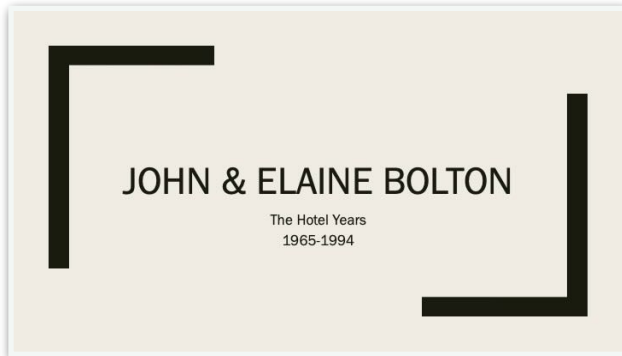


## Part 2 of 3

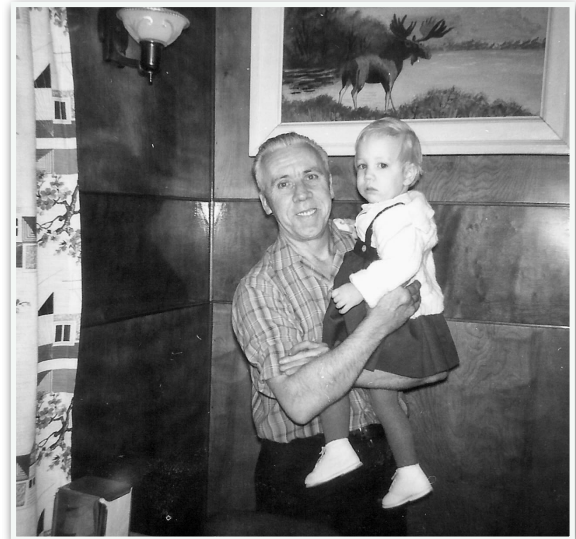
### John & Elaine Years (1965-1994)



Elaine commented that Joe looked so healthy in this February 1963 photo with granddaughter, Cindy. His health was failing and by 1964 Joe's arthritis so crippling he became confined to the upstairs of the Hotel for over a year because he couldn't navigate the stairs. In 1965 Joe and Madeline agreed that John had matured enough to take over the

business and in September 1965, John and Elaine and their two small children moved to the Northbrook Hotel. Joe and Madeline retired to their farm near Norwood. Sadly, Joe died in his sleep on Father's Day June 19, 1966. John & Elaine asked the Liquor Board for permission to close the day of the funeral, but liquor inspectors wielded a lot of power in those days and the family was ordered to open the beverage room by 6 p.m. on the day of Joe's funeral.

I often think how difficult it must have been for my mother those first years. She was 23 years old with a four-year-old and a 10-month-old and had to step in to cook for a house full of



Joe and Granddaughter Cindy - 1963



John, Elaine, Cindy and Mike Bolton 1967  
The other boy is Blake Northey

boarders as the boarding hotel was still a major source of income at that time. She remembers how kind everyone was and how one foreman cautioned the men that they would eat what she put in front of them with a smile and a thank you. This encouragement and lots of on-the-job practice shaped her into a great cook.

One of the first changes made to help with this transition was to get rid of the wood cookstove in the kitchen and to install propane heat and two propane cooking stoves in the kitchen. This photo pre-dates their move to the hotel but it shows the location of the cookstove. Madeline did most of her cooking on it.

When John & Elaine took over, the rooms were renting for \$3 a night. This was immediately bumped up to \$5 a night. Full room and board (breakfast, packed lunch and supper was \$15 a day.) When the Hotel sold in 1994, rooms were renting for \$21 a night.



Elaine & Cindy with old cookstove 1962



We don't have any photos of the crews in the dining room but these photos of birthday parties and family parties in the day give you an idea of the set up.

### **The Beer Strike of 1968 (Northbrook Prohibition)**

John's parents had been through a devastating beer strike in 1958 when the province had literally run out of beer. In spring 1968, John started to hear rumblings of another strike and he was determined that Northbrook would not run out of beer on his watch. He talked to the local bank manager to secure a line of credit and started stock piling beer in earnest. Having the large, empty basement (the winter wood was gone) extra cases were quietly transferred from the beer fridge to the basement via a trap door that had been purposely cut. Later owners never understood why that trap door was in the beer fridge.

At the same time, Ferg had married Madeline and retired to the farm with her. Wanting to help, they made daily road trips to beer stores in Norwood, Campbellford, Marmora, Hastings and other surrounding beer stores stockpiling beer in their garage. As this beer was not purchased on the official Hotel license, it would be considered bootlegging for John to resell it. These would be identifiable as retail beer cases were decorated with brand names and hotel stock came in plain cases.

The strike was a devastating one, lasting from June 20-July 18<sup>th</sup> with Ontario running out of beer everywhere except Northbrook. As supply was running low one night, John and Alec Buchanan made a midnight trip to the farm to resupply. At 2 a.m., with 50 cases of beer tarped down in the back of Alec's truck they had a flat tire in front of the Kaladar Police Station. The adrenaline was pumping (and dad said the language was colourful) while they changed the tire and headed back to Northbrook where Stu and Elaine were waiting to unload. It seems hard to imagine now with beer so widely available, but the Hotel was the only game in town.

In 1969, the LCBO allowed the removal of the wall between the two beverage rooms, but the men and ladies section had to be separated by a 36" high railing. The LCBO also decided to clamp down on advertising particular brands of beer and all the branded ashtrays and bottle openers which had been in use for 40 years had to be removed and replaced with plain ashtrays, trays and bottle openers. Even signs like "Molson's on Tap" were forbidden. These are now collectors' items.



These photos show some of those bottle openers and ashtrays from the family collection. We also include a photo of the original placemat from Joe & Madeline's day that was

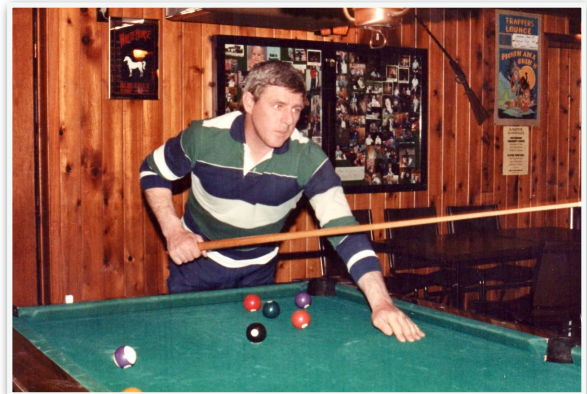
replicated when John and Elaine took over. The only thing that changed was the name and the phone number. The placemat shows the importance of hunting and fishing to the hotel and shows the way businesses supported each other by directing customers to "ask about the local resorts."



We also include a photo of the other advertising from the day such as the iconic "so you think you got troubles" matchbook.



All through the 1960s and early 1970s the hotel continued as a boarding house but with times changing and infrastructure projects finishing, that type of business was tapering off. We had long time boarders who became lifelong friends. One even became family as a young hydro lineman, Harry Scanlan, fell in love with Elaine's sister Marian who was waiting tables one summer. They just celebrated 53 years of marriage.



Harry Scanlan

The rise in popularity of snowmobiling helped tremendously with the winter business. The snowmobile trail came right to the back door of the hotel making it a convenient stop.

The LCBO allowed John and Elaine to put in a juke box, shuffleboard and a pool table. Most people didn't have a TV at cottages or camps so groups would ride in to watch the hockey game on Saturday nights. It seems funny now because those TVs screens were quite small.



Mike Bolton

In these photos Mike and the Butson Boys "David and Stephen" are on snowmobiles in the back yard. Another photo shows a group of local snowmobile enthusiasts getting ready for a trip to upper NY state in a year with no snow.



David & Stephen Butson

These family photos show some of the uncles playing foosball and pool and some of the little cousins taking advantage of the ashtrays of marked quarters that we used to play the games on Sundays. When John passed away in 2023, so many of our cousins and friends remembered playing the jukebox and endless games in the bar while enjoying a little bottle of pop and a small bag of chips on John.



L-R Norm Burley, Don Dentry, Wayne Wagner, Mike Bolton, Darrell Thompson, Etta Perry, Thelma Blackwell and Tom Perry.

## Renovation of 1972

In 1972 John and Elaine undertook a major renovation of the property. They booked a contractor and approached the Liquor Board for permission to close for January – April. Permission was denied (of course), so the carpenters built a plywood wall between the two sections of the lounge and business continued as usual on one side and then they reversed it. It ended up being a very busy time because everyone was curious about what was happening and came in to see. During that time, the contractor coined a nickname for Elaine when he said, “don’t ask John, ask the Little General”!

When the work was completed, the Liquor Board granted a Tavern license, covering beer, wine and liquor. They also approved a Pub Menu, and the era of the Trapper’s Lounge was born. Menu items included Dodge Burgers, Lumberjacks and Etta Perry and Betty Northey’s famous meat pies. The Cocktails tied into John’s pet



Hotel in the 1980s



names for the local towns drawn from the TV of the time.... Northbrook was Dodge, Flinton was Tombstone, Kaladar was Boulder City, Harlowe was Hooterville and Cloyne was Upper Dodge. Favourites such as the Swamp Witch, Kai Ora Blast Off, Skootamatta Streaker and Sundown over Dodge were known far and wide, and draft beer came in 'big, bigger and oh my God' sized pitchers.

### **The WhippleTree**

In the early 1970s John & Elaine bought the log cabin to the north of the hotel from the McNeil family. Elaine's brother Ed and his wife Helen Yanch rented it as newlyweds from 1972 to 1974. The day they were moving to Flinton a customer in the bar enquired about renting it and thus began the wonderful friendship with Elizabeth "Betty" Henderson who lived and ran The Whippletree Shop there from 1975-1989 when she retired and moved to Elliott Lake. It is hard to remember the little cabin was ever there but here are some views of the yard and one of the yard sales that were so much fun.



Elizabeth (Betty) Henderson on the steps of the Whippletree shop.