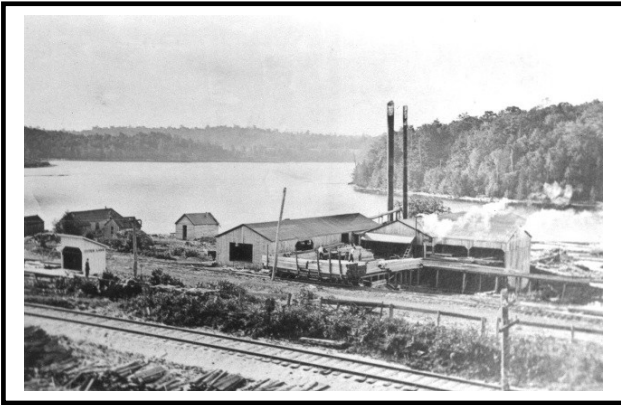


## Logging Days & First Cottages

Logging was a big industry throughout the Parry Sound area in the early 1900's. Otter Lake saw a few of these logging mills in those early years, all located on Little Otter. One was located at the south of the Boyne River, owned by a Mr. Greenless, which burned down. The mill in the photo is believed to have been the Hocken Mill, owned by Norman Hocken, located along the shore to the west of where The Elliott House was later built. Mr. Hocken also owned the General Store on Rankin Lake Road and had the post office. Some of you may remember the General Store later being owned by Walter Crisp.



One customer of Hocken's Mill for several years was the Holtby Bros. Construction Co. in Toronto. As the story goes, Mr. Hocken invited William Holtby to come up to Otter Lake to go deer hunting. William fell in love with the lake and he ended up purchasing an island in 1906. He named it *Rusholme Is.*, after Rusholme Rd. in Toronto where William and two of his brothers, John (called 'Jack') and James, lived side by side. They soon realized that the island was far too small for all of them, so they purchased *Bluebell Is.* where they built three almost identical cottages in 1908. There were other siblings as well who would come to visit frequently. *Rusholme Is.* remains in the family to this day, owned by 'Jack' Holtby's great-granddaughters.

Other summer residents would soon follow, such as the McMurtry family in 1909 on Sentinel Is. and the Hagerman family in 1909 on Delta Is. Both islands remain in these families.

Of course, in those days they didn't enjoy even the simplest luxuries we do today – no electricity, no indoor plumbing! Building supplies, ice and firewood had to be hauled up the frozen lake in the winter by horses to the islands. Daily boat trips were made in the summer for staples such as milk and butter, which they purchased from the Cargill family, local farmers located on the Long Arm. The ice was kept in the icehouse, insulated with sawdust or straw, and would hopefully last the summer. Chunks would be chipped off, just the right size, for the icebox where the food was kept.

These first seasonal residents of Otter Lake traveled the long journey by train. The Otter Lake Station, seen on the left in the photo of Hocken's Mill, was later re-named the *Holmur* station, after the Holtby and McMurtry families. It wasn't until the mid-1920's that they would begin making the trip by automobile.

*Written by Cathy Morrison*