

## MEMORIES OF K.P. LAKE



K.P. Lake - north shore - (later owned by Armstrongs)

Lovells township, in the northeast part of Crawford County, is indeed fortunate to have several small, but beautiful lakes. One of these lakes is located approximately three miles west of the village of Lovells along county Rd. 612 and is named K. P. Lake. There are many stories of how this lake received its name. One such story was related by an old-time resident, Glen Owen, now deceased. In a 1965 North Woods Call newspaper article, Mr. Owen stated that the woods around Lovells were dotted with logging camps. Loggers would be sent out from Lovells and the company had to give directions and as the company usually named these small lakes after a worker, the company office named this lake after a worker named K. P. Lake.

Mr. Owen's father, George Owen, was a Crawford County Sheriff and was one of the early settlers in the lake area. He had a farm and orchard on the east side of the lake and in the winter cut ice from the lake. Remus Buck was also a neighbor at this time.

In the early 1900s, the lure of trout fishing coupled with better transportation systems brought many new families to the area. Among these, in the summer of 1923, were a group of hardy, enthusiastic campers from Detroit. George Brink and family and a cousin, George Luke, and his wife drove down the rutted trail and steep sand hill to the north shore of the lake. Each family had what they called a "camp car," actually forerunners of what is now the modern camper or mobile home. Designed by Bert Brink, the camper was built on a Cadillac chassis. The front seat was wide

enough to hold four adults with one passenger seated to the left of the driver. The sides folded out to make two full sized beds; there was a built-in ice box and stove plus storage compartments for blankets, dishes, etc. A canvas tent, which attached at the back, accommodated folding table and chairs plus extra sleeping room. On the dash was a record player and radio. Everyone loved the lake and camped there so much that there was no more searching for a place to come. Every year, in early spring, the camps was set up and




"Road" to Lovells - 1924

remained until late fall. A large sleeping tent was added and extended family and friends would come and go all summer. The more the merrier. There was an abundance of fish, bass and perch. The water was clear and cold and a great time was had by all. Mail was sent out and received at the post office in Lovells and shopping for supplies was done in the store at the Douglas Hotel. Visitors would drop by from the area to dine, play cards, or just chat. One of them was Rufus Babbitt, game warden at that time. Bill and Jack



Caid from Lovells were frequent guests. In the fall, there was game to be hunted, lots of rabbits and grouse.

Finally, in 1930, the five sisters and husbands pooled their resources and bought forty acres that became available on the southwest shore of the lake. Since there were five families with five keys they named their place Key Phye; using the old English spelling of the word five. They kept the initials K.P. as in the lake name. The sign  5 became something of a landmark at the end of the trail where it met what is now Co. Rd. 612.



Camp car, Marian Brink Kellogg and her mother - 1925.



Fred Burch, Earl Stimpson, Ford Jones and Phyl Stimpson.

In August of 1931, a forest fire swept through the area and all available hands at the cottage were out fighting the fire along with CCC boys in the area. It came close but stopped short of the Key 5 property. That was an exciting event, at night the stumps glowing and sparks flying across the lake from the cottage made it look like the lights of a city, really quite beautiful, but scary.

In the late 1930's, some of the Key 5 property was sold to the Rileys, McGowans, and Bogarts, all from Detroit. Bogarts and Rileys had log cabins built by John Kellogg. John grew up in the Lovells area and was one of a large family whose parents were Ed and Bessie Kellogg, well known community leaders. Their homestead still stands on its site near Kellogg Bridge on the North Branch of the AuSable. John also built a log addition to the Key 5 property and later married Marian Brink, daughter of George and Emma Brink of the early camp-car group. Bogarts did not stay long but soon sold their property to Truman McGowan. Over the years, Truman sold lots until there are now seven homes on that parcel. The Rileys still have their log home and there are three descendants of the original campers living on the trail; Marian Kellogg

(summer resident), Ford and Kathryn Jones and Rama (Mrs. Phyl) Stimpson, who live year round at the lake.

In the mid-thirties, the North Shore of the lake saw rapid development of rental cabins and boat rentals. This was developed by Holger Schmidt and carried on by his son Frank and family. Several families who now have cottages on the lake, first camped with or rented from the Schmidts.

An interesting property on the east side was Ray Owen's. In his early life he had worked at the Douglas store in Lovells. Ray's father, George, who we mentioned at the beginning of this article, had homesteaded here. Later on, the property was divided and several nieces and nephews had parcels so that part of the east shore was called "Our Father's Park." Ray's brother, Glen Owen, came back to his birthplace area



Camp car, added tents plus "outhouse" - mid 1920's.



in 1959 and decided to build a cabin on the lake as he'd always dreamed of doing. For several years he was the only resident in the wintertime. Another Owen descendant, Ray Warner, built a cottage for his family in 1962 and now he and his wife, Jean, make their home on the lake.

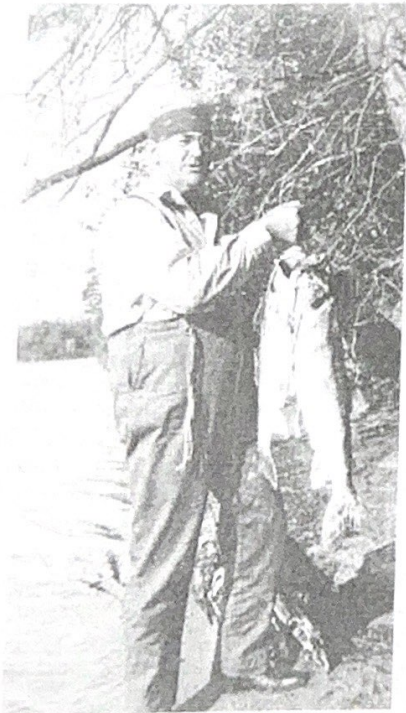
After World War II more and more summer cottages were built around the lake — at the north end on the west side and across on the east side as well. One of the early builders on the east side was the Hartwig family who came to camp, and loved the lake, and became "hooked" as others had been earlier. They built in 1951 and became full time residents in 1974. One of the unique attractions around the lake is the Hartwig sawmill and large collection of old engines and antiques.

At the present time there are approximately 55-60 residents around the lake, probably about a dozen who live here year-round. Even with the growth, this spring-fed lake has remained natural in character and is a lovely jewel set down among the trees. Residents have formed a Lake Association and all make a genuine effort to protect the lake and hopefully keep it a special place for future generations to enjoy.

By Marian Kellogg  
Rama Stimpson  
and Ray Warner



Ray Own



Bert Brink with catch - 1931



Phyl and Rama Stimpson log cabin - 1941.