

Lake Beulah:

Pioneer Days to the Present . . .

Not many centenarians are as sprightly as the Lake Beulah Yacht Club which celebrates its 100th anniversary in 1993. This vibrant organization looks back with pride on decades of steady growth and meaningful accomplishments.

Notable among these are the encouragement of competitive sailing, good sportsmanship, and the opportunities for recreation and socializing for countless families who have enjoyed membership throughout the years.

Today's mylar sails and fiber-glass hulls are a far cry from the birchbark canoes of the early 19th century. What is hard to believe is the fact that before 1830 there is no mention of any white man in what later would become Walworth County.

No records exist describing the region inland between the foot of Lake Michigan and the mouth of the Milwaukee River. This would suggest that it was unknown to the explorers of the 17th and 18th centuries.

TRANSFER BY TREATY

On September 26, 1833, the United States Government signed a treaty with the Potawatomics, Chippewas and Ottawas by which those nations "ceded all lands from the shores of Lake Michigan westward to land ceded by the Winnebagos the year before. The northern boundary met lands ceded by the Menomonees (north and east of the Milwaukee River) and the southern was defined by lands ceded by the same tribe in 1829 in northwestern Illinois."

In return for the land, John Kinzie of Chicago, United States agent, agreed to make annual payments to the Indians in coin, guns, blankets and other necessities. The Government also agreed to protect them in occupancy of the soil they now held until 1835 and then transfer them to other lands west of the Mississippi River.

The territory thus acquired "extinguished Indian title to 5,000,000 acres of land and included all of southeastern Wisconsin." Tribes were to remain in peaceable possession of the lands for two years until moving west.

However, the treaty was not signed until late the following year, so evacuation was delayed until 1836. Before that date, the Government could give no clear title.

LAND OF THE POTAWATOMIE

The leading tribe in the territory was the Potawatomie who were curious about another culture and peaceful in disposition. They were said to show "little deceit or treachery and, among their fellow tribes, managed to cement friendships that remained unbroken."

Having migrated south from Green Bay, their largest village at this time was Mukwonago, "the meeting place of the bears." The principal trail in the area started at the head of Big Foot Lake (Geneva) and led through LaFayette and East Troy to Mukwonago. Known as Army Trail, it had been the "route taken by a regiment of soldiers on a march from Fort Dearborn (Chicago) to Fort Howard (Green Bay) in 1836."

Early records reveal that Mrs. John Kinzie, the U.S. agent's wife, crossed Walworth County in the fall of 1832 as she accompanied her husband to Fort Winnebago (Portage). Her memoirs relate her delight in seeing the waters of Lake Geneva. Her party is believed to be the first whites to view lake.

As a result of early conflicts, Wisconsin passed from French to English to American possession. It was included in the old Northwest Territory until 1800 when it became part of Indian Territory. In 1809 the land was joined to the Illinois Territory, and in 1818 to the Michigan Territory.

On July 3, 1836, Wisconsin became part of a territory which included Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota and a part of the Dakotas. Walworth was one of the first counties approved during the same year. It was named for Chancellor Reuben H. Walworth of New York, an "outstanding character in temperance work and other moral movements."

Wisconsin became the 30th state on May 29, 1848 with Nelson Dewey its first governor. Christopher Payne was the first settler in Walworth county in 1836.

A land sale of 100 townships in southeastern Wisconsin was advertised by the land office at Milwaukee to begin November 19, 1838. Since most of the settlers were unprepared to pay at that time they asked for and gained a delay until February 18, 1839.

Sales began with Townships 1 to 10, ranging from Lake Michigan westward and amounted to 4 to 5 townships daily. The lands of Walworth County were sold between February 25 and March 5.

Sales were made to the highest bidder on each tract, starting with the Government's minimum price of \$1.25 per acre. Agents were empowered to buy for non-attending neighbors and might bid as high as \$20.

If payment were not made that day, the same land was started the next day at the lowest rate and was usually sold at that price without further bids from previous competitors.

WHITE SETTLERS ARRIVE

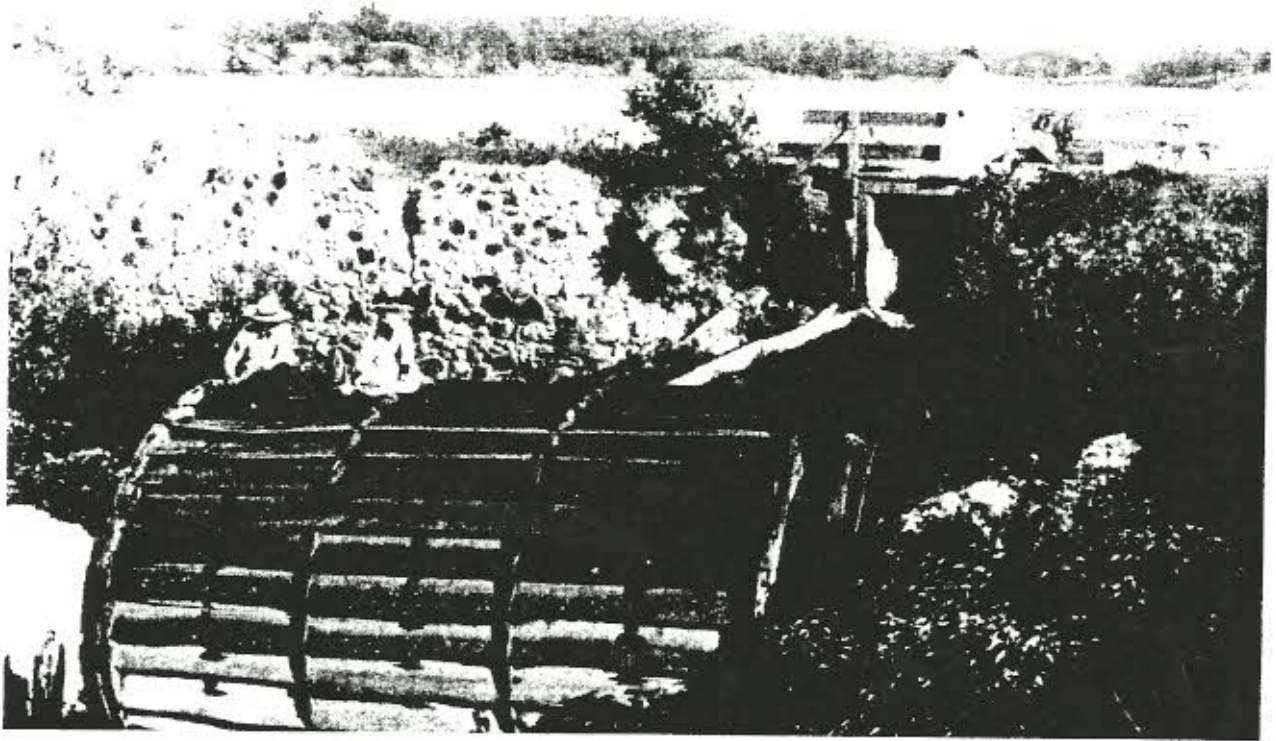
In 1838 Dr. James Tripp, a retired Army surgeon with an eye for engineering, purchased 151.79 acres from the Government and is presumed to be the first white settler in this area.

A native New Yorker, Dr. Tripp had practiced medicine in Mobile, Alabama, for several years before returning home. After 15 years of practice in the East, Dr. Tripp decided to try farming in Wisconsin Territory.

Although his stay here was brief, it was long enough to build and lend his name to a saw mill, Tripp's Mill, adjacent to Crooked Lake, the original name of Beulah. Tripp's Lake, later known as Mill Lake, was not connected at that time.

In 1839 he and his wife, Rosepha, moved farther west where they are credited with founding the village of Whitewater. Rosepha brought with her a "comfortable little fortune" and they became two of the largest property holders in the area.

There Dr. Tripp built a grist mill, which proved more profitable than a saw mill, and practiced medicine "only when called on in critical cases." He represented



Mill wheel at the dam with Mill Lake in the background, circa 1896

the area in the 4th Territorial Assembly in 1841-44.

Dr. Tripp died in 1844 at the age of 49 leaving his estate to Rosepha providing that she "remain a widow."

Tripp's saw mill was bought and sold frequently over the years. In 1852 Seymour Brooks was the owner for a short period. In the early 1870's, the mill was destroyed by fire, and for many years, only the wheel remained.

A local resident maintains that the only access to the mill in the early days was over a bridge from Beulah's East Shore to the Island. During the 1850's, the mill owner built the road, now a part of County Trunk J, to make the mill more accessible.

Huge rocks and wagon loads of dirt were hauled by oxen to build the road

which was seven feet beneath lake level (a fact recorded by Ripley's "Believe It or Not") until it was reconstructed and raised to its present height.

FARMING TAKES HOLD

In 1845, 24-year-old Homer and 22-year-old Seymour Brooks made their way from Ovid, N.Y., to Walworth County with the area's first threshing machine. They ran it in partnership the first season after their arrival and developed a profitable business.

After selling the machine to Seymour, Homer returned to New York where he purchased 2000 Merino ewes and drove them back to East Troy, a three-month operation. Their father sent them a Durham bull and three heifers which proved to be the first blooded cattle in Walworth County and perhaps in Wisconsin.

Homer purchased 160 acres in the Upper Lake region in 1848 and, in 1882, was said to own 218 acres valued at \$60 per acre. Both brothers were successful in farming and raising stock and Seymour had a bent for business as well.

In 1846, Seymour became an employee of Edward Ball, a New York merchant who had opened a store in East Troy. After clerking for three years, he became a partner for eight more years until 1855 when the building was destroyed by fire at a loss of \$14,000.

The store had acquired "Lake View," a 400-acre farm at the foot of Crooked Lake, which Seymour accepted to cover his investment in the destroyed business. This addition to his already sizable holdings purchased from the Government and located north and south of what is now Country Trunk J made him a major land holder.

Included in this property was a small island still known as "Buck Island," supposedly named because he kept his buck sheep there during the summer. It is presently the home site of Dan and Shirley Gawne.

JESUITS PURCHASE ISLAND

The larger island in his possession, later acquired by the Jesuit Order of the Missouri Province, consisted of 29 acres. This was sold initially to H. H. Rogers of East Troy, who built the first summer resort hotel on the lake in 1882 and operated it unsuccessfully for three years. In July, 1885, it was sold to Marquette College for \$11,500 through the efforts of a Milwaukee caterer, James Conroy, who acted as an agent in the transaction.



Crowley Spring, Mill Lake

A second deed dated September 10, 1908, records the sale of an additional portion of the Island from the Brooks' heirs to Marquette University for \$1500.

The old hotel on the island was used as a priests' retreat by members of the Jesuit Order whose headquarters was in St. Louis. Each summer young seminarians would vacation there, living in the two buildings which contained dormitories, kitchen, and dining and billiard rooms. A windmill provided water for general purposes while Crowley's Spring furnished drinking water.

A chapel was built later and lake residents were welcome to attend Mass on Sundays. It was a unique experience for many worshippers to arrive by boat rather than car, and to hear the birds through the chapel's open windows.

For football fans, the Island offers an interesting "first," as described in "The Story of Football."

In 1906, the St. Louis coach, appropriately named Eddie Cochems, brought his team to Lake Beulah to develop the forward pass. It was legal but risky, since if the ball were touched and not caught, it was a free ball.

Cochems developed the first passing combination. The forward pass was introduced in college competition - not by Notre Dame but by St. Louis - against Carroll College in a game played on the Island in September, 1906. St. Louis went on to win every game that season.

Included in Marquette's purchase of the Island was a flat-bottom pleasure steamer, the Lady Anna, which would accommodate 45 seminarians, all in good voice.

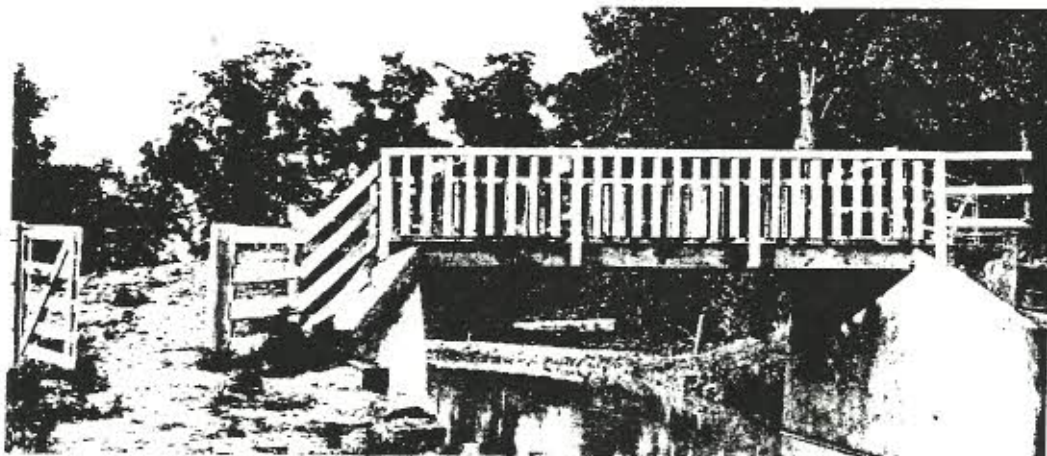
The Lady Anna proved a legend in herself. Not only did she provide pleasant recreation for the Jesuits, but also functioned as good will ambassador among some of the neighboring farmers, many of whom were staunch Protestants. The sale of their produce to the community, plus an invitation to cruise on the Lady Anna, is said to have done much to foster friendly neighbor relations.



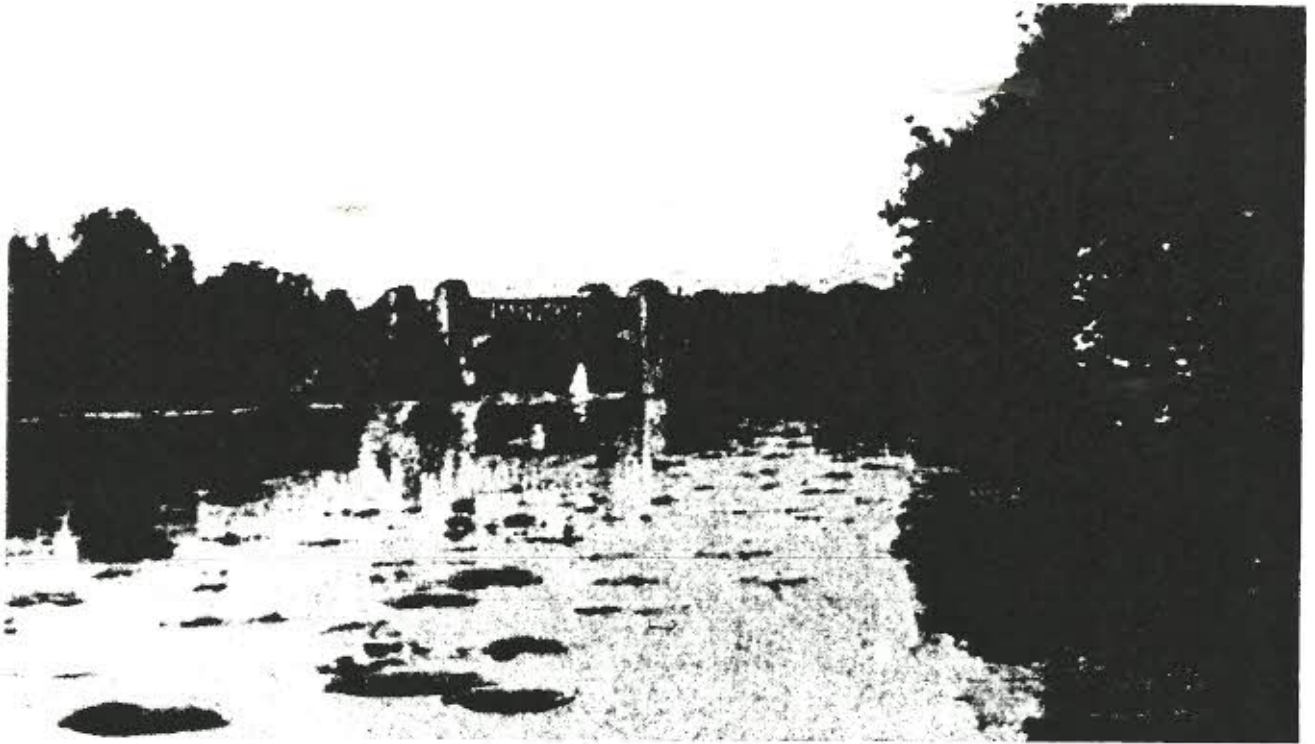
Jesuit residence hall and chapel on The Island

Most celebrated of the steamer's passengers was Vice President Thomas Hendricks, who served under President Grover Cleveland and who visited the Island during his term of office.

The Jesuits also initiated what has become known as Venetian Night, a parade of lighted boats decorated with Chinese lanterns. Many residents would light candles on the shore as the boats passed. Frequently, the procession would halt before the homes of friends who would join the boaters in song.



Canal separating The Island from the West Shore



Bridge connecting The Island and the East Shore

An 1894 story in the "Mukwonago Chief" describes an impressive parade of lighted boats that wound around Buck Island, ending with fireworks on Jesuit Island. Other newspaper articles report the visits of President Theodore Roosevelt and of Cardinal Samuel Stritch.

Jesuit Island was sold in 1971 to LaBonte Enterprises for \$250,000 and its buildings were burned. The property was subdivided into 17 lots. Presently it is the site of the homes of the following Yacht Club member families: J. Cullen Barr, Dr. James Bransfield, Dr. Daniel Collins, Ralph Gehrman, Michael Heiser, and Kevin Moore.

For many years there was a busily-travelled bridge from the East Shore to the Island. Opinion differs as to whether the Jesuits felt it was a deterrent to their privacy and removed it, or whether it fell into disrepair and was abandoned.

A FIRST-CLASS RESORT

The distinction of creating the most celebrated landmark on the East Shore, the Hotel Beulah, belongs to John Porter who was born on a farm in East Troy Township in 1856.

John's father, James, was born in Scotland in 1800, came to this country about 1820, married in Charleston, N.C., and brought his bride to East Troy Township in 1844. He purchased 200 acres, which eventually was increased to a single tract of 700 acres, and farmed the land until his death in 1881.

John, one of seven children, farmed his inherited land for seven years, spent a year in Whitewater, and then purchased a farm on the shores of the lake. In 1879, he married Mary McGraw, sister of Nicholas McGraw who owned adjoining land on the East Shore.

John's long-time dream became a reality in 1887 when he built a first-class resort on a 65-acre portion which hugged the East Shore of Crooked Lake. Situated on about 40 acres, the original Hotel Beulah could accommodate 250 guests, most of whom were Chicago residents who came with their families to stay for several weeks.

The main building was 100 by 65 feet and was three stories high. There was an annex almost as large that housed a dance hall, ice cream parlors and sleeping rooms. Area residents were welcome to tour the grounds and reportedly were treated as courteously as the wealthy guests.

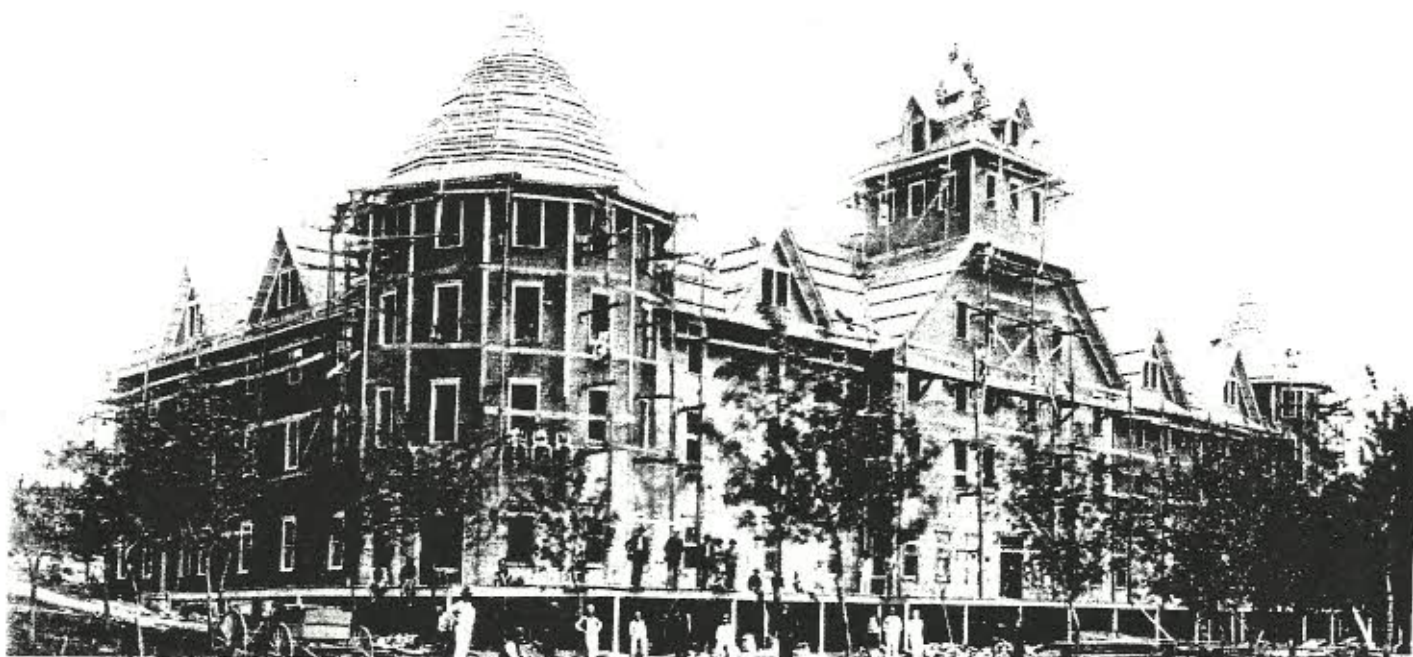
Only eight years after its completion, the gracious hotel was reduced to ashes by gusty winds which blew flames from a street lamp into the annex. Damages estimated at \$30,000 were only partially covered by insurance.

A year later in 1896, work was begun on another structure, even more elegant than the original. It was completed the following year. In addition to a large attic and basement, the new Hotel Beulah had three floors and could accommodate 500 guests.

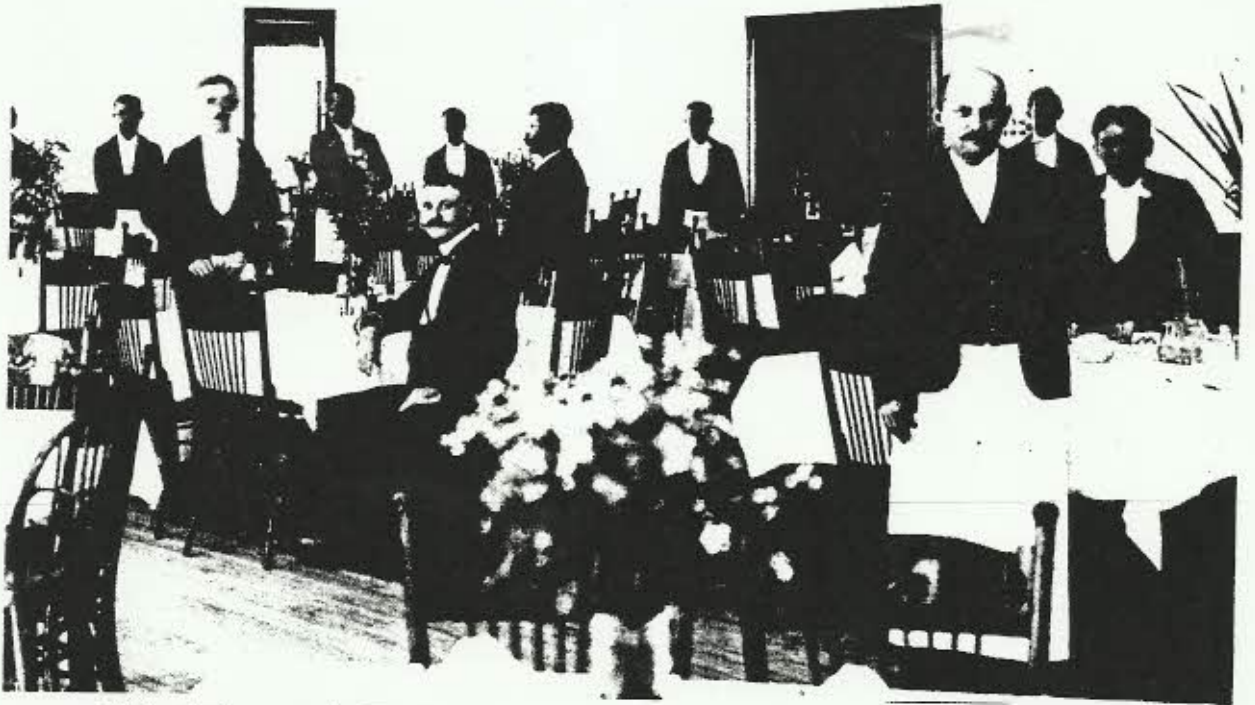
The main floor included elaborately furnished reception rooms, a ballroom, writing room, several parlors, rest rooms, an amusement hall, a 300-capacity dining room overlooking the lake, and a smaller dining room "for children and nurses."

The second and third floors held sleeping rooms, toilet and bath rooms and ladies' parlors. The attic could provide an additional 50 guest rooms.

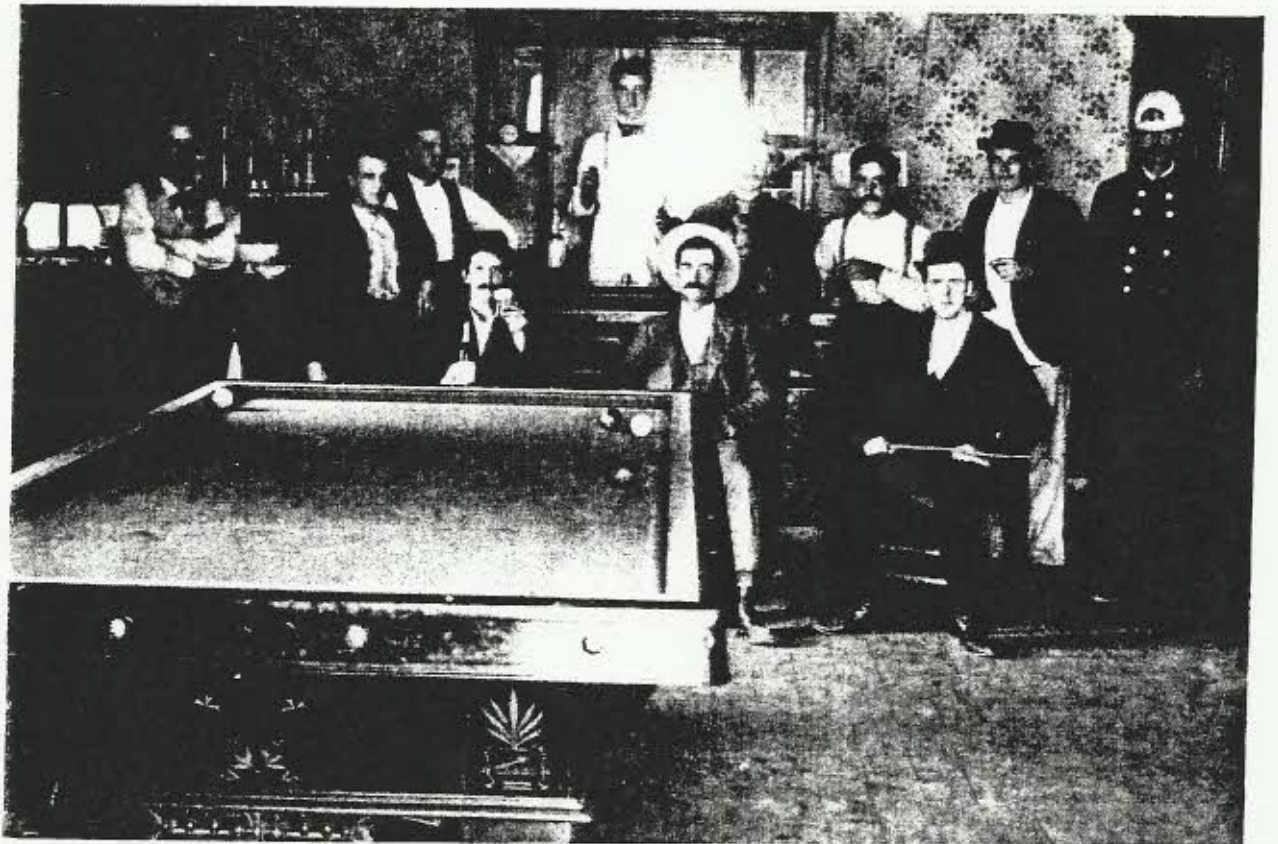
The basement housed a gentlemen's billiard room, barber shop, restaurant, kitchen, several wine rooms, bicycle storage room, ladies' billiard room, and a candy and ice cream store. A 300-foot roofed veranda wrapped around the building.



Second Hotel Beulah under construction



Main dining room in Hotel Beulah where the Sunday menu was printed on birchbark



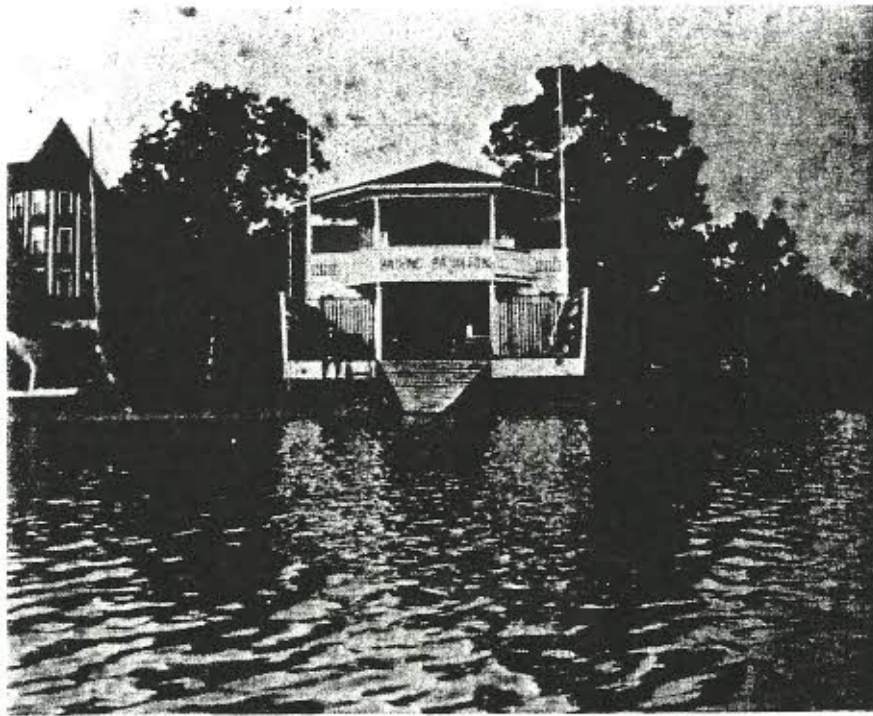
Men's billiard room, Hotel Beulah



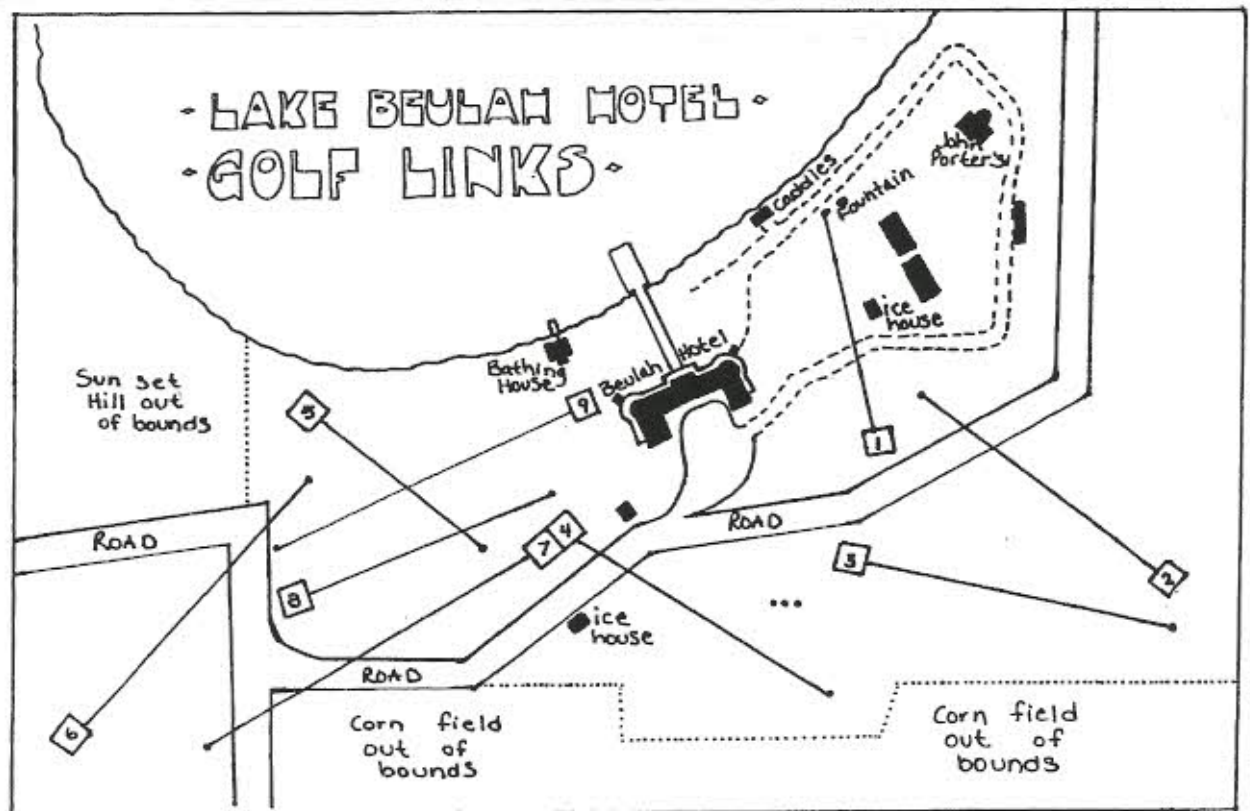
Hotel Beulah ready to accommodate 500 guests



Tree-lined path from Hotel Beulah to John Porter's residence



Bathing pavilion invites swimmers



Map of hotel grounds showing 9-hole golf course

Electricity was provided by the resort's own power plant with a reported capacity of 850 lights. A "long-distance" telephone in the hotel office (the only phone on the lake) offered a link to Chicago, Milwaukee and Waukesha. Room rates ranged from \$2 to \$4 per day or \$10 to \$21 weekly with special rates for those who stayed for four weeks or the entire season.

A separate bathing pavilion accommodated swimmers; a steam-powered launch carried 50 passengers, and sailboats tempted the more adventuresome. Rowboats were on hand for fishermen. For those who still had energy left, there was dancing at tea time every evening on the veranda and in the ballroom on Saturdays. Music was provided by a five-piece orchestra hired for the season.

The hotel brochure's claim of possessing "several of the finest mineral springs in Wisconsin" was endorsed by the Colbert Chemical Company of Chicago.

In 1901, John Porter sold the hotel to Franklin Simons of Chicago under whose management it was remodeled and a golf course was added. Over the years it changed hands several times, but with the growing popularity of automobile travel its appeal lessened.

The hotel's final owner was James D. Learned who operated a cleaning business in Milwaukee. Improvements had already been undertaken when fire again destroyed the hotel in 1911. A loss of \$40,000 was estimated. The cause of the blaze was not determined, but was presumed to be either "a defective chimney" or "spontaneous combustion from cleaning rags."

In 1915, Mr. Learned proceeded to subdivide the property which today is known as Beulah Park. Many of the old trees that lined the drive from the hotel to Mr. Porter's home (the Robert Osters' property) still remain.

The Porter family moved to South Dakota after selling the hotel; however, a granddaughter, Alice Atkinson, still resides in East Troy. Her mother, the only daughter in the family, was named Beulah, as was the hotel.

"It was my grandfather's favorite name," Mrs. Atkinson remarked when asked about the name change from Crooked Lake to Lake Beulah.

A clipping from a 1940 Chicago Tribune article on the lake credits a reference to Beulah Land in Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" as "the land of rest where pilgrims abide forever."

There is no authoritative source for the name change, so either theory is possible.

BAY VIEW HOTEL OPENS

Another more modest but still sizable hotel was operated by the Shepard family on South Shore property adjoining the DuPuy farm, which they had purchased in 1890.

At age 24, Edward Shepard left his home in Yorkshire, England, in 1855 to come to the United States. Penniless on arrival, Edward worked for six years for \$14 per month and eventually became the owner of 260 acres of valuable land. The original owner had been Simon Branch who had been deeded the land by the Government in 1844.

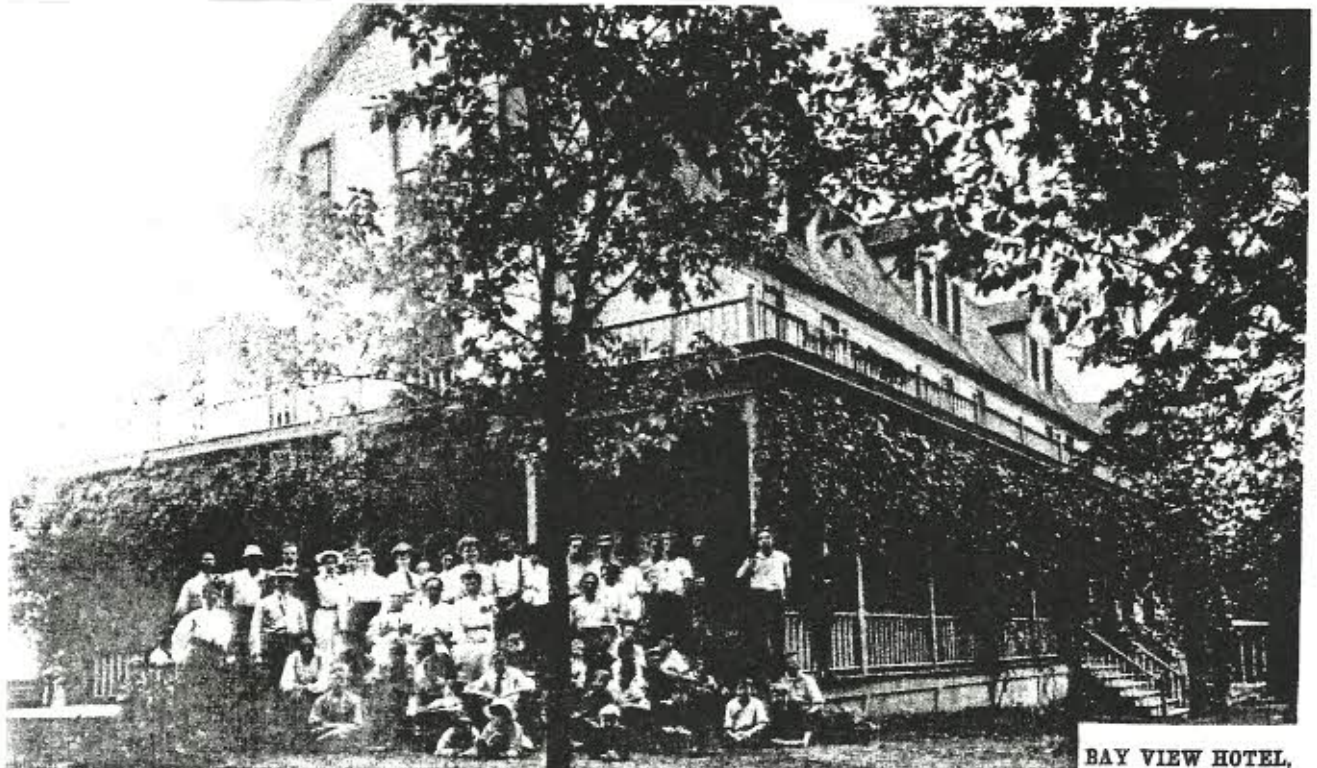


Edward Shepard, owner of Bay View Hotel

On June 24, 1896, Edward opened the Bay View Hotel, which he operated for 11 years with the help of his wife, Hannah, and their nine children. A treasured memento is the original hotel register which records some local names together with guests from Cuba, Manila Bay, India and Ireland.

Margaret Box Shepard, who resides on Army Lake Road, remembers working for the Shepards as a young girl. She captured the eye and later the hand in marriage of Edward's grandson, Lester. Their granddaughter, Diane Wilson, and her family live next door on Bay View farm, which has been Diane's home since childhood.

September 14, 1907, marks the last entry in the Bay View Hotel's guest register. In that year the hotel was sold to



BAY VIEW HOTEL,

Bay View Hotel



August Koch residence, the former Bay View Hotel

August Koch, the CEO of the Victor Chemical Company, Chicago, at his wife's request. It was where they had spent their honeymoon. The porches were removed, the exterior coated with stucco, and the entire building was renovated.

The elegant structure was named Ke-Nen-Ista, Potowatomi for Eagle's Eye, since an Indian mound was said to be nearby. The Koch family occupied the property until the 1940's, and there has been a succession of owners since.

DEPOT AIDS VISITORS

On March 30, 1892, a public announcement was made that the Wisconsin

Central Railroad would put a depot at Hunterville Crossing on land owned by Frank Fraser. In order to accommodate lake people, a road was to be laid across the north line of Judge John Potter's land to extend to Lake Beulah.

Until this time, Chicagoans took the train to Milwaukee where they transferred to Eagle. The last seven miles were made over gravel ruts by horse and buggy.

In mid-July the station was built, but the freight house and side track were still under construction. At this time the depot was officially named Beulah Station.



Railroad station at Lake Beulah, Wisconsin



Taxi service provided from the station to Lake Beulah

This was a boon, not only to hotel guests but also to lake residents arriving from Illinois with their families to spend the summer. Each train was met by horse and buggy to carry travelers the three-plus miles to their lake destinations. The driver, in top hat and formal black frock coat, added a note of dignity to his task.

McGRAW'S LANDING

Like many an Irish immigrant who sought to escape the potato famine, John and Mary Duffy McGraw arrived in New York where they stayed for several years. In 1854, they packed their ox-drawn wagon and headed for Wisconsin. The McGraws built a small log cabin on the East Shore of Crooked Lake where John hunted, trapped and farmed to support his family of six children.

Only two of the six remained in the area after their parents died. Nicholas built a lakeshore hotel which the family operated for 40 years. The original building is contained in the present Dockside North restaurant. Over the years the building was variously called Hanson's Resort, Peg's Supper Club, Clifford's and Lee-Shore.

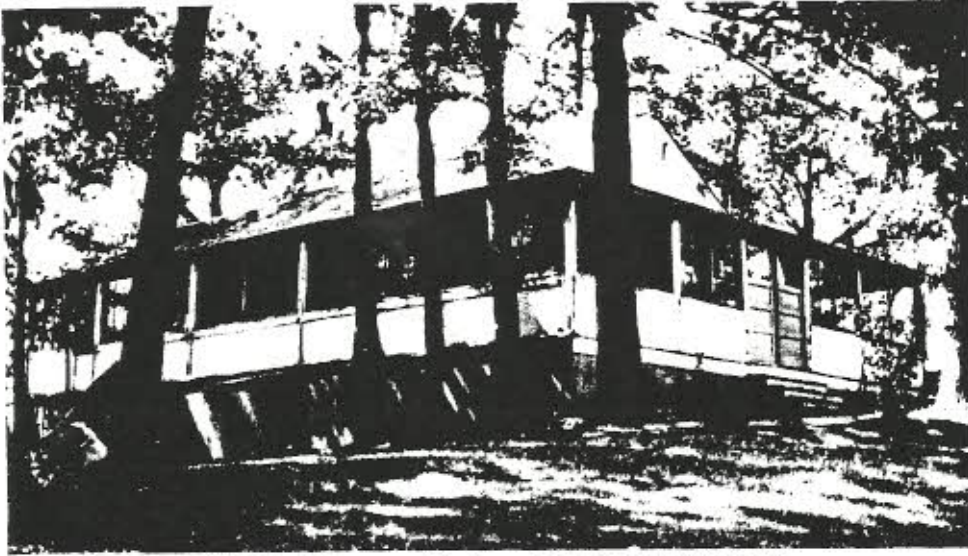
In addition to hotel rooms, McGraw's Landing offered rental row-boats, swimming facilities, and a small grocery store. Nicholas married Ellen Traynor who bore two daughters, Margaret Priestly Brady and Ellen Casey. Both continued to live in the area for many years. In the 1940's, the hotel was purchased by Irving Hanson of Chicago.

Nicholas's sister, Mary, married John Porter whose Hotel Beulah grounds were near the McGraw property.

STEWART SCHOOL PLAYS ROLE

Although not located on Lake Beulah, the Stewart School and the families whose children attended it play a large role in identifying some of the earliest settlers in the area. Many of the children came from homes built on land adjoining the lake.

The first school house was built on the Bryant property about 1840 and was destroyed by fire. A second frame building on the Stewart farm site (Hwy. ES) was constructed about 1865-66 and served until 1940 when a new brick structure was built.



Hillside Cottage on Bechman's Hill, later Lipperts

McGraw's Cottages



McGraw's Landing,
presently Dockside



In the early years, a teacher's salary ranged from \$15 to \$18 per month, sometimes including board at a local home as partial payment. There were three teachers a year, one for spring term, one for summer, and one for winter, with a total school year of seven months.

Four families had three generations in attendance: McGraws, Gaskells, Kobers, and Bradys.

One of the oldest buildings near Stewart School is the Chafin home which dates to 1837. Samuel E. Chafin arrived by ox-drawn wagon from Vermont in 1837 and built a large colonial house which remained in the family until 1946. A brother, Christopher, followed the same year and settled nearby. A descendant, Eugene W. Chafin, ran for president of the United States on the Prohibition ticket in 1908 and again in 1912.

Having sailed around the world twice, Captain Benjamin Stewart decided to settle down. In 1853, he purchased the Stewart farm, which his son, Charles, maintained until his own death in 1926. "Melon King" Asa Craig, the next owner, found it an ideal spot to raise his honey melons. Richard Swendson was a later owner of the Stewart farmhouse, which had been the site of the first post office, as well as being one of the oldest homes in the area. The building fronted the old Army Trail (Hwy. ES), a favorite route for Indians, soldiers, settlers' wagons and stage coaches.

Three DuPuy brothers came to America with LaFayette to fight in the Revolutionary War. Two returned to France after the war, while Henri settled in New York State. His only son, Moses, fought in the War of 1812, married and moved to Lima, Indiana.

HOTEL TRADED FOR FARM

Moses's son, Edwin, born in 1825, migrated by ox team to Waukesha County where he acquired several farms before he was 21 years old. He owned and operated the Hotel Mukwonago until 1852. He then traded his Waukesha property for a large farm on the shore of Lake Beulah where he lived with his family until 1883. Later that holding became the Shepard farm.

One of Edwin's seven children was the late Ella DuPuy Randolph who lived beyond her 100th birthday. In a 1948 interview, she recalled unexpected visits of friendly, inquisitive Potawatomi Indians at the first Stewart School. It was not unusual for them to call at her home occasionally in search of gifts of food or clothing. She also remembered visiting a camp of Indians on Army Lake where she was invited to share a meal of stewed muskrat.

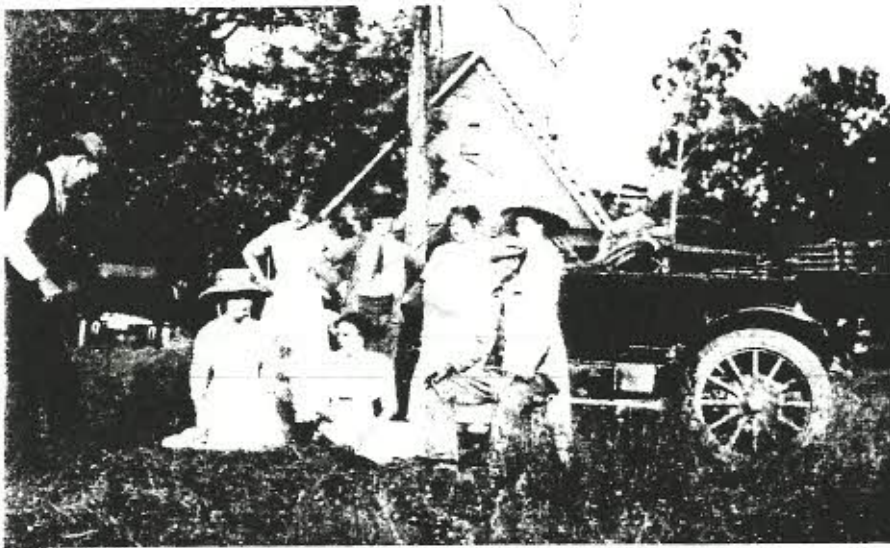
Much of the information regarding the earliest settlers was gathered by Stewart School students encouraged by a far-sighted teacher to interview elderly relatives and neighbors. A fourth-generation member of the Gaskell family, and a fourth James as well, described his ancestors' arrival.

James and Cecily Gaskell came from England in 1850 and purchased their original 220-acre farm from the Government. "It stretched north and south from the Diest fence to Lake Beulah and east and west from DuPuys to Flanagans." The present DeGrave farm property was in the parcel.

James II returned to England to the farm in Lancaster which his family had left. Charles and his brothers inherited their parents' land but only Charles retained his holdings. His sons, James III and John, shared their inheritance and their families still lived there in 1948.



The barn (visible in background) belonged to Hotel Beulah. It was moved about 1926 and is the present Glen Kreinbrink home.



Beulah Park residents relax





Water scene at Gillette's

The Crosthwaite farm stretched from Lake Beulah to Army Lake and a parcel was sold in 1947 to Art Vass of Mukwonago. Thomas and Margaret Crosthwaite came from Ireland about 1846 with a grown family of eight. They purchased land from the Vroom family who had acquired it from the Government.

Four children married and moved; two died, and the two remaining, Thomas and Michael, stayed at home until their parents died. They then divided the property with Thomas retaining the homestead and Michael building a home a short distance away. Thomas's survivors sold to Herman Wilke, while Michael's son, James, sold to Art Vass.

A Crosthwaite daughter, Mary, married Dennis Lawlor in Ireland and, with her husband and three children, joined her parents in Wisconsin in 1859. The Lawlors settled on Major Merrill's farm on Army Lake.

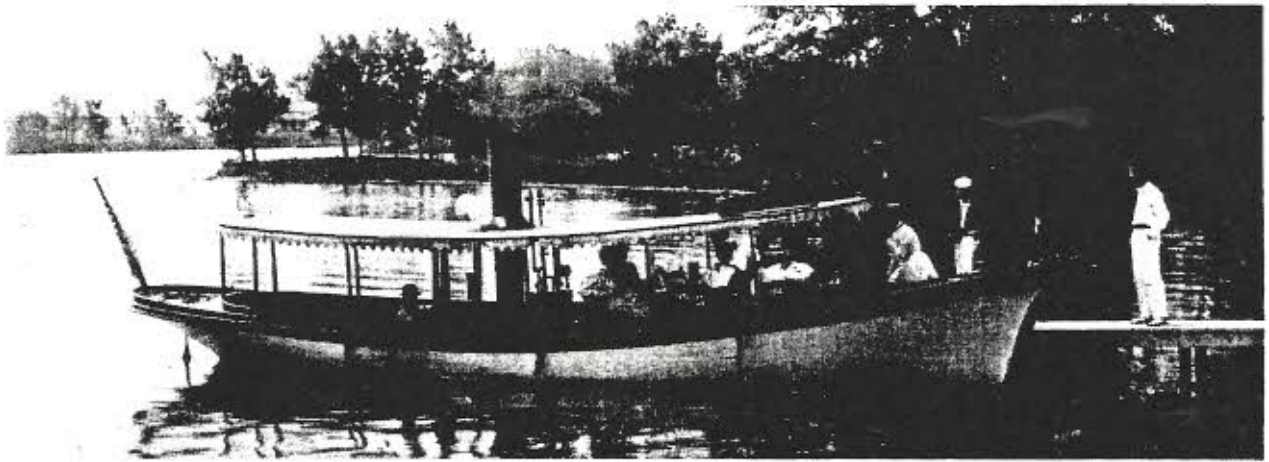
FOUR GENERATION FAMILY

Peter Brady was the first member of a four-generation family who secured property from the Government in 1848. A log cabin was constructed on the site and used until about 1870 when the present

house was built. Over the years, additional property was purchased and Brady provided land for each of his three children. A plat map shows Brady property north of Hwy. J adjoining the O'Bryan farm. Three generations of Brady children attended Stewart School.

Kobers were another four-generation family whose senior members came from Germany about 1860. They settled on a farm on the east side of Hwy. ES, opposite the Stewart property. There were five children in the first family. A son, Herman, who served in the Civil War shortly after his arrival in this country, later owned and operated his father's farm. The property remained a family possession until 1943 when it was sold to Gustave Justin.

The Elegant Farmer property, formerly known as Davelmar's, was acquired from the Government in 1837, buyer unknown. Of its 240 acres, 163 lie in Walworth and the balance in Waukesha Counties. Charles Heath bought it from the original owner and sold 160 acres in 1872 to L. Simonds. After his death, his son-in-law, Hugo Wedell, worked the farm until selling to the Scheel brothers, David and Elmer, in 1946.



Guests arrive by launch

Although the McGraw and John Porter families are presumed to be the earliest settlers on the shores of Lake Beulah, the following were listed among the longtime South Shore residents: J.C. Mitchell, R.L. Porter, Major Shea Smith, George P. Gore, the Gillettes and Jenks, Frederick Thomas, and Charles Standish families.

JOINING THE LAKES

Major Smith, the first Chicago resident on Lake Beulah in 1888, is believed to be largely responsible for bringing about a solution to the friction between farmers and Beulah dwellers regarding the lake level.

Originally, the waters consisted of three small lakes connected by streams, and a fourth lake, unconnected to the others but with a small natural waterfall at its outlet.

The streams connecting the first three lakes wound through a forest of white pines. Legend has it that before the three-mile reservoir formation was engineered by Dr. Tripp creating Crooked Lake, pioneer farmers could shortcut to the settlement of East Troy by driving

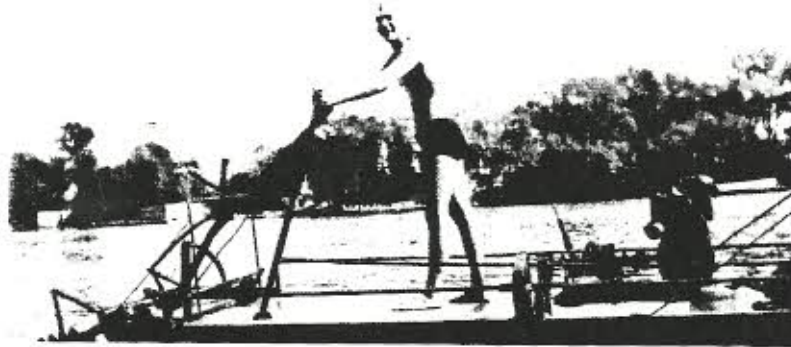
through the woods and fording the streams.

A fourth lake was connected to the others by digging through a gravel ridge. This body of water was initially called Tripp's Lake and later Mill Lake because of the saw mill operated at its outlet.

The first dam of 2x12 planking driven vertically into the ground was built along a sand bar that runs from the north boundary of what was Beulah Beach to the shore of the Island.

The second dam raised the water level sufficiently to allow the navigation of steam-powered launches between the various bodies of water. Stump removal was accomplished by hand winch and broad backs.

However, not everyone rejoiced at the change.irate farmers dynamited the dams upon several occasions, complaining that their pasture lands had been made useless by flooding. Through the combined efforts of Major Smith and summer residents, the state enacted legislation in 1894 which established a definite water level and forbade all tampering with the dams.



Hal Porter cutting weeds, 1944

PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION EVOLVES

Having brought about a successful conclusion to the water level controversy, the summer residents also formed the Lake Beulah Protective Association in 1894, the year after the Yacht Club was founded. In reviewing the first minutes kept by the Association, it would seem that the subject of the Island dams was the principal order of business.

The minutes of August 11, 1894 list the following as members of a committee to investigate the matter: Messrs. Chamberlin, Meyst, Williams, Gillette, Hatley, Romadka, J. Porter and Welch.

The Protection Association met annually from 1894 until 1920. In that period, the chief business undertaken appeared to be legal issues and maintenance regarding the dams and the roadway required to allow steamers passage under the bridge into Mill Lake.

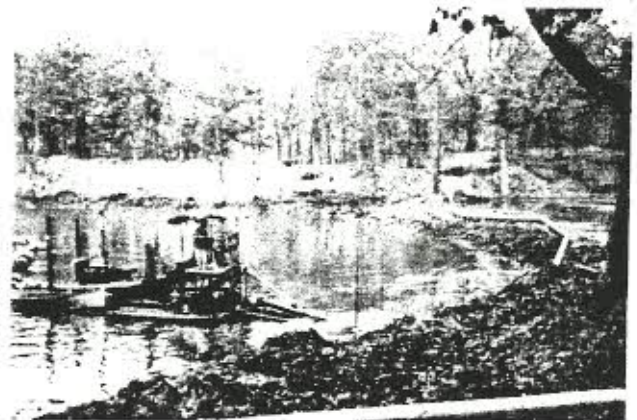
In 1904 members voted to stock the lake with 25,000 walleye pike. Annual dues of \$5 per member were established in 1908, together with a charge of \$5 per power or sail boat.

The following year it was voted to pay Mr. Gillette \$50 for the use of his

dredge until July 10, 1909 and \$100 per day rental thereafter to remove stumps. Purchase of a weed-cutter was approved to clear the channels and to perform "such public work as necessary." Members could rent the cutter for \$1 per day, non-members for \$2 per day.

Over the years, primary Protective Association concerns were bridge and dam maintenance, property protection, fish restocking, stump removal, weed-cutting, and motor-boat regulation.

After 1920, annual meetings were intermittent until 1947 when 42 property owners gathered to reorganize the Association. Yearly meetings have continued since then. Many of the same issues prevail today with the added concerns for preserving clean water and enforcing zoning restrictions.



Dredging at the Shea Smith estate, 1958

Another Yacht Club member immediately involved in the dam operations was Robert Johnston, a Milwaukee commercial baker, who reportedly built the first home on Lake Beulah in 1886. One end of one of the dams adjoined his property.

In 1920, after the death of Association President Eckhard, Vice President Johnston conducted the last meeting held by the organization until 1936. The minutes reported that the bridge had been repaired and the costs involved shared by "Mr. Johnston, the Island people and the Boston Store."

The Island people, obviously, referred to the Jesuit Community. The Boston Store, Milwaukee, maintained a house next door to Johnstons for the use of its executives. Janet Desmond, a granddaughter of Robert Johnston remembers that they were noisy neighbors. She also recalls the reception held on the grounds after her wedding to Humphrey Desmond in 1926. A few years later, her grandparents' home was completely destroyed by a fire that left only the guest house untouched.

In 1928, the Boston Store property was sold and became the site of Burr Oaks, a summer camp for girls which is described in the section entitled Lake Beulah Camp Sites.

BEULAH BEACH A BARGAIN

Until 1990 the property adjoining the camp was known to swimmers and picnickers as Beulah Beach. An early owner was Seymour Brooks who obtained the 400-acre farm, "Lake View," in return for his investment in the burned-out East Troy store. The farm house on the north side of Hwy. J was the original spacious home of the Brooks family.

A scrap of paper in the possession of Seymour Brook's granddaughter, Marian O'Leary, East Troy, indicates that 101 acres were sold in 1938 for \$32,500 to a nephew, Wilfred Sawyer, East Troy, who became the owner of Beulah Beach.



Johnston home, first house built on Lake Beulah



Picnic grounds at Beulah Beach



SEYMOUR BROOKS HOME, HWY. J



William George Bruce cottage, now the home of the Woodrow J. Bachs

According to the same source, the adjoining lakeshore property consisting of 13 acres was purchased by John Romadka for \$1700 in 1889. Born in Bohemia, Mr. Romadka came to Milwaukee as a 19-year-old and became successful as a trunk and luggage manufacturer.

His estate, "Oakwood," was subdivided after his death and the manor house was torn down. Some of the lumber salvaged was used in the construction of several cottages.

A Milwaukeean, Hobert Tallmadge, enjoyed the unique privilege of being the nephew of both the Johnstons and the Romadkas. Now in his 90's, he remembers being "the first camper on Brook's farm," keeping his sailboat at McGraw's Landing, and alternating visits to either aunt when in need of a meal.

In 1928 William George Bruce, a Milwaukee publisher and civic leader,

bought the property of Emil Noehre, which had been a part of the Romadka estate. While serving as president of the Milwaukee Harbor Commission, Mr. Bruce initiated and developed the idea which grew into the National Seaway Council, a means of facilitating commerce on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence waterway.

The Bruce family moved to the East Shore in 1949 after selling to Woodrow J. Bach, Milwaukee attorney. Members of both families remain in residence on the lake. Other Romadka Park neighbors include the Gilbert Tess, Roy Gerloff, David Schmidt, George Moravcik, Ronald Klement, James Byrnes, Kathy and Kevin Barr, and Robert Clayton families.



Thomas Gawne Sr. residence built in 1927 and destroyed to make way for the Ronald Klement home

DUNN FARM A LANDMARK

"Indian Hill Farm" was one of the few remaining large parcels of land to be subdivided into nine waterfront lots. Located on the north shore of the area called Round Lake, the working farm of more than 100 acres was the property of Harold Dunn.

In 1901 Harold's stepfather, Mr. Murphy, vice president of Kohler & Kohler, built the English Tudor house and



Dunn residence and outbuildings

barns as a wedding present for his stepson and his bride, Edna. Situated on a wooded lot with 1500 feet of lake frontage, the buildings were constructed by skilled laborers who were paid \$1 per day. The lumber came from Chicago, as did the handbuilt oak furniture.

After the birth of their only child, Mrs. Dunn confined her activities to the care of her daughter. Their afternoon excursions into town in a specially-built, chauffeur-driven limousine were a daily event.

Mr. Dunn was believed to be the major stockholder in a large corporation and was an avid golfer. In addition to the nine-hole course he had built on his property, he enjoyed membership in the Lake Beulah Golf Course.

Dunn's estate contained a cottage for the caretaker and his wife and a number of outbuildings. One was a barn later



used to house two carriages in mint condition and a collection of Indian artifacts found on the property.

A Princeton engineering graduate, Mr. Dunn established a trust for his wife and daughter and willed that the estate be given to his alma mater after their deaths.

In 1988 Pat and Wendy Nelson purchased the Dunn property from the trust and subdivided it into nine lots, each with an acre of land. Richard and Jean Patterson own the original house which they have restored. Dr. Randall Schmidt and Tom and Joanne Jenders also own homes on the property.

ARTICLE DETAILS SETTLERS

In June, 1895, an article in the "East Troy News" describing Lake Beulah lists 27 families living on its shores.

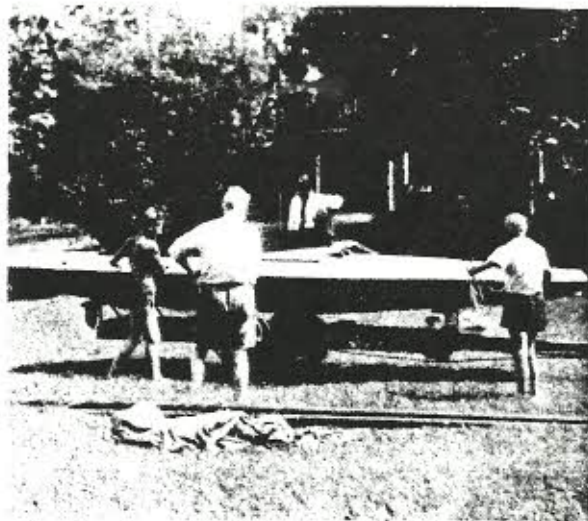
When the reporter asked the residents why they had come to Lake Beulah replies included "beauty of surroundings; clean, weedfree water; bathing unsurpassed, clean, pure air; best fishing within reach of the city; high, picturesque banks, and an atmosphere of refined sociability."

For many of the 27 families named, that 1895 newspaper story is the only record of their presence. Fortunately, there are some whose descendants have remained on the original properties or within the area, and they have furnished the information herein.

Among the South Shore pioneers was a local lumber man from Mukwonago, Rolland L. Porter, whose father and uncle had come from Vermont in the 1830's to farm. Rolland preferred dealing in property to farming. From 1888 to 1890 he had purchased most of the lake frontage held by Edwin DePuy, from Shepard's Bay View Hotel to Shea Smith's property. His



Norm and Hal Porter,
grandsons of a Beulah pioneer



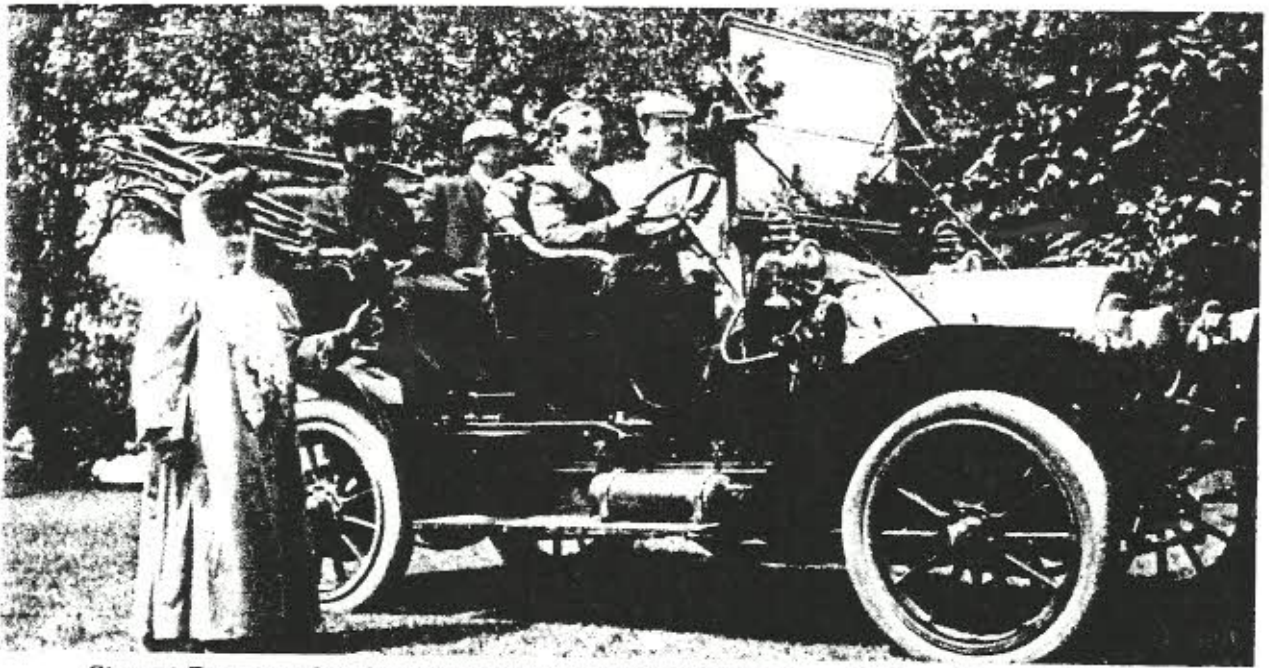
Hal, Harry Porter and Zack Clayton putting the
"Widow" in, 1945.

Porter residence in the background records show a \$500 purchase of DePuy land sold to Shea Smith for \$1,000.

Rolland had one son, Harry A. Porter, Sr., who had a family of four -- Norman, Hal, Don and Pat. In 1889 Rolland built "Fair Grove" at a cost of \$350. For years J.C. Mitchell, a Chicago commission merchant, rented the cottage by the season. It burned in 1967 and was replaced by the home now occupied by Pat Porter.

"Lurline" was built on the point in 1891 at a cost of \$800 and was rented to J. G. Gilkison, Chicago. "Lakeside" also was completed in 1891 and for several seasons housed the Buckley family from Chicago. Hal Porter's modern residence presently occupies that site.

"Meadow Breeze," the fourth building on the property, was brought across the ice in two sections at a cost of \$600. Its original location was on Maple Avenue in Mukwonago. In the 1890's it could be rented for \$66 for the season. Now the modernized original structure is home for Carol, the widow of Don Porter.



Stewart Brown at the wheel with his father sitting beside him and his mother standing by

Several years ago Bob and Rosemary Kaska, as historians of the Yacht Club, tape-recorded interviews with various long-term residents on their memories of the "old days."

Hal Porter recalled making the annual trip from Highland Park, Illinois, with his grandmother, who would get him out of school a week early to go to Lake Beulah. They would board the North Shore train to Lake Bluff, the spur line to Mundelein, and the Soo Line to Mukwonago, where they were met by his uncle. After furnishing a night's sleep in a feather bed, Uncle John would hitch up the horse and buggy and take his guests to the lake for the summer.

There were fond memories of the kerosene stove (no electricity until the mid-20's), and not so fond memories of kerosene lamps with wicks to be trimmed and chimneys to be washed every Saturday. A reflector behind the lamp in each corner gave sufficient light to read.

When it was time to return to school, Hal took the 5 a.m. TMER&L that ran on the present trolley tracks to Mukwonago, and walked to the Soo Line

station to wait for the 6:30 a.m. train. Any traveller was welcome to use the dipper chained to a post and help himself to milk. The unpasteurized milk would flow down over cooling pipes into a huge vat before being taken onto the milk train.

Another story involved his stepmother, Ruth Porter, a zealous housewife. Ruth deplored the dingy look of Hal's cotton sail and decided to give it a proper laundering as a surprise. Her efforts were less than appreciated since the washing removed all of the sizing and it no longer would hold air.

"Those days sails cost \$25 to \$30 for Egyptian cotton. If we were out for a race and it looked like rain, half of the fleet would take their sails down and head for home.

"Wally Weigel was fleet captain one year. He used to brag about sailing in the Mackinac races, and he was really disgusted with us; called us 'fair weather sailors.' He'd say rain shouldn't stop anybody."

Hal started sailing in the early 30's as B7. "I chose 7 for our number because it was the easiest to cut out, and I sewed it on by hand."



Brown's Point, the start and finish of all races; Hal Porter's B7 in the background

Brown's Point, from which all of the early sailboat races started and finished, originally was known as "Point Comfort." It was the property of Edward C. Chamberlin, vice president of Commercial Loan & Trust, Chicago. He was one of the founders and the second Commodore of the Yacht Club. The rambling gray house, topped with a "captain's walk," was built shortly after the Smith residence.

"Breezy Lodge" was the name chosen for the house adjoining the Chamberlin property. It was built by M. E. Cole, a Chicago real estate broker, whose wife was a sister of Mr. Chamberlin.

Chamberlin's daughter, Helen, married W. Morton Brown, a Chicagoan who established a wholesale millinery business in downtown Milwaukee. When their son, Stewart, married Beth O'Brien, the boat

house was moved to high ground and remodelled into a cottage for their use. Although not a sailor, Stewart was an active member of the Yacht Club which he served as Commodore in 1946-47. Ten years later he was named Commodore of the Wisconsin Yachting Association.



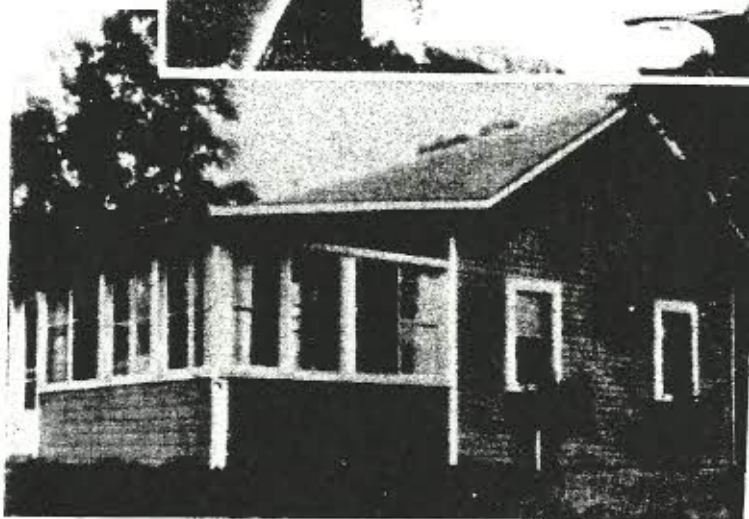
W. Morton and Helen Chamberlin Brown



Brown residence, the scene of many trophy presentations



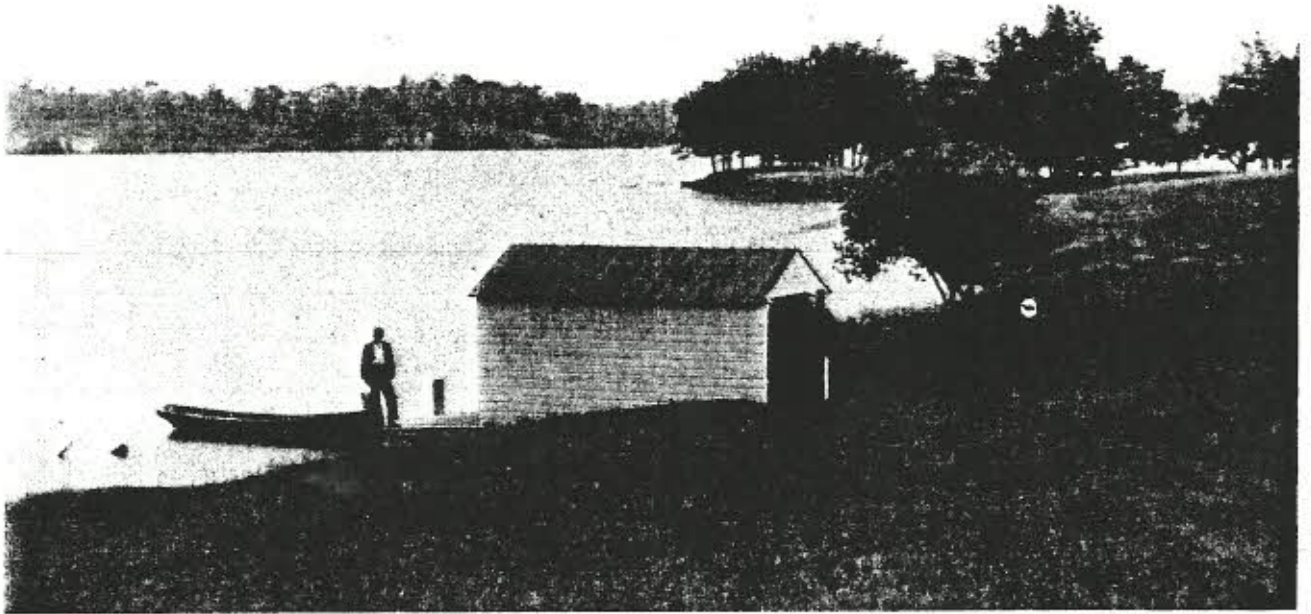
Stewart, Cap and Beth Brown



Brown cottage, originally the boat house

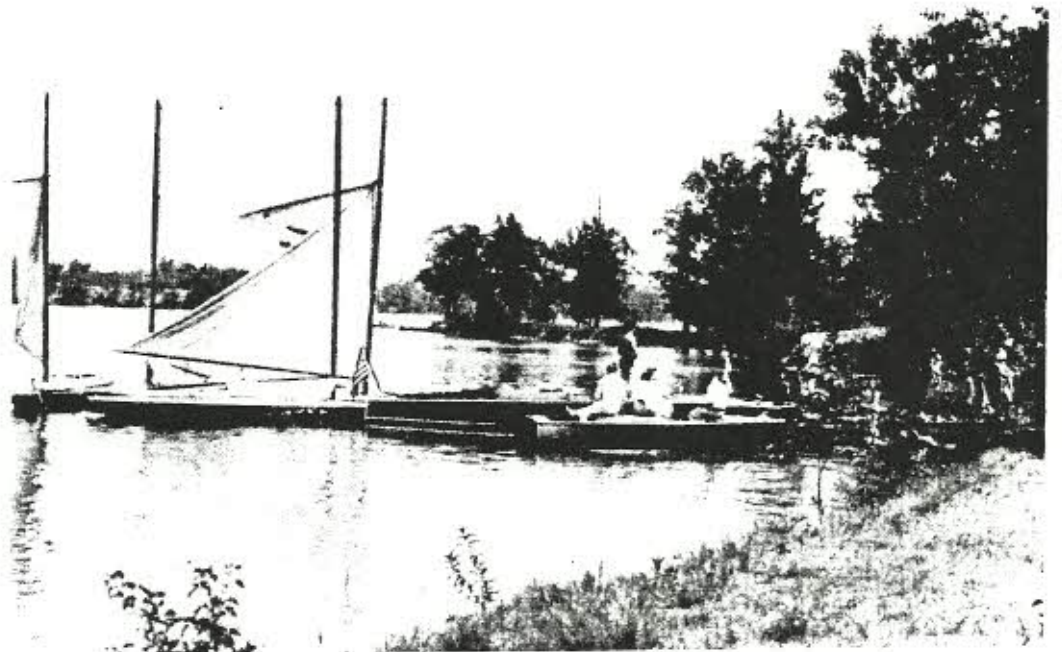


Fishing from the pier



Brown's boathouse, later to be converted into a cottage

**Brown's Point
at the end
of a race
in the 1930s**





James Stewart Brown, better known as Jim

Stewart's son, Jim, was a highly competitive sailor, winning top honors ten out of sixteen seasons. He also was the third member of his family to hold the post of Commodore.

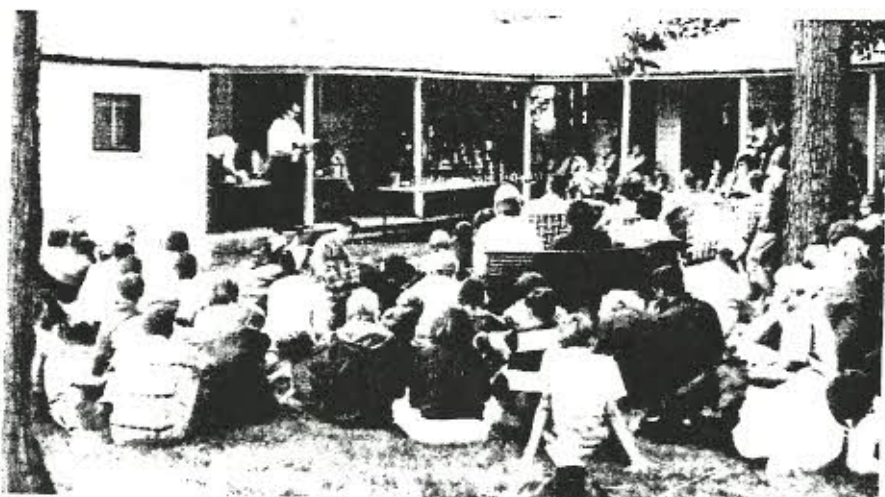
Until the Yacht Club acquired its own quarters, the Browns' porch was the site of annual trophy presentations and the happy hour hosted by the Browns, Hudsons, Webbs and Bergenthals after the ceremonies.

Jim preceded his father in death by a month in December, 1982. His widow, Bonnie resides in Fox Point and the lake property is owned by their sons, James Stewart Brown, Jr., and Peter Dale Brown.

Dr. Gerson Bernhard and his wife, Sandy, have purchased one of the houses on the property.



Bill Hudson and Jim Webb preparing the post trophy presentation refreshments



At last, the big moment

HISTORIC SMITH ESTATE

In 1888 Major Shea Smith was the first Chicagoan to build on Lake Beulah. A printer and bookbinder by trade, Major Smith also held valuable real estate in downtown Chicago. His 20-acre estate was named "Gwendolyn Bower" in honor of his daughter.

The two-story structure had a central living room with a cathedral ceiling. A balcony encircled the second floor and provided access to the bedrooms. A series of porches surrounded the outside of the building at second-floor level. One wall of the living room was covered with leather-bound books, many of them signed first editions.

An interview with Shea Smith II on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Yacht Club described the elaborate entertaining he had observed as a child.

His father would invite leading entertainers of the theater or opera as house guests for two to three weeks. Horses were at their disposal; laundresses were employed to care for their clothing; and for entertainment, cooks would prepare box lunches which were taken aboard the steam launch for an all-day picnic. The launch was large enough to accommodate a small piano to accompany the singers.

Livestock was raised to furnish meat for the table and gardens provided fresh produce.



Shea Smith boat house;
Baby Shea Smith II held by his mother in the naphtha launch



Smith home with family seated in the yard; Baby Shea II present in the baby buggy

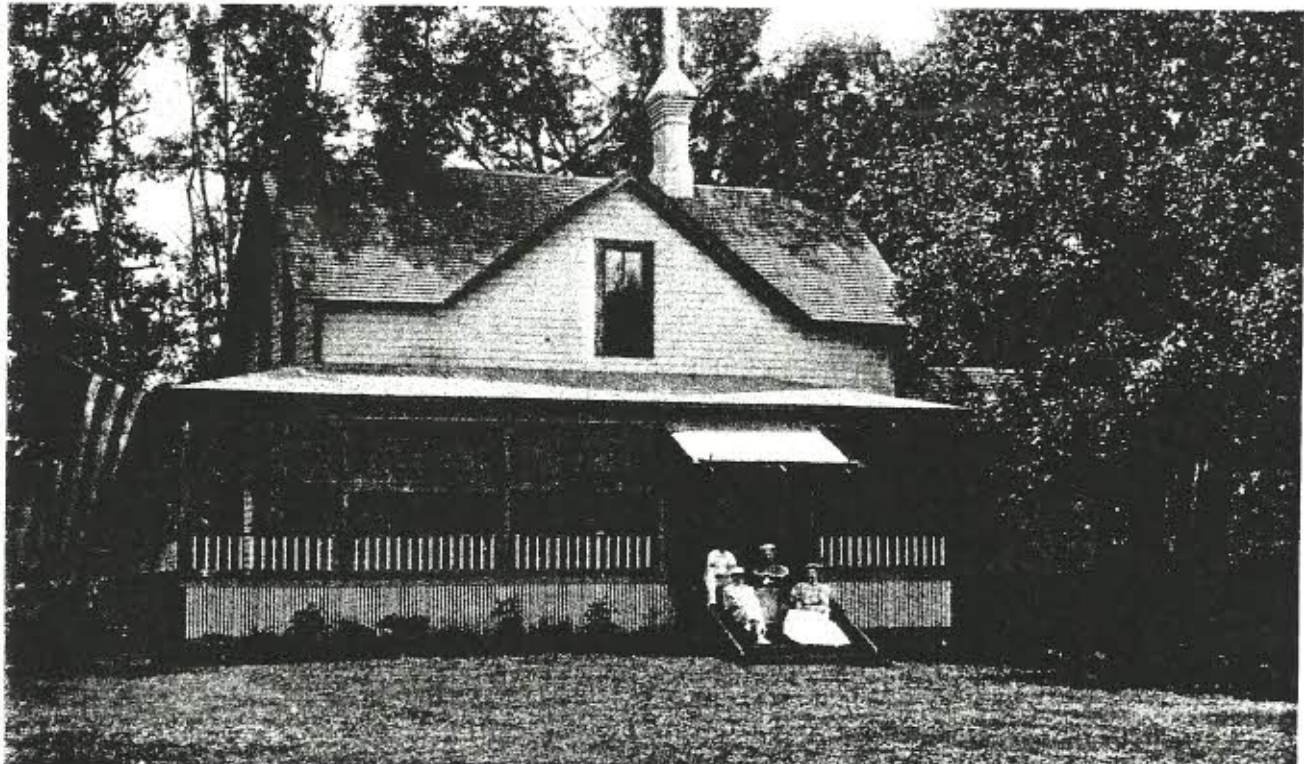
In 1958, the Shea Smith home was completely destroyed by fire and was never rebuilt. Two-thirds of the property had been purchased in 1957 by James and Delores Schubert. The other third was bought by Fred and Norman Wenzel, who later sold to the Jack LaBontes and Jack

Schwellingers, respectively. The Kent Haegers later purchased the Schwelling property.

Schuberts built 11 cottages on their estate and lived there year-round until 1964 when they wintered in Florida. In 1973, they moved permanently to Florida.



Building destroyed by fire in 1958



Gillette-Jenks cottage built by previous owner and occupied until Narasaki was completed, moved to the shore and used as a boathouse

The Chicago World's Fair in 1893 helped influence Edwin F. Gillette and his sister, Delphine, to retreat to the country for the summer, since they felt that the character of the city was changing.

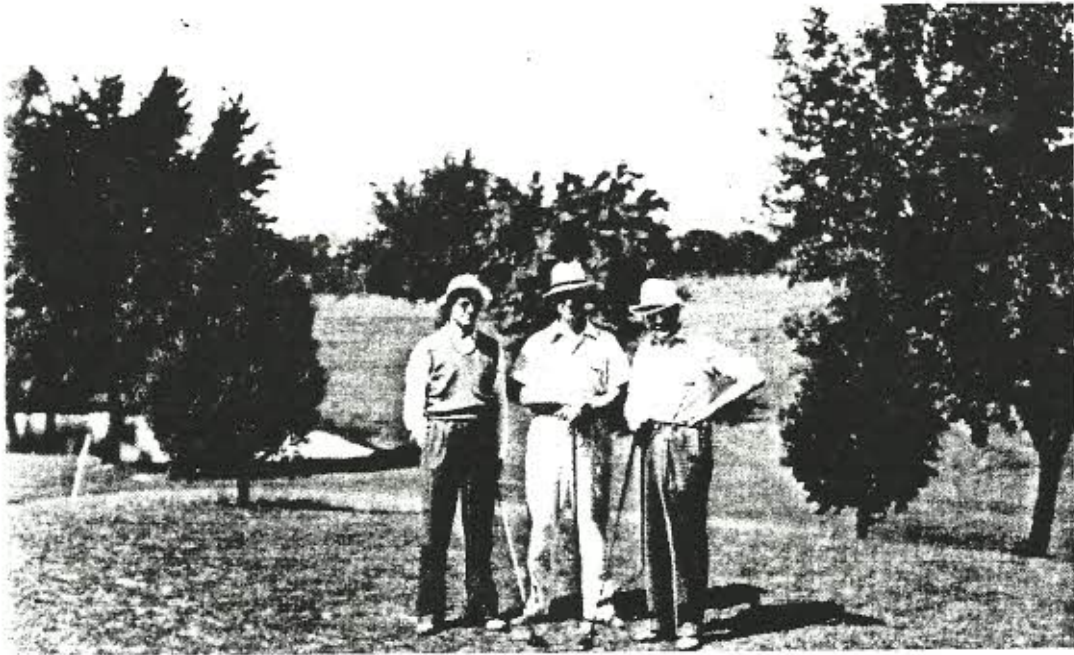
Their father had owned a lumber business at the time of the fire which destroyed much of Chicago. Rebuilding the burned-out structures created a great demand for lumber, increased business prosperity and led to the purchase of their Beulah property.



Edwin F. Gillette



Mabel Hyde Gillette



Frank Mackey, Jr., Harold Sherman and Frank Mackey, Sr., on the grounds of the Lake Beulah Golf Course which was owned by Mackey, Sr., and Sherman, 1939

MEMORIES OF MILL LAKE

At age 94, the recently deceased Edith Cunningham recalled spending the summer of 1903 at the Wittenbacher farm at the southwest end of Miramar Road. She would accompany 15-year-old Gertrude, the daughter of the family, as she delivered milk, butter and eggs to lake residents. Dr. Hawley's residence was up three flights of stairs on Bechman's Hill (Sunset Hill), and trudging up with a pail of milk was usually rewarded with a cookie from Mrs. Hawley.

The McGraws were also customers, and many an afternoon was spent swimming with the McGraw girls, Margaret and Ellen, until Mr. McGraw died and the place was sold.

Another of Edith's stops was the Williams estate, a "beautiful Southern-style mansion" on Mill Lake across from what later became the Lake Beulah Golf Course. Mr. Williams was a state senator from Illinois and owned the property reaching up to Highway J. "Besides the

homestead it had a caretaker's house at the roadside, a huge barn with a large stall for his special pair of horses, plus three other stalls and a large area for carriages and boats."

A previous owner was perhaps a farmer for a road ran down to the lake for his cows to get to the water. An ice house stored ice that was cut in the winter to provide refrigeration in summer.

Mr. Williams sold the property to Mr. Shepard who planted an apple and pear orchard on the northern end abutting Hwy. J. The barn was used to store produce. About the time of World War I, Mr. Shepard sold to Mr. Weber, a Waukesha butcher, who sold off much of the frontage.

When Gertrude was called on to work for the Williams family, Edith would tag along as the older girl cleaned. Other times she would play about the Koch estate where Gertrude's father was employed as caretaker. Eventually the Wittenbachers moved to the village where

he followed his trade as a shoemaker. "We were able to continue our association as he made my family's shoes from individual iron lasts for each of our feet," she recalled.

An 1891 plat map identified John Free as the owner of all the property on the north shore of Mill Lake to the Waukesha County line. Within a ten-year period, the westernmost lakefront area from Hwy. J to what is presently the David Bitters' residence became known as Williams Park. The extensive estate of Illinois State Senator Williams was described previously in Edith Cunningham's recollections.

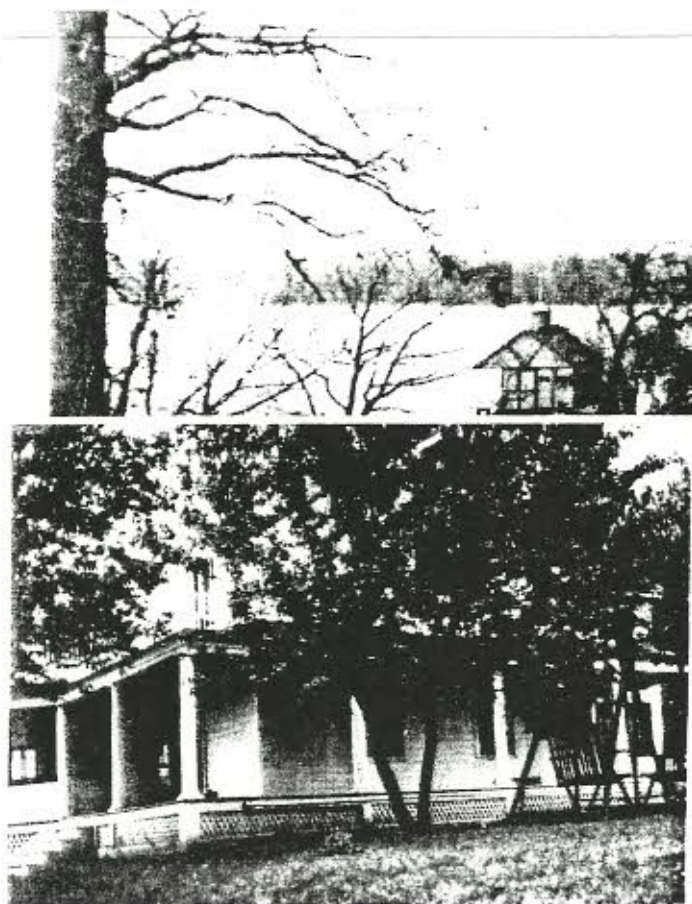
Gore Mitchell, grandson of George Putnam Gore, who was an early South Shore resident, was a long-time resident on Mill Lake and some of his stories are still retold.

A neighbor recounted Mr. Mitchell's being notified by the Board of Sanitation that he would have to part with his outhouse in favor of modern plumbing.

Mitchell described his problem to a local merchant, adding that he still owned a Montgomery Ward bond in the amount of \$1000. The plumber took pencil in hand and covered several sheets of paper with his plumbing estimate before announcing:

"That'll come to exactly \$998."

In 1922 Peter Brust, a Milwaukee architect, purchased lakeshore property for the summer use of his family. The present modern residence of his son, Paul Brust, was built next to the original dwelling which was torn down after the new one was completed.



The residence of Dr. Pitt, a pioneer on Mill Lake, in 1909. The home has been owned by the Frank Mackey family since 1925.

Villa Mauscar, built by Maud de Bretteville in the early 1900s, now houses the David Skotarzak family.



Sherman Brown, owner of the Davidson theater in Milwaukee, was the Brusts' first neighbor to the east. The Brown property had 300 feet of frontage and its turreted house is still standing after a succession of owners. The most colorful was a Milwaukee tavern owner who found it a convenient location for a still during Prohibition days. A raid on the premises by Government agents sent beer underground and provided some unexpected excitement for the neighbors.

Perhaps the most glamorous and celebrated resident on Mill Lake was Maud de Bretteville, described in a "Chicago Tribune" article of 1940 as "very

handsome, tall and majestic, formerly Maud Lillian Berry of concert stage fame."

The daughter of Fulton G. Berry, a pioneer of Fresno, California, Mrs. de Bretteville "discovered" Lake Beulah in the early 1900's, perhaps as a guest of Major Shea Smith. She had been filling a theatrical engagement in Chicago when she was invited with friends "to a picnic on the lake and fell in love with the spot on which her home is now located."

Her home, Villa Mauscar, was reportedly filled with souvenirs and photographs of her travels abroad with her husband's sister, the widow of the late Adolph Spreckles.

The women traveled to Europe to secure art and historical treasures for the museum which the Spreckles had donated to the city of San Francisco. The museum is a replica of the Palace of the Legion of Honor in Paris.

Photographs of the American philanthropists were taken with Marshal Foch and General Petain and a reception was given in their honor. Another autographed photograph was that of Queen Marie of Rumania, a personal friend of the families. David and Judy Skotarzak are the present owners of the original de Bretteville residence.



The Bruces spend an afternoon with the Peter Brusts on Mill Lake