

BIRCHOLM PROPERTY SURVEY

HGDB Project No. 95-08-10

CAMP HISTORY

Deer Island was originally part of Col. Christopher Norton's Timber empire. The Santa Clara Lumber Company which once owned property along both sides of the Racquet River extending from the cold river country including Ampersand Pond down to Stoneycreek Ponds later acquired the island. Although the headquarters of the logging company was in Axton, the lumber company owners, the Meigs family, had vacation retreats at Ampersand Pond and Deer Island. The Ferris' who were related to the Meigs family, owned half of Deer Island. After the Meigs family had built a spacious camp on Big Wolf Lake, near Tupper, they sold part of Deer Island to Alfred White. The Whites camp was designed by Stanford White, one of the most renowned and talented design architects of the late 19th Century. The camp was christened Rest-A-While. In the late 1890's, Dr. Emit Holt, who owned a camp on Panther Point, introduced Edmon Lyon, a prominent Rochester businessperson and philanthropist, to the lake region. The Lyons purchased Rest-A-While from the White estate in 1917 several years after Alfred White's death. Mr. and Mrs. Lyon along with their three daughters, Elizabeth, May and June spent their first summer at the camp in 1917 and renamed the island, camp "Birchholm". In 1926 electric power was supplied to the island via a submarine cable running from Bull Point Camp on the mainland to a transformer building on Deer Island. While the White's owned the camp, transportation to the island was by an oversized guide boat, usually manned by Ellsworth Petty, their guide and caretaker who continued in the employ of the Lyon family for many years. Other caretakers followed and have provided a strong tradition of camp maintenance on the island which has served the camp well in terms of its physical condition over the years. The oversized guide boat was replaced by a canopied launch, originally named the Chug-Chug which was used to ferry lake residents to Chapel Isle for Sunday services. This launch was in turn replaced in 1930 by an open cabin Richardson Cruiser, which was named the To-N-Fro. The boathouse, which housed the Chug-Chug, was expanded to house the To-N-Fro in 1930.