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Lake Jackson began as weekend resort colony

By NANCY BREEDEN

What began as a summer week-end resort colony 50 years ago has become a large, rambling year-round community with streets winding along, around and near a quiet lake.

It is Lake Jackson, the brain child of

the late C.W. Alpaugh who looked at a "little stream with trees overhanging it on each side and decided to build a dam and develop a summer colony," according to one of his sons, Walter.

Alpaugh said there was just a little one-way bridge crossing the stream at

that time. He said his father and he and his brothers Luther and Woodrow started developing the resort, just off Va. 234 between Independent Hill and Manassas, by beginning to construct a dam in 1927.

But Alpaugh said when the dam was about 75 percent completed, the state, Virginia Public Service, took it over in 1929 and finished building the dam.

So Alpaugh went ahead developing the summer colony in the 1930s with 500 acres he had bought.

At that time, Alpaugh said, a log cabin on two lots, complete with fireplace, well and septic tank, sold for \$4,495.

Alpaugh said he recalls the lake was named in a contest held in 1932 when someone named it Lake Jackson.

The lake is 12 miles long and Cedar Run and Broad Run feed into it.

Alpaugh also built a swimming pool for the community, the only public pool for many miles around, using the "left cement from the dam," chuckled Woodrow Alpaugh.

Part of the swimming pool wall is still standing.

C.W. Alpaugh also built the family home in 1930, a one half scale replica of the Lee Mansion in Arlington, according to Woodrow Alpaugh. He said his sister lives in the stately house which majestically overlooks the lake.

Many of the streets and roads are named after sisters, nieces, nephews

and other relatives of the Alpaugh family, Woodrow said.

There are some 300 cottages around the lake now, and most of the families live there year-round now, with many that have been modernized and winterized, Walter Alpaugh said.

A few small businesses sprang up in the community over the years along Va. 234 but the most well-known landmark is a restaurant overlooking the dam that was owned and operated for about three decades by George and Evelyn Hunt. Formerly known as George's Lake Jackson Restaurant, the restaurant has a new owner and is called The Dam Site.

One of the older volunteer fire companies in the county is the Lake Jackson Volunteer Fire Department, Company 7.

Lake Jackson fireman Ned Overton said Company 7 was organized in 1951. He explained that volunteer fire companies are numbered in the order of when they were organized so that means the Lake Jackson Volunteer Fire Department was the seventh to be organized in Prince William.

Overton said the area hasn't grown as far as new families moving in, but it has grown because many former weekenders are now making it their permanent homes.

George Mullen, president of the 194-member, 26-year-old Lake Jackson Civic Association, has lived in the community since 1953.

Mullen agreed there has been little new growth, estimating that only some 50 new homes have been built in the area in the last five years.

Mullen said the community has grown though, because it is no longer a week-end colony. Since he's lived at Lake Jackson probably 25 percent of the original homeowners have made it their permanent home, with the remaining homes sold to persons who have also

made it their permanent abodes, too.

Mullen said he hasn't noticed any change in the community through the years except that when it was a week-end community there were "very few children." There are a lot more youngsters in the community now.

The community can grow though. The Alpaugh brothers are still developing Lake Jackson and their firm is the Lake Jackson Hills Inc.



The one-half scale replica of the Lee mansion in Arlington at Lake Jackson built by C.W. Alpaugh in 1930 overlooks the lake.



The Lake Jackson Dam constructed in the late 1920s by C.W. Alpaugh and later completed by the state.

By Nancy Breedon - Potomac News