

Just an echo in the valley

The following article was submitted by Floyd Churchill, an Echo Township native, vintage 1911.

I will bet you have sometimes wondered how Echo Township got its name. I don't know how or when but the why is obvious. Although the second growth of maple trees has diminished the effect, what you can still hear is self explanatory.

From the Densmore cemetery, take a walk to the north through the pine trees of Murphy Park to a clearing, turn right and walk a hundred yards to the top of the bluff that looks down over the old Churchill back-forty.

Take a look over Beal Lake, give a yell, and listen to the echo. Sometimes you can even hear a second bounce.

My brothers and I had a buddy named Earl. His mother had a great soprano voice. In church she could "sing right out in meeting."

Back in the early "Twenties" we would be out in the boon-docks on some adventure. We would hear a loud voice echoing across the hills - Earllll - Earll-l-l-l!! We would head right for home. It might take half an hour to get there, but we all took off. She might be shouting for any of our mothers, so we all responded.

Prior to 1900, the Echo Post Office was established at the old Dingman Mill. The Dingman Dam was located at the site of the present Dingman bridge at the top of Six Mile Lake. My dad, Hugh, told me the fishing above the dam site was the best he ever experienced.

In 1910, some disgruntled character dynamited the dam and caused a big flood in Ellsworth.

I believe the senior Dingman's retired to California and I don't think Monty and Effie Beal Dingman moved to Central Lake until the nineteen-teens. Their sons started a grocery in Central Lake. The Dingman name is still well known in this area.

Incidentally, the fishing is still good above the old dam, you just have to know when.

Interestingly, Beal Lake was known as Fountain Lake on old maps. Early surveyors discovered a very deep spring bubbling up from the depths just to the east of the lake. It was, and probably still is, full of shiner minnows.

When Pleasant Valley Pioneer, Norman Beal, established a farm on the west side of the lake, it was re-named Beal Lake.

If you follow Beal Creek east up the hill from Beal's Landing you will find it's source on the Churchill back-forty. There used to be a fallen log across the spring and we kids kept a Calumet Baking Powder tin hanging on a stick as a drinking cup for one and all.

The water is the best I ever tasted, good enough to be bottled and sold. There is no farming within two or three miles so no chance for contamination. The present owner of that area is Kenneth Hennings.

Pleasant Valley is a beautiful spot. When the leaves are in full color it is as scenic a view as from Deadmans Hill or the Jordan Valley, from Kidder Road.

Don't forget - give a yell from Murphy Park - then listen - You will hear the "Echo In the Valley."