

*Editor's note: We have all driven past this house on Lovell Lake Road or seen it from the water. Cochran's Marina was Lovell Lakes "Walmart." You could gas up your boat, buy a life jacket, a loaf of bread, roll of toilet paper, and even a set of water skis! Is this news to you or do you remember your first trip there for an ice cream cone or penny candy?*

## **Cochran's Marina**

**~ Submitted by Libby Cochran**



The store, gas dock and garage were built by Fred and Ruth Randall and run by them for several years. A second owner ran the business for only a year or two and then the Keenan family ran it for a few years until we purchased the property in 1976. We were told that the original part of the house by the street was a carriage house associated with the large property across the road that was a boarding house for the men who cut ice on the lake during the winter in the early 1900s. The "carriage house" was added on multiple times through the various owners.

When we began, the store and gas pumps were active and there were pinball machines in the garage area. The pinballs were popular with young people, but we soon converted the garage into a Mercury Marine service and sales business. We saw many changes over the years: in the early years, most of the boats were small and had outboard motors in addition to rowboats and canoes. There were no pontoon boats. The outboard motors used a 50-1 ratio of gas and oil which had to be calculated for each fill up. Eventually, we had one pump dedicated to 50-1 ratio that was premixed in the gas storage tank which made it much easier for everyone.

One funny thing about the gas pumps – the original pumps only went to 99.9 cents and after a number of years when it jumped up over \$1, we had to cut the price on the pump in half and then double it when telling the customer what they owed. We were soon able to get another pump that went over \$1. Looking at gas prices currently, it is hard to believe that they were ever below \$1!



One scary incident occurred one July 4th when a boat refueling caught on fire. It was pushed off the gas dock, floated close to other docked boats and then drifted to the shore behind the garage where the fire department extinguished it. No one was hurt and nothing was burned on the property.

In the early years many families came to the lake for the summer or multiple weeks with the father often going home during the week to work. The store and gas pumps were steadily busy throughout the summer months. It was a “rite of passage” for young people to have their first solo boat trip coming to the Marina. We sold equipment for boats, water skis, fishing supplies, and food but most popular things were the shelves of penny candy, steamed hot dogs, hot fudge sundaes and cold drinks.



We were quite surprised when we first opened to have someone ask to “charge” their purchase (this was before everyone used credit/debit cards). It turned out that the previous owners had index cards in a file box where purchases were recorded and then periodically the customers would return and pay off their charges. We decided to keep that policy going and rarely had any problems. We also had boat slips at the marina and had as many as 16 boats docked here.



We have seen many changes over the years. We watched young children grow into adults and then return with their children. Our daughters were three and six when we moved to Lovell Lake, and they had the privilege of growing up on this wonderful lake and then returning with their children. It was our privilege to meet and know so many wonderful Lovell Lake residents over the years. One person we saw often was Lou Stevens who made it a point to be our first official customer and then returned 29 years later to be our last customer. Although the Marina has been closed since 2005, we continue to live in the house during the summer and enjoy being at the lake.

We would love to learn the history of your home/camp and the time spent on Lovell Lake! Please send us your story at [membership@lovellakenh.org](mailto:membership@lovellakenh.org).