

Moose Lake Notes in its entirety 2020-2021

Information provided by Mike Williams written by Jim Onarheim

I talked with Mike Williams on the phone over this past weekend (Dec.14,2020). He informed me that he was putting together some Moose lake notes or a partial history of Moose Lake along with the input from several other local Moose Lake area residents. The story is well over 3000 words which is much more than I am allowed for each week's article. The information in the article, is remarkably interesting and I am sure you will enjoy reading it. Things that will be covered in the M.L. History are as follows. Louie's Landing, Pine Point Resort, Moose Lake Club and the Island People, Fin & Feather Resort, Bob & Stella Schultz Cabin, Ken & Louise Peterson cabin, Ralph & Bobby Pope cabin, Buckhorn Bar, Pelkey Family, Moose Lake Store, & the Moose Lake People by Mike Dombeck. I will have to break the story into approximately five different segments because of the length of the article. At the conclusion I will post the article in its entirety on the MLIA website. I will have to always save room for other Moose Lake News so this story will be drawn out. I hope you enjoy it.

History of the Williams/Pelkey Cabin

Early in the 1950's Ben Williams, brother to a family of 15 children, read an interesting article about fishing and hunting in the Hayward Wisconsin area. Ben was in the Navy at the time but found time to venture from Illinois to the Moose Lake area for some wilderness adventure when he was at home from the military. Using his Rambler automobile, he accessed a boat and 3 horse motor to explore Moose Lake. Muskies were on his mind. He used his 3 horse to motor to traverse 7 miles up to the other end of the lake and fish his way back. Doing it this way, he was often successful. He also fished other lakes in the area, Teal Lake being one of them. He also pursued Ruffled Grouse in the fall in the Clam Lake area.

Very soon, brothers, Vance, John (the oldest), and Roger were traveling from their home in Batavia Illinois to join in on the activities. John, born in 1919, grew up during the Great Depression and served in WWII. Somewhere along the line he was determined to have a cabin in the north woods. Ben Williams came to become one of the original founders of the Montana chapter of Trout Unlimited. That organization is responsible for significant clean water legislation and the set aside of hundreds of thousands of wilderness lands in Montana.

In 1955 John was so impressed with Moose Lake that he and wife Barbara bought a lakeshore lot on a handshake. The lot is located on Fin and Feather Rd and was bought from Carl Breeman for the sum of Six hundred dollars. John would send 20 to 30 dollars each month to Carl, or whatever he could afford, until the land was paid for. Carl was one of the original large landowners in the area and owned most of the property on Fin & Feather Rd.

John had a large military style tent with a tall center pole that was set up several times on the lot for the fishing & hunting seasons over the next couple of years. Several others joined in including brother in laws, Bill Deking, Shortie Stenman, Steve Ludsted and friend Rich Panke In 1957, on a shoestring budget, a 20' x 20' cabin was built around a handpump. "Friend Carl" helped John drive the sand point for the shallow well and primed the new pump that eventually poured water into the new kitchen sink whenever the handle was worked. An outhouse was also erected on the property. **End of Part 1.**

John, being a teacher had the summers off. He would take a 13-hour drive transporting, Barbara, and the kids, Jeff, Barbara Jean, and Mike to the little lake place each summer for fun and projects. Barbara installed curtains early on and John made the comment that “the place was never the same after that”. The kids grew up using a Neptune rope-start 3 hp motor. Then it was a Martin 7 hp, and then a Johnson 10 hp on the original wooden green boat that was purchased much earlier on.

John, who also worked as a carpenter half of one summer in 1960. He was paid no wages for the summer work, but instead was bartered a run-about boat with a 25-hp motor. For the kids this was the jackpot. They learned to ski frontwards, backwards, on 2 skis, one ski, on a saucer and on each other’s shoulders and as doubles. John also built what we believe to be, was the first sailboat on the lake named, the “Barbara Jean”. Babe made many voyages across and around the lake alone, and with companions.

Each summer a project(s) was completed. The first lake porch, having 13 windows at a cost of \$1.00 each. The cabin got running cold water, a driveway-side porch, a toilet, then hot water, then a shower. Over 6 to 7 summers a knotty pine interior was added. In later years John made a lamp out of the original pump that was installed in the cabin.

Without TV, or internet, outdoor activities were a constant, and then board and card games when the weather dictated. Saturdays, chocolate malts were also enjoyed at Louie’s Landing

John, having 14 siblings and Barbara being one of 5 children were part of a huge group of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, grandchildren, and friends that visited the Williams cabin over 50 years.

There was a tradition, started by Ben Williams’ wife Bobby. They would swim from the Williams dock across the lake to Louie’s Landing. John, Jeff, Mike, and grandson Keith eventually all followed that tradition, always accompanied by a family member in a rowboat.

In the 1970s and 1980s, with the advent of snowmobiling, more improvements were made to accommodate colder weather. Insulation and skirting were added, as well as 3 bedrooms and a laundry. After the addition of the lake side porch that was added, they used this as a 4th bedroom for summer sleeping. With the 4 season improvements many winter holidays were enjoyed at the Williams cabin.

In the 1980s and 1990s, more porch space on the driveway side was added along with a garage. After this a back shed and finally a side shed was also added which was more of John’s improvements as well as many homemade furnishings. Finally, a dining room and skylights finished off most of what is seen today.

PELKEY FAMILY:

With the passing of John and Barbara Williams, Penny and Jay Pelkey purchased the cabin in 2016. A bathroom was added as well as an update to the existing bath was complete. Barbara Williams would have been ecstatic with the bath improvements. A formal firepit was also added. John would have been thrilled with that one. Mike hopes that the Pelkey family enjoys the cabin for at least another 50 years.

End of Part 2.

Moose Lake People and Stories part #3

Information provided from Mike Dombeck:

Mike Dombeck grew up in the house immediately up the hill from what is currently Charlies Restaurant. At that time, Charlie's Restaurant building, was Known as the Moose Lake store. Thirty-five years ago, the Moose Lake Store was changed to a restaurant which it is still today. As a young man, Mike was often seen at the Williams cabin during the summer. He joined the ranks of many people that the Williams family where he was taught how to water ski. Mike guided John Williams for a few days during the summers along with Jeff & Mike Williams. While guiding Mike Dombeck and Jeff Williams one day, Mike recalled having to make a super-fast trip to shore to deal with the "rumbling stomach's" which was the aftermath of a late night of our partying on the town. Eventually Mike went on to be known as Musky Mike, a result of experiences of guiding visiting fisherman on Moose Lake.

Later, Mike wrote his master's thesis on a study of radio tagged muskies on Moose Lake and a few other area lakes. Later, he put together his doctoral dissertation on musky spawning behavior and egg and fry survival. Moose Lake was and still is one of the best musky lakes in the country totally from natural reproduction Mike told me. After Mike graduated from Hayward High his parents retired and sold the Moose Lake Store. They then bought an old cabin in a seclude bay along the narrows. The cabin in the 1930's was a "booth-leg" speakeasy place called the Buckhorn Bar. (More on the Moose Lake Store and Buckhorn Bar later.) Mikes career culminated with being named the head of the United States Forest Service. He has retired from that job and has just recently finished remodeling an old cabin just across the bay from where he and Pat lived in the 1970's when they were first married. It took them nearly 50 years to move a quarter of a mile across the bay.

Moose Lake Store

In the 1950s and 60s the Moose Lake Store was central to the Moose Lake community. It was run by Estelle and Leonard Dombeck (Mike's parents). It was the first stop of tourists and families like the William's returning for the summer and a daily stop for many locals. It was the typical old country store that had all the necessities from milk, bread, eggs, meats, canned good, gasoline, kerosene (yes for lanterns and stoves). They also had nails, bib-overalls, boots, socks, gloves and of course beer. At that time, the roads were gravel and dusty. The only paved roads were highways B and 77. Trips to Hayward were rare since nearly all we needed was right here at Moose Lake. Like Louie and Opal Lucas at Louie's Landing, the Dombeck's knew everyone on the lake and everyone knew them. The keys to half of the older cabins on the lake hung on the wall at the Moose Lake Store. It was open 364 days a year. Closed only on Christmas day, but someone was always around if one of the neighbors needed something and the neighbors knew the back door was never locked. **End of Part 3**

RALPH POPE AND BOBBY POPE CABIN:

Ralph built the home south of the Williams cabin in the 1960.s. The kids and the pope brothers were known as champion ski jumpers in the Eau Claire area. One of their claims to fame was that they often completed diamond shaped jumps. Four boys at a time with 1 in front, followed by 2, then Ralph taking up the rear.

As young men, the Popes flew small airplanes up and landed on a grass strip near the junction of Moose Lake Road and Fullington Road. From there they would walk to Moose Lake and row up the West Fork of the Chippewa River to access their small 10 x 12 cabin a couple of miles up the river for hunting and fishing. Ralph was a WWII veteran, and served in a reconnaissance unit. He was also one of the first Allied soldiers to cross into Germany. Ralph and Bobby's cabin is currently owned by the Renfro family.

KEN AND LOUISE PETERSON CABINS (2):

In the late 1950's, Ken and Loise Peterson purchased much of the land on each side of Fin & Feather Road south of the Pope cabin. Originally, they moved into the small cabin 20'X20'. This cabin later was known as the Broken Cabin. Later the Peterson family built the last home on the lakeside of the paved portion of Fin & Feather Rd. Upon completion they moved into that home. Their 20 X 20 ft. cabin which was referred to originally as the little cabin was sold to the Witt Family. Mike and Mary Williams purchased their cabin with the new name of the Broken Cabin. In 1990 they began the restoration project. The carpenters started working on it at that time and offered to use a lighted match to modify the cabin, but wiser heads prevailed. During the remodel, Mike's 5-year-old daughter entered the structure and declared "daddy, this cabin is broken", hence this is where the second name came from. Rob Scherer currently owns the cabin. Rob's grandfather was the original builder of the Ghost Lake Lodge and resort in the 1920's.

BOB AND STELLA SCHULTZ CABIN/COTTAGE

The Schultze's purchased their land in the 1970's from the Petersons and built the home that now can be viewed just south of the Broken Cabin. Jeff and Maj Williams purchased that home in 2003 and have remodeled it extensively.

FIN & FEATHER RESORT:

This resort built in the 1920s, at its heyday, offered 15 cabins, as well as a large main lodge. Three of the cabins remain today and can be seen at the locations just a few feet from the lakeshore. The Williams family got know the son and daughter of the last owner. The kids were 19 and 20 years, respectively. Unfortunately, the father suffered an untimely death that was written about in True Story magazine. It seems that their dad was a bit of a land-owning tycoon and had titles to as much as 3 million acres of property in South America. Somewhere in his dealings, he was accused of a swindle. The accuser shot and killed this fellow in his land office, after the accused brandished an empty gun pointed at the accuser. Also, before this shooting, the main lodge at the resort burned to the ground under mysterious circumstances. Many stone remnants of the original buildings can be seen on property currently owned by the Richter family. Ethel Richter will have more information in detail about this resort and several others that were on the lake in the weeks to come. This is sounding like a, good mystery. Please stay tuned. **End of Part 4.**

PINE POINT / POINT GROVE RESORT AND MOOSE LAKE CLUB, AND ISLANDS (Pine Grove)

In the late 1800's, Ole and Rob Robertson, (father and son) worked for a logging company that had erected the original buildings/lodges on Moose Lake. The main camp for the Logging Company was located at what many of us call Pine Point. This location is where the food was prepared for the men and then boated up the lake and then up the Big Moose river to the other lumbering camps. These smaller camps had no cooking facilities, so all the food had to be prepared at the main lodge. In 1908 after the trees were cut the Lumbering Company moved on. The main lodge was turned into a fishing resort business using those abandoned buildings for his new venture originally named Pine Grove Resort.

In 1905, H.O. (Horace Kouka) Meyers and Richard Sanders made the first trip from Chicago to what eventually became the Moose Lake Club property. By rail, gasoline was sent ahead to Spooner. They then spent about 4 days on trails and wagon roads using an early model car to make the trip. Provisions

for the summer and numerous spare tires were carried. Breakdowns were common, but Richard, being a mechanic kept the sojourn intact. On the fifth day, H.O. and Richard traveled by rail to Hayward and then on to Moose Lake by horse and wagon. In 1911, the first year a building (bunkhouse) being the first residence on the lake was erected on what is now the island that has the diving board that most of us have seen.

Rob Robertson, Meyers, and Sanders soon made an agreement that if the 2 Chicagoans would somehow get a car to the lake, Rob would improve the bridge over the West Fork of the Chippewa River to allow motor vehicles to drive directly to Pine Grove Resort. In 1912, 3 more members joined the club, Dr. C.S, Meyers, Charley Stoffer, and Don Englehart. From the beginning, club members were purchasing 40 acres parcels for as little as \$9.00/parcel. Most of the acreage consisted of the water between the 7 islands. Eventually 9 cabins were constructed, and the club has grown to 65 members, made up mostly of descendants of the original 5 guys.

During the Great Depression, several of the members became teachers in Chicago. There is a story that some of the original furniture in the cabins had/have the words "Property of the Chicago School District" stamped on them. There is also a story that Dr. C.S. Meyers, being from Chicago and quite possibly an acquaintance of the Capone gang, would disappear in the Hayward area in the summer for a few days at a time, only to return with many cases of whiskey. Alphonse and his group did have a "hide away" compound in the Grindstone Lake area.

Barb and I had a guest stay with us at Mystic Moose 9 years ago that came up here for one reason. He wanted to see the lodge and cabins that his great uncle stayed in several different times. His great uncle to my surprise was Alphonse Capone or as we know him as Al Capone. Our guest who I forget his name at this time had a lot of history about his great uncle. He told me that when his great uncle came to Hayward he mostly stayed in what we know as the Hideout. He told me that his great Uncle had people follow him up here at times from Chicago. Therefore, he needed a second place to go in the Hayward area. The Pine Grove resort was that second place. What I do know is that this man and his wife, had way too much information to be making this story up. I feel he was a very creditable source of information & I do believe everything he told me. I was amazed.

During the 1930's, the teachers were paid in "script" instead of dollars as money was scarce. The lumber yard in Hayward accepted this in lieu of cash to help build many of the buildings on the Moose Lake Club islands. During the Great Depression, many members of the club would rent out their homes during the summer to Chicago White Sox baseball team, while the club folks would spend their vacations on the lake. The Moose Lake Club story has been featured on the Twin Cities TV program titled Minnesota Bound hosted by Ron Schara. **End of Part 5**

This week we will continue with our Moose Lake notes or a brief history of past information that I have gathered about Moose Lake. This week we will finish up the notes that I received from Mike Williams. I also will include information from Dorothy Hogan who most of you know owns Hayward Bait and Tackle. She will inform us on the first bait shop on Moose Lake.

LOUIES LANDING

The original 2 building sections of Louie's Landing were about 12 x 14 feet. Each were built sometime in the 1940's. After that, Louie Lucas purchased the property and expanded it. At that time, it was called

The Moose Lake Tavern, but soon after the purchase, Louie changed the name. Louie was an industrious guy being an employee of the power company. He was also the Fire Marshal, and the tavern owner. Currently there are pictures in the bar of the first 2 original buildings, the Lucas family and patrons. One of the patrons pictured is Carl Breeman, original owner of the Williams/Pelkey land. Another picture shows the huge letters visible from the sky "Tavern" written on the roof. The pictures are a must see.

END of Mike Williams Moose Lake Notes. Thanks Mike for your informative information. JO

The following information is from Dorothy Hogan owner of Hayward Bait and Tackle

The Bait Shop

Dorothy Hogan married Donnie Hogan in 1960. Donnie's stepfather Ed Polo and Mother Thelma had the bait shop next to the Moose Lake Store. The Moose Lake store is now Charlie's Restaurant. Dorothy told me, that they all lived in the house that Eddie and Thelma built which was located just behind the bait shop.. This was in the 1940's before the Dombeck's, Eddie's sister Marie and Mike Strentz had the store. The store was located where Charlie's dining room is. The bar was in the same location as it is today. Dorothy did not know who they bought the building from originally from. She also did not know how long they owned it for. She does remember with the Dombeck's having a bar in the same building as the store they did spend a lot of time there.

1949, Eddie's Bait Shop was moved to a white building which is still on the property today. This is where they had tackle, gifts, and live bait. They trapped all the bait and sorted it by hand for each specie and size. In 1960, Dorothy told me that they just had a route around the Chippewa Flowage selling bait to small resorts. Many other people came to them for bait to resell. They built Hayward Bait and Tackle in 1959. They also added the wholesale part also in the 1960's. Dorothy said they would take turns running the 2 shops. The tackle orders would come into Hayward and we would bring the stock home at night for the shop in Moose Lake. The bait would be in Moose Lake and we would fill milk cans in the trunk of the car and take them to Hayward in the morning. People Moose Lake who needed things from Hayward, would have items dropped off at the bait shop and we would bring it back to Moose Lake for them. In 1963, Eddie and Thelma bought a house trailer and moved it next to Hayward Bait, so they ran that one and we ran this one. In or around 1965 they built the new bait shop in Moose Lake. Also, in that same year, the wholesale business was expanded to routes all over northern Wisconsin. Eddie passed away from cancer in 1971 and so Thelma sold the shop to Ron Selburg. Dorothy and Donnie moved to Hayward in 1972. There were many resorts on Moose Lake then and it was a great place to raise kids in the country-Dorothy told me that they lived in the Moose Lake area for 12 years. Dorothy Hogan's history as the best as she can remember.

Second story & conclusion written by Dorothy Hogan,

A few weeks ago, I included a little history from Dorothy Hogan (owner of Hayward Bait) about how her and her family got into the bait shop business. If you remember from my previous article Dorothy's family had a bait shop in the 1940's next to Charlie's Restaurant in the Moose Lake area. Dorothy sent another bit of history that involved her family. This is her second article.

Dorothy wrote, If, you want another surprise, my mother-in-law, Thelma had the Chippewa Inn, then called the De Shanty back in the 40's. That is how Eddie met Thelma. Eddie eventually became my father in-law & Thelma my mother-in-law. My dad had a small old-time band and played for dances there and

my mom waitressed. I lived on a farm on Round Lake School Road and many years later, when I was 17, I worked the summer at Johnson's Resort which was next door was Clements Resort. This was owned by Thelma's sister Lois and Roland Brinkman. Lois would take me to Hayward to St. Joseph's Church and then stopped at Hayward Bait to visit her sister Thelma. That is how I met Donnie Hogan in 1959. Donnie had just gotten out of the Navy. In 1960 I got married to Donnie Hogan. The guys started building a new bait shop in Hayward in 1958-59 and I remember going by on the school bus wondering what that was going to be. They opened it up, the Spring of 1959.

Donnie Hogan's father Eddie and his stepmother Thelma got married in 1949. I remember them talking about living at the fur or mink farm, somewhere in Moose Lake before they built the house by the old bait shop on Hwy S.

Thelma had the Chippewa Inn remodeled extensively; I do not know when. The bar was across the dining room and the kitchen in back like now. The living area was to the left where the extra dining area is and maybe farther back. When Ethel gets her book written, I am sure she will have more information on this.

There will be much more detailed information and history from Ethel Richter in the weeks to come. As most of you may know Ethel is in the final phase of her lengthy book that she is putting together on the history of Moose Lake. She is editing her book now and hopes to have it finished sometime this summer. She would like to share some information with my readers in the weeks to come. She will give you an idea of what she will cover in her book. In the past several weeks we have just scratched the surface on what she has in her book. She goes into very much detail on some of the topics. Especially, the information on the many resorts that once existed on Moose Lake. I am looking forward to reading it.

All the Moose Lake notes that have been previously written by Mike Williams and the partial history pertaining to Dorothy Hogan's family, are written by her.

News from Ethel Richter:

Jim asked me to write a few words for the column this week. Some of you know that I have talked about writing the entire history of Moose Lake for a long time. In fact, this endeavor has spanned the last 20 or so years. This is not just a figment of my imagination, but there really is a book and the final draft is under construction. My goal is to have it ready for print when I come to Moose Lake in the spring. I do wish it had been finished earlier, but it seems that life always gets in the way of good intentions. Since the COVID quarantine prevents me from being out and about, this is the perfect time to finish "Moose Lake the Past and Present". See, it even has a name! Many hours were spent on interviews, reading and research. There are about 100 pages in this manuscript. Everything is covered from resorts to roads to Eddie's Bait Shop and the store and much, much more. I ask that you be patient for just a little longer. If you have questions about what is included, please Email me at mooselakeray@outlook.com

Following is an excerpt from my book: "KNITTER'S RESORT

Jack Miller's Resort may have been the name of this resort purchased by Bernard and Ann Knitter from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in the late 1950s. Already an old resort at that time, its beginnings are not remembered. The name Winterhaven came up. Also, a set of postcards from Jack Miller's Resort seem to match pictures of Knitter's Resort. In the early 1960s this resort included the owner's home and five cabins. Each cabin had a screened porch that housed the bathrooms added to replace the old

outhouses. Many walleyes were caught in the deep hole just offshore in a spot called Redhorse Bay. Unfortunately, there was no fish-cleaning house. Cleaning the catch of the day for your dinner meant battling the mosquitoes that wanted you for their dinner. Bernie and Ann wintered in Milwaukee, along with their dog Smokie. In 1978, they sold to Roger and Sue Johnson, who subdivided the property. Cabins were sold to Craigs, Haslers, and Biedrzyckis and a vacant lot was sold to Clarence Meyer." Some of these cabins have changed ownership over the years."

This is the End to the entire Moose Lake Notes by Mike Williams as he can remember and the End to Dorothy Hogan's notes as she can remember. I hope you enjoyed the information.

Please look forward to Ethel Richter's book which she should have published and out by this summer.

Jim Onarheim Moose Lake Community Columnist for the Sawyer County Record Newspaper. February 2021