

How The Bay Changed Its Name

By Dr. James D. Henderson

Thousands of years ago when the last glacier receded from what was to become the north central part of Minnesota, the Brainerd Lakes region was left with many beautiful lakes. Pelican Lake was one of them. The current lake outline was created over time as water levels fell and several bays formed part of the shoreline. The earliest government survey maps showing details of Pelican Lake were completed in 1858 and 1870–71 and show most of the bays we know them today but they were not identified by name. Generally Pelican's bays got their names from individuals that were closely associated with land ownership near the bay.

Such was the case with Jones Bay, now a popular place to launch boats and maintained by the Minnesota DNR. But it wasn't always called Jones Bay—and that's the reason for this story.

Marjorie Wilson Richison in her book *Living Near to Nature's Heart—The History of the Pelican Lake Outing Club* explains that an Italian immigrant by the name of Pasquale Chimino (also spelled Cimino) owned about 75 acres of land on the south west shore of Pelican Lake which he homesteaded in 1905. The 1900 U. S. Federal Census indicates he arrived in America in 1882 and by 1900 was living with his wife Martha on the shore of Pelican Lake. Perhaps Martha died or left him since by 1905 Pasquale was living in a cabin along with his wife Josette, an Ojibwa Indian and their son Orlando and daughter Marie Teresa.

The 1910 U. S. Census reveals that Josette attended the Flandreau Indian School in Flandreau, South Dakota in 1899. The school opened in 1871 and is the oldest continually operated Federal Indian boarding school run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the U. S. Department of Interior. It is still operational today.

Chimino transported the Nebraska members of the PLOC to Pelican Lake from Smiley (now called Nisswa) following their arrival by train as early as 1903. The Cornhuskers called the bay near the peninsula of land they had dubbed Lincoln Point, Chimino's Bay. During the early years of the PLOC a large wood tower stood on a hill south of Chimino Bay that had been used during the government survey of the lake in the late 1800s. Around 1908 Pasquale Chimino sold his land to brothers Gus and Fred Eiche, who were part of the Nebraska contingent, and moved his family to Ten Mile Township in Coos Bay, Oregon.

A few years later in 1913 John E. Morrison, a bachelor farmer and woodcutter who owned land directly west of Chimino Bay, platted seven lots beginning on the north side of the present day Jones Bay landing. He called the new addition "Morrison Bay". A year later he added 24 more lots that became the "First Addition to Morrison Bay". Whether anyone ever called the body of water along this shore land Morrison Bay is speculative.

Neighbor Charlie Call found John Morrison dead in his cornfield in November 1919. His body was next to a corn shock where he had apparently been husking corn. Death was said to be due to a strangulated hernia. Not a pleasant way to exit this world.

A map drawn around 1920 was found in a closet of a cabin owned by Frederick Haberle, an early Pelican Lake landowner. It is perhaps the first detailed map of the lake that identifies the bay by name although Haberle spelled it *Chamino*. In the 1920s the boat landing on the bay was called the Morrison Hill Landing.



A view of Chimino Bay around 1926 at what was then called the Morrison Hill Boat Landing. The spit of land in the distance would later be known as Kerr's Point.

Charles Withers Jones was born in Arcadia, Missouri in 1886. By 1900 he was working as a waiter at Carey's Café in Minneapolis. Some years later he moved to Paynesville, Minnesota and operated a restaurant there for two years. In 1918 he enlisted in the U.S. Army and was sent to France. Gassed in the Battle of the Argonne Forest in September 1918, his lungs were so severely damaged that he was disabled for the rest of his life. After the war he returned to Minneapolis where he continued working as a waiter. At the time he was married to his first wife Mabel.

In 1924 Charlie married Clara Stockard who grew up on a farm near Lake Henry not far from Paynesville. Before they married, the two of them worked for Captain Billy Fawcett at Breezy Point Lodge as a bartender and waitress.

The story, according to Marjorie Richison, is that they bought a resort on Chimino Bay from money Charlie got as a tip from arranging a party for some big shot at the Lodge. In 1936, Charlie and Clara became caretakers for the PLOC.

As their resort gained in popularity the bay became known as Jones Bay in the 1950s. Charlie died in 1948 and Clara passed on in 1983. Today local maps of Pelican Lake identify the bay as Jones Bay and Chimino and Morrison have passed into history.



Photo of Jones Resort in 1954. It was purchased by Charlie and Clara Jones around 1935. Now known as Hawkeye Resort its current owners are Clyde and Mildred Wetrosky. The resort's unique fireplace is composed of stones collected by the former owners during their travels around the United States.