

**The following is reprinted from an article by Bonnie Good (SPIA Newsletter Editor), that appeared in the Association 1999 Newsletter:**

It was about 1903 when Arthur L. Leshner, owner of a large textile business in New York City and an associate of the Goodall Worsted Mills in Sanford, inquired where he might be able to purchase property in the area for a summer home. The mills owned the land surrounding Square Pond and the Goodalls gave Leshner permission to buy property there. He bought a piece of land on the eastern shore of the lake, all of Blueberry Island, and Loon Island. (Blueberry Island became Treasure Island when it was developed many years later).

Leshner arranged for local craftsmen to build the lodge that still stands at the northern end of the island. At that time the water was low and the island was actually a peninsula with access over the sandbar. During the winter, workmen brought the building material over the ice – probably on horse-drawn sleds. A year later, Mr. Leshner moved his family there for their first summer at the lake.

The Leshners traveled to Maine by private railroad car. Because of the large size of their group (originally six children, maids, nurses, and cooks), an arrangement was made with the railway line for the Bar Harbor Express to make a special, unscheduled stop to pick them up in Stamford, Connecticut and take them overnight to Kennebunk, Maine. From Kennebunk, carriages would take them to Sanford where they would have a large breakfast at the Sanford Hotel before going on to the lake.

Mr. Leshner stayed in New York during the week to look after his business, but enjoyed long weekends at the camp. Except for the servants, Mrs. Leshner was along at the lake with the children (eventually nine). Once a week she would travel to Sanford to purchase food and other supplies. Perishables were kept in an icehouse which workmen filled with ice cut from the lake the previous winter. By the end of summer, most of the ice had melted and meat would spoil within the week – the icehouse became quite malodorous.

Local merchants making deliveries to the island would phone the lodge using the old crank telephone in the waiting-shed on shore and a boat would be sent to pick up supplies. The Leshner children walked to Shapleigh Corner every day for the mail and penny candy.

Water was pumped from the lake by a windmill for washing purposes, but their drinking water was hauled from Leshers' Spring located in what is known as the Owl's Nest area in Shapleigh. They had no electricity until 1932.

Sailing was a special activity for the family and they also had a racing scull. That scull continued to hang in the lodge for many years after the Leshers were gone. The children would often boat to Long Point, the finger of land across the water from the lodge, where they played baseball on the flat stretch of land there that is now Cypress Road.

Mr. Leshers died at the lodge in 1932. Blueberry Island was sold for around \$5,000 and Loon Island for \$100.

One of the Leshers sons – Stephen – married Marion Bodwell whose father William J. Bodwell had a camp on the west shore of Square Pond. They had two children, Helene and John. Helene Leshers Leighton, now owns the Bodwell camp and spends her summers there. John Leshers lives in Tacoma, Washington and is a frequent visitor to the lake. Marion Leshers, who is almost 99 years old, is a resident of the Maine Stay Nursing Home in Sanford.

After the island was sold, the lodge was used as a camp for girls. Helene Leshers worked one summer at the camp as a counselor. A later owner, Cliff Whiting, operated Camp Joncaire. A young man who was a counselor there in 1959 and 1960 writes of "fond memories of full island capture-the-flag-games and swimming lessons with unbelievably good looking young ladies." The campers slept in army tents set on platforms, boys on the northeast shore and girls on the southwest shore. He remembers being convinced that clouds would instantly form and lightning would strike if the boys dared to venture across the island to the other side.

When the Whitings sold the property, the new owners developed it as Treasure Island. Today, there are 77 camps nestled along its shore.

The facts on the Leshers family were compiled from the remembrances of Margaret Leshers Reed and Alice Leshers Everett (oldest of the Leshers girls) who spent many summers on the island. Thanks to Helene Leshers Leighton for providing information from A History of Shapleigh, Maine 1785-1985 and additional family history.