

# Lake Bomoseen: The Story of Vermont's Largest Little-Known Lake

by Donald H. Thompson

(Published by The History Press, Charleston, S.C.)

It's not unusual today to hear about a farm going into the tourist business for extra income. In this fascinating book about the turn-of-the-century resort life around nine-mile-long Lake Bomoseen, we discover early pioneers in agri-tourism, Lyman Johnson and his son Endearing Johnson, farmers on the west shore of the lake, who sold off their Holstein cows and marino sheep and turned the farm into a mini-resort with a three-hole golf course back in the 1800s.

Lyman had built a floating bridge that later enabled guests to get to the farm no matter how high or low the lake.

Author Donald H. Thompson, a retired history teacher, whose family has had a place at Indian Point on the lake's east side since 1967, has put together a history and an intriguing collection of old photographs and postcards which capture an era when thousands flocked to the lake to stay at one of its many hotels, or to spend the day at a public beach, or for an evening for music and dancing with Vaughn Monroe, Frank Sinatra, Gene Krupa, the Dorsey brothers and others.

Vacationers came from the greater Boston, New York City, and Albany areas by train, which let them off at the Castleton Depot

or Hydeville. Day-timers came out by the droves by trolley from the Rutland area.

Among the popular vacation destinations, all pictured during their splendorous time, were The Prospect House, The Ellis Park Hotel, The Del Monte House, Glenwood Hotel, The Cedar Grove Hotel, and The Grand View Hotel. They are gone today, either having burned down or been torn down. In one remarkable photo we see The Glenwood Hotel on fire!

## Book Review by Charles Sutton

During the pre-World War I days the hotels served three hearty meals a day and had plenty of comfortable rocking chairs on their porches overlooking the lake. The guests had a variety of entertainments: swimming, fishing, boating, horseback riding, card games, golf, softball, croquet, and of course, dancing and listening to music.

There were many public beaches. A major attraction was Bomoseen Park that opened in 1904 with a Victorian dance pavilion, baseball diamond, and concession stands. A record 13,000 people came to the lake on July 6, 1908, during a bad heat wave.

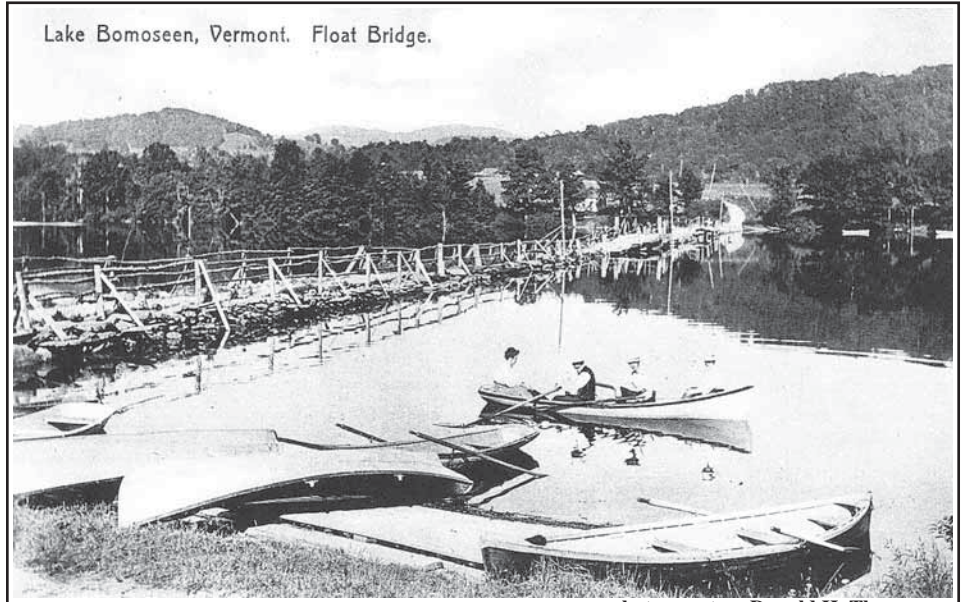
Today there are only two public beaches on the lake: a Vermont State Park on the west shore, and Crystal Beach on the east shore.

We learn there are two surviving inns, the former Lake House—Trakenseen Hotel (now the Trak-In Steak House and Edgewater Resort), which has gone through many upgrades by the long-time owners, the Poremiski family. The complex includes an inn, condo units, efficiencies and a motel with 700 feet frontage on the lake. The other survivor is Hydeville's Bomoseen Inn, made famous for having the longest bar in Vermont.

In the summers of the 1920s and 1930s the famed Algonquin Round Table, a celebrated group of New York City writers, critics and actors, stayed on Neshobe Island in the middle of the lake. The group included such regulars as Times drama critic Alexander Woollcott, who owned a stone house on the island, short story writer Dorothy Parker, and humorist and actor Robert Benchley.

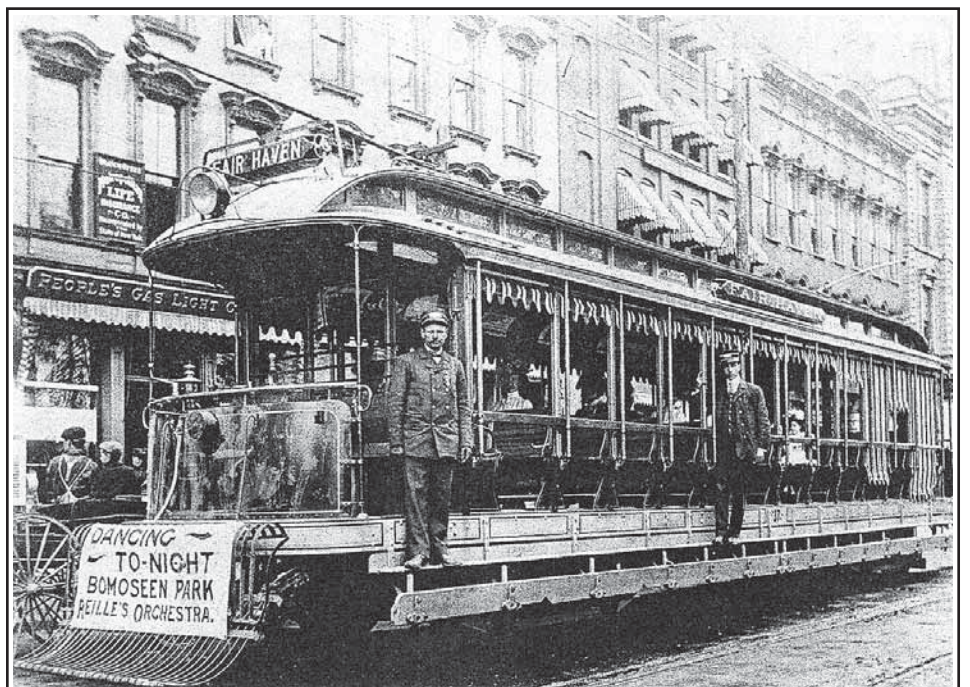
In addition to writing this book, Donald Thompson is a historical interpreter and presenter. Wearing authentic period costumes, he shares stories of early American historical figures like Samuel de Champlain.

Donald Thompson will be appearing at Briggs Carriage Bookstore in Brandon, VT

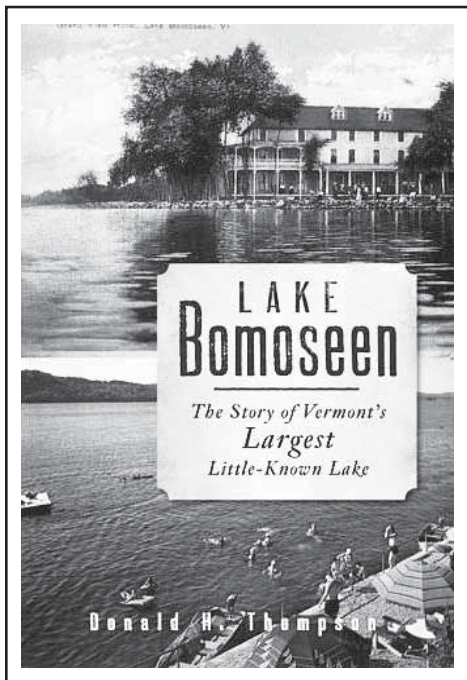


Lake Bomoseen, Vermont. Float Bridge.

A floating bridge ran across the north end of Lake Bomoseen. The bridge was built by Lyman Johnson in 1873 at the cost of \$3,000, to enable guests to come to his farmhouse which had been converted to an inn. The photo was taken in 1910.



This open air trolley, pictured here in Rutland, VT, operated between Rutland and Lake Bomoseen from 1904 to 1918. The trolley took thousands of people to the lake beaches, park, and resorts.



on May 28 at 7:00 p.m. for a free reading and discussion of the book.

Lake Bomoseen: The Story of Vermont's Largest Little-Known Lake by Donald H.

Thompson is available at Vermont bookstores or can be ordered from the author for \$19.99 plus \$3 for s&h at PO Box 113, Bomoseen, VT 05732 or call (802) 468-5309.

## Authors & Entertainment at Briggs Carriage Bookstore

The Ball & Chain Café, upstairs at the Briggs Carriage Bookstore in Brandon, VT, is a comfortable space to hear some live music or a reading from a local author. The café serves homemade baked goods and beverages including espresso. There is also free wireless Internet. (802) 247-0050. [www.briggscarriage.com](http://www.briggscarriage.com). [info@briggscarriage.com](mailto:info@briggscarriage.com).

### Peggy Armitage—Thursday, May 21, 7 p.m.

*Around Pittsford*, a photographic history of Pittsford, Chittenden, and Proctor, is part of Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series, and contains more than 170 images—many of which have never before been published. Assisted by Chittenden and Proctor historians, author Peggy Armitage—president of the Pittsford Historical Society—wrote captions for the black and white photos dating from the 1850s to 1990s. The text includes chapters on people, places, and products. The author will discuss and sign copies of this must-have book of local history.

### John Bryant—Friday, May 22, 7 p.m.

Our favorite pianist extraordinaire revisits the café for an evening of wonderful musical delight as he performs

music ranging from ragtime to Rachmaninoff, from blues to Beethoven, from lullabies to Liszt, and perhaps a little Vince Guaraldi as well.

### Donald Thompson—Thursday, May 28, 7 p.m.

In his new book, *Lake Bomoseen: The Story of Vermont's Largest Little-Known Lake*, author Donald H. Thompson describes these and other glamorous moments in Lake Bomoseen's past and explains how the area has evolved since the last hotels and dance halls closed their doors. Spend an evening learning the history of the lake and leave with this beautiful book autographed by its author.

### Extra Stout—Friday, May 29, 7 p.m.

Celebrate the coming of summer with this lively band plays the full gamut of Irish music: dance tunes, slow airs, marches, composed music, ballads, drinking songs, rebel songs, shanties, Irish punk, etc. Not content to focus on one small niche within Irish music, Extra Stout does it all. [www.extrastoutband.com](http://www.extrastoutband.com).

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