

Lodges of Sandbanks

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Sandbanks is rich in cultural history, with many lodges and recreational opportunities dating back to the late 1800's. The following is an accumulation of information of all of the lodges and recreation facilities that once stood at Sandbanks. Consulting the Resource Data Files, as well as the Prince Edward County archives, as well as an informal interview with a past visitor to Lakeshore Lodge completed the research that appears here.

Any further information on the lodges and their histories can be found by consulting the Resource Data files. All of the information found at the archives can now be found there as well.

Bayview Lodge

Robert and Alexander MacDonald built Bayview Lodge circa 1840, which makes it the oldest standing building in Sandbanks Provincial Park. It was owned and run by Kenneth and Helen Hyatt. During the busy summer months, the Hyatt's, along with their daughter Barbara would move into the barn, and later, the summer kitchen to accommodate lodge guests.

Bayview was operated as an overflow lodge for Lakeland. Guests would only sleep at Bayview, and take their meals as well as recreational time at Lakeland.

Bayview Lodge is located on County Road 12, close to Lakeland Lodge. It is the red stained, wood siding house facing Lake Ontario.

Evergreen House

Evergreen House was situated at the junction of roads to Picton and Lakeshore Lodge (four-way stop). It was owned and operated by some leading citizens from the West Point area. Evergreen House is an example of one of several popular lodges that established a pattern of recreational land use.

In the early 1900's, the natural sand movement of the West Lake dune began occurring quickly because of a lack of vegetation on the dune system. This caused the sand to move very quickly towards the lodge, and eventually a sixty-foot high dune was threatening the lodge from the rear.

In 1911, Evergreen House was sold for \$160.00. There is a local myth that the lodge was eventually buried under the sand, however, research proves this to be incorrect. After the lodge was bought, it was dismantled. The remains were moved to an unknown site

The Department of Lands and Forests bought the land for \$60 in 1922. There was an ongoing attempt to stabilize the dune system that was at one point moving 150 feet in 8 years. Reforestation of the dunes was important to stop such excessive movement. The road that now leads to Dunes Beach from the intersection where Evergreen House once stood was relocated three times to accommodate for the moving dune.

Lakeland Lodge

In the 1920's, Sarah MacDonald started her tourist business out of her own home. This business was unique at the time, because Sarah, or her daughter-in-law, Aoda MacDonald made all of the major business decisions. In the beginning, the lodge ran mostly as a bed and breakfast operation, until it was so busy that an expansion was required.

With the removal of the MacDonald Hyatt Warf in the 1920's, there was space available for a lodge to be built. In 1930, Norman MacDonald built Lakeland Hotel. The lodge included seven rooms for up to 20 guests, a dining room and 12 housekeeping cottages to hold 50 guests. It was built across the road from the MacDonald home (MacDonald House today), for close road access for the convenience of guests. The expansion of the lodge increased popularity of business and revenue for the Macdonald family.

With a dining room that could seat 70 guests, the meals were always very popular. Sunday Brunch was one of the lodge's main attractions, and would fill the dining room every Sunday until the last days of the lodge.

Recreational opportunities included tennis courts, pony rides, shuffleboard, lawn bowling and a dance hall. For the children there was a playground as well as farm activities to enjoy.

In 1966, Margaret Macdonald started her own professional hair salon at the lodge, this was a popular addition for the guests.

The lodge always catered to the middle class group of visitors to this area. A weeklong visit cost \$30 in 1973.

The lodge became the property of the MNR on Jan. 15, 1974. The building was dismantled shortly after that, and today the main building is in the possession of Mr. Doug Lester. The cottages were sold and moved throughout the area outside the park.

Buildings on Site

In an appraisal done in 1971, the following observations were made of the buildings on the lodge site.

Main building:

The main building on the site was a 2-storey frame construction covered with asbestos siding and a cottage style roof. The main guest entrance was through a one storey covered verandah facing Lake Ontario.

The first floor had a large reception room with an open stone fireplace, a coffee shop, fully equipped kitchen, with the verandah partitioned into a sunroom, a sitting room and an office.

On the second floor, there were 8 large bedrooms, and one washroom with a separate toilet.

All floors were pine, except for the sitting room and office, which were covered in carpet.

All of the cabins except for two were covered in siding, with the interiors lined with tile ceilings and pine floors, with a screen door. The two double housekeeping cottages were similar to the others. There were two outdoor privies close to the cottages.

Ontario House

There is very little information on this house. The actual location of the building is unknown. All that is known is that the building was constructed at the turn of the century, and was situated on the road to Lakeshore Lodge, halfway between Evergreen House and Lakeshore Lodge.

Daniel Bartlett bought the property in 1868, and built sometime after that. The house was built to serve to local guests, as well as beach travelers. In 1926 the house and land were sold to George Thibeault. The house later burned, however, the date is unknown.

In 1941, the Department of Lands and Forests bought a portion of the land, with the other portion being sold to James Hyatt. Because there was interest from Mr. Hyatt, it is thought that the house may have been located on the south side of the road, as this land would have been attached to the land he already owned for Lakeview Lodge.

Shore Acres Motel

Shore Acres motel was first built as a private residence. This building was located just past the sharp turn on County Road 12 (across from MacDonald Lane entrance). In 1909 Amos MacDonald, a lighthouse keeper at Salmon Point from 1897-1909 acquired the house. Initially he just dedicated most of the land to farming, until he started a small tourist home on the property in the early 1920's.

The motel consisted of a small tourist home, three cottages, four outbuildings and a small camping lot. The home could sleep 9 guests, while the camping lots could hold 35 guests. It is unknown how big the cabins were.

Mr. MacDonald maintained this tourist resort until his death in either 1941 or 1942 (there are conflicting stories). The property was then sold to Eva and William Wright in 1943. The property changed hands again in 1967 when it was sold to Donald and Margaret Rombough, and Keith MacDonald bought the farmland.

Unfortunately not much else is known about this tourist resort. The Romboughs dismantled the buildings after purchase, and the location of the remains is unknown.

Palace of the Moon

The Palace of the Moon was a traditional dance hall that was built in the early to mid 1930's. The hall was built by the Shannon family, and leased to Jimmy Davies who operated the hall. Davies operated the hall until the Second World War; it was then closed for the duration of the war. It was reopened shortly after the war ended (1948).

The Palace of the Moon stood in what is now the Outlet River side of Sandbanks, near site 328 in Cedars campground. The building was made from cedar and pine, except for the dance floor that was made of maple and raised above the regular floor and sanded smooth. Windows were screens with wood covers that were used when the weather was unpleasant, or while the establishment was closed. Access to the hall was made easy by a long wooden walkway that rose up to the hall.

The Palace operated from late May until Labour Day, and the occasional Saturday after. There was no official dress code, and patrons were usually dressed fairly casual. Sports jackets, dress slacks and leather shoes were the norm, no blue jeans were allowed.

In an interview with Elgin Vader, he spoke of being a member of the band that played at the dance hall after World War Two. His band was called the Melo-Dees, and they attracted capacity crowds from 1949-1951.

There was always a one or two dollar cover charge to get in, as well as a snack bar that sold some snacks and sodas that were used for mix. The dance hall did not have a liquor license, but allowed patrons to bring in their own alcohol.

A local constable provided security for the busy nights at the dance hall. He was usually paid \$5 and mickey of whisky for a nights work.

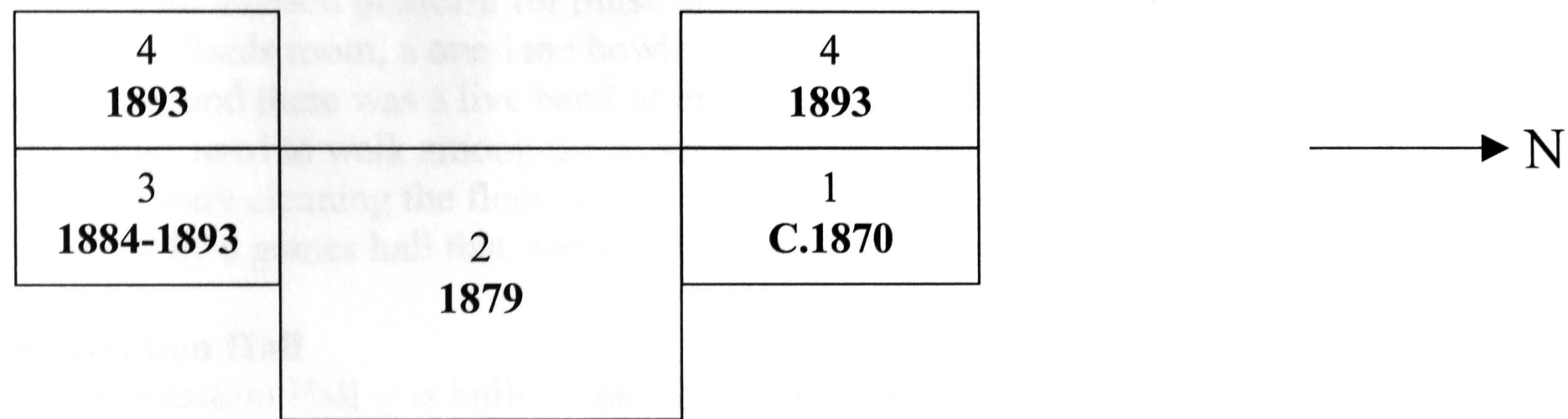
The dance hall was open until the summer of 1952, when the Ministry of Natural Resources bought the property and the building was torn down.

Lakeshore Lodge

Lakeshore Lodge was the largest, longest running tourist resort in the area. The lodge operated for almost 100 years, from 1876 to 1972. The lodge would see an average of 3500 guests in its hay day. There were many changes made to the lodge over that period of time. There were always a wide variety of recreational opportunities available to lodge guests.

Main Lodge

The main lodge was built in four stages between 1870 and 1893. The northeast wing is believed to be the oldest section of lodge, and may have been standing even before Daniel Macdonald bought the property in 1876, with a construction date circa 1870. The next addition was the east wing, which was added in 1879. The southeast wing was added sometime between 1884 and 1893. The final additions to the lodge were the southwest and northwest wings which were added in 1893. The large verandah on the front of the lodge was there from 1884 to 1950.



Over the years, the lodge saw a number of changes in ownership, from the time the lodge was opened in 1876, it changed hands 10 times.

- 1876 - Lewis Mastin to Daniel McDonald
- 1879 - John W. Hyatt enters partnership with Daniel MacDonald
- 1905 - D. McDonald and J. Hyatt to John W. Whattam
- 1919 - J. Whattam to Hubert B. Huff
- 1921 - H.B. Huff to John H. Fitzpatrick
- 1922 - J.H. Fitzpatrick to Robert B. McDonald and J.A. Stanton
- 1939 - R.B. McDonald and J.A. Stanton to Walter A. Hyatt
- 1945 - W.A. Hyatt to William and Robinson Watson
- 1947 - Watsons to Georgena Mackle
- 1971 - G. Mackle to Ministry of Natural Resources

Cottage Row

These cottages were constructed in the 1880s and 1890s according to most sources. The number of cottages is different in many sources as well as the cottage layout. Some sources say there were only 9 cottages and the layout in each was quite similar, except for the one at the south end, which was quite a bit larger than the others. Other accounts say that there were up to twelve cottages, all looking quite different, as different people who were on a long term lease for land built them individually. In either account, it is understood that most of the cottages had two bedrooms upstairs and two bedrooms and a sitting room downstairs. In the early years there was no indoor plumbing or electricity, however electricity was added later on in 1904, with the addition of the Delco generator system.

Guests who were staying in the cottages always ate with other lodge guests in the main dining room. Research shows that it was quite common for one family to rent a cottage for a long period of time, sometimes the entire summer season.

The windmill for generating waterpower for the lodge was located between the 5th and 6th cottages. There was also a wooden walkway that was added to cottage row, leading all the way out to West Point Park. It is understood that this wooden walkway was turned into a concrete sidewalk when electric lamps were added around World War 2. However, a later account from 1967-1971 says that there was no walkway, only wooden porches on the front of each cottage.

Dance Pavilion

Lakeshore Lodge's first dance pavilion was called the "Sunset Room". This room had no full walls, with a gap between the top of the walls and the ceiling so guests could enjoy the beautiful sunsets. Bat and birds would often fly between these gaps and frighten visitors. There were benches lining the walls, with a raised platform for musicians playing live music. Also attached to the "Sunset Room" were a billiards room, a one-lane bowling alley and an ice cream parlour. Dances were very popular in this time, and there was a live band or orchestra almost every weekend. Mr. Whattam, a past owner of the lodge, used to walk among the dancers shaving yellow soap in small flakes on the floor, so the dancers were cleaning the floor as they danced. The dance pavilion was eventually removed, and replaced by a games hall that was built at another location on the lodge site.

Recreation Hall

The Recreation Hall was built in the 1960's after the previous building, which occupied the same site, burned down. During the day, this was a popular place for women to play bridge while the children were playing and the men went fishing. The LSL crest is still visible today on the terrazo floor that was brought in all the way from Italy. This recreation hall burned partially in the fire that destroyed the lodge in 1983.

Carson Cottage

This cottage was built in 1879 as a second home for Daniel MacDonald and his family. The cottage had a rather Victorian style, and served as an example of Daniel's wealth and standing in the community (at this time 'cottages' were not common). In the 1920, William Hyatt bought the cottage when his home burned. Carson Cottage became his permanent residence, however it is not known how long he lived here. The reason it is called Carson Cottage today is because the last person to live in it was a Mr. or Mrs. Carson. He or she rented the cottage after their home burned.

Recreational Opportunities

There were many recreational opportunities available to lodge guests. Riding stables were at the lodge from day one. Of course the sand dunes, were a favourite with all guests. Over time additions such as a baseball diamond (late 1800's), carousel (1920's), 3-hole golf course (1920's), tennis courts (1940's), shuffleboard (1960's) and a swimming pool (1960's) were very popular with lodge guests. Local groups would frequently visit the lodge to take advantage of these recreational facilities. Sunday school picnics, political rallies, sailing regattas and other events were part of a busy summer at Lakeshore Lodge.

Miscellaneous

- a Delco system was put in place in 1904, hydro connections were made in 1939
- horse-drawn carriages, wooden sidewalks, oil lanterns and outdoor plumbing were the scene in 1870.

- in 1904 rates were \$7.50/person/week, \$3.50/horse and \$2.50 for a maid or to stable your horse
- wages for a summer for a girl \$100 (no date)
- some families returned for three generations
- may have been used for smuggling at one time; a crawl space in the northeast foundation was found that had a wooden box suspended from ceiling - possibly to conceal contraband (liquor from United States).
- a lot of Americans would visit the lodge
- there was a fountain in the middle of the dining room that would trickle water, and was surrounded by flowers.
- local people would come in for dinner on Wednesday (steak night), and Friday (smorgasboard night)
- in the later years (1967-1971) games hall was used for square dancing on Fridays
- an average staff at Lakeshore Lodge would be about 16 to 20 people for a summer.