

Resorts - Cherokee Lodge

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In October 1919, Malcom R. "Mac" Fife, President of a bridge construction company in Chicago, purchased 56 acres of property with plans to construct a \$50,000 summer resort hotel. The property had a frontage of 850 feet on White Lake and was extensively wooded which made for a lovely retreat.

Fife was familiar with the White Lake area as he had a home on White Lake and had been coming to the area on vacation with his family for a number of years.

Construction on Cherokee Lodge began in December of 1919, and it opened on July 1, 1920, with his son Richard A. Fife as proprietor. Constructed mainly of logs and wood, to harmonize with the surroundings, this beautiful summer haven would become known all over. The lumber for the hotel was shipped here on about 14 railcars from Chicago.

The three story structure was constructed in a "U" shape with frontage of 100 feet overlooking White Lake on the north side. The north wing of the lodge was 60 feet in length and the south side about 80

feet. Surrounding the entire front and north sides of the building was a screened in porch, 12 feet in width.

The first floor, or main floor, contained a spacious 40x60 foot dining room on the south which could accommodate 300 people. At the rear of the dining room was the 22x24 foot kitchen. At the north was a 40x60 living room/lounging room, which included two card rooms and a huge fireplace. Between the dining room and living room was the 20x32 foot lobby/reception area, with the entrance and main stairway.

The second and third floors were the sleeping quarters. There were seventy-four rooms, 10x12 feet, equipped with both hot and cold running water. The hotel also contained five separate bathrooms and five separate lavatories for the convenience of the guests. It also had electricity throughout.

Mac R. Fife died at his winter home in Florida in 1936. His son continued to operate the resort.

During the years of ownership, the Fifes kept pace with changing conditions and modernized the lodge to fit the demands of their trade. They had just recently added several new baths, installed additional sleeping conveniences, as well as did some remodeling and redecorating in preparation for opening the Lodge for the summer on June 10, 1940.

However, on June 2, 1940, the Cherokee Lodge was completely destroyed by fire, at a loss of \$65,000. It was never rebuilt.

Cherokee Lodge was located just west of what is now the Blueberry Ridge Subdivision. At one time, all of that property was owned by J. A. Dowie.

In August 1942, the lodge property was sold to Mr. & Mrs. Daniel J. Stack. At the time, the property consisted of 17 acres of land on which there were 2 cottages and the Fife house. Repairs were made to all three structures.

In 1998, a developer wanted to divide the property into 14 single-family residential parcels; however, a mutual agreement could not be reached between the parties involved, so the project never materialized.

The property remains privately owned to this day.