

# Ripley resort

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across from the lodge and featured small cabins scattered through several acres of trees, and having a restaurant and soda fountain.

Resorts abounded. There was Shore Place Resort, which featured dining, fountain favorites, boating and even dancing. Cedar Lodge had cottages over-hanging the lake, as if to sweep across its sunlit shores. Then there was Johnson's Resort, Wolfrom's Cabins and Ingelside Resort, which had a landscaped flower garden, sun dial, grass tennis court, and well-appointed library (think of it as the pre-Wi-Fi info area).

Davidson Resort was known for its charming and comfortable private cottages plus food specialties, such as key lime pie and dinner rolls that even unbuttered melted in your mouth. On the west side of the lake was Lindenhurst. There was, additionally, Hi-Lee Cottage, among others.

Lake Ripley Lodge Bed and Breakfast was with them all, especially during their heyday when Lake Ripley was a vacationer's paradise populated with attractive lodges.

Jim, having a Masters in History, is happy to fill in the historical background to whatever details about the lodge his wife, Janice, conveys

by memory and photograph. They are both natives of the area and are only too happy to share information on each, historic Lake Ripley and Cambridge.

"We started our business 14 years ago," Janice reveals, "and have experienced so many guests returning to Lake Ripley with amazing stories of their life growing up on the lake." She continued on about past visitors, "We have a journal for returning guests to share their memories of their life on Lake Ripley. Hundreds of guests have visited from across the United States and the world, including Nepal, Taiwan, and Europe."

Jim emphasizes, "We do our best to make each visitor's stay private, comfortable, enjoyable and memorable, making a grand memory at this

unique historical lakefront inn."

The couple even offers to trade coffee for fish stories, but for the moment, they tag-team the lodge's history.

Built in 1910 by the family of Charles Dawes, a former vice president under Calvin Coolidge and Pulitzer Prize winner, the Lodge has undergone several incarnations. First a family residence, it was later altered several times, even at one point being converted into a duplex, from which, in 1993, one of its owners, Tim Lorden, refurbished the entire edifice into a bed and breakfast.

The Hoiby's purchased the lodge from Lorden in 2003 and have continued to make improvements and updates, including the installation of five rain gardens outdoors. Both Lorden and



Cambridge's Lake Ripley Lodge in autumnal colors. (Photo submitted by Tristan McGough)

the Hoiby's have attempted to preserve the character and integrity of the original building.

Many original features remain, such as the Douglas fir floors, the French doors, and a 1,250-square-foot wrap-around screen porch, the kind that defines what a Grand Lodge should look and function like.

Janice recalls, "This was formerly the Maple Villa Hotel in the 1940's and 50's, owned by the Schmidt's. The exterior is true to the original with a commanding view of the lake, built in the style of a Ford or Edison, with a wide-screened veranda and multiple French doors to access the screened area. There are plenty of windows to take in the view and let in the cool lake breeze."

Jim piggy-backs, "We've updated the plumbing, central air and heat. We even have the Internet throughout the lodge."

As a "Travel Green Certified Lodge," the Hoiby's inn has five new

rain gardens boasting Native Wisconsin wildflowers. The rain gardens, along with the downspouts into them, collect the runoff from the hillside and prevent drainage into the lake. The native flow-ers, trees and bushes have deep roots to soak-up plenty of water.

Guests are invited to mellow out on the porch swing on the peaceful wraparound porch, view spectacular sunsets and stargaze from the pier, or stroll along the lake and enjoy the sounds and sights of nature. More information is available at their website, [www.lakeripley.com](http://www.lakeripley.com).

"The idea is to pamper our guests," Janice smiles. "They might want to enjoy a soothing fire-side whirlpool or take a splash in the lake. We have full A.C., private quarters, luxury beds, fireplaces, a lawn glider, fire-pit, pier, fishing, kayaks, canoes and boats. Bike rentals are available, and as Jim said, we even have free Wi-Fi."

The lodge isn't far away from the Glacial-Drumlin state biking and hiking trail, or from the extensive trails connecting Cambridge with those running throughout the Cam-Rock county park, three-area wildscape.

Nonetheless, though you might come to experience the tranquility of a glistening lake, the serenity of a rustic sunset, or the towering security of overarching pine trees and golden maples, you may still find yourself slipping into a bygone era, mesmerized by Jim's vivid accounts of local history or button-holed into one of Janice's remembrances, replete with photo albums.

They will tell you tales revolving around a south-central Wisconsin 450-acre spring-fed lake, when times were a bit more innocent and, perhaps, a little more authentically exciting, because one made one's own fun, with a little help from enough lodges that encouraged other like-minded vacationers to do the same.



Shore Place from the dock's point of view. (Photo submitted by Tristan McGough)

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