A History of Lake Macbride State Park

GOLDA LEIGHTON JENKINSON

F621
J6
J46x
1969

A History of Lake Macbride State Park

GOLDA LEIGHTON JENKINSON

Golda Leighton Jenkinson

COTTAGE RESERVE CORPORATION
Lake Macbride, Solon, Iowa 52333
1969

To the members and staff of the Iowa State Conservation Commission, whose tireless devotion to the cause of conservation is a priceless gift to all Iowans, this book is most gratefully dedicated.

© 1969 by The Cottage Reserve Corporation

FOREWORD

Lake Macbride State Park was developed in an area of historical interest and great natural beauty. The raw materials were already at hand in Big Grove Township. The three essentials were there: the need for conservation of the soil, the surface waters, and the woodland areas – all waiting and needing to be developed. Over $500,000 and four years of time and energy resulted in a locale perfectly suited for conservational practices and recreational purposes. Today "the wealth of spiritual values await the eager enthusiast."

Many people and organizations contributed to this impressive project, fulfilling the dreams and foresight of Dr. Thomas Huston Macbride and J. N. "Ding" Darling. Thousands of people visit Lake Macbride throughout the year, and many have expressed a desire to learn more about the park and the area surrounding it. That the lake and park serve practical as well as recreational purposes is illustrated by the fact that in 1962, the vocational agriculture class at Solon High School, under the guidance of their instructor, Harry Horner, challenged farmers in the Lake Macbride watershed area to help in reducing topsoil loss by means of proper conservational measures. Brochures were printed explaining how this problem could be arrested, and were distributed to residents of the area by the Future Farmers of America. This project became a concentrated effort to encourage water and soil saving practices in the 24,000-acre watershed, aimed not only at conserving the land, but at preventing serious siltation of the lake itself. The Johnson County Extension Service, the Johnson County Soil Boosters Clubs, the 4-H Clubs and others all joined the Solon High School vocational agriculture department and the Solon Future Farmers of America in this very worthwhile project.

Such activities were a part of the purposes and ideals of the 25-year plan of the Iowa State Conservation Commission. Beginning with the conservation activities of J. N. Darling and the consulting architect, Jacob L. Crane, Jr., and with the enthusiastic cooperation of the Iowa City and Cedar Rapids Chambers of Commerce, many Johnson County farmers and individuals from both Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, officials of The University of Iowa, and state and federal authorities, Lake Macbride has become a haven for many species of fish, waterfowl, marsh wildlife, animals, flowers, trees, and nearly all birds indigenous to Iowa.

It was not an easy task to undertake, this writing of the story of Lake Macbride State Park. I hope I have provided an interesting and reliable story. While much of the information in this history comes at first hand, credit surely is due to many others who were involved in the project from the very beginning in direct and vigorous ways. Even those who were only observers of the development of Lake Macbride served, in their enthusiasm and continuing interest, in helping this most beautiful of all Iowa parks to come into being. The *Iowa City Press-Citizen, The Daily Iowan,* the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* and the *Des Moines Register* were most generous in their support by means of publicity and their recording of progress in the development of the park. Special mention should also go to Mr. A. A. Welt and Miss Marjorie Anderson, of Iowa City, who, with great foresight, kept a complete file of all news items from August 21, 1933, through all the years of accomplishment to the present. Without this source material, it would have been impossible to have written a comprehensive history of Lake Macbride State Park. Gratitude is also due to Dr. Harry R. Jenkinson and Mr. Fred W. Kent for the photographs which record the area as it was, as it became, and as it now is.

Lake Macbride
March, 1969

G.L.J.

A HISTORY OF LAKE MACBRIDE STATE PARK

By Golda Leighton Jenkinson

FROM DREAM TO ACTION

Doctor Thomas Huston Macbride was one of the pioneers in the conservation movement in Iowa. He dreamed of an artificial lake being developed in Johnson County. Through his series of imaginative lectures during the early part of the twentieth century, he set forth the great purpose of conservation and showed that the idea had been generating for decades.

Before the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, the land which is now Iowa was heavily wooded. As the time passed, it gradually became depleted until all that was left consisted of second and third growth, and even this was rapidly disappearing because of the owners' need for cash, excessive pasturing and other forms of destruction.

As the executive, legislative and judicial bodies were set up in the State of Iowa, counties, townships and municipalities were formed. An educational system, scientific research, public health services and highways were soon necessary. Then came one of the most vital problems of all, that of recreation. For this purpose, the State Fish and Game Commission was formed. Three major correlative factors were found to be necessary for all recreational facilities to be provided by the state: the conservation of the soil, the conservation of the surface waters and the conservation of woodland areas. Many urgent problems remained untouched for the lack of definite knowledge of how to attack them. Out of this confusion sprang the idea of preparing one comprehensive conservation plan in which each element could take its proper place coordinated with the others, and in which the effort and money expended could be directed most effectively and economically.

In building this Conservation Plan, the personnel of the area was canvassed to draw into the project the most valuable men available at the time, within the limitation of available funds: biologists, geologists, biochemists, foresters, agronomists, sanitarians, economists, landscape architects, game experts, fisheries experts, hydrologists, historians, archaelogists and several specialists in engineering.

The survey covered a wide range of investigation but because of the limited funds available, it was impossible to study all of the items exhaustively. It was believed the recommendations made were sound. The successful fulfillment of the Conservation Plan depended upon:

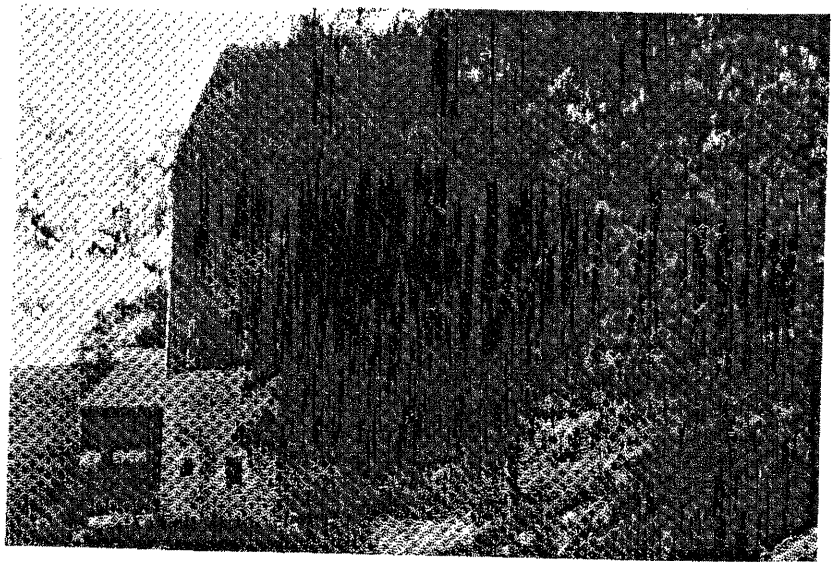
Good organization, both official and unofficial
Adequate finances
Permissive legislation
Strong public backing

In March 1931, the General Assembly adopted a joint resolution which was approved by Governor Dan Turner. This instructed the State Board of Conservation and the State Fish and Game Commission to collaborate on the preparation of a twenty-five-year conservation plan and program. While every branch of the state government is obviously concerned with such departments as Agriculture, Forestry and Public Health, the two agencies named in the legislative resolution were considered best equipped to coordinate all phases of such projects under one master plan which they and other agencies, both public and private, could use as a guide.

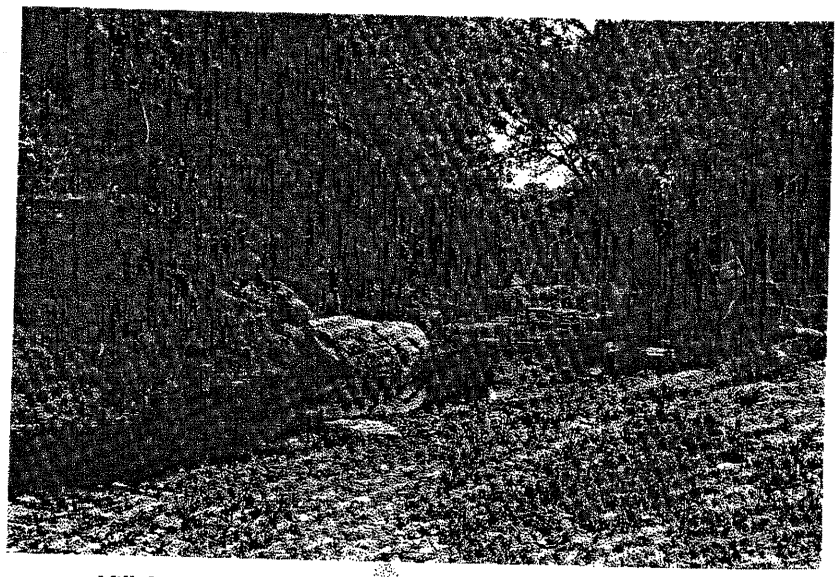
The resolution states that "such plan when completed and approved by the State Board of Conservation and the Fish and Game Department, subject to the approval of the executive council, shall constitute a definite and well-ordered twenty-five-year budgeted program toward which the various funds available for conservation in Iowa may be concentrated and spent in an orderly and scientific development of the natural resources, recreational areas and park systems of the whole state, so there is no limit to the range of the conservation plan except that of usefulness and practicability. The direct purpose of the plan is to make limited funds go much farther than would be possible without an orderly program." (Report on the 25-Year Plan of the Iowa Conservation Commission, by Jacob L. Crane, Jr., consultant, and George Wheeler Olcott, associate, 1933.)

Construction of an artificial lake along Mill Creek in Johnson County was recommended in 1932. It was included in the report of the State Conservation Board at that time and was adopted. The first action on the state conservation project was secured by J. N. "Ding" Darling, a nationally known political cartoonist and conservationist. The plan was developed at that time by the State Conservation Board with the help of the consulting architect, Jacob L. Crane, Jr., and the National Public Works fund.

Mill Creek was of historical interest. It received its name from an old water mill which was built by Anthony Sells in 1839, believed to have been the first inland mill in Iowa. Mill Creek furnished the water power. Pioneers for miles around brought their grain to the Sells Mill to be ground into flour and grist. In 1855 the mill was rebuilt and a stone foundation was laid. At that time it was known as the Hendricks Mill and it operated until the close of the Civil War, when a flood washed out the dam and damaged the mill. It was not rebuilt. A



The old Hendricks mill on Mill Creek, 1917. FWK.



Mill Creek, looking west from the mill, as it was in 1917. FWK.

wooden structure was erected on the stone foundation and was used to store hay. The building was being used as a barn when the land was acquired for a park. Traces of the old dam were still visible at that time, as was a near-by charcoal kiln. The charcoal kiln is a part of the early history of this area, which was known as "Sugar Bottom." The name originated from the large growth of native hard or sugar maples. In pioneer days, much of this maple was cut and converted to charcoal, which was used by the Sinclair Company of Cedar Rapids in processing their smoked meats.

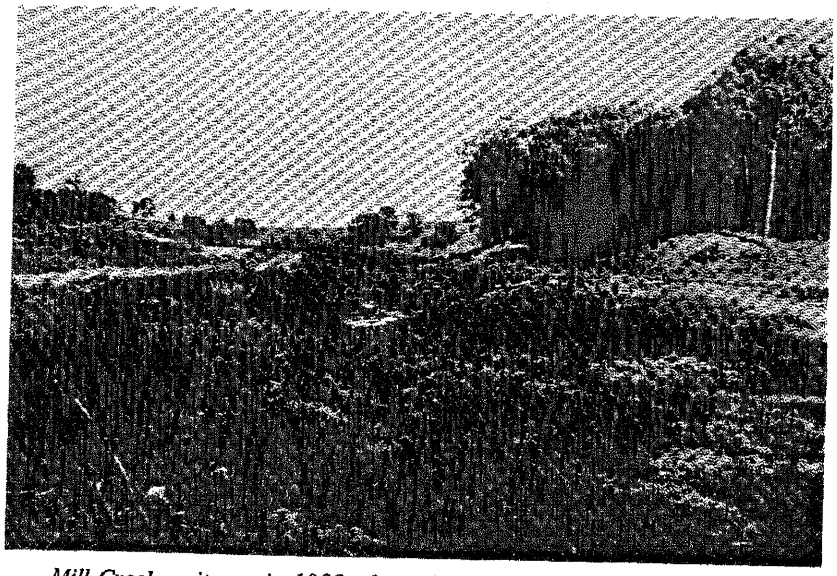
Professor Floyd Nagler, in his work in hydraulics at The University of Iowa, had tramped over the Mill Creek wooded area many times in his effort to secure data on the feasibility of constructing an artificial lake. He devoted many hours in the early nineteen thirties to this idea and gathered much important information about the region.

Professor Fred Lazelle of The University of Iowa Department of Journalism made many nature-study trips through the Mill Creek area. He identified many native trees such as red, white and yellow burr oak, white and green ash, black cherry, shag-bark hickory, butternut hickory, hard and soft maples, hackberry, black walnut, willow, poplar, sycamore, hawthorne, linden, red birch, blue birch, quaking asp, great-tooth poplar, cottonwood, red and white elm and crab apple. Wild flowers grew in profusion and the woods and streams were inhabited by mink, muskrat, raccoon, red squirrel, chipmunk, rabbits and beavers. Every bird known to Iowa inhabited these forests in season. This beautiful, wooded area was one of the first twelve in Iowa to be recommended by the State Conservation Board for immediate conversion into state parks. It had scenic beauty, woods, water and between five hundred and one thousand acres of land which could, eventually, provide both land and water recreation.

The main objective of any such park is to preserve the character of the site, protecting it against any type of damage and making it available to nature-loving citizens so that they may see, study and enjoy the out-of-doors.

The wooded area proposed for this particular park was located in Big Grove township, sections 28 and 29. It was fifteen miles from Iowa City and about the same distance from Cedar Rapids, fourteen miles from Mount Vernon, twenty-four miles from West Branch, five miles northeast from North Liberty and four miles from Solon. The name "Big Grove" was believed to have been derived from a large first growth of timber covering fourteen square miles between the Iowa and Cedar Rivers.

The immigrants of 1839 followed the streams, rivers and Indian paths and later, ox wagon tracks. Johnson County was the converging point for four main roads leading to Dubuque, Burlington, Muscatine and Mount Pleasant. On the Iowa City-Dubuque route, however, strangers crossing the prairie found it extremely difficult to keep on a direct course and often wandered far out of the



Mill Creek as it was in 1933, along the north side of the Cottage Area, opposite the present bathing beach. HRJ.

Looking toward the location of the original dam, as work begins on the lake bed in 1933. HRJ.

way. Because of this, the citizens of Iowa City hired Lyman Dillon to plough a furrow from Dubuque to Iowa City in as direct a line as possible. This became known as "Dillon's Furrow" and was of great assistance to travelers. The Prairie du Chien road, more than one hundred miles long, developed from "Dillon's Furrow." It remained a characteristically public highway for the pioneers until Congress appropriated twenty thousand dollars for its improvement. In this way, "Dillon's Furrow," begun by two men and five yoke of oxen, became a road of primary importance. It passed close to, if not directly through, the Mill Creek area.

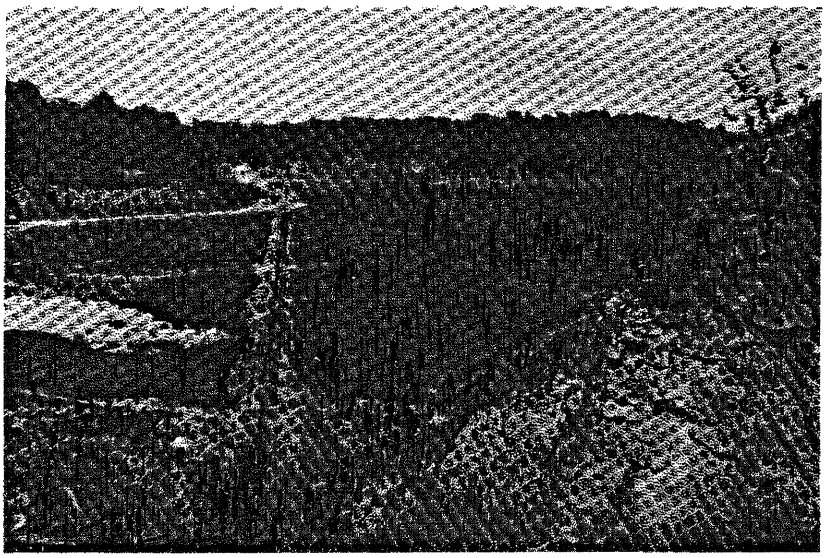
On August 21, 1933, the Iowa City Chamber of Commerce sponsored the recommendation of the State Conservation Board for the immediate conversion of the wooded area north of Iowa City into a state park. A committee of members was appointed to have charge of this project and Dr. E. J. Anthony was appointed chairman. Other members of the committee were A. A. Welt, Attorney Wm. J. Hayek, Roy Ewers, Dr. H. R. Jenkinson, Professor F. B. Knight, Fred Seeman, Professor Fred Lazelle and Chris Yetter. A survey made of the surrounding area indicated that there were 100,000 urban residents within a radius of twenty miles from Big Grove township.

Members of the State Fish and Game Commission, the state game warden and numerous engineers spent many hours inspecting the proposed development of the Mill Creek state park and lake area. Dr. E. J. Anthony, A. A. Welt and D. W. Crum, secretary of the Iowa City Chamber of Commerce, also made the inspection trip. Many matters of detail were discussed and recorded and several points of controversy were settled. Different opinions as to the best usage of various areas were considered, and the general policy relative to transient visitors and cottage owners was explored. The entrance to the park was definitely fixed on the east side. This entrance arrangement met with early opposition because of the difficulty it would cause in reaching the large areas to the west and south of the lake. This objection was finally overcome by a provision of a bridge across the north arm of the lake, about one-fourth mile north of the entrance. This bridge would permit both cars and pedestrians to cross to the west side of the north arm, and afford easy access to all sections of the park.

It was decided that the bridge would be low, set on pilings, and entirely surrounded by rock work giving the appearance of rough masonry. The floor was to be of concrete with low side rails, which would be of modern, approved lines but rustic in appearance.

Erection of a stone shelter house on the north side of the lake was planned, not far from the area where a sand beach was to be constructed for public use. About one mile of cast iron, six inch sewer pipe was to be placed under the lake to be used as a sanitary sewer line from the public and cottage areas. Cast iron pipe was specified, and eventually used, to insure against contamination of the lake water.

The original dam under construction, looking west from the Cottage Area, 1933. HRJ.



The original outlet sewer line under the lake bed, viewed toward the northeast from the south end of the original dam. 1933. HRJ.

Options for the necessary farm land to create the Mill Creek state park were ably handled by A. A. Welt, who drove hundreds of miles to obtain the necessary signatures. When the options were executed, the average price paid for the land was $45 per acre.

The total cost of the entire development was estimated at about $90,000. This included 800 acres of land in the park costing approximately $32,000 and another $8,000 for the installation of sewers, the water system and the building of roads. Sanitation was stressed with sewer connections and deep well water to every lot. The engineers had the complete plan for the park development ready on September 19, 1933.

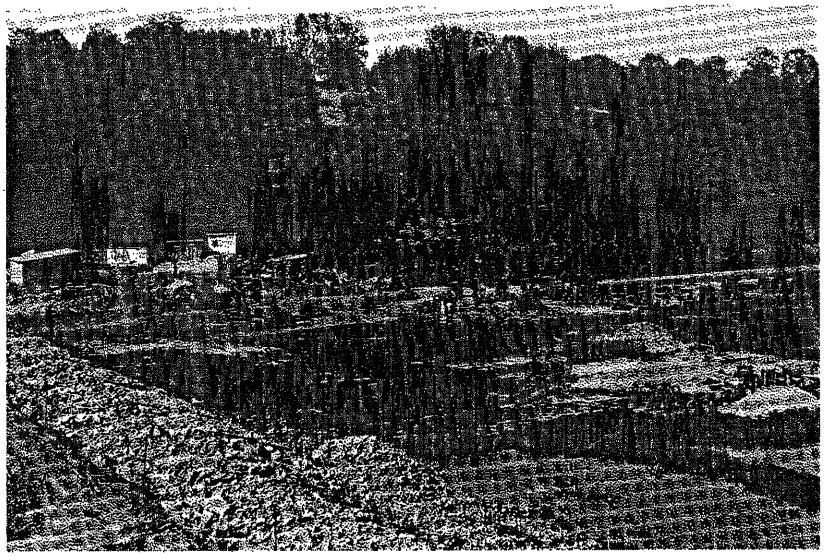
While the engineers were completing their plans, application blanks for the sale of lots were circulated. These required a deposit of $100 to insure holding the lot. The Security Finance Company of Iowa City was appointed by the Chamber of Commerce to act as trustee for handling the legal and financial problems. Local financing was through the sale of the 132 cottage sites. This was accomplished by September 20, 1933, the final day of the options. This money was used to pay for the land for the entire park and for the improvements mentioned above.

FROM ACTION TOWARD REALITY

The State Conservation Board aided in the development of the park and fifty thousand dollars was also furnished by Federal emergency funds for the construction of the dam. When the lake was completed, the entire park was deeded to the state without cost.

The labor for developing the park was furnished by the Civilian Conservation Corps, known as the CCC. It was to employ about 100 young men from this area to work on conservation projects. Their base camp was in Solon, under the command of Lt. Walter Merriam of Iowa City. The construction work on the project was directed by Supt. F. S. Yetter of Anamosa, Iowa.

Engineers from the State Conservation Board and the federal emergency conservation commission staff made soundings in the valley for the base of the dam. The exact location was decided to be across a natural gorge between two high limestone bluffs and below the junction of Mill and Jordan creeks. When the soundings were made, a bed of solid rock was struck at a depth of 17 feet



Construction of the original dam continues, 1934. HRJ.

Dedication ceremonies in the Park, Memorial Day, 1934. Dr. Eugene A. Gilmore, then President of The University of Iowa, is the speaker. Memorial Day still marks the opening of the Summer Season at Lake Macbride. HRJ.

and four inches. Professor Floyd Nagler, of The University of Iowa College of Engineering, who was a consultant for this type of federal construction, determined the type of dam to be built.

An enormous amount of hard work under adverse weather conditions had to be done before the actual work on the dam could begin. Ditches miles long had to be dug in the dusty valley for the large sewer pipes. Men also wove wire and timbers together to make tent-like structures on bone-dry land which later would be spawning places for thousands of fish.

A huge trench 50 feet wide and approximately eight feet deep had to be dug across the valley under the site of the dam. To insure that there would be no seepage of water under the dam, sheets of piling three planks thick and 14 feet long were spiked together and were driven down against the solid rock. At each end of the dam, workmen cut back into the solid rock and built concrete wing-walls which extended from the rock cut-outs into the ends of the dam. The huge trench across the valley was then filled with impervious clay from a near-by hill, up to the level of the valley. After that, the construction of the thirty feet high dam was started.

A concrete conduit 300 feet long was built under the south end of the dam for release of water while the construction was in progress and also to be used later if it should ever be necessary to drain the lake.

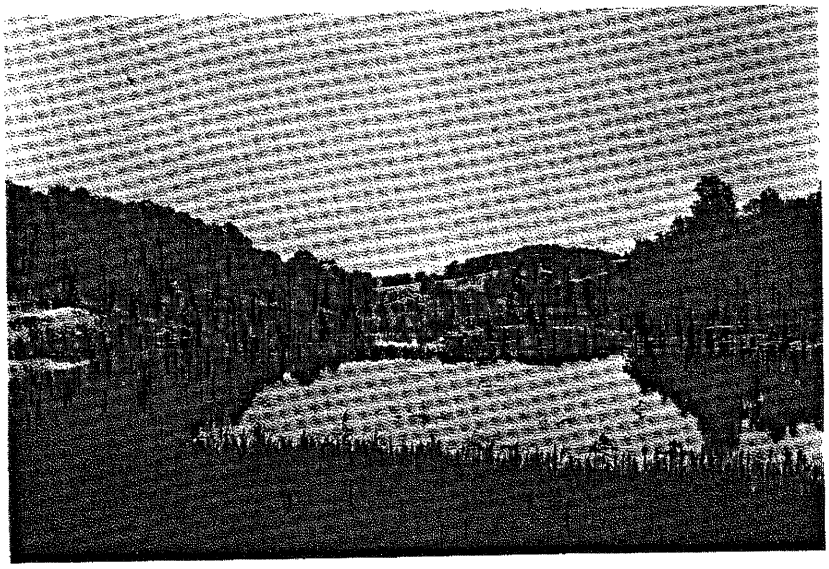
By May 21, 1934, the construction had reached a height of 12 feet. A load of the impervious clay from a high hill on the north side of the valley was being hauled and dumped every minute. It was then spread by hand and rolled with a seven-ton roller that the CCC boys had constructed. This was drawn by a five ton caterpillar tractor. They averaged about 800 cubic yards of clay per working day from April first. In addition, limestone was being quarried from the spillway, hauled in and laid in place by hand on both sides of the dam. This was done at a rate of about 170 cubic yards a day.

In the construction of the wings and sluiceway, a car load of reinforcing iron and more than 2,000 sacks of cement were used. It took approximately 6,000 more sacks of cement and a proportionate amount of reinforcing iron to finish the spillway. Sand for all of the concrete work was hauled from the Palisades-Kepler State Park near Mount Vernon.

Following November 1, 1933, the CCC put in a total of 16,407 man-work days or 106,105 man-hours of work. The CWA, a small group on relief, worked many hours on the project. They spent much of their time during the winters of 1933 and 1934 cutting trees and clearing brush from the lake bed and park area. The CWA put in 25,000 man-hours of work after November 1, 1933.

The CCC did all of their own work—housekeeping, cooking and camp duties as well as keeping the equipment in good repair. The commander of the CCC was

The completed original dam as viewed from the south, 1936. HRJ.



South arm of the lake shown as the lake began to fill, July 13, 1937. FWK.

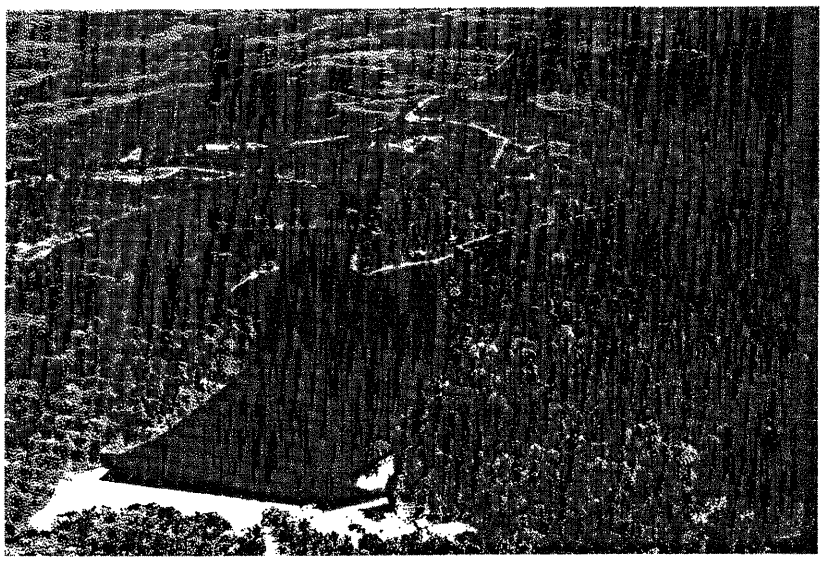
Lt. F. L. Turner. He explained that the CCC was not organized along military lines although some military terms were used. Rations were purchased from the District Quartermaster at Fort Des Moines. For the month of September, 1933, such purchases totalled $2,000.

The dam was 228 feet wide at the bottom. It was 550 feet in length, with an additional 165 feet for the spillway at the south side. When finished, it was 42 feet above the original stream level but the water level was maintained at 28 feet. Figures do not give the same idea of the size of the project as would climbing to the top of the 80 foot hill at the south end and looking down over the dam and viewing the men at work. Looking out over the vast expanse cleared for the lake bed, one could see the hill-top cottage sites with the streams curving around the peninsula and joining in the valley below to form more lake bed. The scene changed rapidly from that 80 foot elevation as it was cut and blasted down some 60 feet to form the spillway. Pipes stretched out in snaky trails on the lake bed and were soon joined to take care of the sewer and water facilities of the cottage area and the public park. From the hill top, a number of low, laced structures could be seen in the lake bed. These were the spawning beds for the fish with which the lake was to be stocked by the Fish and Game Commission.

Earl Fiala, superintendent of the entire project, remembered that as a boy, living in this area he would get game fish out of the two creeks. He also said some of the old timers talked about using the water to create an artificial lake. Mr. Fiala held degrees in both civil engineering and law and thus was well qualified for his duties.

In the winter of 1934, Mr. Fiala had charge of the CCC men and several CWA workers. During this time much of the less pretentious work was done, the men moving from one project to another in the course of construction. They changed the course of the creeks to serve them and it was not until the floor was laid under the dam that the mill stream returned to its old course. The bridge was built across the north arm of the lake during the summer of 1934, and a shelter and a sandy beach were built along the north shore. All structures were built of stone. Work was being rushed so that cottagers could build their summer homes with the conveniences of running water and proper sewer connections.

The CCC used 16,000 pounds of dynamite in quarrying the rock. A total of 114,368 miles was accumulated on the speedometers of the trucks and approximately 21,000 gallons of gasoline were used. The federal government placed an average value of three dollars per day per man on CCC labor. Using this as a base, the CCC group put in about $50,000 worth of work on the project. They planted many thousands of trees and did erosion control work on over 2,500 acres of land. This consisted of bank sloping, building earth and wire dams and fencing in the planted or eroded areas.



Aerial view of the original lake, taken in 1937. Compare this view with that of the present enlarged lake on page 31. FWK.

Eager fishermen try their luck on the very first day of the very first season, July 7, 1937. FWK.

Summer motorists watched their future playground in the making. Twelve hundred cars were counted in the embryo park one Sunday in May, 1934.

The name for the park was selected by means of a contest. Everyone was given a chance to compete. The Chamber of Commerce committee offered a prize of $50 for the winning name. The only requirement was that the suggested name be accompanied by a letter of not more than 200 words telling why the name should be used. Judges were from the Iowa City Chamber of Commerce, the Lions Club, Kiwanis, Rotary and Women's Garden Club. The deadline for entries was May 23, 1934. Over 600 entries were submitted from the surrounding area, but the majority were from Iowa City and Cedar Rapids. The letters were all listed by D. V. Crum, secretary of the Iowa City Chamber of Commerce, before they were passed on to the judges. It was decided to announce the winning name at the dedication of the park on Memorial Day, May 30, 1934.

Construction of cottages had started at the new state park with four lot owners, Dr. Curtis Layton and H. C. Hollaway of Cedar Rapids, Earl Kurtz and Professor R. R. Whipple of Iowa City, having begun work on their summer homes. Restrictions on building were written into the contracts for the sale of the lots prohibiting the construction of ramshackle structures and insuring the orderly appearance of the cottage area. No private concessions or private business were to be allowed.

When the land was surveyed, it was plotted so that each lot on the lake front would have almost an equal amount of shore line. The lots were numbered serially. It was found that lot No. 28, located on the north shore of the cottage area, had a historical background. A sink hole was found on the lot which many years ago was a cave. In days past, it received the name of "Horse Thief Cave" because of the many horses stolen from the surrounding territory that were found in the cave by searching parties.

On May 23, 1934, Dr. Anthony announced that all of the work on the dam would be completed and the lake would be filled with water by October, providing there was a normal amount of rainfall. Hydraulics engineer Floyd Nagler had said enough water had passed through the streams in the park to fill the lake to capacity four times during the year. The watershed of the two streams covered an area of approximately 26 square miles.

As the time drew near, the committee urged visitors to come to the dedication early and view the dam. It was now of sufficient height to show its real magnitude. The park could be reached through North Liberty over the Mehaffey bridge and also by way of Solon.

MEMORIALIZING THE DREAM

On May 30, 1934, eastern Iowa's most beautiful park was dedicated as Lake Macbride State Park in honor of the late President Emeritus, Thomas Huston Macbride of The University of Iowa, prominent botanist and educational leader. Rousing applause by the 2,000 present greeted the announcement of the name. The $50 prize was awarded to Mrs. Onie Strub of East Lucas township. The committee in charge of the selection of the name, Lake Macbride State Park, sought to perpetuate his name.

The dedication program was held in the beautiful cottage area. Mr. Charles Maruth, assistant registrar of The University of Iowa, was master of ceremonies. The program was opened by The University of Iowa Band directed by Dr. Orrie VanDoren and another directed by Dr. Clifford Berkey, playing "The Star Spangled Banner."

Governor Clyde Herring of Iowa was the first speaker. He said he wanted to add the endorsement of the state government to the project which was made possible through the foresight of a few enthusiastic conservationists. He complimented the local committee, Dr. W. C. Boone, Chairman of the Fish and Game Commission and J. N. "Ding" Darling for their work in the conservation of natural Iowa.

President-elect Eugene A. Gilmore, of The University of Iowa, pointed out that the conservation movement was merely to conserve the wonderful things we have in common. "Memorial day is an appropriate time to celebrate the conservation of our national union," he said. "The park contributes much to present and future community life. It is a shelter for all of us--a place to get away from the world into a quiet retreat where it is possible to live with nature, the greatest teacher of all. The park is more than a playground. It is a place where we conserve the spiritual values which make civilization. The people will have to realize that this is their property and keep it clean and wholesome as it was originally. There is much to be learned in the use of parks."

President Harry M. Gage of Coe College was then introduced along with Mayor Harry Breene of Iowa City, Mayor Neal of Cedar Rapids and Dr. W. C. Boone, an active conservationist, of Ottumwa.

Mr. Harry McGuire, editor of "Outdoor Life" was the guest speaker for the afternoon. He began his address by saying, "You have here today set a landmark in the history of recreation building in America. I predict that the twenty-five year plan, of which this project is a part, will go down in history as the most important plan of its kind ever formulated in America. You people have faced the facts and given back an answer. Your leaders saw the past. They saw the wildlife paradise that my own grandparents knew in Iowa decimated, timber

depleted year after year, cover for birds burned off, wild fowl marshes drained, streams and lakes polluted and rendered death-dealing alike to fish and human life; in short, they saw we had squandered nature to the danger point." Mr. McGuire said that a traveler knew when he was in Iowa by the difference in the bird and animal life being more plentiful. He pointed out that the future of wildlife in America depends more on a public sense of sportsmanship than anything else. "You and I must be missionaries to the American public, helping the thoughtless and ignorant to respond to nature in spirit, and by respecting and not desecrating her; to give back to nature something of her spiritual beauty and the peace she is so willing to lend to us weary humans," he said.

Mr. McGuire also said that there was danger of the politicians gaining control of the fish and game departments in the states and warned against it, showing that it would lead to the sacrifice of much of nature's beauty. He urged everyone to get behind the ideas advanced by "Ding" Darling and to back him in his fight to make the country one of natural beauty and productiveness instead of one of "insane waste and extravagance."

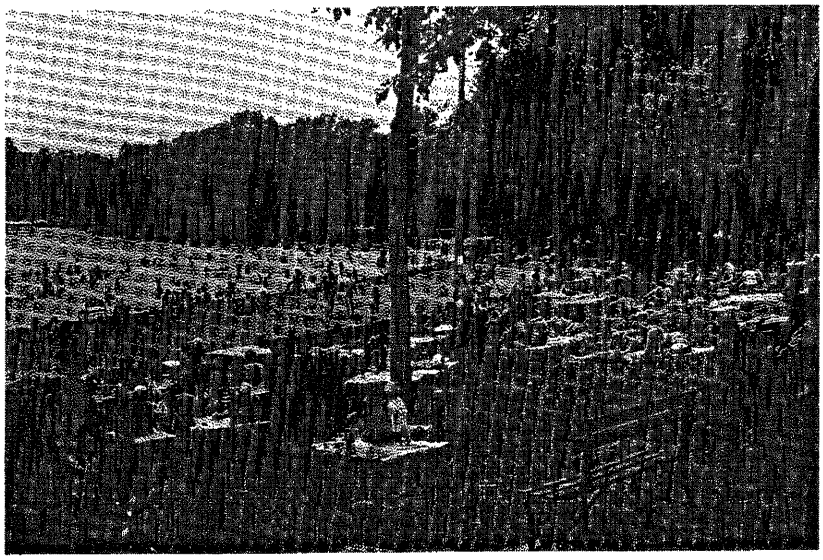
After the close of the program, many of the crowd lingered on, looking over the park. The dam, now fourteen feet high, drew many interested viewers.

THE COTTAGE AREA

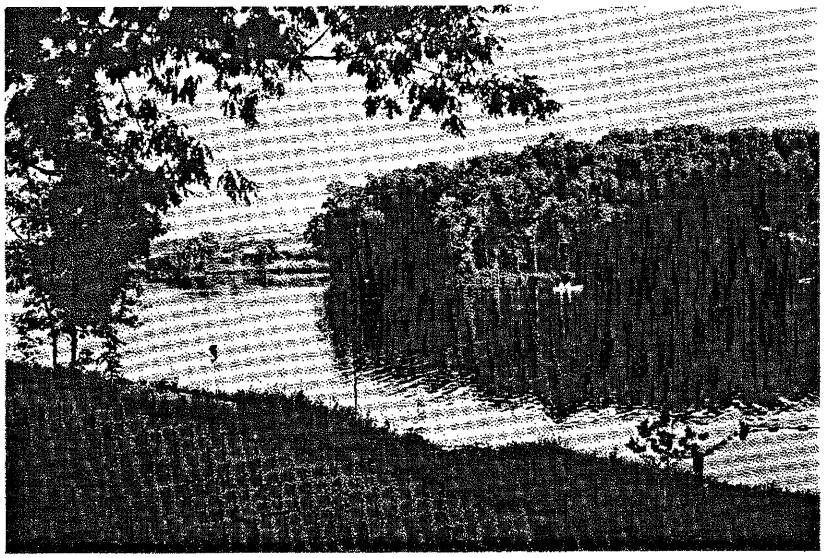
The Cottage Reserve Corporation was formed July 11, 1934. Dr. E. J. Anthony of Iowa City was named the first president. Other officers of the corporation named were Harry F. Holloway of Cedar Rapids, vice president, and A. A. Welt of Iowa City as secretary-treasurer. In addition to these officers, attorney L. C. Clearman of Iowa City and Mrs. C. L. Starr of Cedar Rapids completed the board.

The Cottage Reserve Corporation was chartered for fifty years and the Articles of Incorporation were filed with the county recorder, R. J. Jones, of Johnson County. The new corporation would be in charge of the Lake Macbride Cottage Reserve Area when the Chamber of Commerce trustees completed their work.

The corporation, a non-profit organization, was organized for the purpose of supervising and managing the cottage area with control over sewer, water, roads and easements in the area. All lot owners became members by complying with



The original bathing beach (now under water) as it appeared some time after the opening of the lake to the public. FWK.



Beautiful new Lake Macbride in 1937, looking southeastward toward the Cottage Area. FWK.

the articles of membership and paying a membership fee. The corporation furnished police protection to the cottage area in cooperation with the park custodian, Roy Reed, who had been appointed by the Fish and Game Commission.

THE MAKING OF A DREAM

Lake Macbride State park celebrated its first birthday on August 21, 1934. This was the first anniversary of the date that the plans for development of the lake and park near Solon, Iowa had been announced by the Iowa City Chamber of Commerce committee. Since that time, the park and lake had taken definite form. The dam was being constructed and was within ten feet of its contemplated height. Most of the sewer lines had been laid in the lake bottom. About 275 fish shelters had been built but they were not all completed as the lake bed was not yet completely cleared.

On June 16, 1935, the Iowa Junior Farm Bureau was the first organization to hold an outing at Lake Macbride State Park and 700 were present. Invitations had been sent to more than 20 southeastern county farm groups. All visitors to the new park in the summer of 1935 were greeted by one of the most unusual artificial lake projects in Iowa, located in a setting of natural beauty. It rapidly became a popular place for recreation. On one Sunday in June, two thousand cars were counted transporting approximately ten thousand people to the park.

The roads had been built in the cottage area and at the highest point in the area a 190-foot well had been drilled through 50 feet of glacial deposit and 140 feet of rock. The pump and pressure tank had been installed and tested. Fresh, pure water was available to the newly built cottages.

A 96-foot bridge spanning the north arm of the lake had been built. It gave easy access to the public area, bathing and boating facilities, picnic areas and shelters. Road construction, landscaping, planting, the construction of the custodian's residence and of service buildings for the maintenance of the area kept the workers busy all summer.

Iowa City Lodge 1096 of the Loyal Order of Moose built a beautiful club house at Lake Macbride during the summer of 1935. The three-story building was erected on the east side of the lake. It was built on lots 106, 107 and 108 in the cottage area, with a frontage of 180 feet overlooking the lake. The architect for the building was J. Bradley Rust of Iowa City. It was a beautiful, substantial

structure, finished in English style with a long, low roof. There were boat docks and a private beach for the members.

The directors for the Iowa City Moose Lodge Building Association were in charge of the construction. The officers of this group were Earl W. Kurtz, President; Leo Kohl, Vice President; Charles Benda, Secretary and William J. Parizek, Treasurer. Other members of the board were George O'Hara, Attorney William J. Hayek, Philip Katzenmeyer, Charles Lacina and Anton Meintzer.

The club house was dedicated on Sunday afternoon, August 2, 1935, by Judge Willis Pierson, P.S.D., Regional Director for Illinois, Missouri and Iowa. The program and dedicatory address were given in the large auditorium of the new club house.

In April of 1936, water was being permanently impounded in Lake Macbride, a goal that had been awaited for nearly three years. The gates were now closed on the large dam blocking Mill and Jordan creeks. This followed an inspection visit to the park area by Mr. C. H. Wilson, federal engineer in charge of coordinating all of the groups working in the state park, the CCC, WPA and National Park Service.

Mr. R. C. Choate of Davenport, Iowa, district engineer and Mr. R. S. Truitt, Johnson County WPA engineer, had received approval from Washington, D.C., for the allocation of additional WPA funds for twenty men to finish the construction of the new bridge at the entrance to the park. The bridge was expected to be completed in sixteen working days. This was to include grading the new portion of the road into the park.

With normal rainfall, the impounding of the water was expected to take about six weeks to reach the 28-foot level, as marked at the spillway. Grading was already underway at the public bathing beach. Under the direction of Supt. E. W. Olmstead, the CCC hauled in 1,250 loads of sand from the Palisades-Kepler State Park near Mount Vernon. This was spread over an area of more than three acres, creating a sand beach 600 feet long and into the water for 110 feet. A life line 550 feet long marked the maximum depth of four and one-half feet. Beyond this there was a gradual step-off to a depth of eight to ten feet. A diving tower was provided and a life guard was on duty when the park was officially opened. The sand beach extended back 50 feet from the water's edge and above that was a sodded picnic area.

The bath house was built over a log frame and was constructed of native limestone from Stone City. A pumping system was installed to pump lake water to a five hundred gallon storage tank on the hill above the bath house. There the water was warmed by the sun and purified. It was then piped to the showers in the bath house. A deep well for drinking water was drilled near one end of the bath house.

The wildlife areas could only be reached by seven miles of graveled foot-trails. Twenty stone fire places had been built in picnic areas. Five hundred cars could be accommodated in special parking areas, and all park roads had been graveled by the CCC.

As the park developed, more and more visitors were anxious to watch the changes taking place, while others were curious to see what magic was being accomplished in transforming farm and pasture lands into a summer resort area. One Sunday in June, 1936, found a stream of visitors from all over Iowa—2,000 cars, to be accurate, as the CCC boys kept count, and the number of persons in the cars reached 5,000. The parking area, fortunately, was several hundred feet wide and three blocks long.

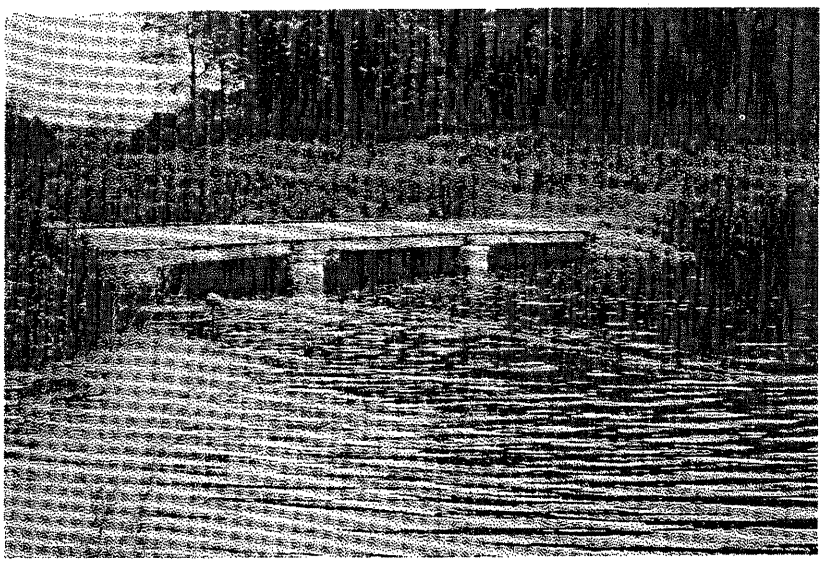
While the park had not been officially opened, picnicking was permitted on the park grounds. Boating was popular and some visitors enjoyed swimming at their own risk as they had been warned there was no supervision at that time.

Lake Macbride marked its third anniversary on August 21, 1936. The water in the lake was being impounded and was at the 22-foot level and a score of other improvements had been made throughout the park. The transformation from a meandering creek at the old mill site to a park development had been a huge undertaking. It required the combined efforts of local, state and federal groups interested in conservation and the restoration of Iowa's natural resources and wildlife, to bring the dream to realization.

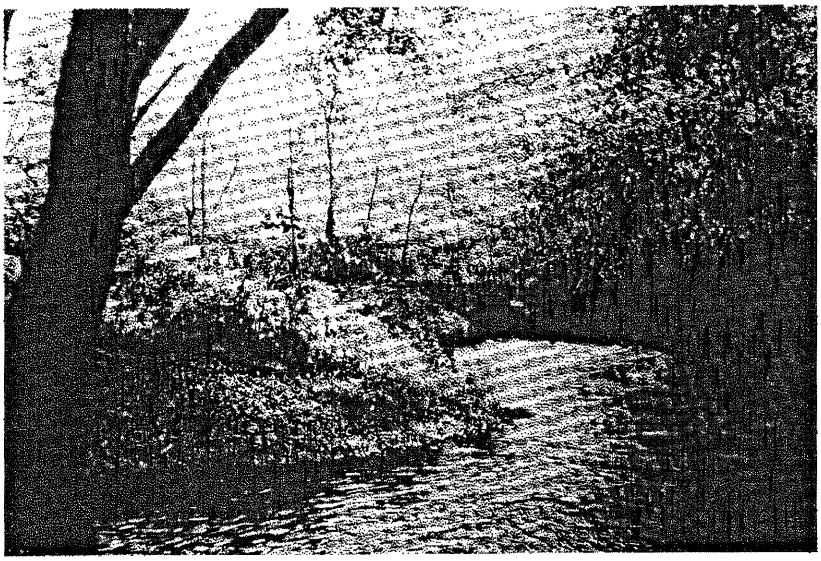
During the summer of 1936, twenty cottages with modern facilities had been erected by urbanites desiring peaceful quiet and a close-to-nature vacation spot. As Dr. Eugene A. Gilmore stated at the dedication of the park, "It is more than a playground, it is a place where we conserve the spiritual values which make civilization."

Since November, 1933, the CCC workers, directed by civil and military supervisors, carried on with extensive park forestry, soil erosion control and wildlife preservation activities. Thousands of locust, willow and cottonwood trees were planted, 3,000 temporary concrete dams were built to halt soil erosion, and eight wildlife areas were developed. The custodian's home, located near the park entrance and northeast of the new Moose club house, had been built of native limestone from Stone City by the CCC. They continued with the construction of bridges, garages, maintenance buildings and trails, until the work was finished.

All work in the park was completed during the year 1937. The lake filled to the 28-foot level at the spillway which formed an eight mile shore line to the nearly 200-acre lake. The new five mile stretch of road from North Liberty to the park was open to traffic since the grading was finished and rock had been put on immediately.



The old entrance bridge over the north arm of the lake as it appeared before reconstruction. The bridge was not removed, but is now about fifteen feet below the surface of the lake. HRJ.



Draining the old lake into the Iowa River, October, 1956. HRJ.

Fishing was not permitted until the abundant stock that had been placed in the lake reached proper size. Sailboating on the lake had been authorized by the members of the State Conservation Commission on an experimental basis for one year. They were to be the final judges as to whether it was safe and practical.

While progress was being made in the development of Lake Macbride State Park, all roads in this vicinity leading to the future recreational center remained as they were in the horse and buggy era. During the dry season, they were extremely dusty; in wet weather, travel was almost impossible. The roads were narrow, twisting and turning, making motoring a hazard even when traveling at very slow speed. The motorist was also in constant danger that the car might become mired in the mud. He experienced the additional anxiety of meeting an oncoming car in a narrow place where passing would be difficult and dangerous.

It had been hoped that at a meeting of the Iowa City Chamber of Commerce committee, the county engineer and the county board of supervisors, a workable plan would evolve which would permit immediate action in improving the roads in the vicinity of Lake Macbride. The Iowa State Conservation Commission advised the abandonment of roads leading into the park on the northwest and on the south sides. Permanent impounding of water had flooded the south road and the northwest road had been entirely enclosed within the park area. A new road had been constructed to the public area of the park. The commission order was given by Mr. M. L. Hutton, Director, following a visit to the park by Mr. R. E. Stewart of Ottumwa, a commission member. The order stated that the commission was following national park service policies regarding one entrance to the park and limiting the mileage within the park for the sake of conservation principles and economy. The first road abandoned was described as beginning at the intersection of the north and south center line of section 29, township 81, and running southeast to the intersection of the recently constructed road. The other abandonment was the road running north from the Mehaffey bridge. The commission closed the road from the east quarter corner of section 29, township 81, south of the section line at the school house. Entrance to the park was now from the east only, on the Solon road. Park visitors using the North Liberty road had to go east a short distance from the Mehaffey bridge and then go north, then turn west to the main park entrance.

In April, 1936, the commission engineers were transferred from surveying the park road from Solon west to the park. It was recommended by the Johnson County Board of Supervisors that the five miles from North Liberty to the entrance of Lake Macbride be improved first, and $28,000 was allocated by the commission for grading the road. As soon as the survey was made, the road was brought to grade and the county then surfaced the highway with gravel.

The North Liberty road was recommended for improvement first so access

to the park would be available at all times on an all weather highway. It was pointed out that if the Solon road was improved first, the CCC camp would be shut off from the park site during the construction period and again a few years later when highway 261 would be improved.

THE DREAM BECOMES REALITY

When Lake Macbride was opened to the public, June 15, 1937, visitors were greeted by an unusual lake project, a culmination of dreams by leading conservationists. "Ding" Darling was a staunch devotee to conservation. He had dreams for greater development of boating, fishing and other forms of outdoor enjoyment. "Ding" was instrumental in getting the Johnson County project under way, lending his assistance to the Chamber of Commerce committee when they sought state assistance.

According to an official count made by the CCC, on the opening day, more than 3,000 persons visited Lake Macbride State Park. Cars loaded with picnickers and others in search of recreation, streamed through the park throughout the day. Hundreds of others enjoyed the new sand beach for bathing, sunbathing and games. Broad steps led from the beach up to the bath house. There, dressing facilities were provided and attendants could provide rental bathing suits and towels. A life guard was in attendance at the beach during open hours for the protection of bathers.

Trails along the shore from the bath house to the dam provided a beautiful walk among the trees. Rock steps and bridges across the ravines added to the beauty of the landscape. Dense woods, hills, the lake and the trails added much in variety and beauty to the scene. Even a beautiful waterfall was provided at the spillway as the water gushed over in frothy cascades.

Opening of the Lake Macbride fishing season for the first time on July 7, 1937, was a historic event which was best described by Bob Hogan, the Iowa City Press Citizen sports editor: "That four o'clock trek to Lake Macbride this morning, although not productive as far as fish were concerned, for us (the managing editor and the city editor also) at least--we didn't take our poles--was one never-to-be-forgotten. It was the first time that we had ever seen a lake opened for the first time to fishing. It was the first time that we have seen fishermen, and women, in such groups that, in spots, it made angling almost impossible. There was many a time when anglers got their lines mixed up and

crossed but it was all in good sport and there was not a sullen crack made. Probably if it had not been opening day with all the color, literally, of a circus, then things might have been different. At five o'clock cars into the lake site were lined up for nearly a mile and a half waiting the time when the conservation officers gave the signal to 'go'. Fishing laws and regulations were given to each car load of persons. Cars were checked for minnow bait and later the bait was checked by inspectors at the bath house. Minnow bait was also sold to those who wished it, at the boat dock.

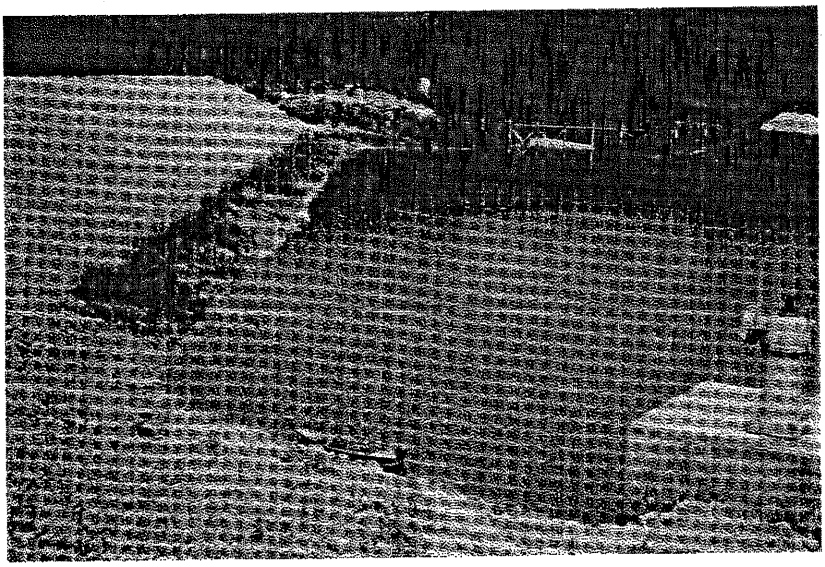
"In the first two hours an official check revealed that 290 cars had passed through the gates and each car averaged three occupants. States of Nebraska, Wyoming, Illinois, Minnesota, in addition to Iowa, were represented. The all-night rain evidently had little effect on the fish in the lake for they were biting quite well. Artificial bait was capturing the eyes of the bass while the bullheads were biting on worms and minnows. Some of the more experienced anglers were getting a few bass strikes on minnows also.

"All of the boats privately owned and otherwise, were put to good use this morning. It appeared there were approximately fifty or sixty rowboats out on the lake. As far as fisherman's luck was concerned, however, these along the banks were getting the limit as fast as those in the boats.

"Conservation officers from Johnson, Linn and Cedar Counties were on hand in all sections of the lake area. They were checking the catches and inspecting the bait. The purpose of checking the minnow bait was to make sure that no carp, quillback, dogfish and the like got into artificial lake waters. Four officials met the cars at the main gate, two of them checked the cars for occupants, county residence and whether the occupants were adults or children. Officials said cars coming after seven were dominated by children who were brought along by parents who planned to make an all-day fishing excursion out of the trip."

To give the public an idea of the number of fish that had been placed in the lake, the following information was released. In 1935, 3,867 large mouth bass and 9,385 black crappies were placed in the lake by the commission. In 1936, 16,000 large mouth bass, 250 yellow bullheads, 2,000 black bullheads, 4,675 black crappies, 4,700 white crappies, 4,400 bluegills and 2,400 minnows were added to the waters of the lake. In 1937, another large number of fish were added, including 22,700 large mouth bass, 11,800 black bullheads, 450 black crappies, 450 white crappies and 6,350 bluegills. The State Conservation Commission limited the catch for any one day to twelve fish in the aggregate of which not more than five could be black bass and not more than seven could be crappies. Other state law dealt with the use of minnows in artificial lakes. It was unlawful for any person to use for bait in any state-owned artificial lake, minnows or small fish which had not been inspected and approved by a representa-

The bath-house relocated, sand for the new beach spread, and the new lake beginning to fill. 1958. HRJ.



The new dam, with the lake refilling, in 1958. Gate control is in the foreground, sewer-line and trestle, jetty in background. HRJ.

tive of the commission. "The purpose of the law," declared Ed Sybil, State Conservation Commission officer for this territory, "is primarily to keep carp out of the newly constructed lakes."

When Lake Macbride was given to the state, a provision was made that the state or the Conservation Commission could never sell or lease any portion of the park, with the exception of the private cottage area, to any individuals for cottage sites. The commission ruling against the sale of cabin sites in the public area did provide, however, that camp grounds would be permitted. The camper had to provide his own tent or camping outfit, camping was limited to areas which were provided with proper sanitation facilities. Camping longer than two weeks was not permitted. The attitude of the Iowa authorities was that the state parks and lakes were the property of all of the people and not for an exclusive few.

A TIME OF CHANGE AND GROWTH

In the early 1940's plans were being made for a flood control reservoir on the Iowa River, including the construction of a new dam about six miles upstream from Iowa City. Original plans of the Army Corps of Engineers anticipated that Lake Macbride would become, at least on a seasonal basis, a part of the larger lake thus created. Since the Coralville dam was to create a flood control pool extending many miles upstream and past the Macbride dam, it would have been possible, at times of high water, for the flood waters to enter Lake Macbride and raise its level temporarily and even destructively.

Mr. Fred J. Poyneer of Cedar Rapids, then a member of the State Conservation Commission, pointed out that Lake MacBride State Park was originally dedicated to the State of Iowa by the federal government as a recreational and conservational facility and that its original purposes should be protected. His firm defense of this position led eventually to the decision to raise the Macbride dam 26 feet, increasing the area of Lake Macbride to some 960 acres and thereby eliminating any possibility of the two bodies of water becoming intermingled.

Accordingly, the Army Corps of Engineers purchased hundreds of additional acres of land adjoining Mill and Jordan creeks to make possible the expansion of the lake and the facilities of a major recreational state park. It was estimated the entire project plus the newly acquired land would cost $900,000, to be paid for by the federal government. When completed, it would be dedicated to the State of Iowa for use as a state park.

The Concrete Materials and Construction Company of Cedar Rapids, Iowa were low bidders on the contract to drain Lake Macbride and build an enlarged dam. Their bid of $249,107.00 was to include stripping the rock riprap from the old dam and building a new one, incorporating the old dam, and the construction of a new spillway at the 712 foot level.

On October 17, 1956 the drain flume of the old dam was opened by John Waalk of Cedar Rapids, superintendent for the Concrete Materials and Construction Company. This was accomplished by turning a control wheel on the existing dam. Mr. Waalk was assisted by Don Edlen, an employee of the Iowa Fish and Game Commission. This work was done under the supervision of the Army Corps of Engineers. The wheel opened the gate on the thirty-six inch drain extending under the south end of the dam. This released the water of the lake to the Iowa river. This dam had been built across Mill creek twenty-two years previously and this was the fourth time the gate had been opened during that period. By a check made before the gate was opened, the Army Engineers had determined there was at least ten feet of silt over the entrance.

The draining of the lake started with a thundering roar as the water and silt that had accumulated on the gate rushed through the 36-inch tube. The roar soon subsided to a steady rushing noise as the water flowed into the Iowa river. The first water to come through was heavy and black like ink as it boiled through the tube. The drain was left open for about an hour but the level of the lake did not show any appreciable change. It was then closed to allow placing of nets to trap any fish that might try to escape to the river.

Not many fish appeared in the nets until there was a marked drop in the water level of the lake. They continued to swim against the current until the water had dropped and there was a noticeable change in the underwater pressure. At that time they began to appear in the nets. The rough fish were seined out and sold locally. Game fish were placed in tubs and hauled by trucks to stock other Iowa lakes. Some fish managed to escape to the Iowa river. It required ten days to drain the lake but a large number of fish remained behind on the mud flats. Since these flats were deep and much like quick-sand, thousands of these fish could not be salvaged. They furnished food for crows for several weeks. Members of the State Fish and Game Department could not explain why so many large fish remained on the mud flats. Only a trickle of water remained in the old creek beds and a few shallow spots of water in the lake. Chemicals were placed in these to kill any remaining rough fish such as carp and buffalo.

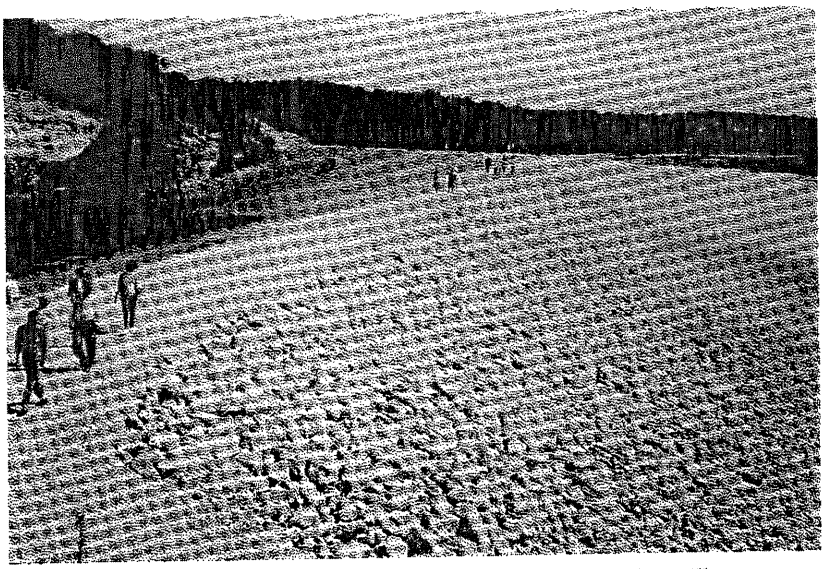
As the water receded, many things that had not been seen for more than twenty years were uncovered. Included among these was an old road across the lake bottom near the Moose club house. The bridge, near the entrance of the park which normally had more than ten feet of water under it, was left high and

dry. The mud flats were littered with driftwood, bottles, empty cans and other trash.

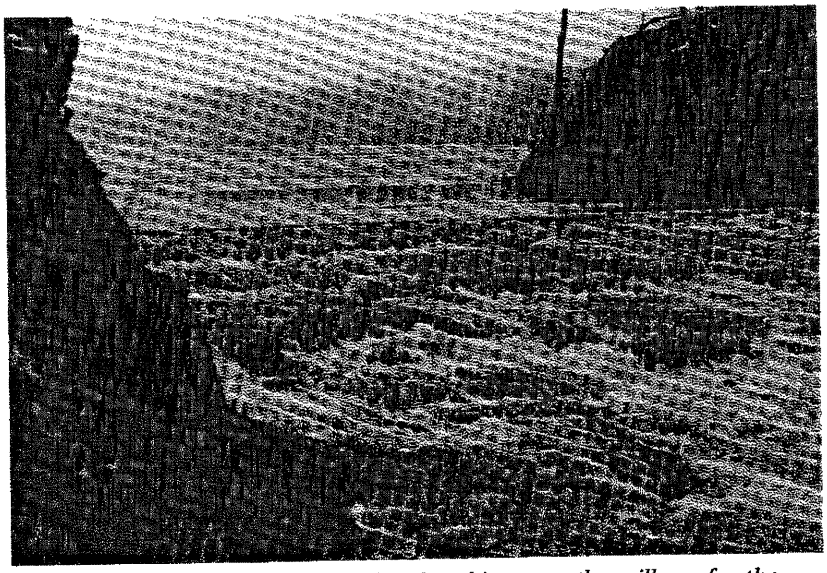
When the water had drained away, crews from the Concrete Materials and Construction Company moved into the area, stripped the riprap from the dam and made preparations for new construction by beginning a new control system under the old spillway and starting work on a new spillway to the southeast which would raise the new lake level to 712 feet above sea-level.

January 16, 1957 found the project on the Lake Macbride dam almost on schedule despite severe winter weather. A new spillway, 150 feet wide, had been blasted from a solid rock bluff overlooking the south end of the dam. This would maintain the new level of the lake and prevent it from "topping" and damaging the dam. A modern pre-cast and reinforced 48-inch drainage tube was installed in a trench 15 feet deep that was blasted out of the rock in the old spillway. Sections of this tube were placed in the trench and the joints cemented. Heaters placed inside the tubes were connected to tanks of bottled gas placed along the sides of the trench. This provided more rapid and uniform curing of the cement and permitted the work to continue during cold weather. Concrete was then poured around the bottom of the tube to make it secure in the rock trench. An upright modern concrete control tower was then erected above the tube to house the controls which were necessary to open and close the gate in the drainage tube. When the concrete work had been completed, the area above the tube and the old spillway was filled and packed with impervious clay to resist any water seepage. This fill formed part of the new dam. A great deal of this material came from close by. The impervious clay came from a ridge to the north of the dam, the rock came from blasting out the new spillway, and earth-fill was removed from a nearby bank of the Iowa River.

The contract called for completion of the work by March 1, 1957, and this was accomplished. The filling of the lake was delayed to allow clearing of the lake bed and removal of trees and bushes that would be below the new water level. Relocation of recreational facilities and the construction of utility services in the state park had not been completed. This work was being done under separate contract. Most of the clearing in the lake area was by Brisk Bros. Construction Company of Tierz, Minnesota. This contract included taking out all natural growth other than grass from an area of almost 1,000 acres of land. This acreage included the former lake bed and some farm land that would become a part of the enlarged lake. Timber and brush removed from the shoreline greatly changed the appearance of the park and the buildings which were left behind gave a feeling of loneliness and desolation. Some of the trees were burned, others served for lumber in the construction of signs and the building of furniture for Iowa state parks offices. This work was done in the Parks Service's furniture shop at Lake Macbride, under the direction of Roy Reed, who was manager of the central shop and also served then as park custodian.



New dam looking south, with the new lake to the left, the spillway at upper left, and a glimpse of the Coralville Reservoir at right. 1959. HRJ.



The new Lake Macbride is full and rushing over the spillway for the first time on January 13, 1960. HRJ.

Where the clearing crews worked, debris littered the ground and the fresh wood stumps seemed to stare from the black ground. Below the newly cleared area, where the lake water had formerly lapped the shores, only mud and debris littered the bottom except for an occasional trickle of water.

New sewer construction at the park was a major contract. This included 6,350 feet of cast iron pipe, 32 manholes with septic tanks and filter beds for treating the sewage. Installation of the system required the digging of ditches in the sharply curved ravines of the park and in several instances the erection of ducts or trestles as high as 17 or more feet to carry the sewer lines across submerged ravines. Posts supporting these trestles were driven into the frozen ground. The old sewer lines were destroyed and closed. The entire new system of water-tight cast iron pipe was installed by the Stanfield-Pyland Company of Des Moines. This sewer system served the public areas of the park, then drained into the Iowa River.

The Army Corps of Engineers purchased all private lands along the lake below 717 feet above sea-level. Several homes in the private area were below this contour and were purchased by the government. The owners were permitted to repurchase some of these buildings and move them to higher ground or to another lot if feasible. Some of the cottages were destroyed and removed. The Moose club house was torn down because of lack of space at a higher elevation.

All trees along the lake shore below the 712-foot level were removed by the Corps of Engineers. Some private owners arranged to have their homes moved by the Conway Construction Company of Cedar Rapids. New sewer and water systems were placed in the ground by the Luethye Company of Durant, Iowa. A new and modern sewage treatment plant, contracted for and financed by the Cottage Reserve Corporation, was installed by F. J. Warren & Company of Winterset, Iowa. The sewer lines of clay, concrete or steel pipe extended from the cottage area to the plant. After treatment, the fluid part of the sewage is pumped through cast iron pipes across the former entrance bridge to connect with the new sewer system in the park area. The sewer systems were all installed by May 1, 1957, which met the contract requirements.

Construction of the dam and the impending changes in the lake level forced relocation of many recreational facilities in the state park and also construction of many of the park's new utility services. This work was done under separate contracts. In March, 1957, five firms shared in a contract amounting to $162,569.00 for the relocation of bathing, boating and picnicking facilities in the park and for the construction of a new house for the park custodian.

The Paulson Construction Company, West Branch, Iowa, was the holder of the general contract with the Army Corps of Engineers. The four subcontractors were the Slach Wiring Service and the Kohl Construction Company, also of West Branch, Iowa, the Leuthye Equipment Company of Durant, Iowa, and the Chase

View of the new dam with fisheries building and parking at upper right and the Coralville Reservoir to the left. 1963. HRJ.

Aerial view of the new Lake Macbride area, looking eastwardly. Coralville Reservoir is in the foreground, Cottage Area at right center, and the city of Solon at top center in the distance. FWK.

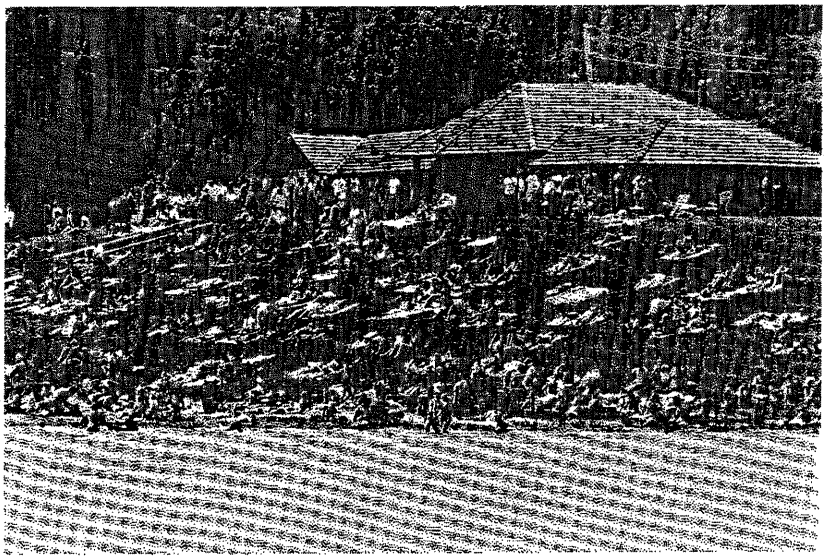
Painting Company, of West Branch, Iowa. The Kohl Company razed the bath house and moved the stock pile and utilities 500 yards to the east of the old beach. Here the bath house was rebuilt in its original form on a high bluff by the Paulson Company. The Leuthye Company installed wells and water tanks for the public buildings and also made sewer connections and installed heating equipment. The Kohl Company graded the area surrounding the bath house and a large parking lot to the rear. They also brought the large, convex-shaped sandy beach to the established grade at the water line. In addition, they cut 6,800 feet of foot trails through the wooded areas of the park and took care of all clearing and earth work. Their contract also called for picking up all rock borders and decorative paths and rebuilding them in new locations, since the rising water would cover many of them along with the old beach and part of the existing parking lot.

The Paulson firm erected the custodian's house, a three bedroom ranch style building with an attached two-car garage. This home is located on the new entrance road into the park and not far from the public camp-site.

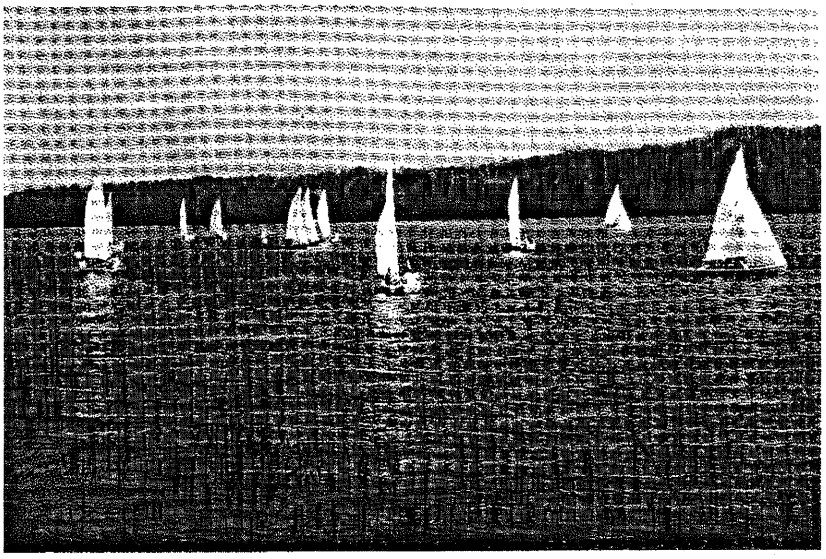
Roads serving the park were relocated and new access roads were built. This included the construction of a new entrance road from Solon, which runs from the old Solon-Ely road to the new north entrance to the park, a distance of more than two miles. After entering the park, the road curves to the southeast to reach the new bathing beach and main picnic area. The old road to these areas, No. 381, is now under 18 feet of water. Part of the old road remains as the entrance road to the private area, the parks area services shops, and a public boat ramp and dock.

Because of flooding, some of the existing roads had to be raised or abandoned when the lake was enlarged. The road from North Liberty was one. This road extends through four miles of beautiful woods and hills, across the new Mehaffey bridge over the Coralville Reservoir. After a moderate climb for about one-fourth mile and a turn to the left, it passes the entrance to The University of Iowa field campus and over a new bridge and grade across Jordan creek, now south arm of Lake Macbride. If one takes highway No. 382 out of Solon to the northwest, the road will finally curve to the southwest along the north side of Mill Creek or larger arm of the lake. This road leads directly to the main park entrance. These black-topped roads have been constructed in anticipation of the growing popularity of the park area and this foresight has already been justified.

There was only limited use of the park in the summer of 1957 because of the construction that was taking place. This contract was completed in December of 1957, then the dam was closed to await the results of rain and heavy snow. Many new improvements in the park were taking place at this time in preparation of the area for future recreation. Lewis Boers, then the park conservation officer, had charge of thirteen inmates from the Anamosa Reformatory to help



A sight typical of almost any bright week-end afternoon at the new beach. FWK.



The University of Iowa Sailing Club is host to a Big 10 Regatta in the spring of 1968. FWK.

with this work. They built new, modern campsites for tents and trailers and prepared huge stacks of wood to be used by the campers for fuel. New picnic areas along the shore line were provided with tables and fireplaces which these men built. Boat docks were also constructed to serve the public.

THE CONTINUING DREAM

January 13, 1960, is an important date as the water began cascading over the new spillway at Lake Macbride for the first time. This eventually provided almost 1,000 acres of water for boating and fishing. The water is now 47 feet deep above the 990 foot dam, which is 29 feet deeper than the original lake. Originally no motor boats were allowed on the lake. Now motors no larger than six horsepower are legal. Fishing was not allowed until the fish population had become stabilized through stocking and reproduction. At first, only large mouth bass, crappies, bluegills and bullheads were stocked. As the lake filled, it was stocked with more bass, bluegills, crappies and catfish; walleye and northern pike were also added. The first fishing season opened in May, 1960, and the bathing beach opened on May 30 of that year. 1969

Expansion of Lake Macbride State Park and its facilities have made the area a major recreational park, offering boating, picnicking, fishing, swimming and camping to all ages. The large water area, over 960 acres, makes the use of sail boats more exciting, since the old entrance bridge was too low to allow sailing craft to pass under. This bridge was abandoned and is under fifteen feet of water and sailing boats now can move over most of the lake without obstruction.

A commercial boat livery is situated at the west end of the beach. The concessionaire, William Chase, has rental boats both with or without motors and several catamarans for cruising. The boats are inspected annually for seaworthiness and passenger rating. This law also applies to all private boats used on the lake. In addition to the boat livery, Mr. Chase has charge of concessions at the bath house where a nominal fee is charged for use of showers, clothes checking, fishing gear and picnic lunches. Free swimming lessons are provided in the mornings with instruction given by well-qualified life guards. Mr. Chase feels the importance of teaching children to swim and to understand the rules of water safety.

As the popularity of Lake Macbride State Park increases, expanded facilities needs are being met with available funds. Charles Hagen, present park conservationist and manager of Lake Macbride State Park, realizes the problems involved

in the use of the park by growing numbers of people. Having had extensive training through the conservation short courses over a period of years, he is alert to the requirements of the Iowa Conservation Commission's program and is aware of the crowded conditions as the attendance increases. A complete new recreational area including a swimming space with larger and more modern bath house facilities and equipment is now in the planning stage for future realization. The program is geared to the amount of appropriations and labor available. It would seem that Lake Macbride's 960 acre lake and a total area of 3,000 acres would have to be very full of people before it would become crowded, but many acres of the park are not fully developed. Access to some of the shore line is limited to those who are able to walk or go by boat.

Parking facilities are being increased, "primitive" camping areas are available and access roads are being constructed. Park crews have built a new service building near the camping area to be used for repair of equipment and also as a headquarters building for carpenters. A crew from the Anamosa Reformatory has expanded the camp area to accomodate 125 units. Picnic areas have been increased in numbers in the main sections of the park. A new picnic area is adjacent to a new road between the original camping area and the Coralville Reservoir. This road provides access to the dam where visitors may use the new boat ramp and dock.

The "fisheries" or fish management building was built in 1963 north of the dam and near the parking area. Robert Mittendorf of Solon is the fish culturist and is manager of the station. Larry Metzner of North Liberty is the biologist. They serve Lake Macbride and the southeastern Iowa lakes in fish management and responsibilities. Officers of the safety patrol are also stationed at this building.

In the fall of 1967, the lake was lowered about seven feet so remedial work could be done. During the winter, Charles Hagen and two other conservation workers completed many projects in the park. They installed 70-foot towers to support power lines, repaired sewer lines and placed rocks on the shore lines to stop erosion. They also constructed seven new jetties. These were constructed of dirt and rock and extended out into the lake bed for 20 yards. Limestone was placed around the edges of the jetties to prevent wave action from eroding them away. The jetties will also impede silting. Their purpose is not for parking but as places for fishermen to enjoy better fishing, especially for bullheads. Now, January 1969, the lake has refilled as it did in January of 1960 and the water is flowing over the spillway.

June 16, 1935, when Lake Macbride State Park was in its infancy, 700 members of the Iowa Junior Farm Bureau held the first picnic in the park. They represented many of the southeastern Iowa farm groups. The first season, 1960, following the park reconstruction, there were 3,902 campers. Popularity of Lake Macbride State Park has increased rapidly season after season. In 1967, there

were 900,000 park visitors including 35,000 campers from 33 states and six countries. The park ranked first among all Iowa state parks in the number of campers. Preparations are continuing to make 1969 a popular and successful season in every way.

It is not unusual, at the peak of the swimming season, to have as many as 2,000 or 2,500 swimmers and sun-bathers using the swimming area in a day's time. Organizations frequently bring groups of handicapped or underprivileged children to picnic and swim. University-sponsored groups come in busses giving foreign students or special conference students an opportunity to spend a day in or on the water enjoying the sun and fresh air. Early morning church services on Easter Sunday have special meaning when they are held at Lake Macbride. One church group conducts special baptismal services at the water's edge.

Enjoyment of the lake, however, is far from being limited to summertime activities. When the ice becomes safe, the Cedar Rapids Wildlife Club holds a "Fisheree" and the 1969 event was attended by some 1,500 persons. Prizes provided by Cedar Rapids merchants were awarded for the largest catches. A frequent sight on weekends are snowmobiles and ice boats skimming about and skaters are many. It is hoped that more people in the area will come to enjoy the lake in the beauty of wintertime as well as in the summer.