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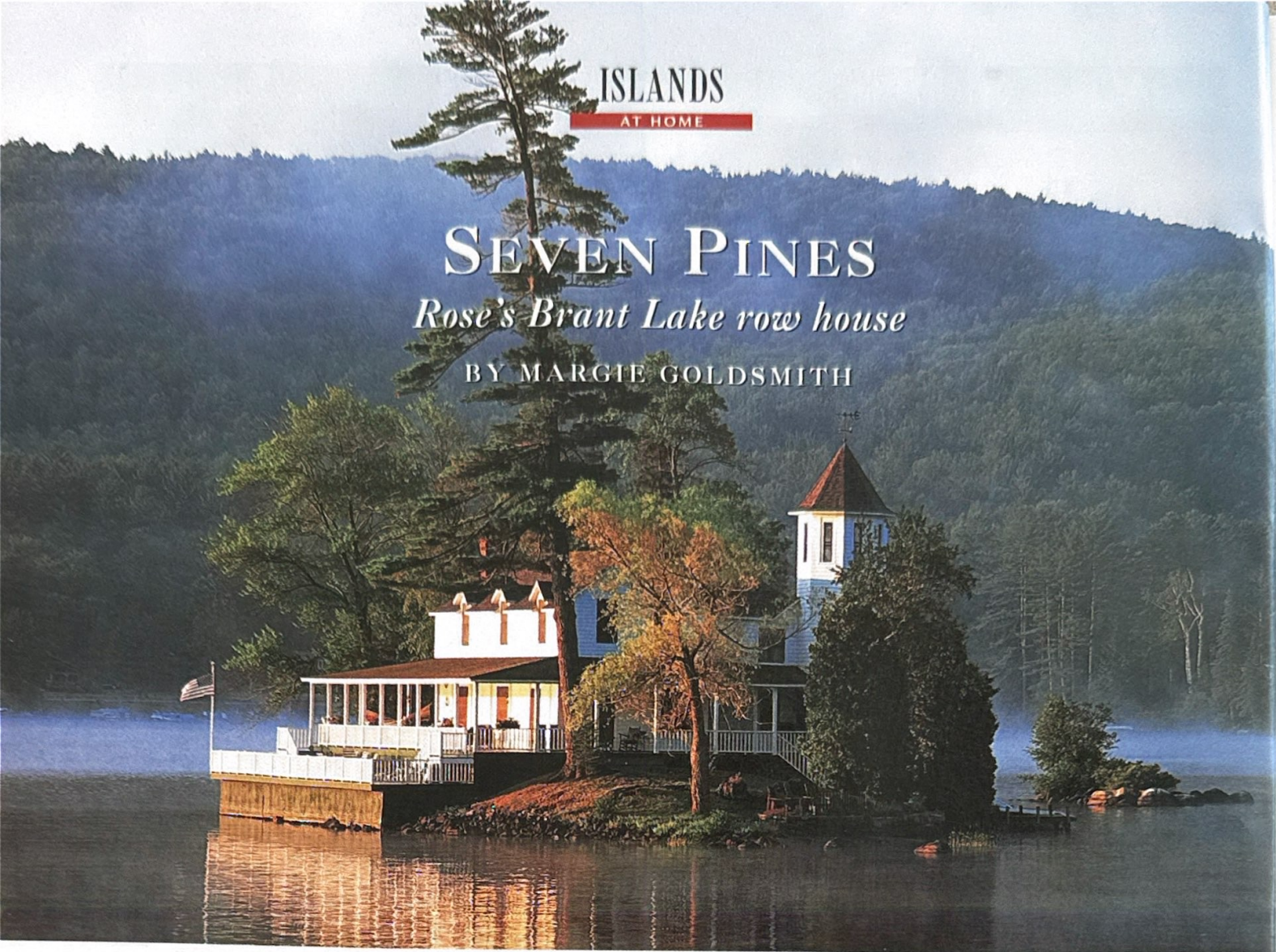


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SEVEN PINES

Rose's Brant Lake row house

BY MARGIE GOLDSMITH



WHO SAYS YOU CAN'T LIVE on an island if you don't know how to swim? Not Rose Schultz, who, until her death six years ago, at ninety-one, spent summers with her husband and children on an Adirondack island just big enough for a house. I met Rose while spend-

ing a weekend on Brant Lake with my friends, her son and daughter-in-law Mike and Lora Schultz. Rose was a petite woman with vivacious eyes, silver hair and an infectious laugh. When she told me she couldn't swim, I asked what would happen if one of her children were drowning. Her eyes narrowed and she said, "I'd swim."

The island was named Seven Pines because when she and her husband, Henry, bought it in 1943, seven pine trees surrounded the house. Storms have destroyed all but one, which stands next to the four-thou-

sand-square-foot white Victorian building with green trim. Seven Pines Island is exactly thirteen oar pulls in a rowboat (about six hundred feet) from the mainland. The lake is six-and-a-half miles long and a mile wide, an expanse of clear green water. The hamlet of Brant Lake, less than a city block long, is at the southeast end.

TOP: THE ISLAND HOUSE.
ABOVE: ROSE SCHULTZ AND ONE
OF HER SONS COMMUTE VIA
ROWBOAT, LATE 1940S.



When the Schultzes bought the island, they were Brooklyn residents hoping to rent a place in the Adirondacks for the summer. The real estate agent showing them a cottage had just received a new listing and persuaded them to look. The property included thirty-five acres of mainland and three small islands, one whose space was almost fully occupied by a five-bedroom home. For more than fifty years a wealthy cigar-company

owner named G. W. Van Slyke summered there. He had just put the property on the market with an asking price of twenty-seven thousand dollars. Almost jokingly, the Schultzes offered nine thousand, a bid so low the agent didn't want to present it. The Schultzes insisted. Van Slyke was at a party when the agent called. He'd had a few too many drinks and, without thinking, accepted. The Realtor told the couple, "If I'd known he'd take nine thousand dollars, I would have offered it to him myself."

The house came furnished. Drawers were filled with silk clothing, and closets held dozens of Saville Row suits, exactly Henry's size. The china was English. The furniture was antique, and chests were held together with pegs, not nails. In the living room was a 150-year-old maple piano with built-in candle holders. The dining room table opened to accommodate forty guests. One hutch drawer held sterling silverware for fifty people. Another contained enough Seven Pines stationery to last fifteen years. The fireplace was made of carved marble imported from Italy. Since the house had no electricity, Henry ran electric and phone lines underwater to the island and wired glass globes and Waterford lamps.

Transportation to the mainland was difficult with the Schultzes' three young children—two boys and a girl—on board the rowboat, even though Rose had grown fond of pulling the oars. One day Henry announced, "Now Rose, don't be nervous. I saw something in Macy's, and it's being delivered." The next day an Army duck amphibious vehicle arrived. Rose used it to taxi her family across the water, up the beach and into town to grocery shop. The duck became an annual attraction at Brant Lake's Fourth of July celebration: Henry would cram fifteen or sixteen children in the back, ride around the shore, then hit the water as they screamed happily.

Most days, Rose would sit on the front porch with her kids, looking out

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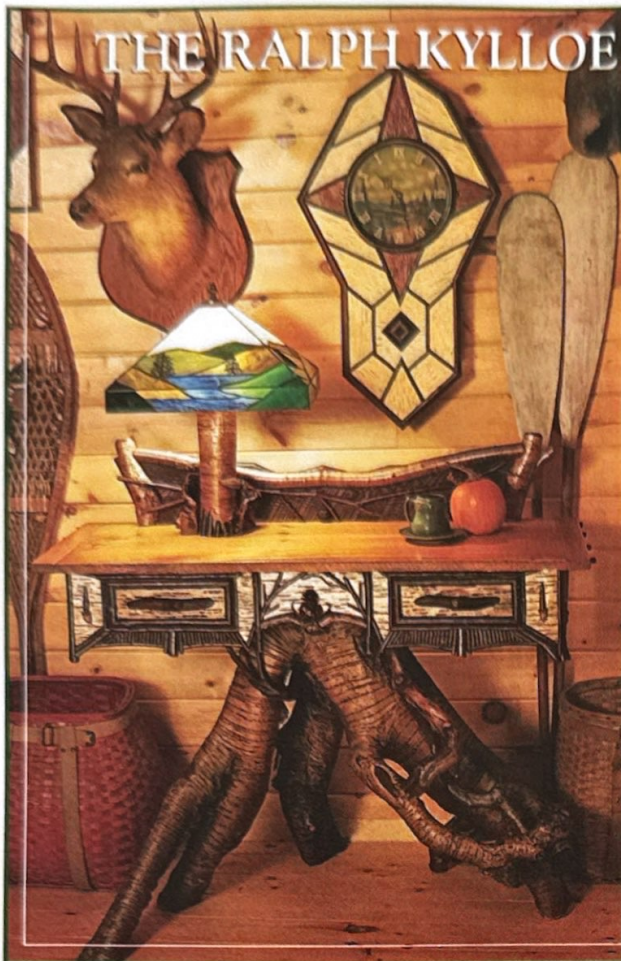
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at the water. Often she would invite weekend guests. Once, she was gazing at the shore waiting for friends who were about to arrive in their new Buick. Instead, a Ford Model T pulled up and a man carrying a suitcase got out, climbed into one of the Schultzes' boats and proceeded to row toward the island.

"Henry!" Rose called. "A stranger is rowing out in our boat!"

Henry came out to the porch and watched as the man approached. When he was within docking distance, Henry said, "May I help you?"

"I'm the Fuller Brush Company representative," the stranger announced. Rose and Henry were so impressed with his tenacity that they bought one of everything.

Sound travels easily on the water, and conversations can be overheard with little effort. On one occasion, two men were fishing in a boat near the island. Rose was listening as one said, "Wouldn't it be great if we could have a couple of martinis right now?" Rose went into the kitchen, mixed two martinis, put them on a tray and ferried them out to the astonished boaters.

Another morning Rose and Henry watched a lone angler cast and reel in fish after fish. Finally, Henry said, "I wonder what he's using for bait?"

"I'm using worms," the man said, "and you'd better watch what you say because I can hear every word."

One of Rose's favorite times was sunset, when the lake turned golden and the mountains in the distance slowly burned orange, then cooled to purple and dark blue. She loved that the island brought her family together far from the city in a place where life was gentler.

Today Rose's grandchildren Douglas and Richard share Seven Pines with their families. Little has changed. The antique furniture, the silverware, even the original lamps are still there. The house is still white. The only thing missing is Rose, the woman who owned an island but never learned to swim. ☞