

# FROM THE 1900'S

By Virginia Kirchoff & Wilma Ahlgren - March 1992

## Memories are wonderful....

Memories bring back some of the good old days and many remembrances that we have.

After visiting and hearing from several people that have lived out at Lake Washington for many years, it is with great pleasure to extend to our members a recap of those memories.



Carl Rusch has lived on Lake Washington for over 30 years and reminisces about the dry years in the 1930's. The lake was raised about 17 inches after the dam was put in. He noticed that weed beds have disappeared in the last 5 years which he felt has had an effect on the fishing.

Lois (Langley) O'Neill said her father bought the property at Lake Washington in the late 1920's (Property by Idle Wave Resort). Northeast of their property was a dance hall that belonged to Jepson's Resort. On Saturday nights they had dances and parties and on Sunday morning's area owner's property would be littered with debris. In order to get rid of the nuisance her father had a six foot high chain link fence put up all around their property to alleviate the problem. The dance hall wasn't there very long - a few years later it burned down.

Lois also told me about the drought in the early 1930's. The dam had not yet been built at that time so the lake was very low. You had to walk out at least a block before you came to any water. Grass and small trees grew up in this area and you had to walk on a beaten path to get to the lake. Then the dam was built. The lake level went back up. You were able to walk all along the shore line in the bay from Cedar point to the Darwin road.

I visited with Dean & Arlys Gayner and Dean's mother, Hazel Gayner. Some of the memories Dean has are when a cousin from California came to visit in 1952 and brought some wide wood water skis with him. Dean asked "what is water skiing"? Well they tried water skiing behind an aluminum boat with a 10 horsepower motor on it, and it worked. Dean & his cousin didn't wear life jackets. Dean told him the water was real shallow on the lake. Needless-to-say they skied over the

16 foot deep hole once in awhile. I guess his cousin couldn't swim - lucky guy! That was the first time Dean water skied.

Different areas had names. Hazel Gayner's area (by Sportsman's Park) was named "Breezy Point". The area by the Manthei's (now Lee VanHorn's) was called "Stoney Point". The point on the middle/north side of L.W. is called Cedar Point. The point East of the Sportsman Park (where a mobile home exists now) was called "Whiskey Point". There must be a good story behind that one.... Using all the roadways on the lake, you would have to drive 22 miles to completely drive around the entire lake and into each area.

A "Hunters Paradise" was noted by many of the locals as the area from the Warren Nelson Farm and West toward Lee Van Horns. It was very difficult for the duck hunters during the Armistice Day Snowstorm, to return home from.

There is a sunken island in the bay, deeper on one side and very shallow on the other. At one time you could drive across that entire area. There were approximately 13 herds of cattle and much farmland around the lake. The entire south side of the lake was farm/pasture land. The water was very clear years ago and no pollution was noted.

The Sportsman's Club used to be farm land; in 1955 the land was given to the Sportsman's Club by the Benson family designated for a club house. That's about when Dean Gayner's mother & dad - Carl & Hazel Gayner- bought their lot. They were the first people in that area to have a home. It is one of the newer divisions on our lake.

The old dam (very near the Warren Nelson farm) was built in the 1930's. The new dam was built in the late 1940's. This allowed the lake to rise up approximately 15"-17" and stay up to that level.

All the people that live in the Sportsman's Park area and east had two roads to exit from. There was a road that exited to the East (by the Gabrielson farm). The county closed that road several years ago, even after every one in that area signed a petition to keep it open. If a train blocks the road (as you turn off on hwy 12 to Sportsman's Park), you are unable to get out of the area.

Harry Andersons (North side) have been very active hosts for the Shriners Club and also the Lake Association for many years. Again, an enormous "Thank You" to Harry & Alma Anderson and the entire family for their interest and all they have done for our Lake Association. The cabin cruiser setting on their property, we heard, used to cruise the lake. Must have been a beautiful site.



Mel Gramsted, who now lives on Lake Stella, told us that the new #14 road (between the two lakes) was built in 1964. The west end of Lake Washington was cut down and replaced with a gradual bank to the road edge. The shoreline was lined with rocks 100ft from the old channel which was located approximately 725 feet south of the culvert/channel now in existence. The property north of the old channel was left as meander land that had to be filled which came from the Huhn property north of the channel. The county failed to fill in the channel and

for years there was stagnant, mosquito infested water until it got filled by Mr. Gramsted.

Some of the biggest changes in the lake were the loss of cattails and weed areas; the addition of homes and cabins; and the pollution of our lake waters. This was noted from our friends and neighbors who lived in this area for years.

Warren Nelson talked about his father, Clifford Nelson, who owned the farm on the north side of Lake Washington. Clifford was an avid hunter and enjoyed the great hunting around that area. He was also a great handyman; he dug basements, septic systems, cisterns, and delivered ice from the lake, eggs, and cream to the people on the north side of the lake. He sold ice to the Hotel (the large gray home) West of Idle Wave Resort.

(Warren has many of the antique tools his father used). Clifford rented out boats and picnic tables in the 's, and there was a picnic area and small ball diamond with campers in his pasture area a block West of their farm. Pasture land went all the way West to the Myrtle Skoog cabin. The Nelson's gave some of their farm lane to the county to widen the road around the north side.

Hazel Gayner & Warren Nelson remember several resort areas on Lake Washington. Jepson's Resort (now Idle Wave Association) was on the NE side of the lake. Mrs. Jepson would serve Sunday noon meals there. They had a woman come out to counsel young girls that came to camp at the resort. Hazel also remembers many fun times at the dance hall that used to be in that area, owned by the resort.

Going further West on the road past Jepson's (Idle Wave Resort), you came to another resort called Trails End Resort. Trails End served noon lunches. Berg's Resort was built in the 1950's

(Leslie Berg) and bought out in the early 1970's as Gordon's Resort located on the North side near the Nelson farm area. Hazel Gayner & Warren Nelson remember several resort areas on Lake Washington. Jepson's Resort (now Idle Wave Association) was on the NE side of the lake. Mrs. Jepson would serve Sunday noon meals there.

had a bait house and snacks for sale. There also was Twin Lakes Resort between Lake Stella and Lake Washington. They had boat rentals on both lakes. There were 2-3 cabins for rent on the North side (Benson's Red Barn on road to Sportsman's Park). Hazel remembers having girl friends out and renting a cabin - they always had a chaperon with them.

Another boat rental area was the Oliver Broberg property. Enclosed is a picture of the Broberg boat rental on the SE side of Lake Washington - the picture was given to us by Ilo Broberg. Oliver Broberg rented out boats and had a building for selling candy, pop etc. The first area to build up homes / cabins on the lake was around Cedar Point.

Mr. Julius Lindquist (World War I Veteran - now 97 yrs. old and living in the Watkins Nursing Home) was the prime contractor for all the sewage systems on the north side of the lake. They were all dug by hand, had a tank, and instead of a drain field, they drained directly into the lake. The newest developed area is the south side of the lake.

