

SHADES OF THE PAST

Williams Bay Historical Society
Established 2013

Volume 2 Issue 3
Summer 2015

HISTORICAL SOCIETY INFORMATION **QUARTERLY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

Williams Bay Fine Art & Craft Fest

Edgewater Park
Saturday, July 25th, 10am – 5pm
Sunday, July 26th, 10am – 4pm
Visit the Williams Bay Historical Society's Booth for *New* 2016 calendars, *New* color note cards and historical Williams Bay prints

Williams Bay Historical Society's Ice Cream Social

Edgewater Park
Saturday, August 28th, 1:30 – 4pm
Rain or Shine
Williams Bay Recreation Department will sponsor games, arts & crafts, and face painting!!

Second Annual Dinner Meeting

George Williams College of Aurora University
Friday, October 16th
Time and program details to follow soon!!!

Board of Directors

President - Judy Bausch
Vice President - Pat Grove
Secretary - Phyllis Janda
Treasurer - Doreen Collins

Directors

Maggie Gage
Henry Kenyon
Tom McReynolds

Picturesque Geneva Lake

Reprinted from Picturesque Lake Geneva by Bonnie Burton Denison Wisconsin Transportation Co., May 6, 1926

Welcome to Geneva Lake—America's Lake Beautiful—Nature's Masterpiece! Why shouldn't this loveliest of all lakes be the most popular and widely known summer resort area in the world?

Its crystal clear waters are supplied entirely by springs—its pebbled bottom is free from mud and weeds—its wooded hills, and sloping shores form a beautiful setting for the sparkling blue waters below, with their ever changing moods. Sometimes Geneva Lake is boisterous, with rolling white caps, sometimes calm and placid, but always colorful and exhilarating and full of charm. No other lake can be compared with Geneva Lake, and you will want to see it yourself. It is not hard to reach the lake...It is but 72 miles from Chicago, 47 from Milwaukee and 76 from Madison, so Geneva Lake holds a natural location as a Mecca for tourists, vacationists, and home seekers.

Geneva Lake is the fisherman's paradise, as it abounds in pickerel and large and small mouthed black bass, besides many of the smaller varieties. The ciscoe, for which Geneva was once famous, is seldom caught now. Satisfied anglers come back season after season to try their luck, as no lake in Wisconsin excels Geneva for the gamey bass.

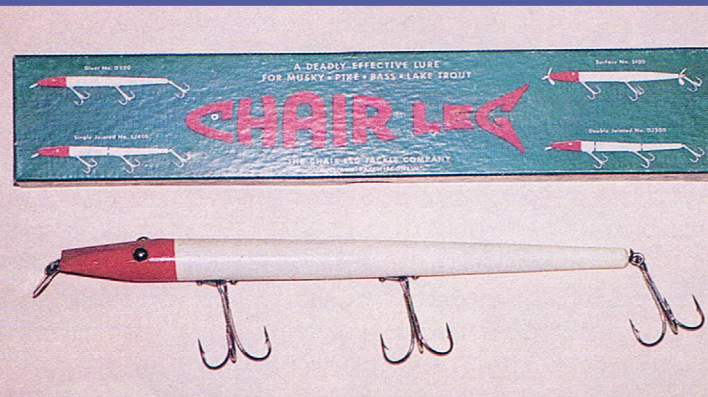
Bathing is one of the most popular sports, as the gradually sloping, sandy beaches attract young and old into the Invigorating waters for the daily dip while the lover of outdoor sports finds good golfing at the several golf grounds around the lake.

Boating of every description is enjoyed at Geneva Lake. One may see the quiet canoe, the row boat (oar propelled or motor driven), sail boats of all kinds and sizes, speed boats whizzing past you, trailing perhaps, a surf board rider enjoying the dashing ride. Grand tour boats make daily trips around the lake... Surely, no one has seen Geneva Lake, nor can judge of its extreme beauty and development until he has spent two hours of inspiration on one of these boats, enjoying the bracing air, and viewing the magnificent homes (for which this lake is noted), with their beautiful gardens and well kept lawns.

A lake shore pathway around the entire lake appeals to the hiker.

If you have ever seen a glorious sunset over the dome of Yerkes Observatory duplicating itself on the tranquil water below or have viewed the Harvest Moon reflecting off the surface of the lake, then you will know your soul has felt the CALL OF GENEVA LAKE!

Photo background: Looking west from shore line at Forest Glen residence of Edward G. Uiblein, circa 1915.



Model D200.



Model SJ 400, one a very rare brown scale lure.

Photo Credit: "The History and Collectible Fishing Tackle of Wisconsin" by Robt. A. Slade

The Chairleg Tackle Company

By Michelle Bie Love

As the name suggests, The Chairleg Tackle Company used surplus chair legs from the Williams Bay Chair Company, a chair manufacturer that went out of business during the Great Depression.

According to Brian Gates, long-time owner of a local bait and tackle shop, the idea for the lure began when Williams Bay resident Ned

Grimm mentioned to Frank and Joe Drabek, that he had once worked for the chair company and he knew there were still chair legs available. Frank Drabek made the first lure in the late 1940s and the Chairleg Tackle Company was born.

The Chairleg lure was available in four models: the D200, a straight 9-inch diver; the S100, a 10-inch surface

twin spinner; the SJ 400, a single jointed 12-inch model; and the DJ300, a double jointed 12-inch model. Most of the lures were painted white with a red head and large black nail-tack eyes. Some rare models featured brown or green scale colors.

The lures were packaged in a green two-piece cardboard box with the company name printed in red in the shape

of a fish. Printed on the corners of the box were pictures of the four lure styles.

The lures were manufactured from approximately the late 1940s to the early 1950s.

The Historical Society would like to thank Frank Drabek IV and Brian Gates for providing us with the history of the Chairleg Tackle Company.

1935 Fishing Regulations

Reprinted from *Bay Leaves*, Vol. 3 No. 1 May 16, 19365

- Lake Trout: Dec 1st to September 30th; 10 each day; minimum length 19 inches.
- Pike: May 15th to March 1st; 10 each day; minimum length 13 inches.
- Muskellunge: May 15th to March 1st; One each day; minimum length 30 inches.
- White Bass, Crappie: May 15th to March 1st; 15 each day; minimum 7 inches
- Perch: All year; 25 each day; any length.
- Large and Small Mouth Black Bass: June 20th to March 1st; 6 each day; minimum length 10 inches.

For comments or questions please contact:

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SHADES OF THE PAST

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Historical Society



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MISSION OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

The purpose of the Williams Bay Historical Society is to assist in the preservation and exhibition of items of historical interest that are within the boundaries of Williams Bay, and the immediate surrounding area. It will seek to provide the public with educational opportunities to learn about our unique local history. It will also seek to organize and assist in the commemoration of significant dates and events in village history.

Geneva Lake - Noteworthy Events

- 1858 - Atalanta was the first steam boat on Geneva Lake.
- May 10, 1873 - First Lady of the Lake launched.
- June 1874 - Lucius Newberry launched.
- August 31, 1874 - Seven boats—they were known as sandbaggers—competed in the inaugural Sheridan Race. The winner on corrected time was the 21-foot topsail sloop Nettie, owned by Julian S. Rumsey. The Sheridan Prize was named in honor of Lieutenant General P. H. Sheridan who was visiting Lake Geneva.
- August 1875 - N.K. Fairbank placed six thousand young bass in Geneva Lake and along with L.Z. Leiter built a fish hatchery in what is now Big Foot County Club.
- 1876 - Geneva Lake Yacht Club formerly established. The first Commodore was N.K. Fairbank, owner of the estate Butternuts.
- 1880 - The Ripple or the "Paper Boat" was the first mailboat on the lake delivering newspapers for 30 years. The Ripple was built by Williams Bay native Walter Jewell.
- December 1891 - Lucius Newberry caught fire and sank.
- 1894 - The Yacht Club is incorporated under its new name Lake Geneva Yacht Club (LGYC).
- 1895 - LGYC's fleet included nine 25-foot sandbaggers, fourteen 21-foot sandbaggers, four 18-footers, twelve 15-footers, a number of catboats in the 15-25 foot range, eleven steamers, and two launches.
- July 7, 1895 - Steamer Dispatch sunk in 110-feet of water off Cedar Point during a storm with torrential rain, hail and 50 mile-per-hour winds. All aboard were lost.
- 1898 - Inland Lake Yachting Association (ILYA) formed.
- 1902 - West End Yacht Club merged with LGYC.
- 1906-1915 - LGYC is located in Cedar Point
- 1906-1908 - LGYC held the first three Northwestern Regatta Championships from its new clubhouse at Cedar Point.
- 1916 - The first Walworth was launched, delivering mail and passengers around the lake. She was scrapped in 1965.
- 1918 - Wisconsin Transportation Company is formed.
- 1958 - Wisconsin Transportation Co. is purchased by Russell and William Gage and Gage Marine Corporation is formed.
- 1964, 1971, 1972 - Jane Pegel, of Williams Bay, named US Yachtswoman of the Year.
- 1965 - Gage Marine launched the Walworth II, a steel hulled boat known simply as the Walworth or the Mailboat.
- August 19-23, 2015 - LGYC hosts the ILYA Annual Regatta at its new clubhouse in Fontana.

Lake Geneva Yacht Club - The Beginning

By Michelle Bie Love

The first sailboats on Geneva Lake were commercial vessels used for fishing and transporting building materials to the new homes springing up around the lake. The most well known captain of the commercial vessels was Billy Woods, captain of the two-masted schooner Fannie Allen. Captain Woods would later gain fame for his sailing skills when sailing became the sport of the wealthy lakeshore residents.

A group of residents decided to hold a regatta to honor visiting Civil War hero Lieutenant General Phillip H. Sheridan. Two Hundred dollars was quickly raised for a perpetual trophy that would be known as the Sheridan Prize.

The Sheridan Regatta was held on August 31, 1874. Seven boats, called sandbaggers, competed in the race. By corrected time the winner was the Nettie, owned by Julian S. Rumsey and sailed by Billy Woods.

The Sheridan Prize, designed and built by the Chicago firm of Giles Brother & Company, took more than one year to complete. The trophy features a 10-inch silver model of the Nettie on a flat oval surface that is inscribed "Sheridan Prize Sailed for Annually on Geneva Lake the last Saturday in August." The names of the winners are engraved on silver bands. The Nettie would win the Sheridan Prize again in 1875.

In 1876, the country's centennial year, the Geneva Lake Yacht Club was officially formed with Nathan-

iel Kellogg Fairbank chosen as the first Commodore and 40 elected members. Reorganization and incorporation in 1891 found the name changed to Lake Geneva Yacht Club. The West End Yacht Club based in Fontana merged with LGYC in 1902. In 1906, Kellogg Fairbank, son of N.K. Fairbank, agreed to lease land he owned on the tip of Cedar Point to the Club for \$500 a year. 1906 marked the first year the club had its own clubhouse located in an ideal location on Cedar Point.



The 1906 Cedar Point clubhouse featured generous verandas.

Photo credit: Martha Cucco Collection

The first annual Northwestern Regatta was hosted by the Lake Geneva Yacht Club August 8-10, 1906. More than fifty boats from the Fox, Piskakee, Delavan, Geneva, and Oconomowoc Lake clubs, fifty boats competed.

LGYC hosted the Northwestern Regatta event again in 1907, 1908, and 1911.



LGYC's Cedar Point pier

Photo Credit: Fore 'n' Aft magazine, September 1906

Swim Meet Ends in Tie

Reprinted from Bay Leaves Vol. 5 No. 30 August 5, 1937

Williams Bay and Fontana staged a swimming meet at the Bay on Wednesday afternoon which was really exciting. Winning thirty points to Williams Bays tie in the children's events, Fontana took a deciding lead. However, the Williams Bay Junior and Senior women's division took first and with a second or third in all their events to whittle Fontana's lead down to put Williams Bay ahead one point as the final men's race started. Bob Anderson (Cedar Point) Williams Bay, and Dooley of Fontana tied for first and Ameron of Fontana took third, giving Fontana 5 points and Williams Bay

four, deadlocking the meet at 63^{1/2} to 63^{1/2}.

For Williams Bay girls, Jackie Lockwood, Marilyn Doherty, and Marion McKenzie were the main point winners, For the Williams Bay men, Bob Anderson practically handled all events by himself, except the breast-stroke race, which Don Doherty took a second. Dooley starred for Fontana.

Photo Credit: Carol Strenstom Ortiz

Catch a Glimpse of History

By Michelle Bie Love

Circumnavigating Geneva Lake is a 21 mile path that began with the first lake shore inhabitants. Early historical accounts make reference to a network of trails around the lake. The Potawatomi used these trails to travel from one village to another. Later the shore path would be used by local residents who worked at the grand estates surrounding the lake.

Public access to the shore path permits visitors and area residents to enjoy the beauty of the lake, the magnificence of the historic mansions, the meticulously kept lawns, and landscaping designed by

notable nineteenth and early twentieth century landscape architects, such as Jens Jensen and the Olmstead Brothers, who left their imprint on the landscape of Conference Point, Villa Hortensia, the Lefens Estate, Dronley, Yerkes Observatory, and Wadsworth Hall.

No matter if you walk the entire 21-mile shore path, or only one mile, you will surely catch a glimpse of the history of the lake and the lifestyles of the early Chicago millionaires who built their stately summer homes on the shore of Geneva Lake.

Photo background: Shore path circa 1908

