it never happened at Idylwild which always maintained a reputation of being clean and wholesome. If someone got out of line, Walt soon put him in his place. Somehow his soft, precise voice and gentlemanly bearing carried a note of authority. Walt Brown was a very special person and it is small wonder that one little boy, years ago, called him "Mister Lake St. Catherine." Not a bad sobriquet.



The first Forest House, a large two-story structure, was built by William Munson about 1900. It was a combination rooming house, dance hall, grocery store and amusement area, with boats for rent. The dining room offered fine cuisine and was a popular place for "eating out." This building was torn down, or partly torn down, about 1913, it is believed, and was replaced by a one-story structure which featured a dance hall, bowling alley and snack bar. The second Forest House, after years of great popularity, was also demolished several years ago and the St. Catherine Cottages now stand on the site.



The impressive boathouse at the Forest House.

During the 1920's and 30's there was a small but impressive group of summer residents who lent a pseudo-Newport air to the lakefront. These families came with staffs of colored servants, including chauffeurs, and they maintained a life style quite unfamiliar to the area. Formal dinner parties, teas, and similar events were part of their summer routine. One family, in particular, played the "high society" role to the limit. Their daily boat rides, when the weather was favorable, seemed especially pretentious. They owned a large boat which was fitted with two fancy wicker chairs in which the couple sat in regal splendor while the chauffeur in his tightly-buttoned blue serge uniform and stiff-visored cap sweltered at the helm. Most cottagers, and all local people, felt that a formally-chauffeured motor boat was a bit ostentatious for Lake St. Catherine.

About the turn of the century, when the hey-day of the resort hotel was passing, the era of the "camp" came into being. Local people from both Wells and Poultney, as well as those from not-too-distance places, especially Granville, New York, began to buy lots at the lake. They built simple, though sturdy, summer homes, always called "camps." It seems that it was not until considerably later that the now-familiar term "cottage" for these seasonal dwellings came into use.

These pages show some of the "camps" which were built about 1900.



"Seldominn" was built by Robert Potter of Granville, New York .It is now Cottage No. 71 and is owned by Janice Summer Potter.



"Loch Awe" was built by James L. MacArthur of Granville, New York, the founder of the Granville Sentinel. It is now Cottage No. 24.



The first "Camp Hortense" owned by the Oscar Munson family of Granville, was torn down in 1940 and the present large cottage of the same name, number 84, was erected on the site. Hortense Munson is today's owner.



This camp was built by the family of Luella Potter, later Mrs. Squire Harrington. It is now number 69.



"Winola Lodge," one of the group of early camps in the Idylwild area.



"The Birches" was built by William Munson and later owned by Nellie and Ed Hannum. It was torn down some years ago and the permanent home of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Rudd III now stands on the lot.



"Woldmere" was built by Rodney Lewis of Wells, the owner of the Lake Austin Knitting Mill. It is now Cottage No. 109. Mr. Lewis owned another camp, called "The Hemlocks," which burned many years ago.



"The Crow's Nest" was owned by the Rising family, also of Granville. It is now Cottage No. 97.



"Stronghold" was built by Marvin Strong of Granville. It is now Cottage No. 31.



"Barb-a-Lew" was built by Mr. and Mrs. Ted Williams. It is now No. 91



"Chickagami" was owned by the Burdick family of West Pawlet. It is now No. 81.



The boat house at Rogers Point, now Camp Catherine Capers, No. 75.

To Lake St. Catherine
By
Morris Rote-Rosen

If you're tired, weary-laden,
And your mind feels like a load,
Take the highway to the open
Winding Lake St. Catherine road.
Walk alone, commune with nature,
Swaying trees will welcome you,
Swinging boughs will nod a greeting,
Chickadees will join you too.
Even though 'tis cold and wintry,
And the meadows turned to white,
Even though the skies are cloudy,
Yet, the world will seem so bright.
The gurgle of the brooklet
Will be music to your ear,
And the humming of the north wind
Brings a solo of good cheer.
And the passing, fleeting shadows
Cast reflections on the snow
To refreshen many memories
Of old friends you used to know.
You will see what endless visions
Will be running through you mind;
You'll be living in the present
Pleasant days long left behind.
And the sound of woodland echoes,
If you know your winter lore,
Preaches nature's finest sermon
Like you never heard before.
There's no music in creation
Sweet as woodland's magic air
And you feel its soft caresses
Point to heaven's golden stair.
On the trail there's no distinction
Whether you are rich or poor;
Make-believe will fade before you
Through the woodland's open door.
There's no caste or social barrier
When you heed the outdoor call;
There you find that we are equal
Before the Father of us all.
There's no race, nor creed nor color,
There's where Brotherhood you'll find,
Just one church for all God's children;
There can be no other kind.



The road (?) along the west side of Lake St. Catherine.
March 10, 1923.



The Harrington and Campbell cottages in winter's
white, also in 1923.



On April 4, 1775, at the adjourned session of the third annual Town Meeting held in Wells, it was voted to build a bridge "across the neck between the ponds," and a committee was elected to provide the necessary timber. The bridge was completed the following year, historic 1776, and from that time on there has been a span, still called Pond Bridge by the local people, across the channel or "neck." The above picture, taken in 1906, shows the bridge which preceded the present one. This structure had plank flooring which gave forth a far-reaching clatter each time a car or horse and wagon crossed. A few of the older cottagers remember that noise which echoed around the entire lake, especially in the hush of a still summer night.



The photo above, taken sometime in the 1880's, shows the old wooden-sided bridge which antedated the one above. The building shown had several owners through the years but was usually called "The Taylor Place." It burned many years ago and Bartholomew's Marina now stands on the site.



Edward Wilcox and my father, Lester Hopson, with a lake trout caught forty years ago.



Porter Johnson and Harold Burdick with a long-ago catch of perch.

In early days Lake St. Catherine teemed with fish. According to old records, it was an often-visited fishing ground of the Indians and the first settlers depended heavily on its output as a food supply. In the 1869 History of Wells, Robert Parks tells of one Mrs. Fry who lived near Pond Bridge. He says, "We have heard her relate about the starving time in 1789. She would go to the pond and catch some fish, dress them and cook them before a fire, adding a little salt; this constituted her daily meals for some time." 1789 was a year of severe famine and doubtless many others subsisted on fish, as did Mrs. Fry.

The same history tells of the first stocking of the lake. In 1821 pickerel were caught through the ice in Lake Champlain and released, by way of a spring, into "Lake Austin." In more recent times stocking has been done regularly by the Vermont Fish and Game Department. In 1969 the Department carried on a comprehensive study of the fish in the lake, using sophisticated methods including gillnets, trapnets and electric boat shockers. They report the following species present in the waters: lake trout, rainbow trout, smelt, northern pike, largemouth and smallmouth bass, yellow perch, pumpkinseed, rock bass, cisco, bullhead and golden shiner.

As proof of the fishing of a decade or two ago, one has but to look at the mounted specimens in Hopson's Store, Wells, all caught by Benny Hopson in Lake St. Catherine. There is a lake trout, 42½ inches, 22 pounds; a bass, 24½ inches, 7½ pounds and a northern pike, 41 inches and 15 pounds.

Catches such as the above are rare these days and various reasons are given for the decline. The most obvious reason is the weed growth which, in Lower Lake, especially, has made fishing nearly impossible. Also, there aren't many truly dedicated fishermen nowadays -- ones like Earl Schermerhorn Sr., Donald Mason and Lester Hopson, whose monumental patience allowed them to spend fruitless hours on the lake they loved, happy just to be there and considering any fish a bonus. Representatives of the Department claim that fish still abound in St. Catherine and the proper combination of patience, luck and skill may at any time result in a sensational catch. It is that hope which keeps alive the ancient art of angling.



Harold Burdick, Billy Burdick and Tom Guthrie fishing through the ice in 1940.

In the winter a different kind of fishing takes place. Fishermen bore holes in the ice with an ice auger - - a job formerly done with a spud - - and set tip-ups in the holes. These "jiggers" are fitted to snap a flag to alert the fisherman if he has a nibble. A colony of "shanties" appears on the ice to protect the fishermen from the frigid temperatures and piercing winds. The fish caught in winter are northern pike, lake trout, smelt and perch.

Before electricity came to the lake area, about 1928, ice boxes were necessary to keep food in the hot summertime. Many cottages had ice houses, as did most homes in nearby towns. Ice harvesting, carried on extensively at Lake St. Catherine, was a planned-for "season", much like maple sugaring, planting and haying. There were skilled cutters in Wells and Poultney who had the necessary long saws and other equipment. A familiar remark on a sub-zero night was "This is an ice-maker." When the ice was the proper thickness, about twelve inches, it was cut into blocks, usually 24 inches square, loaded onto horse-drawn "bobbies" and hauled to the storage houses where the blocks were lifted with huge tongs and carefully packed in clean sawdust to retard melting. Those who did not own ice houses, bought the frigid blocks from local dealers in the summer season.

This picture, taken in late March, 1946, shows the breaking up of the ice on the lake. This event, the first stage of the process known as the ice "going out," is a welcome sight after a long, cold winter. In earlier years the local sports conducted a "pool" with betting on the date the ice would finally disappear. While we no longer hear about the betting, there is a general interest in the annual happening, a sign that spring is on the way. For several decades Valoise Haynes has kept a record of the "going out" day on upper Lake St. Catherine. She says that the earliest date was in 1953, March 24, while the latest came in 1971, May 3. Chandler Hopson has kept a similar record of the event on Lower Lake and agrees about the two years but Lower Lake usually "goes out" a few days before the "Big Lake."





The Island
By
Cecile L. Vanderminden

Until about 1920 there was no building on the Island. The early owners seem to have regarded it merely as a piece of undeveloped property and, we are told, young people from around the lake often picnicked there. Then Mr. and Mrs. Robert Morton (he was a lawyer from New York City) had "The Island House" built, quite a construction feat since all materials had to be transported over water. The main supplies were taken across on the ice the winter before actual building began. Dwight Park, a local contractor, supervised the operation. The remainder of the materials necessary were taken by boat. There was a school bell at the end of the peninsula which was rung when one wanted to cross. The boat from the Island would then make the trip across the "neck" and pick up the goods or passengers.

In 1933 the Island House and property were sold to new owners, Mr. and Mrs. George Brothers, from Virginia. They, with their family, enjoyed many summers at the Island. They built a little rustic bridge between the Island and mainland.

In the spring of 1950, we (Cecile and Henry J.W. Vanderminden, Jr.) bought the Island from relatives of the Brothers. We immediately built an entirely new bridge between the Island and mainland property. In November of that same year, 1950, an unexpected and unusual hurricane hit Lake St. Catherine. Many trees were up-rooted and the newly built sturdy bridge entirely vanished. It seems a nearby float was inadvertently left out in the Lake. It broke loose from its moorings and it apparently jammed against the under-pinnings of the bridge. The second bridge, so far, has not shifted.

Our summers on the Island are a very pleasant part of our year. We love it and Lake St. Catherine is very, very dear to us.

Summers at Pinecroft Cottage By Ruth E. Barnard

In 1917 my father and his twin brother, William and Water Barnard of Granville, bought Pinecroft from Harry Hicks, also of Granville. I believe that the place was built by the Baldwins, the parents of Mrs. Hicks, about 1900.

At the time my family bought it, the cottage was surrounded by shrubbery, mainly alders, and there were many trees which needed clearing out and trimming. We did not need to buy or obtain wood for the little stove-front fireplace in the center of the cottage for the first 40 years we were there. Most of the camps on the west side in that area had rustic yards, pine needle carpeted, and paths leading down to the lake. I dimly remember walking along the foot path which also skirted the lake, through the front yards of cottages nearby.

Our building was very rustic and primitive, according to present standards. There was a "Chic Sale" out-house located, when we first had the cottage, rather prominently between Bala Lodge and Pinecroft, not too far above the shore. This was soon moved farther up the slope and shielded by the garage my father and uncle built.

As the trees and alders were thinned out, a grassy spot developed, with wild rose bushes in the center, and huge long-stemmed violets in the spring. We could pick wild strawberries there, too, and counted on at least one wild strawberry shortcake each season. Cooking was done on a four-burner oil stove. Electricity did not become available until later and the oil lamps used would now be collectors' items. In fact, the camp was filled with antiques. We used Bennington ware for our wild bouquets and for the water lilies we gathered on our annual rowboat expedition to the Little Lake. Each of the three bedrooms had its china washbowl set. The beds were (and felt like) antiques and much of the bedding would make favored displays today in a quilt exhibit. The fireplace was a small one, with a stove front, another antique. The huge porch was a favorite spot on rainy days.

Those summers we spent at Pinecroft remain in memory as happy, carefree, wonderful days. In 1964 the cottage was sold to Mrs. Frances Newton.



The Cottage That Crossed the Lake

By

J. Malcolm Williams

In May, 1948, Esther and I purchased a cottage on Horseshoe Bay, on the west side of Lake St. Catherine. Two days later we acquired a lot on Cone's Point, on the east side. Investigation revealed that it was impractical to move the cottage over the road so we contacted Earl Potter, former member of the Seabees, who agreed to move it across the lake.

He built a raft forty-foot square and mounted the five-ton two-story building on it, after removing the chimney and slate to lighten the load.

On June 10, 1948, Lake St. Catherine was like a mirror and with the help of two row boats, one powered by a 5 HP and the other by a 3½ HP motor, the cottage was moved to the other side, the voyage taking about 45 min.

Earl Potter and his children rode the raft; Esther and I decided to keep our children with us on land as we followed the progress.

The event made the national news wires with stories, carrying photographs of the house afloat in the middle of the lake, in the Boston Herald and newspapers in Maryland, Texas, California and Hawaii.

After the cottage was landed and placed on the foundation, we moved a play house from our Poultney village property to the Red Cottage Lot.

We subsequently purchased the former Louis Kazon cottage and moved the guest house onto the 90-foot lakeshore property. The Red Cottage, formerly owned by Gladys Cox--the one that crossed the lake--is presently owned by Steven West and the guest house cottage, by attorney Miller.



Cone's Point, on the east shore of the lake, is the largest peninsula on St. Catherine. It is believed that it was named for Abner Cone, an early settler of Wells, who owned a large tract of land in the area. Mr. Cone was one of a trio of "secessionists" who petitioned his hometown for the right to join with Poultney. It is said that the action of this group played a part in the changing of the town line, with Wells ultimately ceding a portion of land to its northern neighbor. The original petition, dated March 17, 1783, with the signatures of Mr. Cone and his fellow dissenters, is now in the possession of the Wells Historical Society.

For many years after development of other parts of the lakefront had begun, there were still no buildings on the point. Very few people knew who owned the land and it was treated as if it were public property. The fine beach attracted young people from the entire lakeshore who came by boat to swim, picnic and bask on the sand. After construction began on the peninsula, the public aspect of the beach necessarily ceased.

The cottage at the tip of the point, No. 226, is crossed by the Poultney-Wells town line so that its occupants, when going from room to room, are also going from town to town.



**Prehistoric Find
By
Morris Rote-Rosen**

David J. Campbell of Philadelphia, Pa., an instructor in a commercial school there, built his cottage "Wissahickon" at Lake St. Catherine and during the summer it was his custom to invite some of his students to come and spend weekends with his family.

Two of these young men, impressed with the sight of the high thickly wooded, rocky mountains on the east shore of the lake decided on an exploration trip. They ventured forth, climbed the steep ledge, made their way from rock to rock, leaping across crevices, and finally came face to face with an opening displaying a huge rock. Without much effort they removed some debris blocking their passage and as it was getting dark they noticed by the rays of their flashlights that they were facing a deep cavern, leading to what appeared to them a good-sized room.

Trying to enter the room they found themselves barred by stalagmites, some of which rose three or four feet above the floor. In a smaller room adjoining they also found stalactites like icicles suspended from the ceiling.

The two young men were mystified but continued to explore the cave. They were startled when they came upon what appeared to be a petrified fossil of a pre-historic animal with a long nose and jaws with what might have been tusks. The rear quarters sloped decidedly and looked small in comparison with the strong forelegs. By their flashlights, in the darkness of the cave, they noticed scattered on the floor stone implements such as were used by the Indians who had roamed the lake area. Making a closer inspection they saw what appeared to be hieroglyphics carved into the walls of the cave, some quite distinct while other had been partly obliterated by time.

It was getting late and complete darkness coming up outside the cave. The young men decided to leave and return the next day for further inspection. They slowly weaved their way through the thick woods, down the rocky mountain, and back to the highway from which they had entered.

Excitedly they related the story of their find and gathering several other young men they made plans to return the next day. But, in returning they couldn't locate the cave and failed to find it after several tries.

When the story reached John Beebe, the old caretaker of the Lake St. Catherine Hotel, who was then in his eighties, he said that he knew of that particular cave but had never mentioned it to any one. John said that he and his Indian friend Enireh Tactsekal, son of a chief, had discovered several mysterious caves such as the one reported. When asked to describe the location he promised to do so but never did. The boys' discovery remains a mystery to the present time. Of course John Beebe was a dreamer and a great story teller. Young people enjoyed visiting with him to hear his wild tales. True or false.



The part of Lake St. Catherine south of Pond Bridge, known as "Little Lake," "Little Pond" or "Lower Lake," is very shallow. It is said that prior to the construction of the first dam the water was hardly more than a good-sized stream with swamp on both sides. The 1869 History of Wells relates the following incident about this part of the lake . . . "Abel Merriman (an early settler) much disposed to merriment as his name would indicate, sold this pond in the winter season when covered with ice and snow, as 'an elegant tract of intervale land, with no trees or stumps on it' and deeded the same. Much land at that time was sold by description to people living at a distance." It would be interesting to know the follow-up to the story. We can imagine the litigation which would result from such a deal today.

In 1792 my paternal great-great-grandfather, John C. Hopson, came with his family from Wallingford, Connecticut, and settled near "Lake Austin," on the property now owned by the Delaney sisters. On the map in the 1869 Rutland County Atlas, referred to before, the Hopson home was the only one shown on the west shore of Lower Lake. Very gradually this area developed, as did the rest of the lakeshore, and today it is crowded with dwellings, many of them permanent homes.

From earliest days the marshes surrounding Lake St. Catherine, especially those on the west side of Lower Lake, have been thick with cranberry bushes. The story is told that one of our first settlers, suffering pangs of homesickness for the place she had left in Connecticut, used cranberries as a means of financing a visit to her family who had remained behind. She gathered sacks full of the sour little red berries which were loaded onto the horse she rode, and alone she set out on her journey back to the busy colony to the south. There she sold her berries and thus paid her expenses until she returned to her lakeside cabin.

Cranberries still grow on the lakeshore, though now the growth is less profuse. A few local people, Burton Jones in particular, gather the berries each fall. It is not a job for the uninitiated, however, for poison sumac also grows on the marshes.

Recollections of Wells and Lake St. Catherine

By
Walter C. Wood

I lived in the white house next to the Methodist Church in Wells during my earliest days. The house was in the shadow of Pond Mountain. It seems my earliest recollection of life here was looking up at the white spot near the top of the mountain and letting my imagination run to all sorts of childhood dreams. What was it? Why was it there? Later the dreams became matter of fact when I discovered that it was only an outcropping of white quartz.

Wells was a sleepy little village with its share of good and evil. It supported three churches, the Methodist, Episcopal and Universalist, and attendance was good in all three.

My mother and father worked at the Rod Lewis factory, called the Lake Austin Knitting Mill, located on the road to Granville. Father was a spinner and worked from 6 to 6 six days a week for \$1 per day. Mother operated a sewing machine on piece work which gave her less than a dollar a day. During slack times Father cut wood on the Alvah Park farm east of Lake St. Catherine. For many years the area of woodland cut off was called Frank Wood's clearing.

As a youngster I spent many days on this farm. There were four Park boys, Leon, Dwight, Edgar and Fred. We would camp out down on the east shore of the Little Pond. There were times when provisions were low and we made a raid in the nighttime on the hen house on the Sykes farm across the pond. Later we built a cabin on the site where Charlie Boone built his cottage some years after.

In those days there were some of the most down-to-earth people you would ever want to meet. Smith Norton lingers in my memory. One chilly day in October, I took a swim in the brook back of our house. I was so cold I couldn't get my clothes on right. When Mother spotted the condition, she asked why in the world I would go swimming in such weather. I told her Smith Norton told me to. Smith came by the house later and was promptly gone over by my mother.

The old pine tree that stood near the Episcopal Church was the starting point of all road races and parades. In the evening the men and boys would gather on the steps of George Carter's Store (across from the present Snack Bar). Then the bragging and the betting would begin. The boys would line up at the old pine tree and race to the finish line at the store. The winner became a few pennies richer. We played baseball in the street every night. Wells had a ball team and after the hay was cut in June, a ball diamond was laid out and games were under way. One of the most exciting times of my life was when the big boys named me to play center field.

The Fourth of July was always an event. The old cannon was cleaned up and made ready. The most excitement came on July 3, 1898, when the cannon exploded and a large piece of the iron struck our house.

We moved to Bennington in 1900, when I was 9, but I returned to my grandparents' home each vacation. There I discarded my shoes and sox and went barefoot all season. One summer while I was there, Clarence Potter and I decided to row a boat from the then Cooper end of the little pond to the east side for a swim in the old swimming hole. We anchored the boat off shore and jumped in. As we paddled around a wind came up and dragged the anchor. Soon we realized the boat was too far off shore for our limited swimming capacity. Our clothes were in the boat and were being soaked by a light rain. What to do? Our decision was to get back to his home on Chittenden Avenue. We traveled down thru the woods, cut across an oat field and across the road into the Cold Spring pine woods. We found our way thru the woods and into the back door of Clarence's home. His grandmother, Mrs. Warner, was ironing and was somewhat shocked to see two bare naked boys come rushing into her kitchen. He loaned me pants and shirt and we set out for Cooper's Landing. We had to rent a boat with money he had saved. Finally we arrived at our boat which had now floated in to shore. They say "All is well that ends well." This was the exception to that rule. I was under strict orders from Grandmother Haskins to keep away from pond swimming. She punished me by not letting me play with that Potter boy for the rest of my vacation.

After my grandparents moved away I spent many a pleasant summer with my family at Aunt Dora Stata's camp on the east side of Little Pond. There were only two cottages on this shore at that time. We obtained our water, ice and milk at the Sykes farm on the west side of the pond by rowing a boat over and back once a day.

I thank the good Lord for my memories, and the people of Wells and Lake St. Catherine will always be a beautiful part of my recollections.

* * * * *

Mr. Wood, now 88 years young, is the father of Mrs. Julian Preuss who, with her husband, owns cottage No. 158 A. Mr. Preuss has been an active member, and officer, of the Lake St. Catherine Association for many years.

* * * * *

Probably the one person who did most to develop the east side of Lower Lake, from the two cottages mentioned by Mr. Wood to the busy lakefront of today, was Warren L. Roberts of Albany. He bought up large tracts of land and in the early 1920's, with a crew of local carpenters and other workmen, built many of the cottages which are now in use in the area.



The Lower Channel, near the end of Little Pond. This picture, taken in 1942, shows a few of the boats that were formerly moored here by Wells fishermen.

Horse Racing on the Ice **By** **Morris Rote-Rosen**

The Granville-Wells-Poultney area boasted high-class race horses some fifty years ago. These aroused a great deal of interest, not only among horse owners and horse lovers but the public in general. Interest was especially keen in contests held on the ice of Lake St. Catherine. On the day of such an event hundreds of people turned out to witness lively competition between horses with good track records. Betting, too, was lively at these affairs.

It was estimated that one contest held on Little Lake St. Catherine attracted more than two thousand people who stood out on the coldest day of winter to watch the "event of the year."

The horses entered in this particular race were "Munson," owned and driven by Ernest C. Whiting of Granville, and "Rosewood," owned and driven by Fred Haugh of Hampton. The course was laid out from the south end of the channel straightaway to the Cooper dam at the outlet of the lake. A blacksmith shop was temporarily arranged in a large barn in the rear of the William Cooper property, a place often visited by the spectators because of the intense cold outside. The race, scheduled for three heats out of five, had to be continued into the second day because the horses, while running, would slip on the glossy ice and throw their shoes and have to be reshod to run that particular heat over again. "Rosewood" had won one heat and "Munson" two when the race was postponed to decide the winner the following day. At that time "Rosewood" won two straight heats deciding the contest and winning the purse. Many hundreds of dollars changed hands by the sports who came from Rutland, Bennington and other points to bet on the outcome.

Lake - Town Rapport
By
Stuart N. Park

At the turn of the century, young people began camping in the lake area. Many who became cottage owners at a later date had their first introduction to Lake St. Catherine while staying in a tent. The lot on the farm of my grandfather, Alvah Park, was one of the popular "Camping out" spots. The associations and contacts that were made in those days helped to form a solid relationship with area residents, particularly those on the Wells end of the lake. During the summer months boats were often docked at Cooper's landing while cottagers visited the local stores, churches and various social events.

In the early 1920's Mrs. Annie R. Huyck bought a cottage on the east shore of Little Lake. Later she purchased the Howe farmhouse and soon after built the Lochlea Playhouse. This became a center for theatrical and social activity in which many lake residents participated fully. Her interest in tennis was translated into the building of some very fine courts, open to all, on which many of the outstanding players of the period were seen.

Mrs. Huyck also established the Lochlea Library which grew into today's Village Library, both available to summer residents. This remarkable woman did so much for the area that it would be impossible to enumerate her kind and generous deeds but not least among her accomplishments was her success in cementing a bond of friendship and cooperation between vacationers and local residents.

Another kind of "camping" was popular in the early 1900's. Groups of fashionable young ladies, especially those from the Granville area, would rent a "camp" at the lake, and, very properly chaperoned, spend a week or so enjoying their interpretation of "roughing it." The picture below, left, shows one of these young ladies' camping parties at Rogers' Point. It is believed that one of the chaperones in the photo is Miss Nettie Button who taught in Granville about 1903-06.

Picnics at the lake were also popular in the same era. Many schools, some at considerable distance, traditionally ended the academic year with such a picnic. We have heard about the "closing day" outing of Burr and Burton Seminary in Manchester in 1904. The graduating class left their hometown in a large horse-drawn vehicle at 4 a.m. so as to have as much time as possible at St. Catherine after the long ride. Church and Sunday School picnics, as well as the simple family outings, such as shown below, right, were also popular. The bountiful basket lunches that were the center of interest of these affairs were the forerunners of today's cook-outs and barbecues.





Lake St. Catherine Reflections
By
Gladys Cox

Perhaps one of the earliest transfers of lake property took place in 1866 when land known as Forest Home was sold to G. Reynolds and W. Allen by H. Hotchkin. The deed describes the property as being situated on the west side of "Lake Austin" or "Wells Pond" and on rocks on the shore above the Lake.

An early owner of the lands known as the Peninsula and Island was Patrick Roach who sold to Phoenix Remsen and his wife, Naomi, of Cazenovia, New York, in 1891. Phoenix Remsen resold this same tract in 1914. At that time the road to and from the land ran along the shore of Horseshoe Bay. The new owner discontinued the old road to this area and bought land between the former Remsen tract and the main road, on which he built a new road to the Peninsula and Island.

Many interesting and prominent people have vacationed on the lake, including Helen Keller and her companion, Anne Sullivan, who spent at least two summers at Sunnyside, the cottage then owned by Dr. David MacKenzie, on the west side of the lake.

Several well-known sports figures of the past have spent time at St. Catherine, including Lou Gehrig, Lou McCarthy and Heini Groh. These famous baseball players vacationed at the cottage now owned by Mrs. Edwin M. Groh.

Vermont's Senior Senator, Robert Stafford, spent boyhood vacations at Lake St. Catherine. His father, Attorney Bert Stafford of Rutland, owned a cottage on the west side where the family stayed the entire summer for many years.

There have been many other noteworthy visitors here for Lake St. Catherine's charm and tranquility has a special attraction. In fact our lake has been, and still is, a haven for professional people of all fields.





About 1918 the first Lake St. Catherine Association was started. This was not a formal organization, such as the present Association, but was more a social club with its main objective the providing of entertainment for summer residents. During the years it was active it sponsored dances at Idylwild or Forest House, usually for members only, picnics, card parties, swim meets and other events. On August 22, 1923, the Association staged an impressive regatta or water carnival. Nearly all cottagers entered into the festive spirit and the flotilla of gaily decorated craft furnished the throng of spectators on shore with many thrills. One could not forget P.J. Esquerre, the dapper little Frenchman, as a Chinese coolie in an authentic-looking sampan, nor Simeon Rising in his attractive prize-winning boat, the Jennie B. Another memorable "float" was a cleverly devised boat-sized turtle, its lively head a cutely-costumed little boy who delighted the viewers. Some boats were beautiful, some were funny, but all displayed originality and hard work. There were a few more water carnivals in succeeding years but it seems that the organization that sponsored them faded into oblivion during that decade. No one knows the reason for the group's demise but that well-planned regatta of more than fifty years ago, marked one of the highlights of the first Association's brief life.





Dr. Francis A. Reid

If the long-time summer residents were asked to name the person who has done the most for the lake in recent years, there is little doubt that the one most often mentioned would be Dr. Francis A. Reid . . . In 1957 the trustees of the Lake St. Catherine Association were alarmed by the poor quality of the water and the many dead fish. They voted to conduct an investigation and Dr. Reid, a member of the Vermont State Health Department as well as a cottage owner, was asked to help. He was appointed chairman of the Anti-Pollution and Weed Control Committee, a position he held for twenty years. Newton Williams, then president of the Association, accompanied Dr. Reid to Montpelier to attend a meeting with the appropriate State officials, who, after a lengthy discussion, agreed to look into the problem.

Four sanitary engineers from the Health Department spent several days at the lake. Water samples were taken in all sections and all septic tanks and pipes were checked. They came to the conclusion that nearly all areas had a high coliform bacteria count, partly due to drainage from septic tanks which were worn out or poorly installed. There were 33 places where sewage was going directly into the lake.

All offenders were notified and told to make corrections. Cooperation was nearly one hundred per cent even though thousands of dollars had to be spent. Within three years the lake was declared clean, with very little bacteria count. Dr. Reid's know-how and tireless efforts, together with fine cooperation, soon made this lake one of the very cleanest in all Vermont.

In August 1977, the Association honored Dr. Reid for his twenty years of service. Though now retired and no longer a camp owner, he maintains a lively interest in all Lake activities, especially the weed control project which he helped to launch.

Lake St. Catherine Memories

By

Dr. Francis A. Reid

My folks moved to Lake St. Catherine in 1911, where we lived for eight years at WHIPPOORWILL LODGE, on the north-west side of the lake. My brother and I attended school at the Little Red Schoolhouse at the corner of the present golf course. We often used the swinging bridge which was located in the Ferncliff area, across the channel separating the Big Lake from the Lily Pond. At other times we crossed the lake by boat or on the ice in winter. An interesting way to go to school!

I recall the burning of the big hotel called Lake View in the Pines, located where the State Park is now. This was about 1915 and we stood on our front lawn and watched it burn. It was in late October. The hotel had two or three hundred rooms.

I remember walking the length of Cone's Point and at that time there wasn't a single building on the entire point, not even a road off the present Route 30 to get there. The whole area was then up for sale for \$1,000 -- believe it or not!

My father and I took a ride on Walt Brown's Water Wagon on its first trip. The boat carried passengers around the lake several times a day, 25 cents for a trip around the entire lake. I also watched the construction of the IDYLLWILD dance hall and pavilion.

I recall in mid-winter, when the ice was thick and safe, horse racing on the Big Lake was very popular. They would clear a track and race horses hitched to small cutters or sleighs and would compete for money prizes. There were usually several entries and always a good crowd watching.

I recall the time when there were three dance halls, three bowling alleys, some hotels and several small confectionery stores around the lake. Times have changed!



About 1953 the present Lake St. Catherine Association came into being. In the beginning it was a rather loosely-knit organization and we can find no record of the first officers. It is believed, however, that Dr. Merritt Brown was the first president for he and Jerry Wiesner were prime movers in the formation of the group. In 1955, by-laws were drawn up by Charles Ryan, an early trustee, and the Association was officially launched. Gradually it has developed into a large and influential body which plays an important role in many aspects of the life of the lake and its surroundings.

Probably its most significant work is that of the anti-pollution committee. As noted in the article about Dr. Reid, this committee is vigilant in detecting and correcting any threat to the cleanliness of the lake.

For many summers the Association has paid for two or three separate sprayings of the lakeshore to control mosquitoes and other insects. This does not completely eliminate the pests but does greatly reduce their number.

The organization was responsible for setting up the convenient system of numbering cottages and the issuing of periodically updated maps, a most valuable contribution for all concerned. A copy of the first map and directory is shown on the opposite page.

At one time the Association financed a police officer for the lake area. That is no longer possible but the group now works with Wells and Poultney and with the State Police to provide the best protection available. They also have contributed to local fire departments, rescue squads and other emergency units.

For several seasons swimming clinics at the State Park were sponsored by the organization. At various times in the past swim meets, a golf tournament and Sailfish races have also been promoted, while the annual barbecue is a looked-for event.

In recent years the Association has given priority to the weed control project, for the ever-increasing growth in the lake is a matter of grave concern to all. Some time ago they established a special fund from membership assessments, and have worked with Wells and Poultney to raise the money necessary to purchase the expensive equipment. The committee has also obtained the cooperation of the State in this vital work. Many have been involved in the program but special note should be taken of the labors of Jim Price, Jerry Crawford and Mike Geremia.

At last the long-awaited time is nearly at hand. "Hungry Harvey," the weed harvester, has arrived and is due to start his job this summer (1979). The Association deserves great credit for its tireless efforts on this and other projects, all of which are aimed at keeping Lake St. Catherine unspoiled and attractive, not only for cottagers but for the general public as well.

DIRECTORY BY LAKE ST. CATHERINE ASSOCIATION, INC.

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LAKE SAINT CATHERINE

The stately pines on Catherine's bank,
 Lift high in countless serried rank,
 Their arms to heaven's beclouded dome,
 Breathing forth peace on the camper's home.

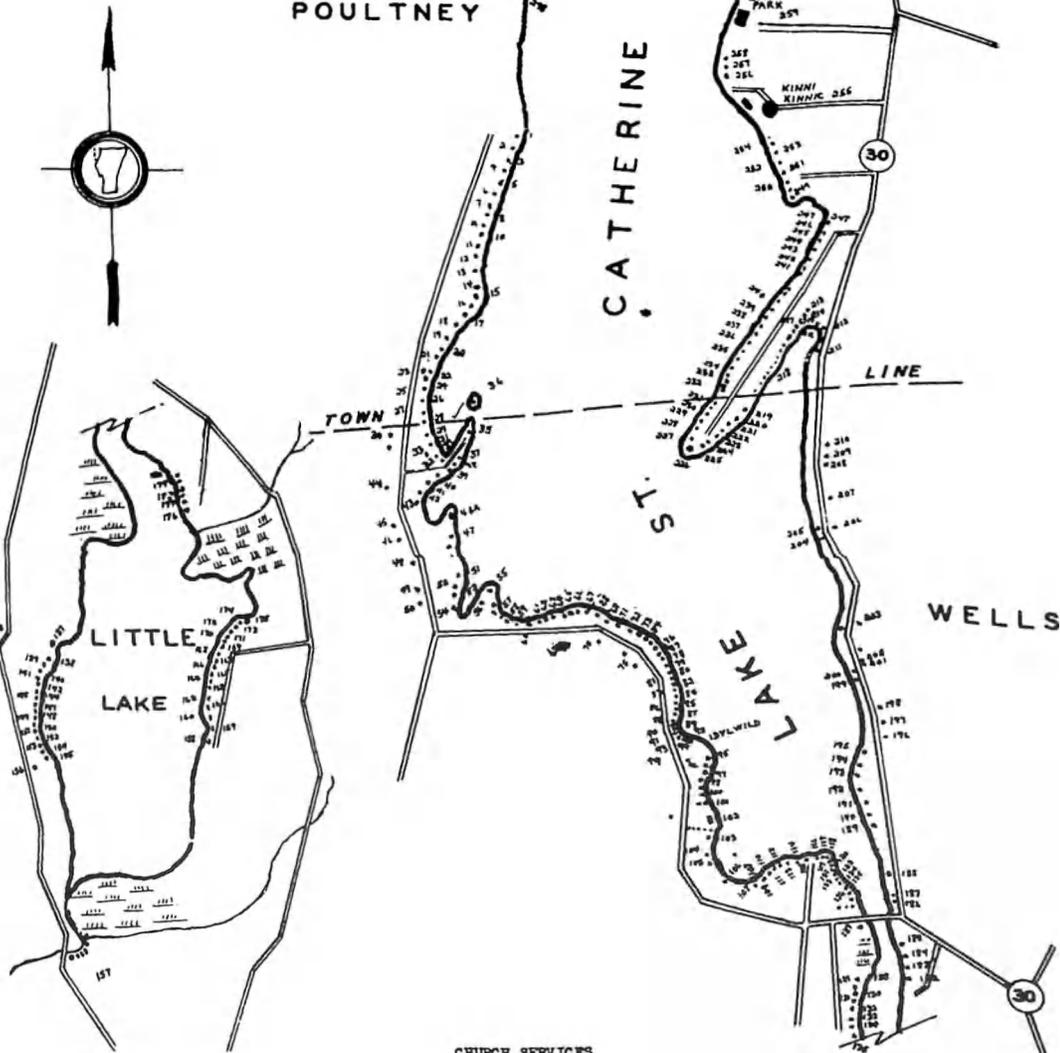
The seasons change and pass with time,
 While saintly Catherine her blessing pours
 As from a chalice filled with wine,
 On trees and saplings along her shores.

The lives and haunts of men full-fought,
 With passions which the world has taught,
 May learn the martyr'd saint's true love,
 In silent rendezvous with gifts above.

Now on the lake's blue-rippled breast,
 A graceful ship, its course does hold,
 Sails full-bellied at the wind's behest,
 Groan and travail with abandon bold.

Straight and tall her mast of pine,
 Spotless and white in every line,
 She shakes the foam from stem and stern,
 As balloon'g jib holds her firm.

Apollo, his western tent has sought,
 While ethereal shades of eve prevail,
 Supernal joy to the heart is brought,
 By wind and water, trees and sail.



- Adt, Kenneth 123
- Adolpson, C. 10
- Alden, C. 283
- Aldrich, R. (2) 189
- Allen, Ernest 105
- Allen, Henry 194
- Annesley, H. 135
- Arrowhead Camp 260
- Ayres, Levi 125
- Baker, Henry 150
- Ballard, George 24
- Barnard, C. 87
- Barrett, Dr. A. G. 56
- Barrows, Elliot 96
- Bartholomew, H. B. 100
- Bascom, Mulford 116
- Becker, Albert 30
- Beebe, Walter 215
- Beecher, Lillian 237
- Beldon, Maurice 183
- Bertram, Frank 126
- Betham, Herbert 18
- Bevis, Mabel 286
- Bixby-Hall 288
- Blackmer, William 241
- Blanch, James 280
- Boyd, Mrs. Harriet 85
- Brehm, Rev. L. 72
- Brayton, Est. 113
- Brook, Anthony 86 101
- Brown, Dr. M. E. 47
- Bruderle, George 74
- Buckley, Chas. 185
- Burdick, Harold 81
- Burdick, Mrs. Clara 266
- Butler, Donald 122
- Busteed, Helen 239
- Camp Arrowhead 255
- Carter, William 133
- Catherine Campers Camp 75
- Champion, D. Est. 206
- Chasey, Lloyd 27
- Chasey, Lloyd Jr. 48
- Clarkson, Arthur 25
- Closs, John 162
- Coffee, Mary 3 111
- Cohen, Max 100
- Connell, Philip 7
- Cooper, Clay (3) 212
- Cory, Kenneth 132
- Coulter, Adell 164
- Cox, Clara 43
- Crandall, John 55
- Crawford, Est. 113
- Cross, Theodore 131
- Curtis, Floyd R. 45
- Dana, Douglas 66
- Dandrow, Raymond 50
- Davey, Violet 256
- Davies, J. Parker 80
- Davis, Cecil 9
- Degemar, Brig. Gen. 153
- Delaney, C. & J. 136
- Dillingham, H. 170
- Disorda, Joseph 128
- Dowd, Mrs. Mary 172
- Drake, Arch 134
- Duncan, Charles 274
- Dunham, Helen 264
- Eddy, Robert 244
- Edelston, Lee 117
- Edson, Robert F. 197
- Edwards, Edgar 256
- Edwards, Mrs. S. H. 38
- Fern, LeRoy 246
- Ferncliff, G. Thrall 262
- Fife, Kenneth 180
- Pink, Harold 6
- Foster, Leonard 231
- Francini, Eugene 49
- Ginsburg, Ruth 227
- Ginsburg, William 226
- Goldberg, Edward 68
- Graham, Clifford 2
- Graubard, S. J. 229
- Greer, Mrs. Alice (2) 279
- Greer, Louise 281
- Griffith, Harold 263
- Groh, Edward 60
- Guthrie, Thomas 82
- Hadeka, Adolph 240
- Hadeka, John 234
- Hammond, Albert 119
- Handfield, Henry 3
- Hardick, Garrett 3
- Harrington, L. 203
- Hatfield, Mrs. S. 65
- Haynes, Theop. (2) 277
- Haynes, Wendell 276
- Herrington, Carl 230
- Hertberg, Astrida 187
- Hicks, M. Est. 21
- Hoblock, Michael 196
- Hooper, Olen 173
- Hopkins, C. A. 8
- Horn, Frank 53
- Horsall, Col. E. 139
- Horton, Dr. K. E. 205
- Howe, Judson (9) 218
- Hughes, Judge Chas. 52
- Hughes, William 190
- Hughes, Eric 29
- Hullett, Nell 73
- Hullihan, Major G. 114
- Hull, R. Alex 394
- Russan, Chas. D. 269
- Idylwild, 94
- Irons, Dr. J. G. 298
- Irvine, Dr. V. G. 93
- Jaeger, Mrs. Olive 160
- Jones, Ethel 33
- Jones, Ethel B. Est. (10) 261
- Jones, Mrs. E. B. 17
- Jones, Jennie C. 83
- Jones, Samuel (10) 157
- Jenks, Gladys 213
- Jensen, Col. L. 359
- Kallahan, Theresa 76
- Kasom, Phillip 229
- Kell, Henry J. 40
- Kelley, Dr. Edward 19
- Kindberg, Mrs. L. (2) 107
- Kitchell, Alma 195
- Knapp, Norman (2) 249
- Kollander, E. 203
- Labas, A. 124
- LaFrance, Grace (2) 282
- Lake St. Catherine Cottages 202
- Lake St. Catherine Inn 232
- Landis, Mrs. Julia 275
- Larson, Franklin 28
- Leahy, B. Est. 309
- Laughlin, Olen 188
- Lawler, Eleanor 5
- Leis, L. Alonso 296
- Leis, Charles 152
- Locke, Edward 58
- Locke, Garrett (2) 118
- Lubin, Albert 13
- Lynn, Eugene Est. 202
- Lyn-Are, T. Jerome (9) 137
- Macura, Andrew 209
- Mallin, Frank 64
- Marshall E. M. 220
- Mason, D. W. 32
- Matookik, Jos. (2) 201
- Mills, Amette 148
- Monette, S. H. 281
- Monette, Marie 278
- Munroe, Leighton 37
- Moore, Mrs. Hazel 120
- Moore, C. E. 254
- Moran & Reynolds 57
- Morris, Harold 178
- Morrow, Arthur 198
- Moss, Mrs. Helen 15
- Mott, Col. F. S. 34
- Mott, Margarita 39
- Munson, Madeline 86
- Myers, Madeline 109
- McClaurie, Francis 248
- McDonald, Harry 83
- McGuire, Howard 297
- McMorrow, Julia 225
- McShanes, 253
- Melton, Camillus 77
- Meibit, Dr. Robert 268
- Norton, Beatrice 290
- Nourse, Harold 243
- Osterhaut, Jane 11
- Owens, W. Est. (7) 284
- Peel, Robert 177
- Potter, Charles 54
- Potter, Mrs. Robert 71
- Pratt, S. 175
- Pritchard, Alleyna 128
- Pritchard, Edris 200
- Pritchard, Gordon 251
- Probst, John 233
- Quinn, Katherine 267
- Quinn, Gerald 268
- Ranese, Elihu 184
- Rabbin, Mrs. Sara 112
- Rawson, Nelson 204
- Reed, Donald 31
- Raid, Dr. Francis 149
- Renton, Jane 250
- Reynolds & Willette 166
- Ritchie, Albert 158
- Ritchie, Norman 159
- Rising, Simeon 97
- Risking, S. & W. 21
- Roberts, Filmore 163
- Roberts, E. R. 236
- Roberts, Mrs. M. (2) 233
- Roberts, Morris 252
- Roberts, Raymond 222
- Roberts, William J. 154
- Robinson, Edward 271
- Rogers, M. & F. 213
- Rosen, Dr. David 206
- Rote Rosen, Morris 104
- Rothchild, Miriam 257
- Rubin, Albert 13
- Ryan, Charissa (2) 270
- Sanson, Dr. Ross 16
- Schwarzman, Earl 51
- Scott, John 171
- Scribner, G. & R. 211
- Scully, William 20
- Secor, J. W. 213
- Shattuck, J. E. 217
- Shoehan, Harold 185
- Sheldon, Wilford 167
- Shellock, Walter 179
- Shroder, J. Ford 44
- Smith, Edward L. 121
- Smith, Michael 181
- Smith, Phoebe 90
- Smith, Robert 252
- Sprague, George 295
- State Park, 259
- Stafford, Ronald 238
- Stecker, J. G. 131
- Stevens, Gordon 78
- Stevens, Raymond 79
- Stewart, Kenneth 99
- Stoughton, Gertrude 272
- Strong, W. 242
- Sumner, Dr. John 42
- Taran, John 247
- Tatko, John (2) 108
- Thomas, For. 4
- Thomas, William 110
- Thrall, D. S. 294
- The Pines, (W. H. Peck Est.) 291
- Tierney, John 130
- Tougher, Robt. 70
- Tougher Heating Co. 69
- Towley, Byron 151
- Towley, George 44
- Travers, J. W. 214
- Travers, Pat 216
- Treat, Dr. Edwin 147
- Tyler, Willard (3) 235
- Vanderburg, Dr. W. 149
- Vandenberg, Prof. 62
- Vandermaiden, Alfred 22
- Vandermaiden, Edwin 15
- Vandermaiden, Henry 36
- Vandermaiden, Robert 37
- Vine, Dr. Anthony 14
- Walker, Lynn 138
- Wallace, Donald 169
- Warner, Randolph Jr. 193
- Weinberg's 103
- Wentink, Viola 187
- West, Bradford 26
- Wescott, H. (2) 273
- White, Robert 224
- Whitaker, Carl 63
- Weser, M. O. 67
- Wiener, Jerry J. 1
- Winslow, Carlton 12
- Wilson, G. B. 146
- Wilcox, George 230
- Williams, George (2) 285
- Williams, H. 145
- Williams, Lawrence 91
- Williams, Mary L. 92
- Williams, Nellie 171
- Williams, Newton (4) 142
- Williams, Malcolm 228
- Williams, Robert 271
- Williams, Russell (3) 292
- Williams, T. Milton 182
- Williams, W. J. 127
- Wolcott, Kenneth 124
- Woolford, Helen 264
- Worrell, E. J. 161
- Wyckoff, William 168
- Wysolawski, John 162
- Yamny, Mrs. Catherine 245
- Zidovsky, Mike 123

CHURCH SERVICES

GRANVILLE

St. Mary's Catholic, 8 & 10 A.M.
 Confessions: 4 & 7 P.M. Saturdays
 Trinity Episcopal, 10 A.M.
 Holy Communion: 4:30 & 5:30 P.M.
 on Saturdays.
 Baptist, 11 A.M.
 Methodist, 11 A.M.
 Presbyterian, 10:30 A.M.

WELLS

Methodist, 9:45 A.M.
 Episcopal, 7:30 P.M.

POULTNEY

United Protestant, 10 A.M.
 St. Raphael Catholic,
 8:30 & 10:30 A.M.
 Confessions: Saturday,
 4 & 7 P.M.
 Episcopal, 11 A.M.
 Holy Communion: 7:30 A.M.
 Christian Science, 11 A.M.

ROADS

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Part of the Schmidt property, later the State Park.

In 1953, when I was serving my second term in the Vermont Legislature, I was asked by the director of the Department of Forests and Parks to introduce a bill which would provide for the establishment of a State Park on Lake St. Catherine. The people of Poultney and Wells, aware of the need for a public beach on the lake, were generally favorable to the idea so I willingly assumed sponsorship. The State already had an option on the Schmidt property at the North End, the chosen site, and we thought it would be a routine matter to get the bill through. How wrong that assumption was! The owners of the adjoining lands, evidently envisioning a Coney Island type of development, fought the measure strenuously. Then there was the usual money-saving element who felt the price -- \$25,000 for 15 acres with 500 feet of frontage, a large building and four smaller ones! -- was too high, while still others thought that Lake St. Catherine would not have sufficient appeal to make a park there profitable. So in spite of hard work on the part of the proponents, the bill was defeated.

At that point a member of the Park Commission came forward to report that he had been offered a large sum of money to get the bill withdrawn. The State House was a-buzz for never before had a charge of bribery been heard in the hallowed halls. On the basis of this information, the bill was called up for reconsideration and this time passed with ease.

On July 3, 1953, a large throng of people, including the Governor, Lt. Governor and many other state officials, witnessed an impressive opening ceremony at which I had the pleasure of cutting the symbolic ribbon. From that time the Park has grown steadily in popularity. One has but to look at the beach and picnic area on a hot Sunday afternoon to know how very wrong was the group who said that St. Catherine lacked the drawing power necessary to support a park.

During the 1930's and 40's Kinni Kinnic, on the northeast shore, was operated as a girls' camp. Not far distant was Camp Arrowhead, a similar establishment for boys. Many activities were offered and both places had a large summer population. Neither camp has been active for some years, though the Kinni Kinnic sign still marks the road leading to the buildings. The only young people's camp on the lake at present is Catherine Capers, which specializes in teaching horsemanship.



After the hurricane of 1950.

Vermont weather varies greatly and at times Nature has shown her more violent side in this area. Our earliest settlers soon found that their new home could be a place of suffering for the winter of 1780-81 was one of the most severe ever known. The depth of snow and the bitter cold were extreme. An old record states "For 50 successive days no snow melted on the south side of buildings."

In 1811, on July 22, there was a most destructive flash flood in our valley. While we can find no written record of the effect on the lake shore, we can safely assume it was experienced here for it was devastating in both Wells and Poultney. In the former, at least one family perished, while in the latter many homes and businesses were washed away and the course of the Poultney River was permanently changed.

1816 was "the year without a summer" for there was frost in every month. Ice formed on Lake St. Catherine at unseasonable times and on the night of June 8 fifteen newly-shorn sheep froze to death in a barn quite near the lake. Again in 1852 there was an unusually cold summer and snow fell on the Fourth of July.

So, through the years, there have been occasional bursts of natural violence of one kind or another -- the Big Wind of 1847 which destroyed the never-completed first meeting house of Wells, near the site of the present D.A.R. marker overlooking Route 30, the blizzard of 1888, the flood of 1927 and others.

Probably the most destructive storm of recent years, perhaps of all time in the immediate area, was the hurricane of November, 1950. This powerful wind took down hundreds of trees around the shore and damaged many cottages. Gladys Cox lost 72 large trees around her place on Horseshoe Bay. Don Read (we weren't married then) lost 56 large pines on his Ox Bow property. When notified of the damage he drove up from New York and literally couldn't find his cottage. He went right by his own driveway for there was not a familiar landmark in sight, just a tangle of fallen trees, some on the cottage and garage. Many other summer residents suffered similar losses, especially those with places on the West Side. It took a long time for the lake area to recover from the hurricane and even now fallen trees, decaying where they fell, can be seen in the woods nearby.



An unusual photo, taken in 1905, of a stormy day at Lake St. Catherine.

Landmarks That Have Disappeared

KINNI KINNIC (Also see page 38)

In December, 1929, St. Luke's Catholic Church of Schenectady, NY, sold more than 200 acres to Camp Kinni Kinnic Inc., with offices in New York City, for \$30,000. A large portion of the property was not on Lake St. Catherine but on the east side of Route 30. The lake parcel was adjacent to the site of the former Lake View Hotel (later Camp Arrowhead, a camp for boys, and much later, Lake St. Catherine State Park).

In its heyday Kinni Kinnic, a girls' camp, was quite grand. Its 55-acre main campus included a 13-acre golf course, tennis courts, riding stables and a lovely waterfront for sailing, swimming and water skiing. A recreation building with a large stone fireplace provided space for indoor games during rainy days. There was a theater with a full stage for camp productions and a building for pottery and craft projects. Other buildings included ten cabins arranged in a circle for the 160 campers, a bath and shower facility, an infirmary, and cabins for visitors to use during the tournaments held at the camp. Meals were served in a central dining hall by waitresses. Even though most of the waitresses were local girls, many stayed in quarters provided for them above the kitchen during the summer.

The campers were primarily Jewish and mainly from New York City. Most of the girls stayed for the eight-week season. Two prominent former campers are Joan Rivers, who has made jokes about Kinni Kinnic in her comedy routines, and Rosalind Russell.

On occasion the campers were taken on overnight hikes up the mountain owned by Kinni Kinnic across Route 30. After much circling and doubling back they ended up camping in a field not far from their own stables and never discovered how close they were to camp until morning.

Co-owners Jeanette G. Brill and Herbert Baer Brill closed Kinni Kinnic in 1977. That same year the administration building burned down. Twenty acres of Kinni Kinnic property were added to the State Park. Another portion of the property was purchased by Anthony F. Cerosimo in 1980. By April, 1983, zoning permits had been obtained to divide the property into 22 lots, all numbered 255 plus suffix. Some who bought original camp buildings retained a bit of Kinni Kinnic history as they converted them into homes.

In 1953 Jean and Edgar Edwards bought Cottage 256 between Kinni Kinnic and the cottage adjacent to Camp Arrowhead. When Kinni Kinnic property became available they added ten acres to their Dragon Retreat. They converted the former director's office to a guest cottage. The supply pantry for the camp kitchen became the storage space for the Edwardses' garden tools.

Camp 255-3, owned by Peggy and Don Husch, used to be the craft shop. One of the newer camp buildings, it was only 15 years old at the time of the camp closing. The Husches had the building moved 30 feet and placed on a foundation. The Laura and John Edwards family camp, 255-4, once Kinni Kinnic's recreation building, features the building's original stone fireplace. The former camp theater is now camp 255-6, home to the Anne and Charles Zolnik family.

Those who live in the Kinni Kinnic area have their own association. They share three acres comprised of tennis courts and a common beach. The closing of the girls' camp marked the beginning of a new community on the east shore of Lake St. Catherine.

FOREST HOUSE
(Also see page 17)
(Now the Lake St. Catherine Cottages)

In 1940 the Wysolmerski family acquired the Forest House property and operated it successfully for the next several years. Activities were curtailed as a result of World War II and the pavilion became idle around 1950. It was subsequently demolished.

The property was then taken over by Dr. Sigismund Wysolmerski and his wife, Jane, of Rutland. They built several cottages surrounded by wide open playgrounds and one of the best beaches on the lake. The focus of the Lake St. Catherine Cottages has been families with small children. The cottages are completely furnished and feature two or three bedrooms. Some of the cottages have been occupied by the same family for as long as 35 years, and several generations return each year to this lovely vacation spot.



Post card view of Lake St. Catherine Cottages

IDYLWILD PARK
(Also see page 16)



Dot and Cliff Ellis, owners of Idylwild Park

Dot and Cliff Ellis operated Idylwild Park from 1947 to 1970. Many school children enjoyed end-of-the-year picnics at Idylwild, and the general public enjoyed boating, swimming, Bingo, dancing, roller skating and bowling. Finally in 1970 Dot and Cliff decided to tear down the pavilion since it was in need of extensive repair work, and insurance was so difficult to obtain. They sold individual cottages on the premises to private individuals—many of whom had rented from the Ellises for several years. Dot and Cliff were able to enjoy retirement in Florida and returned to their cottage at Idylwild for many summers.

Cliff died in 1996. He worked until he was 80, and those who knew him will always remember his pleasant manner and friendliness. Many of us remember Cliff driving the Water Wagon around the lake for a fee of 25 cents. The trip took an hour. The Water Wagon would accommodate about 25 people. How different from the boats on Lake St. Catherine today!

(Information obtained from interviewing Dot Ellis at her lake cottage on September 30, 1996.)

LOCHLEA PLAYHOUSE

(Also see page 32)

Lochlea Playhouse opened on July 31, 1930. Named for its location, *meadow by the lake*, the playhouse was in the shadow of Pond Mountain on Route 30 about a mile north of Wells. It was built by expanding a hay barn to provide seating for 240 and adding a porch. Annie R. Huyck generously shared her playhouse with the community.

From 1930 to 1935 Wells and Lake St. Catherine folks enjoyed amateur theatrical performances such as "Arizona Cowboy," "What Annie Brought Home," "Singapore Spider," "A Quiet Family," "The Haunted House," and "Two Days to Marry." Other playhouse programs included "Ye Olde Folks Concert," children's programs, a 20-piece boys' band from Poultney, the Montvert Concert Co., card parties, women's political meetings, dinners and dances. Admission ranged from 25 cents to 75 cents, and proceeds were used for the work of the Wells Grange, for the Lochlea Lassies Basketball Team, and other local causes. In October, 1936, the Playhouse was used as a temporary school following a fire at the Wells Village School.

In October, 1942, Annie Huyck deeded the playhouse and seven acres of land to family friends, Harold and Marion Loizeaux, who used it as a summer vacation home. Lochlea Playhouse was burned down in the mid-1960's because it had deteriorated beyond repair.

In May, 1986, Jack and Jean Ritchie Cooper purchased the property from Peggy Loizeaux Engle and her husband, David, and had their vacation home, Playhouse II, built in 1991. Jean, a niece of Annie R. Huyck, has written, "Sometimes on a clear night if you listen carefully you might hear the echoes of the laughter and applause that emanated from the Lochlea Playhouse in those early days of theatrical activity." The remains of the slate foundation of Lochlea Playhouse are still evident to the right of the driveway which leads to Playhouse II.



1920 Lake St. Catherine post card from the collection of Phil Alden

THE LAKE ST. CATHERINE ASSOCIATION

(Also see pages 34-36)

Beginning

An Association had been started about 1918, but interest faded in the twenties. In August of 1953 Charles F. and Mary Ryan were visiting with J. Malcolm and Esther W. Williams. Charlie mentioned the Lake Dunmore Lake Association and followed up by getting information on that association. By August 21, 1953, Articles of Association for a Lake St. Catherine Association were signed in Poultney, VT. The purpose of the association was defined as follows: "Encouraging and promoting the development and beautifying of the grounds, cottages, beaches and roads of privately owned homes and cottages on or near Lake St. Catherine." Over the years the Association has undertaken a variety of initiatives to fulfill the stated objectives.

Activities

- Through patient and persistent work, faulty septic systems adjacent to the lake have been identified and corrected. Water quality continues to be a major focus of the Association's efforts.
- In order to operate a motor boat legally in the State of Vermont, anyone born after 1974 must pass a boat safety course. To accommodate lake folks, the Association offers such a course, generally twice each summer.
- The Association places buoys at hazardous lake areas and works with the State to set and maintain appropriate no-wake areas on the lake.
- Members of the Association work closely with local officials and with state legislators and other state officials on all matters affecting the lake.
- House tours were conducted in 1987 and 1992 as Association fund raisers. Several historic camps were opened to the public, and Association members transported those on the tour from one cottage to another by boat.
- Pot luck suppers in conjunction with the annual meeting, an annual picnic, and an annual golf tournament have provided opportunities for sociability.
- The Association periodically updates the lake map and directory.
- A committee on lake beautification has provided plantings at the entrances to several lake roads.
- The Association arranges for the spraying of lake properties twice each year for insect control.
- The weed situation in the lake, the appearance of alewives in 1997, and the impending zebra mussel invasion are monitored constantly by the Lake St. Catherine Association which makes every attempt to ameliorate these conditions on behalf of all lake residents.

The Ongoing Milfoil Challenge

By early 1970 it was evident that Eurasian milfoil was a problem in Lake St. Catherine. The weed was probably introduced inadvertently by a boat that had come from a milfoil-infested lake. The State of Vermont does not permit the use of chemicals to combat the milfoil, so in 1979 the Association purchased a weed-cutting machine. The first machine was named *Hungry Harvey* by Mike Roberts, the Poultney fifth-grader who won the weed-harvester-naming contest. By 1983 the Association had purchased a conveyor, *Harvey's Helper*, and a truck, *Harvey's Hauler*. *Hungry Harvey* was finally retired after years of yeoman service and by the summer of 1997 was being offered for sale.

In the spring of 1987 the Association purchased a 1980 Mudcat Weed Harvester for \$26,000. The Michigan supplier delivered the harvester with the Association paying \$1.79 per mile for transport. Purchase included a spare 33 H.P. diesel engine. Delivery of *Hungry Harvey, Jr.* was complicated by the necessity of finding a route with underpasses high enough to permit its passing and finding an appropriate launch site at Lake St. Catherine. Larry Pickett, John Thomas and his tractor offloaded the machine at the State Park beach area, which turned out to be too shallow. Improvising with a telephone pole found on the grounds and the tractor, the men pushed the harvester into deeper water and it finally floated.

At the time of this purchase Larry Pickett was President of the Lake St. Catherine Association. Since then Larry has headed the weed harvesting program. Six notebooks filled with daily reports of machine maintenance, hours and locations of operation, amount of weeds removed, operators and their hours testify to the thoroughness with which he has undertaken this assignment.

Millie Foil, the third harvester, was acquired for \$15,000 in 1992. Frustrated with the abundance of weeds in their Lake Champlain bay, the town of St. Albans, VT, decided to stop harvesting after this three-year-old machine tipped over because the conveyer had been overloaded.

The newest harvester, *Uncle Sam*, can fit under the bridge between the big and little lakes, thus eliminating the tedious process of loading a harvester on a trailer, moving it around the bridge and then unloading it again. Purchased in 1997 for \$55,000 from the man who sold the Association its first harvesting machine, *Uncle Sam* had been a demonstrator near Syracuse and had logged only 35 hours of engine time. Painted in patriotic red, white and blue, *Uncle Sam* seemed a most appropriate name for this newest weed harvester.

A memorable time in managing the weed harvesting program occurred in 1994 when *Hungry Harvey* capsized due to a tank filling up with water. Two weeks later, one final load of weeds combined with a sudden wind gust caused the transporter to tip over.

The original harvester had only a horizontal sickle bar. Subsequent machines have had vertical sickle bars, too, thus helping to contain the bulk of the harvest. Disposal of the weeds has not been a problem since gardeners and others take the harvested weeds away by the truckload for compost and land fill.

Funding for the weed control program is provided by the Lake St. Catherine Association, the Towns of Poultney and Wells, and the State of Vermont. According to the State-issued permit, harvesting cannot begin until June 1st, after the bass have spawned. With the month of May unusually cool in both 1996 and 1997, the harvesters were able to get ahead of the weeds early in the season. Other years warmer springs have brought milfoil growth to the surface by early June. As the decade neared its end, however, there seemed to be evidence of a slow decline in the volume of milfoil, especially in the Big Lake. The cause of the decline is unknown, but it is a welcome relief to cottage owners in areas where the weed had become a major nuisance.

Presidents

1954-56	Charles Ryan	1973-76	Albert Becker
1956-58	Dr. Merritt Brown	1976-77	Morine Groh McShane*
1958-59	Dr. Ross Scanlon		Jim Price
1959-60	Newton Williams	1977-79	Jim Price
1960-61	Harold Wescott *	1979-80	Jerry Crawford
	John Hadeka	1980-81	Bob Fortman
1961-62	Col. Elmer B. Horsfall	1981-82	Corinne Eldredge
1962-63	Charles Potter	1982-83	Doris G. White
1963-65	Richard Eichorn	1983-84	Ed Edwards
1965-68	Edwin Vanderminden	1984-87	Larry Pickett
1968-70	William E. Jaatinen	1987-91	Bob Williams
1970-71	Dr. Nicholas Murphy	1992-96	Phil Pope
1971-72	Hal Kelly	1996-	Phil Alden

* Resigned

Thus we see that Lake St. Catherine has passed through many phases from the time the Indian campsites in the wilderness were replaced by the first homes and gardens of the early settlers: the "industrial" period when many small mills and businesses were made possible by water power from the lake, the colorful decades of the resort hotels and the era of the "camp" which gradually grew into today's period of densely-developed waterfront with varied structures, including an increasing number of year-round dwellings.

Meantime, the craft on the lake have changed as drastically, from the birchbark canoes of the Red Men to the first rowboats, followed by the exciting steamboats, the historic Water Wagon, and now the many speedy motor boats and graceful "sailfish." Yes, Lake St. Catherine has undergone many changes.

And what of the future? To a great extent the long-range attraction of the area depends on the success of the weed removal project. We who love the lake hope for the best so that good St. Catherine, who has shed her beneficence on countless generations in the past, may continue to do so for many generations to come.





Lake St. Catherine's first weed harvester, *Hungry Harvey*, was purchased by the Association in 1979



Purchased in 1997, *Uncle Sam* is the fourth generation of weed harvesters to operate on Lake St. Catherine

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