

# The Town Grows Again In the Twenties

## Nick Stoner and His Monument

Of the dedication of the statue of Nick Stoner on the golf course which bears Stoner's name, Eberly Hutchinson later wrote, *"It is doubtful whether there would be any memorial of Caroga's ancestral hero other than Simms' pages and Stoner's tombstone, had it not been for the interest in local antiquity of Cyrus Durey, and his desire to add historic appeal to the natural charms of our region."*

The bronze statue by Joseph Pollia, a sculptor from New York City, was unveiled by two children, sixth generation descendants of Nick Stoner. Eberly Hutchinson, who was to accept the monument on behalf of the town at the August 21, 1929 ceremony, described the work as a *"figure of a stalwart young man, clad in deerskins; quiet, earnest, and resolute as he looks on the mountain wilderness about him. In the pose, in proportions, there is something vaguely reminiscent of classic art, a suggestion of a figure modeled in Phidian days or in that tradition of Greece reborn in fifteenth century Italy. And if you look longer with an eye familiar with renaissance statues, you will see that, divested of his deer skin rainment, the young man before you is Michelangelo's David."* The remarks say more of the speaker than his subject. It is thought by some that the model for the statue

was the game protector, Allie Abrams, who was like Nick a natural woodsman.

The choice of Nick Stoner as the town's symbol was a product of the adulation bestowed on the trapper by Simms and later by Cyrus Durey. To Durey, Nick Stoner was an heroic figure, a magnificent symbol of life in the town. Researching Stoner's past became Durey's lifelong hobby. Old Nick became a Bunyonesque myth about whom many tales could be told. So many biographical sketches of Nick Stoner exist that it is difficult to determine the real picture of the man. His proper image probably lies somewhere between the man Durey thought was larger than life and the destitute farmer who claimed, in an 1820 appeal for a Revolutionary War Pension, that he had no real possessions. He *"occupied a lot of land as tenant at will,"* and his personal estate was valued at \$91. It consisted *"of 1 more, 1 cow, 3 hogs, 1 calf, some fowl, 13 traps for hunting, some old knives, some pots and kettles, tea cups and crockery, 1 plough and 1 iron chain."*

For this history of the Town of Caroga, it seems most fitting to quote the short biographical sketch written at the time of the dedication by Cyrus Durey. In it, Nick Stoner is depicted as a legendary hero.

## MAJOR NICHOLAS STONER

*Every large or small community, both of civilized and barbarous men, has its traditionary heroes. The memories of some one person or other, who in his time stood out sharply from his fellows, is preserved by them in tradition or by the written word, often with fantastic embellishments of his person or his acts. Among them he becomes a demigod, fitted for worship by rude people or for emulation by others. The gods of the ancient world originated thus. Reverence for the past and its principal actors who, in the passage of time, became heroic figures to posterity is, therefor, universal.*

*We Americans revere the historic Washington, and can hardly realize that he possessed human frailties. We Fulton County people look back on Sir William Johnson in much the same way. The men and women who, under the direction and chaperonage of Johnson, commenced the labor of converting the savage wilderness into what is now Fulton county with its cities, villages, farms, and homes, are collectively remembered with a kindred respect, their foibles or shortcomings forgotten. Few of these men stand out from the rest with clarity.*

*Among those who do, is Major Nicholas Stoner, a pioneer's son, a patriot soldier in his youth and middle age, and a lifelong hunter and trapper. The story of his life, stretching over more than ninety years, seemed worthy of preservation to "Simms" the historian of the Mohawk Valley, and he preserved it in the "Trappers of New York." Stoner was born on the Jersey seacoast, and brought here as a youngster by his father, who settled at Broadalbin under Johnson's patronage several years before the war and was probably the first settler in that town.*

### HAD DEADLY ACCURACY

*The boy learned when half-grown to shoot with deadly accuracy the wild animals that abounded in the surrounding forests so that the family might eat, while the land was being cleared and crops grown, for in those days supplies could not be imported and food must be procured in the woods. Besides he did his share of the clearing and seeding and cropping.*

*After the war of the Revolution had opened and the fear of the Indians forced the stragglng settlers like the Stoners to gather around the protecting forts of Mayfield and Johnstown, the Stoners going to the latter place, all three, the father and the two sons, Nicholas but fifteen years old, enlisted in the army*

*in 1777 and served during the war. Nicholas was always eager to participate in any activity within reach and soon passed from the position of drummer boy, to which he had been assigned, into the ranks. He was with Arnold at the battle of Saratoga when the General took a bit in his teeth and made his fight without orders, and also at Oriskany. He was in the Rhode Island Campaign, at Valley Forge, at the capture of Major Andre at West Point, and at Yorktown.*

*The war being about to close, the father returned a few months in advance of the boys and having taken his wife on to a vacant farm, the Quilhot farm at Albany Bush, was killed and scalped by the Indians there, leaving to the boys a justifiable hatred of the Indian and his barbarous cruelty.*

*When Nicholas returned (he was Nick to everybody), he soon married the girl he left behind when he went to war, Anna Mason, of Johnstown, and started into pioneering work as his father had done before him. The courtship of the Stoners has been beautifully related by Chambers in his "Little Red Foot." He purchased from the State, which had confiscated the Johnson lands, a hundred acres of wilderness, now the Fulton County Poor Farm. But Stoner's expertness with the gun and the ease with which he could track the wilderness and capture its wild animals lured him into hunting and trapping the beaver and the otter, the sale of which furs made that occupation more profitable as well as more congenial than clearing and farming the land.*

*He selected for his field the string of lakes from Caroga to Piseco, which territory was Indian land until its sale by the state in 1794. Stoner sold the place he had first bought that he might be nearer his trapping route, built a cabin in what is now the Town of Caroga, on fifty acres of land just east of the John Gage place, where his daughter, Mary, who married William Mills, was born. After marriage, she lived the rest of her life at the old Mills place on the Peck Creek. Besides this daughter and another who died young, he had four sons. Stoner lived there until 1794, when he built a house on the Glasgow road near Pines Rest.*

*The proof of Stoner's occupancy of the Pines Rest Cabin comes from the official description of the highway leading to Stratford, which in the Caughnewaga district records reads: "Commencing at the house of Reuben Brookins (now the house of Stephen Fuller) and running thence northwesterly*

of the highway leading to Stratford, which in the Caughnewaga district records reads: "Commencing at the house of Reuben Brookins (now the house of Stephen Fuller) and running thence northwesterly across lot No. 56, following the old Indian path past the house of Nicholas Stoner." The record was in 1796. Later, about 1820, he purchased the farm at Caroga Lake, already cleared by James McClelland (now occupied by the Vrooman Hotel), numerous cottages, and the Mrs. Willett place, and there lived until 1838, when he sold the property for hotel purposes. The proposed monument will be but a few rods away and will overlook Stoner's home of forty years. This sesquicentennial year of the crushing of the Six Nations by General Sullivan is an appropriate time for the erection of a monument to this man. The State Department of Education, recognizing this fact, is aiding in the expense.

During all of these years he had been an active trapper and a hunter of those wild animals on which there was a bounty, except for the interval of three years which he spent in the army during the War of 1812.

When the war opened, he was in the militia in which General Dodge, of Johnstown, was a general, enlisted, and was at Sackett's Harbor and at Plattsburgh. He was officially the Drum Major but more often was Dodge's Chief of Scouts. He was active in the militia before and after that war being an officer, and participated in every general training day in Montgomery and often in neighboring counties. He was the personal friend of General Dodge, of Daniel Cady and General Cochrane as well as J. Fennimore Cooper, who, it is believed, took him as the original Leather Stocking in his works. He and Green White, a noted Otsego County trapper, were often partners in trapping.

In addition to his hunting and trapping, he did the work of the ordinary backwoods farmer and also filled many minor offices of the town and county.

He was Deputy Sheriff, Constable, Highway Commissioner and Assessor of the Town of Bleecker until it was divided and the part in which he lived became the Town of Caroga, when we find him serving that Town in the same capacities.

His morals were those of the time. He was a fun-loving person enjoying a practical joke and yet had a dignified personality. Deception was outside his understanding. He liked folks, men and women, and yet elected to spend a good part of his life in

the solitudes of the woods. What he considered right he aggressively did whether approved or not by anyone else.

His dramatic killing of his father's Indian murderer is intensely interesting. He was in Johnstown on one of his infrequent visits. On entering the public room of the inn kept by Von Clair, the present home of County Clerk Cross, he found several Indian hunters who had come down from the wilderness to dispose of their furs and had become intoxicated, having completed their sales and received their money. They were boasting, each to the other of his own prowess, as Indians when intoxicated always will, and as men of other races often do. One was pointing to his tomahawk handle marked with notches and describing what each notch represented. "And this," he said in the Mohawk tongue, which Stoner spoke with ease, "is for old Henry Stoner." As the fact reached Nick's understanding that his father's murderer stood before him boasting in his intoxication of that murder, he in righteous indignation grabbed the red-hot andiron from the fireplace and struck the murderer with it, without doubt causing his death, although the body was removed by the other Indians.

At the time this act was held to be praiseworthy. He was not called to account for it by the law, although lodged in jail for a few hours, when he was released by the sheriff on demand of the entire town, voiced at the front door of the jail. Today such an act would be condemned. But the horrors of Indian warfare were still a vivid memory to all and the Old Testament law of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" was often the rule of conduct. Individual acts frequently avenged individual wrongs instead of awaiting the slow-moving law. Such has been the fact in all new countries.

Stoner's habits were those of the time, incredibly industrious through life, with only an occasional day at militia training, at court or market trips to Johnstown, when tradition says that the old hero considerably enjoyed stimulants, as custom permitted when meeting his friends and old companions in arms, which only happened on these rare occasions.

In his old age he built a house at Newkirks, where Garrett A. Newkirk had established a busy community and there he spent the last half dozen years of his life, enjoying a pension from the country for his services in two wars and delighting, as all old folks do, in recounting stories of his youth and middle age, when he had been extraordinarily active.



*State Historian Dr. Flick addressing the gathering.*

*All those who knew him liked him, admired him and tried to make his last days pleasant. When he died in 1853, his funeral was held at Johnstown and the procession which followed him to his grave in the Kingsborough cemetery, was said to be the largest procession that the county had seen up to that time.*

*He was buried there and not in Caroga, to give every one the opportunity to pay their last respects to one of the last surviving soldiers of the Revolutionary War resident in the county, and to this personally attractive old pioneer and woodsman, who belonged to the entire county and not to Caroga alone.*

*He was one of the many thousands who made the country. The names of most of them have been long forgotten. His memory now stands as one of them, typical of the rest but remembered because the salient points of his life were recorded in book form and he was perhaps a little more intelligent, a little more active, and a little more adventurous than the rest, knowing no fear. The story of his life*

*was interesting enough to give "Simms's" book a phenomenal sale for those days, running into three editions. Since that time the community has accepted him and his work as indicative of the life in this section when America was in the making.*

*The generations succeeding the publication of the book have had a glimpse of that life through it, and we, especially of this town of which he was one of the first, if not the first white resident, will continue to honor him with reverence and appreciation and in doing so will honor the memory of those others now nearly forgotten who did their share in the making of America.*

*The erection of a lasting monument, now under way, will not magnify his deeds or those others who served their country in its making, but will recall them to coming generations and point to emulation by posterity in the different environments of today and of the future.*

*Cyrus Durey*

## THE DEDICATION CEREMONY

### PROGRAM

*Dedication of a Monument  
to Major Nicholas Stoner  
at Caroga Recreation Park  
August 21st, 1929*

Music by Elks Band, Gloversville, N.Y.

#### *Chairman*

Asa B. Peake, Chairman Board of  
Supervisors of Fulton County

#### *Invocation*

Rev. Walter Shaver, Pastor M.E. Church, North Bush-Caroga

#### *Unveiling of Monument*

by Henry Stoner Gage, 3rd and Helen Gage  
Decendents of Major Stoner in the sixth generation

#### *Salute by the Spirit of '76*

Address by Dr. Alexander C. Flick, State Historian

Salute by Boy Scouts of Fulton County

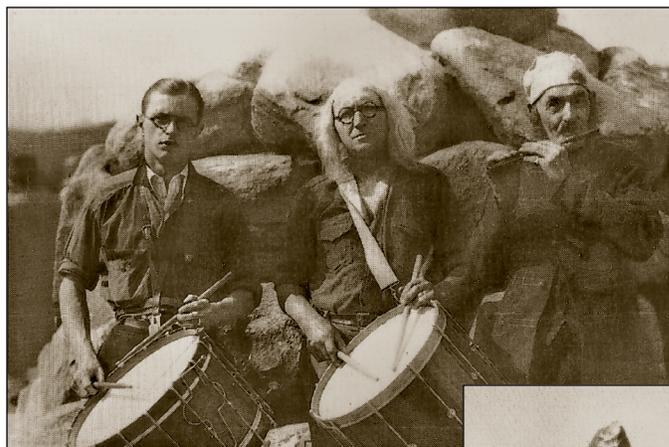
Acceptance of care of Monument on behalf  
of the town of Caroga  
Hon. Eberly Hutchinson

#### *Singing*

America - Audience

#### *Benediction*

Rev. Peter Winkelman,  
Pastor St. Barbara's Chapel, Caroga Lake



*The Spirit of '76—John Sowles, Jr.,  
John Sowles, Sr., and Dan Hamm.*



*"Nick Stoner"  
Monument*



*The Honorable Cyrus Durey, Robert W. Chambers, Asa B. Peek, and Lucius N. Littauer.*



## Nick Stoner Golf Course

It is true that without Cyrus Durey, the town would not have had Nick Stoner as a symbol for the Caroga Recreation Park. It is also true that without Durey, the town might not have had the golf course.

The golf course was constructed on land owned by the Durey Land and Lumber Company. In a complicated exchange of property that was not resolved until 1938, Durey gave the town the farm land where hay had been grown and horses pastured for the Durey company. It was an ideal site for the golf course.

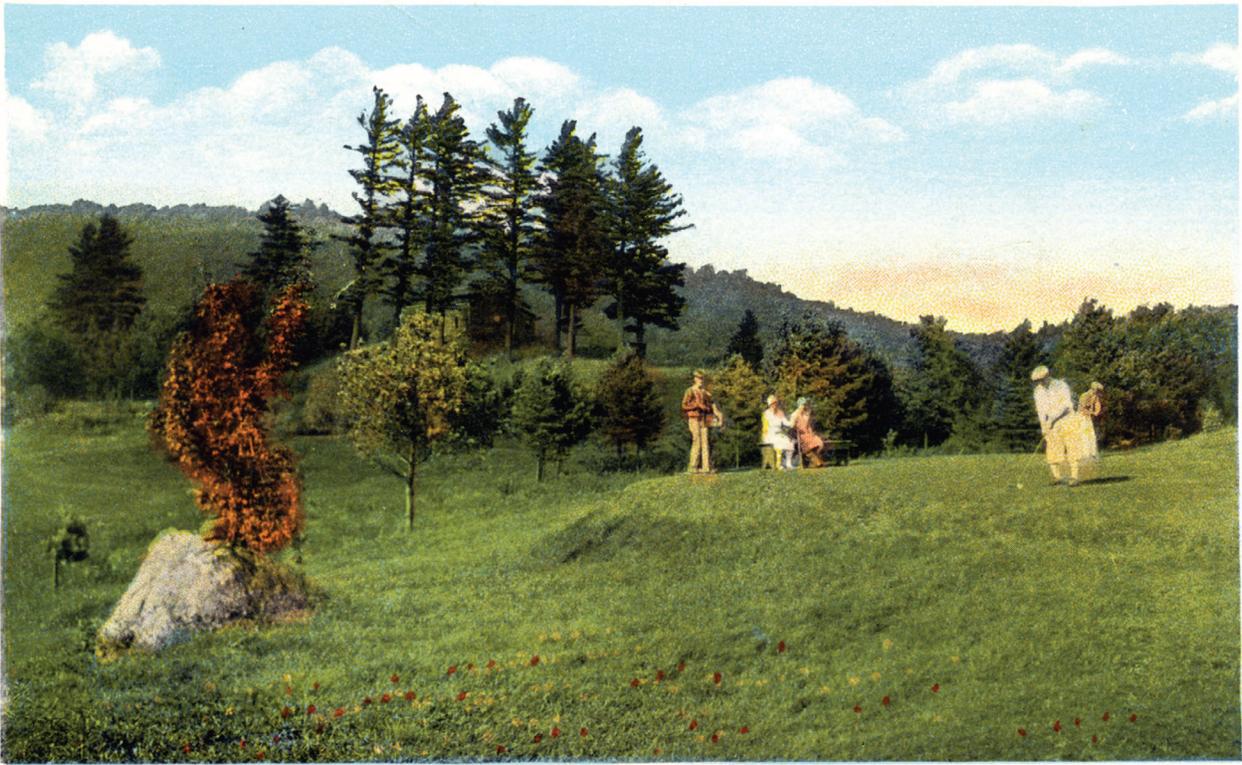
In 1922, Cyrus Durey conceived the Caroga Recreation Park. He had constructed a small landing field so that airplanes could use it to give sight-seeing rides around the lakes. When this scheme failed, work was begun on the golf course.

Durey owned land on the town hall side of the Wheelerville road and some land across, but not the barns which had been a part of the tannery. The towns fixed up the largest barn for a club house for the golf course, calling it the Caroga Park Recreation Center. Durey exchanged the town hall building and the surrounding golf course lands for the Recreation building, which he later sold and which has been converted into the present Nick

Stoner Inn. It was this land transfer that brought forth charges of impropriety, and town politics played a large part in what followed. In 1934, the town was still trying to obtain title to the land on the west side of the Wheelerville road which "*was heretofore dedicated by Hon. Cyrus Durey, but not deeded as understood and agreed.*" The town actually voted to instruct Supervisor Howard Morey to take proceedings against Guy Durey and the Cyrus Durey estate to recover moneys that were allegedly illegally paid to them. After much wrangling, the town finally agreed to pay the Durey estate \$650 for the deed to the golf course lands. This also entitled the town to water rights from the inlet creek. Title to the land required that the town own it only so long as the golf course was maintained as such for public use.

The first six holes of the course were ready for play in 1925, and as Dot Leavitt, who was one of the course's first players, tells the story of the course, "*We shot from the first tee to the ninth green for the seventh hole. It was a free for all, no green's fees; and it really was a Free For All. Since 90% of the players were novices, they thought that by yelling FORE they had the right to hit anywhere, anytime.*"





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*Mr. and Mrs. E. Mochrie and Mr. and Mrs. J. McDougal (Dot Leavitt), were the golfers in this 1928 postcard. Ross Reynolds was the caddy.*



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*The Wheeler Claflin Store became the clubhouse and later the Town Hall.*

*"The roughs were truly that, and the woods surrounding the greens and fairways were all natural and beautiful. There were great swaths of deep hay between some fairways, where players spent much of their time looking for lost balls. The young pro tried to keep order, but there were plenty of hassles.*

*"The next year, 1926, the 7th and 8th holes were completed, going up in the woods and we started to pay to play. It was \$25 a year for men. \$10 for women, and a friendly group of between 50 and 75 people joined. (The fees are now \$100 for men and \$85 for women, certainly nominal.)"*

The second nine holes were completed in 1929, the year of the dedication ceremony, when Nick Stoner officially became the symbol of the Caroga Recreation Park.

In the 1930's a WPA project started removing boulders and rocks from the fairways and in the process they created many unusual hazards for the players who had to hit around both rock and holes. Howard Morey was the town supervisor and responsible for vast improvements in the course under the WPA project.

The golf course introduced a few strange items to the town's budget. Fifty years before the town had budgeted for water troughs and allotments for sheep killed by dogs. In the thirties the town

added \$18.50 for trophies and medals, \$20.00 for 4,000 scorecards, \$28.40 for two tons of coal for the showers, and \$1.80 for cloths for washing golf balls. The most unusual items in the town budget in the 1930's however, was the annual appropriation of \$62.20 for the purchase of deer food.



*Francis Smith, Howard Morey, who was Supervisor from 1934 to 1949, and Channing Floyd, the golf pro.*



The town actually harbored deer at the Caroga Recreation Park, in a pen built between the 7th, 8th, and 9th holes of the golf course. At that time Allie Abrams was the game warden, and he knew every stick, stone, and stream in the area. He brought injured, stray, or orphaned deer to the golf course pen and fed and cared for them. The deer pen proved to be an unusual hazard on the golf course.

During the 30's, extensive improvements were also made on the Golf Club building. The Wheeler-Clafin Company store was transformed into the Golf Club, complete with lounge and showers. Later, the Town offices were installed in part of the building.

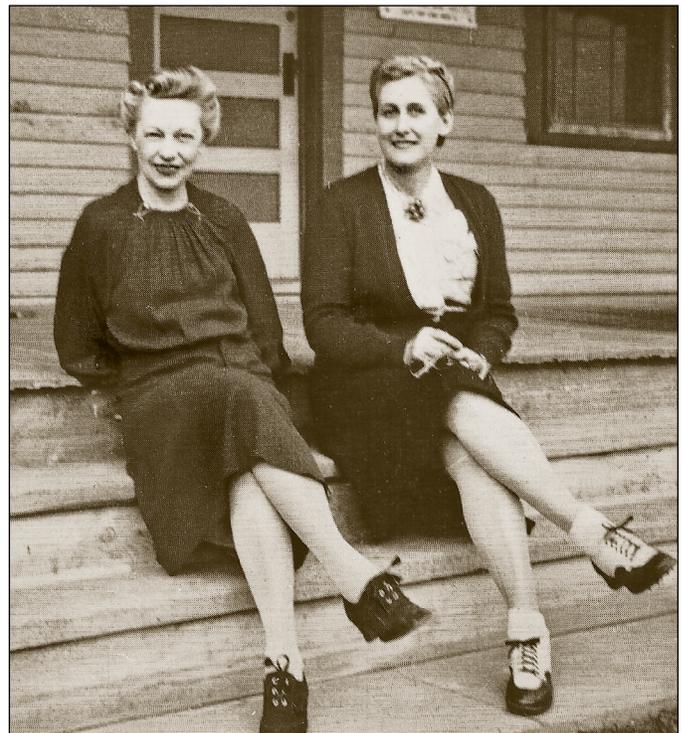
In the first few years the golf course was administered by a group of directors which included Cy Durey, Guy Durey, Alfred Dennison, C.E. Mochrie, Joseph Nadler, Dan Nadler, and Mr. Petrie. Later the Caroga Recreation Park came under the direction of the Town Supervisor and it became a municipal course.

A few residents have been members almost since the course was opened. Rouette Mochrie has been a member every year starting in 1926 except for 1943 when there was no gas to get there. Ted Cassavant is another "oldtimer," as well as Catherine Evans, Helen Busch, and Marguerite Fincke. The ladies of the club started Wednesday Ladies' Days in the early 30's. With a good social time and good competition, many fine players developed along the way.

In 1927, the three story barn built by the Wheeler Clafin Company was opened as a restaurant. At first it was called the Caroga Recreation Club House and George Dudley was the first manager for the town. Next, Tom and Kitty Vill were

brought in as managers. She had been a circus performer and he was a sheriff of Fulton County. They had previously run a restaurant in Fonda and they brought with them some of their massive Victorian furniture, pieces of which remain at the Inn. The food was excellent.

Van Hough and Busch bought the Inn and operated it until the late 40's when it was purchased by Kerwin Van Hoff and Ted Luther. Margaret Luther Hidde and Paule Stoppe were proprietors for twenty years, then it was sold to Jimmy Remington and Paul Stoppe in 1966.



*Lilian Floyd, the pro's wife, and Marjorie Brookings Morey, the supervisor's wife, at the club house.*



*Golfers, left to right: Hazel Denkert, Marion Chamberlin, Catherine Green, Lil Floyd, Elinor Knox, Pauline Dean, Helen Strong, Helen Hall, Alice Mahoney, Rouette Mochrie, Mary Pannaci, Agnes Ward, Helen Busch, Dorothy Mochrie, and Hattie Pannaci.*

## **Sherman's**

In 1919, the beach along the east shore of West Caroga Lake was an inviting spot for vacationers from Johnstown and Gloversville and the Mohawk Valley towns. There was a small bath house along the beach and a hot dog stand run by Jack Staley and Jim Whittaker.

During the winter of 1919 and 1920, Frank Sherman, who had moved back to Caroga after his misfortune at Pine Lake, set up a portable saw mill on land west of the London Bridge Road. He bought timber rights from Cy Durey and during the spring his mill produced large quantities of lumber which he stacked behind his house at Caroga. The huge piles of lumber inflamed everyone's curiosity, for Frank Sherman had not had much luck with the lumber business during the past few years.

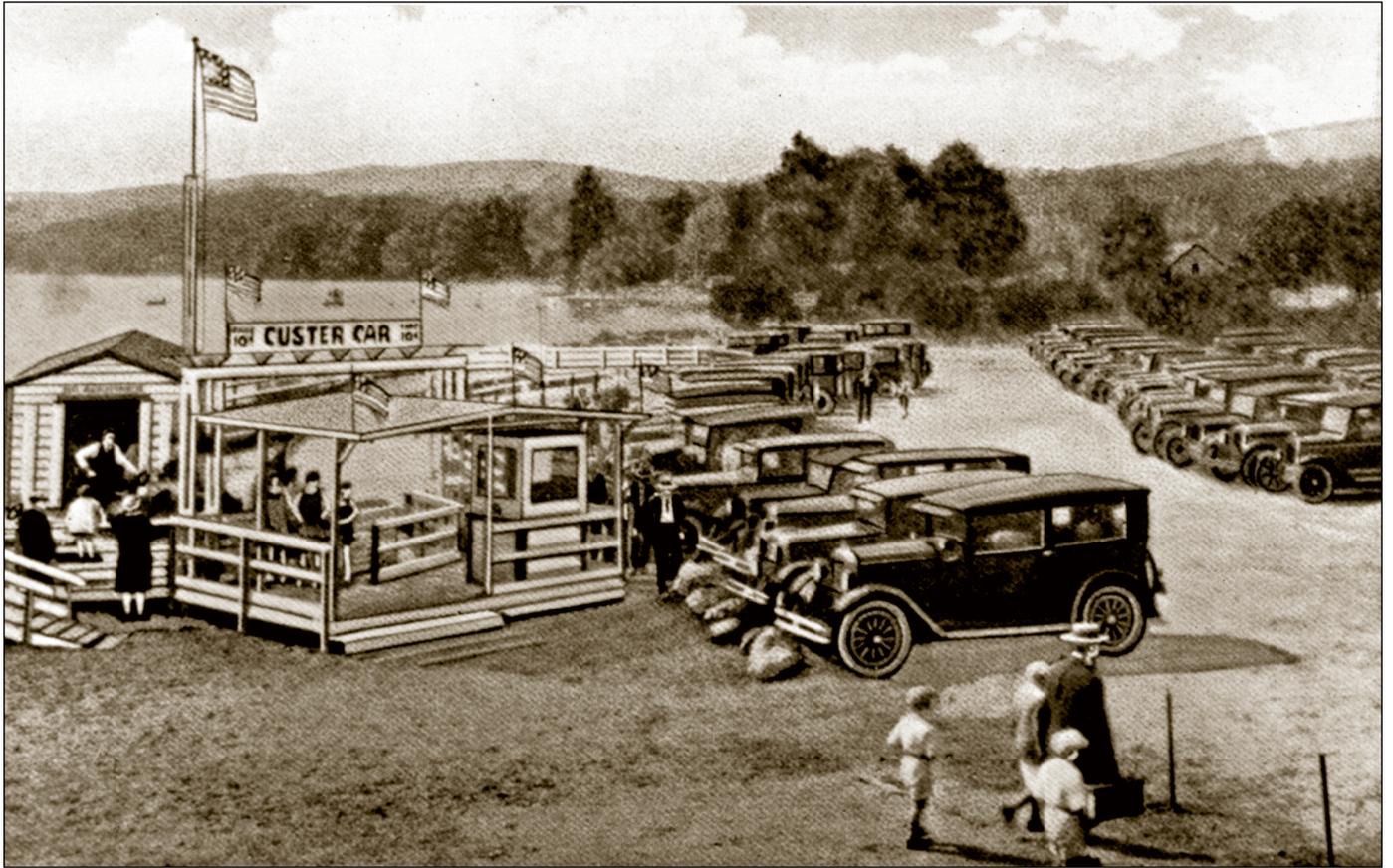
That spring and summer, Caroga Lake's biggest attraction was erected along the water front. The two story pavilion and dance hall was built within a year, and immediately after its opening in 1921 it began to attract crowds of vacationers. On warm days, the bath houses were filled and the soft white sand beach in front looked like Coney Island. A huge diving platform was added to the waterfront and stood there for many years

until it was toppled by wind driven ice packs.

"Name" bands were featured in the dance hall and almost every weekend there were overflow crowds. Sundays were the biggest days, and two or three orchestras played continuously from just after noon until midnight. In the late 20's and early 30's, excursion buses made the trip every Sunday from Albany, featuring dinners at the Unger House and a day of dancing at Sherman's.

Resident bands played on weekends and during the week. One summer Dan Murphy's band held forth for the season. Charles Mechino managed the dance hall and taught dancing lessons, and he is remembered as being a terrific dancer. His assistant was Joseph Rowe.

Bands from the surrounding area played on weekends, Glen Grey and his Casaloma Orchestra, Doc Dayton from the New Kenmore in Albany, Mal Hallet and Fletcher Henderson. The three Gibbons brothers had a good, big band with Fred on the piano, Art, and Percy on the drums. Saxy Marshall's band was typical of the good local talent. Duane Ruppert who played with Marshall is still playing the sax and clarinet. Gordon Aeker and Gene Goldkette also had good groups.



*The beginning of Sherman's Park in 1919. The old Sherman's bath house is in the back left and the Whittaker and Staley hot dog stand is in the center.*

It was the occasional arrival of a famous band or night club act that brought huge crowds to Sherman's. Peaches Browning had a floor-show act that was the biggest attraction of the year. Jimmy Lunceford's "name" band played Sherman's one season. Frankie Carle, the piano player, was in residence all one summer, before he became famous.

Dancing was strictly the ballroom variety, no Charleston, Black Bottom. Or the popular Pivot. These were restricted because of the huge crowds on the dance floor, and because the vibrations they caused in the large second story dance hall floor. People started the rumor that the dance hall was unsafe, but that was never the case. Dancing just became less popular. Liquor was never served at Sherman's, so other night spots seemed more exciting. Dances finally stopped because people forgot how much fun dancing could be. In spite of all the rumors, the dance hall was never closed for safety reasons. Today's resurgence of interest in dancing has brought back a revived popularity of the old dance hall.



Caroga Lake and Midway at Sherman's Bathing Beach, West Caroga Lake, N. Y.



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Sherman's was always a place for family fun. Games of chance and rides to thrill the youngsters were built near the dance pavilion. A merry-go-round and Ferris wheel created a permanent summer carnival. Mr. Kolz had the concession for the first merry-go-round and the Custer Cars, which were later moved to Pine Lake. The original magnificent antique wooden animals on the merry-go-round came from an old park at Sylvan Beach. Many concessions were run by Thomas DeVine, whose son still operates them; and the bingo games were always well attended.

Because the park employed as many as 50 people in the summer, it was a boon to the town's economy.

When Frank Sherman died at the age of 86 in 1955, his two sons Frank, Jr. and Floyd, had already been active for several years in the family enterprise. They continued operating the amusement park until it was sold to the Morris family in 1970. Weekend crowds attest to the venture's continuing popularity.



*The parking grounds with Fort's Hotel in the background.*



*Sherman's—the beach and diving platform*





*The new dance hall in 1921.*





*The beach at Sherman's*



## Pine Lake and Groshan's Park

The expanding twenties also saw the rejuvenation of Pine Lake. Joseph Groshans bought the land surrounding Pine Lake from Frank Sherman at the time of Sherman's bankruptcy. In 1924, he built the dance hall which opened on Decoration Day in 1925.

The featured square dances on Saturday nights drew crowds from far and wide. Local "Country" bands and good callers added to the fun. Pine Lake was a good spot for a family outing, with picnic tables in the pine grove, a nice clean lake with a wide beach, and big slide into the water, and later the amusement park.

In the early days, harvesting the 1100 cakes of ice necessary to keep the amusement park through the summer required three weeks of hard winter work. Anna Groshans, whose husband Chris helped run the park for many years, remembers the hard work cooking for the crews of ice cutters. Electricity did not come to Pine Lake until 1936.

The old hunting lodge became the Timberline Inn and is still standing. In 1931, Ward Nixon built the hotel on the corner at Pine Lake and many good meals were served there.

In 1961, the Groshans family sold the park to the family of Robert Lord who changed the name to the Pine Lake Amusement Park. A large campground was added on the southeast side of the lake, beneath Kane Mountain. In 1966, heavy rains nearly caused a washout of a section of the earthen dam, and that April many workers had to struggle to reinforce the dam.

The Park was sold again and is now owned by a new group of five men who continue to operate the resort area.



*Joseph Groshans built Groshans Park.*

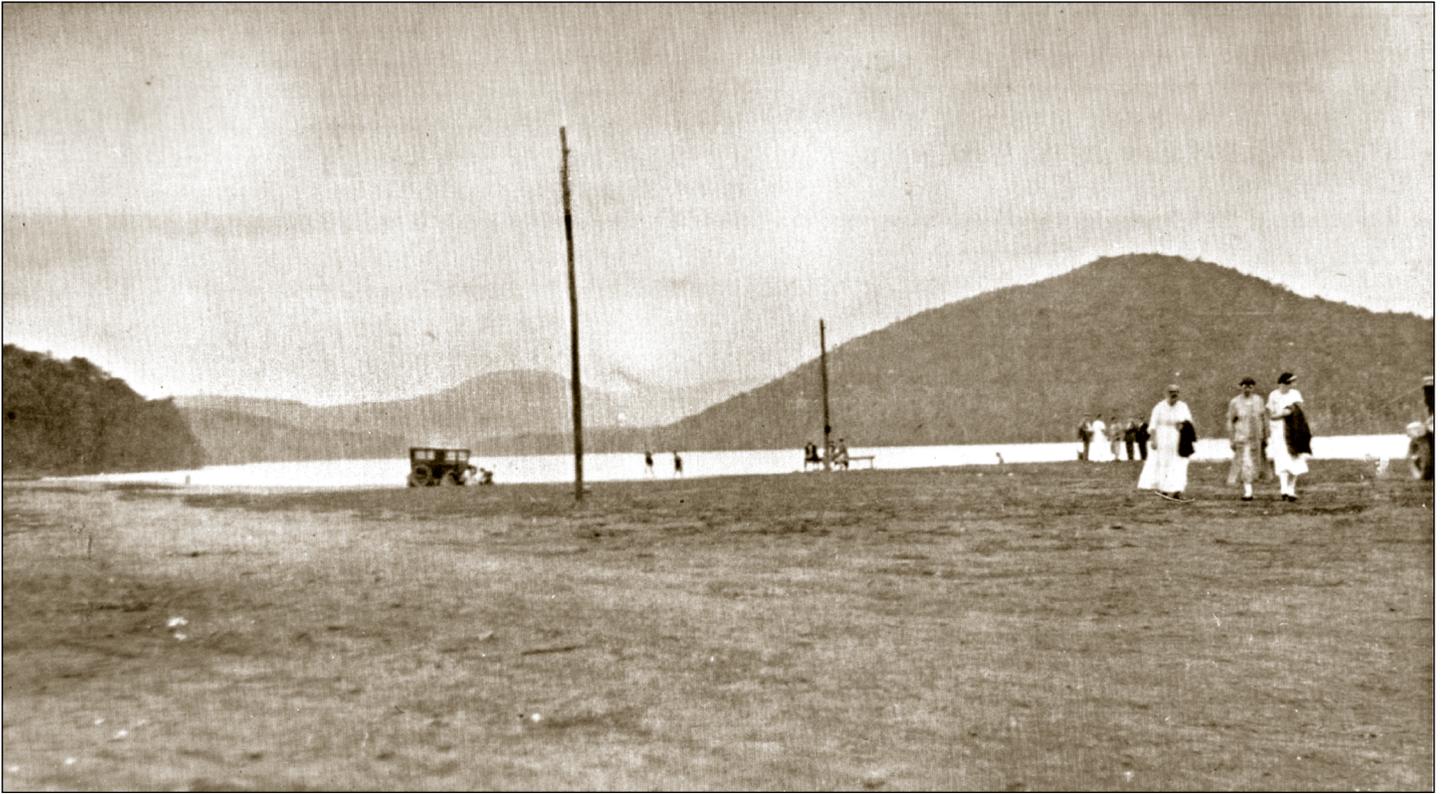


*Gene Groshans, William Morris, and Chris Groshans cutting ice at Pine Lake.*



*Kane Mountain at Pine Lake with the hunting lodge on the left and the store on the right.*





*Above, the beach during first year Groshans owned Pine Lake.  
Below, Pine Lake on a busy summer day.*



## The Stoner Lakes

Simms tells us that it was Nick Stoner who gave these lovely lakes their name, Stink Lakes.

Two small crystal sheets above Pine lake are called Stink lakes. Their impoetic name attached from the following incident. Stoner and DeLine were there on a hunt, and discovered many bushels of dead fish, principally suckers, which had got over a beaver's dam in a freshet, and which, being unable to return, had died on the recession of the water, to the great annoyance of those hunters, who thus named the lakes.

Over the years, the lakes have had many names. Two of the early surveyors named the lakes after themselves, so on some early records the lakes appear as Vrooman and DeLine Lake. One early map even indicates they were called Beaver Lakes, but as this was the center of Nick Stoner's favorite trapping grounds, it is appropriate that they are now named after him.

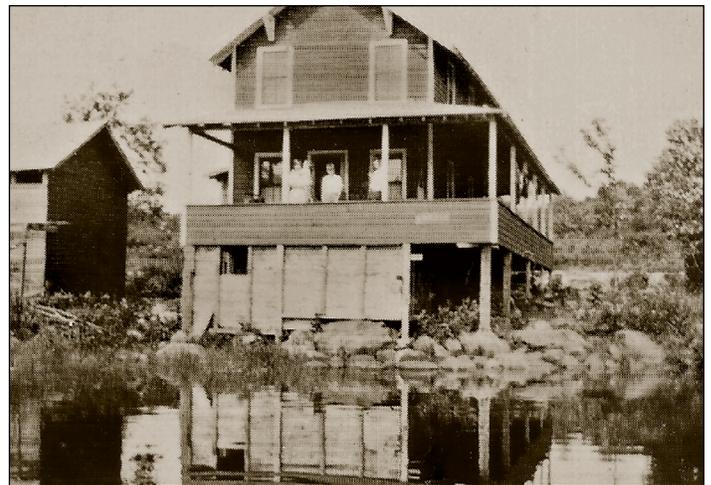
Indian relics found in the vicinity indicate there may have been an Indian camp there. The lakes were regularly visited by trappers and hunters, but they were the last of the town's lakes to be settled.

When Margaret Waterman and her late husband, Emmeron Baker, the forest ranger, first went to Stoner Lake in the fall of 1924, there was only a small shack on the lake owned by Henry Gungel. The Bakers were able to move into their house in 1925 and they ran a store there until 1936. At one time there was another store at Stoner Lake.

Emmeron Baker built two camps on the north shore, by the sand beach which are now owned by Leland Graves and George Lesser. Access to them before the road around the east shore, was by footbridge over the outlet of Upper Stoner. As the road around the east was extended, camps filled up almost the entire shore.

Cyrus Durey owned the land around West Stoner and after he had logged it in 1927, he split it into lots. The first camp on that lake belonged to Walt LaGrange, a very wealthy man who had lost all his money in the 30's. He became a recluse living in a ramshackle shack at Spectacle Lake, but was such a liability to the paper company which then owned the timber rights around the lake that they offered to swap him land there for five acres and the cabin on West Stoner Lake.

Two more cottages were built there before 1943 and more were added as the road was extended around the shore. 🦋



*Emmeron Baker's home, above, and store, below, in 1926.*

