

Golden Lake-From Yesterday to Today

Original settlers

Native American tribes

Before European settlers arrived in southeast Wisconsin in the 1830s, the Ho-Chunk and Potawatomi Native American tribes lived in the Golden Lake area.

European Settlers

In 1832, Lieutenant Meriwether Lewis drew a map of the Lake Region (including Golden Lake) as part of his exploration of the Great Lakes Region and points west. Together with William Clark, they led the Lewis and Clark Expedition through the largely uncharted interior of the USA. Lieutenant Lewis was an expert mapmaker and was an officer in the Black Hawk War.

After the Civil War, references were made to "Gold Lake," and the main road that was built was called "Gold Lake Road."

Golden Lake in the 19th Century

Golden Lake Brewery

The Golden Lake Brewery was started by Ortiges (Otis) Bullwinkle in 1859. Stones were hauled from the Wales area to build cooling caves for the beer. The brewery turned out about 400 kegs of beer per year stamped "Golden Lake Brewery." The kegs were loaded on to wagons and carried to saloons around the area, including Henry Stohman's Golden Lake House. In 1883, the railroad came through to Golden Lake bringing Milwaukee beer to the area, and many of the local breweries including Golden Lake closed.

Thompson's Stage Line

Thompson's stagecoach had Golden Lake as a regular stop, and a group of traveling lawyers stopped at the Golden Lake Brewery to "stretch their legs and have a bracer." This story was reported by Betty Sipos, a prominent local resident. Thompson's stage line ran along the military road (now Highway 18) constructed in 1838 by the US Army to connect Milwaukee and Madison.

Post Office

Ernest Schwager was born in Prussia in 1820, came to America in 1854, and settled on 141 acres on Golden Lake. He worked as a blacksmith and was appointed the Postmaster of Golden Lake by President Andrew Johnson in 1865.

Railroad in 1881, including Golden Lake Station

In 1881, the Northwestern railroad was built from Milwaukee to Madison and Golden Lake had its own station. The station was located on Indian Point Road where the bike trail now crosses. Families had to walk to their summer cottages carrying all their food and clothing for the weekend.



There are certainly stories told to me many times about how my mother's father, before she was born (the 1910s), would come up on the train from Chicago and have the train stop between Sullivan and Dousman. They would then get one of the local farmers to put their things on a horse-drawn cart, and bring them to the cottage. These farmers also helped by cutting ice out of the lake each winter which they would then put it into a big ice house somewhere in the back (we're not sure exactly where that icehouse stood, although I think I have found it in the background of one of those old pictures – although I may not have sent that particular one to you).

Marquette University

In 1911, Marquette University selected Golden Lake as the site of the training grounds for their football team.

(Information on early settlers was referenced in the book The Summit of Oconomowoc by Barbara and David Barquist)). Thanks to Barbara and David.

Lake businesses over the years

Golden Lake House/Stolman's Tavern

John Meyer built a hotel on several acres on the south end of Golden Lake in the late 1860s. The hotel was a large two-story building containing the Golden Lake Tavern. Since the tavern was on the road from Watertown to Milwaukee, it was a very busy place.

A&W

The A&W Root beer stand was located at Highway 18 and the boat launch.

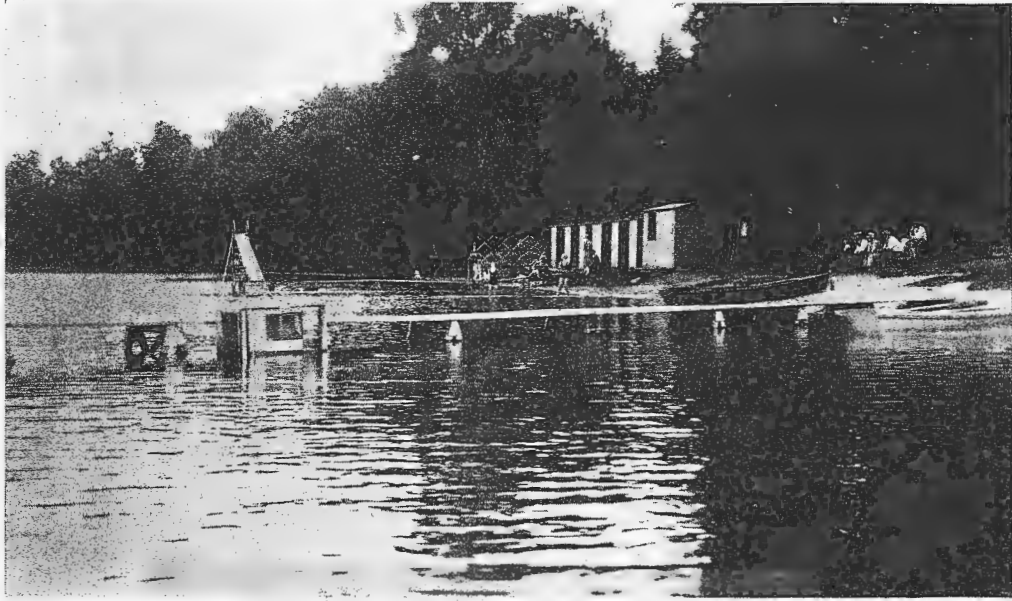
"I was a car hop at the A&W when I was 15 years old" - Barb Figi, current Golden resident.



Lake residents
Lake residents

Becker's Golden Lake Park (dance hall)

Becker's Golden Lake Park was the place to go for dancing (the polka) on Saturday night in the 1940s and early 50s, along with picnicking on Sunday.



Golden Lake Park Beach, Golden Lake, Wis.



BECKER'S GOLDEN LAKE PARK

DANCING EVERY SATURDAY NIGHT
 Cabaret Style — Parties Invited
 Music by The Beckers — Featuring Hammond Organ, etc.

Oconomowoc R. 4 — Box 293 Phone Sullivan LYnwood 3-251
 On West Side of Golden Lake between Highways 18 and 30

COCKTAIL BAR
 BATHING
 BOATS - FISHING

No Picnic Tax
 Large or too
 small
 Frank A. Beck
 Prop.

"My sister and I stayed in my parent's station wagon on Saturday evening while my mom and dad danced at Beckers."-Bob Butschke, current Golden Lake resident. Bob also had the first double decker pontoon boat on Golden Lake and a water slide that has moved around the lake.

Golden Lake Shoppe

Until 1929, the property on the corner of County BB and Highway 18 was a swamp hole. Reinhold Fritsch built a home and a store/tavern on the property, and patrons were able to purchase gasoline from 2 pumps. The store featured ice cream, groceries, tobacco, and the famous Weizel sausages.

(photo of Shoppe)

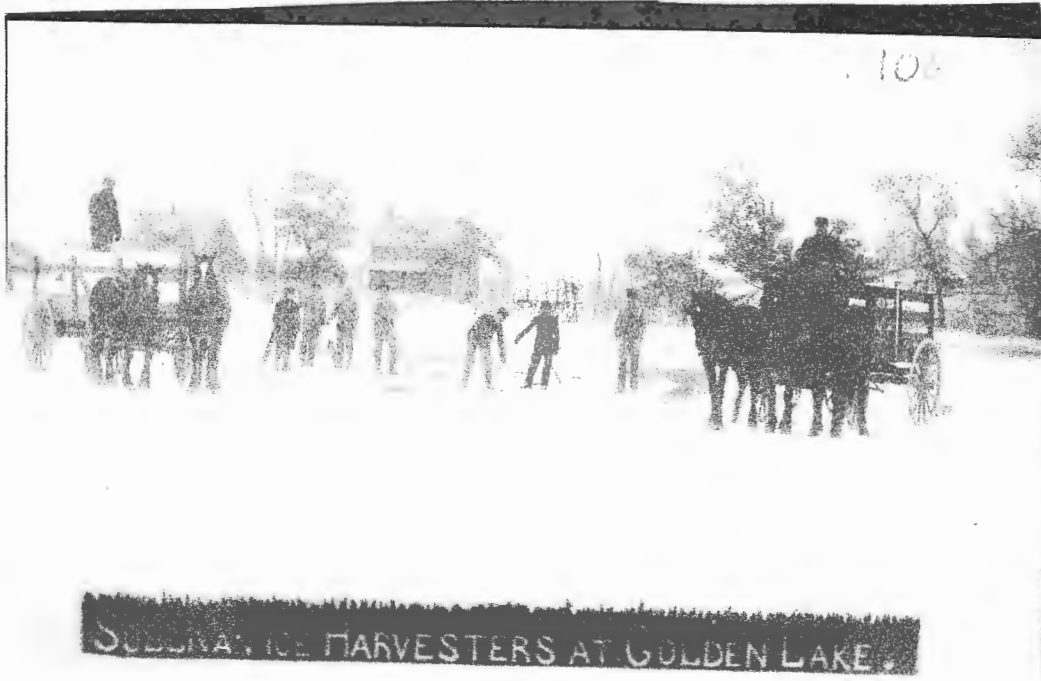
Golden Lake Yacht Club

In the 1940s, Golden Lake had a Yacht Club, and Class C sailboats raced on the lake many weekends. Two people crewed each boat, and membership in the Yacht Club cost \$5.00.



Sullivan Ice Harvesters

Ice harvesting was a tough and very cold job, done by part time employees such as carpenters and farmers who did not have full time work. The harvested ice was delivered by horse drawn carriages to homes and businesses to preserve food. Railroads also used harvested ice in refrigerated cars to move food across the country. Ice harvesting declined with the introduction of refrigerators and iceboxes.



Lake recreation over the years

Origin of no-wake restrictions

In the early 1970s, several Golden Lake property owners and Association members wanted to remedy the problem of out of towners and other off lake people racing around the lake on

weekends with their cigarette boats. The leaders (Dan Schlender, Jack Lugviel, and Bill Kueht) with the Village of Summit Board to implement a non-wake policy on Golden Lake for weekends and holidays.

Summer recreation on Golden Lake over the years

Swimming in the early 1900s



GOLDEN LAKE.



Summer Recreation in the 1970s

"We were in swimsuits every day in the summer until we got our pajamas on at bedtime>"-Karen Trepton, who grew up on Golden Lake during the 1970s.





