

Rogers Island

In 1931, Perrin had purchased Rogers Island in Lake of the Woods from the Hon. Robert Rogers, who had built a camp at the south east end of the island around 1908. At the time of the purchase, Perrin granted Rogers the right to maintain a small camp at the north end of the island. Rogers had served as a cabinet minister in the provincial government of Rodmond Roblin and federal government of Robert Borden.

In 1914, the camp had been greatly enlarged prior to a visit to the lake by the Governor General of Canada. The first member of the Royal Family to hold the office, HRH Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught and his daughter Princess Patricia stayed on the island with the Rogers family. It was during this visit that the Duke suggested Lake of the Woods Yacht Club apply for use of the title "Royal". With the support of the Duke, this title was later granted by HM King George V. By 1914 the Rogers camp had become a landmark on the lake just south of Devil's Gap. The largest single owner island in the Kenora area, the property included tennis courts, a sandy beach, and a very large boathouse. The main camp provided 10 bedrooms and bathrooms, including two very large master suites. The living room area featured two curved staircases leading to a mezzanine balcony overlooking the main floor and the 24-foot tall windows facing south over the lake. A very large 8-spoke hand-painted chandelier, hand-carved from the trunk of a single tree by local aboriginal craftsmen, was suspended through



John Draper Perrin

the mezzanine balcony. A second historic visit to Rogers Island occurred in August 1929 when Winston S. Churchill, following in the Duke of Connaught's footsteps, visited the camp following a speaking engagement at the Walker Theatre in Winnipeg. Several boats had been included in J. D. Perrin's purchase of the island, including a 28' mahogany Chris Craft Custom Runabout with the reputation for being the fastest boat on the lake. It was in this vessel that Winston Churchill toured the Lake of the Woods. The boat had been named "Robert R" by the Rogers family and J. D. Perrin re-christened her "Lady Ripples", a name the boat retains to this day. During Perrin's ownership, the Lady Ripples many times won the title as fastest boat on the lake at speeds of up to 45 mph. J. D. Perrin sold Rogers Island to J. M. Harris of Winnipeg in 1958 and the property fell into disuse and disrepair. In 1975, the main camp was destroyed by fire. The Harris family later subdivided a portion of the north eastern part of the island.