

THE LAKES OF CANOSIA TOWNSHIP



On the north edge of Canosia Township we have Fish Lake, which is a reservoir lake that receives drainage from rivers and streams. Wild Rice Lake, on the east, is also a reservoir lake. Both reservoirs are managed by Minnesota Power. Caribou Lake and Pike Lake, on the western side of the township, are natural lakes fed by springs and streams.

We have several artifacts found near the shores of these lakes at what were former campsites of the early people who traveled through this area. Stone implements are on display in the Canosia Town Hall.

At one time, the town site of Valley Field was platted in the northeast corner of the township by speculators. It was never really settled, but a few homes were built and a school site chosen. There were no roads connecting this area through the swamp to the rest of the township. There was talk of seceding from Canosia and attaching itself to Fredenberg Township to the north. This never came to pass.

Fish in the township's lakes and streams provided food for our early residents, especially in the spring at spawning time. Sometimes the fish were kept alive for a long period of time by damming a pool of water off to the side of a stream or creek near their homes. Canning and pickling of fish was often done, too.

The draw of these lakes brought summer cabins, resorts, swimming beaches, the AAA golf club (Country Club or Auto Club), boat rental, barn dances, a roller rink, and some businesses which built cabins to allow their employees a summer retreat. The Merritt family, which is pictured in the Town Hall, is an example.

As roads were built and improved, more and more large tracts of land adjacent to Caribou and Pike lakes were platted into smaller and smaller lots so many more summer cabins could be built. There evolved a kind of summer community where people became life-long friends.

Minnesota Power platted land along the shores of the reservoir lakes to lease the lots where people built cabins and permanent homes.

We, here in Canosia Township, do not have access to all of these lakes directly through our township. Fish Lake and Wild Rice Lake have public accesses in adjoining townships. Pike Lake and Caribou Lake also have access from Grand Lake Township on their western shores, as well as access from Canosia Township on the eastern sides.

According to the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, at <http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/lakefind> which lists about half of our state's lakes, our lake names are rather common. In Minnesota, while there is only one Wild Rice Lake, there are five Caribou Lakes, 26 Fish Lakes, and 11 Pike Lakes, but no Canosia Lake (Pike Lake's former name).

On the early maps, Pike Lake was named Canosia Lake (Canosia in Ojibwa means pike). How and when the name changed on the map is a mystery to me.

Canosia Historical Society, submitted by Millicent O'Connell