

# Story of a Lake

*Serenity and beauty drew people to Ames Lake early on*

By Sheriece Lyman

On a beautiful day in around 1946, 17-year-old Irene Pedersen rode out on horseback to the Ames Lake area from her home in Bothell, Washington. She became so enchanted with the area that, when she returned home, she convinced her father to co-sign with her in purchasing a piece of property there.

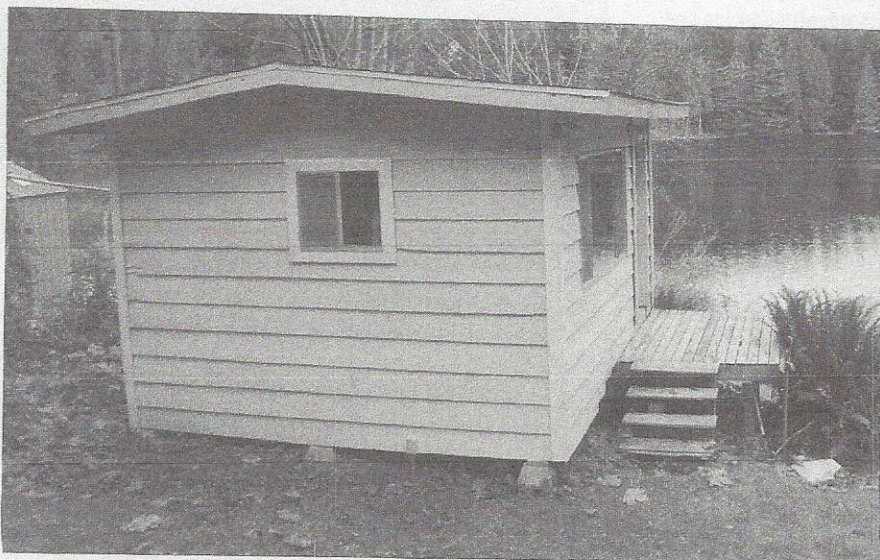
Irene was not yet married, but thought it would be wonderful to have a place on the lake for weekends with a future family of her own.

At the time, her father doubted the wisdom of buying property simply for recreational purposes. He was more inclined toward income-producing land that could be farmed or provide for animals to be raised on it.

However, Irene was determined and somehow obtained her father's support, becoming one of the first property owners on Ames Lake.

In 1963, Irene Pederson Carter (now married) and her husband, Lee, had a pre-fabricated cabin built on their property.

"It cost \$300. Three men came out and erected it in one day," recalls Bob Carter, son of Irene and Lee. "Whenever we went there, we carried drinking water in glass gallon jugs packed in the back of a pickup truck."



Irene and Lee Carter built this pre-fab cabin on Ames Lake in 1963.

Dave Egan started coming to the lake with his family in 1953-54 and camping in tents.

Sometimes, he and his cousins or friends would ride bikes there from Redmond.

"At night, the bullfrogs were so loud," he recalls. "It was a little bit eerie and almost frightening."

Dave recalls those weekends sometimes being filled with hard work. His grandparents built a small 450-square-foot cabin on their property, which was next door to the Carters. They hauled water from the lake up the hill to mix mortar for the brick work.

Dave remembers the lake was sometimes filled with logs and other debris from logging on the northeastern side of the lake. They would spend several hours pulling lumber from the water before they could go swimming.

Most families had individual wells on their property to provide drinking water, but some just piped it or hauled it from the lake itself. Because the well on the Egan property was a bit shallower than others, Dave remembers their well going dry some summers by around August. It wasn't until 1969 that Ames Lake Water Association was incorporated and established to provide water from deep, ground production wells to members in the Ames Lake area.

Some winters, the lake froze over, providing an opportunity for ice skating for the courageous.

"The ice would crack on the lake at times, and the loud sound it made was a sign to residents that soon it would be frozen enough to pull out ice skates to go skating on it," says Dave.

Dave and Bob both recall one such winter around 1979, when they and another friend, Al Jacobsen, dragged lounge chairs out into the middle of the frozen lake. There, they lounged and toasted their crazy exploit with drinks of hot buttered rum.

In 1954, the residents of Ames Lake tried to obtain power from Puget Sound Energy, but were unsuccessful. Tanner Electric was contacted next. In late 1954, the cooperative obtained a contract with Puget Sound Energy to purchase power



## How Ames Lake Got Its Name

John Ames came to Tolt in the early 1900s and built a home for his family across the Snoqualmie River from the Tolt River—McDonald Park. There was a trail from the Ames home over the hill connecting with the road to Redmond. The trail eventually was widened into a good road.

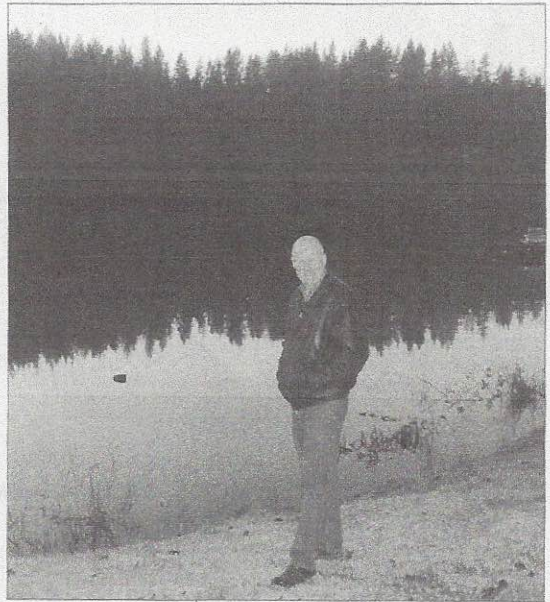
In those days, there was no electricity or running water in the area. Most families simply journeyed there for the day or camped there for the weekend.

Ames built a ferry, which ran on a cable, and charged a small fee to carry passengers and wagons across the river. This was a popular way for the people of the Tolt community to travel: across the river by ferry and over the hill.

Ames built another building, separate from their home, calling it "The Blue Front" and took in paying guests. He drove a hack to Seattle, stopping at the Deller Hotel to tell all of the visitors that he talked to about the great fishing and hiking in the Tolt area. It wasn't long before he convinced many people to come and spend a week at his resort hotel.

The Ames' son, Arthur, was killed while working on the railroad. His father named Ames Lake in his honor.

*From the book, "A History of Tolt/Carnation: "A Town Remembered," published November 1987 by the Tolt Historical Society, printed by Snohomish Publishing Co.*



Above, Bob Carter stands at the same spot along the lake where his dad, Lee, left, stood on a dock in 1948.

to serve Ames Lake. Tanner Electric built the lines and began service that year to about 50 members. There are now about 1,500 accounts in Ames Lake.

Ames Lake used to be open to the public. Dave remembers the opening day of fishing season bringing many fishermen to the lake.

"You could practically walk across the lake from one boat to another," he says.

Tired of the chaos, noise and garbage outsiders brought to the lake, residents took the legal steps necessary to privatize the lake in the 1960s.

Today, no motorized boats or vehicles are allowed on the lake, and it is accessible to residents only. A sense of serenity prevails there, offering a haven for both wildlife and people.

Bob became a full-time resident in 1977, when he purchased the property originally owned by his mother. He enjoys the close community feel of the area and the tranquility of looking out over the water to watch ducks, geese, bald eagles and cormorants.

Dave bought the property from his grandparents in the early 1970s, including the cabin they built, and began living there full time.

"People who live here establish life-long friendships that span generations," he says. ■



Ames Lake as viewed from the Carter property.