

SPARROW LAKE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Winter 2016



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Please see our website sparrowlake.ca for a complete list of executive and contacts.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD PRESENTED TO JAMES STANTON FOR 30 YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE TO SLHS



Severn Township Council congratulates Mr. Stanton on his years of dedicated service, and we are proud to honour him.” (Mayor Mike Burkett, Oct. 1, 2015)

James Stanton is a treasured member of the Sparrow Lake Historical Society with a deep historical background in the area. He was born and raised on Sparrow Lake and is a direct descendant of the first settler and founder of Port Stanton. He has donated his time over the decades on the Board of Directors and as Past-President of the society, and has contributed written and oral material as well as a large collection of photographs and documents to ensure a lasting legacy for future generations.

Childhood Memories of Life on Sparrow Lake

by James Alan Evans

My father and maternal grandfather built a cottage on Fitton Island in the northwest part of Sparrow Lake circa 1924, my father, Frank Rudd Evans, having bought the island in November 1923 for \$250 from my great-uncle, William Edwin Evans, who had purchased the property in February 1904. Another great-uncle, George A. Evans, owned the adjacent island, known then as Evans Island, later bought by the Chesney family from Ohio. Imagine the excitement of a seventeen-year-old boy on Fitton Island when he heard that there were four Chesney girls, Hazel, Lois, Bernice and Faye, moving in next door! Faye later became Faye Tresidder of Hotel Torpitt fame.

The trip to the lake by car in my Dad's Graham-Paige was a three-hour journey from North Toronto up Yonge Street (old Highway 11.) The kids bounced on the seats (no seatbelts in those days!) in anticipation of that first glimpse of the lake, especially the first trip to open the cottage on the twenty-fourth of May weekend, and we were never happy leaving the lake to return to school after closing the cottage on Labour Day weekend.

My parents had a small piece of property on the north shore that they had bought from old Mr. Franklin of Franklin House, where they had a double-ended garage that served for boat storage and car park, with the car in one end and boat out the other. Weather was no impediment, for neither wind nor rain could stop that hardy crew in the cedar-strip Peterborough boat with 5 HP Johnson engine. Maybe ten minutes later, we were at the dock on what we called "Indian Island," because local legend said it was a favourite camping spot for the Indians of the Rama Indian Reserve. One of them, Mrs. Anderson, came around each summer with her canoe filled with birch-bark boxes and baskets and trinkets decorated with coloured porcupine quills.

Life depended on boats. We knew every boat on the lake by the sound of its motor, from the sleek mahogany speedboat owned by Mr. Hershberger to the Elto outboard that owner Hamilton Corbett started by twirling the flywheel with a knob on its top rim. He had to move his hand quickly out of the

way to avoid getting his knuckles rapped by the spinning knob! Once a week, the Stanton "supply boat" from Port Stanton stopped in to sell basic groceries and, best of all, chocolate bars! Milk and eggs came from Mr. Graham, a local farmer in his rowboat. One day he brought the carcass of a rattlesnake he had killed on the road.

For refrigeration we had an icebox, a wooden box lined with galvanized iron and insulation with a large compartment for ice on top. We would go to Joe and Katie Culkeen's farm near Balmoral Hotel where Joe had an icehouse filled with large blocks taken from the lake in winter and stored under sawdust. Joe would uncover the buried treasure, haul it out with ice-tongs, drag it down to shore where he plunged it into the water to wash off the sawdust, then drop it into the washtub in the boat. Sometimes I thought the block would go right through the bottom of the boat when Joe dropped it from the level of his dock.

Summers were never boring. If the kids weren't swimming or fishing, we were getting sunburns, playing in the water or a sand pile that Dad had made in a depression in the rock. There were trips to Big Chute or Ragged Rapids, and sometimes even as far as Gloucester Pool, for campfires and picnics on a handy outcrop along the way. Some turned into real adventures if the outboard sheared a pin and the return trip was made in the dark, or the times when a rain storm hit. There were boat trips to Port Stanton for gas, or to pick up Dad coming from Toronto for the weekend on the passenger train pulled by a great puffing steam locomotive. We picked up mail by boat, and I loved running up the huge flights of stairs to Wianco House Post Office.

During most of my childhood days, we had no electricity on the island, so we refrigerated with ice, cooked and heated with a woodstove, read and played games by oil lamplight after dark, and listened to music played on the portable wind-up Victrola with stylus that scratched a little more off the track of the wax double-sided 78 rpm record each time it was played—except on Sundays. My parents' Methodist background meant we were not allowed to play games or listen to records on Sunday, so thank the God whose nearby country church we attended allowed us to read books!

Ottawa, Ont., 2003, (condensed from the original)

ANNUAL SPRING MEETING

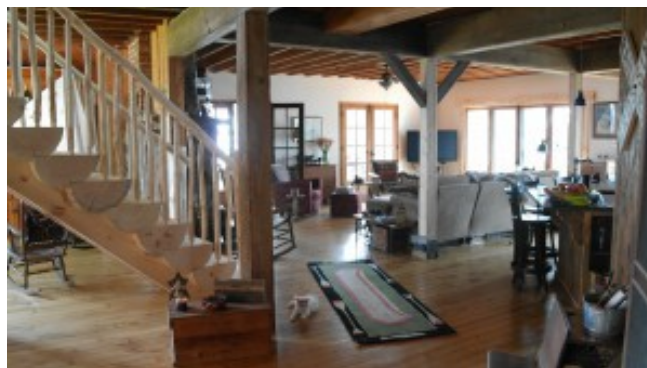
The Sparrow Lake Historical Society annual spring meeting will be held at **7:00 pm on May 21, 2016** at the Severn Bridge Community Hall on Southwood Road. Please plan to attend for a presentation about Hugo Stein, refreshments, and social time.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS



With a somewhat peculiar winter 'almost' behind us, we are looking forward to another gathering of our members. This first session of my role of President has been very quiet and rather uneventful. I look forward to seeing everyone and making plans for the coming year. Please bring any ideas, thoughts, or stories to me that you would like the Sparrow Lake Historical Society to give some attention. In particular, for the Spring Meeting, bring any stories of Hugo Stein. If you have items you would like to share in our newsletter, please let Steve or myself know. Hope to see you this May 24th weekend on **Saturday 21st at 7 pm**. Please share the change of date with anyone you think might not see this newsletter.

SUMMER OUTING 2015



Barb and Dan Brazier are owed a big thank you for a fantastic tour of Pinecroft Cottage last August. The beautiful work done on their property and the hospitality made for an interesting and welcoming afternoon. The Brazier's thoroughness and attention to detail and the preservation of a historical cottage on the lake were mentioned by many of our members. We are appreciative of the preservation of the heritage. Thank you. We look forward to planning another summer outing for 2016. All ideas welcome.

Sparrow Lake Historical Society Membership Renewal & Application Form

Please note: The year that your membership subscription is paid up to is shown on the envelope in bold letters next to your name.

For those email recipients who are not sure of the year please contact Ken Thomson at hamlet@csolve.net.

Name -----

Mailing Address -----

Postal/Zip Code -----

Email address _____

Will you receive your newsletter via email? YES NO

Single \$15.00 ----- Family \$25.00 ----- New ----- Renewal -----

Also note that now there is a ten year membership available for \$200.00 for a family or \$125.00 for a single membership.

Ten Year Single ----- Family-----

Please make cheque payable to – **Sparrow Lake Historical Society** – and mail to **Ken Thomson, Treasurer 1729 Peninsula Pt. Rd. RR #1, Severn Bridge, ON, P0E 1N0.**