

## Seymour Histories—Ruby and Ken Jenness

by Tracey Shadday

When looking at Seymour Lake from an aerial view, you can use your imagination to see many things. Some people see a giant boot; others see a gun. I see an angel on tiptoes with wings outstretched to the west. With this image in mind, you can visualize the Jenness' home at the bottom of



the angel's sleeve off heavily wooded Ni-waskwokok Road – a name taken from the Abenaki word for "place of healing." It was on this lakeshore property that Ruby, a young mother with a husband in the

military, would find refuge and restoration

"After several years of travel, we would return to Seymour mentally drained and exhausted. I always left this area feeling renewed," says Ruby Jenness, now 90. "It has been a place of healing for me." Ken and Ruby purchased the property in 1952. It was 130 acres of woods back then. They lived in the home currently occupied by the Fullers, off Wayeeses Road, and Ken went to work building a small camp close to the beach. That building was eventually torn down and replaced with a larger home. In 2003 a fire burned it to the foundation.

The Jenness' getaway camp was rebuilt during the spring when the winter thaw makes Vermont lawns look like wetlands



The couple created natural erosion controls, including multiple gardens; logs, gravel and stone to reduce runoff, shoreline planting and a rain garden. A massive blueberry patch farther upland provides the family with plenty of

cereal toppings and muffin stuffings while controlling the flow of water toward the lake. Despite all of these interventions, erosion control continues to be their Number One challenge.

Several decades ago, their property was populated with more trees, especially birch and poplar. After extensive traveling, the Jennesses returned to find their beach had been clear-cut by the local beaver population which took great care in transporting the freshly hewn logs to Wolf Point—close to where the rope swing used to be. Prime beaver real estate, indeed.

Today Ken and Ruby continue to find ways to balance the need for using space to recreate with the need to give back to the natural areas so that loons and other wildlife will thrive and make their home a spiritual place for future generations. □