



Sylvia Lake LEGACY 1807-2007

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Sylvia Lake Legacy 1807-2007

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Updating “The Book”

by Shari Barnhart, Editor and Publisher

In 1981, thanks to the tireless effort of a group of Sylvania Lake residents and the generosity of the Pendell Publishing family, a book about the history and culture of Sylvania Lake was published. It was titled, *Sylvania Lake Gouverneur, NY: History and Genealogy 1800-1980*. It became known as “The Book,” the primary resource for Sylvania Lake facts and history. In the 26 years since that publication, the community has grown, property has changed hands, and new homes have been built. Whenever Sylvania Lakers gathered, someone always asks, “When is “The Book” going to be updated?” But how could anyone presume to create a sequel to such an icon of Sylvania Lake culture? What a challenge!

Book Committee

Shari Barnhart
Olive Lane Horning
Marilyn LaPierre
Crystal Leonard
Jeanette Perry
Katie Pistolessi
Linda Scott
Mary Jo Whalen

In 2003, on behalf of the Sylvania Lake Association, Katie Pistolessi and Jeanette Perry began collecting updated camp information. In the spring, a request for information was mailed to the community. In 2004, the Dickson family, Lea, Greg and Jeff, contributed \$1,000.00, in memory of their parents, Andy and Norinne, to help move the project forward. The book update committee had our first meeting at Katie’s kitchen table. Another mailing brought more photos and updates. Our group was joined by Mary Jo Whalen, chair of the 1980 book’s committee. Linda Scott agreed to help and represent the East Shore. Olive Lane Horning had just completed a history book for her family titled, *Do You Mind?* and her book really inspired us. We could do this!

By the end of the summer of 2005, I posted a draft of the new book’s table of contents on the Sylvania Lake website. The site also gave property owners an electronic way to submit camp information. Katie drove the pontoon boat while I shot photographs of every home, camp and property. We solicited snapshots from those Sylvania Lakers who are often seen with cameras. We received permission from Shirley Pendell to use the text and photos from The Book, and because of her generosity, each property would contain the updated submissions plus the old book’s information and photo. The entire 1980’s book would be on a CD that would come with the new book. Bill deLorraine had been working on an updated map for the 911 committee and his map would also be part of the new book.

Throughout the winter, Katie, Linda, and Jeanette nabbed people in the local grocery store and made phone calls to coax information out of the forgetful. Katie and Olive emailed updates to me to be collected in the database. We all wrote articles. Every page of the old book was scanned and prepared for use in the book and on the CD. Needless to say, I spent hours in front of my computer, for months... writing articles, sorting and scanning photographs, creating design and layout and editing. By the end of summer, 2006, we had a completed first draft. Marilyn LaPierre and Crystal Leonard stepped up to organize the sale and distribution of the sequel to “The Book,” the 2007, *Sylvania Lake Legacy*.

Through the process, the committee had some profound personal losses. Mario Pistolessi, Jeanette’s father, (the photographer who took the sunrise photo for the 1980’s book cover) passed away. Katie Pistolessi lost her sister, Janie Vaile and husband Peter (also Jeanette’s cousin). Olive lost her stepfather, Philip Kelley. Andy Dickson passed away in February, 2006 and Crystal Leonard lost her father in 2007. This book honors the memory of all those Sylvania Lake residents who, over many years, have given so much of themselves to the legacy of our community.

Notes from the Book Committee

Olive Lane Horning

As I think about this book, I am reminded of the legacy that Sylvia Lake gave to our family. My grandparents bought the log cabin almost eighty years ago. My grandfather had many steak roasts and poker parties for his political cronies though the 1930's and 1940's. My mother learned to swim and canoe Sylvia's cold sparkling waters. I often think of her tenacity when she decided to swim around the lake, accompanied by a friend in a rowboat. At the age of sixteen, she completed the feat in three and one half hours. For years, my mother brought my sister and me to spend every summer swimming and learning to paddle my mother's black canvas canoe.



Jeanette Perry, Mary Whalen, Olive Lane Horning, Katie Pistolesi, Shari Barnhart, Linda Scott, Marilyn LaPierre, (Missing from photo, Crystal Leonard)

I brought my children, Terry and Russ from Michigan, to enjoy the unique features of the lake. They too, learned to love the lake. Hiking, swimming, canoeing, and sailing were favorite activities. They were also helpful in showing me where the warm springs were! The lake is the place where I feel most creative. I wrote a Christian drama that I perform, studied for graduate school entrance exams, researched genealogy, began writing the Shaw Family History book, ***Do You Mind?***, and worked with the book committee. It has been a pleasure for me to become acquainted with neighbors in the various neighborhoods as I gathered information about their camps.

Marilyn LaPierre

This new book of our beloved Sylvia Lake is truly a legacy. The women who worked on this book did a wonderful job and Shari's umpteen hours and computer skills are responsible for its outstanding look. I was asked to join this elite group of women toward the end of the project to assist with sales. I was honored to be asked and have done what I can.

My family's first summer on Sylvia Lake was 1979 and Roger and I spent five years living full time in the 1990's. This was a time in my life I will always treasure, feeling close to nature, especially in the quiet of the fall, winter and springtime. I hope this book will help my grandchildren and future generations understand how special our little lake is to all of us. And that they will be able to enjoy it, the way we have. Even though it is only eight miles from downtown Gouverneur, when you enter our road to the lake, it's like leaving everything behind and going to our little piece of heaven on earth.

Crystal Leonard

The 1980 version of the Sylvia Lake book has always been our family's reference guide for the lake. In the winter, when you can't wait to get back to the lake, in the summer when you want to know something about the lake or a camp, or on rainy days, just for something to do, the question always comes up, "Where's the Sylvia Lake book?" I know how much we have enjoyed it. I know that my sons will enjoy this 2007 version in exactly the same way. Future Sylvia Lakers will spend hours reading about their camps, others camps and lake lore. Now the question at our camp will be, "Where's the Legacy?"

Jeanette Perry

It was truly an honor to be part of writing the Sylvia Lake book. This project brought back many wonderful memories of “the lake.” It made me realize how blessed I am to call Sylvia Lake, home. The community that we have all formed is one to be proud of. The lake is not only a desirable place to live in the summer, but a winter wonderland as well. This was the first year that my family and I spent the winter here. Although there were a few chilly days, it was like being on vacation everyday.

The inspiration behind this new book is Katie Pistolessi. One sunny day, about 5 years ago, she mentioned that we should put together a new book. I agreed with her and we started asking for help. Help arrived in the person of Shari Barnhart. When Shari became a “laker,” we realized we found the backbone to our project. Not only was she a retired English teacher, she has extensive computer and technical skills. Of course, we needed “Miss Mary” (Whalen) and Olive Horning because they know everything about the lake! When you need to get a job done, you call Linda Scott. Linda was able to get photos, camp legacies, and any information we needed. When it came to sales, the two names that came to mind were Marilyn LaPierre and Crystal Leonard. We knew they would do a wonderful job. And they have.

During the work on this book, we had some wonderful meetings and spent hours reviewing information, editing and sharing ideas. The group became very productive and lasting friendships have formed. I am grateful to have been a part of this group and the Sylvia Lake community.

Katie Pistolessi

Jeanette and I had talked for several years about updating the “old book” due to all the changes on the lake. Never did we dream that the update would turn out to be such a wonderful, complete new book. It was a lot of hard work and some fun for all of us on the committee. It gave me a opportunity to see many people on the lake I hadn’t talked to in years. I want to thank everyone on the committee for all their hard work. I especially want to thank Shari Barnhart, for without all her hard work and expertise we never could have accomplished our goal— the wonderful new Sylvia Lake Legacy.

Linda Scott

Working on the Sylvia Lake book was a great experience for me. The girls were a lot of fun to work with — it wasn’t really work, it was a lot of laughs. My family always likes to come to camp and look at the old book, so the new one with all of the updates and bright pictures will really be enjoyed. Because of Shari, the book is what it is and I am glad I helped put it together.

Mary Whalen

Many camps and their owners have changed at the lake since I worked on the 1980’s book, but the lake does not change – nor do the rocks, woods, animals and flowers. When this edition of the Sylvia Lake book was proposed, I was honored to be on the committee with such capable people.

I have spent over seventy summers on the lake. In the early years, I remember exploring all over with my brother Robert, swimming, surfing and sitting in a plane as he skied behind it. Later, I taught lake children swimming lessons and my nieces and nephews to swim, sail, canoe and waterski. I watched them learn to enjoy all that I loved about Sylvia Lake. I have fond memories of sailing with my nephew Don and watching him in the weekly sunfish races. I have even had the pleasure of scuba diving in Sylvia Lake with my niece Roberta’s husband, Jim Yaeger. In recent years, my grandnieces and grandnephews have come to the lake to swim, canoe and enjoy the water. Like the lake, these things never change.

From the Sylvia Lake Association

Sylvia Lake Association Board of Directors 2007

by **Lea E. Dickson**
Sylvia Lake Association President



Jeanette Perry, Vice President, Sandy Kraker, Director, David McGrath, Director, Gale Ferguson, Past President and Director, Kelley Lacks, Secretary, Donna Besaw, Director, Mona Allen, Treasurer, Lea E. Dickson, President, Faye Lockwood, Director (not in photo)

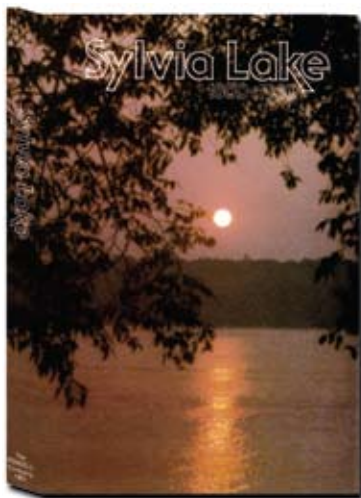
When the first Sylvia Lake book was published by the Pendell Publishing Company in 1981, its stated goal was to “*make it possible for your, their and our children to know about the history of the lake, its camps, and to appreciate the love and affection that Sylvia Lake holds in all our hearts.*” That book accomplished its purpose and more.

Today, with great pride, ***Sylvia Lake Legacy: 1807-2007***, is presented to you and yours. We are pleased that its publication coincides with the Town of Fowler’s Bicentennial celebration.

Many talented and skilled members of our community volunteered hundreds of hours of

their time to make this new book a reality. Its publication is, perhaps, the most ambitious project ever undertaken by the Sylvia Lake Association. Many thanks to the Pendell family for granting us the use of material from the original book. Our Editor-in-Chief, Shari Barnhart, guided the book committee from vision to the Book Launch. On behalf of the Board of Directors and Sylvia Lake Association we offer our gratitude to her and to the committee.

As more and more generations share the water and its shoreline, our little lake has many challenges ahead. The Sylvia Lake Association will continue to provide guidelines and recommendations for maintaining the highest quality of water. The pristine water of the lake is our true legacy.



The Book

Sylvia Lake, Gouverneur, New York: History and Genealogy 1800 to 1980

Published in 1981 by the Pendell Publishing Company, Midland, MI

- In 1981, a new Sylvia Lake book cost \$40.00.
- 442 books were officially sold and numbered.
- Each book sold was assigned a unique number. The original list of purchasers can be found in the Association’s minutes.
- 500 books were originally printed; the resulting financial loss was absorbed by the Pendell Publishing Company.
- The photo on the front of the dust jacket (left) was shot by Mario Pistolesi. The back sunset photo was taken by Gary Scott.
- Sonny Goodison reported seeing one of the 1980’s Sylvia Lake books a local auction... selling for \$100.00.

Happy Birthday, Town of Fowler

With the publication of *Sylvia Lake Legacy 1807-2007*, we would like to acknowledge the 200th anniversary of the Town of Fowler, NY. Our lake and our properties are part of a shared heritage. In 1957, Helen Cunningham, the Town of Fowler Historian wrote:

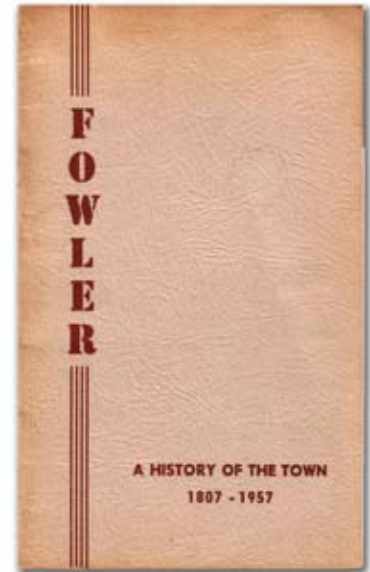
The early story of the Town of Fowler does not open solely with the usual pioneer picture of stern-faced men and nervous-eyed women with a few children and chickens, blankets and pots in a cumbersome wagon being dragged through trackless forests and unbridged streams to find a site where they could fell some trees and hew out a rude cabin. Instead Fowler's beginnings were marked by romance as well as adventure, wealth as well as a struggle for existence, a mansion alongside a shanty. The traditional ox-cart may have arrived too, as settlers from Vermont and the Mohawk valley trickled in seeking a home and livelihood in the abundant forests and from the rich soil of this newly opened land of Killarney.

This region, along with its neighboring towns, seems to have been a debatable ground between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Huron and Algonquian Nations of Canada and was probably never occupied for any considerable time by either.

It was common hunting and fishing ground but extremely dangerous to either party for the two confederacies were ever at war with each other and bloody encounters were sure to follow should two rival hunting parties meet.

So when in the division of the Great Tract, so called, near the turn of the century, Killarney (or Township No. 7) fell to the share of Robert Gilchrist and Theodosius Fowler, the history of the Town of Fowler begins.

Source: *Pages from the Sketch Book of a Town Historian: Fowler 1807-1957*, Compiled by Helen Scott Cunningham.



Fowler Flower
Photo by Shari Barnhart



S. Barnhart