



Sylvan Lake & DISTRICT ARCHIVES

Preserving the Past ~ For Future Generations

SYLVAN LAKE HOTEL

One of the founding fathers of Sylvan Lake, Alexandre Loisel, built the first Sylvan Lake Hotel in 1905, on the site that is currently vacant on the northeast corner of Lakeshore Drive and 50th Street (Centennial Street). He used lumber from his mill to construct a 16 room hotel to accommodate the developing economic activity, and to house tourists coming to the emerging resort location. It became the Rutter Hotel when it was purchased by J.C. Rutter in 1911. A store and post office were added.

Loiselle built the competing Alexander Hotel to the west, which is now the parking lot of the Sylvan Lake Golf and Country Club. Both businesses thrived because of the lakeshore location, fine dining and plentiful liquor. The Sylvan Lake Hotel was sold back to Loisel who ran it until 1915 when it was sold to James Hazelwood who renamed it after himself. Calgary Brewing and Malting Company bought and ran the Hazelwood Hotel in 1925 before fire destroyed it and the adjacent Oriental Gardens dance hall a year later.

Needing a fast, inexpensive replacement to the hotel, agents of the brewing company remembered the Alamo, a once-elegant derelict building in Suffield, 50 kilometres north of Medicine Hat. The move took two gruelling winters with 16 horse teams inching the building along heavy rollers over the 475 kilometre route. The Alamo was set in its final resting place in the spring of 1928 without mishap, except for the theft of an unusual 'square' flush toilet that was taken by a tourist as a souvenir. The "new" Sylvan Lake Hotel was officially opened July 12 by Conservative Party Leader, R.B Bennett.

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First Sylvan Lake Hotel, circa 1910



Coloured post card of first Sylvan Lake Hotel



The Alamo moved from Suffield became Sylvan Lakes' "New Hotel", 1928



1935



1950's



1957



1950's



1950's



Mural on the side of the hotel, 1998

The Calgary Brewing and Malting Company leased the Sylvan Lake Hotel to W.J. Graham who restored the Alamo's former grandeur and defined it as the village's social hub. Through the years, the hotel was a gathering place for dances, church suppers, weddings teas and banquets. Changes in the liquor laws in 1962 forced the sale of all brewery-owned hotels. Over the next years, under numerous owners, the building and its reputation decayed. It became the local party place, and the dingy rooms drew only the most intrepid and drunken revellers.

It was a sad day on January 29, 2002 when this iconic landmark was reduced to a pile of rubble and hauled away to make room for an 80-room resort and convention centre. To date only an underground parking lot has been built - it decays as the property investors sort out the future of this prominent downtown site.



Sylvan Lake Hotel, 1999



Demolition January 29, 2002