Mark Twain made early life on the Mississippi River famous, when he related his experiences as a pilot on the river boats of that period. While we have lived in this locality all our lives and had many experiences on its waters, yet the fame of Chautauqua Lake as a summer resort was established long ago and without our help. No words of mine can add much to it. Yet we do long for the ability of some early writer to present to this Society in a more attractive light the "any interesting events of early life on and around our beautiful lake.

Please keep in mind that our present account of life around Chautauqua Lake is necessarily short - in fact, altogether too short because a few words, even a few pages, can not tell the whole story of a hundred years of building and living around our little lake. It does not permit a full description of those energetic men and women who had never heard of an "eight-hour day," a balanced diet, appendicitis, microbes, germs, and such kindred affictions of modern life, but who labored day and night to convert wilderness of swamp and timber into beautiful homes and gardens, into places of business and manufacturing, and also into places of amusement and entertainment.

Very few of our generation realize the importance of Chautauqua Lake as a way of transportation, for everything was brought into the wilderness in those early days by boats in summer and by sleds drawn over the ice in winter. It was Nature's highway through the great thick pine forests from Mayville to The Rapids, later called Jamestown.

Chautauqua Lake, at an early period, was much higher than at present - much deeper and longer, extending then to the boatlanding in Jamestown, before the waters broke through the stone quarry near the Dahlstrom Metallic Door Company plant in east Jamestown. This opened a new outlet and lowered the waters to about the present level, leaving exposed the swamp land on either side of the outlet, extending from the boatlanding nearly up to Lakewood and across. We asked Mr. Obed Edson once when he thought that important event occurred, and he answered, "It must have been at least 10,000 years ago."

LaSalle, the French explorer, credited with being the first white man to see our lake, stated that "it was 50 feet higher in early days," but there is no evidence of that height shown on either side along the ancient shores although the lake has always had the reputation of being the highest body of water in this country navigated by steam.

Gradually, as more and more settlers came into the country, trees were cut, brush was burned, and some semblance of roads were opened from one habitation to another.

The young people of The Rapids, like all young persons, had to have their pleasures, their parties, dancing and entertainments, even though a wilderness surrounded them. Naturally they withdrew from the everyday scenes. Main Street was an old story, and they wandered farther and
farther "up the lake", the resting place and pleasure ground of a hundred years.

If the history of steamboating on Chautauqua Lake is accounted a tale of vanished activity, then even more so is the story of the summer hotels that were built along its shores at frequent periods during that century, for the entertainment of all. It is a remarkable fact that, with a few exceptions, the many hotels, inns, and roadhouses went the way of the steamboats.

The pioneer of all the lakeside hotels was the Fluvanna House, built by Samuel Whittmore. Its first newspaper mention was found in the Jamestown Journal in 1836 as follows:

FLUVANNA TEMPERANCE HOUSE

The subscriber would inform the traveling public and all those friendly to the Temperance Cause and good order, that he has opened a Temperance House in the village of Fluvanna, four miles West of Jamestown on the road leading to Mayville. His buildings are convenient and in good order, in which will be found a store of the luxuries common to the country in which he resides; and great care will be taken to render the stay of those who may favor him with a call pleasant and agreeable.

Fluvanna, July 13, 1836

Samuel Whittmore

Without speculating on the nature of the "luxuries" common in Fluvanna in 1836, we can envision a young man of that period, after due economy, taking his sweetheart out to that hotel for a fish dinner or a little dancing party. Borrowing his father's horse and buggy if in summer, or a sled if in winter (or perhaps hiring a rig) he drove carefully up Main Street, dodging the stumps then standing in that street, until he reached what is now Fluvanna Avenue, where a toll gate stopped him and toll was demanded for further travel. The lower road had not been opened at that time, and travel was up over the West Oak Hill Road, along the ridge through the forest into Fluvanna.

This hotel was well patronized during its early career by Jamestowners, and during the 1860's the clubs that flourished then made Fluvanna House their Mecca for many excursions and parties. With the opening of the Atlantic & Great Western Railroad in 1860, it was largely patronized in summer by guests from Cincinnati and other Ohio cities. In 1864, it was enlarged and also again in 1872, at which time it had a lake frontage of 216 feet with 52 guest rooms and a dining room with a capacity of 150.

But, after the opening of more pretentious hotels elsewhere on the lake, the fate of Fluvanna House began to wane. Samuel Whittmore, having gone to his reward, the hotel was then being conducted by his son, Henry Whittmore.

One season they had a quiet, unassuming millionaire named Mahlon Martin and his two maiden sisters, from New Brunswick, N. J., as summer guests.
On a certain day blackberry pie was served for dessert. The berries being native grown, ripe, sweet and juicy, the pie was delicious, and Mr. Martin naturally called for a second piece. He was politely told "the hotel did not serve a second piece of pie." Being a man of resource — accustomed to being obeyed — he soon bought the property, intending to have his fill of blackberry pie.

This was in 1890. Plans were made for extensive rebuilding, and the hotel was cut up into sections and moved away for private homes. Additional land was acquired, an elaborate brick stable was erected, and a fine residence was planned for the front — but due to Mr. Martin's death, it was never built. The two maiden sisters, joined by a third widowed sister, lived there until the end, after which it was found the dear souls had carefully planned and provided in their testament for the care, maintenance, and burial of each separate animal on the place. As often happens in such cases, the heirs soon disposed of the property to private parties.

In 1872, Philo Sherwin built the Sherwin House a few rods beyond the Fluvanna House. For a few seasons it was a modest little summer hotel, noted for its jolly parties and fish dinners; but after Mr. Sherwin's death it was leased and trouble began. It was then called Boniwood Inn. Several murders occurred on the premises due to drunken brawls, and it finally burned down on September 11, 1918.

Before leaving Fluvanna, we might add that the Whittmores — father and son — were Postmasters there for over fifty years. The father served forty-seven years (certainly a record).

The popular appeal of fish and chicken dinners inspired the establishment of many lakeside roadhouses, and so it was with Dick Jones's Hotel, located on the lake at the foot of Heineman Road. Dick's venture was known to hungry and thirsty wayfarers far and wide; the bass and 'lunge served there in various ways were the delight and praise of all epicures. It was well patronized for a time, but as is often the case in such places the barroom gradually gained ascendancy over the dining room, with the usual result. The place was destroyed by fire in 1882.

The development of the Greenhurst Allotment as a Real Estate project, by Eleazer Green (with A. N. Prochhead and Chas. S. Abbott as silent partners), led to the construction of a small hotel in 1883, and thereafter in 1890 a much larger establishment was built nearby, to which the first building was connected by an annex. The new Greenhurst Hotel was very attractive and popular, but never financially prosperous, although several very clever landlords like our Geo. P. Hurlburt tried to attract guests to the place. Finally, as the main building was decaying, it was demolished in 1888, leaving the modest annex which burned November 3, 1911. (Refer to the trees planted by Eleazer Green.)

Prior to 1870, Griffith's Point was a lakeside grove, little known save to picnic parties and fishermen. A rude dock, a few fishing boats, and a large sloop — the "Minniehaha" for use of sailing parties — completed the picture of Griffith's Point in the 1860's.

About 1869, the Grifftihs began the construction of a summer hotel. It was christened the Lake Shore Hotel. Meeting success, the building was
enlarged from time to time until it had a frontage of 200 ft., with 115 guest rooms and a dining room seating 250. Every season brought a large quota of guests, but 1877 (the year of the R.R. strikes) brought financial troubles and the property passed into other hands, its name being changed to Griffith's Point Hotel and then later called the Lake Shore Hotel when owned by Col. Alfred Danham.

On February 17, 1880, it was destroyed by a fire of unknown origin. For a few years afterward, the dancing pavilion was operated as a roadhouse where fish and chicken dinners and liquors were dispensed, the place being known as Humphrey's. After a time, a small hotel was erected and operated for a few seasons by John Penfold. In 1890 Heman Hall was built a few rods east of the former hotel. This hotel was popular for a few seasons, but in the end it proved unprofitable and was demolished by the owner, Hon. Porter Sheldon in 1915. His oldest son, Ralph C. Sheldon, erected the pleasant summer home now occupying the land.

Smiley's Point at Belleville (also called Martha's Vineyard) was at one time known as "Camp Mahoning." A large camping club from Youngstown, Ohio, composed mostly of ironworkers and their families, maintained a camp at this point until in 1894 when a small hotel known as the Belleville House was built on the spot by Frank L. Griffith (one of the builders of the defunct Lake Shore Hotel) who changed the name to Point Mahoning Hotel. This hotel was unattractive; still it operated for a time as a boarding house but was vacant much of the time. In 1903, it was demolished and the site sold for residence purposes. This is now occupied by the summer residence of Mrs. William Blackstone Himbaugh.
(Refer to fishing grounds from Fluvanna to Griffiths.)

The vanished hotels of early days at Pemus Point were many in number. Some were replaced and others gave up the ghost. The Garfield House, a small tavern of the 1830's gave up the ghost and was converted into a store. The Chautauqua Lake House, better known as "Jack Pickard's", was built in 1871 and was destroyed by fire March 1, 1888. It was rebuilt the following season and renamed the Pickard House. He was one of the most popular landlords on the lake, but after his death the property was bought by James M. Selden of Pittsburgh and torn down in 1930, with the intention of building a much larger up-to-date hotel in its stead. Due to Mr. Selden's untimely death, the site is still vacant and for sale. He also bought the Columbia Inn next door, run for a long time by Landlord A. W. Rappold.

The first Lenhart House was built in 1891 and burned down in October, 1893. Dr. J. J. Lenhart, the owner, replaced it with another attractive building which enjoyed much patronage under the able management of Mrs. Lenhart and others. It is still going business.

The Browning, built by Perry Brown and now under a cloud of suspicion from a recent fire while under new ownership, leaves only the Lenhart of the larger hotels at this popular resort, although several smaller rooming houses like the Paws and Horns, the Norton, and other places cater to the public wants.

We must not overlook the old Dining Hall and Dancing Pavilion at Long Point, the most favorite point for all excursions and picnics in early days before Caleron and Midway were created. Demolished in 1909, it is
now occupied by the summer residence of Mr. and Mrs. John Mixtun.

What is now the little hamlet of Maple Springs was formerly known as Point Whiteside and prior to that, old timers knew the grove as "Camp Collins." The original Maple Springs was a steamboat landing, with a residence which in the early '80's expanded into a hotel or more properly a large summer boarding house.

The opening of the Chautauqua Lake Railway in 1887 contributed to the prosperity of the place, but after the death of Perry Barnes, the owner, it was unsuccessful and for several years entirely abandoned. In 1913, it was sold to Miss Flora Broachhead and remodeled for a private summer home.

"Woolglin Club House - later Woolglin Hotel - was erected by the Beta Theta Pi Society in 1884 at a point midway between Point Chautauqua and Hartfield. Proving unsuccessful as a club, it was opened as a hotel for a brief period but, being struck by lightning, it burned down on June 22, 1901.

The development of Basket Point as a summer colony, under the name of Point Chautauqua, led to the building in 1887 and 1879 of the Grand Hotel, an imposing structure 800' x 150 ft. in size, five stories high, with two wings four stories high. But its commanding site and attractive surroundings with elaborate fixtures could not save it from the relentless fate that overtook all of its contemporaries - a brief period of success, a longer one of depression, and a disastrous ending. In the fall of 1902, it was destroyed by fire of incendiary origin. It was claimed that the owner, a wealthy Buffalo man, hired a certain person to see that it went up in flames. After three trials, the guilty party was convicted of the crime and served a prison sentence for it.

At about the time of the building of the Buffalo & Oil Creek Railroad in 1887, Matthew Beaus and others erected the Chautauqua House near the lake at the foot of Erie Street in Mayville. It was a three-story building with a lake frontage of 100 ft. and a depth of 92 ft. For many years it enjoyed considerable prosperity, being especially favored by guests from Pittsburgh and the "Oil Regions," from which easy access was furnished by the "Cross Cut Railroad." After the departure of Horace Fox (its popular landlord) who managed it for more than twenty years, its popularity began to wane. On April 24, 1894, it was destroyed by fire.

The Barton House, kept by R. L. Barton, was a popular place near the depot in early days. At the present time, only the Thompson House and another small hotel are left on the lakefront at Mayville.

A small hotel known as the Wahmeda Inn was erected at the point called Duquesne Heights, a short distance from the Chautauqua Assembly grounds. It was a three-story building, erected by a company of Pittsburgh men who planned to develop a resort for summer homes, but it went up in smoke August 22, 1904.

The Hotel Atheneum at Chautauqua was erected in 1881-1882 and is still doing business. It is too well known to need any description at this time, but don't forget that the Lenhart at Beaus Point and the Atheneum are the only survivors today of the many better-class lake hotels.
Also below and near Chautauqua is Light House Point - at one time it had the Light House Inn, which burned. This had been built in the 1820's.

At Victoria was a little hotel, which also went the way of all lake hotels.

The development of Lakewood (or Lake View, as it was originally called) began with the building of the Cowing House by John T. Cowing in 1870 or perhaps a little earlier. The original building was a 43-room house, three stories high, with a frontage of 150 ft. and a depth of 60 ft. After a few seasons, its capacity was increased and the appearance improved by a large addition fronting the lake. It was then called the Lake View House. Still later it was again enlarged and remodeled into an ornamental turreted structure, thereafter known as the Sterlingworth Inn. This name was later changed to the Waldemere.

John R. and Warren Packard (the originators of Packard Motor Co.) became interested in Lakewood in early days, purchasing the Lake View House in 1873 and several cottages adjoining. The Sterlingworth was totally destroyed by fire July 9, 1902. It was rebuilt as a Country Clubhouse but did not pay, having passed into the A. N. Broadhead Estate. It was finally wrecked by Wm. A. Broadhead. M. R. Stevenson of this city, in his younger days clerk of the Sterlingworth Inn when under the management of E. L. Frisbee, is the only one of the early lake hotelmen now living, whom I can recall.

The first Kent House at Lakewood was opened to the public in 1875. It was four stories high, with a lake frontage of 336 ft. and was surrounded by nearly half a mile of verandas. It had a capacity for 300 guests and was well patronized up to the time of its accidental destruction by fire in 1887. Thereafter, the second Kent House was built. After a few prosperous seasons, it met a declining patronage, which finally closed its doors. Gradually it fell into decay, until it was turned over to the wreckers in 1915.

Originally Lakewood was easily the most popular summer resort on the lake and was often called the "Saratoga" of the lake, its hotels being surrounded by a colony of wealthy cottage owners who attracted the Cleveland Grays and the Gatling Gun Battery besides other high-class organizations to the resort.

In the early '90's a project was formed to convert the place into a health resort, and a corporation styled "The Humanitas Company" secured control of the Sterlingworth Inn and one lesser hotel. The former was opened in 1901 as a sanitarium for tubercular patients, and the latter as a so-called "gold cure" for inebriates at a time when the whole country seemed bent on the same treatment. The project was not only a failure in itself but was a deadly blow to the entire summer colony. It destroyed all hotel business, and many of the cottages were abandoned by the owners.

Finally, the Hotel de Celeron was erected shortly after the opening of Celeron in 1892 as an amusement park. Later it also was destroyed by fire but was replaced with the present building now located there.

It was remarked after my paper at the October meeting ("Steamboating on Chautauqua Lake") that so many of the boats appeared to have gone up in
smoke — to have had the same ending. Now what shall we say as to the summer hotels? I think the late Wm. A. Bradshaw, in writing some articles for a local newspaper some years ago, expressed it very well when he wrote, "Whenever Chautauqua's fire record began to lag (referring to the hotels), there was always a steamer ready to fill a blank date by sailing away in smoke, and often for its owners serving to lead as a kindly light amid the encircling gloom of steamboat adversity."

How well that expresses it.

Today the lake is lined with summer cottages and many permanent homes. While we miss the many steamers and hotels with their tinkling music and joyous crowds, the moonlight excursions, the gay Sunday School picnics, and many other pleasure events of earlier days, yet life must go on for all of us. The fresh air and the fresh water are still there. We have the same beautiful sunsets and the same wonderful cloud effects, which can not be surpassed anywhere in this broad land of ours. Mother Nature's gift to all, we should enjoy them while we may.

I thank you.

Respectfully submitted

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