

HISTORY OF DEWART LAKE

The West End

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Samuel Dewart, a descendant of Scottish immigrants, was my great-great-grandfather. He and his wife Margaret were living in Pennsylvania in 1844 when they bought 80 acres, sight unseen. The property was north of the present public access ramp, and Sam and Margaret were the fourth owners. The land was originally granted to Thomas Lingle and his wife Matlene in 1837 by a patent signed by Martin Van Buren. The lake was known as Lingle Lake for many years. Lingles sold it to Henry Goblen for \$500, who sold it to a cousin six months later for \$750. The Gobens were absentee owners, living in Pennsylvania. By the time the Dewarts bought it two years later, the price had gone up to \$1,200, or \$150 an acre.

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Lewis Dewart was Sam’s eldest child, and eighteen years old when the family moved to Indiana. He is the man for whom our lake is named, and was my great-grandfather. In 1844, at the age of 28, he married Nancy Brady, a widow with two sons. Nancy died fourteen years later, aged 37, leaving five children by Lewis and her first two sons who were 18 and 17 years old.

In the early 1880’s Lewis and his second wife Barbara built the house now owned by Dr. William and Mary Meyers, at 9726 N CR 300E. (You may remember Dr. Meyers’s white horse that lived in the white barn for many years.) When Lewis died in 1889 he owned 457 acres, including another 200 acres on the north side of the lake. At Lewis’s death in 1889, the 1844 farm was sold at auction for \$6,000 to George Tom, who gave it to his son Alfred. He in turn sold it to Vern LeCount, and in 1922 William Redmon became the new owner for \$11,000. He then platted twenty acres

nearest the lake into 138 lots, 40 feet wide, known as Redmon Park. Mr. Redmon also had a huge poultry barn on the lakeshore.

That same year Lewis Dewart's son James bought three lots, for a total of 120' x 100', for \$1,300, more than his grandfather had paid for 160 acres. The escalating value of lakefront property was underway.

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I brought several items to show you. First is the MacLean of Duart clan tartan, on a pillow I needle pointed.

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And finally here is the genealogy book I wrote seven years ago, with a picture of Duart Castle, and of Lewis Dewart and his home now owned by the Meyerses.

I know you all love this lake as Don and I do, but I doubt if anyone here has loved it longer than Sylvia and I have.

Marty Scearce
August 2010

I've been asked to announce that there will be a brunch served here at Quaker Haven tomorrow morning immediately after the boat-in service. There has been some confusion as to whether there would be a brunch or not, so the answer is YES!

HISTORY OF DEWART LAKE

The West End

The name "Dewart" comes from a Scottish clan, the MacLeans of Duart, (spelled D-U-A-R-T) that lived on the Isle of Mull, off the west coast of Scotland. Their castle still stands, and the previous Lord of the clan was Lord High Chamberlain of Great Britain and presided at the coronation of the present Queen Elizabeth. He signed my souvenir booklet in 1987.

Samuel Dewart, a descendant of Scottish immigrants, was my great-great-grandfather. He and his wife Margaret were living in Pennsylvania in 1844 when they bought 80 acres, sight unseen. The property was north of the present public access ramp, and Sam and Margaret were the fourth owners. The land was originally granted to Thomas Lingle and his wife Matlene in 1837 by a patent signed by Martin Van Buren. The lake was known as Lingle Lake for many years. Lingles sold it to Henry Goblen for \$500, who sold it to a cousin six months later for \$750. The Gobens were absentee owners, living in Pennsylvania. By the time the Dewarts bought it two years later, the price had gone up to \$1,200, or \$150 an acre.

Sam also bought an adjoining eighty acres to the south, and half of it was swampy due to the outlet of the lake running through it. There were still Indians nearby, and three trading posts located in Syracuse, Oswego, and west of Leesburg. The first year the Dewarts cleared some land and planted a small field of buckwheat to feed their eight children. Samuel died nine years later, but Margaret lived another twenty-four years. Sam and Margaret, plus four sons, Lewis, Amos, Simon and William are all buried in Salem Cemetery west of the lake.

Lewis Dewart was Sam's eldest child, and eighteen years old when the family moved to Indiana. He is the man for whom our lake is named, and was my great-grandfather. In 1844, at the age of 28, he married Nancy Brady, a widow with two sons. Nancy died fourteen years later, aged 37, leaving five children by Lewis and her first two sons who were 18 and 17 years old.

In the early 1880's Lewis and his second wife Barbara built the house now owned by Dr. William and Mary Meyers, at 9726 N CR 300E. (You

may remember Dr. Meyers's white horse that lived in the white barn for many years.) When Lewis died in 1889 he owned 457 acres, including another 200 acres on the north side of the lake. At Lewis's death in 1889, the 1844 farm was sold at auction for \$6,000 to George Tom, who gave it to his son Alfred. He in turn sold it to Vern LeCount, and in 1922 William Redmon became the new owner for \$11,000. He then platted twenty acres nearest the lake into 138 lots, 40 feet wide, known as Redmon Park. Mr. Redmon also had a huge poultry barn on the lakeshore.

That same year Lewis Dewart's son James bought three lots, for a total of 120' x 100', for \$1,300, more than his grandfather had paid for 160 acres. The escalating value of lakefront property was underway.

The South Side

In 1848 Archibald Kirkendall bought 138 acres, 18 of which bordered the lake at the site now known as DeFreese's. His grandfather had been a patriot in the Revolutionary War. Arch grew up in Ohio and married at eighteen. Three years later, he was a widower with two little girls. He left his children with relatives in Ohio and came to Indiana where he rented farmland. When he had remarried, he had to borrow \$5 to get his little girls to Indiana. Eventually he had three wives and fifteen children. Arch was another of my great-great-grandfathers, and his first child, Nancy, married Lewis Dewart. I've always pictured them as going between their parents' homes by boat in the summer and by sleigh across the frozen lake in the winter.

Which reminds me of a story my mother used to tell, about a man, his daughter, and their team of horses, who all drowned northwest of the island when they and their bobsled went through the ice. This happened before she was born in 1888. She also remembered wolves howling around the lake when she was a little girl.

But back to Archibald Kirkendall. Arch's youngest child was Alice. She married a man named Henry DeFries. Henry and Alice owned the original farm in 1914, and DeFreese Landing and DeFreese Road take their names from this couple. However, the spelling has been changed.

Arch and his third wife, Annie, are buried at Salem Cemetery. I have the location, but the gravestone is gone.

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