

South of the Village by Lori Treloar

Early settlement at Shawnigan Lake was not limited to the village area. A 1912 subdivision map indicates that most of the waterfront at Shawnigan Lake had been sold, or was already spoken for, by that time. A surprising number of people lived, or owned property, towards the south end of the lake.

During the 1930's-1940's, there were at least two different stores near the south end. Both stores operated close to the waters edge. One, on the east side, at Don's Camp, and one on the west side called "Smiths". Neither of these existed for a significant length of time and both carried only a few basic items. Smiths' also delivered fresh vegetables, by boat, to properties in the area. A dairy farm at the south end of the lake, on the large property where the east and west roads meet, provided milk for the locals.



The two stores were in addition to the Cliffside Store, which was located on the southwest corner of the east Shawnigan Lake Road at Cliffside Road. Cliffside Store operated from 1920-1962 and although tiny, it housed the post office for residents of the south end. Cliffside also provided a station stop for the E & N which ran two northbound and two southbound passenger trains daily. Many south end summer residents got off the train at Cliffside and made their way to their summer camps, whether on the east or the west side, from there. A public dock at the end of Cliffside Road was used by people on the west side for pick up, and drop off, from the train.

In addition, a hunting and fishing destination, "Savira Lodge", was built on the south west side of the lake (c 1916) and operated until it was bought in the late 1920's as a private summer place. As there was no road on that side of the lake, all guests were picked up at the village wharf and taken there in the launch "Savira". The lodge was meant to attract hunters and fishermen but stories indicate that it was the excellent cuisine that became the attraction.

A one room school, built on the west side near Ida Road, serviced the local children from 1934-1941. It was considered too far for the west side children to attend school in the village. The only person to teach at the West Side School was the esteemed Miss Elsie Miles. The largest enrollment for the school in one year was nineteen students.

A chiropractor, a doctor, a cougar hunter, several cigar makers, and an Austrian (who lived year round on one of the islands) are just a few examples of the diverse group of early property owners that you might have met if you had ventured south of the Village.