

## A Brief History of the South Strand and Schisler Lake Area by Chris Magney

The history of the area I have researched begins in 1881 when surveyors hired by the federal government published the legal map of Township 54 Range 16W St. Louis County. Today, this 36 square mile area that includes the lakes is the eastern half of Cotton Township.

The completion of the map and release of the field notes of the survey kicked off the granting of land patents to those who wished to settle the area. The Map and notes were important - the first settlers often purchased land sight unseen from federal offices as far away as Chicago and had to rely solely on the survey for information about the land. In that era 40 acre plots having good tillable soils or stands of timber were taken first. Any low land or a smaller lake within the 40 acre space was usually thought to be burden to the value of the land, not a benefit. This idea was also rooted in the body of law known as Eastern Water Law, or laws addressing the problem of too much water or the legalities of diverting water onto a neighbor.

Much of the interesting history, though, surrounded the 40 or 80 acre spaces within the township that included lakes. If the lake was big enough and deep enough, these spaces of land were legally described as Government Lots. 'Government Lots' were so named to inform and disclose to potential buyers that they would be purchasing less than the full amount of useful property. The legal description of 'Government Lot' is still used today for this kind of property that is not subdivided. Around the years 1900-1910 or at a time when the usefulness of roads and the first cars came into being, the value of the Government lots on smaller lakes began to

shift. Potential settlers having above average wealth who could afford to bring in their own provisions didn't need to rely on the land to farm or raise livestock. They saw the water as a resource instead of a burden.

Two pioneering settlers in the area who almost certainly saw the water as property enhancement were John O. Strand and Balser Schisler. Strand was the original patent holder (Owner) of Government Lots 5 and 7 in section 20 of the township (1903), and in the same area, Schisler became the patent holder of Government Lot 6 (1909), an 80 acre space with shoreline on two lakes. These two lakes later came to be known as Strand Lake and Schisler Lake.

The lots that Strand and Schisler originally owned were not the only Governments lots on the two lakes. There were a total of 17 government lots on the two lakes. The useful spaces of the lots were all different depending on the meander of the lakeshore.

Schisler's successor was a man named Harold Carmichael. Carmichael died in the late 1920's and his son, Harold Jr. inherited the property. As the story goes, Harold Jr. wasn't really into spending time at the lake and wanted to attend Harvard. In 1934, he sold the estate to Dr. and Mrs. Fredolph Magney of Duluth. Between the time when Schisler first owned the land and when Carmichael Jr. sold, the estate had grown to include five Government Lots on Strand and Schisler lakes. These Government Lots added to be more than one hundred acres of lakeshore property.

The Magneys had two uses in mind when they made the land purchase: to have a place for their four sons, Roy, Robert, Paul, and Mark to play and to grow up and to have a retirement

nest egg, since Dr. Magney was in private practice as a physician and had no formal retirement plan and saw this as an opportunity to create and sell smaller lake lots. The second use for the property didn't develop quickly at all. The largest problem – how to safely get to the south shore of Strand Lake? When the Magneys purchased the land in 1934, the road access was from the north and then across the water flowage that naturally occurs between Schisler and Strand Lakes. This water flowage in not a well defined stream or creek – it is a deep and wide wetland. So deep and wide in fact that the only alternative to a floating road was a bridge, and that was just not going to be economical. To get to the south shore of Strand Lake, a two mile road needed to be built from Rose Lake in the south. Once permission was granted for this route, the road was constructed between the years 1959-1960.

The first plat of land to be sold was to be named Jingwak Beach, 'Jingwak' being the Ojibwe name for 'Pine Tree'. The Plat was recorded in 1962 and the first lots began to sell. Today, several of the first lot owners still own and enjoy their 'Jingwak Beach' property on Strand Lake.

The thirty years between 1959 and 1989 saw many changes for the Magneys and their properties at Strand and Schisler Lakes. An overall plan developed in the mid 1960's identified three more parcels of lake property that could be sub divided and sold to the public. Both Dr. and Mrs. Magney passed away in the early 70's right around the time when two of these new additional plats were coming on the market. Before they passed away, one of the parcels to be sub divided was sold in whole to their oldest son, Roy. In 1974, the Magney estate, which included many unsold lake lots,

passed down to the Magney sons. Each son had their own property(s) on Strand, and the rest, it was decided, was to be sold. In 1988, the Magneys sold the original Schisler property on Schisler Lake to Dr. and Mrs. Peterson of Duluth.

That remaining parcel of land that Roy purchased was not improved at the time. Roy died in 1996 and the parcel eventually passed to his youngest son Chris in 2003. Today, Chris has developing this land into lakeshore lots off of Evergreen Lane. Four lake lots were created. In a salute to the 75 years of family property ownership and development on Strand Lake, the name of the Plat will be *Strand Lake Properties*.

Presently, the south Strand area, like the Three Lakes, is an established community with many year-round residents and seasonal cabins.