# History

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Harvey built a grist mill on Harveys Creek where he remained until the War of Independence was declared and he was enrolled in the local militia.

He was sent south and when he returned the Wyoming Massacre had occurred. Harvey remained at the fort in Wilkes-Barre until he built a new home in Plymouth where he lived with his daughters

In December of 1780, Indians and the British broke into Harveys home and took him captive. Two days later the British gave Harvey to the Indians. According to legend the Indians tied Harvey to a tree and the Indian chief selected three braves to throw one tomahawk each at Harvey's head. All three missed Harvey's head and were so angry they wanted his scalp, but the Chief believed the Great Spirit protected Harvey and released him from the tree.

### The lake is first discovered

In late May of 1781, Harveys is said to have begun the long trek home. He got as far as Bowman's Creek and when he saw signs of Indian camps in the area, he left his canoe and went through the wilderness. After three days of traveling through the woods he knew he was lost, but early on the fourth day he saw a shimmering of water through the trees. After walking a short distance, he stood at the edge of the body of water and soon realized he had found a large lake. From that point he found his way down Harveys Creek and to his home. Thus, the discovery of what is now known as Harveys Lake, in 1781.

#### In different towns

After the creation of Luzerne County, the lake was first a part of Dallas Township, but later - in 1829 — the Lake was included within the newly created township of Lehman.

# Lake bed

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cording to the deed for the land, which is still on file at the Luzerne County Courthouse, Barnum paid \$500 for the property.

Who owns that property today is a question; research into the heirs of the property has not been conclusive. The one thing that is known is that while the state owns the water in Harveys Lake, it does not own the lake bed.

#### State acknowledges private ownership

The ownership question made an appearance in the courts a few years ago when the Commonwealth tried to take a firm stand on regulating boat docks and other items on the water.

Some property owners at Harveys Lake contacted attorney James Geddes to look into the situation. In his research Geddes came across the deed and patent that showed Wright and Barnum owned portions of the lake bed. He took this and other information into a courtroom and walked out with a small victory.

"The ownership was one question that we had to answer," said Geddes. "They said it was a state owned lake and we came in and showed to their satisfaction that at least the bed was not state owned."

Although they never proved exactly who owned the bed, the state has acknowledged that it does not own it. In fact, the Department of Environmental Resources (DER) says this when issuing a permit for construction of a boat dock at the

"Since the bed of Harveys Lake is privately owned, the Department in issuing this permit is not conveying a real property right or interest to you nor is it authorizing you to trespass on any privately owned land. Any dispute over ownership of this land is solely a matter for private litigation."

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Settlement at the lake was slow and the first industries were the various timbering companies.

A second man who some claim discovered Harveys Lake was Thomas Bennet, who is said to have cut a bridle path through the wilderness to the lake. His son, Andrew, was said to be the first white man to launch a canoe on

Over a period of years, various men acquired tracts of land around the lake. The first school was held in 1842 or 1843 at the home of Otis Allen. The teacher was Jonathan Williams. The first church was built in 1845 and the first schoolhouse was built in 1849 and Elinor Montross was appointed as teacher. Williams taught at a school built at the Outlet.

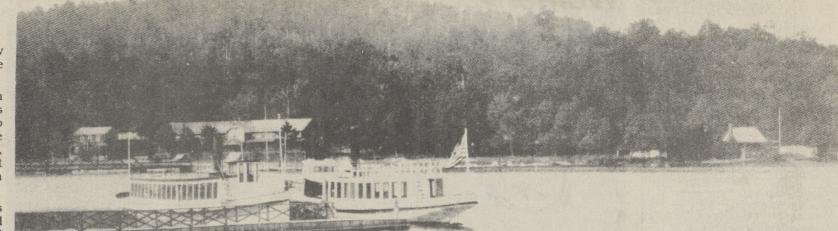
In 1857 or 58, a dirt road completely encircled the lake shore. In the fall of 1870 Hendrick B. Wright and Charles T. Barnum applied to the state for warrants to the land underneath the lake. These type warrants were not uncommon at the time. The lake was divided into two large parcels and in October, 1970, the state granted Wright a warrant for 285 acres and Barnum a warrant for 329 acres, and patents were issued.

## The state claims the water

Local residents protested the patents to the legislature which responded with a law declaring Harveys Creek and Harveys Lake to be navigable waters. In time the lake was stocked with different

The lake slowly drew the attention of other settlers and families from the Valley began to buy land and build vacation retreats. As the decade ended civilizing influences drew the lake closer to the valley. In 1878, a local telephone company, called the Wilkes-Barre-Harveys Lake Telegraph Company was formed.

The only public access to the



Around the turn of this century, three

steamboats plied the lake's waters,

bringing guests to large resort hotels

HARVEYS LAKE EXCURSIONS-For years residents from the Back Mountain, Wyoming Valley and other sections of the Northeast

traveled to Harveys Lake where they took the steamboats across the lake to picnic at the picnic grounds.

lake was by stagecoach, which in 1892 took four hours and 20 minutes. The large Rhoads Hotel was built and Harveys Lake began to become a major summer resort; in 1881 the new Lake Grove House was opened at the inlet across the bridge from the Rhoads Hotel. Boat races became a popular attraction at the lake.

#### More hotels built

The Rhoads Hotel burned in 1908 and after the fire Frank Rhoads converted the Rhoads tavern, a separate facility, into a small hotel. He died in 1909 and his daughter, Amy, who managed the hotel later, expanded it into a two-story 20-room hotel and named it the Carpenter Hotel, that being her married name.

The Lake Grove House was sold to the Harveys Lake Hotel and Land Company in 1897, who wanted the site to build the Oneonta Hotel. In late May 1898 after the Oneonta Hotel was completed, the Lake Grove House was razed.

# The golden age

Historians agree the golden years at Harveys Lake were from 1887 to 1919. A 12-mile railroad was run from Luzerne to the lake development at Harveys Lake. The and passenger coaches began to steamboats made regular runs and run in June, 1887.

In 1889 the Lehigh Valley Railroad purchased a large tract of land from Albert Lewis to build the Picnic Grounds. The Picnic Grounds were an instant success. At the same time, William Bond launched a 70-foot steamboat, named the Big Boat. It was larger than any other Lake steamer and when it was launched it made three steamers on the Lake. They carried passengers to hotels, boarding homes and to campsites.

It is believed by many lake residents that at one time, the Shalake and many remember that Henry Worthington, whose father settled near the lake in the 1800's, claimed his family found Indian relics on the land.

new doctor, R.H. Jackson, moved into the drug store.

In the 1900's there was more

George Burnett added on to his restaurant at the Picnic Grounds which was out over the water. The Lehigh Valley Railroad brought large crowds to the picnic grounds. The dance pavilion drew large

The two steamboat companies on the lake merged, the trolley cars brought large crowds from the Valley, and automobiles began to appear at the lake.

## 15.000 visitors

In 1914, a new hotel, Lakeside wanese Indians settled along the Inn, was built at Warden Place, opened by Martha Schworm. A taxi and baggage service opened and in 1915, the season was very active. There were 15,000 people at the lake and four big hotels; Oneonta, In 1898 Avery's Drug Store was Lakeside, Avon and the Tabard opened at Alderson and in 1899, a Inn. Water activities were popular and a water carnival was planned for July 4. Boarding houses were popular for many of the people coming to spend time at the resort.

After the first world war, July 4, 1917 was a big day at the lake, cottages were filled and hotels were crowded. Bands played and the beaches were packed. But in 1919 the Oneonta was destroyed by fire and with its loss, the care of the roads went downhill. Rowboats were stolen and not found and with the coming of a new generation, the lake as it was, began to decline.

#### Rides come to the Picnic Ground

Alderson was known as the North corner at the lake. The Sunset area was originally called

the inlet which was misnamed since the lake is fed by spring from the bottom of the lake. The Picnic Ground was always popular, and when it became an amusement park in 1908, it drew large crowds. The arcade, ferris wheel, the big roller coaster, miniature railroad, merry-go-round (now in operation in Florida), leased by Redington was the biggest attraction at Harveys Lake.

Stands popped up all around the Picnic Grounds property-restaurants, novelty stands, shooting galleries, Bingo, ten-pin alley, a grocery store.

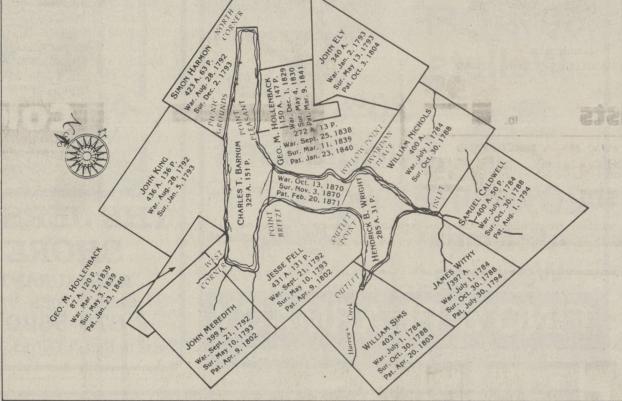
Redington, Charles Lee, George Heller and Alfred Wintersteen formed a company and eventually acquired the park from the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

The West Corner of the Lake was the less mountainous area of the lake near the Methodist Church and the Lynch Beach, Sandy Beach, and the home of C.N. Booth better known as the 'Stone House'

The true steamboat years were from the early 1890's until the late 1920's and when they were no longer used, some were moved to other waters, some were crushed by ice, and one the Natoma, a double-deck, was sold to Oscar Roth, a local jeweler and Bob Roberts and eventually, it became a dock near the picnic grounds. Parts of it may now rest on the bottom of the lake.

A post office was created in 1950 at the Outlet with Lewis Allen as postmaster and that same year a store was opened for the benefit of the men employed to timber.

In the years 1920 to 1940, this Lake again became a popular summer resort but as the years have passed, more and more permanent homes have appeared around the lake and the public beaches have disappeared as the former resort area changes once again into a year-round commu-



HARVEY'S LAKE WARRANTS AND PATENTS

# Why own a lake bed?

the rights to the lake bed. According to documents at the courthouse, Wright obtained the land in The state controls water a patent from the Commonwealth. Luzerne County Recorder of Deeds Frank Castellino said that it was common for men who served in the army to receive a patent for land from the Commonwealth and added that Wright may have gotten the land that way.

Geddes agreed that the land was obtained through a patent and said that Wright and Barnum may have wanted to use the lake for its ice.

"Back then the ice business was a big business," said Geddes. "If they could have controlled the lake they could have done a lot with the

In the late 1800's, however, that

idea was stopped. "An act of legislation made the water navigable There are a number of stories and that is when the state took told of how Wright came to obtain over the water portion of the lake," said Geddes.

The Commonwealth is in control of the water and is responsible for enforcement of waterway regu-

The state also has resolutions that regulate the size of docks and building procedures. The Department of Environmental Resources Bureau of Dams & Waterways Management watches over construction.

A spokesperson in the local office said last week that docks and boathouses are allowed on the water as long as they meet the requirements, the biggest of which

is that the owner get a permit from

Once construction is finished the ownership of the dock or boathouse may still be in question. When asked if the state could force all the docks and boathouses to be removed from the water, the spokesperson said, "This is not a likely situation because of all the construction but if it were to happen the state probably could come in and clear the lake.

The state also claims ownership of parts of the land around the lake, as does the borough of Harveys Lake.

Borough Zoning Officer Dan Samson said the borough collects fees when construction is done on the lake. "We get permit fees because the work is being done in the borough," he said. However, he borough," he said. However, he admits the borough has no jurisdiction on the water.

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