

As was noted in the preceding article, Turtle Lake was the name most frequently given to our lake during the years between 1855 and 1902 whenever state or federal entities were involved. However, Turtle Lake was not the only name attached to this lake during that time period, when local and regional forces were likewise playing a role in the development of this region.

The first mention of a possible different name can be found in The Centennial History of Cheboygan County and Village,<sup>1</sup> which was authored and published by the Reverend W.H Ware, the historian of Cheboygan County. His manuscript had been prepared in 1876 as part of the nationwide centennial celebration of American independence. Portions of that manuscript were read as part of the July 4 celebration of that year.

In the section of the manuscript describing the "physiographical" characteristics of the county, the Reverend Ware had written:<sup>2</sup>

It is well WATERED by the Rainy, Black, Pigeon, Cheboygan and Maple rivers, and by Cheboygan, Mullet, Burt, and the east part of Turtle (or Douglass) and Long Lake.

Although the author described the lake as "Turtle" Lake, he included the secondary name of "Douglass", signaling recognition of the fact that a second name was also being used locally to identify that same lake.

Eight years later, a second historical volume was published, this one covering what was described as "the Traverse Region."<sup>3</sup> Included in a section devoted to Cheboygan County was a map of the county. Our lake, which was shown on the map, now bore the name of "Douglas" Lake.<sup>4</sup> Interestingly enough, one of the three smaller adjacent lakes was also identified by name. According to the map, the lake now known as Munro Lake was then called "Skunk Lake."

On the following page of this volume was a narrative description of the topographical features of Cheboygan County which paraphrased the earlier description offered by Rev. Ware in 1876. Borrowing from Ware's narrative, our lake was called "Douglass Lake," but with all reference to "Turtle Lake" deleted. This deletion suggests that the name Douglass Lake was gaining traction locally, however it might be spelled.

Further evidence of the emergence of the name Douglass Lake can be found in the proposed plat map of the "Douglass Lake Resort," prepared in 1899 for the first Bryant's Hotel. As can be

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<sup>1</sup> The Centennial History of Cheboygan County and Village, Rev. W.H. Ware, author and publisher, Northern Tribune Printing, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> Id. at 5.

<sup>3</sup> The Traverse Region, Historical and Descriptive, H.R. Page & Co., 1884.

<sup>4</sup> Id. at 95.

noted, there is no reference to Turtle Lake and the spelling of Douglass contains the double “s” spelling utilized by Reverend Ware in his manuscript from over 20 years earlier.

Three years later, in 1902, a series of maps was published in the Plat Book of Cheboygan County, Michigan<sup>5</sup>. All five of the county-based plat maps appearing in that volume share a common characteristic. All of them identify our lake as Douglas Lake and spell the name with only a single “s.” The first in time was the plat of the Village of Ingliside, prepared in 1895 on behalf of the Reverend J.C. Inglis and his wife Myrta. It is interesting to note that this plat was prepared four years prior to the one submitted for the first Bryant Hotel, which had spelled the lake’s name with two “s’s” That spelling variant was to disappear in the updated Bryant Hotel plat map, which utilized only a single “s” when setting forth the name of the lake. The same single-“s” spelling is repeated in the three additional maps included in that book: the plat map of Munro Township; the map of the Bogardus plat of the Douglas Lake Resort, and the plat map of Cheboygan County. Nevertheless, the lake’s name remained “Turtle Lake” in the state-prepared map of the State of Michigan that had been included in that same volume.<sup>6</sup>

The question of when this lake’s name was changed from Turtle Lake to Douglas Lake is not a simple one. It would seem that both the federal and state governments continued to identify our lake as “Turtle Lake” until sometime around 1902, presumably based upon the 1856 “Map of Township No. 37 North of Range No. 3 West” that had been submitted to the U.S. Surveyor General’s Office in January of 1856 and that was later ratified by the state of Michigan in 1881.

The United States Board on Geographic Names was created in 1890 to resolve all unsettled questions concerning geographic names. When resolving inconsistencies in names or spellings, the Board has generally deferred using the federal place name in favor of the local usage. When reviewing the Board’s data base, both names for our lake were mentioned. However, Turtle Lake, which was cited as the variant, had apparently been based upon a citation bearing the date of 31 December, 1856 (most likely a reference to the 1856 plat map of Munro Township). However, the official name according to the Board was Douglas Lake. Although the web site did not reveal the date upon which the name change had taken place, one thing seems clear. From about 1902 forward, and for whatever reason, there do not seem to be any further references to the name Turtle Lake when identifying our lake.

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<sup>5</sup> Plat Book of Cheboygan County, Michigan, The Consolidated Publishing Co., Minneapolis, Minn, 1902.

<sup>6</sup> The various plat maps discussed in this paragraph can be found on pages 6,7,13,17,22,31, 39 and 40 of this volume.