

AREA NEWS

RETURN

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“The experiment was not a success and Camp Maqua closed its doors in 1978,” said Baker.

During the course of interviewing 280 men and women about their experiences for a historical book she wrote about Maqua, Baker said that the stories from that particular era were less than wonderful, as the girls hated the boys moving in. They felt they had to wear makeup, bras and act differently.

Baker pointed that many of the women who attended camp were from a long line of family members who either worked at the YWCA or served on the camp committee or attended themselves.

“It served as a wonderful feeder for the numbers who attended, but those numbers began to dwindle in the years before camp finally closed. Many believe it was

due to the increased interest of families taking vacations, instead of sending their kids off to camp,” said Baker.

Baker, who began chronicling the history of the camp since her family purchased property, finished a pictorial history of the camp in a book simply titled, “Camp Maqua,” published in late 2015.

She interviewed hundreds of campers and scoured archival ledgers, camp committee minutes, director’s reports, newspaper clippings and photographs from the vaults of the Great Lakes Bay Region YWCA.

Photos and captions in the 128-page book are of girls being themselves, which differ only with clothing and hair styles giving away the decades. Photo archives show fads which have come and gone, but reveal that the spirit of girls at camp did not change with passing of time.

The book, published by Arcadia Publishing in its Images of America collection is available for \$21.99 from Baker at walkbake@gmail.com, Hale Pharmacy and Amazon.com. Baker said, when a book is purchased directly from her, she will donate a portion from the sale to the YWCA.

The book outlines a day at camp from the time the bus left the YWCA, to the buildings that were on the property, many built by the Aladdin Company of Bay City, to the activities and traditions.

A blog, www.girlsofcamp-maqua.com takes the history into much more depth, including why the girls attended camp, what their feelings were going to camp, their relationships, accidents and calamities of camp life and responsibilities as they moved up into staff positions.

“I think I have seven blogs on homesickness,” said Baker.

Keeping memories alive and

connecting campers to each other is a Camp Maqua Alumni page on Facebook. A post by Deb Wilkinson-Dingman sums up her experience:

“A very big thank you to Kathryn Walker Baker, her husband, Bill, and all the neighbors at Camp Maqua for opening up their homes and the wonderful hospitality that they gave to all the alumni campers who showed up for the 100th anniversary of Camp Maqua.

“Wonderful memories were made. Awesome time spent for just a few hours. The former campers, counselors came from near and far for a short, but truly a memorable journey, from a time that was so magical, each camper didn’t want it to end ... Happy 100th Birthday Camp Maqua YWCA!”



Courtesy photo

BEST LAKE VIEW – Amy Johns Ikler peers out of the renovated boathouse window over Loon Lake from the coveted Camp Maqua Hut No. 9.



Courtesy photo

MAQUA GIRLS – Left is Jan Bateson Curtice of Michigan, left, and Sascha Immerman of Colorado at the Camp Maqua centennial on June 25.



Courtesy photo

PICTORIAL HISTORY – Debbie Robson Milkowski of North Carolina reads the “Camp Maqua” book at the campfire during the reunion. The book is available for purchase at walkbake@gmail.com, Hale Pharmacy and Amazon.com for \$21.99.



Courtesy photo

CAMPFIRE – A fire pit on the beach of Loon Lake, serves once again as the focal point of a sing-along by women who had spent summers at Camp Maqua during a reunion held on June 25.



Courtesy photo

BACK AT CAMP – Deb Wilkinson-Dingman, left, and Kelly Higgs, both Michigan residents, at the Camp Maqua reunion.