

Below is the history I've put together over the years concerning our family's connection to Long Lake dating back to the 30s.

History written by Joy Reese Derr

Updated 8-18-08

East Long Lake History: 1936-2008

Long Lake, Park Rapids, Minnesota

**Camp Mindiana * Metcalf's Resort * Sampson's Mindiana
Reese's Retreat * Meandering Point * Derr Crossing**

Camp Mindiana (1936-1950s)

Hubbard County records show a large section of East Long Lake property once known as Mindiana. The property was purchased in 1936 by Richard and Ora Reese Sampson of Hammond, Ind., who bought the 160-acre Story farm, which included about one mile of frontage on the eastern side of Long Lake, two miles northeast of Hubbard, Minn. Ora was born and grew up in Park Rapids. After her marriage, she returned to the North Country to vacation and to visit her parents, A.D. and Ida Reese of Park Rapids. Ora's parents, her siblings—Florine, Abner, Vernon, and Llewellyn, and eventually their families—enjoyed, and continue to enjoy, many summers on Long Lake.

After purchasing, the Story property, Ora and Richard leased the farmland to area farmers and started a resort on the lake property. They named the resort Camp Mindiana, for Minnesota and Indiana.

The first cottage in the resort was a boathouse brought over the ice from the west side of the lake in the winter of 1936. It was originally known as the Boat House cottage. In 1937, Richard James, Sr., Ora's uncle, built two small cabins. Ora and Richard lived in the boathouse and rented the other two cabins.

According to an old Camp Mindiana brochure,

“The attractive cabins are new, clean, comfortable, and fully equipped for housekeeping except linens. Children will be safe and happy while Mother and Dad go fishing. Camp Mindiana enjoys high-class clientele ... a family vacation spot, where courtesy and friendliness prevail. Nights are cool, insuring restful sleep. Cabins range in size to accommodate parties of 3, 4 and 6. Rates are \$13, \$15, and \$18.”

Many of the early tenants were friends from Indiana, where Richard was a teacher, and friends from Kansas. Ora and their son, Richard Sampson, Jr., known as Dick, came in June and opened the camp; Richard came as-soon-as school was out.

During the first year, an icehouse was built, a rough structure with lots of sawdust. Ice was harvested in the winter and buried in sawdust. Surprisingly, the ice lasted all summer. Today the only original cabin still standing is the one that features a large stone fireplace.

Metcalf's Resort

In the late 1940s Richard and Ora Sampson sold the resort to Neil and Elsie Metcalf, who renamed the property Metcalf's Resort. The Metcalfs built a year-round home at the south end of the property, managed the resort successfully for a number of years, and then sold the cabins and lots, one by one. The Metcalfs continued to live at the lake for a number of years, eventually selling the property to the Pike family.

Sampson's Mindiana

After selling the resort, Ora and Richard continued to vacation each summer at the lake on the property they still owned—north of the resort—that they continued to call Mindiana. They lived in a little one-room red cabin with a porch that they eventually enclosed. In 1952 they enlarged the cabin, adding kitchen and bedroom wings, with Ora's brothers, Vernon and Lew, doing most of the construction. Over time they built several other buildings behind the cabin: a shed called the annex, a boathouse, and a two-room sleeping cabin to the south, painted white, called The Dorm.

The Sampsons divided the far north end of their extensive property into lots that they then sold in the 1960s and 70s. The last lot bordering the north end of their property, they sold to Ora's sister, Florine Reese Sheldon, who sold it to the Heikkinen family.

In 1960 the Sampsons sold a 100 foot lot south of the red cabin to Ora's brother, Llewellyn Reese, and his wife, Evelyn, of Grand Rapids, Minn. (See **Reese's Retreat** below).

Richard Sampson died in May 1961. Ora moved to a retirement community in Phoenix, Arizona, but she continued to vacation on Long Lake each summer. In 1976 she married Perry Jackson, and they spent their summers at the lake until Perry died in 1988. Ora died in 1990, leaving the property to her son, Richard Sampson, Jr. In 1998 Richard Sampson, Jr., died, leaving what was left of the original Mindiana property to his third wife. In 2005 she sold the property to Mark and Lori Anderson of Sebeka, Minn., who also have a summer home on Long Lake.

In the mid-1980s Richard Sampson, Jr., deeded a section of property north of the red cabin, originally known as "Billy Hale's Point," to his oldest daughter, Susan. In 2000 she sold this property to her second cousin, Diane Reese Balk, the daughter of Evelyn and Llewellyn Reese, and her husband, Don Balk, of Mounds View, Minn. (See **Meandering Point** below). In 2006 the Balks sold this property to Mark and Lori Anderson of Sebeka, Minn.

In 1987 Richard Sampson, Jr., sold two lots—north of the red cabin and just beyond the point—to his first cousin, Joy Reese Derr, the daughter of Evelyn and Llewellyn Reese, and her husband Jack Derr, of Braddock Heights, Md. (See **Derr Crossing** below).

Reese's Retreat

Llewellyn (Lew) and Evelyn Reese built Reese's Retreat in 1960, with lumber from trees that Lew felled on the property. The hardwood floors came from a building at the North Central University of Minnesota Experimental Station in Grand Rapids, Minn., where Lew worked. The outdoor stone fireplace contains rocks from several states, including taconite pellets from the Minnesota Iron Range and stones from Maryland and Indiana.

The Reeses spent weekends at their cabin until Lew's retirement, after which they spent the summer months at the lake, joined by family and friends. In 1973 Lew moved an old swine shed

from the North Central campus to the lake, where it became an all-purpose storage shed known as the “pork-au-pine” (pork in the pines!). In 1983 the Reeses built a sleeping cabin, known as The Bunkhouse, to accommodate their growing family. The original cabin was enlarged in the 1998; in 2006 a Workshop was constructed opposite The Bunkhouse.

Lew and Evelyn had three children, Diane, Joy and David, and eight grandchildren who spent their summer vacations together at Reese’s Retreat. According to Evelyn, “The Reese children dearly loved Long Lake and spent as much time as possible vacationing at Reese’s Retreat. Today they come with their children and grandchildren from throughout Minnesota, Washington, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Maryland, to enjoy time together.”

Family members include:

David and Pam Reese of Grand Rapids, Minn., (David has two stepdaughters, Jill and Heather); they have three grandchildren;

Diane and Donald Balk of Mounds View, Minn., who have four children: Michael Balk and Julia Lukas; Jeff and Staci (Balk) Taylor; Jon and Sara (Balk) Bolen; and Tyler and Kathy (Balk) Erlandsen; and six grandchildren;

Joy and Jack Derr of Braddock Heights, Md., who have four children: David and Martha Derr; Matthew and Elizabeth (Derr) Schultz; Andrew and Molly Derr; and John and Amy (Derr) Hodges; and 14 grandchildren. In 1994 Elizabeth Derr Schultz wrote a book, *Feels Like a Minnesota Day!* that chronicles the family’s summer vacations on Long Lake.

Evelyn, 96, whose husband Lew died in 1995, is the undisputed matriarch of the family and still enjoys summers at the lake with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

To this day, the extended family—representing four generations—travel to Reese’s Retreat and Derr Crossing each summer, sharing memories and enjoying the beauty of the lake.

Meandering Point

In the mid-1980s Richard Sampson, Jr., deeded a section of property that was originally known as Billy Hale’s Point to his oldest daughter. In 2000, she sold this property, what the family called Sampson’s Sandbar or The Meandering Point, to her second cousin, Diane Reese Balk and her husband, Don Balk, of Mounds View, Minn. The point commands a view of the lake both north and south. It is called a meandering point because the wind will sweep the sand from side to side, with the actual “point” of land sometimes to the north, other times to the south. Over the years, extensive erosion and the movement of the winter ice pack have altered the shoreline, leaving a steep bank and very little of what was once a sandy shore. However, it remains a favorite swimming spot for the family and others on the lake because of its sandy, weed-free bottom. Two of the Balk children chose to be married at The Point.

Derr Crossing

In 1987, Richard Sampson, Jr., sold several acres of the original Mindiana property north of the red cabin and to his first cousin, Joy Reese Derr and her husband Jack Derr, of Braddock Heights, Md. In 2005 the Derrs built a lake home, Derr Crossing, with the expectation that the families’ paths would cross during summer vacations on Long Lake. Each summer and at various times throughout the year, the family does gather, sharing memories of summers past and dreaming of summers to come.