WHITE SAND LAKE:
A STUDY OF LAND USE ALONG ITS SOUTHERN AND EASTERN SHORES, 1903-1974.

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History 489
Dr. James Oberly

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Abstract

At the beginning of the twentieth century, White Sand Lake’s shores were cutover from the logging of Goodyear Lumber Company, Mississippi River Logging Company, Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company, and Yawkey – Bissel Lumber Company. The State of Wisconsin forested the land through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). CCC Camp Crystal enhanced much of Vilas County making it a sought after vacation location for the Midwest, as well as the rest of the country. The desire for a pastoral retreat, along with the advertising campaigns of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, Boulder Junction Chamber of Commerce, and local resorts helped contribute to the diversity of visitors in the Boulder Junction area and on White Sand Lake. Camp Milo Lodge, En-Dah-Win and Wilsie’s Rustic Cottages attracted and hosted guests from many different parts of the country. This paper will chronicle the impact that logging, Camp Crystal and tourism had on the land bordering White Sand Lake.
Introduction

The railroad lines connecting many lakes of Boulder Junction, Wisconsin were used to transport freshly cut timber to different lumber mills for production. The Boulder Junction Railroad Station opened in 1903 and a railroad company ran a line along the north side of White Sand Lake.\(^1\) Although trains stopped running on the White Sand Lake track shortly after the lake’s logging era ended in 1914, lake residents heard the familiar sound of a train bell until the 1970s.

In the early 1900s, a young man named Floyd Williams became the stationmaster at the Boulder Junction Railroad Station. He worked for the Milwaukee Road but soon, being an avid outdoorsman, became conflicted with his passion. One day Floyd decided to skip out of work early. Although we are not certain of the specifics, his grandson Tom Swanson said it was to either hunt or fish. The afternoon that Floyd left early a special dignitary arrived on the train. Floyd subsequently lost his job because of his absence, but decided to take a keepsake upon finding the news. Floyd “borrowed” one of the cast iron bells that adorned the visiting train.

In 1926 with a bell in his possession and desire to stay in the area Floyd decided to buy Camp Milo Lodge, an American plan resort on the southwest shore of White Sand Lake. American plan resorts were known for serving three meals a day to their guests. Floyd and his predecessors used the “borrowed” train bell to announce lunch and dinner at Camp Milo Lodge until the resort closed in 1974. The bell is now property of the Boulder Junction Historical Society.\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Tom Swanson, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 7, 2009.
I have always been fascinated with the history of White Sand Lake. It began when I discovered a cement pad in the woods that served as the foundation of a Civilian Conservation Corps structure. I had only known the eastern shore as an uninhabited forest. I wanted to document how the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp changed the area, and what happened to the structures.

My next goal for this study was to document the vacation resorts of White Sand Lake, but something was missing. What motivated vacationers to “rough it” in the North Woods? I wanted to find out how the vacationers heard about the Boulder Junction area and how White Sand Lake’s resorts promoted themselves.

Many of White Sand Lake’s current residents trace their roots to two resorts, Camp Milo Lodge and En-Dah-Win. When I tried to learn more about these two resorts, I looked to the Boulder Junction Library. I found a book written by Shirley Doolittle, BOULDER JUNCTION The Early Years: 1880s to 1950s, which had a section devoted to the early resorts of Boulder Junction. Doolittle captured the feel of many resorts in the area with photos and brief biographies of the owners.

A few questions arose from reading Doolittle’s book. First, only one resort on White Sand Lake was documented: Camp Milo Lodge. Why did Doolittle not include En-Dah-Win? While the section on Camp Milo Lodge had four good photos of the resort, it did not describe the intricacies that gave character to the resort. Another question arose from reading the section on Wilsie’s White Birch Lodge on White Birch Lake. Doolittle mentioned that during Pat Wilsie’s career with the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Crystal on White Sand Lake, his family “settled next to the camp and built a
Was there a third resort on White Sand Lake whose history is not
known?

During an interview on En-Dah-Win, the Wilsie Lodge on White Sand Lake was
brought up again by Dick Steiro. Dick said that Pat Wilsie had a resort next to En-Dah-Win, but lost the property to the state. At that moment I realized the importance of
documenting the resorts of White Sand Lake. White Sand Lake’s resorts’ histories are
known the best by the resorts’ proprietors’ children; collecting these oral histories
became a priority in this study.

This study is chronological and topical, showing which logging companies logged
White Sand Lake’s shores, and how they transported the logs. It will investigate the
Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Crystal, how it improved the area, and what happened
to its structures. The study will also investigate the motive for city folks to “rough it” in
the North Woods and promotional campaigns that attracted people to the North Woods.
The last portion of the study details the operations of Camp Milo Lodge, Wilsie’s Rustic
Cottages, and En-Dah-Win.

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3 Doolittle, BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s, 38.
4 Dick Steiro, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 6, 2009.
Logging and Railroads

In 1892, logging companies arrived in the Boulder Junction area and logged pines from a five-mile radius of the Manitowish River and its tributaries. The primary source of transportation for the logs was floating them in the different rivers and tributaries. Sleigh roads were built for teams of horses and oxen that pulled log-laden sleighs during the winter; the log-laden sleighs also used frozen waterways during the winter. The logs were staged by the waterways and were floated downstream to different sawmills during the summer months. The accessible area for logging companies and the method of transport drastically changed with the arrival of the railroad. Railroads allowed for year-round transportation and the option of transporting hardwood trees that might not float.

With railroads, logging companies accessed areas of Boulder Junction away from the Manitowish River. Shirley Doolittle wrote, “In 1903, the Milwaukee Road extended its line from Star Lake northwesterly, running track along the north side of White Sand Lake, westerly to Cutler Junction, then north into Boulder Junction as a logging railroad.” The railroad served as an access point for logging companies to harvest White Sand Lake’s timber. The railroads positioning in relation to White Sand Lake and Boulder Junction can be seen in Map 1.

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5 Boulder Junction’s Early Logging and Tourism Industries Talk by Paul Brenner, Elmer Dahlquist’s Personal Collection, Boulder Junction, WI, 1.
6 Doolittle, BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s, 11-5.
8 Doolittle, BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s, 25.
The railroad line provided a form of log transportation and also serviced tourists in the summer months. Doolittle also stated that after logging ended “the short summer season could not produce enough revenue to keep the railroad service in operation.”9 Tourists continued to use railroads to visit White Sand Lake through the Star Lake Station.10

9 Ibid., 11-7, 26.
Water played an important role in the harvesting of White Sand Lake’s timber. Logs harvested on the south side of White Sand Lake were floated across the lake to the north side to reach the railroad tracks. Floating the logs to the railroad tracks was the easiest way to transport and store them until trains arrived. Additionally, Doolittle wrote that the “logs were stockpiled in the water rather than on the ground, where insects and a kind of rot known as “blue stain” quickly damaged them.” Logs sank in this process, and Camp Milo Lodge’s original cabins were built with harvested sunken logs.

Many logging companies owned the property surrounding White Sand Lake including Charles A. Goodyear Lumber Company, Mississippi River Logging Company, Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company, and Yawkey – Bissel Lumber Company. The Mississippi River Logging Company bought land July 15, 1895, which was likely the first logging company to use White Sand Lake’s surrounding resources. Logging companies tended to sell their holdings to different logging companies. The result of the logging left the White Sand Lake shoreline cutover until a healthy forest returned with the Civilian Conservation Corps reforestation effort in the late 1930s. Map 2 shows select land acquisitions and sales of different logging companies. The map does not include all the lumber companies’ acquisitions and sales, but indicates which companies logged White Sand Lake’s surrounding resources.

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11 Doolittle, BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s, 16.  
13 Vilas County, WI, Register of Deeds, Book 1, 559.  
14 Ibid., Book 22, 372.  
15 ABSTRACT OF TITLE for partly Government Lot 7 in Section 27 and partly Lot 1 in Section 34 in Township 42, Tiefenthaler Family Collection, Boulder Junction, WI.
Map 2

White Sand Lake Area Logging Companies

May 19, 1908: Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company sold land to Yawkey – Bissel Lumber Company
June 11, 1908: Yawkey – Bissel Lumber Company sold land to the state

July 15, 1895: Mississippi River Logging Company buys land
October 18, 1902: Mississippi River Logging Company sold land to Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company
June 11, 1908: Yawkey – Bissel Lumber Company sold land to the state
April 27, 1909: Charles A. Goodyear Lumber Company sold land to state

Lost Canoe Lake

In Section 35-7 past owners include Yawkey-Bissel Lumber Company and Chippewa Lumber and Boom

Cartography by Thomas Holtan
Source: Vilas County, WI, Register of Deeds, Book 1, 559.; Vilas County, WI, Register of Deeds, Book 22, 372, 413-17, 604.; Vilas County, WI, Register of Deeds, Book 20, 76; Vilas County, WI, Register of Deeds, Book 27, 243; ABSTRACT OF TITLE for partly Government Lot 7 in Section 27 and partly Lot 1 in Section 34 in Township 42, Tiefenthaler Family Collection, Boulder Junction, WI.

16 Map 2’s lots should be viewed as an approximation. The lot sizes were modeled after a hand drawn map in the Tiefenthaler Land Abstract.
Logging left more than just a cutover landscape. A logging operation located on Lost Canoe Lake left a “beautiful three story house with a fireplace that provided heat for the first and second floor,” according to White Sand Lake resident Georgiana Steiro.\(^{17}\)

She explained the house’s function in her memoir:

> The second floor was the dormitory for the “jacks”, and the third floor contained all the needed goods to operate such an enterprise: racks of heavy woolen lumberjack garments, boots, sewing articles in old, old chests of drawers, non-perishable food, smoking materials. You can’t imagine the quantity of materials. . . . It was Mr. Stevens’s habit when the logging came to an end to leave with just the clothes on their backs. . . . This was evident, as Jack reported, by the clothes remaining in the closets, the beds made as though someone would be sleeping in them tomorrow, the cooking utensils hanging on the wall, and the dishes on the shelves.\(^{18}\)

Some White Sand Lake residents took advantage of some of the abandoned goods. The Steiros took items that became permanent fixtures at their En-Dah-Win home.\(^{19}\)

The White Sand Lake area became a target of logging companies with the completion of the railroad along the north side of the lake. By 1910, four lumber companies were logging the landscape leaving an abandoned house and a landscape with limited vegetation. Much of cutover property was bought by the state and is known today as the Northern Highland – American Legion State Forest. Twenty years after the logging companies left, the Civilian Conservation Corps would reshape the forest through their conservation works on the government owned property.

\(^{17}\) Talking Leaves from Printed Memories by Georgiana Steiro, Steiro Family Papers, Boulder Junction, WI, 14.
\(^{18}\) Ibid., 14-5.
\(^{19}\) Ibid., 15.
Civilian Conservation Corps

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was an independent agency created by Congress during Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s first “Hundred Days” in office in 1933. The CCC served as a device to bring the country out of economic depression, put young men to work, cut down crime, teach values and build infrastructure in the country. Their greatest achievements were in the advancement of reforestation, erosion control, and recreational development programs.20;21

The CCC was strong in Wisconsin. Governor Phil La Follette was credited by many Wisconsin Progressives with “having first developed the idea for such a program.”22 Wisconsin residents were more receptive to the CCC than other federal conservation programs at the time. Wisconsin residents thought the unemployed youth were restless, and the hoped to preserve Wisconsin’s natural resources.23

At the time of its inception, the CCC was one of the largest peacetime government employment programs in American history. Nationally, the program boasted 1,300 camps.24 Although the CCC was a federal program, it was run regionally. Wisconsin’s CCC worked in conjunction with the Wisconsin Conservation Department (WCD) as seen through letters, documents, and reports of the WCD. A report documenting 1933 to 1938 by the WCD showed that Wisconsin had forty five active CCC camps and seventy seven abandoned camps. Camps had either a fixed status with

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20 Robert Fechner, Objectives and Results Report for the Civilian Conservation Corps, Wisconsin Conservation Department. Series 271, Box 899 (Madison, WI, 1938).
23 Ibid., 492-95.
24 Ibid.
buildings supporting the CCCs, or a portable status run out of tents. Out of those active and abandoned camps, Wisconsin’s CCC had twelve national forest camps, twelve state forest camps, and eight state park camps, according to the History of Wisconsin Volume V.  

Camp Crystal, Camp Crystal Lake, Crystal Lake, and S-74 were all names for one highly effective fixed CCC camp in northern Wisconsin. The location was intended to be on Crystal Lake, but for unknown reasons it was put on state property on White Sand Lake. The camp kept its name, most likely for paper work reasons, and officially opened July 19, 1933 on White Sand Lake. While Camp Crystal was operational it received supplies from the railroad freight and express station in Woodruff.  

The camp was large and was located on the east shore of the lake. It employed 154 men who worked a 100,000-acre area. One of the camp’s largest responsibilities was to aid Trout Lake’s Forest Nursery by raising and planting eleven million trees annually. Reforestation was a goal of the Wisconsin Conservation Commission and the state forests, specifically using red pine (Norwegian pine), white pine, jack pine, and white spruce. Twelve CCC camps collected seeds for the Trout Lake Nursery to assist in the eleven million tree quota. Annually, Camp Crystal was required to collect 225 bushels of red pine (Norwegian pine) seeds, and 50 bushels of white pine seeds.

25 Wisconsin Conservation Department. STATUS OF ALL C.C.C. WORK PROJECTS in the SIXTH CORPS AREA from April, 1933 to January 24, 1938: Abandoned CCC Camps and Active CCC Camps, by John McLaren. Series 271, Box 899, Folder 1 (Madison, WI, January 24, 1938).
26 Glad, HISTORY OF WISCONSIN VOLUME V, 492-5.
28 Wisconsin Conservation Department. STATUS OF ALL C.C.C. WORK PROJECTS.
29 Wisconsin Conservation Department. Series 271, Box 899, Folder 25 (Madison, WI, January 1, 1940).
30 Doolittle, BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s, 38-9.
31 One bushel is a dry measure equal to thirty two quarts
Camp Crystal performed many other functions. The CCC designed and built roads surrounding White Sand Lake. This could not have been done without Jack Steiro, a man who served as the chief forestry foreman in 1933 and was the acting superintendent in 1936.\textsuperscript{33,34,35} Besides designing the roads, the “CCC workers maintained 60 miles of forest roads and 40 miles of truck roads . . . they manned fire towers . . . built phone lines . . . ran a sawmill and a cement block making operation for building projects at Trout Lake . . . [and] landscaped much of the area” as told in Doolittle’s book.\textsuperscript{36} Camp Crystal’s workers monitored fish populations and worked in fish hatcheries and rearing ponds.\textsuperscript{37} The camp also aided other camps, including the McNaughton Camp in Oneida County, sometimes giving their assistance in unusual ways. In Georgiana Steiro’s memoirs she wrote of when her husband Jack, Camp Crystal’s superintendent, “told of the time the CCC boys had to look for three fugitives who had escaped from the McNaughton Camp.”\textsuperscript{38}

The camp cleaned up the woods, but only on state property.\textsuperscript{39} An example of what this duty entailed is seen through letters in 1938 when a heavy snowfall during October caused a number of trees to be broken on the state property. The CCC workers helped clear the trees on the Boulder Junction Pine Plantation, which is adjacent to today’s YMCA Camp Manitowish. Camp Manitowish received just as much damage and

\textsuperscript{32} Wisconsin Conservation Department. J. C. Kirsche to All Camp Superintendents, Series 271, Box 899, Folder 22 (Madison, WI, August 10, 1939).
\textsuperscript{33} Jim Tiefenthaler, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, December 30, 2008.
\textsuperscript{34} Doolittle, \textit{BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s}, 39.
\textsuperscript{35} Wisconsin Conservation Department. \textit{Wisconsin State CCC Camps & Nurseries}, Series 271, Box 899, Folder 25 (Madison, WI, June 1, 1938).
\textsuperscript{36} Doolittle, \textit{BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s}, 38.
\textsuperscript{37} Wisconsin Conservation Department. J. Bert Warner to H. W. MacKenzie, Series 271, Box 899, Folder 20 (Madison, WI, March 19, 1938).
\textsuperscript{38} Talking Leaves from Printed Memories by Georgiana Steiro, 15.
\textsuperscript{39} Doolittle, \textit{BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s}, 38.
requested assistance from the CCC men by sending a letter to the Wisconsin Conservation Commission (WCC).40 However, the WCC disapproved because the CCC’s were restricted to work on state property, unless dealing with an emergency.41

Although Camp Crystal was a successful conservation tool for the state, it did report some trouble. On May 5, 1939 an “unsavory incident occurred” at the camp involving four of the CCC workers.

Four of the boys from the Crystal lake Camp went to one of the lakes in the vicinity of the camp and lifted a state net which had been set to obtain muskellunge for spawn and six muskellunge and one pike were removed, taken to the kitchen at the camp, fried, and a party was held. The following night, May 6th, the same incident was repeated by a different group of boys who lifted another net and took six muskellunge and had a party in the kitchen.42

The excuse given to the game warden was that the men were intoxicated. Using the state nets was a regular occurrence at Camp Crystal according to Edmund H. Drager.43

White Sand Lake’s Camp Crystal received orders to end its operations May 31, 1938 to Vilas County residents’ dismay. The Star Lake Conservation Club petitioned Wisconsin’s Conservation Director, H. W. MacKenzie, to continue Camp Crystal arguing the need of labor in rearing ponds and fish hatcheries, improving trout streams and lakes, clearing large quantities of slash left by logging operations, and protecting the reforested area by fire observation crews. The Star Lake Conservation Club also saw Camp Crystal as an essential tool in the tourism industry and said: “Our tourist business brings thousands of visitors, and we simply must have a program to take care of them and

40 Wisconsin Conservation Department. Elmer F. Ott to H. W. MacKenzie, Series 271, Box 899, Folder 22 (Madison, WI, January 12, 1939).
42 Wisconsin Conservation Department. Edmund H. Drager to E. F. Carter, Series 271, Box 899, Folder 22 (Madison, WI, May 16, 1939).
43 Ibid
protect our interests.”44 MacKenzie informed the club that the reason for disbandment was budgetary, and that the club should contact members of the Wisconsin congressional delegation who were voting on a resolution in Congress for additional funds for camps.45

Although MacKenzie could assist the Star Lake Conservation Club, he continued to plan for White Sand Lake’s interests. “Future conservation crews,” he wrote, “will be using . . . all or parts of the buildings for fire suppression, construction work, maintenance or existing improvements, planting of trees, and other related conservation work.”46 Additionally he mentioned that definite plans were being formulated to reoccupy the camp in a joint state and federal program, and to have the Wisconsin’s Conservation Department “carry on where the CCC is leaving off.”47

The camp was able to find the funds to continue until 1940, when many of the CCC workers got involved with the war effort.48 Camp Crystal’s size shrunk after May 31, 1938 indicated with the deconstruction of some of the structures.49 The camp stayed dormant for a short time until the Region 7 Boy Scout Camp took the camp’s place 1940. This came as no surprise because letters by conservation agents discussed using White Sand Lake in this capacity as early as March of 1938.

This is particularly true of the Crystal Lake camp, which is located on state land on the shore of White Sand lake and right in the heart of the Northern Highland State Forest. In all Probability we will not want to dismantle any of these

47 Ibid.
48 The History of Camp Crystal Lake (No. 74 – S) of the CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS 1933-1941 by E. A. Schwechel, July 1980, NWNCB, Boulder Junction Historical Society Collection, Boulder Junction, WI.
buildings but keep them for reoccupancy [sic] as a summer camp for boys and girls groups. The buildings and the entire layout are exceptionally well adapted and the location is right for an enterprise of this kind, which is something we need in that part of the state.\(^{50}\)

After Camp Crystal closed the camp the buildings were used as storage until the Region 7 Canoe Base acquired the lease from the state.\(^{51}\)

The Region 7 Canoe Base opened in 1940, and had sixteen groups use the camp in its first year. The first chairman of the canoe base, E.A. Schwechel, said “The 1940 fee was $14 for a seven-day period. We had 24 weeks to work with. The leader came free with each ten scouts. The average trail party was four canoes with ten people.”\(^{52}\)

The Canoe Base serviced Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin Boy Scout Councils.\(^{53}\) At full operation the camp accommodated 200 to 250 boys ages 13 and up. Shirley Doolittle said the Canoe Base was not just a launching area for campers:

“Conservation courses were added in 1967, ecology courses in 1975, and [a] snowshoeing and cross-country skiing outing [happened] during the winter of 1978-79.”\(^{54}\)

Statistics in the 2008 *Lakeland Times* reported that, “The Canoe Base remained active for several decades. However, probably due to lack of attendance, 1983 was the last year it was operational.”\(^{55}\) The Scouts cancelled their lease in 1987 and the land reverted to the care of the State Department of Natural Resources, which permanently

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\(^{50}\) Wisconsin Conservation Department. C. L. Harrington to Ralph M. Immell, Series 271, Box 899, Folder 1 (Madison, WI, March 22, 1938).

\(^{51}\) The History of the Region Seven Scout Landing by E. A. Schwechel, Boulder Junction Historical Society Collection, Boulder Junction, WI.

\(^{52}\) Ibid.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) Doolittle, *BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years*, 81.

closed Camp Crystal’s and Region 7 Canoe Base’s facilities by moving or demolishing almost all of the buildings.\textsuperscript{56} The main dining hall area, with huge white pine timbers, was moved to the Muskellunge Clear Lake Campground.\textsuperscript{57} At the eastern shore of White Sand Lake one building is still visible.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} Jim Tiefenthaler, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, December 30, 2008.
North Woods Appeal

The desire to visit the North Woods of Wisconsin was explained eloquently by William Cronon, in *Nature’s Metropolis*. “The pastoral retreat in its mythic form is a story in which someone becomes oppressed by the dehumanized ugliness of urban life and so seeks escape in a middle landscape that is halfway between the wild and the urban.” The motivation to escape the city to a peaceful, rustic life was not a new concept in any regard. As Cronon put it, “A retreat from the city into pastoral nature . . . has deep roots in nineteenth-century Romanticism and in European culture stretching back to classical Rome.” 59

At the turn of the past century, Chicagoans began looking at Wisconsin for pastoral retreats. Illinois lacked lakes, making lower Wisconsin a perfect destination.60 The North Woods were hard to access at that time, limiting the initial group of visitors to the North Woods to wealthy sportsmen from the upper class who traveled by train. However, between the World Wars the pastoral retreat became available to middle- and working-class tourists because the automobile became the chief source of transportation.61 Pastoral retreats also became available to middle- and working-class tourists because more Americans started receiving vacation time.62

While White Sand Lake was being logged in 1902, the lake districts in southern Wisconsin were booming from tourism. When White Sand Lake’s first resort opened in 1917 Chicagoans were visiting the area. Cronon said “the bankrupt economy of the old

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58 *Pastoral* – of a rustic life; peaceful; simple
60 Ibid.
62 Ibid., 8.
cutover district was redeemed by urban travelers who sought a place to hunt and fish.”63 There was a desire to visit more northern locations, like Boulder Junction, because city folk “were seeking a more extreme version of the pastoral retreat.”64 Resorts played to this rustic vision using “pastoral name[s].”65 White Sand Lake’s resorts also played to this pastoral vision with names like Wilsie’s Rustic Cottages and Camp Milo Lodge.

Chicagoans were choosing Wisconsin in their vacation destinations. Information found in 1950s and 1960s surveys showed that nearly twenty five percent of Chicagoan vacationers traveled to Wisconsin while eight percent visited other parts of Illinois, and smaller percentage visited Michigan.66 City inhabitants had the desire to take pastoral retreats, but what drew the Chicagoans, and other visitors to the Boulder Junction area? Although there is no way to prove the effectiveness of advertising campaigns during the 1920s-1960s, these campaigns may explain a reason for the multi-state visitors to White Sand Lake.

The Boulder Junction Chamber of Commerce allocated $400 to run a booth at the Outdoor Exposition in the Chicago Coliseum in 1929, the first act of the Chamber of Commerce.67 In 1930, Vilas County collected almost two million dollars in tourist expenditures.68 During World War II the Chamber of Commerce tried to associate vacationing in the North Woods to being patriotic, saying, “Buy Bonds First then

63 Ibid., 382.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
68 Ibid.
Vacation in Boulder Junction.”69  By 1942, the Chamber of Commerce financially supported annual sports show presentations in Chicago and Milwaukee.70

Local proprietors promoted their resorts through the Chamber of Commerce at regional and national events.71  Don Swanson, of Camp Milo Lodge, took advantage of this, but also promoted his resort independently at local shows.72  Camp Milo Lodge made several sports show presentations in Green Bay, WI as seen in Photo One. Although the photo is thirty years older than Boulder Junction’s first sport show exhibit in 1929, it serves as a good example of White Sand Lake promotions.

Photo One – Camp Milo Lodge presenting at a Green Bay, WI sport show.

Source: Camp Milo Lodge at Sport Show, circa 1950s – 1960s. Reproduced with permission of the Swanson Family.

69 Shapiro, “Up North on Vacation,” 11.
70 Boudreau, BOULDER JUNCTION The Way We Were: 1960 to 2000, 32.
71 Ibid.
72 Tom Swanson, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 7, 2009.
Wisconsin promoted the North Woods as early as 1937, when it sent three parade floats to New York City for the National American Legion Convention parade. The Wisconsin Conservation Department sponsored the three floats, which were seen by over two million people. The first was a replica of a summer fishing camp that had a camping scene on a pine-bordered lake. The second float was a collection of live animals and taxidermy showing off Wisconsin’s animal and fish diversity. The slogan “Relax in Wisconsin Where Friends and Nature Meet” was emphasized on a large sign on top of the float. The third float was a winter scene displaying a female skier and a male hunter outside of their snow-covered cabin.\(^73\) All three floats exhibited the vision of a recreation vacation destination and are shown in Item A of the Appendix.

The Wisconsin Conservation Department did not stop in New York. In 1938, it sponsored two advertising displays in the Chicago Northwestern and Union railroad depots. Each was twelve feet wide, eight feet deep, and seven and a half feet high. They displayed various scenic and recreational views of Wisconsin. Additionally, the display featured mounted fish and an illuminated highway map, and showed the railroad lines running from Chicago to the North Woods. The slogan attached to the two displays was “56,000 Square Miles of Vacationland.”\(^74\) Chicago also held the National American Legion Convention parade in 1939. Wisconsin sent parade floats displaying slogans such as “Visit Wisconsin This Fall for Fishing, Hunting and Colorful State Tours,” “Come to


Wisconsin and Catch a Muskie,” and “fish in our Great All Year Vacation State.”

These strong pushes of recreational opportunities were noticed as early as 1938.

In 1938 C. L. Coon, from the *Recreation Publicity Division* of the Wisconsin Conservation Commission, stated that:

One of the most interesting human developments in the recent years is this drift to outdoor sports. Play! The escape from the fast tempo of business life. The keen whetstone upon which one can resharpen [sic] the dull blade of thought … The modern world has assumed the mood that nature was not only made for Sunday rotos or picture postcards. They have discovered that the woods and streams are beneficent servants of mankind, and that fishing, swimming, hiking, and other kindred sports are the right and privilege of millions rather than the special enterprise of the few.

C. L. Coon’s quote showed that the pastoral retreat was becoming a reality for middle- and working-class people. He asserted that pastoral retreats are the rights and privileges of millions, showing the potential in the market for North Wood’s resorts.

By 1939, hundreds of national headlines appeared in newspapers promoting Wisconsin. With a limited budget, it was the goal of the Recreational Publicity Division to spread Wisconsin’s story to the other 47 states. The Recreational Publicity Division accomplished their goal through providing press releases to newspapers along with befriending travel agents, travel writers, and transportation agencies from different states. Their materials showed the ease of traveling to the North Woods by means of Wisconsin’s “fine fast highways that open up every section of the state … our railway service and bus service.” The Recreational Publicity Division noted that 1939 was the

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best publicity year ever because nationwide newspapers and magazines were printing more Wisconsin vacation news than ever before.\textsuperscript{77}

Boulder Junction was highlighted in the November 1940 edition of the Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin as one of Wisconsin’s “Famous Recreational Regions.” Boulder was not just a railroad junction, but “a place today to change your pace, forget for a time the ills of the world, and slip into the peace of a North Woods vacation.” Of the over two hundred lakes close to town, High Lake, Fishtrap, Boulder, White Sand, Allequash, Trout, Gresham, and Wolf were mentioned. Not only did the article boast of the resorts, cottages, and cabins, but it also highlighted the many beautiful roads that led through the Northern Highland State Forest, as well as activities such as camping, picnicking in scenic spots, golf, horseback riding, boating, canoeing, and fishing.\textsuperscript{78} Thus, White Sand Lake was appealing in the 1940s according to the Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin as part of the local area and the larger north woods vacation land.


Vacation Resorts

The history of White Sand Lake resorts stems back to the first resort in the Boulder Junction area, the Manitowish House. Located on Trout Lake, and built in 1889, it combined a house and a hotel offering meals and accommodations for sixty people. The fishing declined in Trout Lake, leading the Manitowish House to build a fishing camp on White Sand Lake.\(^7\) This auxiliary camp served as White Sand Lake’s first experience with resorts.\(^8\)

Map 3

Cartography by Thomas Holtan


\(^7\) Doolittle, \textit{BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s}, 47.

\(^8\) The date is unknown for the camp on White Sand Lake, but is likely to be before 1916 when the Mann Family sold the Manitowish House to the Cardinal family.
Since then, three resorts have been on the lake: Camp Milo Lodge, Wilsie’s Rustic Cottages, and En-Dah-Win. (Map 3)

**Camp Milo Lodge**

**General Information**

While the southwestern shoreline of White Sand Lake is highly valuable today, this was not always the case. Camp Milo Lodge’s property was cutover following the logging of the Mississippi River Logging Company, Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company, and the Yawkey – Bissel Lumber Company on that same parcel of land.\(^{81,82}\) The cutover land changed hands three times during different poker games before 1917. Because the land had been stripped of its chief value, people thought of it as a tax burden.\(^{83}\) That changed when George Lovick purchased the parcel in 1917.

Lovick opened Camp Milo Lodge in 1917, which served as a fishing camp for guests. The lack of logs posed a unique problem for the construction of the cabins. George knew that the different logging companies floated felled trees from the south side of the lake to the railroad tracks on the north side. White Sand Lake served as a new resource, the most viable option for obtaining logs. George collected the waterlogged wood and opened a makeshift sawmill on his property. He apparently had a limited number of logs given the many styles of cabins he built, including whole logs, half logs, horizontal logs, and vertical logs. None of the wood and hardware went to waste; in the event of fire, it was common at the time to rummage through the debris for the nails.

George Lovick sold Camp Milo Lodge to Floyd and Hazel Williams in 1926 on the contingency that Floyd and Hazel retain the original name, Camp Milo Lodge. Don

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\(^{81}\) Vilas County, WI, Register of Deeds, Book 1, 559.  
\(^{82}\) Vilas County, WI, Register of Deeds, Book 22, 372.  
\(^{83}\) Tom Swanson, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 7, 2009.
Swanson, the Williams’s son-in-law and a future proprietor of the resort, told the story on how the camp had originally received its name. A Mrs. Oliphant was involved in the property during the sale to Floyd and Hazel. Her son, Milo, was killed in World War I and the resort was named in his honor. The name remained for many years, but was changed around 1958 when Don Swanson received many phone calls inquiring if Camp Milo Lodge was a boy’s summer camp or a girl’s summer camp. Because the connotation of the word “camp” was no longer associated with fishing, Don decided to change the name of the resort to Milo Lodge, which still preserved Milo’s honor.

The Williams’s acquisition of the property differed from the other resorts on White Sand Lake because the property came with five cabins, giving Williamses an immediate income source. The cost of staying at Camp Milo Lodge during the property transfer was estimated from two sources. Marian Swanson, the daughter of Floyd and Hazel Williams, remembered the price for an American plan resort at three dollars a day per person in the late 1920s. Marian’s son, Tom, heard a story throughout the years at Shrimp’s Nightclub and Wildlife Museum that suggested a second price; “The fishing guides were really the guys who made the money up here [Boulder Junction] because the American plan resorts were charging a buck and a half a day for three meals and the fishing guides were charging two fifty.”

When the Williamses first started Camp Milo Lodge, they lived out of a tent to maximize the profits from the five cabins they owned. Bears and mice were a frequent annoyance around the tent during the evenings. They eventually built a cabin, which turned into their residence.

84 Ibid.
The number of cabins available for rental changed throughout George Lovick’s, Floyd Williams’s, and Don Swanson’s tenure. Floyd built an indefinable number of cabins and Don decreased the number. When Don and Marian Swanson purchased the resort from Marian’s parents in 1952, they remodeled. Annually Don tore down two cabins, and built one new, calling them “homes” because they were winterized for yearlong use even though they lacked foundations. The materials used came from Goetsch Hardware and Lumber and from the cottages that were torn down. Don resawed the salvageable lumber, but ended up burning a tremendous amount of unusable material. In 1974, the resort had fifteen cabins, one being the personal residence of the Swansons.

Although the Town of Boulder Junction had a garbage dump, Camp Milo Lodge had its own located across Highway K. The dump was not unique to the resort; in fact, many American plan resorts had their own dumps to assist in the large operation. There was a great deal of left-over food daily making the site very attractive to bears.

Resort Operations

Perhaps most crucial component for Camp Milo Lodge’s operations was food. Serving three meals to seventy-five daily meant full-time jobs for the women. Although the resort was not consistently at seventy-five guests, that was the maximum occupancy during the peak of summer. Hazel Williams “handed down the spatula” to her daughter Marian Swanson in 1952 when the Swansons purchased the resort.

86 Doolittle, BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s, 103.
87 Tom Swanson, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 7, 2009.
88 Ibid.
The meals helped define the resort’s appeal, and stand as the largest difference in comparison with the En-Dah-Win resort to the west. The morning menu consisted of typical American breakfast foods including eggs, bacon, sausage, pancakes, and French toast. Lunches tended to stay light; they included soup and sandwiches, or hamburgers. The dinner menu followed a weekly schedule as seen below during Don and Marian’s tenure.

**Weekly Menu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Meal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Chicken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Pork Roast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Duck *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Corned Beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Walleye Fish-Fry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Prime Rib</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* If there were a large number of guests staying for two weeks, Wednesday nights would change into Corned Beef.

The operation of meals included a wait staff, a cook, and cleaners. Food purveyors, such as a produce salesperson, visited the resort during the week and took the resort’s order. The distribution companies were located in different parts of the state including Wausau and Milwaukee, and delivered in refrigerated trucks.

Employees typically worked seven days a week, but were occasionally granted one day off. During the season, it was particularly hectic with cooking, cleaning and laundry. To provide relief to their employees, the Swansons occasionally held evening cookouts around their campfire pit serving hotdogs and hamburgers, as seen in Photo Two. Cocktails were common during these occasions, but alcohol was not provided by the resort. Camp Milo Lodge never provided an alcoholic beverage in its existence under the Williams or Swanson Families. Some guests went to Boulder Junction taverns for cocktails.
Photo Two- Don Swanson (far right) cooks at cookout in front of the honeymoon cabin. A chore boy assists him.\textsuperscript{89}

Source: Cookout at Camp Milo Lodge, circa 1950s-1960s. Reproduced with permission of the Swanson Family.

**Camp Milo Lodge’s Guests**

Guests had many options for recreation. Thirty-six wooden boats were available for rental on White Sand Lake at $2.00 a day under the Swansons. Guests could rent a boat with a motor for $2.50 or $3.00 a day. Because boat maintenance on a different lake was too difficult, the Swansons had five steel boats on Lost Canoe Lake that were left there through the winter. Guests carried over the outboard motor from White Sand Lake if they desired its use it on Lost Canoe.

\textsuperscript{89} The location of the honeymoon cabin is the current location of Richard and Lynne Kohn’s Cottage: 9913 Highway K, Boulder Junction, WI
Fishing was a very popular recreational activity at Milo, but was sometimes difficult on White Sand Lake because of the lake’s clarity, and its lack of weeds. Fishing guides assisted guests during their vacations. The Swansons allowed fishing guides to live at Camp Milo Lodge during the summer months. The guides earned their room and board by taking resort customers fishing or by helping out around the resort. Additional fishing guides could be hired from town if the guests desired them.

Movies were shown in the dinning hall of Camp Milo Lodge on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays to help entertain during the week. Different sorts of movies were shown including westerns and musicals. The Swansons invited other White Sand Lake residents over for the movies and many neighbor children took advantage of the opportunity.

Marion Swanson thought that the Boulder Junction area survived on one-week vacationers; however, this was not always the case with Camp Milo Lodge. Some of the wealthier families were able to stay for two weeks, usually in July and August. The resort also had visitors who stayed for extended periods, such as Harry Pecal. Harry owned Pioneer Paint and Varnish Company in Tucson, AZ and visited for six-week stints. Along with Arizona, guests came from all over the country including Illinois, California, New York, and Missouri because of strong advertising beginning with the Williamses, and peaking under the Swansons.

Much of the national publicity came from Boulder Junction’s Chamber of Commerce. Through being a member of the Chamber of Commerce, the resort was promoted at shows in Milwaukee and Chicago. Camp Milo Lodge also promoted itself and received guests through word-of-mouth referrals. The resort handed out a brochure
(see Appendix Item B). A yearly newsletter was sent in wintertime to remind the regulars of the season that was approaching and to inform them of any changes at the resort. During the season, letters were sent to remind previous guests of the good fishing in late fall (see Appendix Item C). The resort opened May 15 and typically closed the first week in October. The Swansons initially tried to extend the season into late October, but that often cost frozen pipes, sinks, and toilets. The closing date eventually moved later as the cabins were rebuilt and winterized.

At the time of closing in 1974, Milo guests were charged about $60 a day per person for lodging and meals. Milo closed for two reasons. Don and Marian Swanson were ready to retire, and Don thought he was not earning enough for the time and labor he put into the resort. The Swansons decided to sell the resort in a condo fashion, by separating the cabins into individually owned properties.

Fifteen cabins were too many for condos, so the Swansons bought half of Little Gibson Lake, which they strategically divided into six lots. Lasik Movers from Rhinelander moved six of the cabins to the six lots on Little Gibson Lake around 1974. The cabins were surprisingly easy to move because they lacked basements. No trees were removed on the White Sand Lake property, and only one house had minimal damage during its move. Besides the six cabins sold on Little Gibson Lake, the Swansons divided the White Sand Lake land and sold eight cabins there. They kept one cabin on White Sand Lake for a period until they moved into the town of Boulder Junction. Some of the buyers were previous guests at the resort.
Wilsie’s Rustic Cottages

Pat Wilsie visited Boulder Junction in 1923 to hunt deer, and moved to White Sand Lake in 1933 to become the assistant to the foreman at Camp Crystal.\(^{90,91}\) Pat relocated for a short period of time to the Ladysmith Camp, but returned to White Sand Lake in 1935. While working at Camp Crystal, Pat started leasing property from the Wisconsin Conservation Department on the south side of White Sand Lake, east of En-Dah-Win.

Wilsie’s Rustic Cottages started with one rental cabin in 1935 for extra income, and grew to three cabins by 1940. “The cabins were rather rough. They had a bed, kitchen, living room, and a path to the outhouse,” Pat’s son Bruce recalled.\(^{92}\) Food was not provided, but was available for purchase from Pat’s wife, Kelly. Boats were also provided. The Wilsies relied exclusively on word of mouth referrals, which meant all of their guests were friends, friends of friends, and local referrals.

Material for the three cabins came from “whatever was cheap and available,” according to Bruce Wilsie.\(^{93}\) One of the cabins was constructed with half logs that had been the interior of a summer home on Trout Lake. Another cabin was an “old house from the mill at Presque Isle that they cut in half, moved, and put back together.”\(^{94}\) Bruce Wilsie also remembered getting some of the materials for free. “Georgie Steiro used to say that if Dad and I [Pat and Bruce Wilsie] came back from the dump with less than they took, than it was a good trip.”\(^{95}\)

\(^{90}\) Bruce Wilsie, letter to author, April 14, 2009.
\(^{91}\) Doolittle, **BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s**, 39.
\(^{92}\) Bruce Wilsie, letter to author, April 14, 2009.
\(^{93}\) Ibid.
\(^{94}\) Ibid.
\(^{95}\) Bruce Wilsie, interview by author, telephone, April 17, 2009.
Two motives lay behind the Wilsie relocation to White Birch Lake in 1940. The first was that Camp Crystal was closing on White Sand Lake, and Pat did not want to relocate to a different camp. Second, the Wisconsin Conservation Department ended the lease for the property. All of the cabins were disassembled and were taken to the new location.\(^96\) The Wilsies did not take all of the disassembled components because Jack Steiro used some of the abandoned material to help build the cottages at En-Dah-Win.\(^97\)

**En-Dah-Win**  
**General Information**

Located on property east of Camp Milo Lodge, Jack and Georgiana (Georgie) Steiro opened En-Dah-Win resort for business August 22, 1939.\(^98\) Since its inception, En-Dah-Win had been different from its neighbor, Camp Milo Lodge. En-Dah-Win was a European style resort, meaning that guests were responsible for their own meals, each cottage being equipped with its own kitchen.\(^99\) Additionally, the Steiros only purchased land, not preexisting cabins like the Williamses. En-Dah-Win became the third completed resort on White Sand Lake, and stopped building cabins in the early 1950s. It also had one cabin for rental on Lost Canoe Lake.\(^100\)

En-Dah-Win was the result of Jack’s job experiences in Vilas County drawing maps for the Rhinelander Fire Protection Department and planting trees for the Trout Lake Forest Nursery.\(^101\) He became Camp Crystal’s chief forestry foremen in 1933 and acting superintendent in 1936.\(^102;103\) He engineered many of the roads surrounding the

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\(^96\) Ibid.  
\(^97\) Dick Steiro, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 6, 2009.  
\(^98\) Guest book of En-Dah-Win, Steiro Family Collection, Boulder Junction, WI.  
\(^99\) Dick Steiro, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 6, 2009.  
\(^100\) Ibid.  
\(^101\) Talking Leaves from Printed Memories by Georgiana Steiro, Steiro Family Papers, Boulder Junction, WI, 11.  
\(^102\) Doolittle, *BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s*, 39.
lake, including Highway K. Initially, Highway K was a grass road with two ruts, but the Camp Crystal workers cleared and widened the sand road to connect the north-south US Highways of 51 and 45. 104;105 Jack’s wife Georgie wrote a memoir that showed Jack’s interest in settling on the lake. She wrote, “Finally, land on White Sand Lake was chosen . . . Jack had laid out this road [Highway K], and was in the process with the aid of CCC boys of clearing and widening it . . . do you suppose he wanted his bride-to-be to have smooth sailing?”106

Georgie remembered that they “purchased land from a Mr. Roberts . . . where at one time there had been a large dwelling at the foot of the hill in the clearing. They continued for years to dig up large stones, and pick up nails.”107 The dwelling was a vacation home and a stable, both of which eventually burned down. When the owners of the vacation home and stable visited White Sand Lake, Georgie said they took the “train to Star Lake, where a team of horses met them and took them to their destination.”108 ;109

Throughout the construction of En-Dah-Win, Jack Steiro designed the houses and ordered the supplies. The first cabin was deemed “livable” in June of 1939. Georgie explained in her memoirs that the process was slow because the “Pulp, cement, gravel and other materials and equipment had to be ordered and delivered, and delivery was slow, for the merchants would deliver only if others in the area needed a delivery.”110

103 Wisconsin Conservation Department. Series 271, Box 899, Folder 25 (Madison, WI, June 1, 1938).
105 Talking Leaves from Printed Memories by Georgiana Steiro, 14.
106 Ibid.
107 Ibid., 15.
108 Ibid., 16.
109 No other information was given about this early inhabitant of the lake. Because they used the railroad to Star Lake, we know the place was built after 1895. The home and stable were gone before the CCC’s arrived in 1933, giving a timeframe for the structures.
110 Ibid.
Jack’s brother Al helped build the first cabin and the future cabins were built with the assistance of Arnold Burg, Leif Steiro, and Lowell Bradley.\textsuperscript{111;112}

En-Dah-Win officially opened for business with two rental cabins in the summer of 1939. In the Pottawatomie language En-Dah-Win means “home in woods.” Jack and Georgie adapted the slogan to promote their resort as “our home in the woods.” During the winters of the 1940s Georgie and their son Dick lived on White Sand Lake, while Jack worked construction for Badger Ordinance in Baraboo, WI. During the summer months, he built the additional cabins until En-Dah-Win had eight cabins.\textsuperscript{113} (Appendix Item D is a handout describing En-Dah-Win’s cabins and their pricing from the 1960s.)

With World War II, construction supplies became limited. En-Dah-Win’s proximity to Camp Crystal helped because Jack used some of the materials of the buildings that had been taken down at Camp Crystal for his new resort. He also used some of the materials left behind from Wilsie’s Rustic Cottages to the east. Some of the borrowed materials from Camp Crystal included toilets and bathtubs, which became Georgie’s responsibility to clean. She scrubbed them in White Sand Lake because it was the best water source.\textsuperscript{114} Jack also recycled window frames, doors, and concrete blocks from the CCC camp. Nothing in the cabins was standard. In one cottage, all of the doors measured at a different size. Jack would have Georgie tell him what a comfortable height for the kitchen sink was. Georgie was around 5’2” making the sink seem abnormally low for future guests and owners.\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{112} Dick Steiro, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 6, 2009.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} Jim Tiefenthaler, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, December 30, 2008.
En-Dah-Win did not advertise as much as Camp Milo Lodge, but relied on word of mouth referrals, and they tended to have a large number of repeat visitors annually like Camp Milo Lodge. En-Dah-Win had a large number of postcards that were available to their guests, typically with a scene from the resort and a caption on the bottom (see Photo Three and Appendix Item E). Many showed scenes of families enjoying their pastoral retreat.

Saturdays were the change-over periods at the resort. Each week the boats were taken out of the lake, swept and rinsed. Georgie and her helpers replaced the linen, washed the windows, and vacuumed. Guests had to leave by nine in the morning and the cabins would be ready for the next visitors around two in the afternoon.116

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The cabins went through two distinct phases: pre and post electricity. Before En-Dah-Win electrified, the resort operated two generators that mainly serviced the different cottage’s water pumps. In addition, each cabin was equipped with its own icebox that needed to be filled with ice weekly. Jack designed the cabins to have iceboxes as a permanent fixture, which were able to drain under the structure. When the cabins received electricity and refrigerators, Dick Steiro took the iceboxes to the town dump and destroyed them. To him they represented his weekly chore of refilling each of the iceboxes with fifty pound blocks of ice.

Although this study mentions the resort’s buildings as cabins, Jack Steiro would have strongly disagreed because he viewed the cabins as homes due to their livability in all seasons. The term cabin describes the ambiance of the resort.

**En-Dah-Win’s Guests**

The operation initially was a seasonal job. The exception for the resort was during the month of November when guests came November 22-26, 1939, most likely for deer season. The next winter guests arrived late November of 1946. The season at that time started May 31 and continued through the week of October 8. The 1946 guest book can be viewed in the Appendix as Item F. In 1946, most guests came from Wisconsin and Illinois. The resort saw much geographic diversity over the years including guests from Oklahoma, Ohio, Texas, Michigan, Indiana, Kansas, and Connecticut.

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118 Ibid.
119 Guest book of En-Dah-Win, Steiro Family Collection, Boulder Junction, WI.
120 Ibid.
En-Dah-Win guests arrived numerous ways. Often Jack and Georgie picked them up at the train station in Star Lake. These guests were usually from Milwaukee and Chicago areas, but guests also drove to the resort. According to local historian Paul Brenner, the roads in the early 1930’s “were good enough to make the trip up by automobile in one day” from Milwaukee or Chicago.\(^\text{121}\) Some guests arrived by seaplane transportation, as seen in Photo Four.

**Photo Four – Seaplane arrives at En-Dah-Win Pier**

![Seaplane at En-Dah-Win Pier](source: Seaplane at En-Dah-Win Pier, circa 1950s – 1960s. Reproduced with permission of the Steiro Family.)

Guests participated in many forms of recreation. Boats were available for a fee, which allowed the guests to take advantage of the fishing opportunities. Fishing guides were not part of the resort’s operations, as they were at Camp Milo Lodge. Fishing guides were hired from Boulder Junction by the guests. Water sports were common, and they turned into a spectators sport. Guests would line chairs on En-Dah-Win’s long pier to watch the water skiers. (see photo five)

\(^{121}\) Boulder Junction’s Early Logging and Tourism Industries Talk by Paul Brenner, Elmer Dahlquist’s Personal Collection, Boulder Junction, WI, 3.
Guests found ways to make their vacations more enjoyable. The Koch Family started the tradition of having a “Miss En-Dah-Win” pageant. Shown in Photo Six is Kay Koch, the winner of Miss En-Dah-Win title in 1955. Guests found pleasure around the group campfire having cocktails, cooking, and socializing. Jack and Georgie visited with their guests here.

Photo Five – Spectators watch water sports from the pier


Resort Closing

In 1969 Jack and Georgie sold their cabins to former guests largely because they were getting older and wanted to retire. Their son and daughter-in-law, Dick and Gloria, reside on the original En-Dah-Win property today. The Steiros instilled the resort business acumen to their descendents. Jack and Georgie’s granddaughter, Heidi, owns En-Dah-Win’s cottage number two and rents it out today.122

Photo Six - Miss EN-DAH-WIN

Source: Kay Koch is Miss En-Dah-Win 1955. Reproduced with permission of the Steiro Family.

Shared Experiences

Camp Milo Lodge and En-Dah-Win collaborated in cutting the ice annually on White Sand Lake. According to Jack Steiro’s son Dick, “This event took place on Trout Lake and on White Sand Lake because of their depth,” right after the New Year, or whenever the ice reached the appropriate depth of two and a half feet. White Sand Lake’s cutting was originally done with a hand ice saw, until a local built a mechanized ice saw. With over 1000 cakes taken, the operation was substantial and took place in the bay located next to Camp Milo Lodge because of the easy access point to Highway K.

Although they harvested the ice together, the systems of ice storage at each resort varied. Food was served to the guests at Camp Milo Lodge, negating most of the necessity of iceboxes. Instead, each cottage had a designated cubicle inside the icehouse where guests would bury their freshly caught fish. Chore boys, or resort helpers, would come to the icehouse and clean the guest’s catch. Occasionally, chore boys missed a fish, and all of the cubicles had to be dug up because of the stench. En-Dah-Win equipped its cabins with iceboxes. If guests caught fish, they cleaned them and buried them in the icehouse designating their fish with a sign. Although En-Dah-Win went through numerous fifty-pound cakes weekly, they never ran out of ice, suggesting how large the number of ice cakes was harvested each winter.

123 Ibid.
124 Talking Leaves from Printed Memories by Georgiana Steiro, 35.
125 Doolittle, BOULDER JUNCTION the Early Years: 1880s to 1950s, 135.
126 Cake – fifty pound block of ice
127 Talking Leaves from Printed Memories by Georgiana Steiro, 35-6.
129 Ibid.
130 Dick Steiro, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 6, 2009.
Both resorts rented, cleaned, and prepared their boats the same way. Preparing them was the first task at Camp Milo Lodge each spring even before opening the cabins. First, staff would scrape all of the paint off the boats and re-caulk them. Then each of the thirty-six wooden boats were taken to the cove, right next to the resort, and were floated in the lake. The sunken ones were brought back to the shore to be repaired. Those that floated were kept in the water to let the wood swell, which reduced leaks.\textsuperscript{131} At En-Dah-Win, the work fell heavily in the weekly preparation of cleaning. The ribbed wooden boats were taken to shore and washed with a bucket of lake water and a broom. The boats were heavy, usually requiring two workers to bring them ashore. Some other resorts in the area had workers who would bail out the boats after a rainstorm.\textsuperscript{132}

The retention of customers was dependent on the guests’ positive experiences and friendships, something both Camp Milo Lodge and En-Dah-Win provided. Spending evenings around the campfires at both resorts was one of the most effective ways for guests to socialize with the resort proprietors. The closing of En-Dah-Win in 1969 and Milo in 1974 serve as proof that guests enjoyed their annual pastoral retreats, because almost all of the subdivided property was bought by former guests. The closing of these two resorts was part of a larger trend, as by the late 1960s many smaller resorts on waterfront property “subdivided and sold their land for summer residences, sometimes at prices that were 50 to 150 percent greater than their original investment.”\textsuperscript{133} Resort owners found it more advantageous to sell their resort properties than stay in business during the 1970s.\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{131} Tom Swanson, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, March 7, 2009.
\textsuperscript{132} Jim Tiefenthaler, interview by author, Boulder Junction, WI, December 30, 2008.
\textsuperscript{133} Thompson, \textit{THE HISTORY OF WISCONSIN VOLUME VI}, 291.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
Conclusion

Logging around White Sand Lake began when the railroads provided a means of transportation for the felled timber in 1903. The lake became an essential tool for the loggers protecting the logs from rot, and providing a quick transport to the railroad tracks from the south side of the lake. Mississippi River Logging Company, Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company, Yawkey – Bissel Lumber Company, and Charles A. Goodyear Lumber Company left White Sand Lake’s shores bare and a tax burden for property owners. The Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Crystal played a crucial role in the reforestation of the area. Camp Crystal assisted in planting eleven million trees annually, designing and maintaining roads, protecting against fire, and landscaping much of the area. Camp Crystal thus helped reestablish the North Woods, allowing Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin of 1940 to call Boulder Junction one of Wisconsin’s “Famous Recreational Regions.”

White Sand Lake’s vacation resorts benefited from the middle-class desire to vacation at pastoral retreats. The advertisement campaigns of the Wisconsin Conservation Department, the Boulder Junction Chamber of Commerce and local resort owners contributed to the national visitors that the local resorts saw. City folks wanted to enjoy the cool summer temperatures, the outdoors, and nature, and Boulder Junction was an ideal setting for their recreational desire. The three resorts on the lake that accommodated these people had similarities, yet had different ambiance. Camp Milo Lodge was an American plan resort originally built out of logs harvested from the lake that charged their customers per day, and advertised privately in sports shows. Wilsie’s Rustic Cottages was a European plan resort that lasted five years while its owner Pat
Wilsie worked at Camp Crystal. The Wisconsin Conservation Department ended the lease on the property, forcing the Wilsies to relocate to White Birch Lake. En-Dah-Win was a European plan resort built using borrowed items from Camp Crystal and Wilsie’s Rustic Cottages that rented cabins by the week, and relied primarily on word of mouth referrals. For the most part, former resort guests bought all of the property that Camp Milo Lodge and En-Dah-Win sold.

This study has laid the foundational structure to White Sand Lake’s history of shoreline use. The railroad’s existence, along with the amount of the logging companies present showed that this area was a strategic target in the logging campaign. Additionally, the significance of the lake is proven with the state’s decision to locate Camp Crystal here, a camp originally intended for Crystal Lake. The tourism industry became strong, with regional and national promotional campaigns. The three resort lodges brought national visitors to the lake annually, allowing for a diverse set of summer visitors.

White Sand Lake serves as a case study in the history of North Woods Wisconsin. Studying White Sand Lake also has a larger purpose: an illustration of how the middle-class vacationed during the twentieth century. They took advantage of the pastoral resorts found on North Wood’s lakes, like White Sand Lake, for vacations and honeymoons. The memories of North Wood’s resorts are forgotten as resort owners follow the trend of selling their property, rather than renting it out. By preserving the histories of Camp Milo Lodge, Wilsie’s Rustic Cottages, and En-Dah-Win, future generations will understand how their predecessors satisfied their desires to escape from, as William Cronon wrote, the “dehumanized ugliness of urban life.”
My regret in this study is brevity of the topics. Each topic could have its own paper dedicated to enlarging and enriching its history. Additionally, the history of the peninsula and northwest shore deserve attention in further studies, as those areas were sites of private homes. It is important to document these histories while the sources are currently available. Much information came from oral interviews, recalling material that would otherwise be lost. It is through the collection and documentation of these histories that the legacy of White Sand Lake endures.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

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Guest book of En-Dah-Win, Steiro Family Collection, Boulder Junction, WI.


--------. “The History of Camp Crystal Lake (No. 74 – S) of the CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS 1933-1941,” Boulder Junction Historical Society Collection, Boulder Junction, WI.


Wilsie, Bruce, letter to author, April 14, 2009.

--------. interview by author, telephone, April 17, 2009.

Vilas County, WI, Register of Deeds.

Wisconsin Conservation Department. Series 271


Secondary Sources:


Appendix

Item A – Wisconsin Parade Floats in New York City 1938

OTHER RECREATION

We do not have our own golf course, but there are four challenging courses within a 20 minute drive from the lodge. We show family approved movies each week at the resort and there are theatres within a 20 minute drive from the lodge. Each week (weather permitting) we hold a cook-out on the lake shore and you'll long remember this event. Most other recreational facilities including shuffleboard, table tennis, archery, trap shooting, etc; are available at the resort for our guests and their friends.

HOW TO GET TO MILO LODGE

Follow U.S. Hwy. 81, 10 miles north of Woodruff, Wis. Then take County Hwy. H to Boulder Junction; anyone will give you directions from there. If you fly, we will be glad to meet your North Central Flight at Land O'Lakes, Wisconsin or the private airport at Boulder Junction. Railroad passengers will be met upon request at Woodruff, Wisconsin, serviced by the Chicago Northwestern Railroad.
Dear Folks:

We had planned to send out a beautiful fall post card, colored with Indian Summer. We couldn’t get everything we wanted to say on the card, so we decided to get off this letter.

Marion and I would like to invite you up to the Northwoods Colorama which starts about the 20th of Sept. and runs to about the 20th of Oct. Many call it Autumn, or Indian Summer. We find it without question, the most beautiful time of the year. The days are warm, nights are cool and the woods are dressed in many colors. This is the time of the year when the camera fan can enjoy taking pictures through out the day.

This is the last call for Muskie Fisherman. We expect to close the resort about Oct. 25th. Fisherman have been enjoying good Muskie fishing later in the season each year. Our largest Muskie always are caught after the first hard frost. Last year the largest Walleyed Pike of the season was caught in Oct. We extend to you an invitation to come up this fall and do some fishing.

Hunting seasons while we are open are; Bow & Arrow deer season opens Sept. 22nd. Grouse hunting opens Oct. 1st. There are more Grouse or Partridge in the woods this year then I have seen for the past ten years. Duck season opens Oct. 13th. There is a twenty five day season this year with a limit of 4 ducks a day. We bagged over 50 ducks and two geese in a little over two weeks last year.

COLORAMA, MUSKIE FISHING, HUNTING. We invite you up to the Northwoods for a few days or week to enjoy the nicest time of the year. If you call for reservations, our new number is Evergreen 5-2921.

Sincerely Yours,

Source: Fall Fishing Reminder Letter, circa 1962. Reproduced with permission of the Swanson Family.
A completely modern housekeeping cottage resort. Comfortable and attractively furnished cottages on the lake shore. Each has complete bath, hot and cold water, interiors of native wood paneling, wood burning fireplaces, gas furnaces and complete kitchens.

**Cottage No. 1**
A three bedroom cottage with one double and one twin bed in each; living room; bath; kitchen and screened porch. Limited to parties of not more than nine persons. Rate $120.00 per week.

**Cottage No. 2**
A three bedroom cottage with double bed in one, two double beds in second, twin beds in third; kitchen; bath and living room. Limited to parties of not more than eight persons. Rate $110.00 per week.

**Cottage No. 3**
A three bedroom cottage with double bed in one, a double and a twin bed in second and third; living room; kitchen; bath and screened porch. Limited to parties of not more than eight persons. Rate $110.00 per week.

**Cottage No. 4**
A two bedroom cottage with twin beds in one; two double beds in the second; studio bed in living room; kitchen; bath; screened porch. Limited to parties of not more than seven persons. Rate $105.00 per week.

**Cottage No. 5 and Cottage No. 6**
Two bedroom cottages with double bed in one and twin beds in second; studio bed in living room; kitchen; bath; screened porch. Limited to parties of not more than six persons. Rate $90.00 per week.

**Cottage No. 7**
A three room cottage consisting of a large combination living and bedroom; kitchen; bath. Limited to parties of not more than three persons. Rate $65.00 per week.

**Cottage No. 8**
A completely modern, private, year-around three bedroom home on Lost Canoe Lake, one quarter mile from En-Dah-Win. Will accommodate a maximum of six persons. Private pier; good beach. Rate $125.00 per week. Boat included with this cottage rate.

**R A T E S** — Ten dollar deposit requested with each reservation.
**Seasonal** — Fuel, electricity, all bedding and bed linens furnished. No towels and wash clothes. No boats included. Additional $2.50 per day per person over allotted number.
**Discount** — If your vacation of one week or longer is taken prior to the third week of June or starting with the first full week in September the rates quoted are subject to a 20 percent discount with a boat included.

White Sand Lake is a fine clear water lake, one of the largest in the area. It is well known for Muskelunge, walleyes, small-mouth bass. We are proud of our swimming beach.

We have boats available on White Sand Lake and on Lost Canoe Lake at $2.50 per day or $12.00 per week.

PLEASE DO NOT BRING YOUR PETS.

Source: EN-DAH-WIN Handout, circa 1960s. Reproduced with permission of the Steiro Family
Item E – Two postcards of En-Dah-Win

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<tr>
<td>May 31, 46</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Allen Jones</td>
<td>4157 Bond St., Chicago, Ill.</td>
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<td>June 14, 46</td>
<td>Mrs. &amp; Mr. J. W. Armstrong</td>
<td>2130 N. Danforth Rd., Chicago, Ill.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/17/46</td>
<td>Mrs. &amp; Mr. L. Armstrong</td>
<td>2140 N. Hooper Ave., Chicago, Ill.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6/26/46</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Garfield Jones</td>
<td>6015 N. Kent Ave., Milwaukee, Wis.</td>
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<td>8/1/46</td>
<td>Margaret Schlesinger</td>
<td>4307 E. Thomas St., St. Louis, Mo.</td>
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<td>8/4/46</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. P. K. Smith</td>
<td>320 E. 12th St., Milwaukee, Wis.</td>
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<td>7/30/46</td>
<td>Mary Hattie Russell</td>
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<td>Mrs. &amp; Mrs. W. Waldo Shaver</td>
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<td>7/21/46</td>
<td>Mrs. J. Valentine</td>
<td>3260 W. 44th Pl., Chicago, Ill.</td>
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<td>8/5/46</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. Leonard Halves</td>
<td>5164 W. Tennyson Rd., Chicago, Ill.</td>
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<td>8/7/46</td>
<td>John &amp; Agnes Halves</td>
<td>2450 W. 85th St., Chicago, Ill.</td>
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<td>Mrs. W. Tennyson Halves</td>
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<td>9/1-2/46</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. J. W. MacDonald</td>
<td>424 N. Pinckney St., Madison, Wis.</td>
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<td>9/10-11/46</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. A. Marver</td>
<td>2007 Oak St., Beloit, Wisconsin</td>
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<td>9/22-23/46</td>
<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. J. W. MacDonald</td>
<td>415 E. Milwaukee St., Milwaukee, Wis.</td>
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<td>Mr. &amp; Mrs. J. W. MacDonald</td>
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<td>10/14/46</td>
<td>Helen &amp; Ed. Schrebergener</td>
<td>347 Jefferson St, Madison 3, Wis.</td>
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<td>10/15/46</td>
<td>Bob &amp; Helen Wright, Earl Wright</td>
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<td>Mrs &amp; Mr. Harold Weideman</td>
<td>Monroe, Wis R. #2</td>
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<td>11. 28. 46</td>
<td>Robert Remle</td>
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<td>George Stig</td>
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Source: Guest book of En-Dah-Win, Circa 1946. Reproduced with permission of the Steiro Family.