

## LITTLE SILVER & RAINBOW LAKES: A LANARK COMMUNITY

“Well back from the front line of settlement in Ontario, the region was yet early occupied by Scottish and Irish immigrations, some of them state-conducted and others organized by emigration societies. Much of the terrain was unsuitable for agriculture, but conditions in the British Isles were so bad during the first half of the nineteenth century that, whatever the hardships in Upper Canada, the attitude was common that settlers could hardly be worse off in the New Land.”

Jean S. McGill, *A Pioneer History of the County of Lanark*, Introduction, 1968

## **INTRODUCTION**

### ***Why a history?***

So why a history of Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes? And why now? The initial catalyst for a history was the need to provide some background information on the area for the Lake Stewardship Plan (or LSP) being developed by the Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes Property Owners Association or LSRLPOA. For example, a basic chronology and timelines of development were needed, as well as taking a look at how the lakes were developed, who the early cottagers were and so on.

Within a short time, however, the need for, and the scope of, the history grew. In part, it was perceived as a unique initiative to celebrate Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a nation as so much of this area's development reflected the evolution of the county as a whole. In large part, however, the history of the lakes evolved as did the community around Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes changed. What had started largely as a community of cottagers, with its own sharply focussed concerns, has evolved into a microcosm of the larger surrounding community, contributing to its social, economic and political life. In some ways, the Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes community represents the latest wave of European 'settlers' to help 'colonise' this corner of the county, a process ongoing since the end of the War of 1812. And that is something worth recording and celebrating as Canada itself continues to grow and evolve.

### ***Structure of the history***

This history of our lakes has been written to better place it in the context of the larger community. As such, it begins with a brief overview of the geography of the area and place names, as they are indicative of the community in which the lakes reside. Then a discussion of our lake names follows as their history represents a separate story in themselves. This is followed by a very brief outline of the history of the development of Lanark County and South Sherbrooke Township, as it was not by accident that a cottage community took shape on Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes. Finally, the history concludes with a more detailed overview of lake development, how the lakes evolved and what the future could hold.

### ***A few caveats***

This is not meant to be a comprehensive history of the lakes; rather it might better be described as a sketch or an overview of the 'settlement' of Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes, placed into the context of the immediate surrounding area. It should also be noted that historical sources for the area are necessarily limited, firstly, as South Sherbrooke Township was not at the centre of the county's political and economic activities, there is limited documentary evidence available for review, and, secondly, by the fact that this area was relatively sparsely-settled with few original families to interview.

In terms of the development of the lakes themselves, there was a need to depend on largely anecdotal oral evidence, which is always subject to personal memory and perspective, as well as such documentary evidence as minutes of lake association meetings, which are dependent on the secretary's skill as a writer and which, in any case, do not necessarily fully capture the tenor or the details of the conversations. All of

this was exacerbated by the author's limited time to research and write this history, given other professional, community and family commitments. For much the same reasons, this history is woefully short on the social, economic and cultural contributions of the First Nations to this area throughout the years of European settlement.

In this context, this history should be considered as a first draft or work in progress, prepared in time for Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> celebrations. The intent, given the fascinating story of the area, is to build on this history, adding to and revising where necessary as new information comes to light. Finally, any errors and omissions are unintentional and are the responsibility of the author alone.

## **AREA GEOGRAPHY, PLACENAMES & NOMENCLATURE**

### ***A quick geographic summary of the lakes and surrounding area***

When we speak of Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes, the area we are broadly concerned with covers Concessions IV and V, Lots 11-16 of what was until 1998 the geographic Township of South Sherbrooke in the historic County of Lanark. To put things into perspective, the two lakes represent a very small geographic entity within a relatively large township in a fairly large county. The Township of South Sherbrooke with which the lakes were associated for much of their history, comprised less than a third of the total size of what is now their new "administrative home", Tay Valley Township, comprising the former Townships of South Sherbrooke, North Burgess and Bathurst.<sup>1</sup>

Tay Valley Township covers some 550 square kilometres, has some thirty lakes plus eight rivers, including the Fall, Tay and Mississippi Rivers, within its borders. In relation to other lakes in the area, Little Silver Lake is relatively small, comprising about 206 acres and shallow, its deepest point being 41'. Rainbow Lake is much smaller, at 35 acres and much shallower overall; its average depth is around 9-10'. Surrounded by a significant proportion of swamps and wetlands, the lakes are fed by watershed streambeds, some surface, some submerged, for a watershed totalling some 2,500 acres. Geographically, much of the area has a surface geology made up of the Canadian Shield, with the bedrock geology largely Precambrian. The surface comprises a mix of swamps, wooded areas, rocky outcrops, wetlands, ponds, all cut by a series of streams, seasonal or otherwise. There are extensive mineral deposits, including quartz, feldspar and mica, beneath the surface. So extensive are these deposits that they are noted as 'classic' examples for graduate studies.<sup>2</sup> As we shall see later, the limited usefulness of the land for more commercial purposes – farming, logging and mining, for example – was to act as a principal catalyst for development (or non-development) up to the present.

What make the geographic nature of Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes unique, however, is that until the 1980s, there was only one officially recognised lake, Little Silver. It was only with the damming of what is now Rainbow Lake as part of the development of the lands north of Little Silver that the area would take on its present-day physical characteristics. Until that time, Rainbow Lake had been variously described by local residents as a pond, mud hole, swamp, cattle watering hole and meadow or, perhaps as more generously noted in Geological Survey of Canada records, as a "seasonal lake."<sup>3</sup>

### ***The surrounding area and its place names***

While it is a truism that names of a geographic area tend to reflect its history and settlement, those of the area surrounding Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes have a remarkable and persistent consistency that reflect its early Anglo-Scottish military settlement, of which more later. And, as the area evolved, if anything, the place names became even more anglicised. And unusually for an area that was so close geographically to the Ottawa and Rideau Rivers and which had seen some early contact with traders and explorers from New France, there is very little French influence in local nomenclature.

The naming of Wemyss, to the east of Maberly on Highway 7, is a case in point. The hamlet is relatively new, created after 1884 with the establishment of the CPR line between Sharbot Lake and Perth. Originally named Bathurst after its parent township (with Bathurst Station for the siding that served the community), the Canada Post Office insisted its name be changed to prevent confusion with Bathurst, New Brunswick. It was therefore named after Francis Wemyss, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Wemyss of Fife in Scotland.<sup>4</sup> Dying in 1883, the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl's relationship with the area remains obscure, although it should be noted that one of the Wemyss family homes is Elcho Castle, located near the original Perth in Scotland. Nonetheless, decades after the original waves of Anglo-Scottish settlement were finished, the Scottish connection remained strong.

Thus, Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes find themselves nestled on the westward extremity of Lanark County, which is named after the Scottish county, and from where many of the original settlers to the area originated as part of the Military Settlements around Perth. Lanark County as an administrative district, in turn, derives in part from the many townships which made up the original District of Bathurst settlement, itself named after Henry Bathurst of which more below. The three former townships - North Burgess, Bathurst and South Sherbrooke - that now make up Tay Valley Township are equally Anglo-Scottish in origin.

The Township of North Burgess was settled by Scottish and Irish settlers and War of 1812 veterans as part of the original Military Settlement. The township itself was named for the Right Reverend Thomas Burgess, a prominent English theologian and supporter of the British government of the day and, as such, to contemporaries worthy of a namesake township. Founder of St David's College, one of the oldest higher educational establishments in Wales, he became the Bishop of Salisbury in 1825 (and is commemorated by a plaque at the Cathedral School associated with the cathedral, where the author rather reluctantly taught Sunday school in the mid-1990s).<sup>5</sup> To better illustrate the fluidity with which settlement proceeded, there was, in fact, a South Burgess Township. It was severed from the original Burgess Township and allocated to Leeds County in 1845. A few years later, in 1849, the two small wedges of land on the southern shores of Big Rideau Lake and the many islands that constituted South Burgess Township were united with Bastard Township for administrative purposes, remaining so until amalgamation into the Township of Rideau Lakes, our near cousin in the United Counties.<sup>6</sup>

The second township, Bathurst Township, was named for Henry Bathurst, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Bathurst, who served as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies from 1812-27, a key position in the British Cabinet at a time when Great Britain was more often at war than peace.<sup>7</sup> Lord Bathurst was key in promoting the military settlements in the wake of

the War of 1812. While it may seem counterintuitive to modern eyes to link cabinet functions associated with settlement and making war, in fact the two activities were closely linked throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, with military garrisons defending British possessions, whilst colonies more often than not represented garrisons protecting British commerce and interests in far flung corners of the globe. The Perth Military Settlement in fact represented a logical illustration of this policy.<sup>8</sup>

The third of the Tay Valley townships, South Sherbrooke Township, and the township in which Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes spent most of their history, was named for General Sir John Coape Sherbrooke. A classic 19<sup>th</sup> century English soldier/colonial administrator, Sir John served in the British Army for some thirty years, including service in the Netherlands, Spain, Sicily and India, oftentimes with his friend and colleague, the Duke of Wellington. He was appointed as Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia from 1811 to 1816, a happy coincidence as his vast experience was invaluable in securing the British colony from American attack during the War of 1812. More importantly to our story, Sir John was appointed by the British Government as Governor-in-Chief of British North America, a position he held from 1816 to 1818. This position in most respects represented the pinnacle of military-civilian co-ordination in a period of consolidation following the near run victory over the Americans after 1814. As such, Sir John was key to promoting and implementing the policy of the military settlements. In effect, as the holder of this position, Sir John could be considered, if not the “patron” of North American settlements, then certainly a godfather, and thus worthy of remembrance as a township in the new military settlement.<sup>9</sup>

These three townships now comprise Tay Valley Township. The latter’s naming, although much more recent (2002), is actually somewhat less clear. It all started, however, with the recognition by the Ontario Government in the 1990s that the cost of administering, supporting and, perhaps more importantly, subsidising, the very large number of townships across Ontario could not be sustained indefinitely. As such, in 1998, legislation at Queen’s Park ‘encouraged’ smaller townships to merge creating larger ones, in the hopes of reducing administrative and other costs. Those townships that declined to be encouraged could lose provincial subsidies (South Sherbrooke’s was \$350,000 in 1992; by 1997, the writing was on the wall when they totalled only \$76,000).<sup>10</sup> After some heated debate at the township and county levels, the Townships of Bathurst, North Burgess and South Sherbrooke agreed to amalgamate. The reasons for these three choosing to amalgamate and their naming require much more research. Some would suggest that there were sound geographic, historic and communication reasons to form a partnership. Others suggest that no one else wanted them or that three economically unviable townships had now been squashed into one larger economically unviable township, meeting the letter if not the spirit of the legislation. In any case, the rather unimaginative name of Bathurst Burgess Sherbrooke Township was chosen in 1998 for the new administrative entity.<sup>11</sup>

The choice of Bathurst Burgess Sherbrooke for the new township was not universally popular, and could be generously described as unwieldy. Its unfortunate acronym – BBS – was rather unhappily described by some as standing for “Big Bullshit” Township.<sup>12</sup> Its selection perhaps indicated less a desire for continuity with historic roots than a lack of consensus on a name that would reflect a new partnership of equals moving forward to the future. By 2002, several influential councillors on the combined council of the township proposed the new name of Tay Valley Township in recognition of the primary watershed and river in the area, a name, which after some debate, was duly

confirmed by the council and by the Ontario Government on July 30, 2002.<sup>13</sup> Even so, there was grumbling about the new name, especially in the northern portion of the old South Sherbrooke Township, which was, in fact, dominated by the Fall River. So heated was the debate that some local residents still vividly recall anti-Tay Valley signs in Maberly, one reading: “Born in South Sherbrooke. Live in South Sherbrooke. Will die in South Sherbrooke. Tay Valley my ass”.<sup>14</sup> That notwithstanding, in choosing Tay Valley as its new name the combined township had once again re-affirmed its Anglo-Scottish roots. And the original township borders remain as wards within the combined township for electoral purposes (Sherbrooke being our ward) and as geographic identifiers for specific government and legal functions, such as the location of mining activities.<sup>15</sup>

Interestingly, the Wiki page on Tay Valley Township is careful to differentiate it from the Township of Tay, also confusingly to be found in Ontario. This latter is located in Simcoe County some 300 kms to the west of Tay Valley Township, in the southern Georgian Bay area. While there may have been some local controversy in naming Tay Valley Township after the river, the origins of the Township of Tay’s naming was apparently more idiosyncratic: it was, in fact, named in 1822 after the pet dog of Lady Sarah Maitland, wife of Sir Peregrine Maitland, the then Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. Not to be outdone, the adjoining townships were named Tiny and Flos after her other pet dogs.<sup>15a</sup>

Still closer to Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes, we have the communities of Maberly and Bolingbroke, the railway siding of Feldspar and the Tay and Fall Rivers, with our lakes included in the Tay Valley watershed. The naming of the Tay follows the local tradition of recreating a little (or bigger, depending on your perspective) Scotland in what was then perceived by the European settlers to be the Canadian wilderness. In this case, the Tay’s namesake is the longest river in Scotland and the seventh longest in Great Britain. Originating in the west of Scotland, it flows easterly through the Highlands, across the centre of the kingdom, before flowing southeasterly through Perth (yes, that connection between our community and the mother country again) where it becomes tidal and exits into the North Sea.<sup>16</sup> The origin of the naming of Fall River is more problematic. Generally, while the name Fall River has connections with Scottish communities, such as Fall River in Nova Scotia, there is little firm evidence to confirm the connection; more research is required on its origins. There is, intriguingly, an anecdotal American connection with a community located in Massachusetts, whose name may have been passed on through the United Empire Loyalist connection.<sup>17</sup>

The hamlet of Bolingbroke lies to the south and west of Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes. It was one of two ‘industrial centres’ in 19<sup>th</sup> century South Sherbrooke that bracketed our lakes, of which more in this story. Its naming is of relatively recent origin. It was originally named Thom’s Rapids, named after the Thom family who had built a sawmill on the Tay River at the west end of Bob’s Lake in 1821. Its name was later changed to Bolingbroke, although the rationale for the renaming is unclear. One view is that it was named in honour of the sailing ship that had transported several of the Irish families that had settled in the area.<sup>18</sup> Although the records do indicate that there were sailing vessels of that name, they were in service after the Irish migrations. In all likelihood however, the town was named in honour of the aristocratic Bolingbroke family, perhaps reflecting the increasing sophistication (or perhaps snobbishness) and bureaucratization of an evolving Canadian society, with the newly-established Post Office and railways attempting to rationalise place names and reduce the plethora of locations with Landing, Mills and Rapids in their names.<sup>19</sup>

The second 'industrial centre' was the village of Maberly, lying a short distance north of our lakes. Its naming is also relatively recent. Originally called Morrow's Mills after the owners of the local sawmills, it was first settled in the 1820s. When the Post Office was established in 1864-5, Colonel William LeSueur, secretary of the recently established Dominion of Canada Post Office Department, named the village Maberley in honour of Lieutenant-Colonel William Leader Maberley, Secretary of the General Post Office in London, England, although its original name remained in use for some time.<sup>20</sup> In so doing, he indirectly linked the village of Maberly with Anthony Trollope, one of the most prominent social novelists of late Victorian England, author of the *Palliser* and *Barchester* novels. At the time, Trollope was a relatively junior official serving under Colonel Maberley, not the most progressive of civil servants. Genially detesting each other, Trollope soon realised that prospects for promotion under Maberley were slight and sought another preferment. Glad to be rid of Trollope, but not prepared to do him any favours, Maberley offered him a position as a postal inspector in Ireland, then generally regarded as a most undesirable backwater of empire. In fact, this fortuitous posting allowed Trollope the opportunity and time to take up a lifelong passion for the hunt, begin to write professionally, and, incidentally, to visit many of the areas from which later waves of Irish immigrants to Lanark County would originate.<sup>21</sup>

There had been some discussion, even noted in a South Sherbrooke Historical Society paper, that the town was named after a Lord Maberley: "When the CPR decided to put a station here (Maberly), the men insisted that it be called after their foreman – Lord Maberly, an Englishman."<sup>22</sup> There are no records in appropriate lists of the British peerage of a Lord Maberley and certainly no record of the Maberley family being associated with the CPR. Colonel Maberley did however belong to the English landed gentry and had married in to the aristocracy, his wife having a title. But Maberley himself did not have a title, not even a knighthood.<sup>23</sup> In fact, this notion likely simply refers to the accepted understanding on how Maberly was named, noted above, appropriately mangled by the passage of time.

Trollope aside, Maberly has a second artistic connection, this time closer to home and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a local Jewish family, the Cohens, known as the "Jews of Maberly". Thanks to the work of local historian Karen Prytula, we now know that Lazarus and Fanny Cohen sold for \$200 in March 1885 the land on which the local Anglican parish church, St Alban the Martyr, is situated. Their great-grandson, Leonard Cohen was to become one of the most prominent Canadian musical artists, with a significant impact on the musical scene for nearly four decades.<sup>24</sup> A final point regarding Maberly is worth noting, its actual spelling. Reflecting perhaps the sometimes shambolic manner in which settlement can evolve, Maberly was formally known as both 'Maberly' and 'Maberley', one spelling used by the railway and the other by the Post Office. After some years of debate, the spelling was revised to agree with that used by the CPR, a decision confirmed in 1976, although some government records note its usage as early as 1941.<sup>25</sup>

Although not a community per se, the railway siding of Feldspar, once located to the west of the small wooden CPR bridge found at the bottom of Little Silver Lake, was viewed by both the CPR and Post Office as a rail point for the purposes of postal and freight shipment. Named after one of many minerals that speculators hoped would help make their fortune, the siding was established in the early 1920s, in part as a loading point for ores from mining operations, and, in part, as a mail drop point for the local community. The location was not inhabited and although accounts vary, its only

infrastructure apparently comprised the siding and a shed for the watchman, who was responsible for checking the rock cuts along the right of way before every night train to ensure boulders had not come loose and fallen onto the tracks. The building has since been dismantled.<sup>26</sup> Largely abandoned soon after for mining operations, its status as a named station was rescinded in November 1968. Further west of Feldspar is Dead Man's Cut,<sup>27</sup> an area named for a rocky outcrop which during blasting operations for the construction of the new railway line in the 1920s, resulted in the death of three rail workers, two of whom are buried in the Anglican Cemetery at Rokeby.<sup>28</sup>

A final feature, the Rancier Road, was, until recently, thought to no longer exist. It ran westwards from County Road 36 (Bolingbroke Road) from the end of what is now Rainbow Lake, through the swamps and hillocks, ending at Section House Road near Bolingbroke Station. It serviced a number of homesteads, including the Rancier and McKewen Farms, all since abandoned.<sup>29</sup> In use until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, it had almost disappeared (certainly from 'corporate memory'), although it could still be traced with difficulty using Googlemaps. Rancier Road was 're-discovered' with the sale in 2020 and subsequent development of a parcel of land to the west of County Road 36 and running from the end of Rainbow Lake northwards past Maple Lane. Township approval of the development application was contingent, amongst other conditions, upon the developer obtaining civic numbers for the building lots facing onto Rancier Road and bringing the road up to township private road standards. All this on a road that had been effectively unused for almost a century, but for which the official right of way had never been abandoned.<sup>29a</sup>

## **THE NAMING OF LITTLE SILVER & RAINBOW LAKES**

### ***Little Silver Lake***

Despite the emphasis on Anglo-Scottish names in the county, there is in fact no evidence to suggest a direct connection to the name Silver Lake with any location in the United Kingdom. And while 'Silver' has been associated with the name of Little Silver Lake since well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, why it was actually chosen remains unclear; provincial and local records offer few clues. There are anecdotal references to local mining activity and the profusion of birch trees on the lakes (with 'the island' on Little Silver referred to as Birch Island in land transfer agreements and on an official survey,<sup>30</sup> presumably after birch trees which have long since died). Or as several residents with a magnificent view of the lake have noted, perhaps the lake was named after the effect of the sun or moon or both causing the surface of the water to shimmer silver.<sup>31</sup> Or perhaps all of the above.

Whatever the origin of the name, all maps clearly depict the lake and, until well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, its name as Silver Lake. This is where things become a little convoluted, as these same maps depict two Silver Lakes, the one the subject of this history and the other much larger Silver Lake further to the west, running parallel to Highway 7 and home of Silver Lake Provincial Park. This latter lake is largely located in Frontenac County, although a substantial portion is in Lanark County. There is some evidence to suggest that local residents appended "Little" to the name to avoid confusion with its larger cousin. Thus, there were two Silver Lakes until April 1941 when our Silver Lake was renamed to Silvery Lake; the name of our large cousin up the road had been confirmed in May 1940 by the Government of Ontario.<sup>32</sup> The reasons for doing this

remains unclear. It could well be that this reflected a necessity under wartime pressures to rationalise place names (although the threat of German invasion of Lanark County seemed a little unlikely), bureaucratic tidying-up or a requirement to identify place names in conformance with up-to-date naming conventions (ie, geographic entities were not meant to share the same name in the same county). Again, there is little on record to indicate why Silvery was chosen. It may be that Silvery was bureaucratic 'word-smithing' to maintain the historic 'silver' in the name while differentiating between the two lakes or perhaps that Silvery had in fact been used locally.<sup>33</sup>

Interestingly, relatively few maps show the lake as Silvery Lake, although there are several (including a tourist information-style map published by Lanark County in the 1950s) that do.<sup>34</sup> What is nevertheless clear is that the name changed once again four decades later to Little Silver Lake. Township surveys dating from the 1970s clearly show the name Little Silver Lake, with Silvery Lake contained in parentheses to provide clarity and continuity with its earlier title.<sup>35</sup> Again, the reasons for the name change are obscure, although it seems that local residents may not have been entirely happy with the historic name of Silver having been tampered with. Whatever the reason, the name Silvery Lake was formally rescinded in January 1968, and the change to Little Silver Lake was formally confirmed the same day.<sup>36</sup> And, indeed, in another bureaucratic nicety, Little Silver received its official French designation, 'petit lac Silver' in January 1995.<sup>37</sup> In conformance with provincial naming conventions, the Silver was not translated. As for the name Silvery Lake, it lives on in Silvery Lane, or what had been referred to as the 'North Access Road' in the early days of cottage development. Similarly, Little Silver Lake Road was chosen for the 'South Access Road', both choices representing a consistent provincial 'tradition' of associating cottage access roads with the local lake.

Whatever the reasons for the name changes over the years, the final choice of name was at least consistent with the name it bore for much of its history. That said, if the intent was to differentiate between the two Silver Lakes, it may only have been partially successful. Local residents still quote anecdotal tales of day trippers and boaters being confused between the two lakes, with quite large, powerful boats being launched at Little Silver Lake's boat ramp and charging down the lake only to discover that they quickly run out of lake.

### ***Rainbow Lake***

The history of the naming of Rainbow Lake and, for that matter, whether it was a lake at all, is simultaneously clearer and yet a little more uncertain. In some ways, this ambivalence is reflected in the various maps produced of the area over the years. Thus, Rainbow is clearly depicted in many maps dating back to the 1870s and not in others, including the highly detailed official Electoral District of Lanark map of 1911.<sup>38</sup> As noted earlier, local residents had described it as a pond, mud hole, swamp, cattle watering hole or meadow. The Geological Survey of Canada of the 1870s and 1880s records it as a "seasonal body of water".<sup>39</sup>

Its naming is also somewhat unclear. There are some references that in local usage it was previously referred to as 'Mud Lake' as it was a largely seasonal body of water, almost a large pond, and dependant on heavy rain and melting snow for its size, which varied year to year. Certainly various residents interviewed have noted it was called Mud Lake and there is, in fact, a reference on the Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes

Property Owners Association website that this was the case. If so, there are no official references to this name and research has yet to uncover maps depicting it with this name. And, if this were the case, it would have shared that name with several other Mud Lakes in the same area and throughout the county.<sup>40</sup> The first of these small lakes is just to the south of Little Silver Lake on the property across from the CPR bridge. Again, there are no official references and its usage seems to be entirely local, although that name does appear in various historical papers and newspaper articles dealing with the construction of the CPR line through that area.<sup>41</sup> The second Mud Lake was clearly depicted on a variety of local maps until fairly recently. This Mud Lake (now renamed Little Mud Lake) was (and is) to the west of Maberly (and south of Highway 7) and is now coincident to Clear Lake (confusingly called Maberly Lake until 1968). There are a variety of other Mud Lakes in the county, each with a qualifying noun, such as Upper and Lower Mud Lakes, both near Fallbrook. The 'definitive' Mud Lake in Lanark County can be found just to the west of Little Otty Lake. Given provincially mandated naming protocols dating from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, it is unlikely that there would have been eight or more officially-recognised Mud Lakes in the same county.

On the face of it, the ultimate choice of Rainbow as its name is also rather confusing, with no known linkages to traditional or historic nomenclature in the area. There was some speculation that it was to be called Rainbow Lake as the developer, Jacques Noel and his family (of which more later), had intended to stock it with Rainbow Trout.<sup>42</sup> And, in fact, the family have recently confirmed that they stocked Little Silver Lake with 5,000 Rainbow Lake Trout fingerlings in the 1960s.<sup>42a</sup> All of that said, interviews with the Noel family indicate that they chose the name and it was not chosen for any other particular reason than it sounded 'nice' for the area they intended to develop; 'Mud Lake' would certainly have lacked a certain marketing cachet.<sup>43</sup> The lake was officially registered as Rainbow Lake by the Government of Ontario in March 1980 just prior to the development of the area. Its official French name, 'lac Rainbow', followed in January 1995.<sup>44</sup> Its associated access roads, Rainbow Lane and Rainbow Lanes A and B, while complementing the name of the lake, were chosen carefully as many of the properties on Rainbow Lane and Rainbow Lane A actually front onto Little Silver Lake.

## **LANARK COUNTY & SOUTH SHERBROOKE TOWNSHIP OVERVIEW**

The early European settlement of Lanark County did not directly lead to the development of the community on Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes. However, there are several themes in the histories of both Lanark and South Sherbrooke that provide some context as to why the area immediately around the lakes was settled and developed. While there are many others that could be considered, perhaps the ones that apply the most to the area around Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes include the initial development of the military settlement, the nature of the land, poor communications and uneven population and economic growth.

### ***Initial Settlement***

The history of the initial European settlement of the areas comprising Lanark County and South Sherbrooke is reasonably well known and need not be repeated here. There are several good histories that provide a wealth of detail, including Jean S. McGill's *A Pioneer History of the County of Lanark* and Howard Morton's *Lanark Legacy: 19<sup>th</sup> Century Glimpses of an Ontario County*. As noted in the opening comments, there is

much less published material dealing with South Sherbrooke, with Bud Van Alstine's *A Short History of South Sherbrooke* and Kay Rogers' *At Home in Tay Valley* being recent additions to the subject. Finally, although this history focuses on European settlement, there had been significant First Nations activity in the area for hundreds of years before Europeans arrived. An overview of this period of history is covered in a separate chapter in Rogers' *At Home in Tay Valley*.

Suffice it to say that European settlement of what is now Lanark County began as early as the 1790s. However, sustained settlement in the area only began after the War of 1812, with Perth and District beginning in 1816. In the same year, Burgess was named and surveyed with South Sherbrooke following in 1819. So why then, and why this area? In fact, several factors following 1815 had persuaded British authorities that large tracts of what they saw as Canadian wilderness needed to be settled. First, caught up in the titanic struggle against Napoleonic France, the Anglo-American War of 1812 was a near run thing from the British perspective. The much more densely-populated United States had come close to capturing the British North American colonies. There were a number of lessons learned, including the need for strategically-placed fortifications and the requirement for defensive belts of British settlement that would provide the people and resources needed to oppose any future American incursion.<sup>45</sup> As such, the Perth Military Settlement became one of three strategic defensive outposts to be created along the Rideau Corridor after the war, a key communications route to defending Upper Canada. In later years, the vastly-expensive (for the period) construction of the Rideau Canal and Fort Henry were to be the ultimate expressions of this strategic approach.<sup>46</sup>

If the goal of the military settlement was to create an area along the line of the Tay River in which a trained reserve force of fighting men could be settled as an insurance policy against any future American attack, settlers needed to be found. The conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars and the need to reduce military expenditure provided a means to do so. The British Army needed to be reduced, and enticing willing officers and enlisted men with land grants, based on their rank, in the military settlement provided a ready-made pool of settlers with military experience (a Lieutenant-Colonel could receive up to 1,200 acres, a lowly private soldier a mere 100 acres).<sup>47</sup> This approach coincidentally (and happily) minimised the cost to the British Treasury. The end of the Napoleonic Wars also provided another inducement to settlement: economic depression. Wartime economies tend to require a period of time to adjust to peace, and the end of a quarter century of war with the French (and its associated allies) created severely depressed economic conditions in the British Isles, particularly in the north of England, Scotland and Ireland, providing pools of potential settlers. And in Ireland, which provided many of the immigrants from the 1830s, the rural economy remained desperate.<sup>48</sup>

So what does this mean for the area in which Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes find themselves? The important thing to note is that the initial settlement of Lanark County shaped the area as it is known today, including place names, the structure of the townships, the layout of the county and so on. With the exception of the major political amalgamations in the 1990s, the structure of the county and South Sherbrooke have remained largely stable since the 1860s (South Sherbrooke was separated from the District of Bathurst as a self-governing township in 1860). This is all the more remarkable given the relatively hurried nature of the Military Settlement, with surveying hastily completed (some would say haphazardly by Captain Reuben Sherwood and his assistants, resulting in many disputes in later years) to allow immediate settlement.<sup>49</sup> Initial settlement also partly dictated the oddly-shaped borders of both North and South

Sherbrooke, with little reference to natural boundaries, and the physical layout of the concessions and lots, the southern half of the county having them run north to south, with the upper half running east to west. Initial settlement also meant that many of the settlers were Scottish in origin, either from paid-off Highland regiments or recruited by the Settlement Societies from depressed areas in Scotland (although many of the follow-on settlers were from Ireland). In either case, they brought the names of the old country with them. This resulted in place names around the county that were predominantly Scottish or, as we have seen, were dedicated to military or government figures who were connected with the military settlement, so much so, that the line of settlement along the northern borders of North Elmsley and North Burgess is referred to as the “Scotch Line.”

### ***Geography of the County***

So where were these new recruits enticed to settle? In short, it was to what was perceived by the British Government and settlers alike as a wilderness on the edges of empire. As noted earlier, settlement happened relatively quickly and the area they settled in was largely uncleared. If the intent was to create a body of soldier-farmers who could clear and work the land and, if necessary, be called to the colours in the defence of British North America, then the choice of the settlement area was to produce mixed results.

As early as 1817, British officials were noting the difficult nature of the settlement area for traditional farming. While there were large tracts of land in Lanark County that, when cleared, would prove to be admirable agricultural country, equally there were large areas of the county that comprised swamp and wetland, interspersed with rocky outcrops, streams and rivers.<sup>50</sup> As the Ontario Agriculture Commission of 1881 noted, the land consisted of “small strips of fertile soil over ... doubtful terrain”<sup>51</sup> and was “best adopted to stock raising”<sup>52</sup> for which the original settlers had not been equipped. When cleared, this land proved to have limited utility for large scale farming, all of which would have a significant impact on population and economic growth.

South Sherbrooke Township reflected in miniature many of the same land use issues experienced at the county level. Initial groups of settlers had been granted plots in those areas where the prospects of agricultural success looked brightest; follow-on settlers moved into the North and South Sherbrookes.<sup>53</sup> Canadian officialdom could be even more scathing about the prospects for successful settlement. When land surveyor Charles Rankin was sent to investigate conditions in the settlement, his formal report noted that the area was “...little else than a continued succession of rocky knolls or ridges with scraps of good land between...it appears a matter of surprise how the people managed to obtain a livelihood there” and that the area “should never have been attempted to be settled. The people are barely able to live.”<sup>54</sup> While a number of homesteads were successful, there were those which, after just a few short years of cultivation, quickly exhausted the thin layer of soil over the bedrock, forcing the families to move on. The distinct piles of stones sometimes seen in forest areas are mute testimony to land once cleared for agriculture, and when the soil was exhausted and abandoned, quickly reclaimed by the bush.<sup>55</sup> Successful settlers adopted farming strategies that reflected the land. Wheat, for example, was abandoned for barley, a more hardy crop although less attractive financially. Similarly, mixed farming or cattle grazing were common in the area and could usually wrest something from the land. And, in fact, Lanark County was known for its milk production in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which would ultimately turn the area into one of the largest producers of

cheese in North America (and which is commemorated by the replica of the large cheese produced for the 1910 World's Fair located in Perth).<sup>56</sup>

Farming incomes in the area were often supplemented by logging, with local inhabitants providing both the land to log and the workforce to harvest the trees or work in the local mills. Or land could (and would) be sold to entrepreneurs who wished to mine an area well-known for its unique mineral deposits. And, as we shall see below, local families could accumulate very large tracts of land to support these activities. All this aside, as several local accounts would have it: "It was a damn hard way to earn a living" or "The land was no use for growing anything but rocks!"<sup>57</sup> The families who settled in the area and made a success of it, had to be tough, resilient and persistent. What is interesting in all of this is that the land around Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes was considered only valuable for much of its 'settlement' history in terms of what it could or could not produce from a purely resource perspective, whether it be from farming, logging or mining. However, a watershed moment was came in the early-mid-20<sup>th</sup> century with the realisation that this hard-scrabble land scattered around the county was actually more valuable for recreational use and, in reality, there wasn't that much of it.

### ***Communications: Getting around the county***

Not only were the new soldier-settlers being invited to make themselves a new home in what was by European standards a wilderness, it was a rather out of the way wilderness. After all, Ottawa would not be chosen as the new nation's capital for nearly another half century, Smith's Falls and Brockville would only become major centres with the coming of the Rideau Canal and railways and Kingston, York (eventually renamed Toronto) and Montreal were a difficult journey away. Communications and transportation in the early days of settlement, such as it was, depended on the rivers and the crude roads carved out of the bush.<sup>58</sup> More advanced roads were to be developed in successive decades, followed by the Canal in the 1830s (and eventually its smaller cousin the Tay Canal, the first completed in 1834 and the second in 1887) and then the railways in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The modern highway (Number 7) followed in the Depression years of the 1930s.<sup>59</sup> Broadly speaking, both Lanark County and South Sherbrooke were to experience increased prosperity and population growth with increasingly sophisticated and effective communication links. And yet, these links also produced the unintended consequence, which indirectly contributed to the development of Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes as a cottage community.

The coming of the trains after the 1880s is a case in point. The immediate area, including South Sherbrooke, was served (or meant to be served) by a variety of lines, including the Toronto and Ottawa, the Ontario and Quebec, the Campbellford, Lake Ontario and Western, the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific Railways.<sup>60</sup> To do so more efficiently, Bolingbroke and Maberly Stations, the latter as early as 1884, were created to serve those two communities and their surrounding areas with both passenger and freight services.<sup>61</sup> And, as noted earlier, Feldspar was created to serve local lumber and mining activities; while there was no passenger service, it did act as a mail drop.<sup>62</sup> The arrival of the train spurred both population and economic growth, in particular helping Bolingbroke and Maberly to become South Sherbrooke's only 'industrial centres' by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. It also promoted travel by local residents to larger centres, including Perth, Smith's Falls, Carleton Place and locations further afield.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, it allowed access by outsiders to what was in reality a still isolated area. This could include a day excursion to the Maberly Fair by Perth residents in 1906, with the Perth Citizens Band

providing music all afternoon.<sup>64</sup> Or, more pertinent to this story, it allowed access to the area for recreational users, such as cottagers, from large urban areas, including Kingston and Ottawa. Christie Lake saw some cottagers as early as the 1890s, but large scale cottaging accelerated when the new CPR line was opened across the top of Christie after 1914.<sup>65</sup> During the Depression years and after, William M. Neal, the regional manager of the CPR (and later President) used to park his personal railway carriage during the summers on a purpose built siding near the station at Christie Lake where he had a cottage. Mail was delivered twice weekly by floatplane.<sup>66</sup>

The problem was that there were too many railways trying to service too many small rural centres, with little financial gain for the railway companies. Almost as soon as many of these lines were opened, their owners attempted to rationalise services and look for ways to increase efficiency and profits.<sup>67</sup> Some lines were not built at all; the Toronto and Ottawa Railway is a case in point. Although its right of way was cleared by 1881, no track was laid and its rights were acquired by the Grand Trunk; its right of way later became the roadbed for parts of Highway 7.<sup>68</sup> Other companies went bankrupt or were absorbed into larger companies. For example, the CPR acquired the rights of way of the Campbellford, Lake Ontario and Western Railway in a 999 year lease; this became the basis for the CPR line now running to the south of Little Silver and paved the way for the CPR to ultimately become the most successful railway in the area.<sup>69</sup>

The clearest way to make a profit was to move large quantities of goods and passengers efficiently over long, uninterrupted distances between major centres. Making this happen, however, was not always easy as railway service was sensitive to politics and shutting down lines required Parliamentary approval.<sup>70</sup> While the process was to take many years, centres such as Smith's Falls, Carleton Place and even Perth were to prosper (until their rail service too succumbed to the laws of economic scale in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century); communities such as Maberly and Bolingbroke became economically unviable milk stop runs; service stopped in 1971.<sup>71</sup> As early as 1907, the *Perth Courier* noted that Maberly was losing some of its most prominent citizens and local merchants were complaining that both residents and railway passengers alike wished to shop in the larger centres than in the local shops.<sup>72</sup>

So, at the time of writing, what remains of railways traffic in the immediate area? In fact, a surprising amount, with CPR trains constantly traversing the trackage to the south of Little Silver, with the noise of the vibration from the massive trestle structure (to the east of the little CPR bridge at the bottom of Little Silver) built in 1912 carrying long distances.<sup>73</sup> But none of the train traffic stops. And what rail traffic there is has become increasingly controversial with the recent sensitivities about the bulk transport of oil and chemical products. Bolingbroke Station, the railway stop used by the CPR to support the local community, is still defined as a 'railway point' according to the Government of Ontario. However, it refers simply to the specific area of trackage which was renamed as Bolingbroke Siding in September 1977.<sup>74</sup> The commercial value of Maberly Station was undermined almost as soon as the 'New Line', south of Little Silver, opened in June 1914. With a grade of only 0.44% compared to the 1.1% of the old CPR line running through Maberly, it made much more economic sense to run heavy cargoes along the new route, with Maberly Station increasingly serving as a milk stop.<sup>75</sup> The introduction of centralised train traffic control in the mid-1950s ended the need to keep staff and service crews in the smaller stations along the line; indeed, almost all were closed.<sup>76</sup> Maberly Station is now defined as an "unincorporated place" according to the

Government of Ontario; its status as a railway point was rescinded in September 1977.<sup>77</sup> The station itself was dismantled in 1959.<sup>78</sup>

With the decline of the railways had come the rise of the modern roadway. In some ways, the conversion of the old Toronto and Ottawa Railway roadbed into Highway 7 is perhaps emblematic of this transition. Its construction during the 1930s (the Perth to Madoc section was announced in 1931), with the country still suffering from the economic and social effects of the Great Depression, represented deliberate government policy, placing the car above the train.<sup>79</sup> In so doing, the government could, in the long term, strengthen the province's industrial base (with concomitant growth of good well-paying middle class jobs) and create a more sophisticated transportation network (in turn, strengthening the economy). In the shorter term, as a 'relief project' it put many unskilled, unemployed workers to work quickly, a clear political priority. In the stretch of highway construction through Lanark and Frontenac Counties, where unemployment and poverty was especially widespread, nearly 2,700 workers were employed in seasonal shifts to maximise the number of workers who could be hired.<sup>80</sup> The same policy of placing the car over the train was to ultimately kill John Booth's old Ottawa, Arnprior and Parry Sound Railway when a conscious decision was made to build Highway 60 rather than subsidise the repair of a washed out trestle bridge, effectively severing the railway's link to Parry Harbour on Georgian Bay.<sup>81</sup> While the impact on railways round Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes was not as dramatic, the advent of the car and high quality roads was to contribute to the decline in local rail passenger traffic, in turn making the rationale for rail service to Maberly more problematic.

But this would be some time in the coming. Prior to the construction of Highway 7, a trip to Perth for South Sherbrooke residents could involve an overnight stay.<sup>82</sup> In fact, right up to the end of the Second World War, local roads, including what is now County Road 36, could prove an adventurous drive. For example, communications between Maberly and Westport were almost non-existent up to the 1920s as the road base was of sand and most cars (such as the venerable Model T) were likely to get stuck or damage the suspension and tires.<sup>83</sup> There were apocryphal stories that some local farmers ensured that the portions of the road fronting their properties remained in poor repair, providing a useful source of cash as they 'rescued' stuck or disabled travellers.<sup>84</sup> What made matters worse, is that many of the local township roads were "forced roads", that is, roads that did not follow relatively straight concession lines, but roads that ran higgledy-piggledy as local geography dictated. Much of the rebuilding of portions of Highway 7 (starting in 1953) and county roads have been to improve on their original layout.<sup>85</sup>

If travel by car was difficult during the summer months, travel by car during the winter, when snow-ploughing was primitive, was particularly challenging. Until the 1940s, many township roads were impassable to automobiles during the winter months and spring thaw; as late as 1945, some county roads were still being cleared of snow by horse drawn ploughs; some township roads were abandoned altogether until the spring thaw.<sup>86</sup> The end of the Second World War, however, freed-up surplus heavy, Army-pattern vehicles with four wheel drive that proved ideal for snow-ploughing and which finally allowed year round use of county and township roads.<sup>87</sup>

Similarly, it wasn't until after the end of the war, with a burgeoning middle class prosperous enough to purchase cars as a matter of routine, that railway passenger travel experienced significant decline. Yet, oddly enough, the coming of the car was to

prove a mixed blessing. It dramatically improved communications, with access to even the remotest regions of Lanark County increased, in part reflected by the appearance of tourist/day tripper maps during this period. And, in time, the same middle class that could afford cars, could also afford to purchase recreational properties, boosting the local economy and providing a real value to land that hitherto been of sometimes doubtful value. At the same time, the car has in some ways hollowed out the community. Local inhabitants no longer had to depend on shopping at their local general store, when a quick trip on a modern road could take them to Perth or further afield, with a wider selection of goods at a more competitive price.<sup>88</sup>

### ***Uneven population and economic growth***

The difficulty in earning a living from the land and the relative isolation of the area was to contribute to the final theme – that population and economic growth across the county was uneven and would have a profound impact on settlement. So what did that mean? First of all, growth throughout the county was uneven, complex and, sometimes, transient. For example, census data is quite nuanced, showing that, in some areas, the population was to decline after the first wave of settlement or stay relatively static for periods of time. North Burgess is the best example of this with the population growing slowly after initial settlement, then falling dramatically in the 1850s and continuing to do so for nearly a century into the 1950s, only growing to its pre-1851 population in the 1996 census.<sup>89</sup>

This history is not a detailed statistical analysis; however, the data suggests that as European settlers arrived and began the laborious process of carving a new home out of the wilderness, others did not stay but rather quickly moved on. This could have been for a number of reasons, but it is most likely that the land couldn't support them, or that it was too hard to settle into an unforgiving wilderness, or they simply wished to move to larger population or industrial centres.<sup>90</sup> One has only to imagine the shock that English war brides must have experienced on arriving in Canada after 1945, when the country was relatively 'civilised', to have an inkling of what the earliest settlers must have felt. Data does suggest that large centres in the county, such as Perth, Carleton Place and Smith's Falls, experienced fairly consistent growth, albeit with some ups and downs.<sup>91</sup> Population growth, combined with improved communications, access to new markets and a variety of other factors, was to turn these centres into the economic workhorses of Lanark County, while much of the remainder remained largely rural.

South Sherbrooke again represented a microcosm of what was happening throughout the county. Its population has always been relatively small in relation to its neighbours and it was one of the townships that was to experience, at best, modest growth. There were less than a dozen families in and around the time of initial settlement and the population remained relatively stable until the next wave of settlers began to arrive after 1831.<sup>92</sup> These differed from their predecessors in that they were largely Irish (most from County Fermanagh) and Catholic, changing the demographics of the township dramatically. Whereas North Sherbrooke's population remained overwhelming Scottish, by 1861 South Sherbrooke's population was over 60% Irish.<sup>93</sup> In spite of this latest round of immigration, by 1850 there were still only 452 inhabitants in South Sherbrooke, with only 630 acres under cultivation (by contrast, Bathurst's population was nearly 2,900 and North Burgess' was approximately 1,100). By 1861, South Sherbrooke's population had grown to 731, but remained largely static thereafter up to the turn of the

19<sup>th</sup> century and actually declined to 615 by the 1951 census. Only in the 1990s did it recover to its pre-1911 levels.<sup>94</sup>

So what did this mean in practical terms? A review of the Wallings map of 1881 (in the author's collection) depicts the issue graphically: for much of its history, South Sherbrooke was largely rural with sporadic pockets of population. The area around Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes was particularly empty. As a ward in the new Tay Valley Township, Sherbrooke continues to remain largely rural.<sup>95</sup> To provide some perspective, the official census data of 1871 for South Sherbrooke indicated a population density of approximately 1 person per 51 acres; by 2011, census data for South Sherbrooke Ward (within Tay Valley Township) indicated a population density of 1:57. For all of Tay Valley it was 1:24. Overall, nil to modest growth over 140 years.<sup>96</sup>

In practical terms then, the land was the principal means of earning a living. Farming began as soon as the land could be cleared in the 1820s. The harvesting of the forests, especially red and white pine, and associated activities – sawmills, transshipment of square-cut lumber, saw logs and the like - were competitive industries throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Little Silver Lake was used as a transshipment point for logs on the way to Maberly.<sup>97</sup> The author has a rusty logging pick in his possession; found at the bottom of the lake at the furthest reach of Little Silver Lake; it may date from this period. And it would seem that some logging activity at Little Silver Lake continued through to the 1960s. Michele Noel, daughter of Jeanne and Jacques Noel, developers of the lakes from the 1960s onwards, recounts that her father and his brother 'Fern Noel, cut down all the pine trees by hand to build both their cottages... ours on the point on Little Silver Lake and Uncle Fern's on Davern Lake. Huge pines were cut by hand in winter back in the early 60's and the lumber was drawn out by a team of horses and pulled to the sawmill in Maberly.... It was milled into lumber to build our first cottage, which to this day has the original pine walls on the interior.'<sup>97a</sup>

Similarly, consistent mining began as early as the 1850s, close to Silver Lake; there was an iron mine near Maberly as early as 1871.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, throughout much of the two centuries that the area has been settled by Europeans, there were great hopes that mining would represent an economic boon to the area, with the Geological Survey of Canada noting the exceptional nature of its minerals.<sup>99</sup> The mineral feldspar, for example, in which the area is rich (an assay site can be seen near the entrance to Rainbow Lane), can be used as a filler in paints or glaze in ceramics. Mica could be used in a variety of industrial applications or even as an alternative to glass, which was the case before the large-scale production of cheap glass in North America. Prospecting for iron ore and other deposits around Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes occurred throughout the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and up to the decade before cottage development (a claim was filed as late as 1956).<sup>100</sup> The minedat.org website still shows the location of what was then known as the Silver Lake Iron Mine located near the easternmost extremity of Little Silver Lake, first reported in the 1901 Annual Report of the Geological Survey of Canada.<sup>100a</sup>

All of these industries had mixed success and, with the exception of some farming and selected logging, have all but disappeared from the area around Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes. And despite the uproar in the 1990s and 2000s over the possible reintroduction of mining in the area, with Graphite Mountain Ltd (a subsidiary of Diamond Lake Minerals of Salt Lake City, Utah) having hundreds of claims in South Frontenac and Tay Valley, many proved to be uneconomical.<sup>101</sup> In any case, the moratorium by

the Government of Ontario on new mining activities in southern Ontario and the passage of the new Mining Act in 2009 appears to have ended, for now, the hopes of mining speculators. The Swiss-based Omya plant along Highway 7 near Perth, which processes calcium carbonate materials for use throughout North America, although not a mine, remains the closest mineral-based operation to Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes.<sup>102</sup>

South Sherbrooke, by contrast, was not entirely rural. As we have seen, there was also an 'industrial' side to the township, albeit on a smaller scale than at the county level, with Bolingbroke and Maberly as its two 'industrial centres.' Founded in 1821 as the site of a sawmill, Bolingbroke harnessed the water flowing out of Bob's Lake to power its mills and provide communications.<sup>103</sup> A review of local maps and local surveys is instructive. By 1868, it warranted a Post Office; by the 1880s it featured several mills, the Post Office, a general store, a school, a Methodist Church and a hall, and was reputed to be the largest site of employment in the area. Maberly's growth, although not as explosive, was also nonetheless impressive as excerpts from Lovell's Gazetteer of British North America from 1874-1908 clearly demonstrate.<sup>104</sup> First settled in the 1820s, by the 1880s it included several general stores, a Post Office, blacksmith, shoemaker, town hall and cooperage. It also featured, off and on, several hotels (one with one of the few "open bars", complete with polished brass rail, in the county). In fact, Maberly's drinking holes had something of a dubious reputation, featuring in one drowning, one murder, several assaults and one landlord actually acquitted over a drink-related murder.<sup>105</sup> On a more mundane note, the Maberly Agricultural Society was formed in 1882 and in 1885 the Fair Grounds were opened. As noted, both these towns were considered important enough to be served by their own railway stations.<sup>106</sup>

Sadly, both towns, are now shadows of their former selves, with Bolingbroke almost unrecognisable from the 19<sup>th</sup> century descriptions. As early as 1917, the *Perth Courier* would opine that Maberly was only just "holding its own" and that it faced an uncertain future.<sup>107</sup> Although it would be difficult to pinpoint when the decline began, the heady excitement of mid-to-late 19<sup>th</sup> Century growth was long gone by the post-Great War and the Depression years of 1930s. And there was still progress of sorts. In June 1923, the Maberly Telephone Company established a trunk line to Perth, one of the few in the county.<sup>108</sup> And as late as 1937, Maberly would host one of the largest Orange Lodge rallies seen in years.<sup>109</sup> Thereafter, newspaper reports of the period note a steady drip-drip of mills and other businesses closing and services shifting elsewhere. While no one factor was key to the decline, both towns had grown based on primary industries – principally farming and forestry – and when these became less economical, many of the other factors discussed earlier in this history exacerbated a decline that was already evident. Little Silver and Rainbow Lake residents, of course, only witnessed the decline, although meals of bullfrog legs at Patterson Restaurant and Maberly hosting Willie Nelson remain vivid in some locals' memories.<sup>110</sup> As the decades passed, Maberly would lose its ability to be self-sustaining, becoming in many respects a satellite community to larger urban centres.<sup>111</sup> Bolingbroke largely disappeared.

And, yet, as already noted, while traditional uses of the land failed or declined, there was to be dramatic growth in the recreational use of the land, where the focus was no longer on what could be harvested or extracted from the soil, but on the inherent beauty of the land itself. There was, in fact, a long tradition of recreational use of the land in Lanark County. As early as 1861, the Lanark and Renfrew Game Protection Society was established to better regulate recreational hunting in the area. A number of local angling societies sprang up in the following years.<sup>112</sup> Pickerel were introduced to Mississippi

Lake for game sport in 1908.<sup>113</sup> Beaver, which had been trapped nearly to extinction, were re-introduced into the watershed in 1917.<sup>114</sup> Otty Lake reputedly featured the first cottage in the area by the 1880s.<sup>115</sup> By the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, 'hosting' facilities had been established around Christie Lake to cater for day parties from Perth and elsewhere with a hotel established by 1906.<sup>116</sup> Jordan's Cottages was established during the same period and became well-known as a destination throughout southern Ontario and the United States.<sup>117</sup> The opening of the new CPR line in 1914 was to accelerate the process, with a large number of cottages established after the Great War. A number of recreational camps for boys and girls were to open in the following years, with Christie Lake Camp opening in 1922, Camp Opemikon in the 1930s, and Camp Davern in the 1940s.<sup>118</sup> The character of Lanark County would never be the same again.<sup>119</sup>

## **HISTORY OF RAINBOW & LITTLE SILVER LAKES**

### ***Early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century***

It is in this context that the settlement of Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes, as in so many other recreational areas around Lanark County, can be more easily understood. And, in those terms, Rainbow and Little Silver Lakes are relative newcomers, with systematic development of cottages only beginning in the 1960s. That said, as Canada celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> year, Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes were themselves approaching sixty years of age as a community.

The ownership of the area now covered by Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes (effectively Lots 11-15 of Concessions IV and V, although, as previously noted, Rainbow Lake would only take on its present appearance following development in the 1980s) remained relatively stable as it entered the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the land was tree covered, hilly and generously interspersed with rocky outcrops, swamps and small seasonal streams. There was, of course, Little Silver Lake. But Rainbow Lake at this point was known locally, if it was called anything at all, as Mud Lake, drying to a swampy bog in the summer, sometimes used for grazing. Although ostensibly farmland, as some locals have noted, in fact the land was good only "for growing rocks". While there were some mixed crops and livestock, much of the land was given over to lumbering and mineral exploration; as well, the lakes and surrounding areas supported local sport fishing and hunting. This state of affairs began to change around the time of the First World War with the consolidation of parcels of land by the Lanark County Peat Fuel Ltd, who hoped that the area could produce an organic material similar to the peat harvested in Scotland as a heat and fuel source. This venture was relatively short-lived; a lack of funds and an inability to harvest a usable material resulted in forfeiture of the company's property around the lakes to the original owners.<sup>120</sup>

Nonetheless, consolidation of the properties in the area continued with the arrival of Sidney H. Orser. A businessman, Orser hoped to exploit the area's mineral wealth by developing a series of mines. Although there had been widespread attempts to mine throughout Lanark County in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, few of these attempts had been commercially successful, largely due to limited access to markets, high production costs and the quality of ore. Nonetheless, prospects seemed more hopeful. Mineral exploration had indicated a number of ores in the area with potential industrial uses, Orser himself had significant capital to invest, there was a railway close at hand (through Bolingbroke Station) to transport bulk materials to markets either east or west, and the

First World War had created a huge appetite for certain ores and minerals to support war production, with the prospect of conversion to civilian use with the war's conclusion.<sup>121</sup>

In early January 1917, even before the war was over, Orser began to buy land in the area. The first plot comprised much of the western half of Lot 12, Concession V, which was acquired from J.A. Morrow for \$3,100. However, his greatest acquisitions were from Agnes Forgie, executor to Catherine Forgie, on behalf of the family in June-July, 1920. In this way, for \$4,300 he acquired large parcels of land throughout Lots 12-15 of Concession V and others in Concession IV. Almost immediately, usually within weeks, he sold these lots onwards to the mining company, Orser Kraft Feldspar Ltd, of which he was a partner. Invariably, there was a significant return on his personal investment, in one case of \$2,200, a not inconsiderable amount of money at the time. Fortunately for the future residents of Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes, mining (centred on what is now the Potvin property) did not turn out to be the commercial success Orser hoped for. While some 2,300 tons of ore were extracted and shipped to market by a purpose-built railway siding at Feldspar, relatively high production costs coinciding with a post-war recession and slump in mineral prices effectively killed the project.<sup>122</sup> Orser sold most of the land on to the Strong family in 1922, although he retained some local holdings. Land Transfer Certificates show that his estate was selling property as late as 1959.<sup>123</sup> And hedging his bets, he retained some mineral/mining rights on the land until they were forfeited on his death in 1951 under the provisions of the Mining Tax Act.<sup>124</sup> And perhaps wisely; records indicate that prospecting for iron deposits was to begin again as early as 1949.<sup>125</sup> Interesting pictures of the Orser-Feldspar 'occurrence' can be seen on the mindat.org website.

The majority of this property stayed in the Strong family until the 1960s, although there was effectively a change of name to Newton, when Wilfred (or Wilf) Newton married into the family, becoming the husband of the widowed Mary Jane Strong. Wilf Newton actually added to the family holdings in the 1940s, in the end owning most of Little Silver's lakeshore and surrounding land. At one point, Newton bought one 500 acre parcel for \$500, a dollar an acre.<sup>126</sup> It was Wilf Newton who introduced the first recreational users and cottagers to Little Silver Lake in the 1950s, an act that was to represent a paradigm shift in land use around the lakes. Land which had once been considered only for what it could produce for its owners in terms of lumbering, or farming, or mining, now became important for what it represented and was: clear water, unspoilt forests and wetlands, quiet and solitude.

Recreational and cottage use began in the early 1950s, with Wilf Newton renting out boats to visiting American fishermen. However, settlement really began in the early 50s when Frank Williams first visited the area with a few friends from Auburn, New York, to take advantage of the recreational fishing on the lake, camping on the shoreline. He returned with his wife Jeanne and another couple, who liked what they saw and, in 1957, decided to buy. The first three cottages were built and sold by Wilf Newton, located at the west end of Little Silver near County Road 36.<sup>127</sup> They and two other American families pretty well had the run of the lake for the next decade. The conditions by modern cottaging standards were primitive: outhouses, muddy access tracks, no electricity. Oral history indicates that fresh water was fetched by canoe from the spring at the head of the bay at the northwestern most extremity of Little Silver (on the author's property).<sup>128</sup>

### ***Development of the lakes by the Noel family***

This rather idyllic approach to cottaging was to change dramatically by the end of the decade. In May 1960, Wilf Newton, by now a widower and executor of Mary Jane's estate, sold most of his land holdings to Jacques and Jeanne Noel for \$12,500.<sup>129</sup> The Noels thus acquired properties that effectively ran from the railway crossing at County Road 36 that led to Maberly Station southwards almost to the YWCA camp at Lake Davern, approximately 2,000 acres. The Noels were to acquire other parcels of land around the lake, including the Patterson farm and Birch Island, as late as 1977 and 1978.<sup>130</sup> In addition, other members of the family bought lands around Lake Davern and towards Sharbot Lake.<sup>131</sup>

The Noels were developers and proudly so. Whereas Wilf Newton and other local farmers had been content to sell small parcels of property and build cottages as a sometimes profitable venture in their principal role as farmers and local property owners, the Noels approached the development of the area with a quite different approach. Their vision was to develop the area around the lake systematically and holistically, creating planned recreational waterfront developments (formally noted as sub-divisions by the township) that, as noted previously, potential buyers from Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa and as far away as the United States could afford. Even the bush lots were seen as a sound investment opportunity. Rural sub-divisions based on these lots would tap into an increasing desire by city-dwellers to live in the countryside while providing extra housing stock in an area that had a chronic shortage of affordable, high-quality housing.<sup>132</sup>

Of course, none of this happened quickly. Detailed surveying needed to be complete, planning arrangements with the township and county pursued and money needed to be raised; Jacques even borrowed \$500 from his sisters. In simple terms, as much of the development and construction occurred organically, the two Noel-owned development companies, Noel Development (Ontario) Limited and Lakeside Living Limited, developed the area in three waves or tranches. The first wave began in the 1960s and was focussed on what was then known as the North Shore or North Lane of Little Silver Lake and is now known officially as Silvery Lane. Following detailed surveys and what at the time were seen as extensive planning permission approvals from South Sherbrooke Township, the first lots were sold between June and November 1967. Growth was relatively slow at first with the Drysdales, Tarzswells, Jacksons, Gervais and Jolleys among the first of the new generation of cottagers on Little Silver Lake. The second wave of development started in the mid-1970s, with the development (planned as a township sub-division) of the South Shore of Little Silver Lake, or what is now known as Little Silver Lake Road.<sup>133</sup> The final wave of development – encompassing the area now known as Rainbow Lane – began in the 1980s, with the first lot sold to the Sauraults in July 1980. It was in some ways the most ambitious development, involving larger plots at the extreme north-west end of Little Silver Lake and the damming of what was then a seasonal lake (or swamp, depending on your perspective) and the creation of Rainbow Lake and development of waterfront plots on the north side of this new lake.<sup>134</sup>

Looked at from a distance in time, it seems that the development around what were now two lakes reflected differing approaches and attitudes to development, including the tastes of buyers, official planning and environmental regulations, and the need to capitalise on a finite amount of valuable waterfront property. Initial planning and

development starting in the 1960s involved relatively small lots of one to two acres bunched together along the western arm of Little Silver, with some cottages close to the shoreline. The development of Little Silver Lake Road formalised the process, with the area being considered as a sub-division for development purposes, complete with a formal agreement between the Noel's Lakeside Living and the township, and the access road named and deeded to the township.<sup>135</sup> The Noel family even built a half dozen pre-fabricated cottages on what were then considered undesirable 'high lots' to encourage sales.<sup>135a</sup> In some ways, this approach represented development typical for the time, with a number of original cottagers concerned that it created an almost urbanised appearance,<sup>136</sup> with the effect only mitigated by the 100' setback from the water along Little Silver Lake Road imposed on Lakeside Living by the Ontario Municipal Board or OMB.<sup>137</sup> In comparison to more modern times, township planning and approval processes were less rigorous and bodies such as the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (RVCA), although created as long ago as 1966, exercised less regulatory clout.<sup>138</sup> A number of cottages have been gradually converted to year-round use and as full-time residences.

This approach can be contrasted with the last major development in the 1980s when Rainbow Lake was created by damming the smaller seasonal lake and creating fairly large lots of approximately two to five acres along what is now Rainbow Lane and Rainbow Lanes A and B. It too was considered as a sub-division by the township for development purposes. In this case, while cottages were built, a number of full-time residences were planned from the beginning and, since then, other properties have been converted to year-round use. The larger lots allowed greater privacy, potential for greater setbacks from the lakes and larger residences.<sup>139</sup> Large areas of the lake, not owned by the Noels, remained largely untouched. Taken as a whole, development (and lack of development) has given the two lakes very different "looks." Little Silver Lake really has three different perspectives: strips of land with cottages crowded on smallish lots; larger and undeveloped properties at the north-west end of the lake; and, very large stretches of undeveloped lands to the east and south. By contrast, Rainbow Lake largely comprises a belt of medium-sized to large lots stretching along its northern edge, with its southern edge mostly undeveloped. In some respects, it is a community unto itself with very limited access to Little Silver Lake.

Not surprisingly given its ambitious scale, development of the lakes was not without some controversy, anger and even legal action. The first trouble appeared in the early 1970s with the plans to develop waterfront properties along the south shore of Little Silver Lake (what is now Little Silver Lake Road). Buyers along the North Shore believed that they had received assurances that this shoreline would not be developed; they believed that they were now faced with the prospect of a sub-division of up to 60 narrow waterfront properties opposite. And given the steep slopes along much of this area, cottages would probably be built close to the shoreline. Worse, there were rumours that development could also include a tent and trailer park.<sup>140</sup> Very quickly, the recently-formed Lake Association found itself in discussions with the Noels and the township to stop the development. When these discussions faltered, the Association created a legal fund that ultimately took them to the OMB, where setbacks from the lake and fewer lots were imposed on development. Considerable ill-feeling and suspicion over this development lingered over the years.<sup>141</sup> And, in fact, the LSRLPOA kept separate funds available until 1989 in case there was a need to return to the OMB.<sup>142</sup>

The damming of Rainbow Lake and the development along Rainbow Lane in the 1980s also created considerable concern and close monitoring by the LSRLPOA. While the development generally proposed larger lots with significant setbacks from Little Silver Lake and conformed to township planning requirements, there were some suspicions that the developer and officials were too close and that there were insufficient environmental and development safeguards in place.<sup>143</sup> For example, with the lake to be dammed in 1984, the Noels had received a 'Permit to Take Water' amounting to millions of litres of upstream water, with, by modern standards, minimal environment assessment on the short and long-term impacts of the water quality on Little Silver and the watershed as a whole.<sup>144</sup> Equally, it was believed that too many lots had been jammed into Rainbow Lake given its limited size, even after expansion due to damming. Most importantly, there was some feeling amongst original cottagers that the Rainbow Lake project was a step too far, representing too much development on too small a lake and with the changes to the watershed and water flow rates still not fully understood.<sup>145</sup> This concern was echoed by Glen Owen, a Ministry of Environment official, to the LRSLOA annual general meeting in 1988, who flatly stated the MOE would oppose further development of the lakes.<sup>146</sup>

### ***Further related developments in the area***

The Noel family's plans for development were not limited to the immediate vicinity of Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes. As noted earlier, the family had extensive holdings to the north and south of the lakes. Closest to the two lakes was the Maberly Pines development, largely comprising bush lots with some access to ponds but no other water frontage. The area is easily identified by the large number of red and white pines, neatly planted in rows to the east of County Road 36 south of the old CPR junction. In interviews, Michele and Philippe Noel, children of Jacques and Jeanne Noel, have vivid memories of weekends spent planting countless red and white pines, poplars and walnut trees.<sup>147</sup> The other local development sometimes (and incorrectly) associated with the Noel family was the Silver Lake Estate towards Sharbot Lake along Highway 7. Although this project had significant support, including some local politicians, it ran into financial difficulties during an economic downturn and few of the properties were ever developed. Rumours aside, the Noels were never involved with this development and thought its prospects rather dubious.<sup>147a</sup> Aside from the sign for the development still visible on the south side of Highway 7 just before Silver Lake, little else remains.<sup>148</sup>

Looking back after a half century, the Noel family's influence on the Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes community should not be underestimated despite the controversies of the day. While, as we have seen, a number of factors laid the foundations for establishing this community, it was in fact the Noel's vision, entrepreneurial skill and persistence that were key to establishing the lake community as it exists today. During this period, the Noel family had lived in various properties around the lakes, including 115 Rainbow Lane, the only one which has unimpeded access to both Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes and on which the dam that created the modern Rainbow Lake is located. These were all eventually sold and with the deaths of Jeanne and Jacques Noel in 1982 and 1985 respectively, it seemed all connection with the Noels had disappeared. However, in the last few years, their daughter Michele Noel has bought a property on Rainbow Lane and has physically re-established the connection with the area that her family was so responsible for developing. And, in fact, the connection was never really broken: after their early deaths, Jacques' ashes were scattered on Little Silver Lake, and

Jeanne's were buried on Birch Island, maintaining their presence with their beloved Silver Lake properties.<sup>148a</sup>

### ***Evolution of the lake community***

The Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes community initially started as a tight knit group of cottagers, largely comprising some of the original American cottage families and those who built along what is now Silvery Lane. However, very much like the surrounding area, while there remains a very strong cottage flavour to the lakes, they have slowly evolved and indeed have been absorbed into the surrounding community. A number of factors have acted as a catalyst for this change, whether it be the waves of increasingly formal development, the inclusion of Rainbow Lake or the increase in the number of fulltime residents.

The growth of fulltime residents has been particularly important. Increasingly cottages were either converted for year round use or were purpose built as full time homes. Starting with treating the development of Little Silver Lake Road as a township subdivision, this trend became increasingly noticeable with the development of the Rainbow Lane area. There are nearly three dozen dwellings on all three 'lanes' that are full-time homes or are used year round. While the majority of holdings are still recreational/cottage properties, this has resulted in what were once cottagers now become 'locals' themselves. They are now active participants in such activities as the Althorpe, Bolingbroke Community (ABC) Association, the Tay Valley Community Choir, Maberly Agricultural Society and Fair and other local community activities.<sup>149</sup> One lake resident even started the first tennis club in Maberly.<sup>150</sup> And like other local residents, they experience the same rural issues: lack of public transportation, limited shopping facilities, intermittent internet access, the need to travel to shop in Perth, trying to support local businesses that struggle to compete and the like.

The evolution of the LSRLPOA reflects this change. It was initially created as the Little Silver Lake Property Owners' Association by Ken Jackson and other original cottagers along Silvery Lane. With its constitution approved in June 1975, its role was to provide a body that could work on road and access issues collectively.<sup>151</sup> However, it was quickly forced to address much broader concerns forced on it by the proposed development along Little Silver Lake Road, including legal action and hearings before the OMB.<sup>152</sup> It then needed to absorb the residents of that development and, in the 1980s, the properties created by the follow-on Rainbow Lane development. Each created its own set of difficulties that needed to be worked through.

A few examples illustrate the complexities (and evolution) of an association that represents two lakes, three private roads and residents of a County road that can access the lakes. For many years after its formation, the association represented only those residents/properties that actually fronted on to Little Silver Lake. This was simple enough when there were only Silvery Lane and Little Silver Lake Road residents; in fact, the original constitution drafted in 1975 had not anticipated any further development on the lakes.<sup>153</sup> However, when this eventually included residents on Little Silver who accessed their properties by Rainbow Lane, but excluded residents that fronted on to Rainbow Lake, it created an interesting challenge. Not only was this perceived to be unfair, but it also placed Rainbow Lane residents, whether bordering on Little Silver or Rainbow Lakes, and who in general shared many common concerns and mingled

socially, in an anomalous position. Equally, it excluded a group that were extremely important as their activities could have a profound impact on Little Silver's water quality.

Even when Rainbow Lake residents were invited to join the association, it actually took some years for the name Rainbow Lake to be incorporated into the name of the LSRLPOA; it stubbornly remained the Little Silver Lake Property Owners' Association until 2004. Similarly, as the association had started as a tight-knit group with a modestly centralised financial system to fund activities and road maintenance, there was reluctance in allowing Rainbow Lane residents a separate bank account to address their road maintenance needs, a situation which had previously arisen following the development along Little Silver Lake Road.<sup>153a</sup> Unsurprisingly, there were years when Rainbow Lane participation in association activities could only be described as disappointing (in 1990 there were no members from properties on Rainbow Lake proper).<sup>154</sup> In the end, the association continued to evolve to address all residents' concerns. The first formal Rainbow Lane report was made to the AGM in 1991 by Marine Leullier, the area representative.<sup>155</sup> The governance structure evolved to require representation by all 'lanes', with the association dealing with pan-lakes issues and 'road associations' dealing with, and having financial control, over road maintenance, access and security issues.<sup>156</sup> The LSRLPOA encourages all area residents who have access to, and who can have an impact on, the lakes to become members. And the association is increasingly aligning itself with other local residents not physically connected to the lakes on issues as diverse as weed spraying or local end-of-road garbage collection.

Even nomenclature could be problematic, with a variety of names, some official, some traditional, applied to the three access lanes leading into the lakes. Already officially named by the township as part of the development process, only at the 1987 AGM was it agreed that consistency in naming needed to be applied. Henceforth, correspondence, directories and discussion would refer to Rainbow Lane (formerly Fire Lane 5 or Silver Lake North), Silvery Lane (formerly Fire Lane 6, North Shore Road or North Access Road) and Little Silver Lake Road (formerly Fire Lane 7, South Shore Road or South Access Road).<sup>157</sup>

The issues that the community dealt with varied widely and perhaps reflected the times; results were mixed. The 'Battle of the Gates' with the township illustrates this point. Locked gates had been installed along all three lanes when the community mostly comprised seasonal cottages as a security measure (with complementary voluntary road patrols) to prevent the very large number of break-ins that were occurring in the off-season. As late as 1992, a survey completed by residents indicated that security was their top priority, community liaison second, road maintenance third, with water levels a distant fifth.<sup>158</sup> Access through the gates by township and emergency services was available through a spare key kept at the general store in Maberly. The gates seemed to work as the number of thefts dropped significantly after they were installed. But nothing is ever simple in cottage country. Internal to the community, there was endless debate about when they should be locked during cottage season, the off season, what those terms actually meant, weekdays, times of day and on and on. The absolute frustration of the association was evident when residents could not follow what were apparently simple guidelines, leaving the gates open or unlocked. However, this was nothing to the debate that ensued with the township over emergency access and which rapidly morphed into who actually owned the roads or portions of roads on which the gates sat, what services the township and county provided, access to the boat ramp, and physical placement of the barriers and so on. In the end, the township 'won' and the gates were

removed in the early 1990s.<sup>159</sup> With the advent of more full time residents and the installation of warning signs and cameras on the lanes, theft has at least been kept in check if not eliminated altogether.

The 'Great Telephone War' was more successful. From the late 1970s onwards, some lake residents had lobbied for Bell Canada, which provided service to the lake area, to establish telephone service for those on the lakes who wished it. In particular, they cited the need to communicate with medical or police services in the event of an emergency. This should not have been difficult, as Maberly had had telephone service since the 1920s. A variety of solutions was mooted, but Bell Canada essentially refused to do so as it wasn't in their long term plan and, in any case, wouldn't generate sufficient revenue to justify the expense of expanding service southwards from Maberly for just 28 families. When pushed, they quoted outrageous costs (\$176,000 in 1987) to the cottagers. Westport Telecommunications Company or WTC, which provided telephone service from the south (in fact, their service ended just one mile south of the lakes), declined to do so as that would infringe on Bell Canada's turf. This situation endured for years, with the cottagers devising a variety of means of communication, ranging from ham radio connections to the persistent honking of horns, in the event of an emergency. They even applied for a hearing to the CRTC through the local MP without success. The situation was finally resolved only in 1988 when Bell finally agreed to allow the WTC to infringe on their territory, the WTC promising to provide service to 35-40 families by the autumn.<sup>160</sup>

These are just a few of the many issues that the lake community has addressed over the years. What is more remarkable, based on a review of available lake records, is how often the same issues – the debate over high or low water levels, development, water quality, over or under-fishing, beaver, speeding or large boats are just a few examples – have been repeatedly raised over the years, cause a period of often acrimonious debate, go quiescent, only to re-appear 5-10 years later. Fundamental as these issues are to small recreational lakes, it is unlikely that they will ever be resolved to everyone's satisfaction or that they will not continue to provoke often deep emotion.

### ***And the future?***

One of the constant themes of this brief historical overview is that the Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes community did not simply happen of itself. While the lake community can be 'dated' from the 1960s, it is in fact the product of two centuries of growth and evolution, driven by a unique set of circumstances – ranging from land usage and economic development to transportation and communications and changing demographics – in the larger community surrounding the lakes, and all firmly rooted in the original European settlement. And as the lake community grew, reflecting and increasingly joining the larger community, as we have seen so too did it evolve internally, adjusting to and embracing three waves of development, the creation of a second standalone lake and adapting its governance structures as needed. And this without considering the impact of the First Nations on the surrounding area, more of which will be covered in following editions of this history.

Looking to the future, where do Little Silver and Rainbow Lakes go from here? There can be no sure answer to that question. However, if the past is any guide, the lakes' future will likely look much like their past – continuing evolution and increasing integration into the local community, guided by the newest wave of 'settlers' who have

come to cherish this area as much as previous generations did. And that is no little accomplishment as Canada heads towards its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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## **SOURCES**

A variety of primary and secondary sources were used in the preparation of this history. Primary sources range from personal interviews, a review of personal and archived materials, including official reports and notes, newspapers, personal reminiscences, land transfer documents, surveys, maps of one sort or the other and other similar documents, many available at Lanark Archives, on-line in official government websites or in the author's possession. Secondary sources include local histories and collections, other on-line sources and consultation with fellow historians. Specific references can be found in the endnotes.