

## One hundred years of vacationing on the shores of Lac Mercier

In 1907, Guillaume-Alphonse Nantel, former member of provincial parliament for the constituency of Terrebonne, made a trip through the Northern Townships, which settlers had started to clear thirty years earlier. On the shores of Lac Mercier, where a modest village had taken shape, he noted the presence of a few attractive villas where middle-class residents of Montréal spent the summer. Among them, the descendants of Honoré Mercier, former premier of Québec, after whom the lake is named. Mr. Nantel also noted the presence of two hotels close to the railway station; one of them accommodated workers from a chemical products factory which had just been established nearby. The visitor was charmed: here, he noted, is “a delicious meeting place for tourists and vacationers”.

Twenty years later, the factory had closed its doors and vacationers became the villagers' saving grace. The men worked as carpenters and delivered fire wood and blocks of ice. The women did the laundry and sold vegetables from their gardens. The girls worked as maids. Children picked berries that they offered to the tourists, and carried the bags of clients arriving by train. New hotels were built on the shores of the lake—the Belvédère, Manoir du lac Mercier, Shady Nook Inn and Chalet du Lac—as were two on Lac Ouimet: Gray Rocks Inn and the Villa Bellevue; there were also the big hotels of Lac Tremblant.



*The hotel called Pointe du Rocher, on the western shore of Lac Mercier, was a popular meeting place in Mont-Tremblant.*

*Source: SOPABIC.*

vacationers equipped their chalets for winter use, and for the affluence of skiers to be of any real benefit to local businesses. The 1990s saw the beginning of development of the north shore of the lake and the building of the first



*The pleasures of bathing in Lac Mercier.*

*Source: Nicole Roch collection.*

But come September, the tourists and vacationers returned to the city and Lac-Mercier was once again isolated.

In February 1939, an American millionaire opened a luxury ski resort at Mont Tremblant; thanks to the intercession of Father Deslauriers, employment was available to local residents all winter. Nevertheless, it was several decades before summer



*From the beginning of the 1900s, there was a hotel behind the Canadian Pacific railway station. The hotel Mont-Tremblant, photographed here in the 1950s, is thus one of the longest-established hotels in Mont-Tremblant.*

*Source: postcard, photo by GK, Marcelle Labelle collection.*



*Relaxing on a Sunday, in front of the Manoir du lac Mercier.*

*Source: collection Nicole Roch.*

*(Right) In the 1940s, no fewer than seven hotels and pensions shared the Lac Mercier clientele. See more of them on the next page.*

*Source: Advertisements from L'Écho des Laurentides of May 21, 1948.*

condominium properties in the village. The dazzling beauty of the autumn foliage, enhanced by the tourist facilities, lengthened the season into October. One hundred years after its modest beginnings, the village—with its henceforth prestigious name, Mont-Tremblant—became a true four-season resort.

Research and writing: Danielle Soucy

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(Continued from the page before) *In the 1940s, no fewer than seven hotels and pensions shared the Lac Mercier clientele.*

*Source: Advertisements from L'Écho des Laurentides of May 21, 1948.*