

## Al Runge's Story

By: Al Runge

"At the turn of the century, my grandparents were spending their summers on Lake George. They liked the area so well that it was decided that they would buy property and build a summer cottage in the area.

In looking around for property my father was introduced to an attorney in New York City by the name of Peter Flint. He occupied the cottage on the road now owned by the Alden Wickes family. He praised Eagle Lake so highly that the family visited the Eagle Lake Hotel. This led to the decision to buy the property on the lake. The choice was narrowed down to what was called Prospect Point (later Hurd's Point) and the island near the bridge.

The island won out and was purchased from the Eagle Lake Improvement Company in 1903 for \$1,000, and in 1904 the big house (10 bedrooms) was built along with two, two hole privies (Queen Ann for the ladies and King George for the men), an ice house and cold storage building, a wood shed and three boat houses.

My grandfather spent much of his time in China buying Chinese porcelains and pottery. While he was in China my grandmother would spend the summer at the lake with her children.

This was before the days of the family automobile, and she would take the train from New York City to Ticonderoga and finish the trip to the lake by horse and buggy arriving in June and leaving in September.

Food staples such as sugar and flour were shipped to the lake in bulk and sides of beef were hung in the icehouse. The ice was cut from the lake each winter and stored in the icehouse under sawdust and used in the pantry 'ice box' as required.

Light for the evening was furnished by kerosene lamps and candles until a gasoline electricity generator was installed in the late twenties. Water was pumped into a storage tank by a gasoline engine.

Part of the island was a vegetable garden and chicken coop was built. I can remember when my cousin Edward and I would have to catch the chickens each Saturday that were to be the Sunday dinner. After being sure that they were deceased, we had to soak them in hot water and pluck them. After we finished with the chickens we cranked the ice cream maker, and got to lick the paddles.

In the evenings we would all climb into the motorboat (named Tah Kee for one of my grandfather's associates), and go down to Herb Moore's store (later Bill Geisels) and then walk to Alanson Moore's farm (now the Geisels home) for our milk. As kids we enjoyed watching Alanson milk the cows. The next morning the cream on the top would be so thick that you had to spoon it out of the container.

Gradually the family car, outboard motors (1-cylinder engines with a hand crank), telephone and electricity made life a lot more convenient, but they also eliminated allot of the customs that gave us so much pleasure.

One big difference between the first twenty or thirty years that the family was at the lake and now was the fishing. The only thing in the lake then was northern pike, bass, perch, bullheads, sun fish and shiners - no rock bass, strawberry bass, whitefish, splake or trout. It was not unusual to catch six and eight

pound pike (and some larger than that) in substantial numbers. Also there was no concern about polluting the lake.

Some other fond memories are Peter Flint playing his flute every night, the sound of the cow bells from Ben Hunter's farm (in back of the Lodges camp), the peddler and his wagon on the narrow dirt road (now Rt. 74) selling his sweet smelling grass baskets, the berry pickers returning from Potter Mountain offering blue berries for sale, Gwendolyn (my grandmothers pig) getting out of her pen and swimming over to the road and heading for Chilson, playing baseball with the Chilson Black Sox on Sunday afternoons and at the Essex County Fair with the Stonewells, Flemings, Osiers, Sumner Wissel, George Armstrong and others. It was lots of fun.

Things have changed allot but Eagle Lake is still the number one spot as far as I am concerned, and I hope it stays that way for my grandchildren who are the fifth generation of the Runge family to enjoy it.

Al Runge  
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