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Please see our web site www.sparrowlake.ca for a complete list of executive and contacts.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please mark your calendars for Saturday May 25/13 the day of our next general meeting. The location is the same - at the Severn Bridge Women's Institute hall at 7:00 pm. The speaker at this meeting will be Frank LeFeuvre a trapper and retired principal from Wawa ON, who now lives in Orillia and continues to trap near Algonquin Park.

Yours truly has been putting together this newsletter for quite some time now, and I have enjoyed doing it. However I would not be adverse to passing the opportunity on to someone else. So if there is someone out there who would be willing to take this on please let me know.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES

We are sorry to report the loss of a long time member and all round special lady. Leslie Wagner passed away on November 18, 2012. Last summer she was looking forward so much to Travelling holiday, and to all reports she had a great time.

We are sure that all of us extend our condolences to her family and friends. She will surely be deeply missed.

As always we invite your suggestions for future programs and ideas for our summer "outing". Your input enables us to keep things as interesting as possible. Contact any of the executive!

SOPHER'S LANDING

When I was growing up in Severn Bridge some of my most enjoyable times were those that I spent with my cousins at Swift Rapids. There were several ways to get to the Swift, but before the advent of ATVs or Snow Mobiles these involved trains, boats, marine railroads, horse drawn sleighs and or considerable walking. The most convenient route was to drive to Sopher's Landing where Granddad would meet us with the OWL.

We still travel frequently by boat to the Swift where we have a cottage. For many years we kept our boat at the facilities in operation at Morrison Landing because we were under the impression that docking space was at a premium at Sopher's. However this past summer in response to changing conditions at that location we

inquired at Sopher's and were lucky enough to get one of their last available dock spaces.

This has given us the opportunity to get to know the owners operators Pat and John Halliday and learn some of the history of Sopher's Landing from Pat who is a descendent of a number of Sophers who have owned this land. In addition to the information I obtained from Pat I had a land registry search done for the lot presently owned by the Hallidays and came up with the following history.

In our original copy of the Muskoka Parry Sound Atlas published in 1879 an owner is not shown for this property. However a patent was issued for this lot in August of 1877 to Mary McLane. Mary's last name was misspelled in the patent index as McLean. This I suspect accounts for the name of the adjacent bay, which is shown on the original maps as Big Bay. Also contrary to local parlance the name of the bay on all maps and charts is McLean Bay not McLean's Bay. This lot, which is on concession 9, was more than cut in half by the bay and is only thirty acres.

Mary, who was described as a "Farmers Widow", died in 1880 and left the land to her two sons Hector and Donald.

In September of 1890 Hector, listed as a lumberman, sold the property to Benjamin Sopher for \$400.00. Benjamin died intestate in August of 1911 and the property was finally deeded to his widow Elizabeth in April 1928. Elizabeth granted the land to herself and her daughter Harriett as joint tenants in November of 1934.

Elizabeth died in May 1943 leaving Harriett as the surviving joint tenant and she granted land to her brother Albert in September 1948. Albert was Pat's great uncle and the

land eventually passed to her parents Philip and Bernice Sopher and then to her and John.

It is interesting to note that it appears the original intent was to farm this land. In the earliest picture I have from Pat dated 1930 the area where the present marina sits there are some small buildings but no evidence of any docks or boat houses.



The next picture shows the original farmhouse in the background with some indication to the left of a cleared area.



These next two pictures do show fields in the background.



The remaining pictures show various stages of the development of the docks, boathouses and parking area with different vintages of boats and cars.



It would be interesting to know if any of our members have pictures of McLean Bay prior to 1914, when the water level in the lake was raised by the dam at Swift Rapids.



The following is an article written by Pat's mother Bernice for inclusion in the Kilworth Country Anthology "A Legacy Almost Lost", reprinted with the permission of the Kilworthy Historical Committee.

Sopher's Landing
by
Bernice (Denne) Sopher

Philip (Booze) Sopher was born and raised in Kilworthy. We married in 1955 and moved back to Mcleans Bay in 1959. Sopher Construction Company was formed in 1965. Philip purchased the "Landing" from his Uncle Ab in 1975 and spent many weekends fixing motors and boats. Over the years there haven't been very many cottages on the Bay or the River that weren't either built or repaired or some work done on them by Sopher Construction. Our summers never seemed to be long enough to get all the building done that people wanted. We always had young lads from the lake or Kilworthy area working for us every summer.

Friday night the cars arrived to park at the landing and a lot of cottagers stopped in to say hello before getting in their boats and heading for their cottages.

Philip and I made many good friends over the years. Our house at the landing was a beehive of activity during what always

seemed to be too short a summer. You could tell by our "handle" on the "C.B." how busy our place was -: "GRAND CENTRAL STATION".

Our first house at the Landing, burnt down January 7, 1979. We lost everything. We lived on the property in a mobile home and one weekend that winter it was 48 below. All our good friends and neighbours held a dance for us and helped us start again.

In the late 70's snowmobiles made Sopers Landing a hive of activity during the winter months as well as the summer months. A lot of the cottagers used their cottages in the winter so we went from fixing boat motors in the summer to fixing snowmobiles in the winter. I can remember Philip walking with a rope tied around his waist tied to the snowmobile so he could put the markers out for people to know where to cross the channel.

We enjoyed all the years we were at the landing and the long lasting friendships we made. We sold the Landing to our daughter Pat and her husband John Halliday in 1987 and hope that they get as much out of owning it and meeting people as we did.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Just spending a few minutes leafing through this book I came across several more references to the Sopers and their contribution to Kilworthy and Sparrow Lake. Pat and John have children and grandchildren still living and working in the area so I would speculate that Sopher descendents will continue for some time to contribute to life in this area.

REMINDER

Please note that over half of our memberships are over due and we have included a reminder with the mailed newsletters. However we have not included this with the email version so please check your records and if you are over due send

your cheque to Ken Thomson, 1729
Peninsula Point Rd. RR#1, Severn Bridge
ON, P0E 1N0. 15\$ single, 25\$ Family.
Thank You.