

# SPARROW LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring 2020



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Please see our website [sparrowlake.ca](http://sparrowlake.ca) for a complete list of executive and contacts.

## PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS



Hello All,

We find ourselves living in unprecedented times. I hope all of you have a place to isolate in comfort and safety. Because of the federal government instructions to isolate, we are cancelling our May meeting for 2020, and we will inform you regarding the August outing once we reassess the situation in early July.

The second week in April, I went down Canning Road expecting to cross the swing bridge as I had been doing for weeks. No such luck! The posting said it was closed as of April 9<sup>th</sup> for one month. I tried to get an update for the summer season by phone, but no luck just yet. If you are not aware, you can receive the updates as they come out to

the public by following this link:  
[www.parkscanada.gc.ca/tswseverngravenhurst](http://www.parkscanada.gc.ca/tswseverngravenhurst)

I have some new and interesting topics percolating for when we next meet. If you find yourself with some extra time on your hands, please consider making notes for posterity. Write, type, speak into a recorder or cell phone. It is a great time to record your family history, your personal story of life, or make a list of questions about Sparrow Lake history you would like to ask. Please, if you have comments or questions about our area or our organization, please email or call me. If you have questions or ideas that we could research for our next newsletter, that would be fantastic! Please be thinking of friends and family who may not be familiar with our work, who might come to our next meeting with you.

For those of us who are fortunate enough to be able get out for a walk or have a sheltered sunny corner to sit, spring is definitely here. In my yard I have bulbs coming up and birds busy making their nests (much of interest to my cat through the glass.) I hope you are all able to enjoy some sights of spring while we wait out our period of isolation. Stay healthy and well!

Would love to hear from you,  
Sara

## Canning's Corners

Excerpts by Harry Linney, 1932

While the early Muskoka Road settlements between Severn Bridge and Gravenhurst were the show windows of Muskoka District to the people looking for farms “free for locating,” they did not continue to hold that record for many years, even with the comfortable log houses and tilled patches of wheat, corn, and vegetables, because it was found that the best soil was westward toward Sparrow Lake. The government of the day, under the leadership of Hon. John Sandfield MacDonald, was devoting every energy to the obtaining of population. Hon. John Carling, one of the ministers of government, claimed that the cornerstone of prosperity rested in farm expansion, and that the new North teemed with wealth which would bring to the artisans of the British Isles wealth and contentment. It was in response to appeals of this kind that land was “taken up” by the first settlers in Morrison. This gospel of free land and a farm of one hundred acres for each son in the family was what brought John Canning and his wife, Jane (Winchester), and their ten children.

Originally from Belfast, Ireland, John Canning assisted in forming Bethel Church and was occasionally the preacher. He was active in organizing the Morrison & Ryde Agricultural Society. He devoted time and thought to the forming of the first Orange Lodge in Morrison, which was organized at Severn Bridge in May 1868, called Morrison True Blues 1144. Around the garden in front of his house, Mr. Canning erected a fence built of split cedar palings, the first such fence in Morrison, looked upon as an attraction in those days. At the annual agricultural fair in 1875, Mrs. Michael Clipsham (Charlotte) secured first prize for her butter, and James Clipsham for his team of horses. In 1876, one of the events was the testing of strength and pulling ability of teams of horses. Lumbermen had

offered \$5 as a prize to the winning team. On this summer day of 1876, excitement ran high as the contesting teams were separately hitched to a sleigh loaded with stone, and none could move it more than a few inches—none could drive off with the load. John Roach was given permission to hitch his yoke of oxen to the sleigh, and as his “yoke” walked away with it, to the loud acclaim of the gathered crowd, a dozen men—17 men, one record states—jumped on the load, and the oxen pulled it without hindrance until the sleigh struck a flat stone and the sudden jerk and stopping of sleigh broke the attaching tongue and separated the oxen from their load.

(By Harry Linney, excerpted from newspaper clippings, 1932.)



**AGENCY FOR THE SETTLEMENT**  
OF THE  
**Severn and Muskoka Road.**

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August, 1859.

**T**HE undersigned Agent appointed by His Excellency the Governor General, for the Settlement of the Severn and Muskoka Road, passing through the Townships of Morrison and Muskoka, to the North of Lake Simcoe, Upper Canada, hereby gives notice to all persons willing and having the means of locating thereon, that the Lots on the Road are now ready for location. His Office will be (for the present) at Orillia, and will be open every day in the week from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Grants of One Hundred Acres will be made to any Settler Eighteen Years Old, subject to the following conditions, viz.:

To pay a Fee of Five Dollars; to take possession within one month, and to put in a state of cultivation at least Twelve Acres of Land in the course of Four Years; to build a House (at least 20 x 18) and to reside on the Lot until the conditions of settlement are duly performed; after which accomplishment only shall the settler have the right of obtaining a title of property. Families comprising several settlers entitled to Lands, preferring to reside on a single Lot, will be exempted from the obligation of building and of residence (except upon the Lot on which they live), provided that the required clearing of the Land be made on each Lot. The non-accomplishment of these conditions will cause the immediate loss of the assigned Lot of Land, which will be sold or given to another.

The Road having been opened by the Government, the Settlers are required to keep it in repair.

**RICHARD JOSE OLIVER,**  
*Agent, Severn and Muskoka Road.*

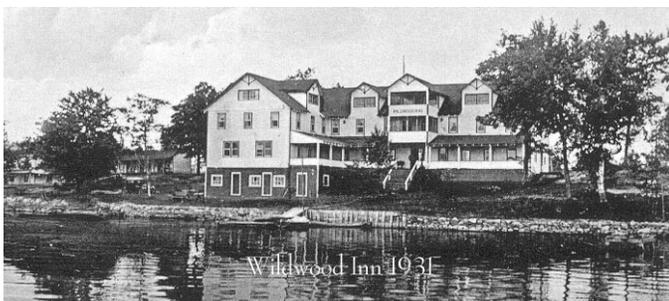
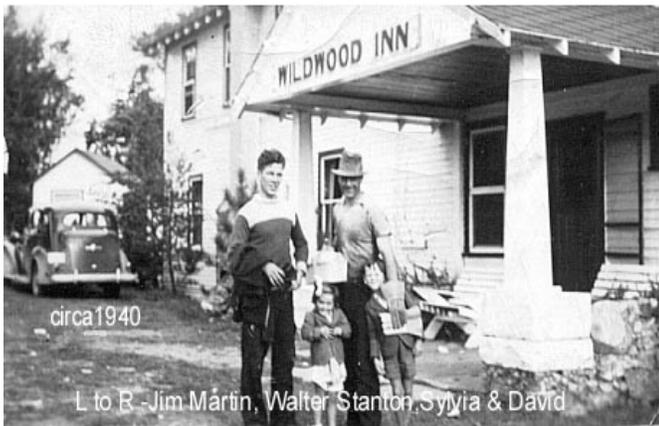
Scanned by GlobalGenealogy.com for www.GlobalGazette.ca

## Bayview-Wildwood Resort

Compiled by Steve Stanton

The biggest change around Sparrow Lake during this last winter was the purchase of Bayview-Wildwood Resort in November by Choice Hotels Canada under their Ascend Hotel Collection—a network of sixteen upscale resorts, historic properties and boutique hotels that offer guests a uniquely local experience.

Choice Hotels Canada is one of the largest and most successful lodging franchisors in the country with more than 350 properties currently open or under development. Choice Hotels Canada is a master franchisee of Choice Hotels International, Inc., with more than 7,000 hotels, representing nearly 570,000 rooms, in over 40 countries and territories.



The original main lodge known as Wildwood Inn was built by Walter and Eleanore Stanton in 1931. Walter was a grandson of pioneer Thomas Stanton, and the resort was built on the former

site of the Stanton sawmill. In 1954, after Eleanore developed terminal cancer, Walter's younger brother Ernest Stanton purchased the resort. In 1955, his son Ronald and Irene Stanton took over Bayview Lodge management and soon combined both properties under the name Bayview-Wildwood Resorts Limited.



During his illustrious career as hotelier, Ronald Stanton amalgamated Wildwood Inn, Lakeshore House, Bayview Lodge, Martin's Tourist Supplies and Wild Echo Lodge into the Bayview-Wildwood Resort complex, and also founded the fractional ownership development known as The Cottages at Port Stanton. Ronald Stanton continued to oversee corporate operations until his death on June 10, 2014 at age 77.



Hotel activities today include fine dining, breakfast buffet, badminton, bicycle rentals, billiards, kayaking & canoeing, tennis, cross-country skiing, shuffleboard, volleyball, and a sandy beach with water park. In addition, there are two pools – indoor and outdoor – and a fitness room. Corporate travellers have access to a business conference centre with meeting rooms and banquet space. The new manager is Jason Stanton, keeping continuity with a proud family tradition.

**Sparrow Lake Historical Society Membership Renewal & Application Form**

**We now accept PayPal from the link on our website at [sparrowlake.ca](http://sparrowlake.ca)  
For those email recipients who are not sure of their renewal status, please  
contact Karen McKenzie. [kswood@sympatico.ca](mailto:kswood@sympatico.ca)**

**Name**

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**Mailing Address**

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**Postal/Zip Code** -----

**Email address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Will you receive your newsletter via email?    YES    NO**

**Single \$15.00 ----- Family \$25.00 -----**

**New ----- Renewal -----**

