

# MISSOURI'S LOST ROAD

## NEVER RECOVERED

By Mrs. W. F. Hudson

At Lakeside, near Crystal Lake, lies a sunken road about which there is an interesting story. Crystal Lake occupies about 80 acres. It has no visible inlet or outlet but is fed by springs from a bog at the northeast end. The average depth of the lake is about 25 feet but there are sink holes of unknown depth, especially in the northeast corner.

Last year intense heat dried the lake 50 yards from its original shore line and farmers who were in the habit of watering their cattle at its edge dug ditches to get the water from the lake to run out to where there was solid footing for cattle.

About 60 years or more ago there was a big pond to be drained at Woodstock and Joseph Thornton, who lived near Woodstock, offered to take the job of

draining the pond if given the fish in the pond for his work. By opening a dam the water was reduced to the area of a small pond, when the fish, mostly pike, some a yard long, was caught by hand, and put in a watering tank of a threshing machine. The "catch" was taken to Lakeside and put in Crystal Lake, but now, however, the pike are all gone, supposed to have been eaten by carp. This summer the Government put several thousand baby pickerel in Crystal Lake.

The first original road ran north and south on the eastern shore of Crystal Lake, Edward Bartley owning property through which the road ran. Following some differences he forbid the use of the road through his property and closed it to the public. Then the Township of East Missouri had to build a road to get to the school

which was situated at the southeast end of the lake, so they purchased land at the west side of the lake from Burlay Mitchell and Mortimer Mitchell and at the south of the Mitchell property they built a road across bog to the 12th concession south of the lake.

### DISAPPEARING ROAD

When the road was built across the bog the bed was made by a filling of logs and gravel. After being in use for 10 or 12 years the bog began to sink and the road along with it. The council had more gravel put on but this also gradually sank out of sight and more gravel was applied but it also disappeared.

Then when about four feet of water was on top of the road the council decided to make another attempt. They went to a blacksmith shop and got iron rods coupled together in 50-foot lengths

and these were driven down, but they just went down as in a bowl of porridge with a sort of gurgle.

So the councilors decided to abandon the rebuilding and, as there was no way for the farmers to get across the lake or to the school, the council had to buy more land still farther south of the lake. This land was owned by an American who asked what seemed an enormous sum for it, but finally it was bought by the council and a new road built on solid land. The old road, however, kept sinking for about 15 years, until now the lake extends far to the south of what was the road. Only an approach of a few yards at each side show where it used to be.

About 35 years ago William Dalrymple owned the farm adjoining the lake to the east. He conceived the idea of making a summer resort. Huge cedar posts

were driven into the lake in a rectangular shape, a number of dressing rooms were built, a board walk on cedar posts connected the bath house with the shore; a dance pavilion was also erected and a large stable and a boat house were set up. It was a Coney Island with a sort of raft built on barrels and anchored with stones and was used on occasions as a bandstand.

Summer cottages came, a race track was added, and the East Missouri Township Fair was held there annually as well as the monster U. F. O. picnic. But after a number of years Mr. Dalrymple sold his park and it went into disuse until now it is only used each summer by a number of Girl Guides and Boy Scouts. The old boat house and bath house have disappeared and the race course is grown up with grass. Only the pavilion remains as a reminder of the prosperous days.

John Sinkins of Lakeside, a few years ago purchased a piece of land at the south and west of the lake, and here he had the stumps pulled, underbrush cleaned out and established a new modern resort.

Directly east of Crystal Lake, about a half-mile away, lies a little lake about 20 acres in size. In dry years it goes completely dry, becoming treacherous. Many cattle have ventured for a drink in the summer and been caught in its quicksands, never to come out.

Wild ducks are there in great numbers each year, as well as wild geese and other fowl, but so treacherous is it that few venture near its edge and it remains a sort of mystery to most people.

At the north shore of Crystal Lake is situated Lakeside, a prosperous village, but few, except the older men of the village, know the story of the Sunken Road.

Today the lake at Lakeside is quite a resort for swimming and boating enthusiasts but in the early days the big pond had a reputation for bottomlessness that kept most of the adventurous spirits on the bank. It was also hemmed-in by thorns and berry bushes to say nothing of the dense forest and bullrushes and other water weeds grew along its shores for some distance out into the water. It was therefore very difficult for anyone not wanting to get a wetting or to get mired in the mud and torn by the thorns, to get out onto the water in comfort. However it is recorded that its waters were navigated in the very earliest days. Soon after the first settlers came to that vicinity a number of officials came up the hewn trail from Woodstock and being in good spirits decided that they would sail upon the waters ere they returned to their home. They labored for half a day building a raft and finally got it launched with its human freight aboard. However when the party got out into the middle of the pond they were so hilarious that one of their number who carried a rifle let the shooting iron drop. It bounced off the raft and sank to the bottom of the lake and rests there still according to old residents of the district who have had the story handed down from one generation to another.

(To be continued)