

Bay Lake History

"101"

Introduction

Welcome to Bay Lake History 101, a presentation that attempts to describe the early history of this area and to tell some of the stories of some of the settlers and early residents of our community.

It was created because it's interesting and learning about our history strengthens our community.....and the PowerPoint format makes learning easy.

Editor's Note:

Numerous authors have written about our area. The information in this presentation came from their books and some interviews. See the last slide (i.e. "Sources"). The accuracy of the details isn't guaranteed but the basic story should be close. At the very least it is an acknowledgement of those who came before us.

Questions or comments : Contact Paul Erickson at ericksonpaulsue@aol.com

Bay Lake History "101"

Curriculum

- *Early Native Americans*
- *Voyageurs & The Fur Trade*
- *Railroads*
- *Settlers*
- *Lumber*
- *Schools*
- *Early "Bay Lakers"*

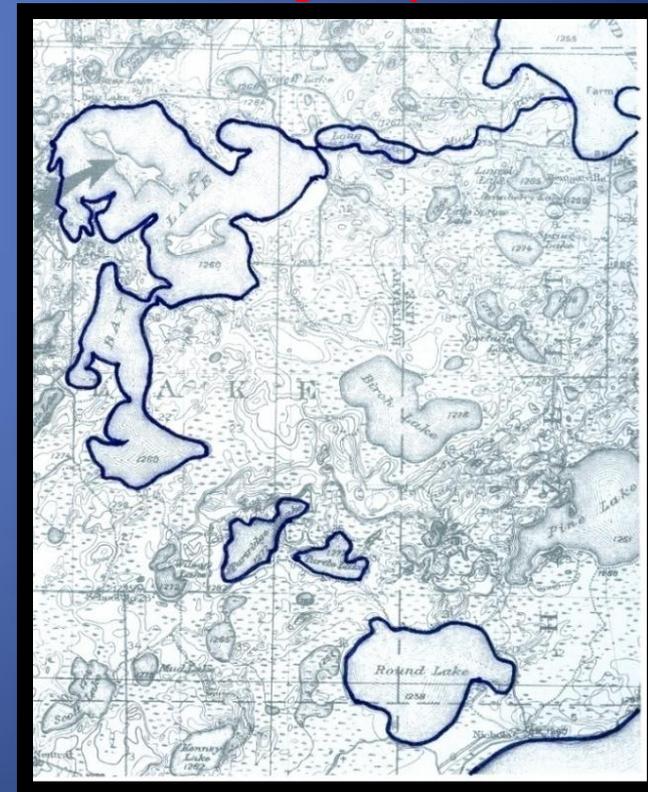
Early Native Americans

- *12,000 BC—Paleo-Indian Period*
Man came to our area as the glaciers receded.
- *8,000 BC—Archaic Period*
Nomadic hunters, fisherman, gatherers of berries, nuts & weeds.
- *800 BC—Woodland Period*
Nomadic hunters, bow & arrows, ceramic vessels and burial grounds (evidence of settlements in the Gull Lake area).
- *900 AD—Late Prehistoric Period*
Less nomadic, farming (wild rice), settlements move from rivers to lakeshore.
- *1600 AD—Historic Period*
The fur trade was active. The Dakota were displaced by Ojibwe.

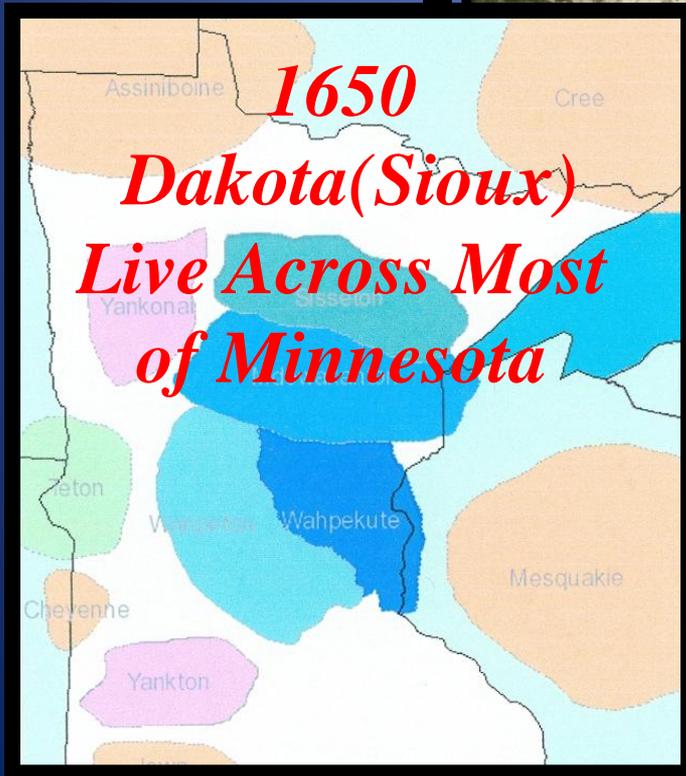
French-Canadian Voyageurs & The Fur Trade 1600 & 1700's



The route from Lake Superior to the Dakota settlement at Kathio on Mille Lacs was through Bay Lake



Dakota (Sioux) & Ojibwe



Battle Point - 1800

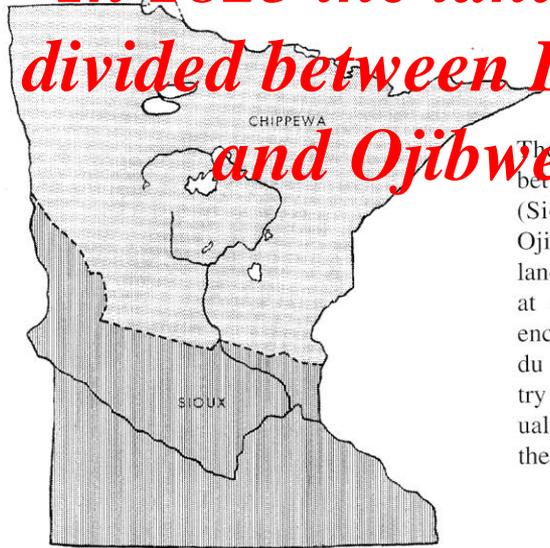
*One of the final battles between the Dakota and Ojibwe
was on Bay Lake's Battle Point*



*This wall sized painting by Sarah Thorp Heald, which
depicts a native settlement on Battle Point, is on display at the
Crow Wing County Courthouse*

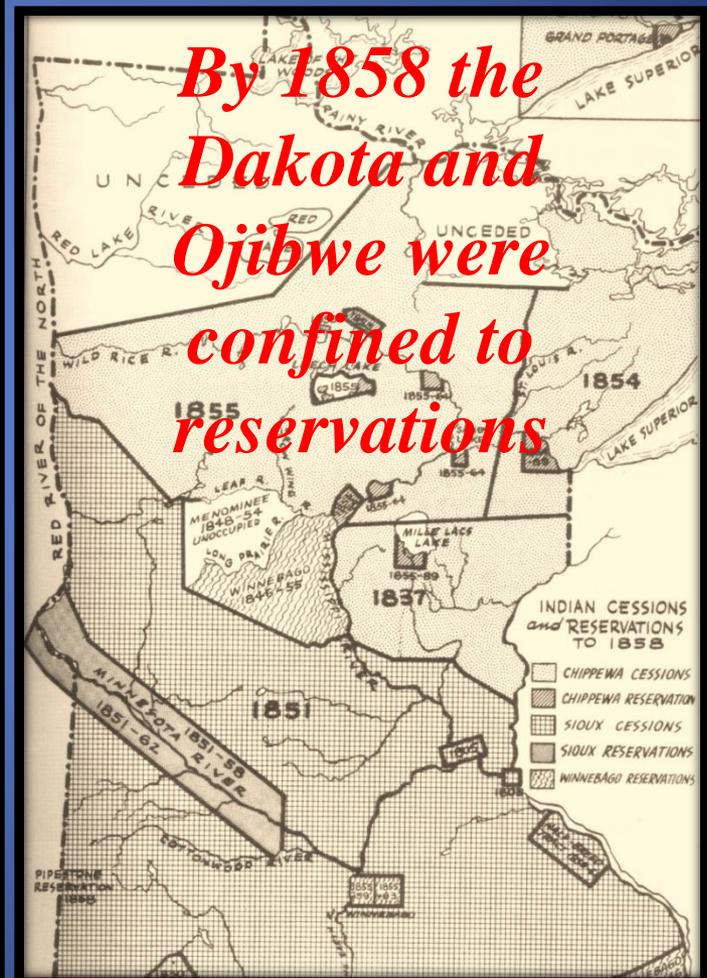
Grand Conference & Cessions/Reservations

In 1825 the lands are divided between Dakota and Ojibwe

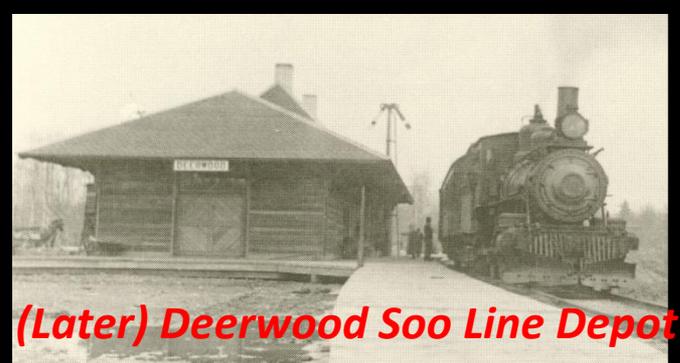
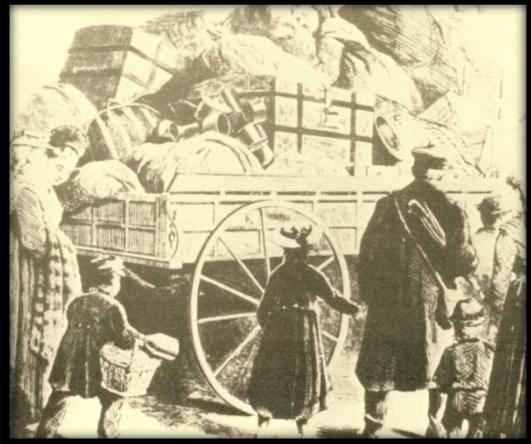


The dividing line between the Dakota (Sioux) and the Ojibwe (Chippewa) lands was drawn up at a "grand conference" held at Prairie du Chien in 1825 to try to end the continual warfare between the two tribes.

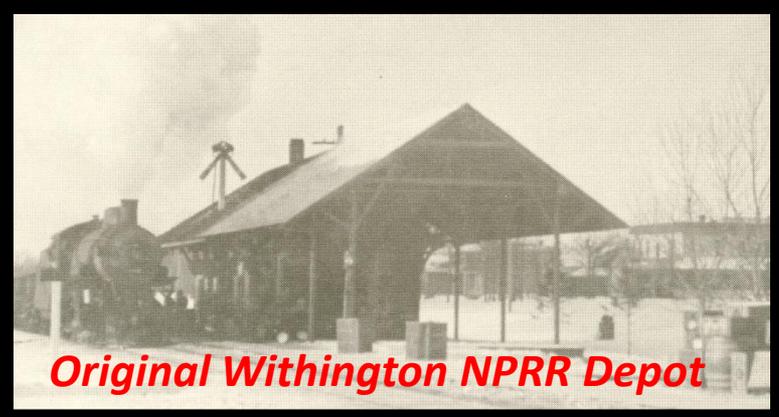
By 1858 the Dakota and Ojibwe were confined to reservations



Railroad Expansion & Immigration



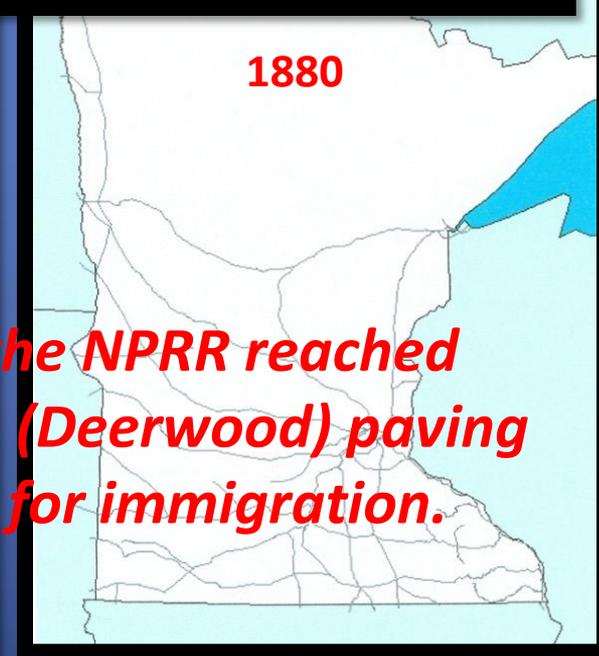
(Later) Deerwood Soo Line Depot



Original Withington NPRR Depot



1870



1880

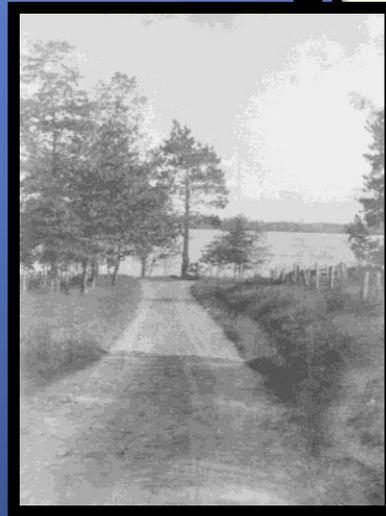
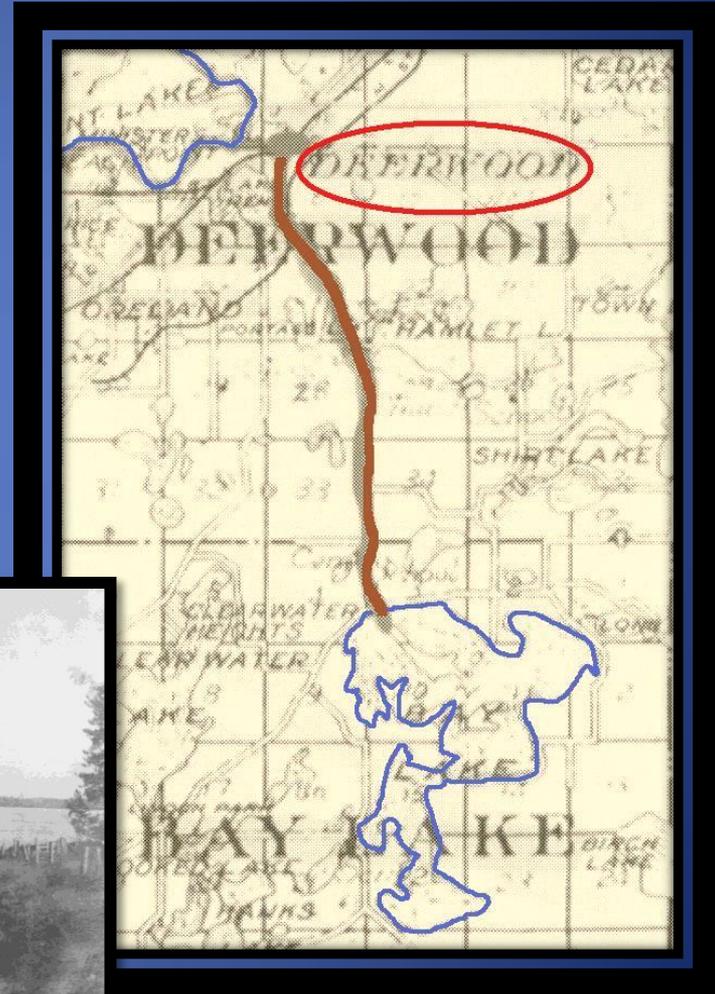
In 1871 the NPRR reached Withington (Deerwood) paving the way for immigration.

Sessabegamah Trail

With the building of the NPPRR line, came the settlement of Withington. Robert Archibald, who was on the first survey crew, was the first homesteader.

(When postal service was established the name was changed to Deerwood to avoid confusion with Worthington).

Many of Bay Lake's early settlers came down the Sessabegamah Trail from Withington/Deerwood.

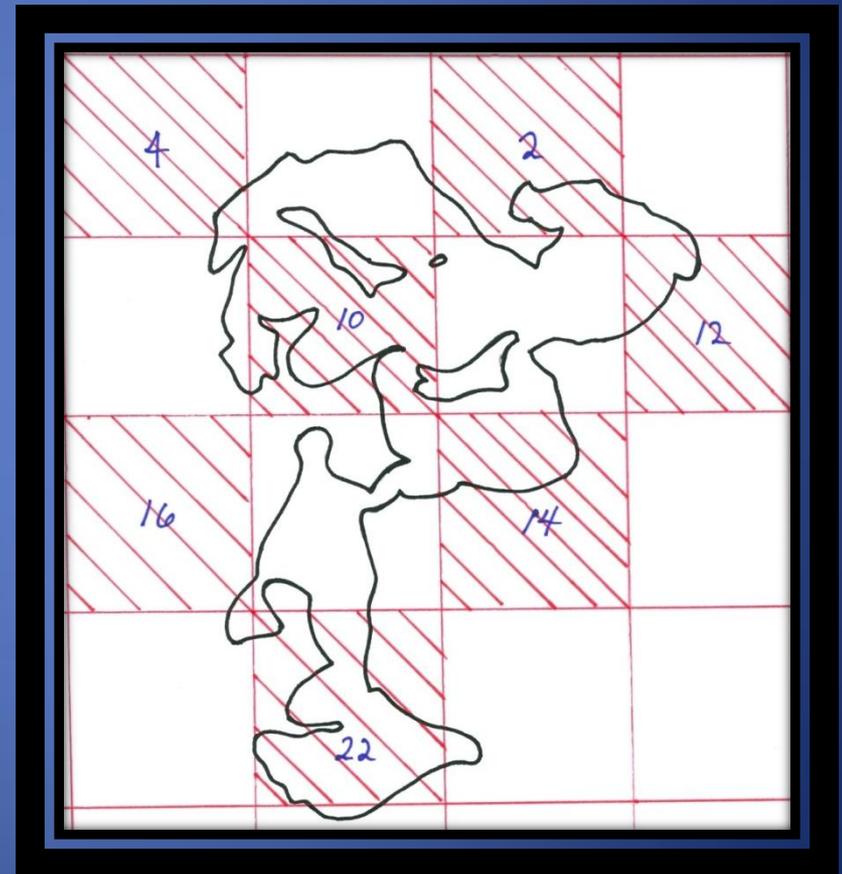


Homestead Sections (Even #) vs. NPRR Sections (Odd #)

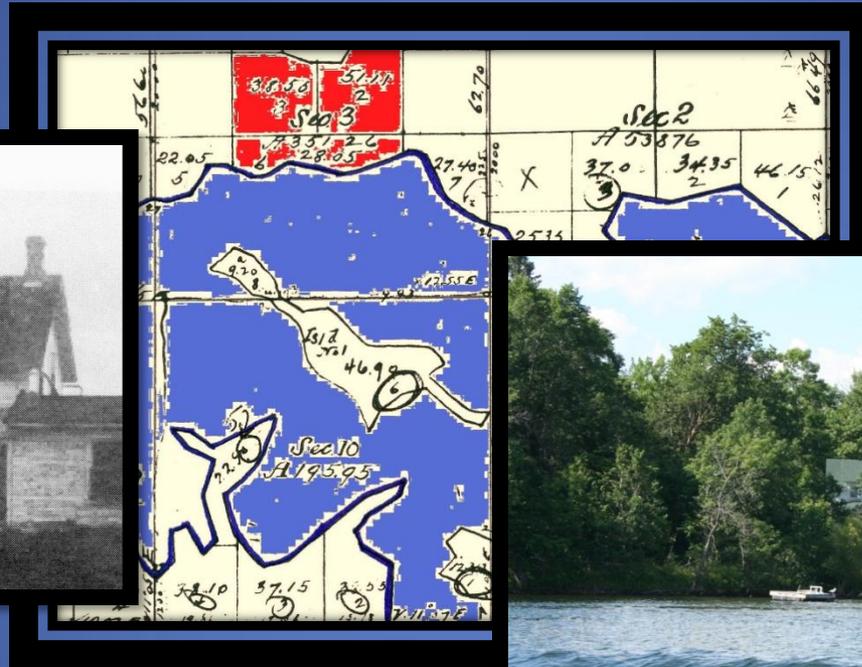
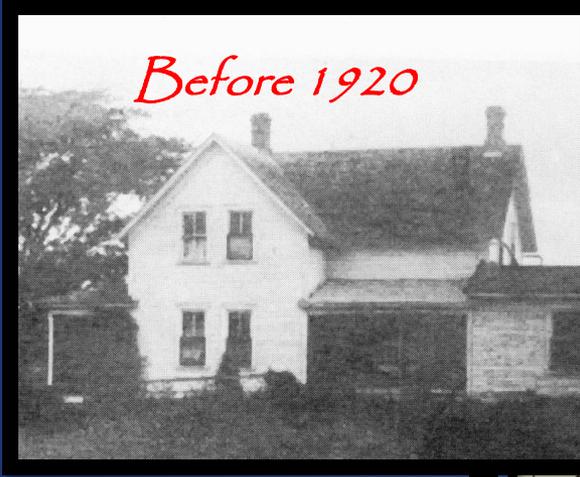
To promote the building of transcontinental rail lines, the US Gov't gave every odd numbered section within 6 miles of the new line to the railroad.

Bay Lake is within 6 miles of the line that was built from Lake Superior to Puget Sound (which goes through Deerwood). So approximately half of Bay Lake was available for homesteading. The land that was given to the railroad was available for purchase.

This affected the timing and pattern of development. For example, the land that is now Bay Lake Shores was homesteaded while Eaglewood had to be purchased.



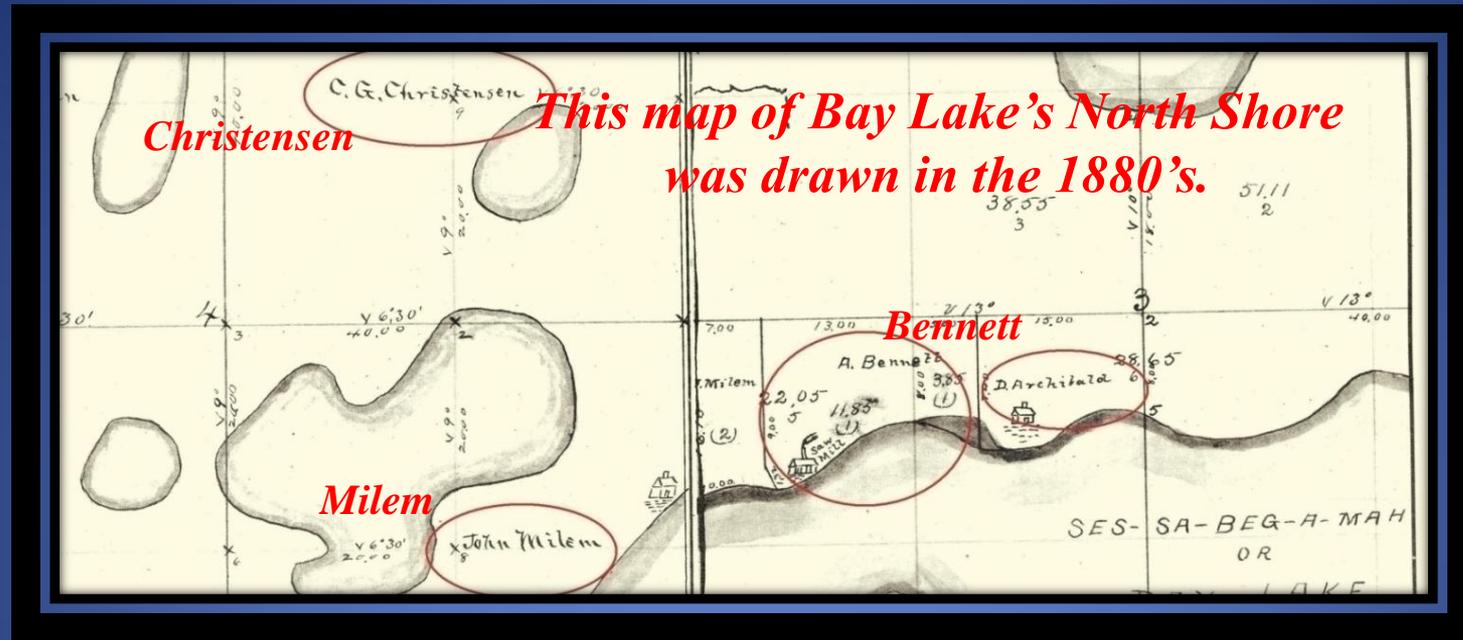
Achibald (Continued)



Their original log home was replaced prior to about 1920. The house was later purchased by the Below family from St. Louis, MO.

The property is now owned by Below decedents (Blistains & Wolfs).

Milem, Christensen & Bennett



In 1882, John Milem, Christian Christensen & Ashael Bennett homesteaded the northwest area of Bay Lake.

Bennett built a sawmill (just east of where Ruttger's Main Lodge is today).

In 1884, Bay Lake was established as a voting precinct. John Milem, Dave Archibald and Nick Newgard were named as judges. Milem's home was the first voting place.

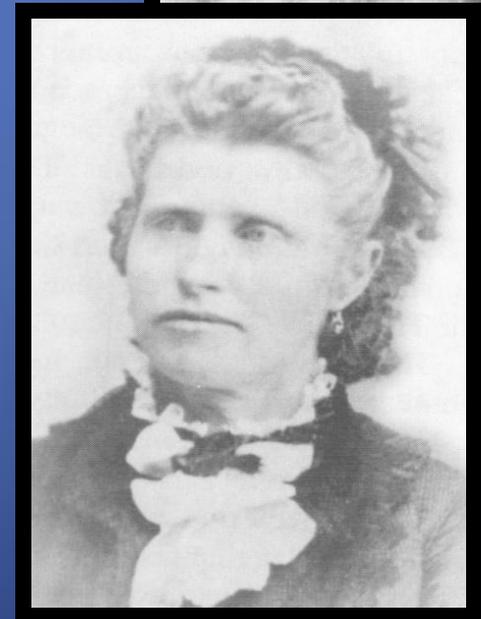
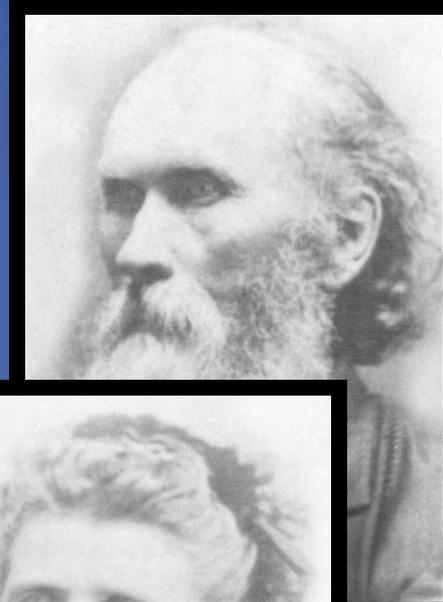
Henrich Knieff & Louise Wasserzieher

*Henrich Knieff, born in Germany in 1822, married
Doris Schlaffer in 1853.*

*They settled in New Ulm in 1856 where Henrich
operated a ferryboat and had a tin shop. After the Civil
War they moved to Crystal Bay on Lake Minnetonka.*

*Doris died in childbirth in 1868 leaving 7 children under
the age of 15.*

*In 1872, Henrich married Louise Wasserzieher. They
returned to Crystal Bay where four more children were
born.*



Knieff (Continued)



In 1883, Henrich & Louise homesteaded on the northeast shore of Bay Lake.

Their first winter was spent living in Nick Newgard's chicken coop.

In 1885, they built their home (1912 picture after additions).



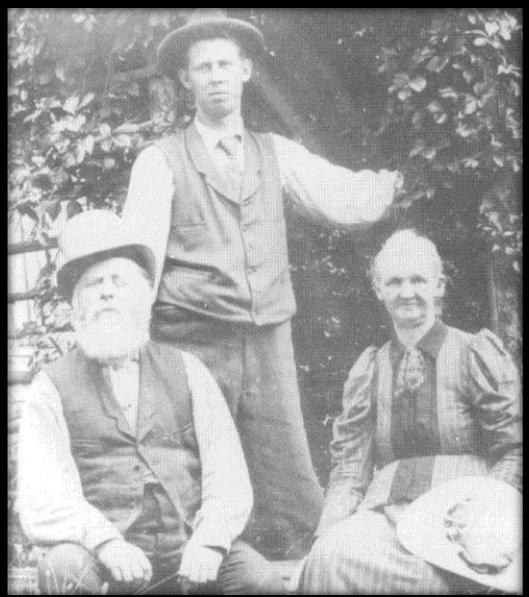
Today, their great granddaughter, Erin, and her husband, Justin Smith operate Knieff's Shore Acres resort. Their home is built on the original homestead, making their children the fifth generation to live there.

Otto & Adelia Wasserzieher

Otto Wasserzieher, Louise (Wasserzieher) Knieff's brother, born in Germany in 1837, married Adele Vogt in 1869. (Picture d are Otto, Adele and their son Edward.)

In 1883, Otto accompanied Henrich Knieff on his exploratory trip to Bay Lake and, in 1884, he and Adele homesteaded east of Knieff's on the north shore of Echo Lake (now Tame Fish Lake).

There wasn't a road, but they could visit by boat traveling across Echo Lake down the Mud River and into Bay Lake.



Wasserzieher (Continued)



This painting, done by Henrich Knieff, depicts the Wasserzieher homestead where they grew berries and apples.

Today, their grandson, Ken, and his wife Sharon, live on the homestead (north side of Tame Fish Lake Road at the "Maple Syrup" sign).

Later, their son Edward, owned and operated Sunset Cabins, a small resort adjacent to (and now owned by) Ruttger's.

He built and operated this steamboat to ferry people on Bay Lake and Echo Lake (now Tame Fish Lake). He had a drawbridge between the lakes.



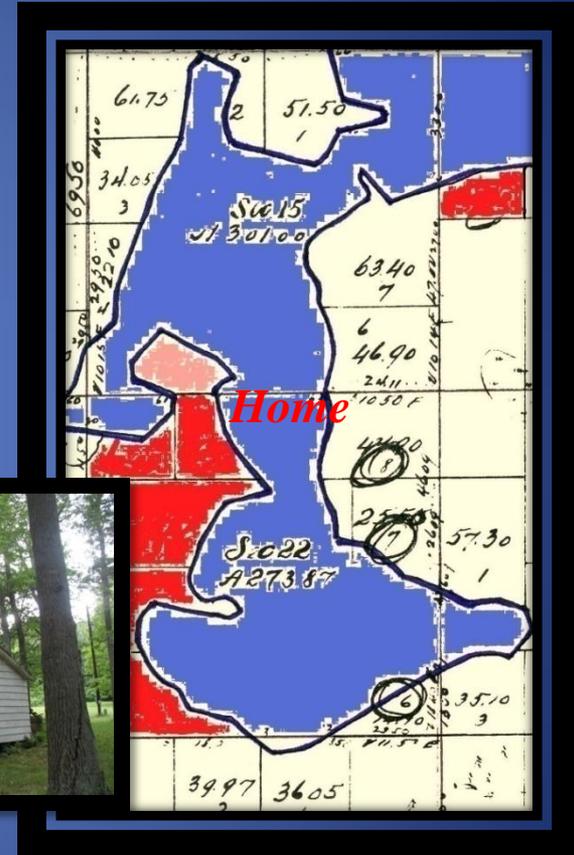
Today, their grandson, Gil and his wife Dorothy, have a home east of Tame Fish Lake.

George & Maggie Hunt

In 1883, George Albert and Maggie Hunt (and their 11 children), homesteaded most the southwest portion of Bay Lake (and a parcel across the lake).

Later, they purchased the northern portion of Hunter's Bay Point (which had been given to the NPPRR).

With Nick Newgard and the Wasserziehers, the Hunts later formed the Bay Lake Fruit Growers, an organization that shipped produce from Deerwood by boxcar.



They built a frame house between the points that are now owned by Birkeland's and Erickson's.

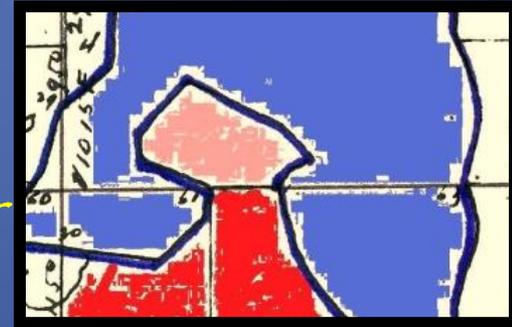
Hunt (Continued)



One of their sons, George Wilbur (known as “GW” or “Grandpa Hunt”) was a remarkable gardener.

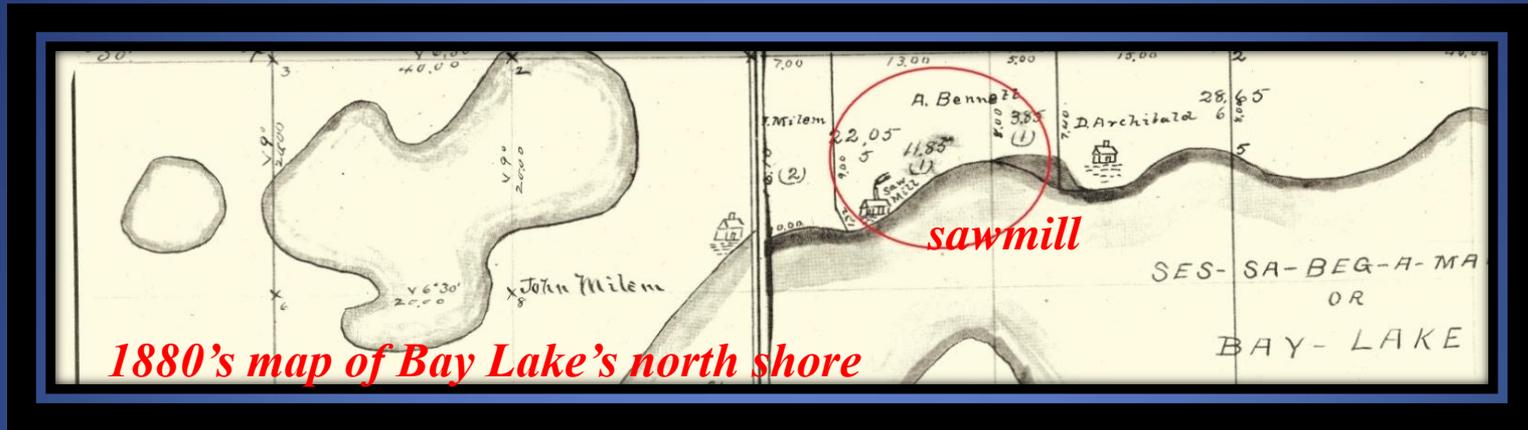
He was also a Lay Minister at Nokay Lake, Vineland and Deerwood. He walked to these locations.

Their farming operation lead to the development of Hunt’s Cannery which was later owned and operated by one of their sons, Ralph, and his wife Alisimon.



Many of our “older” residents remember buying sweet corn and berries at the Cannery (often coming by boat) and home baked bread and pies from Ralph’s sister-in-law, Silvia.

The Bay Lake Colony



In 1886, the Pioneer Cooperative Company (known as the Bay Lake Colony), was chartered to be an "experiment in cooperative associations".

The colony purchased the Bennett sawmill and likely the Bennett and Milem homesteads.

Bennett moved about 6 miles east where he established another sawmill on the east shore of Farm Island lake in a small settlement that became Bennettville.

The Colony was a financial failure and it closed the next year, but it attracted a number of pioneers to Bay Lake.

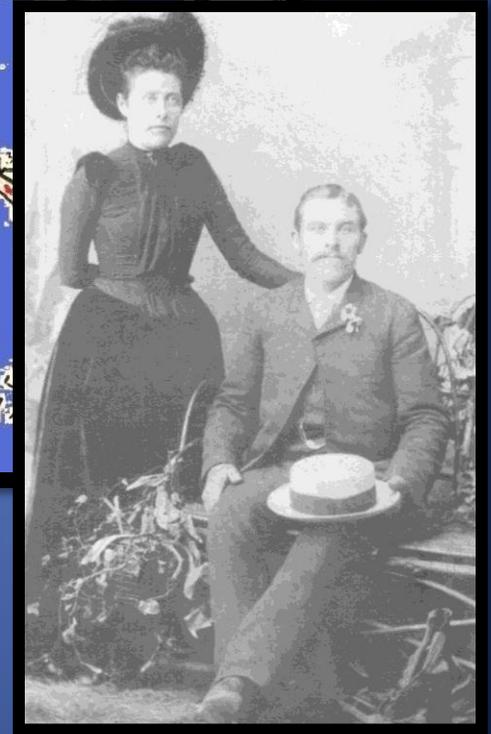
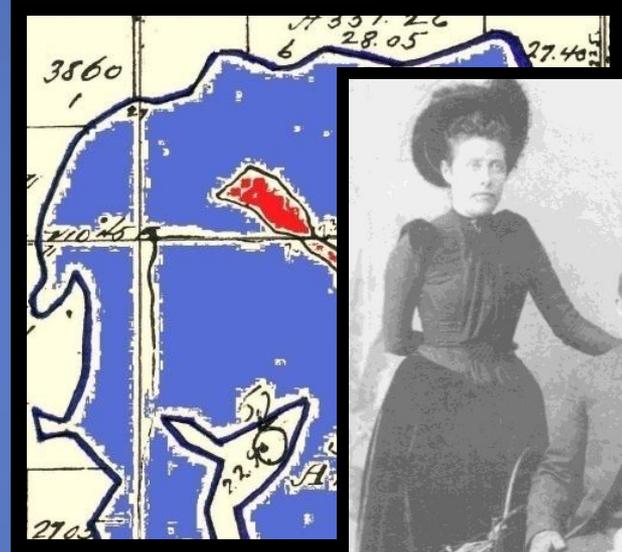
Joe & Josephine (Wasserzieher) Ruttger

In 1886, Joseph Ruttger, born in Germany, came to Bay Lake to run the steam engine for the Colony's sawmill.

When the Colony closed, he homesteaded what is now Malkerson's Island.

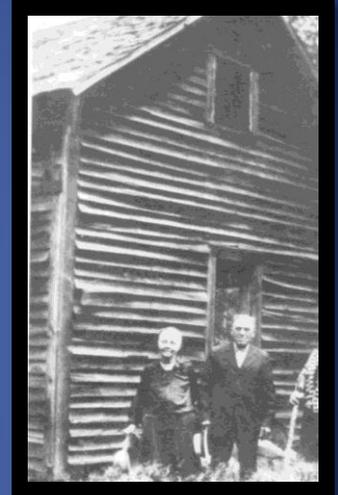
In the fall of 1889, Josephine Wasserzieher, came to stay with her recently widowed sister, Louise (Wasserzieher) Knieff.

About a year later, Joe & Josephine were married in the front room of the Knieff home.



Ruttger (Continued)

They lived in the home Joe had built on the island (picture of Joe & Josephine in their later years by the house which is still on the island).



Alex was born in 1892. In 1894, with their second child on the way, they moved to the mainland.



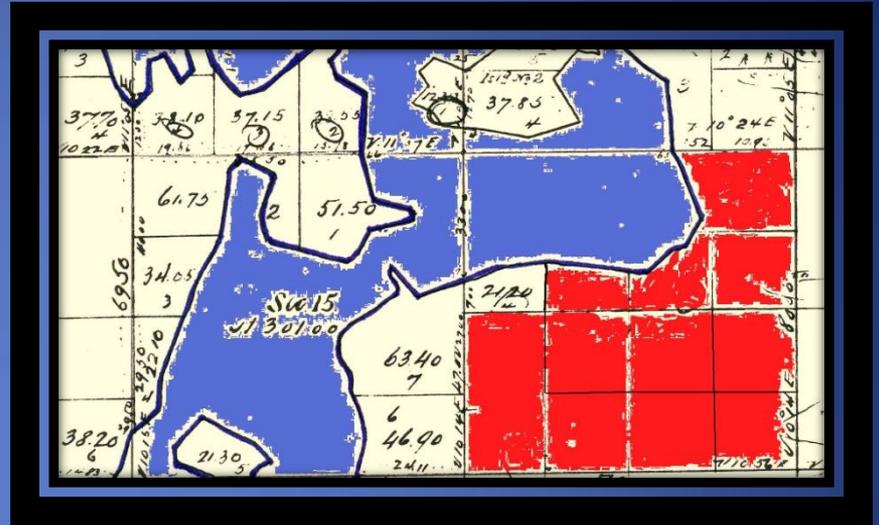
Soon afterward, they began construction of the home (that even today is part of the Ruttger's Lodge building) which, later, led them into the resort business.

Their grandson Jack, and his wife Ann, and their great grandson Chris, and his wife Joanne, continue the Ruttger's Resort legacy on Bay Lake.

Erath Brothers

In 1886, the Erath brothers came to work at the Colony.

They homesteaded the shoreline that is now Sand Beach Park, Greg Road and Wakeman Road as well as a substantial amount of land off the lake.

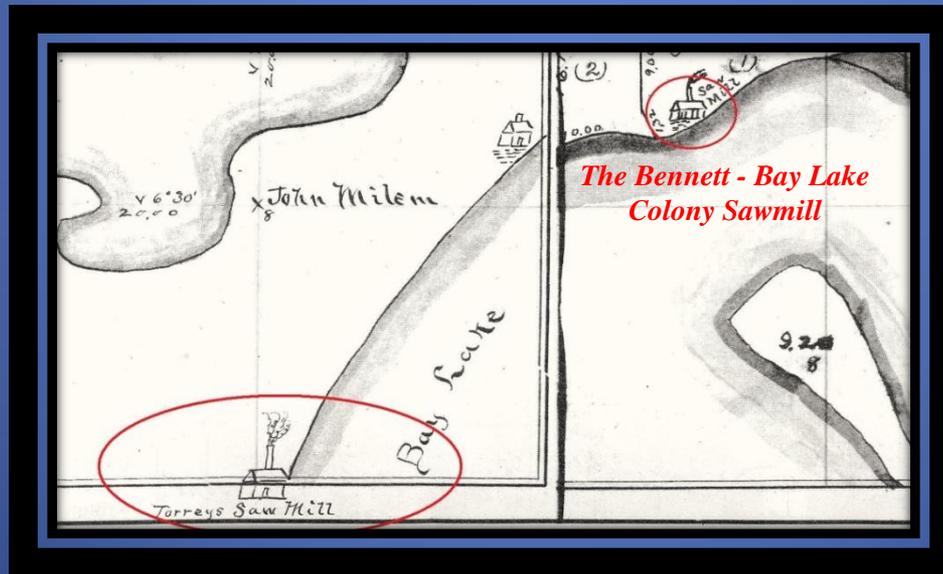


One of the brothers traveled to North Dakota to work the harvest. He returned soon after the ice had formed. He crossed to Ruttger Island and then Church Island but fell through and drown on Brighton Point.

A year or two later, his brother also fell through the ice and drown on Brighton Point.

Torrey Sawmill

When the Colony sawmill closed in about 1887, James Torrey and his son, Ira, who jointly operated a sawmill in Deerwood, built a mill on Bay Lake.



Arthur, Ester & Gordon Gray



A Horseless Carriage?

In 1904, Arthur & Ester Gray purchased a farm north of the lake.

Two years later they purchased land and built a store on the Sessebegamah Trail (note the oxen).

In 1919, they sold the store to Ruttger's (now Ruttger's Country Store).

They then purchased 8 acres and built a resort.

Their son, Gordon, later operated a resort, hardware store and millworks. He sold the store and millworks to Larry & Nancy Thoms in 1969 who turned it into an Ace Hardware Store in 1973 and built a new building in 1989.

Newgard, Hall, Ruttger & “Content”

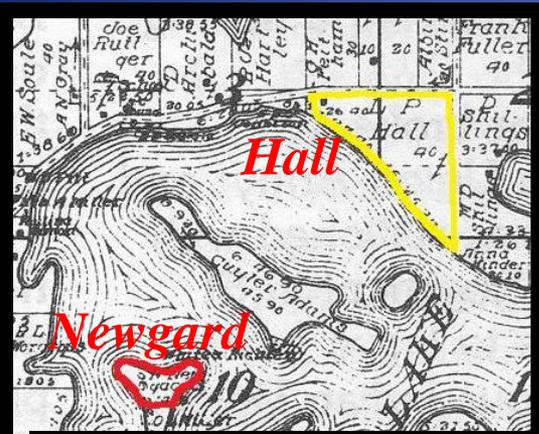
*In 1902, L. P. Hall, an architect from Duluth, brought his
bride to Ruttger’s.*

*While on a walk they met Nick Newgard and sometime
prior to 1913, they purchased some of the his property.*

*Newgard then purchased a portion of the Wheeler
homestead where he built a home.*

*In his later years he asked his friend Joe Ruttger to
check on him if smoke stopped coming from his chimney.*

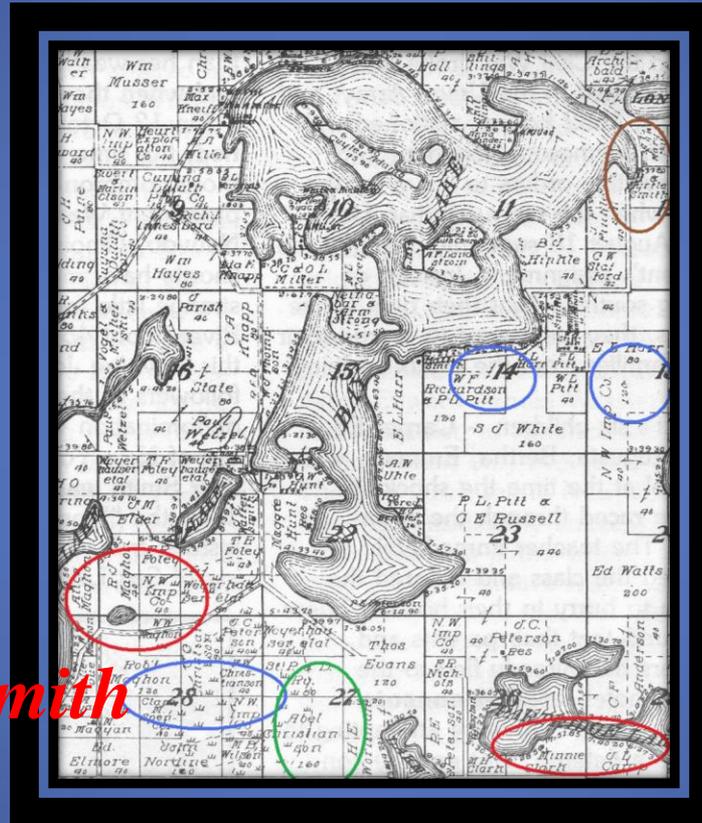
*The smoke stopped. Joe checked. Nick was dead. The property was willed to
Joe. Today it is part of “Content” which is owned by the Johnson & Keller
Families.*



Waffensmith & Bath

*John & Ethel
Waffensmith settled
SW of Bay Lake.
Later generations
settled on the east side
of the lake (by what is
now Waffensmith Road).*

Waffensmith



Bath

*M. Bath homesteaded
the far northeast shore
and E. A. Bath
homesteaded to his
east.*

Bay Lake Schools

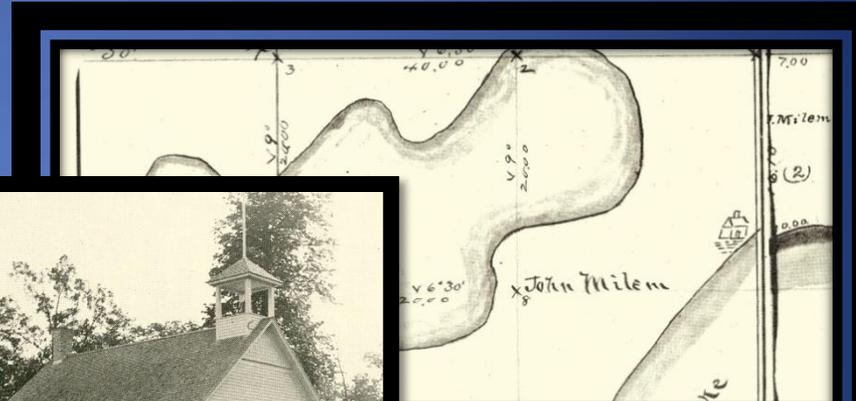
There were at least 4 Bay Lake area schools.

The first school was built in 1884, on land that was donated by John Milem.

In 1902 it was replaced by a new building (where Ruttger's tennis courts are today).

The original log schoolhouse was dismantled and moved to Deerwood Township.

A list of the pupils enrolled in 1910 include the following familiar names: Albert & Casper Miller, William, Ed & Max Ruttger, Marie Archibald, Mortimer Bath, Clarence Wheeler and Myrle Fuller (Alex Ruttger's future wife).



NORTH BAY LAKE SCHOOL,
District No. 11
Bay Lake Township,
Crow Wing County, Minn.

ADA F. DYK, Teacher

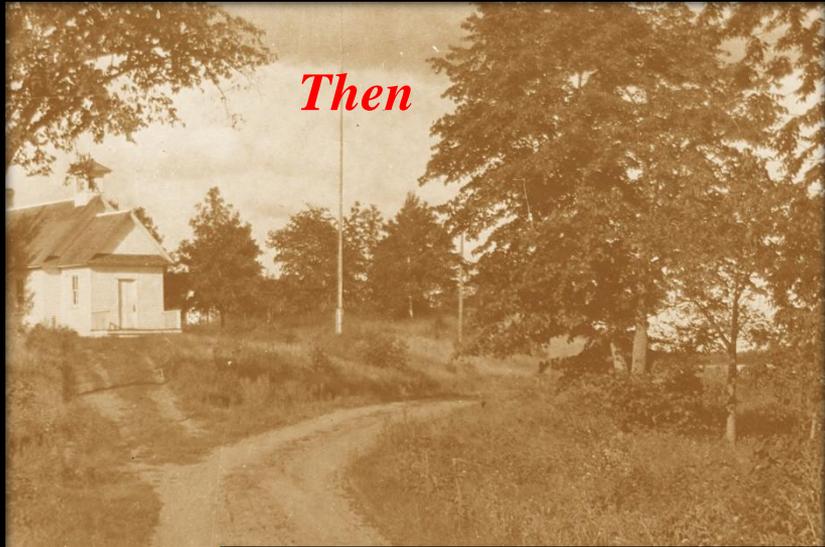
PUPILS

Mabel Fuller	Hazel Orr
Frank Taylor	Myrle Fuller
Charley Scott	Etta Skillings
Martin Taylor	Everett Skillings
Mabel Orr	Arthur Taylor
Bertie Miller	Casper Miller
Willie Ruttger	Bryan Scott
Ora Taylor	Mortimer Bath
Winnie Carron	Nellie Orr
Eddie Ruttger	Blanchard Skillings
Katie Simons	Addie Taylor
Max Ruttger	Ronie Scott
Marie Archibald	Charley Wheeler

J. A. Wilson, Co. Supt.
David Archibald, Clerk
F. E. Fuller, Treasurer
A. N. Gray, Director

Schools (continued)

Then



This picture of the Katrine School was taken in 1917.

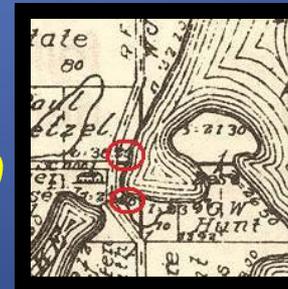
It was located near Hunter's Bay just north of what is now Eaglewood Road. The two rut road later became Highway 6 and then Eaglewood Road.

Now



Note that Hunter's Bay is visible in both pictures.

In 1962, Highway 6 was relocated and the school house was condemned. Art Hansen (Curt's father) bought the building and moved it to its current site.



Some of the early “Summer People”

Until air conditioning became popular it was common for people from Kansas and Missouri to seek the cooler Minnesota climate.

Frank & Helen Below

In 1901, Frank & Helen Below, from St. Louis, MO, came to Ruttger's and later purchased some of the Archibald property.

Their decedents Blistains & Wolfs own the former Archibald property today.



The Kansas Colony



In 1898, Mr. & Mrs., Fred Boone, from Junction City, KS, were Ruttger's first "registered guests" and later they purchased property on the North Shore (now the Tietz home).

Over the years they enticed many other Kansas families to buy property on Bay Lake.

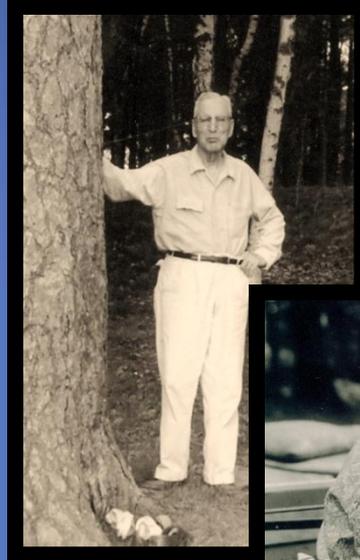
Eventually the shoreline east of Ruttger's became known as the Kansas Colony.

Springer, Weigel & Wagaman (Manhattan), Boone & Durland (Junction City), Meyer (Atchinson), Holton & Black (Wichita). Additionally, Ritchies bought on the northwest shore and Warehams (Manhattan) purchased the northeast point in the Battle Point/Birch Lawn area.

Pierce



EB, daughter Rhoda & son Harmon.



EB & Ulla



In about 1920, EB & Ulla Pierce (from the Twin Cities) began camping on land that was owned by GW Hunt.

Later they purchased 4 lots (now Parrish, MacKay, Erickson & Sosey properties).

Editor's Note: These wonderful family pictures are a great reminder of how lucky we are to be here.

The End

Sources

The contents of this presentation came from interviews and these books.



See how and where to buy them in the History Project section at baylake.org.