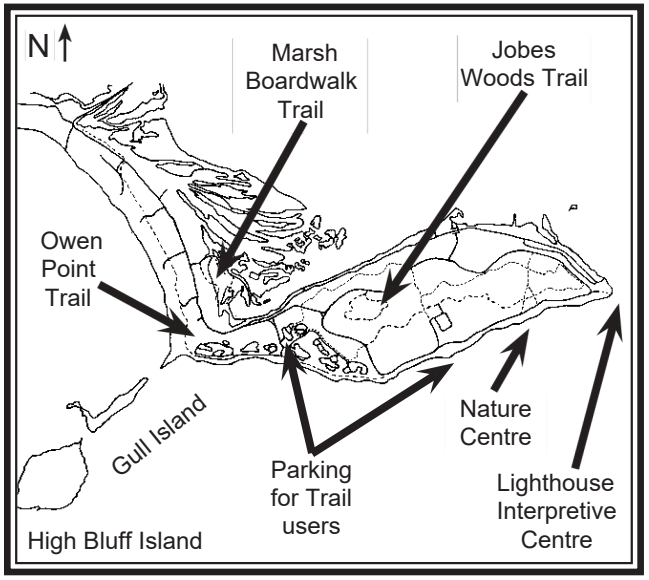
How Did It All Begin?

Presqu'ile Provincial Park has always been a hit with visitors as a recreational haven. The park is a place where people can come to camp, swim, enjoy campfires, go on walks, or become involved in interpretive programs. However Presqu'ile has not always been a recreational paradise. In 1797, Presqu'ile was actually being designated as a town site. The new town was to be called Newcastle, the capital of a district with the same name.



Plans were going well until the sinking of the H.M.S. Speedy on October 8, 1804. The Speedy was transporting many important government officials to this new town from York to hold a trial. The disappearance of the Speedy made officials skeptical about the suitability of the new town's location and in 1805 they moved the town to Amherst, which is now known as Cobourg. This saved the peninsula from development and allowed recreational opportunities to be established like the Presqu'ile Summer Hotel.



Presqu'ile Provincial Park is located on the north shore of Lake Ontario, five minutes south of the town of Brighton. For more information about Presqu'ile or its programs, contact:

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Presqu'ile



100 Years Of The Presqu'ile Summer Hotel

History 100 Years In The Making

The year 2005 marked 100 years since the establishment of the Presqu'ile Summer Hotel. The hotel, which is no longer standing, is worth celebrating because it brought people here for more than just our beaches. The hotel paved the way for new forms of recreation on the peninsula and also made Presqu'ile popular in the United States.

In 1905, a fish and fruit exporter from Brighton named Peter Covell opened Hotel Presqu'ile west of the current government dock. When the hotel opened, it had no hydro, water, or even road access! It could accommodate a maximum of 50 guests who arrived by boat. Covell also had built a dance pavilion behind the hotel where live bands would often play to a full crowd ready to dance the night away. Some famous acts frequented the pavilion like Guy Lombardo and Herbie Bell and the Solidaires.

The interior of the hotel had a rustic look and feel. It had dark walls and unfinished floors. Small rugs were placed in the upstairs hall and there was a fireplace in the east end of the building at a central location. The front entrance of the hotal had a half circle counter and a grand staircase. The hotel had many sporting facilities including a riding stable, as well as tennis and badminton courts.

In the early years, the hotel was open seasonally. A grand opening would be held every July 1st, but times were changing and so was the hotel. In 1913, competition opened up across the road. Grant Quick's dance pavilion, Quick's Pleasure Palace, proved a hit. After one year of competition, Grant Quick took over management of the hotel and renamed it the Presqu'ile Summer Hotel. He managed to bring running water to the point and in 1923 he brought electricity to the hotel.

With Quick now running the operation, people could enjoy lawn bowling, baseball, volleyball, croquet, and boat racing. In 1930 the cost to stay at the hotel was $7 per person, per night.

In the late 1920s, Quick was allegedly involved in rumrunning along with Ben Kerr (pictured below). Ben Kerr was known as the "King of Rumrunners". Ben illegally ran alcohol across the lake to Oswego, NY, which was under prohobition, to sell it for a hefty profit. He stored his alcohol in the basement of one of Quick's cottages. When Ben was lost out on the lake in February 1929, Grant Quick was the person who identified Ben's body after it washed ashore badly mangled.



Many annual traditions were started at the Presqu'ile Hotel. One of the most famous of them was the annual Rochester to Presqu'ile yacht race held every July 4th. The race would begin in Rochester, NY as part of their Independence Day celebrations.

With the removal of Covell's pavilion, the Pleasure Palace became the main pavilion now and had some very strict rules. No bare feet, no bathing suits, no shorts, and no dancing in "suggestive" ways. In the 1940s, admission to the pavilion was $1 and cottagers could get a season pass for $10. On a good evening there would be 700 to 800 people in and out of the pavilion and young people called it the PAV.



The hotel was now at its peak with people coming to enjoy canoeing, kayaking, golfing, dancing, rowing, sailing, and just about any other water-sport. There was even a landing strip put in place for people who wanted to make an entrance. In the late 1960s, popularity declined. Quick couldn't keep up with new demands and maintaining the hotel. After his death in 1971, the hotel was torn down and the land was divided into smaller lots and sold off. All that remains of the hotel are the memories shared by many local residents who visited the hotel in its glory days!