

Haliburton Lake Cottagers' Association

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The content of this publication was compiled from the recollections of various individuals who have lived or vacationed in the scenic Haliburton Lake area and are dedicated to the preservation of its history.

We have tried to verify all facts and apologize for any discrepancies that may occur.

This acknowledgement is in appreciation to HLCA's past members, officers, directors, and volunteers for their contributions, which have been instrumental in the continued growth and development of Haliburton Lake.

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In 1847, the area of Haliburton was first recorded to have been surveyed. Just south of Haliburton Lake, in the approximate location of the Harburn settlement is the Peterson Colonization Road which was constructed by the Government in the 1850's.

The late 1850's saw the formation of the Canadian Land & Emigration Company with Haliburton Lake's namesake being its first Chairman, the Honourable Thomas Chandler Haliburton. Mr. Haliburton was originally from Nova Scotia, moving to London, Ontario and eventually to England, where he spent the rest of his life. In 1864, the rapidly expanding village was named after this Canadian historian and humorist, who was known for such books as "Sam Slick of Slickville" and "The Clockmaker". Later, in 1874, the Provisional County was also to bear his name.

Thomas Chandler Haliburton died in 1865 and to the recollection of history, never saw the area which bears his name. However, after his death, Mrs. Haliburton on a visit to the area donated a pipe organ, in the memory of her husband, to the Anglican Church in Haliburton.



In the fall of 1870, before Fort Irwin was known by its present name, Mossom Boyd, a lumber king from the Trent Valley, was busy clearing the river from Oblong Lake to Moose Lake, and building a dam for the purpose of a log drive. At this time, the only camp that existed on Haliburton Lake was owned by a trapper named Ross. The camp was situated where the Parson's cottage and boathouse stands today, at the narrows opposite the south end of the Big Island. This location had other characteristics of interest. Although, today we may find the narrows very shallow at certain times of the year, it still allows for boat travel. This was not always the case. At one time a sand bar connected the main land to this south tip of the island. It was duly named "the Lift Over" for obvious reasons. High water levels from damming the lake and erosion have brought the sand bar down to its present level.

Upon this same island, at the southern tip, the location of the Koehler cottage, was at one time cleared and farmed, boasting crops of corn and oats, by resident Dave Sawyer. Contrary to common belief farming, and not logging, is what brought settlers to Haliburton.

In the early 1870's, fire ravaged the land that today includes the marina, store, restaurant, KLMK building, all the way down to the church. In 1894, this area was part of a 40 acre farm. Since the fire 20 years earlier, a few pine trees had started to grow, some reaching 10 to 20 feet in height. Today, surrounding the store and restaurant, stand reminders of these pioneer days.

Fort Irwin was named after James Moore Irwin, Mossom Boyd's partner. He built a large lumbering depot on the shores of Oblong Lake in 1886. Pine was primarily logged. It was called "Fort" Irwin because the depot buildings formed a square that resembled an old fort. The fort consisted of a 100 foot stable at the rear, bunk house and cooker, 80 feet long on the left, and an office, blacksmith shop and storehouse that were 60 feet long, on the right. The fourth and final side was open, facing the shores of Oblong Lake. Although, Mr. Irwin's plans were ambitious, they were never realized. The town did not grow as expected and although he retained the rights to cut the remaining pine from the Canadian Land and Emigration Company's townships, he lost these in the depression of the 1890's. History writes it that the Fort Irwin depot was used for only one year. Stored in the barn were sleighs that had never been used until after Mr. Irwin went bankrupt in the 1890s.

In the early 1900's the depot was used as a "stop off" place for the Mickle and Dyment Lumber Company of Fenelon Falls. Around 1914, the town of Fort Irwin was expected to grow with the coming of the railroad. Although this did not prove to be the case, later in 1920 the depot was again utilized, this time by Gull River Lumber Company, which was logging in the Harburn and Guilford townships.

By the 1940's, the only building left standing from the fort was the office. It was later moved to the location of the Hodgson Lumber Camp, on the north side of the channel leading to the marina, which today is the approximate location of Glen and Shirley Hodgson's home. In 1940, Mr. Clayton Hodgson MP purchased several hundred acres of land from the Canadian Land and Emigration Co. This property surrounded the shores of Haliburton Lake, known locally at this time as "Crooked Lake". "Haliburton Lake" was officially registered in 1952, when the Haliburton Developments Limited registered the first plans (222 and 226).

The Hodgson Mill built by Clayton Hodgson, was a steam operated mill which included a generator producing the first electricity to come to the lake. Upon Clayton's retirement, the operation of the mill was taken over by his son, Glen. The mill closed in the 1960's.



On a humorous note, in the 1920's, a couple of local gentlemen known to be operators of a moonshine distilling business in the area, were unfortunately plagued with a runaway fire while under production one day. The operators were unable to contact the fire department until the still was moved to a new location, resulting in a considerable area being burnt. When the trees started to grow back years later, an abundance of white birch dominated over the previous variety, and is today a reminder of this incident. This area today is the location of Bill and Kendra Stamp's cottage in South Bay. The still was relocated to a mainland site, opposite the second island, until operations ceased years later.

In 1941 the road from Redstone Lake to Fort Irwin was constructed. Until this point, the only way to get to Haliburton Lake was by the Harburn Road.

Near the end of 1952, Ridout Real Estate Limited in Peterborough was approached by lawyer Jim Dunn and business partner Jack Hayward, who recently purchased a large tract of land fronting on Haliburton Lake. The land was purchased from Clayton Hodgson and would be developed and offered to the public as a cottage and lakeshore package for \$2,500. Ernest Ridout Real Estate was to be appointed exclusive agents for this project.

It was disclosed on January 5, 1953 in a news release on the front page of the Toronto Star and The Telegram, that the \$2 million project would include a shopping centre (to serve up to 5,000 summer residents) which would contain a general store, service station, motel, boat livery and airplane docking facilities. There would be 800 cottages built on at least 100 feet of shoreline fronting on Haliburton Lake.

Ridout Real Estate featured the properties for sale at the first Canadian Hobby and Home craft Show at the CNE Coliseum, on February 6, 1953, after advertising extensively in the Toronto dailies prior to the opening of the show. The promoters of the show donated free space for a model cottage as a drawing feature for their new show. From this exhibition, more than 100 buyers placed \$100 deposits on cottage sites, unseen. The prospective purchasers signed the offers conditional upon their approval and inspection by May 15, 1953.

Approximately 300 future vacation home owners were brought to the village of Haliburton in a steam powered passenger train chartered by the developers from CNR, for \$760 return in early Spring, and then

transported by buses to the lake, where salesmen awaited with boats and cars to show the parties their sites. Although there were a few cancellations, the majority of buyers were delighted.



The developers offered four different 24 x 30 designs - The Algonquin, Northernaire, Whitesands, and the Haliburton Special. All plans would include three bedrooms, dining area, living room, kitchen and porch. All styles would complement the natural beauty of the untouched terrain.

In 1953 the South Bay Cottagers Association was formed. It was named "South Bay" because this was the first area of development. The founding President was Howard Dignan and founding officers were John Potts, Hugh Newton, and Peter Hucal. In 1954 the name of the association was then changed to the Haliburton Lake Cottager's Association (HLCA)

(The first South Bay Cottagers Association meeting was held August 16, 1953 on a lumber pile near Lot 36, Plan 331).



Before the HLCA acquired the fire siren, located at Fort Irwin Marina, the ringing of the ships bell was the only way to alert cottagers in the case of an emergency. This bell was mounted on a cement and stone pedestal, on Bowens Point. The bell is still hanging in the same location today, which is the site of the Bagg cottage on Dunn Drive. The name "Bowen" was derived from resident hunting and fishing guide, Jack Bowen, who was the original occupant of this point.

The furthest southeast bay on the main lake was named Barnhardts Bay, after the Superintendent of logging for Boyd and Irwin.

Mr. Barnhardt was known as "the walking boss" because he travelled over many acres of the land surrounding Haliburton Lake assessing future timber sites.

To celebrate the coming of the hydro in 1953-54, the floor of the Church was constructed, for the purpose of a dance, on the property which is presently known as Fort Irwin Marina. The floor was later moved to its present day site.

August 8th, 1954 was the service of Worship and Dedication of the Haliburton Lake Community Church and Recreational Centre. The Church was erected by generous donations, many volunteers, HLCA, and the Haliburton Developments Limited.

Later on June 28, 1957, Haliburton Developments Limited deeded to the HLCA for \$1, the Church Hall land, for the purpose of recreation.

In 1974, the Church bell was donated to the Haliburton Lake Community Church by Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd Phinn of Peterborough. The belfry was built and installed by Mr. Harold Feagan and the bell was hung by Mr. & Mrs. David Dodds.



Between the years of 1973 and 1977, the HLCA found themselves in a legal battle with local land owner, Mr. Frank Price (Price Yards Ltd.). The dispute involved the development of Mr. Price's property at the extreme north end of Haliburton Lake (Plan 575). Mr. Price's proposed plan of subdivision to the Municipality of Dysart et al was for 140 back lots, all sharing in common the 1,800 ft. of shoreline. HLCA, not only objected to the number of lots, but also to the back lot development proposed.

The HLCA's objection was filed with the Municipality, who had given this development draft plan approval. In 1976, the HLCA engaged the services of the firm of BIRD & HALE, LIMITED, Engineering Consultants, to produce an Environmental Impact Study of the undeveloped lands of Haliburton Lake. The HLCA hoped this study, which was of significant cost, would justify their view that Haliburton Lake could not support this large subdivision.

The HLCA also engaged the services of the law firm of Chappell, Bushell and Stewart to represent the Membership, as they knew that this dispute would eventually be brought to the attention of the Ontario Municipal Board. The HLCA was willing to negotiate with Mr. Price in regards to the number of lots proposed but with no exception to backlots. On September 27th, 1976, the HLCA went before the Ontario Municipal Board and won several concessions, along with gaining the sympathy and respect of the Board.

Meanwhile, Mr. Price's draft plan of subdivision had one month left before expiring. At this time, negotiations brought about by Reeve Murray Fearrey, found Mr. Price accepting the HLCA's proposal. The outcome being fourteen 125 ft. lakeshore lots, with no exception to backlot development. This four year battle was fought by a courageous board. Through the foresight and hard work of Mr. D. Delaney, Mr. A. Tulk, Mr. F. Nicol and Mr. Wm. Bright -President, these dedicated individuals laid the foundation for future Boards to follow.

The Haliburton, Boshkung and Twelve Mile Lake Cottagers Associations initiated the Haliburton Highlands' Property Owners Council, in order to fight the Trent Severn on water levels (in our case the 6.5 ft. draw down). These two groups were able to form and maintain a good working relationship. For the first five years of this Council, HLCA's President, A.B.(Bud) Bonner was Chairman.

Mr. Bud Bonner, Mr. Glen Hodgson - MPP, Mr. Leslie Frost - Premier of Ontario, and the Trent Severn Executive met to discuss the difficulties with the water levels. During this meeting, Mr. Bonner quoted the 1906 Water Rights Agreement. Specifically, Clause #6, which states that the water may be drawn down by the Trent, unless needed for logging operations. Mr. Bonner also stated that the HLCA, as a Limited Company, could if necessary, start a logging operation on Haliburton Lake forcing the water levels to be kept high. After verifying the contents of clause #6, Mr. Frost then offered to act as the HLCA's legal counsel if they decided to pursue this course. Although the HLCA decided not to proceed, their strong position kept the water levels better regulated for some time.

The original bridge in Fort Irwin was built in the late 1800's. It was constructed of pine logs with log and stone cribbing for support. The pine logs were cut in West Bay (near the Public Beach) and were floated to the bridge site. This bridge was replaced in 1925 by another wood bridge supported by cement and stone cribbing. Some of this cribbing is still in place and can be seen from the Marina docks. This bridge was constructed by the Municipality of Dysart et al and was refurbished again in 1927. Thirty-nine years later, in December of 1966, the two approaches were raised and the present bridge was erected.



Through the years, the South Bay Bridge has more than once given reason for concern. The original bridge which took cottagers past the channel to the east side of South Bay, was of the same construction as the original bridge in Fort Irwin. In 1960, one of the support timbers rotted and fell into the channel below. This was removed and the top was re-planked for strength.

Two years later, the bridge caused further concern, which thankfully resulted without physical injury. In a letter written to the Municipality of Dysart et al, dated early June 1962, HLCA's President Bud Bonner stated that the condition of the bridge had deteriorated further and strongly urged Municipal Council, "to have it completely rebuilt before the July 1st weekend." The letter was received in time to be acted upon at the June 12th Council meeting, however, according to the minutes, was not. On June 14, 1962, the same bridge collapsed under the weight of a passing truck. (Taken from the Haliburton County Echo, dated June 21, 1962). The collapse resulted in the construction of the present bridge that was built by the Municipality of Dysart et al that same year.

In 1974, the HLCA dredged the South Bay approach channel and under bridge. The Municipality voiced concern that too much fill had been removed, which they feared was undermining the pilings. Therefore, Council requested that the fill be replaced to alleviate this concern. The fill was replaced and there were no repercussions from this action.

In 1986 the HLCA in conjunction with the Municipality of Dysart et al, dredge the channel under the bridge again. They dumped the excavated material in the park, where the horseshoe pits are situated today. Gabion baskets, purchased by the HLCA were installed by the Municipality of Dysart et al in hopes to hold back the banks and prevent the need for future excavations.

On June 23, 1973, 29 year old Bill Lewis, set the world's Parasailing record on Haliburton Lake. The duration of the flight was 11 hours, 2 minutes and 10 seconds, non-stop. The tow boat, a 19 foot Hydrodyne, powered by twin 115 hp Mercury outboards and driven by Andy Murdison of Mercury Outboards for the entire duration. Another Mercury employee, Dave Barber was in the boat and handled all fuel transfers. The fuel was donated by the Sun Oil Company representative, Mervyn Elstone of Elstone Motors Sales in Haliburton. Numerous cottagers took part in this event. Such an event called praise from such dignitaries as Pierre Elliott Trudeau, William Davis, and Betty Kennedy. Some years later, Bill became the HLCA's president.

The HLCA's objectives throughout the years have remained consistent: concerns for water level management, spraying of pesticides, recycling, fire prevention, family activities, water safety, and regeneration of spawning beds to mention just a few.

Fire equipment has been purchased and updated on a continuing basis. Jackson Real Estate and Haliburton Lumber generously donated new docks for our Public Beach area in 1989. That same year, the diving raft was constructed by Rob Poole. To celebrate the Centennial of Fort Irwin, held in 1986, the HLCA, along with Glen Hodgson, named the roads around Haliburton Lake. The Municipality of Dysart et al erected the signs that the Association had prepared. That same year the HLCA spent a considerable amount of money regarding and hard topping the West and South Bay boat ramps.

In October 1988, three permanent residents initiated the lot numbering program on Haliburton Lake. Financial assistance for this program was made possible by the HLCA and Fort Irwin Residents Association.

Re-cycling bins were introduced into the area in the late 1980's. In 1992, recycling bins were placed in both landfill sites.

The Church Hall has seen many renovations in the past few years. The well and septic system was installed in 1990. The bathrooms, kitchen and furnace room were framed in, in 1991. At the same time the hall was insulated, re-wired and a heating system and plumbing were installed. In 1992 the old wooden front entrance doors were replaced with new insulated steel doors and the ceiling was insulated and strapped. Most of the work was completed by volunteers that belong to the Association. A fridge and stove were purchased in 1992.

The playground equipment was purchased by the HLCA in 1985, and donated to the Municipality of Dysart et al. The playground is currently in the process of being expanded.

A joint venture between the HLCA and the Ministry of Natural Resources recognized the need to revitalize the lake trout spawning beds, due to a buildup of silt that was suffocating the un-hatched eggs. The HLCA organized a rock throw that added a fresh layer of rocks to rejuvenate the existing beds.

Fireworks displays were started in 1989 and continue to be tradition. Kid's bingo and crafts, swimming lessons, T ball and the rock bass derby are also available each year.

We send a yearly newsletter to every cottager, as one service and in an attempt to increase membership. Memberships reached 333 in 1992, out of a possible 526.

The HLCA not only tries to plan activities throughout the year for residents and seasonal residents, they also try to keep its members informed of any information that may be applicable to them through the newsletter. HLCA has a Municipal Liaison, who is presently David Freeman. Through our Representative, the HLCA is better informed on subjects of concern, such as roads, dumps, land developments, etc.

