

Stewart's Landing Dam.

(dam)

Sometime in the early to middle 1800's a stone dam was constructed near what is now called "Cold Spring" which is at the beginning of the long and winding channel entering Lily Lake from the Stewart's Landing direction. This dam was probably to control the level of water on Canada Lake for moving logs. The location of this dam can be seen by observing the narrow passage at that point and the large boulders on each side of the channel.

Later in the century another dam was constructed at the narrows above the present dam near the Vallee camp. The remains of this can still be seen. This was used to raise the level of the water through the Stewart's Landing flow to Canada Lake for the navigation of a passenger steamboat that was used to carry campers to Canada Lake before the building of an access road. It has been said that one of the steamboats, when discontinued in use, was taken to a deep part of Canada Lake and sunk.

A third dam was built about half way between the present dam and the narrows. This I believe was constructed by James Stewart for the purpose of powering a sawmill. This dam was built in the later part of the 19th century about 1876. The remains of this dam can be seen when the water is lowered to the winter level. The sawmill apparently burned and was not rebuilt. When the present dam was being resurfaced in 1990 and the water was at an all time low, machinery that was in the sawmill was seen in the bottom of the lake. This included a wood thickness planer and a water turbine that was used to power the machinery of the mill. This machinery is under about twenty feet of water in the summer.

The present dam was built in 1922 by the Adirondack Power and Light Corp. for the generation of electricity. A water line about six feet in diameter and about five miles long was made of cyprus and conducted water to the generator on the edge of Sprite Creek. The water drop was about 380 feet. The static pressure build up of the water in this drop is about 165 pounds per square inch.

In 1927 Adirondack Power and Light joined with five other utilities to form the New York Power Corp. In 1950 this Corporation merged with the Buffalo Niagara Power Corp. to form the present Niagara Mohawk Power Corp.

Generation of power by this facility was terminated in 1958 for economic reasons.

In 1965 the Oregon Mountain Corp. purchased the dam and all the land on both sides of the flow from the Niagara Mohawk Power Corporation and laid out the building lots as seen today. One hundred and ten lots were originally surveyed on the north shore. The south shore was not completed as camp lots because of environmental restrictions imposed by the Dept. of Environmental Conservation. The south shore is now owned by New York State and will remain forever wild.

The story of the dam does not stop with Oregon Mountain. Tax assessments on the dam were to be reduced as camps were built and lots sold to pick up the revenue generated by the dam. The assessment of the dam was not reduced as expected by the Town of Stratford. A court case reduced the assessment, but not to the satisfaction of the Oregon Mountain Corporation. Taxes were not paid on the dam, and it reverted to the County of Fulton. Fulton county did not want the responsibility of the dam and threatened to destroy it. Meetings held by the newly formed Stewart's Landing Association, the Canada Lake Protective Association during the Presidency of that organization of Arden P. Zipp, Fulton County, Town of Stratford, The Oregon Mountain Corporation and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation resulted in Assembly bill number A-7688 and Senate bill number 6112 being passed in May of 1973 empowering the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to take ownership of the dam. This assures the continuation of the lake and the maintenance of the dam.

The control of the water level and the time schedule for raising and lowering has been a cooperative agreement between the Stewart's Landing Association, the Canada Lake Protective Association and the Department of Environmental Conservation. This cooperation has benefitted all the residents of the lakes. This continued cooperation is essential to maintain the lakes for everyone to enjoy.

As mentioned above, during the summer of 1990 the water level was not raised. There was extensive work done on the dam by a New York State hired contractor. The spillway, face of the dam and wings of the dam were resurfaced by removal of porous, decayed and fractured concrete. New concrete was installed. New gate gates were installed and a new system of opening and closing the gates. A new gate house was built and fencing installed.

During the summer of 1983 there was an application for a hydroelectric power project along Sprite Creek filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. This was filed on June 6 of that year for a term of 36 months to prepare studies. This was filed by a group headed by Raymond N. Gload from Schenectady. The study was to cost \$30,000 and was to encompass Stewart's Landing and Canada Lake. It was to utilize the Stewart's Landing dam to provide the water power to drive the turbines to run the generators. The study indicated that the project was not economically feasible and was dropped. Niagra Mohawk stipulated in the 1965 deed of transfer to the Oregon Mountain Corp. that the dam could not be used for power generation. This was probably a factor in rejecting the project.

Note: The dates as shown in the text for the construction of dams and the acquiring of the Stewarts's Landing property by the Oregon Mountain Corporation are taken from dates indicated by the property abstract as provided by the Tryon County Abstract Corporation.

October 1995

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