

Lininger Lake - August 2020



Lininger Lake, previously known as, Dake Lake & Reed Reservoir was purchased by Dr. A.M. Lininger on 4-1-1928. He was serving as a State Senator at that time and "Big Ed" Johnson was Lt. Governor of the state. It was mostly on a school section which is why it was available for purchase, being otherwise surrounded by the Pike National Forest.

Dr. Lininger traded 3/4 of existing section to the Pike National Forest for the 118 section around the North end of the lake to have complete control of the shoreline.

The early years were spent in developing roads, ditches, dikes, etc. Using rented horses from the local ranchers, a fairly large family of children and patients who were glad to work to pay for dental care in those depression days. The boy friends of the Lininger girls made significant contributions, as well.

Base camp was established near where the ditch inlet is now. It consisted of a galvanized steel shack and a large tepee tent that would sleep about a dozen people. Evenings were spent around a campfire spinning tales and singing. Everybody would vie for the affection of the various dogs around to get them to sleep at your feet for warmth.

The first summer projects were road improvements and surveying the ditch. The second summer saw construction of the ditch, a portion of which was contracted as so much per foot. The Lininger boys were used mostly for runners, carrying lunches, tools, etc., back and forth as necessary.

The whole Lininger family lived there from the time school was out until September.

Dr. Lininger would be up every Wednesday and weekend with supplies. There was a team of horses, a pony and a cow. In the Spring and Fall, the pony and cow could be transported in the back of an old Packard Sedan. The horses were ridden back and forth from Littleton to Kenosha by the boys. They would spend one night in route with the Long family at Shaffers Crossing.

The next Summer began the construction of the dam. This was accomplished by a team of horses using first a plow to loosen the dirt, then a scoop (slip) to move it onto the dam. This wasn't very efficient compared to the tractors of today. Boy Scouts, friends and relatives all helped. The first rip rap was of logs that were later replaced by rocks.

With the advent of the ditch, stocking of the lake began. The fish were picked up at a hatchery in Leadville. A lumber truck with a large stock tank on the back was used. The sides were lined with 100 lb. blocks of ice. One boy had to ride in back; adding ice to keep the water as cold as possible, so it could absorb more oxygen. He would then oxygenate the water by constantly taking up a bucketful and sloshing it back in as vigorously as possible. It was always a race to get to the lake before you ran out of ice or energy.

The next project was the cabin. The bricks were gathered from the old kilns at the abandoned town of Hoosier near the turn off from the highway. The beams were from lodgepole pine gathered on site. The rest native lumber from a nearby sawmill.

With the relative comfort of the cabin, guests could be invited and the sale of lots began. One of the first was to the Charles Hess family. His brother, Clarence, was a stone mason. He built most of the early cabins at the lake. These were the Booths, Kimbals, Blakes, Tunstals, Marks, White Reeder and 41 Pepper and probably me caretakers also. Most of them have some similarities in plan and design. They can be recognized by the rough but sturdy masonry.





Clarence Hess was also the 1st caretaker. It was hoped that raising the lake with the ditch and dike would keep the fish from being lost in the Winter. This proved to be only

partly successful. There was always some fish loss and sometimes a complete loss. It was apparent that Winter time aeration would be necessary.

The first device was a small 4' x 6' shack built on a large raft to be anchored in the lake with a gasoline motor and a pump to supply air and keep a 50 foot wide opening in the ice. It worked but was a difficult and dangerous chore for the caretaker to keep in operation. It was not until the advent of electric power in the early 40s that improvements could be made in the form of the present compressors.