

# Now & Then in Ripon ... Looking back with the Ripon Historical Society

## Escapade was preceded by many boats over the years

This summer, the Escapade is celebrating 30 years of cruising the waters of Green Lake from the Heidel House & Conference Center, 653 Illinois Ave.

This 60-foot catamaran was built in Berlin by Carri-Craft in 1995. The Escapade replaced the Yachts of Fun, another Carri-Craft boat that also was available for tours and parties on the lake. The Yachts of Fun was a 57-foot catamaran that was purchased by the Heidel House in 1972.

Carri-Craft was founded in 1958 by three brothers, Raymond (1927-2007), Dick (1929-2017) and Glenn Brooks. They were in the tank manufacturing business in Berlin when they built their first boat. In 1999, Advanced Marine of St. Augustine, Fla., purchased the molds and tooling required to manufacture the Carri-Craft twin hull motor yachts.

The Escapade and the Yachts of Fun were not the first tour boats on Green Lake. This tradition of showcasing the natural beauty of Green Lake by boat dates back more than 150 years. In the years after the Civil War, Green Lake became a popular resort destination for wealthy people from Chicago, St. Louis and New Orleans. At one time it was the largest resort area west of Niagara Falls.

Ebenezer Pierce (1832-1916) established the first boat landing in 1869 in Dartford, now known as the city of Green Lake. This landing was located at the corner of South Lawson Drive and South Street. Pierce chartered rides on sailboats.

William Lockwood (1835-1916?) and his wife Eunice Snyder Lockwood (1840-1905) came to Ripon in 1857 and established a photography studio. This was located on the second floor at 205 Watson St., where Soul Patina now is located.

The Lockwoods purchased their first excursion steamboat in 1875, which took tourists onto Green Lake. Over the years, they owned three boats: the Camera (1875-1881), the Palette (1880-1891, formerly named the "Minnehaha") and the Easel.

The *Ripon Free Press* from July 22, 1875, noted that "Last Sunday was a



**THE 100-FOOT** Queen of the Lake was the largest of five steamboats and boat launches operated by the Norton Family of Green Lake. Built in the mid-1800s, it was powered by coal and wood and operated from the mid-1800s until the late 1920s as a tourist excursion boat. *Dartford Historical Society photo*



**THE 60-FOOT ESCAPADE** is celebrating 30 years of cruising the waters of Green Lake. The catamaran was built in Berlin by Carri-Craft in 1995 and has been available for tours and private parties on the lake leaving from the shores of the Heidel House & Conference Center, 653 Illinois Ave. It replaced the Yachts of Fun built in 1972. *Jonathan Bailey photo*

gala day at Green Lake. Hundreds of pleasure seekers find their way to this resort every Sunday and while away the time boating on the lake. ... Last Sunday the new boat 'Camera' made a trip to different points of interest. About 75 took passage. ... The trip was enjoyed by all."

The Lockwoods not only made money by charging for a ride on their boats, but also sold photographs and stereoscope cards of their boats, the lake and surrounding area.

The Lockwoods divorced in 1883. Eunice first opened a competing photography studio in Ripon. Willam remarried and moved out of Ripon in 1891, first to Fond du Lac and then to Buffalo, N.Y. This ended the Lockwood

boat excursions on Green Lake as the boats were sold and moved by the new owner to other lakes.

Norton's Dock operated from 1887 until 1968. Founded by three brothers: Joe (1870-1948), John II, (1877-1941) and Jim (James 1878-1932). Norton's Dock was located next to the present-day Deacon Mills Park at the dead end of Mill Street.

The Nortons built rowboats, did guiding on the lake for fishing, rented fishing boats, hosted shore dinners and offered excursions on steamboats. Over the years, the Nortons had the J. Norton, The Queen of the Lake I and II, the Katherine C, and the White Wings.

The propeller from the Queen of the Lake sits in Deacon Mills Park near the public boat landing. A plaque near the propeller reads, "At 100 feet in length, the Queen of the Lake was the largest of five steamboats and boat launches operated by the Norton Family Green Lake."

### TIME TABLE For the Large, Staunch, New Steamer QUEEN OF THE LAKE Largest Steamer on the Lake

Season of 1907			
Green Lake.	1:00	Oakwood	2:00
Spring Grove	1:30	Maplewood	2:15
Pleasant Point	1:45	Sherwood Forest	2:20

Every afternoon except Mondays  
The steamer will make three trips around the entire Lake each week during July, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Fare for long trips, 35c. adults, children 14 yrs. or under, 15c. 25c for Hotel trips. Special for August, the Steamers will make five trips around the Lake each week during August, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

**Steamer "Queen"**  
Can be chartered at very low rates for forenoon charters and Mondays. Special rates to picnics and fishing parties.

**Steamer "J. Norton"**  
Will be run for accomodation of picnics, moonlight rides, fishing parties and general charter work as we have the only expert guides on the Lake, guides who have fished here in Green Lake all their lives. Rate, one guide, fishing boat and fifty good minnows, \$3.50 per day. Two besides the guide are all there will be permitted in each boat. Headquarters for minnows and fishing boats. For rates, etc apply to NORTON BROS., Green Lake, Wis.

Large 30 ft. Launch to rent by the hour, or day, and also several 20 ft. Launches to rent. We sell the best gasoline at our pier. Patrons do not have to wait to have it delivered.

Thanking the public and our patrons for all past favors and hoping for a continuance and share of your patronage in the future, we are yours to please,  
P. O. Green Lake, Wis. NORTON BROS.  
Telephone No. 25.

**THIS 1907 TIMETABLE** is for tourist excursions on the Norton brothers' boats on Green Lake. The Queen of the Lake was the largest steamer on the lake and a trip on the boat cost 35 cents for adults (\$9.27 today), 15 cents for children under 14 years old (\$5.45 today), and 25 cents for hotel trips (\$8.93 today). A day-long fishing excursion on the J. Norton cost \$3.50 (\$128 today).

*Dartford Historical Society photo*

Built near this site in the mid-1800s, and powered by coal and wood, the Queen was famous for its 'Round the Lake' excursions until the late 1920s."

Starting in 1930, during the summers, the Nortons also delivered mail by boat to people around the lake. Tourists paid to ride along on the mailboat.

Today, the Escapade continues this long tradition of boat excursions on the Green Lake during the summer months. Information on how to take a tour, enjoy a dinner, Sunday brunch or drink cruise on the Escapade is available at [www.greenlaketours.com](http://www.greenlaketours.com).

*The Ripon Historical Society is the oldest continually operating historical society in Wisconsin. It is open Fridays and Saturdays 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

*For more information, visit [www.riponhistory.org](http://www.riponhistory.org), [facebook.com/riponhistoricalsociety](https://facebook.com/riponhistoricalsociety) or [instagram.com/riponhistoricalsociety/](https://instagram.com/riponhistoricalsociety/).*



**FEATURED IN THIS** undated photograph are the Camera and Minnehaha (renamed the Palette) which took tourists out on Green Lake in the late 1880s. They were owned and operated by William Lockwood and his wife, Eunice Snyder Lockwood. The Lockwoods came to Ripon in 1857 and established a photography studio that was located on the second floor at 205 Watson St. where Soul Patina now is located. *Dartford Historical Society photo*

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