

CHAPTER 10 - The Havelock bank robbery

In 1961, when I was 15 years old, I had invited my neighbour, where we lived in Toronto, to come to the cottage for the weekend. It so happened that that was the weekend of the sensational "Havelock Bank Robbery".

I have to give you a little background first. Most of you on the lake will have travelled the North Steenburg Lake Road all the way around the lake and on to "Murphy's Corner" as it seems to have been labeled now. "Old Timers" would always have called it "Murphys' Corners", as that's where Mart Murphy and his brothers had their lumber mill on the south-west corner of the intersection, and it is my understanding that 4 different townships intersect at those 4 corners. A bit more information, and then I'll get back to my story. If you take a quick left and then a quick right to carry on along the "Steenburg Lake Road", you would travel past Dickie Lake (the Bowes & Cocks Shawano development), then Thanet Lake, and then you would have to take the Ridge Road to Wollaston Lake and then left on 620 to Coe Hill. Years ago, if you didn't turn right on the Ridge Road but went straight, there used to be a very rough road that went through to another road upon which you could head in a southerly direction towards Havelock. (Another thing you might find interesting is that if you continue straight up that hill instead of turning right on the Ridge Road, you will find the Moore Farm on the right hand side of the road, owned by the family after which the Moore Headland and Moore's Landing has been named).

Now, back to the story. Several enterprising bank robbers decided to rob the Havelock branch of the Toronto Dominion Bank. They had determined the day of the week when one of the large businesses in the Havelock area was paying their employees. They knew that a large amount of cash would have to be at the bank. They robbed the bank and headed north from Havelock in a get-a-way car and had another car stashed along the way so that they could do a switch of vehicles and continue their escape. Many things went wrong for the robbers including getting stuck, being eaten by black flies and mosquitoes, having to deal with the OPP, and having to confront the very brave residents of our area. Somehow they made it through to the area of our lake, and broke into the Hiles cottage at the end of Austin's Bay which is now the home of Kent and Sheryl Anderson. Bert and Doreen Hiles were from Belleville, where Doreen was the nurse/receptionist for my Uncle Richard (Dick) Potter who owned the cottage where Robert and Peggy Delaney are today. I remember Curtis Fitzgibbon along with other locals in our area knocking on the door where the Pollards now live. They were all carrying rifles, and warned us to stay in the cottage and not to let anyone in, as they felt that they had surrounded one of the robbers, and that he was within the area of a few cottages along our shoreline.

I remember my friend Billy Russell going home that weekend and saying it had been the most exciting time of his life. I remember that they never found the approximate \$230,000 that had been stolen. I also remember that there were way more berry pickers the following spring, all hoping to find the stolen money.

CHAPTER 11 - Hot Dog!

Uncle Dick and Aunt Enid (the Potters, who lived where the Delaneys now live) were good friends of the Wellers at 973 Steenburg Lake Road North. Carol Weller and her family are still enjoying Steenburg Lake. When the Wellers arrived at the cottage from their home in the USA, they would bring big white hotdogs up for my aunt and uncle, and I can recall how good they were when BBQ'd on the big stone BBQ at the front of what is now the Delaney's home.

CHAPTER 12 - The Eldorado Cheese Factory

Back in the 50's, the Eldorado Cheese Factory really made cheese. Men and women in white clothing, white aprons and white hats walked around huge vats of cheese curd being churned with large metal mixers. If you stopped there on the way to the lake to purchase cheese, they'd take you into a large cold room where they stored and aged the cheese. When you told them that you wanted a certain quantity of new, medium or old, they would take a big wheel of cheese down off of the shelf and cut it with a wire with 2 wooden handles. The cheese was wrapped in a brown paper that would slightly discolour with the oil from the cheese as you carried it in the car to the cottage. If children in the car wanted some curd, they'd put some in a bag for you at no cost. As the years went by and costs had to be controlled, artificial or dried ingredients must have been used to make the cheese, as it gradually lost its wonderful taste. Cheese production ceased many years ago, and the store continued as a good place to stop and get an ice cream cone and possibly a plastic wrapped package of cheese that had been made somewhere else.

CHAPTER 13 - The Junior Bass Lake Association

When we were being raised on the lake in the 50's and 60's there weren't as many cottages and as a result of that, most of the young people got to know each other. Our lake is wonderful the way it is now, but there are so many young people at the lake now that there are many sub-groups. Some of my favourite memories include:

1. PJ Marshall flying down the lake in his aluminum boat to visit us at our cottage where the Pollards are now.
2. Gloria Pinder, and the song G-L-O-R-I-A that came out at that time.
3. Nancy Bick who lived at 756 Steenburg Lake Road South where I believe the Bigellis live now.
4. The late Kathy Bingham who water skied with us lots who lived at 754 Steenburg Lake Road South where I believe Jessie Ray lives now.
5. Dianne Burke, Rick and Bud Burke's sister. I remember how my brother John, his friend and I had to carefully plan how we would fall water skiing right in front of their cottage so we could meet them.
6. Mrs. Burke, giving her a piggy back ride through the woods in the dark to the cottage next door.
7. The MacLaughlin/Cassan cottage now owned by Lynn & Glen Rusaw at 486 Steenburg Lake Road South with it's big red metal water slide that wooden toboggans came flying down and skimmed way out on top of the water
8. Wayne Candy, my next door neighbour, and I swimming across our bay to join John Daley, Joe Cooper and friends at an evening campfire.
9. Bob MacLaughlin, Lynn Rusaw's brother, being made the President of the Jr. Steenburg Lake Association, with our initial project to build a dance floor on "Snake Island", now called Picket Island.
10. Berry picking with Doris Powers and Betty Burton (nee Johncox) on Moore's Landing, and probably eating more berries than I picked.
11. Having dances in the boathouse and Susan Walsh dancing with me. At the beginning of every season, visiting Walsh's Island and getting a hug from Mrs. Walsh.
12. Sailing in the Steenburg Lake Regatta with Betty Burton crewing and coming 1st.