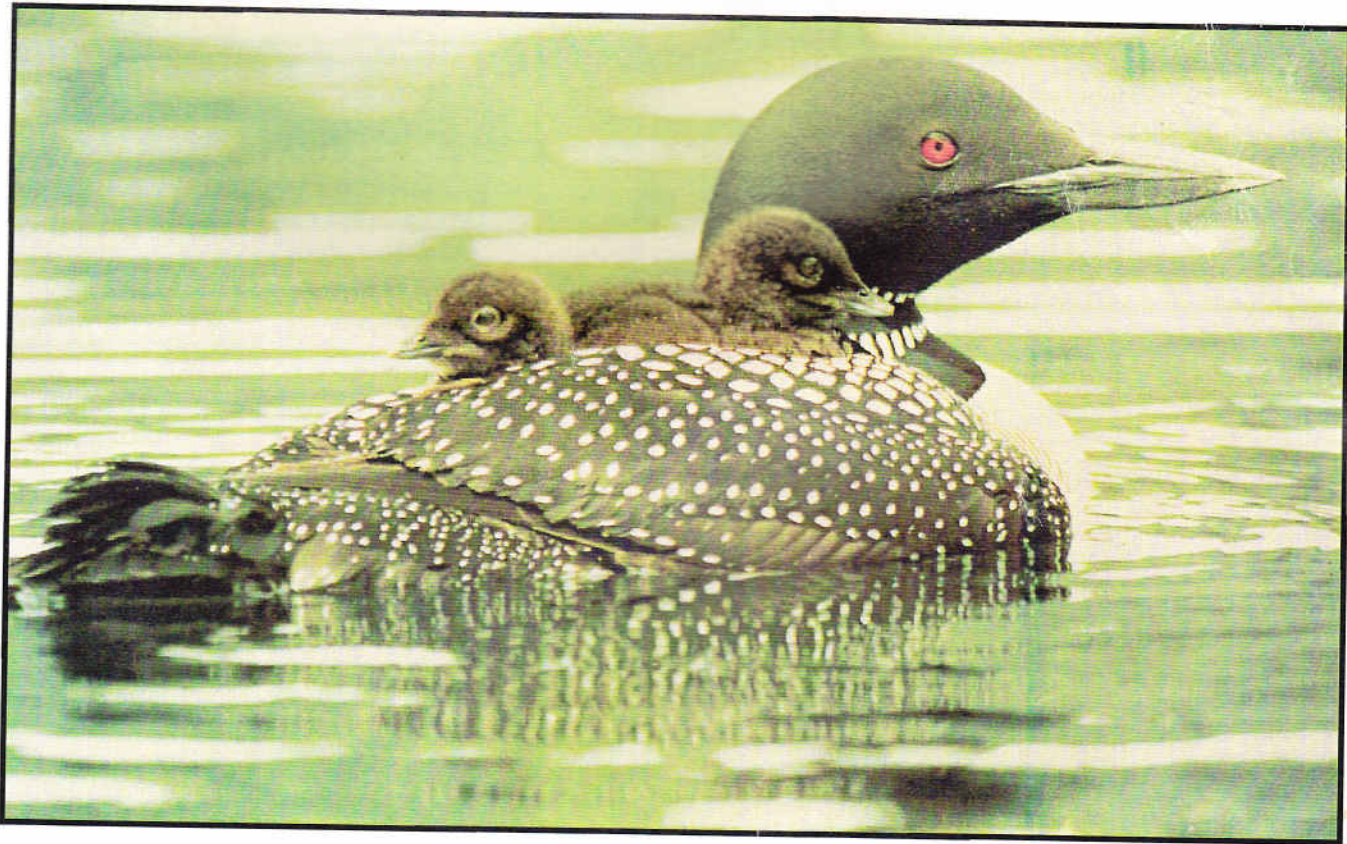


THE FIRST YEAR(s)
1959 -

LOONLAKE

GRAVENHURST



Bob Jordan

INTRODUCTION

This booklet has been prepared for the sole interest of the property owners along the south side , and at the east end of Loon Lake (Gravenhurst) , as appears on Registered Plan M321 , for the township of Muskoka, prepared in 1958, approved , and made available to the public on June 19 , 1959 . No attempt has been made to include those lots on the north side of the lake, and numbered 1 -16 on the above-mentioned plan. Three of the original lots, numbered 17-33 have been split, resulting in the twenty (20) existing lots , currently numbered S₂₁ -S₂₀ .

It is hoped that each property owner will enjoy a bit of "history" concerning the road construction into the south side of the lake , and that the building of the Jordan cottage on lot #25, Plan M321, and now Known as lot S₂₁₀ , might typify the "blood, sweat and tears" that each owner shed in the struggle to build your cottage. It is a further hope that when your cottage is sold , this booklet will remain at your cottage , so that the new owner might also enjoy this brief record.

Many thanks are extended Albert (Al) Burkinshaw, owner of lot #16 , Plan M321 , and to Orvil Rowe , a current citizen of Gravenhurst , and builder of the cottage on lot #30 , plan M321 for their information provided towards this project.

BEFORE SUBDIVISION

One of the owners of land in the Loon Lake area , was a certain Mr. Burkinshaw , grandfather of Albert (Al) Burkinshaw , first buyer , and present owner of lot #16 of Plan M 321 , being the most easterly lot on the north side of the lake . Al's grandfather cleared the first one hundred acres of land in the area , opposite the first farmhouse approaching the north side of the lake after leaving the Musquash Road . Henry Burkinshaw , an uncle of Al , and who worked for a surveyor , had two hundred acres in the same area , the foundation of whose homestead still exists on a large , flat rock, visible from the road as you approach the lake from the north side .

And so it was , when maps were made of the lake , and the surrounding area , three islands near the center of the lake (see map) were named HENRY , EDWARD and BURKINSHAW , all members of the family, and ancestors of Al. Although the map misspells the surname , the correct spelling is Burkinshaw . Many thanks to Al for this contribution . We know he he is still enjoying his cottage years (since 1960), and has been honored that his ancestors were first in the area.

Each person has his own reasons for owning a cottage ; whether as an investment , a love of the outdoors , a place for the children to swim , boat , sail , fish and hike , or a retreat from the busy hubbub of the city . In many cases , it may be a combination of two or more of the above ,but for me, a place of quiet , a retreat to 'get away from it all' , with woods , trails and a feel for nature . (A lot on the shores of Lake Huron or Georgian Bay , would not be the place). And so it is , this booklet may refer to the events occurring on Loon Lake , as experienced by me , might typify the whole program of each owner , and his struggle to "have his own private place in Muskoka".

During the summer of 1958 , it was my pleasure to assist a colleague, Jim Swalm , now a resident of the Gravenhurst area , with the building of his cottage on Resound Lake (sometimes called Echo Lake) , near Torrence . (It is one of a cluster of three lakes , Resound L. , Clear L. and Gullwing L.)By the time 1959 rolled around , the temptation was strong enough to warrant a trip to the Department of Lands and Forests in Parry Sound, with the request for a lot in the area of Gloucester Pool , or Go Home Lake , both located nearer to Georgian Bay , and at the outlet of the Muskoka River.Nothing was available there at that time , but a subdivision on Loon Lake , near Gravenhurst , had been surveyed for two years , and was expected to be made availablethis summer (1959), to the general public .It was "first come , first served , cash only," and the price was \$1.00 per foot frontage, plus \$150.00 for each lot towards the survey costs.(A small outlay it seems now , but at that time , it was equivalent to several days pay.)

The return home , of course , demanded a 'detour' to Gravenhurst , where a waitress at the then famous Sloan's restaurant , described the route to Loon Lake . At that time , the foundation , and floor only , of an abandoned home was located at what is now a sharp bend in the road , at the south-west end of what is commonly referred to as "the meadow" , and has been marked I on the map .From here , it was about a one-mile walk to the south east end of Loon Lake , along a well marked 'Blueberry Trail'.It shoul be stated here, that in the late nineteen twenties or early thirties , a forest fire went through this area along Loon Lake, resulting in the lush blueberry growth , luring many pickers to the area .A friend and cottage owner on Muldrew Lake , says that as a young girl , she and her parents picked the best blueberries in the area along the 'Loon Lake blueberry trail'.Sadly , increasing forest growth has reduced both the quality and quantity of berries in the area. Interesting also , is the fact that the then owners of Miami Lodge ,(the present campgroundat the south end of Muldrew Lake), told me that he and his father had often carried a canoe along the path to Loon Lake where they caught the largest black bass of all the lakes in the area. (Could this be that Loon Lake is the first lake of the watershed , receiving the water from the area from as far south as near the 'Muskoka Trading Place 'on highway #11 , perhaps two and one half miles south of town?)

Upon reaching the lake , it was discovered that each lot of the subdivision was well marked with a wooden 4"square pointed marker , and a stone pile . Some were also marked with a 1"square steel bar ,and it was no trouble to record the lot number , together with its particular shoreline and topography .Some buyers apparently bought 'sight and unseen' , probably not having the time to walk the area , and see what was there firsthand . Two weeks after this exciting venture , the letter arrived indicating the lots were available , necessitating a speedy trip to Parry Sound. Certain conditions applied . One individual could buy only one lot , preventing resales and making high profits. Mineral rights were not granted , and work to the value of \$2,000.00 must be spent within two years on each lot , preventing holding the lot for several years , and again profiting from resale . Mr. B. Jones (31) and Mr.O.Rowe (30) , Gravenhurst residences , were the first two buyers , Mr.V.Draper (32) , also of Gravenhurst , and Rev.A.Young (17),London , Ont. , were the next two buyers , with R.Jordan , Waterloo , being the fifth buyer , purchasing lot 25. The names of the buyers was recorded on a copy of the registered plan in Parry Sound as each lot was sold .

CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

During the late summer of 1959 , a meeting of all the south-side property owners was convened in the hall above Sloan's Restaurant in Gravenhurst. An association was formed and it was agreed that each property owner contribute a sum of money (\$350.00 if I remember correctly) ,towards the cost of a road into the lake . The best route was to continue the old road along the north side of Muldrew Lake, a road which eventually passed to the west side of Bearpaw Lake , and joined the Southwood Road in the vicinity of the C.N. Railway . (see map) . In 1959 , however , this road was only passable to the large flat rock , still in evidence on the North Muldrew Lake road , about $\frac{1}{2}$ kilometer south of the start of Pinetree Road . From the North Muldrew Lake Road then it was about 0.6 miles (1 K.) ,to the public Block B of Plan 321 , on the south side of the lake.This route was chosen because of its closeness to the lake , and no purchases of land , easements , or Rights of way , was necessary from private owners .

Mr. Carl Laycock , a retired road superintendent , was hired as construction supervisor , and he established the road location , choosing those areas requiring the fewest culverts , the least amount of earth fill , and the fewest number of trees to be cut down . Mr.Harley Holmes did the chainsaw work , and John and Chum Whitehead , who owned a horse , dragged the logs to the low-lying and swampy areas where they were laid side by side , then covered with earth and gravel , creating a road known as a corduroy road . (About 165 feet of corduroy road was built across the swamp located about halfwaybetween Muldrew Lake and Loon Lake).

Dave McMillan operated a bulldozer , and it was hoped that enough earth and fill could be acquired close enough to the road and pushed into the pathway to make a single-lane road . (Backing up to a wider location on a flat rock was the order of the day if you should meet a vehicle on this narrow roadway). A close look at aerial photographs 40-30 and 40-31 , taken in the spring of 1960 , shows the newly constructed road , and also the areas where the bulldozer has pushed earth up onto the roadbed. It was later discovered that there was insufficient earth and fill for some areas , and so gravel fill had to be hauled in . The Dep't of Lands and Forest had recently finished roadwork in the area , and their equipment was available . The cottage owners also paying the wages and living expenses of the operators . A front-end loader and one truck were rented , and the single-lane road was completed to Block 'B' Plan 321 by New Years of 1959 . Much brush and many logs were also placed for the roadbase in the lowlying area off the east end of Turtle Lake near the start of Drury Lane , and Block 'B' of the plan.

In the spring of 1960, it was decided to construct a road across the rear of the cottage lots from Block 'B' to the last private lot on the east end of the subdivision owned by Rev. A. Young . Additional money was contributed by each cottage owner for this work , and each owner signed an agreement to give other owners the right to travel over his (the owners) land . It was then up to each property owner to establish the location and pay for his own private laneway to his cottage , usually placed a few feet from the shore of the lake . (Names & some data above by Orvil Rowe).

Ontario Hydro was now able to construct their line along Drury Lane , and each owner , after having his cottage wiring duly inspected , was permitted to be connected to the hydro service . Ont . Hydro provided 100 feet of this wiring the balance of the wire and the necessary poles were the responsibility of the cottage owner . Not all cottagers requested the service the first years ; in our case , not until 1967.

Much cooperation existed during the cottage-building program. Relatives , friends and co-workers seemed to be the order of the weekend . Only a few could afford the luxury of having the cottage built by a contractor. It was my pleasure to give and receive help from Hilt Davis , lot #26, and from Vic Annis , lot #21 of the plan . By the winter of 1960-61 , all cottages were at least 'closed in ' , and it seems building programs in most cases , have continued ever since !!!!!!!!! . How well I remember hearing Bonnie Jones , lot #31 , upon driving the last nail of the last shingle on the roof, give a loud "YA -HOO " , that could be heard over the whole east end of the lake.

Shortly after the road had been completed to Block 'B' , a developer from Toronto , Mr. Black, bought land further west along the south side of the lake , and began selling off cottage lots . Within a few short years , the road began to deteriorate with the extra traffic and heavily loaded trucks , hauling in construction materials and gravel. After several appeals , he improved the road , and a few years later the road was brought up to municipal standards, properly surveyed, taken over by the municipality.

This road, from Muldrew Lake to the West end of Loon Lake , later became known as Pinetree Rd. The private road along lots #17 to #33 , was given the name Drury Lane after Ellen Drury , an original owner , long time road superintendent , and an active contributor to the social life of our Cottager's Association.

Since Drury Lane has been periodically used by the general public , our Cottager's Association (formed when construction was first taking place) , decided to keep it a private road under our private ownership .The road has been closed yearly for a minimum of one day , preventing its takeover by individuals or companies, and keeping its control in the hands of the association. The blocking of the road was carried out for many years by John Janas (lot #18) , until the Janas cottage was sold in the early 1990's .This writer is currently in possession of the barricade , and has continued to block the road each year , usually in Nov. when it is least inconvenient to the cottagers. Our association has also had a 'potluck' picnic each year, when new officers are elected (president , secretary-treasurer and road superintendent) , and a road maintenance fee is collected for gravel costs and sign maintenance . The host cottager is usually the president or president-elect.

Regarding full ownership of your entire lot , it should be stated here that the original registered plan (M321) did not grant to the owners the first 66 feet back from the water's edge. (Some people say the reason pertained to an old 'navigation law' and applied to all waterways; others said it was a concession allowance held in lieu of roadbuilding). However , by 1980 , most owners agreed to apply for ownership of this 66 feet, and in 1981 , the land was surveyed, the plan was registered , and each participating owner paid \$250.00 for the survey and land cost of that front 66 foot portion of his lot . Maps of this portion of those owners participating are also included in this booklet.

It is hoped that new and old cottagers alike, will continue to enjoy the pleasures offered by this (as Vic Annis once said) , "IN ALL SEASONS OF THE YEAR. THE PRETTIEST LITTLE LAKE IN MUSKOKA".

H A P P Y

H O L I D A Y S

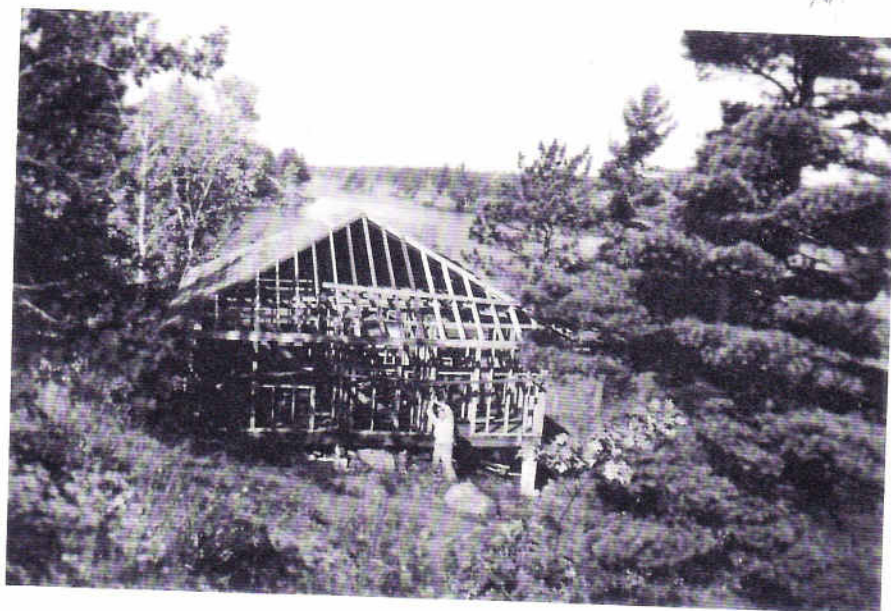
Bob Jordan

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July, 1998



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