

BLUE SPRUCE INN LOT 5 & 6, CONCESSION 13

Submitted By: Joan Hayden

Peter and Margaret Robertson arrived at Oxtongue in 1879. They had three sons, Alexander (Sandy), John and Jim. Alexander farmed and lumbered approximately 160 acres north of Concession 12, registering a Crown Grant in 1913.

For a few years Charles and Annie Bishop from Toronto would come up in the summers to board with the Robertson's. Charlie Bishop was Secretary-Treasurer of the T. Eaton Company, and Annie was sister-in-law to Timothy Eaton. Finally in 1914 the Bishops bought the property for \$700.00. A very determined Annie had the buildings painted white – over solignum- no mean task.

In the early years of the Bishop's ownership the trip from Toronto was very onerous, beginning with a train trip to Huntsville, proceeding by boat to the Portage Railway, by steamship to Dwight, and thence by cart over a very rough, rocky and sometimes corduroy road. To travel thus, and then to come upon a well kept lawn with ladies in long dresses and dangly earrings playing croquet, was quite unbelievable. With the new improved road completed around 1933, car travel became possible, and the trip was much less difficult.

Charlie Bishop thoroughly enjoyed the outdoors and landscaping, and had an obvious love of trees, planting many Blue Spruce and thousands of Pines. He cared little for indoor amenities, and the house was still without running water in the 1950's. He employed a year round caretaker who was rarely allowed to make repairs to the house, and was expected to devote all his time and energy to the gardens and trees. Many trips from Toronto were difficult for Annie with the trunk and back seats of the car filled with sacks of manure.

Tom Parris well recalled guiding for Charlie Bishop, Jim Elliott (who succeeded Charlie as Secretary treasurer of Eaton's) and a third, whose name we don't know. He often spoke of tramping the trails all day, coming back and getting dinner, and then having to play cards with these mathematicians. He found it necessary to keep his high boots on during the game to absorb the kicks from Charlie when his playing was not appropriate.

In 1952, Charlie sold the property to his son Paul Bishop, for \$7000.00 and two years later Paul sold to the Haydens for \$20,000. Since they were city folk, the Haydens quickly traded the wood stove for gas, and converted the caretakers cabin to a central washroom, with flush toilets and showers. With little money but much spirit and enthusiasm the Haydens then remodeled the ice house into a double unit, hauled the boathouse up from the lake for a larger "deluxe" cabin, built one double unit, and rented out all possible rooms in the main house. The first year saw the accommodations gross a magnificent \$700.00.



Home bought by Charlie Bishop from Alex Robertson - 1914



Charlie Bishops - early 1920's