

Please Note: The following text was extracted from the "Memories of Half Moon Lake" booklet which was assembled by Martha C. McMahon (with her permission). The following pages do not reproduce the Memory booklet in its entirety (or exactly).

Please contact Sheila Waldoch (salesadmin@WALDOCH.com) if you wish to purchase your own copy of Memories which includes maps, news stories, and other illustrations. As of January 2005, the purchase price is only five dollars plus one dollar for mailing. (Quantities may be limited.)

Martha McMahon is in the process of preparing a second Memories booklet. It would be greatly appreciated if you could share your Half Moon Memories with her. Martha can be contacted at mmcmahon@netconx.net.

Enjoy !

MEMORIES OF HALF MOON LAKE

Forward

During the summer of 1994, David Butler, President of the Half Moon Lake Association, expressed interest in having a written history of Half Moon Lake. A trip to three local libraries resulted in zero information, hence the change from "history" to "memories".

It has been such an interesting and rewarding experience to visit with so many lovely lake residents. They are all to be sincerely thanked for sharing their personal memories of lake living with the rest of us. Those who have contributed are: Ruth McMahon, Bev Hoium, Gwen Ruschoff, Floyd Risvold, George and Myrtis Mitchell, Doug and Margie Voss, Craig Johnson, Don Frenette, Virginia Wold, Inez Smith, Jim Smith, Kay Armbruster, Mary Palmer, Art and Steven McMahon, Ruby Hansen, Karen Bollmann and Carl and Doris Christoffersen. Many other Half Moon Lake residents helped in many ways.

Also to be thanked are several area people who were so helpful in this project. Among these are the personnel at the Ledger Newspapers, Balsam Lake, WI, office, Michelle Judkins at the Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative, Librarians at the Milltown, Balsam Lake and Luck Libraries and the staff at the Polk County Historical Museum.

Martha C. McMahon

Throughout these "Memories" I will use the 1993 Half Moon Lake Map numbers as reference for locations of properties.

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Fish Survey from 1957

It was interesting to go through old minutes of the Half Moon Lake Association meetings. The earliest dates available to me are from the late 1950s. It is so intriguing that many of the problems then are still being discussed today. There are several entries concerning the "rights" of water skiers, boaters, fishermen, swimmers and the call for more common courtesy among these different activities. Also the matter of the dam and the lake level runs throughout the years.

Many of the officers and active participants of these early meetings remain active in lake affairs today. They are to be praised for over 40 years of service for the benefit of Half Moon Lake.

A few interesting facts from these early minutes are: On July 12, 1957, the State of Wisconsin Conservation Department conducted a fish survey with the following findings:

27	Walleyes	12.9" to 27"
2	Largemouth Bass	6.9" to 7.1"
3	Northern Pike	19.6" to 26.5"
1229	Bluegill	4.0" to 10.2"
190	Pumpkinseed	4.4" to 8"
100	Rock Bass	4.8" to 10.4"
50	Black Crappie	6.7 to 11.8"
24	Perch	7.7" to 12"
35	Bullheads	8.7" to 13.5"
1	Sucker	12.3"

The report goes on to explain that the fish observed in the outlet creek are not fish from Half Moon Lake going to Balsam Lake. Since Fish are not down-stream migrators, it is more likely that the fish are coming from Balsam Lake to Half Moon Lake.

Minutes from 1957 also state that 8 brush shelters for fish were placed in the lake; 4 in the south end and 4 in the north end.

The 1958 minutes contain a letter from Mrs. A. A. Johnson (then secretary of the Half Moon Lake Association) to Mr. Glen Chat Fee (Conservation Officer) concerning the deterioration of the dam. She states that the dam site on the Kohout property was instigated in the early 1930s.

It is noted in the 1961 minutes that a water safety patrol was authorized and the Association dues were raised from two to three dollars.

LEDGER - LAKER ARTICLES

Some interesting Half Moon Lake items were found by going through the old files at the Ledger Newspapers, Balsam Lake, WI, office. A few of them are:

1923: "Calderwood landed a successful season during its first year in business." Calderwood is a popular restaurant located at the northeast end of Bone Lake.

1920s and '30s: From a feature spread in the June 1991 Laker there was an extensive story about Sandy Beach in the 1920s and '30s. Sandy Beach is 198 on the map and is now the Township of Milltown beach and public landing. In those days it was a privately owned business where hundreds of people spent weekend afternoons fishing from rented boats, swimming and socializing. The beach house contained a concession stand selling pop and candy. The beach, which cost a quarter to use, sported a 10 foot diving tower and a 20 foot slide. The slide had a pump at the top so with a squeeze on the pump water ran down the slide making it slippery. Water wings were rented for ten cents. Water wings were canvas bags that fit under the arms and when filled with air, kept the swimmers afloat. Swimmers could also rent scratchy woolen swimsuits and lockers were available for storing clothing. The owners, Herman and Blanche Gutzmer, could not hear or speak but communication with them was easy using hand signals and by writing on tablets. Along with the other sales and rentals, Herman also sold freshly caught lake fish to fishermen who failed to catch their own. The entire article can be found at the end of this book, in the exhibits section.

November 1972: An article states that "a new dam is needed at the outlet of Half Moon Lake." The statement followed a controversy that had been going on among lake residents. In a written statement for the Ledger Cyril Jensen, Chairman of Milltown, wrote: "It is getting to the point where a new dam on Half Moon Lake is needed, as it would cost more to repair the old (1926) dam in time and labor, than to build a new one. But don't blame the Half Moon Lake Association. The Association repaired it in 1967 as best

it could. After removing the top of the spillway, it could be seen that the structure was crumbling as well as leaking. The water was going around and under the boathouse. If we keep getting rains as we did last year, this dam could go out and take the town road to the South with it. As the old dam is not owned by the town, there is little anyone can do about the situation. Only by working with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources can we hope to get anything done. It seems the fish grates have been a big headache. They have been taken out and put in so many times that all that can be said is they don't work. If they are in, they plug up. It is even claimed that fishermen from Balsam Lake come up and pull the grates out so the Walleyes can get down to Balsam Lake. What is needed is a new dam with a spillway large enough to handle the outflow of water without grates and fish grates." (More on the subject of the outlet dam can be found in the Christoffersen's "History of the Dam" later in this book.)

June 1973: The Spring meeting was reported in the Laker. Some of the Directors mentioned were: Bill Igoe, Julian Amquist, Ken Briegel, Joe Smith and Walter Gretsfield. Water quality was discussed. A test of the Half Moon Lake water in 1972 revealed the bacteria count was so low it approached drinking water standards. The dam on the outlet that flows into the creek that ends in Balsam Lake was also an issue since it was not being properly maintained. The rights of fishermen versus water skiers were discussed with no action taken.

May 1980: There was a long article concerning a then heavily used and highly abused lake access on 190th Ave., south of 113 on the map. "A number of people testified that 100-150 people have created noise and litter disturbances on a July 4th weekend and that it was common to see and hear people having beer parties at the access during all hours of the evening and early morning." Neighbors of the access petitioned to abandon it as a public access, but Judge Robert O. Weisel, Polk County Circuit Court, ruled not to vacate it.

August 1980: "Half Moon Lake District opposes tax levy increase." At the same meeting that inspired the preceding headline. President Craig Johnson addressed lake water quality and an aeration project was discussed.

August 1982: A one year aeration project for Half Moon Lake was approved at the Half Moon Lake Association meeting.

August 1985: The Half Moon Lake Association had been dormant for more than a year. It was reorganized in June and at the August meeting Walter Gretsfield, Sandy Smith, Carl Beck and Gordon Mommsen were elected officers of the association. A motion was passed to have Mr. Mommsen continue the work on the lake study project.

June 1986: The aeration project has been abandoned because of the lack of State cost-sharing funds. The Half Moon Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District proposed draining the phosphate-laden, oxygen deprived water from the bottom of Half Moon Lake into the creek leading into Balsam Lake. This would increase the level of oxygenated water. The water leaving Half Moon Lake would be revitalized with oxygen and cleansed of phosphates during its travel down Harder Creek before it reaches Balsam Lake. In other business, it was voted to begin a district newsletter.

June 1986: In a separate article, the Ledger reported that Rick Cornelius of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources presented a 1978 fish survey of Half Moon Lake to the Half Moon Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District meeting. It showed the following fish captured in Half Moon Lake: 950 Walleyes, 42 Northerns, 108 large mouth Bass, 538 Bluegills, 55 Crappies, 163 Perch, 27 Pumpkinseeds and 49 Rock Bass. He went on to state that Half Moon Lake is traditionally a lake on which it's hard to catch fish.

August 1986: The project to draw the water from the bottom of Half Moon Lake into Harder Creek was again discussed, with a possible vote to implement this project the following spring.

April 1994: "FOUR RESCUED AFTER BOAT CAPSIZED ON LAKE" Four people suffered hypothermia when their boat capsized on Half Moon Lake last week. Michael Bearhart, Jennifer Bearhart, Burt Lindemann and Theresa Nelson, all of Hertel,

were in the boat when it overturned in the Breezy Bay area of the lake about 10 p.m. April 18.

James Smith, a resident on the lake, took his boat out to search for the victims when another neighbor told him she heard voices yelling for help from the lake.

Smith found the four victims clinging to an overturned boat in approximately 20 feet of water.

Sheriffs deputies took the victims from the Smith residence to St. Croix Valley Memorial Hospital where they were treated for hypothermia.

"Smith's quick response after learning of the accident quite probably prevented a possible drowning due to exposure" according the sheriffs report.

HALF MOON LAKE MEMORIES

These accounts were transcribed from interviews.

RUTH McMAHON'S BOOK: Ruth McMahon's parents purchased "Sleepy Hollow" (1927 - 120th St., Map # 98) in September of 1936. Ruth (no relation to the A. E. McMahons) kept a history of her families' summers at the lake in verse as well as precious pencil drawings illustrating all phases of lake living. She remembered that her Mother and the children moved to the lake as soon as school was out and those who held jobs came on the weekends. In 1936 her Father caught a 9 pound 6 ounce Walleye while trolling on the sandbar.

Ruth kept a record of ice-out dates from 1938 to 1966 and these dates ranged from March 29, 1945, to May 5, 1950, and included all dates in-between.

She depicted a very simple life in the early days. They cooked and heated with a wood stove, washed clothes in the lake, bought milk from the Munson or Lundsmen farms and brought it home still warm in Mason jars. They bought their ice from Oscar Johnson's ice house that he filled each winter with ice harvested from the lake. They also hauled their water from Oscar's well until Mr. Munson dug them a 30 foot well.

Ruth remembered the Half Moon Dance Hall. The large stone fireplace is all that remains of it today. (The Dance Hall burned the 1940s. The fireplace can be seen Map #42).

In the 1940s the Half Moon Lake Club was formed to discuss mutual problems. Fred Stevens held the first meeting, followed by German Nelson, Elmer Anderson and Sam Berg.

Ruth recorded receiving electricity in 1941 and that they had the first Pontoon boat on the lake. Her book is a priceless legacy that her family must treasure. It was very generous of her to share it with us.

COFFEE WITH BEV HOIUM AND GWEN RUSCHOFF: These sisters remember childhood days at 111~3 the lake. Their property (Map # 197) is close to the public r beach (Map # 198). When the Gutzmers owned the beach in the 1920's and the big slide with the water pump was there, it was quite a spectacle. The sister's property has extensive cranberry bogs and they vividly remember 2 different tribes of Indians coming at separate times to pick berries. They would erect their teepees (Sioux) or their wigwams (Chippewa) and stay a month working in the bogs. The sister's Father would either take a share of the harvest or buy the cranberries for ten cents a pound. He would ripen his share in the attic and then put them in his car and sell them at Ruff Brothers Grocery Store in Minneapolis. Some were also sold door to door for a quarter a pound.

Gwen remembered that a bear looked in the windows of their summer home and it frightened her mother. Bev related a story of more recent times about a very friendly snake who would join the family on the dock. They named him Oscar. One day an eagle swooped down and carried Oscar away. The children were devastated.

FLOYD RISVOLD'S STORY: Floyd (Map #62) knows so much about the history of this whole area. One particular incident was of special interest. His Grandfather was the Pastor of the North Valley Lutheran Church. North Valley is about 7 miles west of Milltown and was a stagecoach stop in the olden days. Between 1915 and 1920 the congregation would hold picnics on Half Moon Lake. The men would put out fish nets and the congregation would then spend the day fishing, picnicking and holding services. At the end of the day they would haul in the nets and fill wash tubs with fish to take home to eat.

AN AFTERNOON WITH GEORGE AND MYRTIS

MITCHELL: (Map #1) George remembers that in 1936 there were no houses on the northwest shore of Half Moon Lake from the Ruschoff-Hoium house to the dam. It was owned by the Baker Land and Title Co. This was across the lake from the Mitchell farm. The farm had 8 cows and they bottled and sold the milk. George took the milk (ten cents a quart) and the cream (ten cents a pint), along with eggs, around to neighbors in his wagon. His family cut lake ice in the winter and had a shed to store it. The farm had electricity in 1945.

George and Myrtis remember the Dance Pavilion. It was owned by Fred Anderson and was considered by locals to be the best dance pavilion in the Country. The June 1991 Laker mentions that Herman and his Hermits (not to be confused with the famous 1960's Rock Band from England) was one of the bands to play there. In the March 31, 1931 edition of the Milltown Herald it states: "On Saturday, April 4, 1931 at the Half Moon Country Club (Dance Pavilion) the first dance of the season will be held. Music will be furnished by Mr. Lager and his 5 piece orchestra. Mr. Lager has been booked to furnish music at the Country Club every other Saturday of the Spring and Summer season." Exact dates for the structure are obscure but it was there in 1924 and burned down in the 1940s, leaving only the large natural stone fireplace that stands today (Map # 42). Apparently the pavilion had slot machines available and there was a bar in a separate cabin closer to the road.

There was a resort in the same area named "M-B Resort", (Fridley Resort and then M-B Resort, formerly Map # 26). It served meals and many of the guests came from Indiana.

NOTES FROM MR. & MRS. DOUGLAS VOSS: They can date places and events from 1922. The C. L. Voss family came in 1909 and bought a wild forty. The Douglas Voss farm is on that 40 today (Map # 20).

C. N. Pedersons lived where George and Myrtis Mitchell now live. The H. W. Gages owned cabins that they rented.. M. W. Thatcher had a lake home on Half Moon before 1920. Fred Hoigaard lived on the north side; he was a boat builder. Fridleys, also on the north side, (formerly Map # 26) owned a resort and Indiana people came there every summer.

Herman Gutzmer bought 80 acres in about 1919. In the 20s he built bath houses, diving boards and rafts. He charged 10 cents to swim, five cents each for a towel and soap. Large crowds came to the beach in hot weather. After Mr. and Mrs. Gutzmer passed away the beach was sold to Herb Anderson of Kentucky.

Douglas Voss had permission from Mr. Anderson to swim at the beach. He kept it free from weeds by hitching a scoop to a horse and riding the horse back and forth, collecting weeds. Once he accidentally rode the horse over the drop off and had a very tense time getting back to where the horse had footing.

In about 1944 Mr. Anderson sold the beach property to Milltown township and village. Since that time it has been a public swimming and picnic area.

In those early days the Indians had a sugar bush on the Andrew Sandin 40 acres. A sugar bush is a stand of Maples that are tapped for syrup. Every fall Indians would set up camp and pick cranberries on the South west side of the lake. About 500 Indians would come. The women did the picking. Doug remembers that his brother played lacrosse with the Indian children. There was an Indian Mound on the Gutzmer property. It was taken down in the 1930s but arrows and pottery are still to be found in that field that now belongs to the Voss family.

On April 29, 1927, there was a tragedy on the north side. A bomb was set in the Charley Anderson mail box. The Andersons owned a dance pavilion and the bomb was meant for them. But instead it badly injured the mail carrier, Pat Hermstad, on the hands and face. There used to be very successful sucker fishing every spring in Harder Creek. Grandma Voss used them to make delicious fish balls. Dr. Bergstrom of Milltown built a 16 to 20 foot steamboat in the 1930s that he kept docked at the Public Beach. It had a boiler and a paddle wheel and was probably the first powered boat on the lake.

RESEARCH BY MICHELLE JUDKINS: Michelle is the Director of Communications for the Polk-Burnett Electric Cooperative. She researched the advent of Half Moon Lake electricity and wrote, in part: "The best I can make from the information available is that the area now occupied by a Mr. John Wolf (2036 135th St.) and by Mrs. Ida Hinz (1235 County Road G) was the first area around Half Moon Lake to be energized. Both locations have membership applications dated 1938 with electrical wiring affidavits in shortly thereafter.

Because of the war efforts in the early 1940s, however, the farms around Half Moon Lake were not electrified until later that decade; Mrs. Hinz's as early as 1946 and Mr. Wolfs around 1951 (the original owner was a Mr. Horace W. Gage)."

AN EVENING WITH MARY PALMER: Mary Palmer's Father, Wesley Hartwell, came to Half Moon Lake in 1926. He had traded his home in Columbus Heights, Minnesota, for a 49 acre farm. The farm shoreline extended from Map #58 to #73.

At the time of the farm purchase Mr. Hartwell had entertained the idea of farming. This was a short lived idea. But during this time Mary attended the Half Moon Lake School on County Road G for 6 to 8 weeks. It was a one room school house with a single teacher for all 8 grades.

Mary and her parents then used the little farm house (Map #59) for a summer residence. She remembers blueberries and wintergreen growing on the property. There used to be a little dirt road running right along the lake and faint tracks are still visible.

There were very few roads then. Mr. Kohout (Map #164) kept a motor boat at the Fridley Resort and this boat was his sole access to his property. Mary remembers this motor as being the first one on the lake.

In these early days fishing was very good. Mr. Hartwell kept boats that he rented out to fishermen. One of Mary's early spring chores was to help her mother caulk and tar the seams of those boats.

Until they replaced the farm house with their present house in the 1940s they had no modern conveniences. The floor in the farm house had a trap door. Under the trap door they kept a wash tub for storing their perishables on the cool earth. They kept a board on top of the wash tub, anchored with a rock to protect the food from animals.

Mary remembers going to the dance pavilion (Map #42) with a neighbor boy. Her father disapproved of the pavilion and came there to bring her home.

Mary's place is typical of many places on Half Moon Lake. It is a beloved four-generation property filled with many happy memories.

ART MCMAHON'S MEMORIES OF THE 1930'S: My father, Dr. Arthur E. McMahon, Sr., from Glenwood City, Wisconsin, first learned of Half Moon Lake by coming to Dr. Eppley's cabin (Map #1 10) in the mid 1930s for an afternoon of relaxation with area physicians. When John Peterson's property (Map #121) became available in 1937 my parents purchased it. At that time the property extended to the south end of the lake.

The house was a small, one room affair that my parents extended by building a wide three-season porch around three sides of the house.

All cooking was done on a wood stove, illumination came from kerosene lamps, water was pumped from a well and an outhouse completed the rustic ambiance.

There was a little room under the cottage with three earthen sides, the fourth side a door. In the dirt floor of this room was a square hole with walls of concrete and a slotted, wooden platform on the bottom. This hole was covered with a wooden top that had a handle for easy removal. It was large enough for a cake of ice and quite a bit of perishable food. It was called "the cooler". To this day, even with the door removed, it is decidedly cooler in there than in the rest of the basement.

There were very few cabins on this end of the lake. The shoreline was very wild and there were huge patches of lily pads along the southwest shore. Fishing for bass, walleye and panfish was excellent and you could count on a good catch with minimum time and effort.

I remember that during the drought in 1937-38 parts of the "crappie bar" were above the water. For newcomers, the "crappie bar" is an underwater sand bar running across the lake from near Map #1 16 on the east to Map #147 on the west, except for a trough on the west end of the bar. The trough is about 100 yards wide. That summer sunfish swam around and over the bar with their backs out of water. During that time I caught pickerel off the dock. Pickerel no longer inhabit the lake.

During the winter of 1937-38 my parents commissioned Mr. Hoigaard of Balsam Lake to build a 15 foot wooden row boat, complete with floor boards, oars and a beautiful brass ring in the bow for securing it to the dock. The cost, including several coats of paint, was \$75.00. The wooden boat was incredibly quiet compared to today's boats and was used by our family for 50 years until dry rot took its toll. This boat made many trips to Oscar Johnson's for ice.

During the summer of 1938, Mr. Kadre of St. Paul, who owned the Golden Pheasant Restaurant there, built a cottage on the property north of us (Map # 120). The sole purpose of this endeavor was to bring his two little daughters to the lake to escape the terrible polio epidemic. At this time, staying away from crowds was the only known protection from this dread disease. They would come for the entire summer and the family really enjoyed the lake. These two daughters are now Grandmothers and the property remains in the family.

We used to be amused that Mr. Kadre would invite huge crowds of people to his place and they would go fishing in his two boats. None of the visitors would have fishing licenses and now and then the Warden would come upon them and issue fines.

I remember:

The sound of bears in the woods.

The call of the loons.

The bellow of the bullfrogs.

Clouds of bats sailing over the lake at dusk.

Owls hooting at night.

Huge crowds of people using the south end public swim beach with cars lining both sides of the road.

This place is a four-generation treasure in our family. It continues to

draw our children and grandchildren back every year.

**FLORA & FAUNA FOUND ON THE A. E. McMAHON PROPERTY
(Southeast Shore Map # 121)**

TREES: Paper Birch, Red Oak, White Oak, Red Maple, Silver Maple, American Elm, White Pine, Red Pine, Basswood, European White Alder, Common Cottonwood, Bigtooth Aspen, Black Ash, Balsam Fir, Norway Spruce

BUSHES: Sumac, Blackberry, Blueberry, Gooseberry, Lilac, Dogwood, Black and Red Raspberries.

FLOWERS: Blue Flag Iris, Large Leaved Blue Aster, Clover, Butterfly weed, Two-flowered Cynthia, Groundnut, Tall Meadowrue, Hog Peanut, Marsh-marigold, Clintonia Lily, Trillium, Spotted Touch-me-not, Columbine, False Solomon's Seal, Wild Lily of the Valley, Wild Calla, Lance Leaved Coreopsis, Trumpet Honeysuckle, White Lettuce, Indian Pipe, Pinesap, Poison Ivy, Day Lily, Wild Rose, Turtlehead, Bladder Campion, Spotted Joe Pye Weed, Wintergreen, Orange Hawkweed, Ox-eye Daisy, Wintercress, Anemone, Violet, Bellwort, Ground Ivy, Poison Ivy.

BIRDS: Ruby-throated Hummingbird, Red-winged Blackbird, Baltimore Oriole, Indigo Bunting, Catbird, Least Fly-catcher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Woodpeckers (Pileated, Downy, Red-headed, Hairy, Red-bellied, Black-backed three-toed), Waxwings (Cedar and Bohemian), Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Kingbird, Phoebe, Goldfinch, Warblers (Yellow, Yellow-throated, Redstart, Black & White, Yellow-breasted Chat, Bay breasted. Myrtle, Magnolia, Yellow-rumped), Vireos (Yellow-throated, Warbling, Red-eyed), Purple Finch, House Finch, Ruffed Grouse, Cardinal, Olive-backed Thrush, Flicker, Barn Swallow, Wren, Scarlet Tanager, Bluebird, Pine Siskin, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Junco, Fox Sparrow, Robin, Blue Jay, Grackle, Crow.

WATER BIRDS: Green Heron, Great Blue Heron, Kingfisher, American Bittern, Common Loon, Grebe, Mallard, Coot, Wood Duck, Trumpeter Swan, Hooded Merganser, Cormorant.

BIRDS OF PREY: Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Red-tailed Hawk, Great Homed Owl, Bald Eagle, Osprey.

ANIMALS: Raccoon, Skunk, Deer, Mink, Otter, Beaver, Woodchuck, Porcupine, Chipmunks, Squirrels (Flying, Black, Gray, Red), Bats. Assorted frogs, toads, snakes and turtles.

Add your own flora and fauna to personalize this list for your property!

CONVERSATION ON A PONTOON: Al Selchow, his daughter Karen and her husband Paul Bollmann reminisced about their picturesque cottage on the hill (Map # 137). Al purchased the land from the Harders in 1940. At that time the Harders owned all of the west shore of Breezy Bay except for 3 or 4 existing cabins. Al purchased 4 lots for \$700.00! To get to their property they had to come in on a crude road through a pasture on the east side of Harder Creek. They drove over stumps that had been cut to ground level and through gates not only to keep the cows in the pasture but also to keep the cows off their land.

Al and his father built their cottage over a period of several years. World War II made obtaining lumber an impossible task so the work was slow. He put down a well 50 to 60 feet and did strike water but the pipe kept plugging with sand. Mr. Smallidge, Warren's father, came visiting one day and told him how to correct this situation.

Later on he decided to put a basement under the cottage and that was a near disaster because the fireplace fell in, almost trapping him. To help him with the well and the basement, Al converted an old Chevy truck into a tractor and with this he used a big scoop on front to move the earth.

Karen remembers getting water, as well as ice, from Oscar Johnson. Al recalls good fishing and also the big floating islands that would come sailing around the point into Breezy Bay. In the early days the entire southwest shore was covered with reeds and lily pads, extending into the lake for quite a distance.

In 1996, Paul Bollmann counted 85 pontoons on Half Moon Lake.

HISTORY OF HALFMOON'S OUTLET DAM

as related by Carl and Doris Christoffersen:

The Christoffersens have a wealth of correspondence and photographs detailing the history of the dam located at the Harder Creek outlet (Map # 164). The following is a summary of that information.

1926 - The dam is built eight and one-half inches higher than the level authorized by the Railroad Commission of Wisconsin.

1930 - Upon application by the "Land-O-Lakes Club et al," the dam level was investigated by the Railroad Commission and the level was left unchanged. The Half Moon Lake outlet site was originally owned by the railroad before being acquired by the Kohout family.

1936 - The Frank A. Kohout family had acquired the outlet site, and Frank circulated a petition to lower the control gate.

1939- The dam was repaired and a new spillway controlled by "stop-log boards" was constructed and paid for by Frank Kohout and lake shore volunteers.

1960 and 1967 - Repair work was done by the Half Moon Lake Association and the Milltown Sportsmen's Club, including work to close a crack in the dam in 1967. Ice pressure subsequently re-opened the crack.

1967 - A letter from Francis Kohout (Frank A. Kohout's son) to Laura and Helen Kohout states that elevation of Half Moon Lake is 1166 feet while the elevation of Balsam Lake is 1134 feet. He writes that the dam's "fish gates" are preventing the Balsam Lake fish from entering Half Moon Lake to spawn.

1973 - Laura Kohout wrote that "someone" had installed a fish screen but heavy rains had washed it down the creek. The Kohout family still owned the dam site at this time.

1974 - In January, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) informs the Kohout family that repairs are urgently needed and recommends municipal ownership. In February, the Kohouts agree to give a quit claim deed for the dam site to Milltown. In March the ownership was transferred.

1974 to 1975 - There were many letters and phone calls between the Kohout family, the town of Milltown and the DNR.

1975 - The official deed was received for record on July 3, 1975, from the Kohout family (Francis and Julia Kohout and Irene Strong) to the town of Milltown. For this conveyance they were granted a perpetual easement to the property and it could be used only for repair and regulation of the dam. It can in no way be used as public access from the water. Also, the existing boat house was to be moved to a new location, to then be used as a garage.

This is just a brief summary of the many letters, legal documents and photographs held by Carl and Doris Christoffersen. For further details they can be contacted for making an appointment to review the dam history in greater depth.

Also in the Christofferson papers was a letter from the State of Wisconsin Conservation Department, Northwest Area Headquarters, Spooner, dated August 31, 1964. It stated that:

1954 - The lake was stocked with 8,440 Walleye fingerlings.

1957-A survey concluded that stocking was unnecessary to maintain a desirable fish population. A copy of this survey appears in the "minutes" section of this history.

1964 - The proposed year for a new survey.

ACCOUNTS TRANSCRIBED FROM TELEPHONE CALLS

CRAIG JOHNSON: (Map # 180) Craig phoned with the memory of the floating islands that used to be pushed around the lake by the winds and waves. They ranged in size from 6 feet up to 75 feet. Some even had trees growing on them. In a storm they could produce all kinds of damage as they crashed into docks and boats. In the mid 1950 the Lake Association organized a round-up and a large number of boats herded them to the opening of Tamarack Bay and secured them there with chains. Craig has photographs to substantiate their amazing size.

DON FRENETTE: (Map # 129) Don found "ice-in" and "ice-out" dates written down inside of a cabinet door in the utility room. He assumes that they were recorded by Don Leisch when he owned the Frenette house. The "ice-in" dates were kept from 1979 to 1989. The earliest was November 25 recorded in both 1982 and 1985. The latest was December 17, 1987. The "ice-out" dates were kept from 1979 to 1993. The earliest was April 3, 1981, and the latest was April 25, 1983.

VIRGINIA WOLD: At age 93 this dear little lady shared her happy memories of the mid 1920s on Half Moon Lake (Map #77). She remembered Oscar Johnson. He lived in the basement of his house (Map #87) and invited the ladies to come in and have a drink. It was a very messy place. Oscar's niece, who was a nurse, would come in the summer and do her best to clean. She remembers that Oscar and Mr. Munson dug a well by hand. Mrs. Wold recalls that the summers on Half Moon were the best summers of her life.

LETTERS

These letters, expressing such deep feelings about our lake, are too choice to edit. They follow in their entirety.

This letter from Inez Smith was written in October, 1994:

Half Moon Lake - 1936 - The Long Hot Summer. My uncle, Fred Barr, had been looking for a lake lot on a good, clean lake no more than 60 miles from the Twin Cities. He wanted a lot on the east side of the lake, if possible. Someone told him about Oscar Johnson who had some lots for sale on Half Moon Lake. Fred stopped at Oscar's huge, old house but no one was around. He heard someone sawing wood and found Oscar high up in an old Oak tree right on the water's edge. Oscar was cutting the top off the beautiful tree so it wouldn't die due to the very hot, dry summer. Fred told him to stop cuttingall the trees along the lake were feeding from the lake and in no danger. That was the beginning of a long friendship that lasted until a few years before Oscar died. Fred bought a lot that day.

There weren't many cabins on Half Moon at that time; a couple of farms on the west shore, some cabins and a farm on the north side along the road and several on the east shore. Oscar had measured most of the lots on the east shore with a link chain, starting on the south corner section line (so many chain links to a lot- not quite 100 feet).

The roads were dust and everyone had an out-house. Fred built his first cabin in 1937, bought another lot and built over a boat house in 1943-44, then bought another lot and built a glass block cabin in the 1950s. He raised bees and my mother complained that the only time we went to Half Moon was when the cabins needed cleaning in the spring, and when Fred and his wife Lillian extracted honey in the fall.

In 1937 we could sit on the wall of Fred's boat house and see the water tower in Milltown. A storm or fire must have gone through the area as the trees and brush were not very high.

Oscar Johnson was a "local character". He wore bib overalls and always had a pin where a button was missing on the top of his long underwear. When his clothes got too dirty (about twice a year), he threw them away and put on new stuff. He worked the ore boats out of Superior and Duluth on Lake Superior in the 1920s. He bought a farm on the south-east corner of County G, County GO and 120th. Tom Munson owned a big house on the east shore of Half Moon Lake, but he wanted more farm land so they traded places. Oscar grew potatoes, made wine and sat under his tree and enjoyed! He lived in the basement of the big house. His dishes were green with mold. We used to send food over when we were at the lake. Oscar decided to make us Fish Head Soup....a soup made with milk and potatoes like a chowder.... and the fish eyes floated around in it. Our kids got almost sick. When Oscar needed money he sold a lot. He loved to build three walls of a boat house on his lots. He made forms, mixed cement and filled the walls with rocks. Oscar cut ice in the winter from the lake and had a big ice house. He sold ice all around the lake in the 30s and 40s. The old ice box and ice tongs are still at our son Joe's place on the east shore. My brother, Bill, and I had to dump the pan under the ice box (very messy when full) and buy ice from Oscar.

Oscar had a dump between his place and 120th Street (also known as Leeland Road), right at the pond. During World War II, he found some Stations of the Cross in the dump. He built an air raid shelter towards the lake, dug a tunnel from his basement, and put the Stations of the Cross in the tunnel.....and he wasn't Catholic!

Oscar loved to tease the kids and he enjoyed people. He had found many beautiful agates while working the ore boats and would give the teenage girls agates and tell them to make an engagement ring out of them. Our daughter has a perfect eye agate from Oscar. Oscar had a Model A Ford that he drove a few times a year. He'd get the car out, pile our nine kids in the car and take them to the Half Moon Lake store and treat them to ice-cream and candy. He said the snakes were his friends - they would shed their skins on his side steps. He had a huge turtle shell foot stool in his house. We all enjoyed Oscar! When my husband and son were on the Lake Board, they named the road behind Oscar's place "Oscar Lane."

In the 50s, they had a little food stand at the North Beach. We'd pile the kids in the boat and go for ice-cream.

We bought the first lot Fred built on in 1971 (Map # 90) and have enjoyed many years of boating and swimming and "quality time" with our family at Half Moon Lake.

FORTY-FIVE YEARS OF MEMORIES HALF MOON LAKE

by JIM SMITH, submitted Oct. 5, 1994 1950-1970

I started coming to Half Moon Lake about 1950 with my parents. We stayed on the east shore at the Fred Barr property. Fred was my mother Inez's uncle.

Every summer we looked forward to two weeks at the lake and I used to tell everyone (when I was 7 or 8??) that someday I would live at the lake year round.

As with most little kids I got a pat on the top of the head and told "Sure little boy!!"

The lake was great! Oscar Johnson used to take the kids to the Half Moon Store in the rumble seat of his old Model A Ford. What a thrill for a little kid!

Oscar was a strange old man with bats in his house, snakes (maybe some were pets??) and he used to make turtle soup and dandelion wine. Oscar rarely took a bath and now he has a road named after him. Did he know something that we didn't?

Fred Barr was another real piece of work. He was a Bee Keeper for the U/M and used to work in the Horticulture Bee cage at the Minnesota State Fair. He was the Bee Keeper. Fred kept bees at the lake, sold honey and thought he was a real ladies man.

Fred's imagination was enormous. He would pick flowers from the neighbors for the ladies and deliver them in person to the same people. Fred claimed to shoot two cougars out of the tree with one shot and was a WW I veteran that got mustard gas during the war. He had the stories to tell and could keep a kid's attention for a long time. Fred had a heart of gold and helped us kids realize how special Half Moon Lake was.

Our family has a lot of old pictures from the old days and they are fun to look at.

I never could figure out why Fred, Oscar and others always dumped their trash into the lake. There must still be a lot of this on the bottom of the lake in front of Waldoch's and Dougherty's.

Fred got old and had to go to the nursing home in Luck. He sold part of his property to my Dad, Joe Smith. Don Waldoch now owns the other half. When Dad wanted to retire I just couldn't see his property leaving the family so my brothers Pat and Joe, and I bought it so it would remain in the family until one of us could purchase it. I had my home on the north end and Joe is now the current owner.

When I was a kid you always saw me with Tom Lennartson and his dog in the green fishing boat. We'd swim back and forth to each other's cabin from Breezy Bay to Fred's place. Tom's Dad, Bob, was always cool with this and to this day I still appreciate Bob's insight to life. Bob is now about 80.

My Dad used to give Tom and me hell for swimming across the lake alone. Bob never seemed to have a problem with this. What goes around comes around and now I am on my kids for swimming across the lake.

I think my Dad started the Water Ski issue about 1958 when he brought up a 16 foot fiberglass boat with a 60 HP Mercury that went 36 mph. Wow! 36 mph! Dad would load all 9 (yes, nine!!) kids in the boat and cruise around the lake with the fastest boat at the time. Back then if you had a 35 hp motor you had it all!!

Grandpa Witte (Capan) didn't approve of the boat or the water skiing and was always giving my Dad a bad time.

In the old days I remember clean water and big strings of Walleyes being caught by Clarence Dreske and Walter Cariton who used to stay in one of Fred's cabins for the summer.

I remember when the only cabins on the west shore belonged to the Kohouts. There were only a few cabins on the entire west shore back in the '50s.

I remember the two level diving tower in front of Al and Alice Johnsons and remember Craig Johnson, Warren Smallidge, Jane Brodie (who set me straight that we never had a date!), Phil Shores (now Dan O'Learys) and many others. If I only knew then what I learned a few years later in life. Those were the "good old days" growing up as a kid!

I remember the water-ski fisherman battles that were always going on. It was difficult for everyone to understand that the lake is for everyone to share and enjoy. I'd much rather have my kids on the lake water skiing where I know where they are, than doing something away and not knowing what they are up to. Dad felt the same way and we assisted him in burning up more boat gas than anyone else on the lake.

One summer when we first arrived I took my brother Joe water skiing. We saw a Loon and as little kids followed it with the boat as it tried to fly off the lake. Someone didn't think this was a smart thing to do and the sheriff was waiting for us when we returned to the dock. Not even the judge was amused as I found out when I had to explain this to him.

I am the oldest of nine kids and Mom and Dad used to stay in Fred's little cabin on the water. We had beds all over the floor and used the lower level to cook and eat. This worked fine unless there was a big storm and then it would flood out. This was also before the dam on Harder Creek was complete.

We used to swim a lot at the South Beach and I remember all the controversy about this access. On hot summer nights local people will still come and swim after a hard days work in the fields.

The little cabin remains unchanged in the bay by the boathouse because of Zoning's out of date ordinance that you cannot improve a property more than 50% of its value. What a bone-head law! Often times an old structure can be preserved like Oscar Johnson's (Dougherty) old farm house.

I remember big "bogs" (small islands) floating down die lake from the north end beach area. Ken Briegel and others finally put some cables across the area to hold them in place.

I remember the "Bullet Boat" (Falsgraf Flyer). I was impressed as a kid and this boat is still on the lake covered up next to Craig Johnson's place. I have always wanted to purchase this boat and restore it to its original condition. Every year I ask if I can purchase it and the answer is always "NO!" Maybe someday, who knows.

The first water ski course was put in the lake about 1959 by Bob Lennartson, his brother Tom and Warren Smallidge. The ski course has been a part of the lake for over 35 years and many kids have enjoyed it. All three of Warrens' kids (Carrie, Warren Jr. and Dan) have qualified and represented Half Moon Lake in the U.S. Water Ski Nationals. They have done quite well and even in 1994 old man Warren at 51 still competes in tournaments.

When I got out of the Navy in 1968 I made it a point to spend as much time at the lake as possible and my dream was still alive about living full time on Half Moon.

1970-1994:

In the mid 70s we even had a water ski jump in front of my Dad's place. This was a lot of fun and we made a few trips to the hospital with those who were careless, including a number of the Smith boys. I gave up tournament water skiing years ago because I didn't want to leave the lake. Maybe the jump knocked some sense into me! Who knows!

We had a Parasail and flew it often. Many lake people got a different perspective of the lake while 425 feet above their cabins.

My dream of living on the lake became a reality in 1972 when I purchased a lot on the north end and built a new home. Dale Kastner became the new owner in 1993. I spent 20 great years there but still wasn't directly on the lake.

In the 60s and 70s we had an active water ski club and worked with a lot of lake kids. We would practice often and put on a ski show every summer for the lake residents.

We taught a lot of kids to ski: Palawitz, Arnquist, Risvold, Haynes, Anderson, Capan, Northrup, Taimo and many more. Again, the parents knew what their kids were doing on the lake.

The water ski issues continued into the 70s. I bought the first Master Craft inboard ski boat in 1973 and continued in my Dad's tradition. The old blue Master Craft is still on the lake and is currently owned by Craig Johnson. In 1994 we had at least 10 inboard ski boats on the lake. How things change!

Not everyone approved of the boat and the fact that my two boys, Matt and Rick, were always the first to ski every spring when there was still ice in the lake. You see, this is another tradition that I started in the 70s. The Jim Smith family has been the first to ski in the spring every year except for one year when I had back surgery and Ron Voss took over.

I remember being a Special Polk County Deputy and getting calls in the middle of the night to break up parties at the north and south beaches. Kids partying!

I remember the irate phone calls that Sandy and I got when Matt (age 4) and Rick (age 2) would ski early in April. They would holier and scream and were having a riot. The neighbors, and particularly Al Beck, thought we were torturing them because we made them ski when there was still ice in the lake. Little did they know how much fun the kids were having.

Over the years I have tried to purchase a number of properties but it took until 1990 for this to become a reality. In 1990 I purchased the old Haynes/Sermius property and started a three year building project. Sandy and I just couldn't tear down the old log cabin so we gave it to the lake Wapogasset Lutheran Bible Camp. They moved the cabin and are still using it just south of Hwy. 8.

The new home is great and I am finally on the lake. My boys are 13 and 15 now (as of 1994) and have a great love of Half Moon Lake. I hope they appreciate this lake long after I am gone.

Many things change but they really don't. There are new families but many properties remain in the family for many generations.

Many of the kids that I taught to ski are back with their kids and still enjoying the lake. Properties are being upgraded and new homes replace old cabins.

Tradition still continues and is an important part of life at Half Moon:

Annual July 4th Breezy Bay Boat Parade

Annual July 4th Night Boat Parade with lights

New Years Eve Ice Skate/Snowmobile Party for those at the lake over the holidays

Oscar Lane Pig Roast Breezy Bay Picnic

Bill St. Marie Chili Cook-Off

Water Skiing every spring when there is still ice in the lake

Water skiing and Swimming

Get together with the Pontoon Boats in the middle of the lake.

Snowmobiling and Cross Country Skiing

Fishing in the Slimmer and in the winter when the water is hard

Model Sail Boat Races

I can't see ever leaving Half Moon Lake. I have a special soft spot for this little-bit-of-heaven that I learned to love as a little kid. When I die, spread my ashes over Half Moon Lake as long as my brother Pat isn't flying the plane! Ha-Ha!

What makes Half Moon Lake what it is? People!

It's the people and families that come to relax, play and get away from the hassles of everyday life.

It's the kids having fun on the lake.

It's the many people that have served their lake over the years on the Lake Board and the many who have assisted with special projects over the years.

It's the desserts and meals with family and friends on the lake.

It's the loon's calling in the middle of the night!

Great people. Great lake. Great place to raise a family. Keep the good times a rollin!

Life's short. Eat dessert first!

HALF MOON TREASURES

by Kay (Langenberg) Amibruster - September 8, 1995
(of Indianapolis, Indiana)

I really don't fully qualify for this project because I don't own property on "the" lake nor do I live in "the" area; however, for 64 years I've had an ongoing love affair with Half Moon Lake and some of the people who live there.

It was in August 1931 when my parents and grandparents decided it was time to visit the far north. I say "far" north because we lived in Indianapolis, Indiana, and the trip to Wisconsin was a two day trip, the majority of travel on two-lane roads. My mother had written several resorts in the Indian Head area and decided on Pine View Beach Resort on Half Moon Lake.

The resort was owned by Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Gage and consisted eventually of eight cottages. Our first year we spent in a two bedroom cottage called "Number 4", but in years to come we stayed in all eight cabins.

There was no electricity - no inside plumbing - no refrigerator, etc. I slept on an army cot on the porch and the weather must have been ideal for I was never rained out-or in!

One of the first things my grandfather did after we arrived was to cut a long stick to flip the garter snakes off the path on the way to the outhouse. Both the snakes and the outhouse were new experiences for this 10 year old "city" girl!

In the days to come. Grandfather also made me a sling shot for I soon learned this was an "in" thing with my new friends. I don't recall ever shooting anything - a bird, a snake or a squirrel - but it was important to always have rocks in your pocket so you could "ready, aim, fire!" There were many important things we kids had to do like hunt for agates and arrowheads, go swimming at least twice a day and walk up a lovely sandy road to the mailboxes on Highway G. We usually arrived well before the postman and

we would sit and eat wild strawberries and raspberries and read outgoing postcards while we waited. It was nice to know everyone was "Having a fine time" and "Wish you were here"

After the trip to the mailbox, it was time to go swimming again, then later, we'd treat ourselves to a bottle of pop and a candy bar from the little "snack shop" or pop stand.

There were also times when we climbed the ladder and played in the ice house. Now this was cool - not in today's definition of "cool", but really cool! Mr. Gage had people help him cut ice off the lake in the winter and store it plus lots and lots of sawdust in the ice house for use in the iceboxes in the cottages in the summertime. By mid-summer, a lot of ice had been used and the saw dust was pleasantly cool and damp - a really great place to spend a few hours on a hot day.

Only once did we get in trouble up there in the ice house. Often the people renting the cabins would bury the fish they caught in the ice and the fish would really freeze so they could be taken home later. Usually the fishermen would put a stick or marker with their name on it in the ice so they would know exactly where to go to recover the fish they had buried to freeze. For some reason ONLY ONCE did we think it would be fun to move these markers around. Please note, ONLY ONCE did we do this because we ALL got in trouble with EVERYONE!!

There were a few things we never did - we never watched television, we never listened to the radio, and we NEVER again moved the markers in the ice house!!

Occasionally there was a rainy afternoon and we would go to the Gage's house to spend some time. At that time, "Uncle" Hod and "Aunt" Germaine (as we soon began calling them), lived at the lake in the summer time only, so they had a big living room all screened in with an old-fashioned porch swing in it. (How's that for country living decorating?) We talked and talked and played riddley-riddley-ree till the sun came out and we were back on schedule.

In the evening we played "Run, Sheep, Run", "Hide & Seek", "Red Rover" or "All the Out's in Free!" Finally, when darkness fell, we would sit on the hill and share our dreams and hopes and plans for the future. And when we finally parted and went to bed, the last thing we heard was the wonderful, lonely cry of the loons on the lake!

As the years passed, we grew to love and admire the Gages. Uncle Hod had been involved in a railroad accident and lost an arm and a leg. He had an artificial leg. The many things he accomplished in an era without the conveniences that handicapped people have today was amazing. He fished (quite successfully), hunted, drove his car and delivered huge chunks of ice to all the cottages for the ice boxes. In high school, I wrote an essay on the man I most admired, and it was Mr. Gage.

The Gages had two children who also became a part of my life - Gen (now Geri Beck) and Clayton, who now live at the lake. When his parents died, Clayton kept only one cottage to rent to people like us!

I guess I would wish that every child could have such happy childhood memories. We tried to make that wish come true because years later when our son was five and our daughter not quite one, we introduced them to Half Moon Lake and all its special joys. As the years passed, planning the annual trip to Half Moon Lake was an understood part of our family's summer.

In 1981, our son and daughter came to Half Moon with their children, who also found the same happiness and love for this place that I had discovered so many years ago. This meant that five generations of my family have enjoyed Half Moon Lake.

Little did I think when I was 10 years old that I would still be coming here when I was 74! Last June on the evening before my husband and I were to leave for home, there was one of those big thunderstorms that happen on rare occasions. The lake turned a slate color with white caps all over.

The rain poured down on the north shore - the sun was shining brightly on the south shore. As I watched from our cabin door, I looked for a rainbow. There was one, and for the first time I could remember, it started right in front of us in the middle of the lake and I knew for me the treasure at the end of MY rainbow would always be Half Moon Lake!

POTPOURRI

These interesting anecdotes and rumors about the Half Moon Lake area did not fit into the previous categories of the book. So here they are!

In the 1950-60 era Luck, Wisconsin, was known as the "YO-YO CAPITOL OF THE WORLD". A billboard on the highway proclaimed this fact. The Duncan Yo-Yo factory opened in 1946 and by 1962 was producing 60,000 yo-yos a day. The hard maple was replaced by plastic and the business declared bankruptcy in 1966.

In the 1940s and '50s, Milltown was home to a Stokely plant that processed peas and corn. The odor of the rotting pea vines and corn residue was quite overwhelming during the canning season. The plant used German Prisoners of War and then Jamaicans as laborers. In the evening they would bring truck loads of these workers to the south public swim beach where they could bathe and cool off in Half Moon Lake.

Ruby Hansen (proprietor of Ruby's Bakery) baked for Oscar Johnson and remembers a tunnel that lead from the lake to the house. She remembers him as a fine old gentleman.

From the Polk County Ledger, Thursday, November 18, 1971: "FIND MAN DEAD AT HOME: C. Oscar Johnson, 86, of rural Balsam Lake, was found dead at his basement home, November 14, by Fred K.. Barr, a neighbor. Johnson had been dead for some time before he was found. His home was located on the east side of Half Moon Lake."

The court house papers state that Carl Oscar Johnson was born to Emma Samuelson and Carl Johnson on April 4, 1885, and that he died on November 12, 1971.

No one who has been interviewed can remember hearing of a drowning on Half Moon Lake. This is remarkable!

Have you seen deer swimming across the lake? Many people have.

Do you have the glossy, black squirrels on your property? This melanistic variation of gray squirrels is a dominant genetic trait that is spreading throughout the squirrel population around Half Moon lake.

Do you know that sometimes when you hear the loons calling in distress you can look up and see an eagle soaring overhead?

There seems to be a great decline in the number of Bull-frogs, Leopard frogs. Kingfishers, Great blue herons and Warblers. Is this local, or wide spread? Is this permanent, or temporary (we hope)?

Will there ever be an end to the outlet dam and water level controversy?

In 1941 Ruth McMahon (Map # 98) remembered that her family had the first pontoon boat on the lake. In 1996 Paul Bollmann made an unofficial count of pontoon boats and found 85 of them on Half Moon.

There were many bear sightings on Half Moon Lake property in 1996. Bears were observed on most areas of the lake.

RUMORS: Have you heard that John Dillinger or Al Capone spent some time at the Fridley Resort? Have you heard that Oscar Johnson haunts his former lake home and when provoked he slams doors and otherwise makes his disapproval known?