

Reflections of Springsyde Association

This was a letter written in 1972 to Tony Moffat by Janet Irwin (nee Moffat - daughter of Frederick William (F.W.) Moffat).

“THIS IS SPRINGSYDE

I would like to say a few words about what this Springsyde Association means to me and many of us. In 1901 my father, Frederick W. Moffat, mother, and Bryce (oldest brother, father of Tony) were holidaying at Fairyport on Fairy Lake. My dad paddled into Peninsula Lake and liked what he saw, so he built on this shore. His four brothers, when they came to see his land, followed suit, and built their cottage here. My father always said this lake was the closest thing to Scotland that he had seen in Canada. The Springsyde Beach Association came into being in 1912 - as did I. These past 60 years the cottages have more than quadrupled.

There was always a good feeling among this homogeneous group of cottagers. I can remember many incidents to show this. One was the throwing of the mail bag from the “Algonquin” (steamship) onto Springsyde dock. Each cottage took its turn sorting the mail and delivering it. Then there were incidents of a more personal nature - such as the time Fred Cruikshank took out my son’s (Richard Irwin, now 63) tonsils on our dining room table.

Through the years our family knew and enjoyed all the cottagers on the beach. They were glad to see Isobel Purdy and Mrs. Mansell who came up early, for my parents lived here six months of the year. My children have been coming here since they were born. Our cottage has been our “Rock of Gibraltar” in hectic and unsettled times. This is where we come to be close to nature and to be refreshed.

We like the uniqueness of this beach. The 70 year old trail, which now with motor boats available, is not used nearly as much as it was then - still serves its purpose to add another dimension to owning a small piece of lakefront property. We can go back up our road - forward onto the lake - or sideways on the trail. Very few cottages have this advantage.

The loss of privacy by people of the other 36 cottages occasionally walking by, is in my opinion, negligible, compared to the added freedom of a mile long beautiful walk on the beach. It is a beach with tradition of good neighbourhood. It has worked for 70 years.”