



Mrs. Julia Lawrason

By this time Rosseau already boasted a fine hotel, called The Rosseau House (or Pratt Hotel as it was known by locals). It had the distinction of being the first hotel built in Muskoka, and opened its doors on July 1st, 1870. The journey up from Toronto consisted of two stages: first, guests traveled from Toronto to Gravenhurst by train; after that they boarded a steamboat and completed the rest of the journey on the water as there were no roads or rails to take them any further into the northern wilderness. Visitors paid the astronomical fee of \$2-\$5 per day for their vacation and enjoyed dances, concerts, good food and all manner of other outdoor activities. Soon other resorts and guest houses were built in Rosseau, putting it on the map as a destination spot for tourists. It is also worth mentioning that two rather unsuccessful farmers began building boats for the local hotels to use and from this, the world famous Ditchburn Boat Co. was born.

Just down the road from the town of Rosseau, the Lawrasons were working diligently on their land and Mrs. Lawrason, known as quite a belle in her native England, was often seen wearing hand-me-down ball gowns she received from her affluent family while out farming in the fields. Mr. Lawrason served as one of the first local Councilmen. In December, 1879, they registered with the Crown and, meeting all the requirements, became official land owners. In a sad occurrence, in January, 1889, Mr. Lawrason died a week after being accidentally shot. Subsequent to the death of her husband, Mrs. Lawrason took in summer boarders and hired local hands to help her with the farm as she did not have any children.

Mrs. Lawrason was very involved in The Church of the Redeemer in Rosseau. After visiting Ottawa and realizing what an organized group of women could accomplish, she returned to establish the Women's Auxillary during a time when the church was struggling. The first meeting was held in her home and she became the secretary.

Tradition suggests (although we have not been able to officially confirm the story) that Mrs. Lawrason kept a journal and in that journal she wrote her prayers that the land she homesteaded would always be used for God's glory.

Mrs. Lawrason sold the property in 1900. It changed hands several times until Mr. and Mrs. Arthur McCrea (brother of Lady Eaton who had a summer home next door on the property now owned by Rosseau Lake College) bought it in 1932 for a summer home. They built a large manor house that encompassed the log cabin and this historical building still stands on the property today. The property changed hands a few more times before being purchased by the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in 1947. They used the land as a Bible Conference Centre known as Glen Rocks.



The original Lawrason Log Cabin, know as The Beach now enclosed in the Manor Building.