

Bethinking of Old Orleans

C.W.Lattin County Historian

Vol. XVII

7-22-95

No. 25

LAKESIDE 1890



When I saw this delightful photo recently at The Timeless Treasures Antique Shop near Childs, I couldn't resist purchasing it for more reasons than one. The photographer's label states "Lakeside. F.A. Warner, Photographer." On the back someone once wrote "Lakeside, June 28, 1890." Other than that, no written information appears as to who the individuals are. I did check the date and June 28, 1890 was a Saturday.

It seems obvious this group was out for a picnic or at least enjoying a beautiful day in June 105 years ago. It may also be fair to assume that they planned on doing some boating on Johnson's Creek as row boats are partially shown in the photo. Also, we might wonder why the older gentleman is out with six attractive young ladies. I think this may be in part a family group. I also think the man may well be one of my great grandfather's brothers and the young woman to his far left a great aunt. I'm also positive the woman with eye glasses in the center is Molly L. Lattin, a distant relative, although she died before I was born.

Aside from who they might be, let's look more closely at the photo. Times certainly have changed! Almost any one the age of these women going out on a trip like this would be clad in a lot less clothing today than what we see them wearing here. Indeed, there are no shorts, swim suits, T-shirts, sandals, sneakers, sun glasses or short hair styles. In fact, everyone in the picture is dressed to the hilt. Most have hats and have probably removed them for the photographer. We note the man is holding a derby hat and the woman next to him holds one decorated with daisies. The woman who is standing is also wearing some daisies which suggests that along the way they stopped and picked some. Instead of a "boom box" or radio, one of the women is posed with a guitar which indicates they had live music from this instrument or that it was used to accompany singing from one or more of the group. A crocheted afghan appears draped over the side of the boat. Indeed, a tranquil group in a placid setting so long ago.

But there is more. Let us look at the background. This photo just happens to be a very good one of the bridge crossing Johnson's Creek over

to Lakeside Park. In the far distance we can also see Lakeside Bluff and a couple of the original cottages located there. The bridge in the picture was replaced in 1894 by a Modified Pratt truss-type bridge (Steel). In 1987 that bridge was replaced with the present one. The bridge in the picture appears to be a wooden one supported on a pier in the center of Johnson's Creek. The 1893 Highway Manual of N.Y. states: "A person who drives over a bridge, a vehicle or load together weighing four tons or over is liable for all damages to persons or property by reason of the breaking of said bridge." It is plain such a code was conceived out of necessity when there were many bridges like this around.

Lakeside, it seems, was quite a resort back when this picture was taken. Consequently many people traveled there to enjoy picnics, boating and the beauty of the setting.

From "Landmarks of Orleans County" by Isaac Signor, published in 1894, we find this interesting bit of information: "Bruce S. Hoag was born in Otsego County September 22, 1847. He was educated at Lockport Union School and took a preparatory course at the Rochester Collegiate Institute. He inherited a fondness for flowers from his mother and in his younger days cultivated fruit and flowers. In 1882 Mr. Bruce Hoag purchased the peninsula at the mouth of Johnson's Creek, fronting on Lake Ontario and containing 42 acres. On this he erected a commodious hotel, cottages, pavillions, rinks, etc., and the place is now known as Lakeside. The hotel is capable of accommodating 150 guests and the resort is widely known. There are 16 cottages situated near the hotel owned by private parties residing in Washington, D.C., Buffalo, Rochester, Cleveland, Ohio, and Albion, besides six cottages owned by Mr. Hoag himself."

It was Bruce Hoag who, in 1882, first erected a bridge across Johnson's Creek to gain access to the peninsula which became such a popular resort. Carlton Historian Lysbeth Hoffman notes that the bridge shown here is the second one across the creek as the first one collapsed at an early date forcing Hoag to erect a replacement.