

THE WINDERMERE GAZETTE

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE VILLAGE?

- **Windermere House** - Lots of things happening at WH. Stop in for a drink or meal at one of their lovely dining options.
 - **Windermere Pub & Patio** - Lunch & Dinner - patio open weather permitting. Reservations on Open Table
 - 12pm - 10pm Sunday - Thursday
 - 12pm - 11pm Friday & Saturday
 - **The Rosseau**, upscale dining, beautiful setting
 - Thursday, - Sunday - 5 - 9pm until October 11**
 - **The Trading Post** - Artisanal goods & produce, charcuterie, souvenirs and more.
 - **Spa at Windermere** - Daily 9am - 6pm
- **Windermere Marina** - Thurs. - Sat. 9-5 Sunday 10 - 5. Hiring for next year!! Will train now for next year. Great summer jobs!
- **Windermere Golf Club** - Open to all for lunch and dinner throughout the season at **Iron and Strings Restaurant**. -Sunday 11 - 7, "**Wing Night**" -every Thursday.
- **Windermere Garden Centre** Mon.-Fri. - 8 - 5, Sat & Sun - CLOSED Call for delivery
- **Taylor Farms** - Mon - Fri, 7am - 6pm. Sat. 9am - 5pm. CLOSED Sunday. Great Cappuccino and Lattes at the cafe! More details at taylorfarms.ca/market. Or email strawberries@taylorfarms.ca

Windermere Lions Club is offering a bottle drop off for your recyclables -fundraising for all the great things they do for the community and beyond. Drop off at Taylor Farms.

- **Lagree by the Lake** - Fitness Studio right in Windermere. Friday - Sunday. Open until Thanksgiving. lagreebythelake.com for exact hours and classes.
- **Christ Church Windermere** - services Sunday at 10:30am. Welcome all.
- **Windermere United Church** -services Sunday at 10:30am. Check out "Upcoming Events" for Taize & meditation schedule.

Some history on Florence Island...

Florence Island has always been considered part of Windermere Village, along with Wellesley Island.

(Each are about 80 acres)

Both Islands were originally part of Francis Forge's land grant of the early 1870's. Forge was born in Yorkshire, England in 1838, came to Canada in 1857, and then to Muskoka in the early 1860's. He acquired 100 acres of the land around Windermere in about 1871, (as did Thomas Aitken and David Fife). As part of his grant, Forge was offered what is known now as, Wellesley Island (originally Island 'G'). He reportedly turned the offer down, unable to pay the taxes of what would have been about \$11 for Wellesley Island.

The Crown later sold both Wellesley Island (November 11, 1879) and Florence Island (November 19, 1879) to

James Edward Smith, of Toronto. for approximately **\$180** (\$80 for Wellesley, \$100 for Florence). In 1879 James E. Smith sold 'Island F' (eventually known as Florence Island) to William J Florence for **\$500**. According to the land registry, William J. Florence sold the island in 1883 to Henry and Harry Logan for **\$550**.

James Edward Smith was mayor of Toronto from 1867 - 1869. Wellesley Island is still owned by a descendent of his family, Selby Martin.

Not much seems to be known on why 'Billy' Florence, an American actor, songwriter and playwright, co-founder of the Shriners, ended up buying an island in Muskoka. That will most likely remain a mystery, but one can guess it was the reason we all like to be here.... It is speculated that he built the first cottage on the island, the iconic red roofed structure with

An ad found in a 1888 publication advertises the entire Florence Island, with 'a good house on it' -

"For Sale"

(no price listed)

'Florence Island' painted below it. It could also have been built by Henry and Harry Logan, as they owned it from 1883 until 1889. Maps of 1886 identify the building.

The entire island with building was purchased in 1889 by Charles H Nelson for **\$400** (that might have been the only time there has ever been a dip in real estate prices in Muskoka!).

Nelson subdivided Florence Island into the 19 lots we see on the map (next page)

In 1890 Florence Island was sold to Robert Heber Bowes, (a Toronto barrister - Smith, Wood and Bowes) for **\$2000. It sold again one year later, in 1891, for \$1, to John Payne** (wondering if this was ~~pay~~ **debt?**).

According to Wellesley Island owner, Selby Martin, there has always been a rumour that Florence Island was 'lost' in a high stakes poker game....could this have been it?

UPCOMING EVENTS

If you have a community event to announce, let us know!

Muskoka Arts and Crafts at the Village Hall!

Open weekends until Thanksgiving.

- **Oct. 1st** - The "**Garden Club**" meeting at Windermere Garden Centre - FREE for all you interested gardeners.

- **October 8th @7:30pm**

Windermere United Church is holding *Mindfulness Meditation in the Zen Buddhism tradition.*

- **October 11th - Thanksgiving at Windermere House - @ The Rosseau Brunch - 11am - 3pm
Dinner - 5pm - 9pm**

At "The Rosseau"

A la Carte featuring seasonal favourites, fall flavours and sushi selection

Reserve now on OpenTable

Email fbmanager@windermerehouse.com

Call (705)769-3611

- **Saturday November 14th 2026
30th annual Christmas Craft Sale,
Ullswater Hall
9am - 3pm**

Call Darlene to become a vendor @
705-380-3588 or email @ jdpoirier@live.com

Submissions, content, or to subscribe
windermeregazette@icloud.com

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Police - Non-Emergency 705-645-2211

Fire Department 705-765-3156

District of Muskoka Office 705-645-2100

By-Law Office Township 705-765-3156

Wharf Master 705-769-3611

Windermere Golf Club 705-769-3381

Windermere Marina 705-769-3661

Windermere House 705-769-3611

Taylor Farms 705-769-2368

Windermere Garden Centre 705-769-3238

Archives windermereandareaarchives@gmail.com

Lions Club - windermereclubmuskoka@gmail.com

In 1899 John Payne sold the entire island and building to George Robert Baker for **\$2000**. The island's 19 lots remained in George Baker's hands in their entirety until 1905 when he began to sell off lots and parcels of land to individuals every few years.

Baker died in 1921.

The last of his property on Florence Island was sold in 1925, by his widow, Alice Lloyd Harvey. These distributions are shown in the pages below (colour map and notes)

George Robert Baker was an engineer and machinist. He started a business in 1874 with James Henry Westman, manufacturing printing, cutting and book binding machines, for distribution across Canada.

Baker was a canoe enthusiast, Commodore for the Toronto Canoe Club 1892 – 1893. The Toronto Canoe Club was very active here in Muskoka. Research also reveals that George Robert Baker was related to the Alfred Baker (1848 – 1942) - Ishkaugua Island – (and Baker Shoal on your map), a noted mathematician at U of T and president of the Royal Society of Canada. He was also related to Richard Langton Baker, MP for several years in the 1930's. R. L. Baker owned Silver Island and it is still in that family. Another member of the Baker family at one time also owned Alfreda and Euphemia Islands on Lake Rosseau.

Electricity came to the island in 1946.

It is interesting to note that this island was subdivided 137 years ago!....early developers!

