

The Trees Cottage

Lake Manitou History- "The Pittsburgh Connection"

by Gwilym Price



Included is an obituary from the Pittsburgh area Butler Eagle about the death of Joe Benedum Trees. I was always told by my good Manitoulin buddy Rob Bullas (who was the first person I knew to swim from Red Lodge to Rockville) that the very large cedar log cottage on a point along the NE lake shore was the Trees' "mansion". Old Joe Trees was an oil wildcatter from Pittsburgh at the turn of the century and made a fortune.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Trees

Somewhere I read an account of the annual summer trips to their cottage on Lake Manitou, in part by steam launch. If I ever come across the source of that memory I'll send you the link. I suspect their cottage predates the 1920's, but I really don't know much more of the history as it was on "the other side of the lake." It must have been one of the first summer cottages and was probably the largest until very recently. In the early 1960's, when I became old enough to navigate and explore the lake on my own, the mansion was run down and hadn't been used in years. Joe died in 1943, but it seemed like someone must have used it up until the 1950's. I also wonder if the Trees-Lake Manitou connection might explain the popularity of Lake Manitou for many folks from Pittsburgh. My grandparents started coming to the Beatty cottage in Rockville in the early 1930's and I suspect the Beatty's probably knew the Trees and started coming in the 1920's.

Other Rockville area cottages were, or still are, owned by families with their roots in Pittsburgh.

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Mrs. Trees in the centre
(Photo from Paul Moffatt)