There’s Something Lost and Something Gained in Living Every Day

As often is the case, in the midst of major societal changes or radical shifts in technological innovation, as our society experienced at the beginning of the twentieth century with the advent of commercial electricity, the gasoline powered engine, the telephone, automobiles, and manned powered air flight—perhaps just a few are longs for the average person living in such a time, life simply goes day by day, and change often comes slowly, incrementally, almost imperceptibly. Such was the case of August Andreae. Born in Milan, Italy in 1880, he was of German descent.

August came to Tallahah Falls at the turn of the twentieth century and there met his future wife, Minna Korff, a young German governess who was staying at one of the luxury hotels overlooking Tallulah Gorge, employed by the Busch family from St. Louis. The story of August and Minna’s lifelong affair with each other and with Lakemont is told beautifully on pages xx–xx of this book by his daughter Rita Andreae Collins, but August began his adventures in Rabun County seeking relief from the tuberculosis that had been plaguing his family in Pennsylvania’s colder and harsher climes.

A textile engineer by training, August had purchased more than five hundred acres along the Tallulah River valley upstream from Tallahah Falls for Mulberry groves for a silkworm venture. Although the silkrooms idea was eventually abandoned, the land purchase proved out an opportunistic real estate investment. When the power company came calling in 1911, the newly married August invited the officials to stay with Minna and him at their farmhouse along the river. Upon hearing the company’s plans, August remembered his childhood visits to his family’s summer villa along Lake Como, one of the most picturesque settings in all of northern Italy. With that in mind, he knew that land along the future lakefront would have tremendous value, and so he swapped out his bottomland for a strategic piece of land from the northern edge of the Dobbs Peninsula up to what would become Halls and Rabun Boat Marinas (Lots 26–73). This area would become, after the lake’s impoundment, some of the most valuable property on the entire lake during the early years, the home of some of the earliest summer lake homes, mansions and castles... or as the old-timers say, the “Gold Coast.”

At the other end of the lake, near the headwaters and where the bridge at the base of Seed Dam exists today, another group of families, members of the German Society of Atlanta, traveled north by horseback in 1914 to view seventy acres that were on the market for sale by a local Rabun County family. An investment decision exclusively, ten business partners and their families formed a land company called Lorelai after the legend of a strikingly beautiful maiden who threw herself headlong to her death into the Rhine River because of a faithless lover. Transmuted into a siren, she made up for her fate by luring unwitting sailors to crash upon a rock in the river, which bears her name. A year later, the same group purchased the Flat Creek School building, which was supposed to become submerged after the lake reached a certain level. At the end of the lake, near the headwaters and where the bridge at the base of Seed Dam exists today, another group of families, members of the German Society of Atlanta, traveled north by horseback in 1914 to view seventy acres that were on the market for sale by a local Rabun County family. An investment decision exclusively, ten business partners and their families formed a land company called Lorelai after the legend of a strikingly beautiful maiden who threw herself headlong to her death into the Rhine River because of a faithless lover. Transmuted into a siren, she made up for her fate by luring unwitting sailors to crash upon a rock in the river, which bears her name. A year later, the same group purchased the Flat Creek School building, which was supposed to become submerged after the lake reached a certain level.