

a newspaper and my coffee and listen to the sounds of nature. There is still good fishing for pike, bass, mudcats, sunfish and perch, although the fish are not as big as in the 1940s (see picture). I can't recall a summer drowning, although there was a death in the winter many years ago. The ice on the lake then has many soft spots as the lake is spring fed.

All the early cottages were built by Mr. Milton Bird, who originally owned the Bird's Beach canteen. The cottages were all painted green, with one room only inside. An open porch on three sides had shutters that went up and down to keep out the rain. At that time, coal oil was used for lighting and cooking. Vendors came around to the door selling vegetables, milk, baking, newspapers and ice for the icebox.

Mr. Farley Lindenfield used to water his cows at the lake twice a day. The campers complained, and consequently he dragged a stoneboat night and morning to the edge of the lake to fill big cans with water to take back to the cows. The noise of the stoneboat

dragging over ground and stones could be heard all over the lake. Willy Detlor directed his cows down the highway to pasture twice a day, riding on a motorbike.

Russell West had the first motorboat on the lake. It was 5 horsepower, and at that time, the oil mixture was 1 part to 16 parts of gas; consequently, there was lots of smoke. Now oil and gas are no longer mixed, so there is less pollution. Now, the boats on the lake may have 100 to 125 horsepower.

I firmly believe campers and farmers see so much beauty of this world that city people miss: the sun, moon, stars, clouds, thunderstorms, sunsets and wild life that are all so wonderful. I truly believe that camping on Oak Lake is the best thing next to Heaven!

*Editor's note: Lake on the Mountain is only 415 feet above sea level as compared to Oak Lake at 667. Lake Superior is 602 feet above sea level.

MEMORIES OF STIRLING

by Rob Dykstra

As a young boy I grew up in the village of Stirling. It was a very pleasant place to live and because Stirling is small it was very easy to get across town. I could visit most of my friends in one day. Some days we would bike up to Oak Lake, a favourite place to go for many kids on a hot summer day. The bike ride was only 20 minutes. It was a lot faster coming home though, as we could coast our bikes most of the way back down the Oak Hills. They were very steep and seemed like mountains at that time. Although I never learned to swim at Oak Lake, I loved the french fries at Birds Beach. In my whole life I've never had french fries that tasted so good again. They were mouth watering, a sheer delicacy for a kid my age. Another pastime was racing home-built wooden go-carts down Stapley's Hill (George Street). It was a very steep hill. A lot of kids would use this hill to race their fast as lightning karts, or so they thought. They probably weren't very safe but when you're just a kid it was "fun first, safety later."

Some of the best times were spent on sunny Saturday mornings at Woodbeck Auto Wreckers at the north part of the village at that time. We would play in some of the wrecks and imagine that we had just smashed them, or pretend to be fixing them with our eight-years-old mechanical knowledge. Sometimes we would get nice tall antennas for our bikes, or find a mirror that had good chrome on it so it would shine

on our bikes like silver dollars. Other times we would go into the house in the southeast corner and watch Saturday morning cartoons and the Three Stooges. Some time we would have breakfast there also. The toast was always burnt just right. These are just a few of the many wonderful memories of growing up in the Great Little Village called Stirling.



The Stirling Rink was bordered by Rawdon Creek, Emma, George and Henry Streets. The George Street hill began at Emma (top left) and ended at Henry (bottom right). Many a homemade go cart has been raced down the hill.