

# **Southwest Michigan RoadMap: The West Michigan Pike**

## **Volume I: Historic Context Narrative**

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Tourism has long been ranked as Michigan's third largest industry, but over the years little funding has gone into the promotion of the state as a tourism destination. Michigan's tourism investment has typically been in local and Midwest markets, and as a result 70 percent of Michigan's tourists have come from within the state. Over the past decade focus has been on the promotion of the state's natural resources for fishing, hunting and boating.

In an effort to diversify the state's economy, the Michigan legislature voted to greatly increase the state's tourism budget in 2007 enabling Travel Michigan's award winning *Pure Michigan* campaign to be initiated on a national basis. In addition, Governor Jennifer Granholm asked all state departments to suggest ways they could assist in the effort to bring increased revenue to the state. The Department of History, Arts and Libraries determined that as part of its *Cultural Economic Development Strategy* there was an opportunity to promote the state's cultural heritage resources in addition to its natural resources. This was confirmed by a survey conducted by the Travel, Tourism and Recreation Resource Center at Michigan State University, which showed that heritage tourists stay longer and spend more money than the average tourist. This led Don Holecek, director of the center to conclude, "The heritage link can be used to identify and capture (e.g. promote to) a potentially very profitable target market segment."

In an effort to increase cultural heritage tourism in Michigan and appeal to a niche market of heritage tourists, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) applied for a grant from the federal *Preserve America* program in 2006 to survey the historic resources along the Lake Michigan shore in West Michigan. Support for this project was also received from the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Holland/Zeeland Area Community Foundation, the Frey Foundation, the Upton Foundation, the Muskegon County Community Foundation, the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation, the Mason County Community Foundation, and the Tri-Cities Museum. The SHPO partnered with *Beachtowns, Inc.*, a consortium of convention and visitor bureaus from communities between New Buffalo and Ludington. The purpose of the *Preserve America* project, entitled the *Southwest Michigan RoadMap*, was to provide the information needed to enable *Beachtowns* to apply for official designation of a Michigan Heritage Route program along the historic U.S. 31 corridor through the Michigan Department of Transportation.

## History of the Proposed West Michigan Pike Heritage Route

Research conducted by the SHPO led to the discovery of the West Michigan Pike, the first continuous paved road built in West Michigan. Constructed between 1911 and 1922, the purpose of the West Michigan Pike was to bring automobile tourists to West Michigan from Chicago. The Pike ran along Lake Michigan's east coast from the Indiana state line to Mackinaw City. For this project research was limited to the area between New Buffalo and Ludington, the area of jurisdiction for *Beachtowns, Inc.*

At the turn of the century tourism was seen as a means to revitalize West Michigan's sagging economy, which took a strong downturn when lumber companies withdrew from the state in the late 1890s. As new resorts were being developed up and down the West Michigan coast, access to previously inaccessible dune land and lakefront became increasingly important. The sudden popularity of automobile transportation around 1908 completely changed how the region developed. The State Highway Department and the State Park Commission partnered to build a system of roads and state parks that provided public access to Lake Michigan and, before motels and hotels were available, camping facilities for auto tourists. A key feature of their efforts was the reforestation and beautification of West Michigan's roadsides so that they would appeal to tourists. Due to its close proximity to the city of Chicago, West Michigan became an inexpensive vacation destination for the thousands of immigrants that had settled in the city in the late nineteenth century. Middle class resorts geared to the cultural and culinary needs of specific ethnic groups—Eastern European, Greek, Italian, Swedish—blossomed all along the West Michigan Pike. The golden age of West Michigan's resorts lasted from about 1920 until 1970.

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Resort hotels, cottage associations, and tourist courts sprang up during this period and thrived even throughout the Depression and World War II.

The West Michigan Pike became a part of Michigan's first state trunk line system (M-11) and the first federal highway system (U. S. 12 in Berrien County and U.S. 31 to Mackinaw City). The route was improved and realigned with New Deal funding throughout the 1930s. After World War II the resort areas on Lake Michigan gained new popularity with baby boomer families and throughout the 1950s and 1960s locally owned "mom and pop" motels and hotels were constructed.

West Michigan's agricultural heritage is closely tied to the history of the West Michigan Pike and the development of the resort industry. The region is known as "the Fruit Belt" because of its unique climate, which is suitable for growing peaches, apples, pears and small fruits such as blueberries, strawberries and raspberries. Many of Southwest Michigan's resorts started out as farms. Immigrants, who had been unable to own land in their native countries, dreamed of purchasing property in America and starting a farm. Lack of experience and poor soil quality often led to the conversion of these "blue sky" farms, as they were called, into tourist resorts. As auto tourism increased in the 1920s, farm owners would allow auto tourists to camp on their land charging a small fee. Providing food and shelter to tourists was a more enjoyable way of life for many inexperienced immigrant farmers and brought in more profit than farming. The rural, agricultural character of the region has always been important to its tourism industry, providing a sharp contrast to the urban life of Chicago.

Another important piece of Southwest Michigan's twentieth-century history related to the West Michigan Pike was the conservation and beautification initiatives undertaken in the effort to develop a tourism industry for the region. When the lumber companies moved to western states in the 1890s, they left miles of cutover land, barren of trees and filled with unsightly stumps. Throughout the 1920s the Michigan Highway Department and the Department of Conservation worked closely to protect dune land and reintroduce trees and vegetation to the area as they developed state parks along the Lake Michigan coast and access roads to them. The Michigan Highway Department even hired a landscape architect to develop guidelines for plantings along its roadsides, one of the first highway departments in the nation to do so, and the large maple trees that line the original route of the West Michigan Pike are evidence of this effort.

## **Results of the *Preserve America* Project**

The project began with the award of a *Preserve America* grant in June 2007 and was completed in September 2010.

The *Southwest Michigan RoadMap* project resulted in the following:

- A reconnaissance survey of the buildings and sites found along the original and early routes of the West Michigan Pike in seven counties (Berrien, Van Buren, Allegan, Ottawa, Muskegon, Oceana and Mason) between the Indiana state line and the city of Ludington. Historic resources were photographed and GPS coordinates recorded. Wherever possible a cursory history of the resource was developed.
- A historic context statement was researched and written. It focused on the significant people, trends, and time periods associated with the themes of agriculture, art, architecture, conservation, ethnic heritage, recreation/entertainment and transportation.
- Three historic properties within the project area were listed on the National Register of Historic Places: Lakeside Inn, Lakeside; Lieindecker's Inn (Coral Gables), Saugatuck; and the Lifesaving Station, Ludington
- Five official Michigan Historical Markers were erected: The West Michigan Pike, New Buffalo; Jewish Resorts/West Michigan Summer Resorts, South Haven; Scenic

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Drive/Muskegon State Park, Muskegon; John Gurney Park/Auto Tourist Camps, Hart; and Winsor McKay (animator), Spring Lake

- Two communities within the project area applied for *Preserve America* Community status. Ludington was accepted and Saint Joseph was still pending as of October 2009.
- Vincent Musi, a free-lance photographer that has photographed Route 66 and often works with *National Geographic* magazine, was hired to spend two weeks photographing the West Michigan Pike. His work resulted in a traveling exhibit of photographs that has been shown in art centers and museums throughout the project area. Musi also gave presentations in four *Beachtown* communities: Saint Joseph, South Haven, Holland and Saugatuck.
- The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) held three workshops on historic resource survey in Whitehall, Pentwater, and Saint Joseph. Three half-day workshops on SHPO programs were presented in Ludington, Saint Joseph and Grand Haven.
- Three thematic tours of resources along the West Michigan Pike were created under the general name of *Roadside Attractions*. They were *Roadfood of the West Michigan Pike*, *Historic Parks of the West Michigan Pike* and *Lighthouses Along the West Michigan Pike*.
- *Beachtowns, Inc.* developed a Web page that includes a history of the West Michigan Pike, information about its resources and a theme song. ([www.beachtowns.org](http://www.beachtowns.org))

## The Final Report

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has identified four basic steps to be followed when developing a sustainable cultural heritage tourism initiative

- Assess the Potential
- Plan and Organize
- Prepare for Visitors and Protect and Manage your Cultural, Historic and Natural Resources
- Market for Success

Under point one Assessing the Potential, the Trust lists five areas that should be evaluated:

- Attractions
- Visitor Services
- Organizational Capabilities
- Protection
- Marketing

This report addresses step one, Attractions. It is an inventory of the cultural heritage resources found along the West Michigan Pike, the region's first tourist highway, which brought vacationers from Chicago to the Lake Michigan shore. The final report is broken into three sections, which contain the following:

- **Historic Context** – The context provides an overview of the history of the area and an in depth look at the historic themes of agriculture, art, architecture, conservation, ethnic heritage, recreation/entertainment and transportation.
- **Community Assessments** - The purpose of this section was to assess the community's use of historic preservation programs and to offer assessments of the historic themes

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that were associated with the community and the resources that showcase those themes. The recommendations under community themes were based solely on SHPO program offerings.

- **Historic Resource Survey** – This section provides a photograph and history of the resources located along the West Michigan Pike. A database list of the resources by address with GPS coordinates is included.

Copies of the final report were provided to each *Beachtowns, Inc.* community and to Preserve America. A copy was retained in the State Historic Preservation Office and the Library of Michigan.

## Methodology

The preservation planner of Michigan's State Historic Preservation Office served as project manager and was assisted by four graduate interns. The project corridor was divided into three regions and an intern was assigned to each region. The fourth intern was hired later and concentrated solely on the art theme.

Work on the project began with an assessment of the historic resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the Michigan State Register of Historic sites as well as information found in the working files of the State Historic Preservation Office. The interns then reviewed publications found in the Michigan Collection of the Library of Michigan for the communities and counties in their assigned areas. Once this general overview was complete and a sense of the general history of the communities obtained, the students were sent into the field to visit local museums and libraries, talk with local history experts, and to collect printed tourist information for their region. For the art theme, the intern developed a questionnaire that was sent to art organizations and provided to artists encountered at galleries along the route of the West Michigan Pike (See Appendix B). Because of the size of the project area and the amount of information available, it was determined that research time would not be spent on sites or themes that had already been well documented, such as the Dutch heritage of Holland or art in Saugatuck. Our goal was to find new sites related to the designated themes that would add depth and interest to the known cultural history of the area.

As research progressed, it became clear that a centralized theme needed to be established to provide clearer focus for the project. When information on the development of the West Michigan Pike surfaced and its significance to the region was clear, we were able to concentrate research and documentation on the linear corridor of the highway. To determine the original route of the road, period tour guides developed for the West Michigan Pike (located in the Rare Book Room of the Library of Michigan) were used in particular the 1922 version entitled *The West Michigan Pike—Lakeshore All the Way*. Another excellent resource was *Scarborough's Official Tour Book: Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin and Trunk Lines, 1916*, which provided information and historic maps of the route through some communities along the Pike. Another very helpful resource was the website *Michigan Highways: The Great Routes of the Great Lakes State* at [www.michiganhighways.org](http://www.michiganhighways.org) which provides an account of realignments, arranged by time period, that have occurred to U. S. 31.

Current county plat maps were copied and used to plot the historic route of the Pike and its subsequent realignments. The plat maps include property lines and the names of parcel owners. They were invaluable in providing information and documenting both the heritage route and the locations of historic resources. In addition to the plat maps the *Michigan Atlas and Gazetteer* was used during the historic resource survey portion of the project.

For the photo-documentation a digital camera and a hand held Geographic Positioning System (GPS) unit were used. A simple four-column data collection sheet was developed with the headings: Resource Name, Address, GPS N, and GPS W. At the top of the sheet was a space for the location (city or county) and the date (See Appendix A). The simplicity of the form made it easy to record a vast amount of resources in a short time. Internet search engines such as Google and Yahoo were used to fill in any blanks for addresses when only a resource name was recorded, or a resource name when only an address was known. It was found that the data collection was most efficient if two people participated; one to drive and take photographs, the other to navigate, collect GPS coordinates, and fill out the data collection sheet. The information collected on the data sheets was then recorded in an Excel database. The digital photographs were organized in folders by county then city or township. Each photograph file was named by street number and address and placed within the appropriate city, township, and county folder.

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Deciding how to organize the vast amount of photographic data in the survey report was a difficult task. It was finally determined that the most useful presentation of the survey data was geographic, starting with the southern border of the project area and following the route of the West Michigan Pike to the project's northern border. Two major early re-routings of the Pike, the Red Arrow Highway and the Blue Star Highway, were listed separately under those names.

The project manager conducted the indepth research used for development of the historic contexts using resources from the Michigan Collection at the Library of Michigan. Two construction trade publications *Michigan Roads and Forests* and *Michigan Contractor and Builder* were invaluable in documenting the development of the West Michigan Pike and its relationship to tourism. County histories containing good overview information and local histories in the Michigan Collection at the Library of Michigan provided in depth information about specific resources. The West Michigan Tourist Association magazine *Carefree Days in West Michigan* was also useful. Newspaper research also provided essential information. The SHPO project manager wrote the historic contexts, compiled the survey data, and formatted and created the final report.

Throughout the time period of the grant, the project manager participated in *Beachtowns, Inc.* monthly meetings.

## Cultural Heritage Tourism

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines cultural heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources." Cultural heritage tourism differs from past tourism efforts in that it considers the effect bringing bus loads of tourists to a site will have on the community—excess traffic congestion, unplanned growth, and physical stress to sensitive sites and habitats are not satisfactory results. Communities are also encouraged to discover and promote their own history and identity rather than adopt a phony theme that has little to do with the shared experience of its citizens. The current emphasis is on sustainable tourism which is based on developing environmentally friendly practices, safe conditions, and authenticity.

The twentieth-first century has seen a marked change in tourist behavior. Today, tourists are much more sophisticated and self reliant in their travel planning. They use the Internet and social media websites to target destinations and activities that appeal directly to their specialized interests. These niche market tourists will travel farther than the average tourist to reach a destination with an attraction or activity that appeal to their specialized interest. Niche market tourists typically have a strong knowledge base in a particular subject area. They seek an authentic experience that will enhance that knowledge. It is important that this type of tourist be provided with the level of information needed to draw them to your local resource. It is also imperative that information is presented in an easy to access format since computerization has drastically changed how information is obtained.

The advent of niche market tourism has made it less necessary to develop sites that appeal to busloads of people. It is a sustainable type of tourism that keeps intact the quality of life for the residents of a community and provides the tourist with an authentic travel experience that showcases a community's history, culture, and way of life. Niche markets tourists provide a steady stream of visitors that will spend money in the community.

### Cultural Heritage Tourists

A cultural heritage tourist is one that visits a historic site as one of their primary activities when on a trip. A historic site can be a museum but it can also include a stay at a historic hotel, eating in a restaurant located in a rehabilitated historic building or one that has been in business for fifty years, strolling through a historic district, or taking in a show at a historic theater. A heritage tourist often has an interest in a specific aspect of history such as the Civil War, railroads, gardens or lighthouses. Cultural heritage tourists are often aware of architectural styles and periods, the work of individual architects, landscape architecture styles, and urban planning trends. They are interested in an authentic experience and the visual

### The Benefits of Cultural Heritage Tourism

Cultural heritage tourism can have a tremendous economic impact on local economies. To economic benefits like new businesses, jobs and higher property values, tourism adds less tangible—but equally important—payoffs. A well-managed tourism program improves the quality of life as residents take advantage of the services and attractions tourism adds. It promotes community pride, which grows as people work together to develop a thriving tourist industry.

An area that develops its potential for cultural heritage tourism creates new opportunities for tourists to gain an understanding of an unfamiliar place, people or time. With the arrival of visitors in turn come new opportunities for preservation. Well-interpreted sites teach visitors their importance, and by extension, the importance of preserving other such sites elsewhere.

Perhaps the biggest benefit of cultural heritage tourism is that opportunities increase for diversified economies, ways to prosper economically while holding on to the characteristics that make communities special.

*National Trust for Historic Preservation  
www.culturalheritagetourism.org*

### CULTURAL TRAVELER PROFILE

- Baby Boomer
- College Degree
- Annual HH Income of \$75,000 or More
- Stays Longer & Spends More
- Looks for Unique Travel Experiences
- Demands Value--Both in Time and Dollars
- Spends \$3,000+ on 4.2 Trips per Year
- Force behind Multi-Generational Travel
- Researches Travel Online (as well as word of mouth)
- Part of 65%+ Americans Who Book Their Travel Online

*U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism Marketing Council*

cultural landscape. According to a 2009 report by Mandala Research for the U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism Marketing Council, 78 percent of all travelers in the United States are cultural heritage tourists. They spend \$994 per visit versus \$611 spent by regular tourists.

The West Michigan Pike proposed heritage route is an opportunity to use the region's historic resources to create a state of mind to lure potential visitors with the thought of simpler times—memories of a picnic in a park, a day at the beach, or relaxing in a row boat with a fishing rod. The *Pure Michigan* campaign has already laid a strong foundation. The rural character of Southwest Michigan's that defines its sense of place is the result of the collection of small features and individual resources found throughout the region; a gas station on Oceana Drive, a stone building at Thunder Mountain, the mom and pop motels of Ludington, and maple trees along the Blue Star Highway in Allegan County. Individually these resources may not make a destination site but collectively they work together to create the unique Lake Michigan resort experience. A comprehensive approach to their retention and enhancement through zoning ordinances, design regulations, conservation easements, and local historic district designation should be undertaken to protect this Michigan experience.

## Recommendations

- Bring together planning officials, county road commissioners, local historians and others to discuss the best means of preserving, protecting, and promoting the resources of the West Michigan Pike.
- Encourage the use of historic preservation programs and practices, such as the National Register of Historic Places and federal and state historic preservation tax incentives, to protect and reuse historic resources.
- Develop a campaign that highlights historic resources with a high degree of historic integrity and feeling. For example, a logo that reads "Authentic Michigan" or "Authentic Pure Michigan" that a property owner can use in advertising.
- Cultivate a regional approach to using historic resources to develop critical mass in creating tourists destinations. For example, developed themes driving tours such as "Historic Gas Stations of the West Michigan Pike" or "The Jewish Tradition in Southwest Michigan" our "The House Museums of Michigan's Beachtown Communities."

Some of the themes that can be applied to the development of a regional tourism destination included:

## Roadside Architecture

According to the Society for Commercial Archaeology website, the term roadside architecture refers to "buildings and other structures directly and indirectly associated with roads. Obvious examples include restaurants, motels, and gas stations. Other examples include signs, vernacular buildings, shopping and retail centers . . . as well as theme and amusement parks." The resources found along the West Michigan Pike represent some of the state's earliest roadside architecture. Often it is the combination of small features, such as the neon Saugatuck sign on the Blue Star Highway, the rustic well house at the Roadside Park in Hagar Township, and the stone gas station/fruit stand on Oceana Drive near Hart that form the region's character. Roadside architecture resources appeal to a broad spectrum of niche market tourists. For example, an automobile enthusiast might be interested not only in antique car shows and museums but also in historic gas station buildings, old highway routes, historic bridges, and neon signs.

## Recommendations

- There are existing websites that already do a good job of tracking and promoting roadside architecture resources. In addition to putting information on a West Michigan

Pike website, the information should be submitted to already established websites that showcase roadside architecture such as

- *Winter Water Wonderland* at [www.waterwinterwonderland.com](http://www.waterwinterwonderland.com).
- Michigan Drive-Ins at [www.michigandriveins.com](http://www.michigandriveins.com).
- *Roadside America* at [www.roadsideamerica.com](http://www.roadsideamerica.com).
- Work with the Society of Commercial Archaeology ([www.sca-roadside.org](http://www.sca-roadside.org)) and other similar other organizations to hold a conference in West Michigan to highlight the resources of the West Michigan Pike.
- Develop articles on roadside architecture resources for publication in magazines such as *American Road*, *Michigan History*, *Midwest Living*, or *Lake*.

## Mom and Pop Motels

"Mom and Pop" is the name given to a locally built, owned, and operated resource. There are a large number of mom and pop motels still operating throughout the project area. While a few pre-World War II tourist courts exist along the West Michigan Pike, most were built after the war to cash in on the increased tourist travel brought on by the baby boom of the 1950s and 1960s.

## Recommendations

- To appeal to twentieth first century niche market travelers it is recommend that mom and pop motels along the West Michigan Pike retain their historic appearance but upgrade their facilities to offer a boutique experience and offer the amenities that appeal to today's travelers.
- Work to improve and enhance exteriors of the region's mom and pop motels. It is important that the historic character of these resources be retained so that their charm remains authentic. It is recommended that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation be followed for any rehabilitation work undertaken. A National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property nomination for motels and tourist courts should be developed so that qualifying properties throughout the region can be nominated to the National Register, which will enable them to take advantage of federal and state historic preservation tax credits for rehabilitation work.
- Originally mom and pop motels were built in rural areas. Over time, development has sprung up around some of these resources and they are now surrounded by modern strip malls or light industrial buildings. Establishing a program that helps property owners to develop attractive landscaping to shield the motels from adjacent development would enhance the visitor experience. One idea might be to work with the Michigan State University master gardener program to develop landscape plans—they must provide a certain number of hours of community service.
- Develop a regional marketing plan for mom and pop motels to facilitate trip planning for tourists traveling the West Michigan Pike heritage route.
- West Michigan needs a wider range of motel room costs and more discounts during off seasons so that younger travelers, artists, and new families can afford to visit the area. Mom and pop boutique motels have the potential to serve this market.

## Food

Finding a unique restaurant and experiencing local cuisine has become a motivation in itself for travel. According to the article "Traveling to Eat" published in *USA Today*, in the past five years one in six tourists has included a food-related activity, such as a winery tour, in their vacation plans; half of those chose a vacation destination because of its reputation for quality or unique cuisine. According to one interviewee "We're not connoisseurs. This is to me more interesting than museums. ... You can actually experience it." As the state's Fruit Belt, Southwest Michigan has a ready-made opportunity to create a rich and significant niche market based on the fresh

fruit and vegetables it produces. Michigan's agricultural heritage is a shockingly underutilized resource given the current popularity of the culinary arts.

- Re-brand Southwest Michigan at the national level as "the Fruit Belt."
- Improve the quality of food offered at restaurants along the West Michigan Pike heritage route. Encourage the use of locally grown produce. Encourage the establishment of locally-owned culinary destinations that provide menus with a variety of price ranges.
- Encourage the establishment of culinary schools or programs at community colleges that can take advantage of the area's close proximity to restaurateurs in Chicago.
- Use the region's rich ethnic heritage to provide diversified food choices.
- Create a market for specialty fruits. Historically, certain varieties of peaches, strawberries, raspberries, apples, etc. were grown in Southwest Michigan that were excellent for home use or local markets but did not have the qualities needed for commercial sale as they were too delicate to travel long distances. Work with small farm owners or hobby farmers to reintroduce heritage varieties only available for purchase at farm markets in Southwest Michigan. Instead of just marketing "blueberries" or "peaches" educate the public on the qualities of the different varieties so that they seek out a specific fruit type—and must come to West Michigan to get it. The Tree-Mendous Fruit Farm in Eau Clair does this on a small scale and could be used as an example.
- Develop a means of honoring and promoting growers or restaurants that have been in business for over thirty or more years.
- Partner with other agricultural heritage programs. For example, fully participate in the "Buy Local" agriculture program.
- Include Michigan restaurants on websites such as [www.roadfood.com](http://www.roadfood.com), Submit Michigan eateries to programs such as Food Network's *Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives*.

## Eco-tourists

The world's largest collection of sand dunes on fresh water is found in Michigan. Between New Buffalo and Ludington there are twelve state parks and numerous county and township parks that provide access to the state's unique dune eco-systems. In addition the Muskegon area is home to a designated National Wild and Scenic River, the Pere Marquette. According to a report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration entitled *Niche Marketing for Sustainable Tourism* 'Eco-tourists seek to increase their knowledge about the natural environment. Typical activities are nature, tours, short hikes with guides knowledgeable in flora and fauna, bird watching . . . The actively seek guides . . . to find observe and understand wild nature. They demand guides that are extremely knowledgeable . . . Eco-tourism is primarily concerned with an individual search for learning."

## Recommendations

- Michigan's sand dunes have long been promoted for their recreational aspects and as a backdrop to the state's beaches. Rebranding Lake Michigan's sand dunes as one of America's unique eco-systems will lead to the dunes themselves becoming a tourist destination—much like the White Sands in New Mexico. Shifting the focus to highlight the scientific and environmental aspects of the dunes would attract a new niche environmental tourist group that appreciates and respects this fragile resource.
- Develop a regional marketing approach for West Michigan's sand dunes that incorporates not only the dunes within the project area's twelve state parks but also Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore. This might include descriptions of the different types of dunes and where they can be viewed; unique eco-system features such as the

endangered trilliums that bloom in P. J. Hoffmaster State Park, or the lakes and bogs at Grand Mere State Park, which are a designated National Natural Landscape.

- Work with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (DNRE) and Michigan's universities to establish an internship program that would provide knowledgeable guides at state parks.
- Birding is one of the largest components of eco-tourism. Birders love to travel to new areas to access new birds and habitats. Michigan's shore and dune land offer great opportunities for bird watchers. One example, the Piping Plover is an endangered bird with two recognized habitats, Muskegon and Ludington State Parks. The DNRE operates a volunteer program to protect the bird's habitat during mating season. Some eco-tourists like to spend their vacation participating in such volunteer programs. In addition, the state's profile on birding websites and in birding magazines should be increased.
- Go Green. Work with groups that promote green construction and practices to build or locate in West Michigan. Work to bring conferences on green technology to the area.

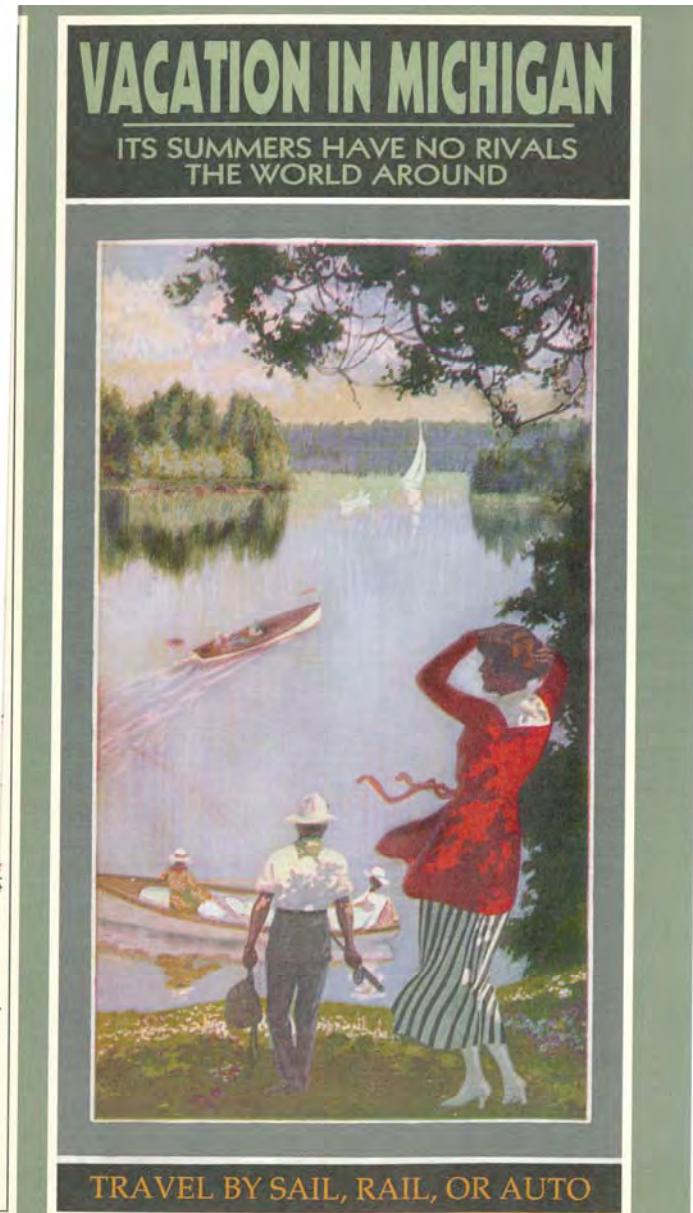
## Chicago-West Michigan Connection

There is no denying that there historically has been a strong connection between the city of Chicago and the Southwest Michigan shoreline. That connection is on-going and it would be beneficial to enhance and highlight the relationship. The Chicago tourist market is one in which the state of Michigan has consistently invested, but it could be updated by more directly targeting niche markets.

## Recommendations

- **Architecture.** Many noted Chicago architects and landscape architects worked throughout Southwest Michigan. Their work in Southwest Michigan should be identified and tours developed. The possibility of forming a partnership with the Chicago Architectural Foundation to create lectures, summer weekend programs, and workshops related to Chicago architects work in Southwest Michigan should be explored.
- **Ethnicity.** In the 1880s Chicago was the melting pot for a varied immigrant population. Many immigrant groups vacationed in Southwest Michigan. Showcase the region's ethnic diversity and re-establish the ethnic connection with Chicago by holding festivals, encouraging the establishment of ethnic restaurants that use local produce,
- **Culture.** Southwest Michigan has long been a place where Chicago's cultural groups came in the summer to relax and bond and work out new shows. The region's proximity to so much talent should be exploited to increase cultural offerings in Southwest Michigan. For example, a musician booked at a club in Chicago could
- **Historic Events.** Highlight Southwest Michigan's relationship to major events that define Chicago's history such as the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, the Chicago Fire of 1871, or organized crime activities during Prohibition.

These are just some examples of the types of regional themes that could be used to develop niche markets in Southwest Michigan geared toward cultural heritage tourists and using the history of the West Michigan Pike.



*United Railroad Administration Travel Brochure c. 1915*  
Source: Vintage View Archives. [vintageviewsprints.com](http://vintageviewsprints.com)

## Overview of Michigan's Agricultural Heritage

Michigan's agriculture industry has undergone a number of changes that can be categorized in the following periods:

- **Pre-1800** - Michigan's Native Americans, primarily Ojibwa, Potawatomi, and Odawa were established in the area in the early nineteenth century and grew fruits and vegetables. The Potawatomi were known for their extensive gardens that were often planted on large, shaped mounds. French fur traders from Quebec introduced the first pear and apple trees at outposts along Lake Michigan.
- **1800-1840** - The period of early settlement was characterized by the clearing of land, planting of subsistence crops and grains, construction of mills, and experimentation with different types and varieties of fruits, grains and vegetables to determine what grew best in Michigan's climate. Diversified farming emerged in Michigan during this period.
- **1840-1870** - This period signified the maturation of Michigan's agricultural economy. The construction of rail lines and new transportation routes to growing towns and cities in the Midwest created new markets for Michigan agricultural commodities. The Civil War brought an increased market for farm goods and forced farmers to find ways to mechanize agricultural processes when human labor sources was diverted to the war effort. The Michigan Agricultural College was established during this period.
- **1870-1920** - The period following the Civil War was considered to be the golden age of agriculture in Michigan. As the lumber industry declined, the number of family farms in Michigan increased. The work of Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr., and the establishment of the agricultural extension to make farm life more rewarding was successful. Scientific research was being applied to the development of new crops and new technologies were introduced in the planning of farms and farm animal care. Farmers began to form organizations such as the Grange, the Farm Bureau, and Pomological Societies to promote information, techniques, and policies that improved production and yield. County fairs that provided fellowship and an opportunity to show livestock, produce, and wares were first established. Many farmsteads were improved during this period since farmers were prospering. New frame or brick homes in the Italianate or Queen Anne styles and larger barns were typically constructed. World War I provided increased markets for farm products.
- **1920-1940** - The period following World War I marked the beginning of a period of decline for subsistence, family farms in Michigan. The industrialization caused young men to leave farms for higher paying jobs in cities. The introduction of the gas powered tractor and truck enabled the development of larger corporate farms. Many farms were abandoned as older farmers died and there was no one left at home to continue with the farm work. The development of the small gasoline engine helped to mechanize many daily chores associated with farm labor. The construction of improved farm to market roads and the introduction of refrigeration made it possible for fruits and vegetables to be shipped longer distances to larger markets. It was during this period that migrant workers were first brought in from Mexico and Texas to assist in fruit and vegetable picking. This era saw the formation of regional markets such as the Benton Harbor Fruit Market and co-operatives that employed early marketing techniques to promote local agricultural products on a regional or national scale. The Depression resulted in the establishment of federal programs to experiment with and implement improved farming practices and techniques. The electrification of rural Michigan in the 1930s enabled the use of new labor saving devices that made farm life easier and farming more efficient.

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- **1945 to Present** - During World War II all farm production was directed toward the war effort. Following the war, a “back to the farm” movement arose when weary G. I.s tried their hand at subsistence farming. This continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s as the changes in social consciousness associated with the “greening” of America resulted in a “back to nature” movement that had young people trying their hand at farming. During this period there was the rise of the “U-Pick” industry, which enabled city dwellers to gain access to fresh produce in large quantities at a reasonable price by providing their own labor. By the 1980s America’s family farms were in crisis. Farmers had over borrowed in the 1970s in order to expand their production capabilities when trade barriers were lowered. A number of years of overproduction led to decline in prices in the markets and President Ronald Reagan’s hands-off, free market approach to the problem resulted in thousands of small farmers losing their homes and land. An end result was the organization of huge corporate farms that made it difficult for small farmers to compete in the marketplace. Many small farmers turned to agricultural tourism adding corn mazes, cider mills, and pumpkin patches to their farms. Others turned to specialty markets growing organic herbs, decorative wheat or gourds, etc. to make ends meet. Hobby farming has also become popular where agricultural income is not the primary source of income for the landowner. The late 1990s saw the encroachment of suburban development upon America’s farmlands. From 1997 to 2002, according to the U.S. Census of Agriculture, Michigan converted three hundred thousand acres of farmland to other uses, at a rate of sixty thousand acres annually. Trusts and conservation groups geared to helping preserve Michigan farmland were established.

Today fruit and vegetable production is still very important to Michigan’s economy, and agriculture is the state’s second largest industry. Southwest Michigan has benefited from the new trend of upscale Chicago restaurants purchasing fresh produce from the region. As one local recently stated: “Where a chef used to have an herb garden, now he has a whole farm.” The recent downturn in the economy and a focus on improving the nation’s health has renewed interest in buying local produce on a national scale and should continue to benefit West Michigan farmers in the coming years.

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## Origins of Southwest Michigan's Fruit Belt

Michigan is the largest non-citrus fruit-growing region in the world, with over 125,000 acres of fruit and 2,400 fruit farms. It is the second most diverse agricultural producer in the nation. In 2002 Michigan produced more than 707 million pounds of fruit, of which 73 percent were apples. Other important fruit crops include tart cherries, sweet cherries, blueberries, peaches, grapes, strawberries, pears and plums. Southwest Michigan gained the nickname of the Fruit Belt in the early nineteenth century and has continued to be the state's largest fruit producing region.

The agricultural heritage of Southwest Michigan began a little earlier than in many parts of the state. Like most of Michigan, the southwest corner of the Lower Peninsula was forest, and lumbering was the first major industry in the region. The lumbering period was shorter lived and less influential for the area south of Muskegon simply because the existing forests were less extensive and dense. By the 1840s the major timber stands of Southwest Michigan had been logged off and farmsteads were being established. Landowners began experimenting with different types of crops to find those that were best adapted for the climate. It did not take long for them to discover that the region was perfect for the production of fruit.

Southwest Michigan's unique climate and topography created a temperate climate not found in the interior of the state or along other shores of the Great Lakes. Glacial deposits left a wide range of soil types throughout the area. In Berrien County alone forty-two different soil types have been identified, but the predominant soil type is a well-drained sandy loam and clay mix. The climatic conditions created by the proximity to Lake Michigan—uniform rainfall, westerly breezes that keep frost from forming on early buds, a growing season that begins a week early in spring and lasts a week longer in fall, uniform temperatures throughout a season, and fog from coastal lakes and lake effect snowfalls that insulate plants from freeze damage—are all conducive to fruit growing.

In addition to the unique topographical and climatic conditions, the early development of Southwest Michigan's fruit industry was aided primarily by two factors: the area's proximity to a major national market in Chicago and the development of good transportation systems. In the beginning, the majority of the produce was sold to the Chicago market, but by the turn of the century Milwaukee had also become an important shipping point that opened the Northwest to Michigan produce. Lake Michigan provided an unparalleled opportunity for quick transport. Fruit laden schooners would sail from Benton Harbor or South Haven to Chicago leaving Michigan in the cool of the evening and arriving in Chicago before dawn. The introduction of steam vessels made the trip even shorter, an important factor for perishable fruit like raspberries and strawberries since refrigeration had not yet been invented. While the railroad did play an important role in the development of Michigan's fruit industry, it was quickly over-shadowed by automobile transport and the rise of commercial trucking. Southwest Michigan was part of Michigan's earliest road transportation networks, and two of the state's first land transportation routes, the Chicago Road and the Territorial Road, cut through Berrien County on their way from Detroit to Chicago. In the earlier twentieth century, Southwest Michigan's civic leaders showed foresight and worked to maintain the region's competitive agricultural edge by developing a continuous hard surfaced road from Chicago to the Mackinac Straits that connected with a network of improved farm-to-market roads much earlier than most of the state.

### Peach Fever in Berrien County

The first pear and peach trees were introduced to Southwest Michigan by French traders associated with Fort Miami in Saint Joseph who brought them from Quebec. A trading post operator named Burnett, who settled in Saint Joseph in 1755, is credited with planting the first peach trees in the region. When a farmer named B. C. Hoyt first came to Saint Joseph in 1829 he found peach trees already growing within the town plat (later known as the Langley estate). He discovered that the seedlings had come from a farmer named Brodiss in Niles, Michigan, who

had grown them on his farm and brought them by wagon to Saint Joseph to sell. In 1837 two farmers, a Mr. Curtis and a Mr. Noble, found peach trees “of an improved variety” that were known to be from a Rochester, New York, nursery in an orchard abandoned by the Abbee Family near Gard Schoolhouse in Berrien County. They transplanted the trees to their farms in Royalton Township and sold the ripe fruit in Saint Joseph. Eleazer Morton, the first settler in Benton Harbor, planted his peach orchard in 1837. These early fruits were subsistence crops grown for the use of the farmer and his family.

According to the 1870 annual report of the Michigan Pomological Society, commercial interest in peach growing did not begin until 1839 when B. C. Hoyt of Saint Joseph sent the first peaches to the Chicago market for commercial sale. The next year Captain Curtis Boughton packed peaches grown by his brother, Caius, in barrels and took them to the Chicago market. They sold for the outrageous price of forty-five dollars a barrel and the course of West Michigan’s economy was changed forever. According to the Pomological Society report, “He gave the whole country the peach fever, and the whole lake shore from New Buffalo to the extreme north has been catching it ever since.” The first men to join Captain Boughton in his new commercial venture were Eleazor Morton of Benton Harbor and George Parmelee of Saint Joseph (Parmelee later moved to the Old Mission Peninsula west of Traverse City and was instrumental in establishing the cherry industry there). Together the three men planted a total of twenty-five acres of peach trees with the intent of selling them commercially in Chicago. Orchards of this size were unheard of at the time and naysayers believed such a large number of peaches would quickly saturate the market. This was not the case and the industry quickly flourished. Soon other farmers in the Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor area were planting peaches. Samuel Jackson purchased George Parmelee’s orchard and expanded it. H. C. Morton expanded the orchard planted by his father, Eleazor, into the successful Lakeview Farms. Other early peach farmers included C. Hull, Stern Bronson, A. R. Nowlan, M. G. Lamport, the Hopkins Brothers, Dr. Collins, and Hatch & Drury. In 1857 the Cincinnati Orchard, a sixty-five-acre peach orchard—the largest in the state—was planted by two men from Ohio named Smith and Howell, on land they leased under a twelve-year agreement with H. C. Morton. By 1865 there were 207,639 peach trees planted in the Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor area. The fruit was shipped from Robbins Dock in Benton Harbor via the tug the *Daisy Lee* to the Goodrich Line steamer *Corona* in Saint Joseph where it sailed for Chicago.

## South Haven Peach Orchards

Settlers in the community of South Haven were not far behind in their discovery of Southwest Michigan’s unique fruit growing climate. According to a report by A. S. Dyckman to the Michigan Pomological Society in 1870, South Haven was about three years behind Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor in the establishment of its peach industry because the land around South Haven had not yet been cleared of timber making it impossible to establish farms and orchards. S. B. Morehouse is recognized as planting the first peach orchard in South Haven in 1852. His neighbor, Randolph Densmore then set out an orchard on an adjoining lot. Not long after, A. S. Dyckman planted the largest peach orchard in the area at forty acres. South Haven’s peach industry was advanced in 1864 and 1866 by freezes that destroyed the peach crop in the Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor area. No harm occurred to South Haven’s peaches and, as a result, South Haven gained recognition as a peach growing community and was able to command a higher price for its peaches throughout those seasons.

At first it was believed that only a small narrow strip of land near the Lake Michigan shore in southern Michigan was suitable for peach growing—thus giving birth to the “Fruit Belt” name --but experimental plantings showed this was not the case and peach fever quickly expanded to the north. In 1863 Charles Soule planted three hundred peach trees near Spring Lake followed by Thomas Petty who also planted an orchard. In the Saugatuck-Douglas area B. S. Williams and Sons planted six hundred peach trees on their farm on the south side of Kalamazoo Lake in 1867, adding eight hundred and fifty more trees in 1869 bringing the total number of peach trees in their orchard to three thousand.

The Michigan Pomological Society reported in 1872 that there were no major peach orchards in Ottawa County. While there was some attempt at planting peaches in the Muskegon area, the effort was not well supported or organized. According to a report to the Pomological Society submitted by C. L. Whitney in 1872, the failure of Muskegon's peach industry was due to growers that planted peach varieties unsuitable for a commercial market. Growers that planted the Barnard peach such as T. Moulton, who owned a large farm on land located between Muskegon Lake and Bear Lakes, were successful.

The Fruit Belt eventually formed a 480,000-acre strip that ran between Benton Harbor and Grand Haven. By 1872 over 594,000 peach trees had been planted in orchards in South Haven, Saugatuck, Holland, Grand Haven and Spring Lake. The boom led to a rise in real estate prices, especially near harbors that served as shipping points. Suddenly land "near small piers and unimproved harbors, formerly only good for ties and wood" was going for ten to fifty dollars an acre once the timber was stripped off. Established orchards in the Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor area sold for one thousand dollars an acre. In Grand Haven, in 1867 a twenty-five acre farm with ten acres planted in peaches and the rest underdeveloped scrubland, sold for ten thousand dollars.

## **Early Peach Varieties**

According to A. S. Dyckman of South Haven, four varieties were "identified with the peach industry no where else as they are in the Michigan Peach Belt." (p.61) The four peach varieties first planted for the commercial market were Early and Late Crawford, Barnard, and Hill's Chili. The Crawford peaches were the most highly recommended for commercial uses and the majority of trees in Michigan peach orchards were of these varieties. George Parmelee of Saint Joseph first planted the Barnard peach. He thought he was purchasing the "Lemon Cling" variety trees from a nursery in western New York but found what he had received were freestone peaches that had been misidentified. Hill's Chili was a local name used only in Southwest Michigan for a common variety peach. Other names applied to the Hill's Chili variety include Sugar Peach, Seagrove's Smock (Spring Lake), Jenny Lind, Leopard, and Queen of Sheba. Hill's Chili was known in other parts of Michigan as the Cass Peach. Reportedly John Haskell, a farmer in Genesee Prairie near Kalamazoo, received the peach pits in 1831 as a gift from General Cass who had obtained them on a visit to northern France. Commercial peaches had to be sturdy enough to withstand packing and shipping and these varieties displayed those qualities while also supplying fruit at both the beginning and the end of the growing season.

## **Evolution of an Industry**

Within a decade Southwest Michigan's peach industry had reached an extraordinary scale. A group of farmers found it "desirable that those engaged in fruit culture should seek a closer connection with each other and should establish an organization which should directly represent their common interests." A number of informal, local societies had already been formed, for example South Haven had established a Pomological Society in 1870 headed by O. C. Lathrop, H. E. Bidwell and A. S. Dyckman. The South Haven Pomological Society developed a trademark that was placed on all South Haven peaches, which served as a symbol of quality. On February 11, 1870 a meeting was called by A. J. Linderman at Sweet's Hotel in Grand Rapids to discuss the creation of a more comprehensive, formal society to examine issues related to the peach industry. In July of that year the Michigan legislature passed a law enabling the creation of a state level society for the advancement of fruit culture and the Michigan Pomological Society was born. The society held regular meetings where members read papers on the history of Michigan's fruit industry, discussed diseases and pests that afflicted crops, and learned of new techniques in cultivation and fertilization. The society also sponsored festivals and fairs where fruit crops were highlighted and offered awards to growers for the best produce and the best laid out and maintained orchards. In 1872 a group of society members proposed that a state test garden be developed to experiment with new varieties of fruit. The information garnered would give

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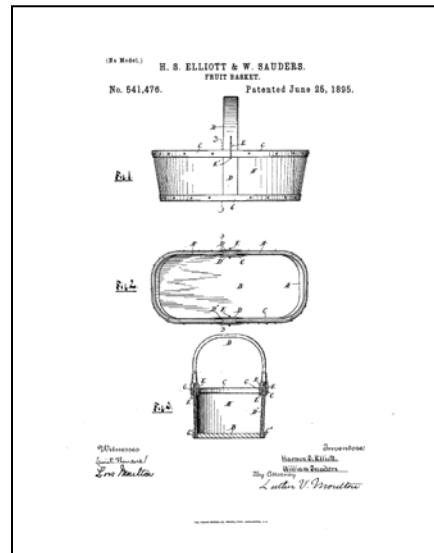
credence to the recommendations put forth by the society. In its first three years, the new Michigan Pomological Society almost exclusively covered the interests of Southwest Michigan fruit growers. The society would meet in a different community every year visiting orchards and hearing papers read on local issues. For their first annual meeting after officially organizing, the Society met in South Haven and the citizens there planned and constructed, within a matter of weeks, a 40 x 100-foot hall on the lake expressly for the society's meeting. (The building has since been demolished.) Spring Lake also constructed a building called Horticulture Hall where Pomological Society meetings were held. After 1873 the proceedings began to expand to include other interests of farmers from around the state. The society also began to reflect the interests of the growing Country Life movement championed by Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. and agreed to include floriculture in its meetings and to allow the presentation of papers that discussed home improvements, landscaping and ornamental tree plantings for homes and streets, as well as bird and wildlife protection.

The Michigan Pomological Society began offering suggestions on the best methods for laying out an orchard. For example, a rectangular shape much longer than it was wide was considered to function the best for peach growing. It was recommended that a packing house be built at one end of the orchard and that the peach varieties that ripened first should be planted nearest to the packing house. They also endorsed the use of evergreens as windbreaks to reduce blowing sand and to reduce the force of the wind off Lake Michigan. It was noted in the society minutes that in 1871 that I. S. Linderman of Pleasant View Farm in South Haven planted five thousand Norway spruce as a windbreak for his peach orchard.

According to a report by South Haven farmer A. S. Dyckman, peaches were much more saleable and would command a higher price when placed in attractive baskets rather than standard boxes. He had observed "commission men" at the Chicago market repacking fruit shipped in boxes from southern Illinois into baskets in order to increase their profits. There was a "class" in Chicago that wanted to carry home handsome packages of fruit, so Michigan's farmers began placing the peaches in attractive baskets and covering them with a veil. It was estimated that in one year, Michigan farmers had given away fifty thousand fruit baskets. The first state laws regulating fruit packing were passed on April 13, 1871. These laws required that the size of a peach basket be regulated about 716 cubic inches—the size of a third of a bushel basket—and that a dry packing barrel be 27 inches in length with a 16 and a half inch diameter head, the same size as an ordinary flour barrel.

A number of communities housed fruit basket businesses. The Colby Basket Factory in Benton Harbor was a significant basket manufacturer. Another was E. E. Weed and Company in Douglas. Joshua Weed was an enterprising fruit farmer, and former Saugatuck Township supervisor. In 1876 he "was instrumental in organizing the fruit packing industry which is now known as E. E. Weed and Company the business having grown to mammoth and profitable proportions." It eventually employed 128 people.

Overproduction of fruit and market saturation had been a concern since the day Michigan peaches first went to market. In 1871 the Michigan Pomological Society began examining methods of canning and drying fruit to enable the use of all the fruit grown in the region, even that of lesser quality, and to expand the market for Michigan fruit beyond Chicago and Milwaukee. Canned fruit could be used for the army or shipped longer distances. It also allowed the public to purchase the fruit product in winter when fresh fruit was not available. Canning, or the act of sealing food in glass jars, originated in France in 1790 and was brought to America in



1812. The Pomological Society invited agricultural expert Charles Downing to attend a meeting of one of their meetings where he described the Alden method of fruit canning. Rights to the Alden canning process were held by a group of Chicago businessmen who would, upon request, erect a processing plant in a community. The first Alden canning plant in Michigan was built in Traverse City to process cherries. In 1872 F. I. Parks, who later became mayor of South Haven, built a small canning plant in South Haven that produced fifteen hundred cans a day using an application of steam and "Mason's improved glass jars." Two canneries were established in Benton Harbor, the Phoenix and the Excelsior. John Williams of South Haven developed a simple method of drying fruit by removing the water from the fruit. He established a business known as the Williams Evaporating Company in South Haven. In 1910 Edward P. Ray of New Era established a canning operation when he had difficulty shipping his raspberries to the Chicago Market during warm weather. The company is still in operation today as the New Era Canning Company.

## The Yellows and the End of the Peach Boom

In the late 1860s, Michigan peach growers became aware of a disease that was destroying peach trees in the East. First noticed in Delaware, the disease spread to Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut. Known commonly as "the Yellows," the scientific name was *chlororis*. Symptoms of the disease were a yellow discoloration of the peach tree's leaves and small wiry branches growing from its limbs. The fruit of an infected tree matured early and was a rich, deep purple color, but the meat of the fruit was "insipid." The disease rendered peach crops useless. In 1873 the Michigan Pomological Society formed a "Committee on Yellows" to investigate the problem. They visited orchards throughout the Peach Belt and found the disease in orchards in the Saint Joseph-Benton Harbor area, reaching as far north as Watervliet. They were able to determine that the disease had been there for about five years. The committee was "surprised and astonished" to find the Yellows so "wide-spread and fearful." It was thought that the disease had been spread through the purchase of infected trees from a nursery in New Jersey. All kinds of theories were bandied about as to what caused the Yellows—a fungus, a parasite, too shallow planting--and how to cure it. Until a remedy was found, the Society recommended that infected trees be cut down and destroyed and their roots grubbed up and discarded. Because few trees north of Berrien County were infected, the South Haven Pomological Society sought to stop the spread of the disease by asking the Michigan legislature to pass a law that required farmers with infected trees to destroy them and the fruit they produced. Such a law was passed in 1875 and proved to be effective. As a result the disease was successfully contained in Michigan. Continued research and improved science eventually found that the disease could be controlled. Still, the Yellows put an end to the peach boom in Michigan. Speculators that had gotten into the peach business only to make money, like the Cincinnati Orchard in Berrien County, lost their trees and moved on to other businesses. Serious fruit farmers were able to eradicate and control the disease and continued to prosper. While the Yellows ended the boom, it did not kill Michigan's peach industry, which continues to be strong today.

## South Haven Experiment Station

Theodatus T. Lyon, a farmer in Van Buren County, championed the special qualities that made Southwest Michigan suitable for fruit farmers and encouraged the establishment of an agricultural experiment station there. In 1888 the Michigan Agricultural College leased Lyon's farm and purchased ten acres adjacent to it in order to establish the South Haven Agricultural Experiment Station. Lyon served as director of the station until his death in 1900.

In 1920 Stanley Johnston, a graduate of Michigan Agricultural College, was appointed director of the South Haven Experiment Station. Johnston remained there for forty-nine years until his death in 1969. Johnston was instrumental in the development of the Southwest Michigan fruit industry. Once established at the South Haven station, Johnston began working diligently on improving peach production. He focused his efforts on finding an early-ripening, red-skinned peach to rival the then popular 'Elberta' variety—a yellow-skinned, fairly late-ripening peach. He knew that if the

fruit ripened more quickly it would extend the harvest and also improve overall profitability of the fruit market. Johnston was responsible for founding the Haven series of peaches, including the Halehaven, Kalhaven, Redhaven, Fairhaven, Sunhaven, Richhaven, Glohaven, and Cresthaven. The most important variety in terms of both the fruit industry and Johnston's career is the Redhaven. It was the red-skinned early-ripening peach that he had been searching for and its commercial success was phenomenal (it was a hybrid of the Halehaven and the Kalhaven). The Redhaven collected one to three more dollars per bushel than its predecessor, the Elberta, and as a result fortunes were made from the crop among growers in South Haven.

## Beyond Peaches – Experiments with Other Fruits

Not everyone in Southwest Michigan fell victim to Peach Fever. For a long time it was believed that peaches could only be grown in a small area between Benton Harbor and South Haven. Some farmers, fearful that over planting peaches would lead to market saturation, experimented with other fruits. It quickly became apparent that the same climatic and soil conditions that were so conducive to peach growing were good for other types of fruit. Once the "Yellows" extinguished peach fever, farmers concentrated on diversifying their fruit crops.

## Grapes

While most of Southwest Michigan was growing peaches, farmers in the Spring Lake area were experimenting with grape culture and planting vineyards. The largest vineyard was planted by Hunter Savidge and contained 2,000 vines while J. B. Soule planted 350 grape vines. In 1870 there were three vineyards in Spring Lake that produced a total of fifteen tons of grapes that year. The most highly recommended grape varieties for Southwest Michigan were the common Concord; the Delaware, a sweet, thin-skinned summer grape; the Clinton, a thick-skinned winter grape; and the Iona, an aromatic grape of the Labrusca family that was good for wine making. In South Haven, Orris Church set out the first vineyards, which totaled eleven and a half acres in 1858. Samuel E. Peck of Muskegon was among the first to test grape cultivation in that area. He planted thirty-five varieties on twenty acres south of the city and found that the red grapes adapted best, especially the Moulton and Concord varieties, while the white grapes lacked flavor. By the 1880s Southwest Michigan's wine industry had gained national attention, aided by the destruction of the nation's top wine producing region in Ohio due to disease. Today 45 percent of the grapes used in Michigan wines are grown in the area around Fennville.

In the years of Prohibition (1919-1933) Dr. Thomas Welch helped to expand Southwest Michigan's vineyards and turn the region's grape industry into a successful and continued venture. Welch had created a juice from grapes that he called "unfermented wine" for use in church communion services. It became popular with the public and Welch formed the Welch's Grape Juice Company to manufacture it in quantity. The juice was made from Concord grapes harvested in Western New York and Southwest Michigan. In 1919 Welch's Grape Juice opened a plant in Lawton, Michigan, in Van Buren County. In the 1930s the House of David, a religious group in Benton Harbor, operated the Lakeside Vineyards. They built a cold storage facility adjacent to the Benton Harbor Fruit Market in 1932 and used it to assist the Welch's Grape Juice Company to develop a process for lowering the temperature of grape juice to curb its acidity so that it could be sold in cans as well as bottles.

Wine production resumed in the region after Prohibition. In 1936 Italian immigrant Mariano Meconi, a former autoworker at a Studebaker Plant in Canada, started what is today known as the St. Julian Wine Company in Paw Paw. In 2009 the Lake Michigan Shore Wine Trail included eleven vineyards throughout Allegan, Berrien and Van Buren counties.

## Small Fruits

A number of small fruits such as strawberries, raspberries, currants, gooseberries, and blueberries were found to be indigenous to Michigan. Some early farmers began experimenting with improved varieties to determine, which were the best producers for the climate.

One of the major problems with growing small fruits as a commercial crop was their fragility. Before the turn of the century it was almost impossible to transport small fruit. Shipping methods were slow and with refrigeration not yet invented the fruit would rot before it got to market. The sale of small fruit was typically confined to local markets. West Michigan's proximity to the Chicago market proved to be as big a boon for small fruit cultivation as it had been for peaches. Small fruit could be transported by boat over Lake Michigan in the cool of evenings and reach the Chicago by daybreak just when buyers were arriving at the market.

## Blueberries

Stanley Johnston of the South Haven Experimental Station played a major role in the development of the Michigan blueberry industry, which today brings in thirty million dollars a year. Despite a lack of support for the project, Johnston went to New Jersey, brought back blueberry bushes, and planted them at the experimental station. According to Dr. Frank Dennis, "After seeing Johnston's trial planting of U.S.D.A. selections at the Experiment Station, James E. Keefe, a Chicago dentist who vacationed in South Haven, bought a farm near Grand Junction with acid soil—just the type of soil that we now know is ideal for blueberries—and began growing the crop in 1928." Keefe planted Rubel, Rancous and Jersey blueberries. The discovery that the sandy coastal soil unique to Lake Michigan could also be used in local fruit production was a very important one that shaped Southwest Michigan's Fruit Belt history. The blueberry industry quickly flourished and Johnson helped to organize the Michigan Blueberry Growers Association. During the early years of the blueberry industry's development, the crop was picked by hand using migrant workers. As blueberry plantations grew in size, a method of mechanical picking was developed.

Today Michigan ranks number one in high bush blueberry production and over twenty varieties of blueberries are grown. Van Buren, Ottawa and Allegan counties contain 83 percent of the state's acreage devoted to blueberries.

## Apples

Apples were another fruit crop that did well in West Michigan. One of the most respected apple growers in the region was Liberty Hyde Bailey of South Haven. Bailey grew over fifty-eight varieties of apples and in the late nineteenth century his farm was considered a model for other growers. His son, Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr., was renowned for his grafting skills. The elder Bailey recommended two varieties, the Baldwin and the RI Greening, for commercial use specifically for their high yield: one of his Baldwin trees was recorded as having yielded thirty-one bushels in one year. Michigan's apple industry began keeping statistics in 1889 and the production that year was 13.16 million barrels. Today apples are Michigan's top fruit crop.

The Michigan Apple Institute formed in 1936 to bring individual apple growers together under the umbrella of one nonprofit organization in order to create a strong regional organization to promote Michigan apples. A participating grower would sign a five-year contract to give a half-cent on every bushel of apples he sold to the institute's advertising fund. The institute developed a system for grading apples so that only the better apples would be placed in stores. It also developed advertising placards and displays, and literature that educated the public about different apple varieties and their best uses as well as the health benefits of apples.

## Cantaloupes

Roland Morrill was one of the leaders in fruit production in Benton Township, Berrien County. His first orchard bore fruit in 1895 and by 1899 he was receiving thirty-five thousand dollars from his forty acres of peaches. Morrill was the originator of the cantaloupe variety "Heart of Gold," which became one of the best selling commercial cantaloupes in the nation. He earned the title "Daddy of the Commercial Cantaloupe" after becoming the first farmer in Michigan to ship melons in 1872. By 1937 the cantaloupe was Michigan's most important commercial fruit crop. Morrill expanded his business, the Morrill Orchard Company, into Texas purchasing 12,500 acres in Cherokee County. There he established the small village of Morrill on the St. Louis Southwestern Railway line in 1903. Most of the Morrill orchards in Texas were abandoned during the Great Depression and in 1940 only one hundred residents remained in the village. His wife, Joanna Adams Morrill, kept the Michigan farm going after his death growing peaches and watermelon. The Michigan Horticulture Society honored both Joanna and Roland Morrill in 1937. The Morrill packing shed was located on Empire Avenue in Benton Harbor.

## Strawberries

According to Michigan Pomological Society reports, while other farmers were growing peaches farmers in the Muskegon area concentrated on establishing strawberries. The society's Orchard Viewing Committee reported in 1872 that Muskegon was "not yet a bountiful fruit region—except for strawberries." They also noted that a Captain Walker of Black Lake near Holland was experimenting with refrigeration. He enclosed strawberries in a dry closed box and placed them in an icehouse where he succeeded in keeping them fresh for up to three weeks. In 1873 the Pomological Society recommend that the strawberry variety best grown for commercial purposes was Wilson's Albany strawberry, while the Charles Dowling, Green Prolific, Michigan, and Downer's Prolific varieties were best for family use.

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# Agriculture – Fruit Belt

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*Berry Pickers, Glenn*

*Photo: Vincent Musi*

## Non-Fruit Agriculture in Southwest Michigan

Though fruit is the predominant agricultural crop in Southwest Michigan, there have been a number of non-fruit crops that have had their own measure of success.

### Beet Sugar

Michigan's sugar beet industry began through the efforts of the Michigan Agricultural College (MAC) that started experimenting with growing sugar beets in 1896. Dr. Robert C. Kedzie sent to Germany for sugar beet seeds, which were dispersed to the agricultural experiment stations across Michigan. The experiments proved so successful that in 1899 over five thousand pounds of beet seed were shipped to Michigan farmers for planting. The first beet sugar plant was established in Bay City in 1898 and by 1920 had expanded to sixteen plants across the state, including the Holland Sugar Company in Holland.

The outbreak of World War I resulted in a sugar shortage in the United States. Trade with Germany, the main supplier of beet seeds, was banned and the beet sugar companies had to seek alternatives. The Owosso Sugar Beet Company set out beet seedlings as did the Holland Sugar Beet Company, which in 1918 planted three hundred and fifty acres of sugar beet seedlings. According to an article in the June 6, 1918 *Holland City News*, the Holland-St. Louis Beet Company hired high school boys to work in the sugar beet fields. The company hired automobiles to pick the boys up and return them home after the days work. The boys were paid around three dollars a day.

### Asparagus

In 1923 George Starr of the Michigan Experimental Station in South Haven presented a paper to the State Horticultural Society of Michigan suggesting that the growers of small fruit (raspberries, strawberries, etc.) consider planting additional crops to supplement their incomes. Establishing a farm that grew small fruits required a large up front investment with no chance of income the first year. Small fruits also have a short harvest period requiring the use of a large number of temporary laborers, which can be costly. Starr suggested that small-fruit growers interplant vegetables to provide a more even source of revenue. His first choice for a supplemental crop was asparagus. It had an early harvest season so revenue was available at the beginning of the summer, it was easy to cultivate, and it helped stop soil erosion.

Fruit growers took Starr's advice to heart and by 2007 Michigan was third in the nation in asparagus production. The greatest production is in Oceana County in the Hart/Shelby area but the area between South Haven and Benton Harbor is also a large producer. The majority of Michigan's asparagus crop is sold to processors for canning and freezing.

### Cauliflower

Cauliflower was first planted in Casco Township, Van Buren County in the 1920s by David Histed. He started with a half acre and by 1949 the Casco Township area was the state's largest cauliflower producer. Other farmers that planted cauliflower were George Wickham, James Marshall, Walter Harry, Art Milleham and Harry Cogdal.

### Celery

Celery grows in the rich, dark muck land of river bottoms. Its cultivation in Michigan was possible due to the Dutch settlement in Ottawa County, as they had much experience with the crops associated with this type of land. Celery was first planted in Michigan around the turn of the century and the areas around Kalamazoo, Muskegon, Grand Haven, and Decatur became the centers of a profitable celery growing industry. Over six hundred people were employed in the

# Agriculture – Non-Fruit Agriculture

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celery industry in Ottawa County in 1890. By 1919 Kalamazoo County had the largest number of acres planted in celery followed closely by Ottawa County. Today Michigan is ranked second in the nation in the production of celery behind California, which produces 90 percent of the celery grown in the United States.

According to David Siebold in the book *Grand Haven In the Path of Destiny*, there were three major celery-growing areas in Grand Haven and about twenty families in the city's celery industry. One of the most significant celery farmers was Martin Kieft who owned muck land located between Ferry and Griffin streets. The Kieft greenhouses were located at 332 North Ferry. Another celery farm was located on Beechtree Street south of Waverly where one of the windmills used to keep the muck land dry still exists on the northwest corner of Beechtree and Taylor.

Muskegon also had a large celery growing area east of Muskegon Lake. The 1908 city directories for Muskegon listed twenty-three celery growers living in the city, most were located in the Jackson Hill Neighborhood on Amity, Oak, and Walton streets. By 1960 there were sixty celery growers listed in Muskegon, but the number had declined sharply to twelve by 1963.

In 1934 the Holland Celery Planter Company built a one-story, glazed tile building at 341-43 Seventh Street in Holland.

## Pickles

In 1897 the H. J. Heinz Company broke ground for a new pickling plant, Salting House No. 16, in Holland. By 1907 the plant had been enlarged to become the second largest facility operated by Heinz in the United States. Labor shortages during World War II made it difficult to harvest cucumber crops. In response, Heinz developed a smaller cucumber variety that could be harvested mechanically.

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## Farm Markets and Fruit Stands

Between 1919 and 1929 the acreage along Michigan's lakeshore devoted to commercial fruit and vegetable production increased by 69 percent. This development coincided with the widespread use of refrigeration to store and transport crops. Michigan's ability to market its produce was significantly enhanced by the construction of commercial cold storage facilities. Home refrigerators also increased the individual consumer's ability to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and store them for longer periods.

### Benton Harbor Fruit Market, 1891 Territorial Road

In the 1890s fruit was brought to Benton Harbor and Saint Joseph from nearby farms and shipped by boat to the Chicago market. In 1900 loading platforms were built near the Chicago and Ohio railroad station in Benton Harbor to facilitate shipping by rail. By the 1920s the advancement of motor truck transportation and the development of refrigerated trucks changed the way fruit was shipped. To accommodate truck shipping, the city of Benton Harbor built a municipally owned wholesale fruit market to serve as a regional shipping point. Unlike trains, the use of trucks enabled delivery of produce directly to a specific location thus enabling the fruit to reach a widespread national market.

The market was constructed on thirteen acres in downtown Benton Harbor on Lake Street between Market and Broad Streets and consisted of four covered loading docks, a two-story brick entry tower, a one-story brick building for offices, a market restaurant and a small retail store. Eight selling lanes ran between the loading docks and a farmer would pay a "privilege" fee of between twenty-five and fifty cents to enter the market. A market master was in charge of supervision of the market and a market board set policies. In 1929 the Michigan Bureau of Standards reported that Berrien County had provided \$8 million worth of fruit to the marketplace. More than one thousand motor trucks had visited the Benton Harbor Fruit Market, 90 percent of which went out of state. The Benton Harbor Fruit Market was considered to be the world's largest "cash-to-grower" wholesale produce market with over one thousand farm families registered to use it. The market was moved out of town to its present location in the 1960s.

In 1932 the House of David built a cold storage facility, considered the largest in the world at the time of its construction, adjacent to the Benton Harbor Fruit Market. In 1934 the city of Benton Harbor applied to the Public Works Administration (PWA) for funds to construct its own cold storage building. The five-story building, designed by Grand Rapids architect Don Lakie, was made of reinforced concrete faced with brick, and it provided 771,000 cubic feet of storage.

### Pioneer Market, Oceana Drive, Hart

According to an article in the March 12, 1927, *Michigan Farmer*, Oceana County fruit farmer Charles Schmieding was the first farmer on the West Michigan Pike (M-11) to establish a roadside fruit stand that sold the produce grown on his farm directly to automobile tourists. In the article Schmieding states

In the spring of 1919 my attention was called to the fact that the traveling public had no opportunity to buy fresh fruit in a small way, if visiting or touring in this part of the state . . . hotels and restaurants never served home grown fruits such as sweet cherries, peaches, apricots, apples and other locally grown fruits. However there were always oranges,



*The buildings of the Pioneer Fruit Market still exist on Oceana Drive north of Shelby.*

grapefruit, bananas and prunes in abundance in every hotel in the Fruit Belt.

Schmieding owned a 110-acre farm north of Shelby and he started by having his son sell sweet cherries at a table under a shade tree. This quickly proved to be too small a venue to handle the volume of business it attracted. In 1922 Schmieding built a fruit stand building on the 110-acre farm. He added a stone filling station in 1924 and a larger building in 1926 that included two tourist sleeping rooms upstairs. In the construction of the buildings he used "stone off the farm to carry out the motto to display all the products of the farm, as well as sell them." Schmieding also established a camping area with "cookstoves and good water" under some of his cherry trees.

## **U-Picks**

No official history of U-pick markets was found, but it is believed that America's U-Picks got their start in the apple orchards of New York and New Jersey in the late nineteenth century when country "outings" were popular. The concept grew during the 1950s at the height of the post-World War II Baby Boom when family automobile travel was at its peak. The "greening" of America in the 1970s and the social changes that occurred through the youth revolution resulted in an interest in the environment and in healthy eating. U-picks were popular with people that wanted to purchase large quantities of fresh produce at a reasonable price. Some U-picks were the result of farmers allowing people to come in after the commercial harvest was completed to glean any remaining produce or late-maturing fruits.

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## Migrant Labor in Southwest Michigan

The labor intensive needs of growing and harvesting delicate fruit requires the use of human farm labor over mechanical methods. As a result, Southwest Michigan has the fifth highest dependency on farm workers in the nation. Of the five Michigan counties that employ half of the state's migrant worker population, four are located in West Michigan and three are in the project area: Berrien, Van Buren, and Oceana counties. The strawberry, peach, grape and tomato crops of Berrien County, the blueberry plantations of Van Buren County, and the pear orchards, asparagus fields, and Christmas tree farms of Oceana County all rely heavily on migrant labor.

There have been two significant streams of migrant labor to Michigan, as identified by sociologist Karen Dieckman Willson in a 1977 study of the history of migrant labor in the state. The first occurred around 1910 when Eastern European immigrants were recruited to work in Michigan's newly established sugar beet industry. Between 1919 and 1929 the acreage devoted to commercial vegetable production increased by 69 percent in Southwest Michigan. This period was the height of industrialization of America, but technological advances for the types of crops grown in the region were not forthcoming. Therefore the crops remained labor intensive and very specialized, requiring the labor of large numbers of workers for short periods of time. At the same time, Michigan's farm labor force was in decline as young men left family farms to work in high paying factory jobs in urban areas. The second wave of migrant labor occurred during the Depression and World War II when workers from southern states, including Tejano workers from Texas and farm laborers from Mexico, were brought to Michigan to counteract the shortage of labor brought on by the war.

### Early Migrant Labor

The use of migrant labor in Michigan began with what was historically one of Michigan's most important crops—sugar beets. Thirteen sugar refineries were established in the state in the early twentieth century. The majority of the migrant sugar beet farm workers were foreign-born European immigrants that had experience working in sugar beet fields in Europe. They had immigrated to Midwest cities such as Saint Louis, Chicago, Toledo and South Bend looking for a better life. The sugar beet companies advertised in foreign language newspapers in these major cities in order to attract a transient workforce to Michigan. Over the years a significant portion of the migrants settled in the state and took on full-time employment within the sugar industry, rather than continuing to rely on seasonal income. After World War I a succession of immigration restriction acts, such as the Emergency Immigration Act of 1921 and the National Origins Act of 1924, stopped the flow of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe to the United States. Michigan's established Eastern European farm laborers began to organize and demand better pay and working conditions which led Michigan farmers to look for other sources of cheap labor.

Michigan farmers began recruiting Tejanos (people of Mexican descent that were born in Texas) from the Valley area of south central Texas. Tejano laborers had farming experience and therefore were more desirable workers. These laborers responded to the promise of work in the North made by employment recruiters on behalf of the northern sugar industry. They took out loans from Michigan's sugar companies for their travel, living and work-related expenses and then had these costs deducted from their wages upon arrival and completion of work in the fields. The workers also had to sign a contract stating they would return to their southern homes after the harvest in order to decrease the responsibility of both the state and the farmers for their well-being during the off season. Historically, labor costs have been the greatest concern for growers. While all other material prices are fixed in the industry, labor is the only one in which they have the ability to negotiate in their favor. In fact Michigan was one of sixteen states in the nation to exclude agricultural labor from its minimum wage requirements until 1966 when Public Act 89-601 was passed. In a strong partnership, the state and federal government have historically helped to keep labor costs low for growers. During the Great Depression the Works Progress Administration (WPA) limited the hours some laborers could work for WPA programs during

harvest season to insure there would be enough agricultural workers available to farmers and they would not have to raise wages. Because of this abundance of available labor and the resulting competition involved in securing work, workers were severely apprehensive about unionizing or demanding higher wages. In the 1930s during two significant strikes in Michigan agricultural history, growers replaced the striking workforce with newer non-unionized workers from Texas. Further, the presence of racial discrimination in other Southwest Michigan industries prevented migrant workers from straying into other employment positions when unsatisfied with labor conditions on farms.

When the Great Depression struck in the 1930s the dire economic circumstances of southern states like Arkansas led Michigan farmers to try recruiting African Americans and poor whites for farm labor. The southern migrants worked with a variety of crops including asparagus, berries, cherries, apples, peaches, tomatoes, beans, grapes and cucumbers. In 1942 it was recorded that between fifteen thousand and twenty-five thousand of these migrants were working in the fields. The low wages paid to migrant workers resulted in many children of migrant families working in the fields alongside their parents to earn the family income.

## Migrant Labor During World War II

World War II brought its own unique labor challenges for the agricultural industry, and the federal government responded to growers' increased need for workers with several Emergency Farm Labor Programs (EFLP). For instance, the Bracero Program was adopted by the U.S. government in 1942 and became the most influential EFLP to be implemented at the time. In an agreement between the U.S. and Mexican governments, the Bracero Program permitted the use of up to 4.5 million Mexican laborers in the U.S. on a seasonal basis to work in agriculture. Also, because growers were no longer able to recruit southern white and black men during wartime, farmers relied on state and federal programs that promoted the recruitment of women and teenagers to pick fruit while adult men were away for the war. Yet another federal program established to help Michigan growers exempted agricultural workers from the draft. Finally, to retain these newer employees that were not used in agricultural labor, the government instructed growers on how to be effective managers, provide better housing facilities and also to develop local child care programs and health care clinics for the workers. Today similar programs are in place to improve working and social conditions for the predominately Spanish-speaking workforce in Southwest Michigan. These facilities and programs keep migrant workers comfortable and returning for work year after year.

The production of food for America's Armed Forces was an important part of the war effort. As Michigan's men and women headed to work in the tank and bomber plants of Southeast Michigan, a shortage in farm labor occurred. In addition to recruiting Mexican farm laborers through the Bracero Program, the federal government also used prisoners of war (POW) to meet seasonal needs of harvesting throughout the duration of World War II. Tent camps were set up in agricultural regions across the country. In Southwest Michigan, German prisoners of war first arrived in Benton Harbor in October 1943 from Camp Grant in Illinois to work in the fruit canneries. A POW camp was established at Sawyer in Berrien County.

After World War II the government continued to support Michigan growers and yet again strove to keep worker populations high so that growers would not have to increase wages to attract workers in a competitive marketplace. After the war growers continued to improve facilities as they began to understand the power these improvements had in attracting and retaining workers year after year. The Bracero Program continued after the war, but was finally canceled in 1964. Between the years 1965 and 1970 no Mexican seasonal laborers were permitted employment in the United States. Michigan growers were not prepared to lose this ample and inexpensive worker pool and crops suffered during this period as a result. In response, Michigan growers attempted to mechanize the fruit and vegetable growing process to decrease their dependency on foreign laborers. They were able to slightly cut their need for labor, but many crops (i.e.

pickles) still resisted mechanization on many levels. Labor demands, therefore, remained higher among these crops than among others in the United States.

In the post-Bracero years the use of migrant workers from Mexico continues and has again become an important labor and immigration issue that is being debated not only in Michigan, but in every state of the nation. Farmers argue that without these skilled and inexpensively paid Mexican workers that the Michigan agricultural industry will falter. However, the same racism that has historically existed against all ethnic migrant worker groups persists today and continues to strongly affect the debate over the use of their labors in the agricultural industry.

## History of Migrant Housing in Michigan

As a result of the dependence on migratory farm labor, the abilities to provide safe and adequate temporary housing for seasonal workers has historically been a primary concern for farmers and workers, as well as local, state and federal government. Tents, abandoned farm buildings and other similar sites were initially used to provide shelter to this transient workforce. Farmlands within the project area offer many examples of the evolution of migrant housing as the local and national legislation regulating the structures has changed. Berrien County has the most migrant housing structures in the state with migrant cabins dating back to the 1930's still remaining on agricultural properties. A handful of these earlier white, wooden cabins are still being used as licensed migrant housing facilities. However, many historic migrant camps were lost with the construction of U.S. 31 throughout Southwest Michigan. Currently, there are eight hundred to nine hundred migrant camps, mostly older mobile home trailers, from the Indiana border to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

In the 1930s regulations on migrant housing specified a minimum square footage that the cabin must provide for adult and child workers. These regulations required sixty square feet for adults and thirty square feet for each child inhabitant. The standard arrangement placed shared facilities such as showers, kitchens and bathrooms in a separate centralized structure for use by all of the workers in the camp. These regulations were in place until very recently in 1989 when farmers were made to provide housing that offered a minimum of one hundred square feet per person and indoor plumbing. Farmers had ten years to meet this new housing regulation as it took effect in the area in the year 2000. Several farmers simply combined two or three of the original sixty square feet cabins to meet the legislative improvements required of migrant housing. There are several examples of this combination style housing that were surveyed in the project area in which you can see the seam where the two single wooden cabins meet.

In Michigan Public Act 289 of 1966 went into effect to monitor, regulate and license migrant camps via the Department of Health. To assist farmers to meet the increased demands placed on them in their attempts to provide legalized housing for their seasonal workforce, the state made building grants available to growers to improve migrant worker housing stock. These grants originally became available in the early 1980s and as a result historic migrant housing structures were demolished as farmers began to construct new temporary housing units on their properties. The Rural Development grants, as they are known, originally subsidized two thousand dollars per unit and today up to five thousand dollars for construction of new migrant housing. Structures built by growers with Rural Development grant monies must include interior facilities such as a kitchen, a shower and a toilet.

Some historic migrant housing facilities in the project area either came from other interesting historic sources in Southwest Michigan. Slightly east of the scope of the project area, near 64795 CR 342 in Decatur there is a unique set of migrant housing structures that were once part of a(n unknown) 1920s Midwestern resort. After the resort closed the buildings were moved to this agricultural site for use by workers. The buildings are still in excellent condition and were inhabited as of summer 2006.

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Interestingly, another source of housing that make up the majority of the migrant “camps” today in Southwest Michigan are older mobile home trailers that once belonged to homeowners in the project area. Because new regulations do not allow the relocation of older mobile homes into mobile home parks, several owners have begun to donate the homes to farmers to use as inexpensive migrant housing facilities. What originated as a travel trailer to be hauled behind the American auto evolved into the mobile home trailer that was popularized after World War II. At this period in history housing manufacturers were in competition to meet the demands made by returning veterans for affordable housing. These homes also had the ability to be relocated fairly easily to a new location if so desired by the owner or if s/he would need to relocate in the future for employment purposes. The standard size from the 1940s was roughly 8' wide and 20' long. Over the following decades the homes increased substantially in size and subsequently became less mobile. Eventually they became referred to as “manufactured housing” rather than “mobile homes,” which had accentuated the homes’ former mobile characteristics. Therefore, present-day migrant labor camps are visually reminiscent of older American mobile home-style parks that were common throughout the decades of the 1950s through the 1970s.

Also providing housing for migrants in Southwest Michigan are several nonprofits such as the Rural Initiative for Shelter. This group is responsible for the construction and maintenance of the contemporary migrant housing apartment complex in Van Buren County, Sunrise Apartments. The benefit of this apartment style housing is that a worker can submit an application to lease an apartment during the growing season (April to November) before arriving in Southwest Michigan for work. Historically many workers and families did not have any prior arrangements for housing before arriving in Michigan for the season. As more public housing for migrants continues to be built, the historically long-standing pressure to fund housing structures for their temporary workforce is taken off of Southwest Michigan growers.

Statistics on migrant housing in the area is limited since the census did not create a migrant housing category until 1990. Before that time, migrant housing was coupled with other vacation or seasonal homes in a census category that had been established in 1960. It is difficult to find any data of migrant housing prior to 1960 as a result. However, oral histories and the Tolan Hearings of 1940 are good sources on the survey of migrant life and housing in U.S. history.

There are some instances where migrant worker housing has been adapted for reuse. For instance, Woodshed Bicycle Rental at 1669 N. Fifty-sixth Avenue in Mears operates a successful bicycle rental shop out of a former migrant housing structure. The shop currently services the Hart-Montague Bike Trail.



**Hill and Dale Road, Berrien County**  
Migrant housing

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## Common Architectural Styles of Southwest Michigan

The evolution of architectural styles can be seen in the historic buildings that make up America's communities. It is our interaction with the tangible qualities of architecture—climbing a staircase that has been worn down by the steps of hundreds of feet—that brings history alive and makes walking tours and house museums popular with visitors.

Southwest Michigan's architectural development followed the same timelines and style trends popular throughout most of the Midwest. There are a number of field guides of house styles available commercially that provide detailed information on the significant features and important characteristics of the different architectural styles. Below is a short primer of the some of the architectural styles most commonly found in Southwest Michigan.

### Greek Revival: 1825-1860

This style is considered America's first national architectural style. It became popular at the time of the Greek War for Independence, which reminded American's of their own recent struggle for freedom, and incorporated architectural elements taken from ancient Greece. A triangular pediment set on large columns most often characterizes the style in high style buildings such as banks or courthouses. A more simplified version of the style was commonly used for farmhouses. Distinguishing features of the Greek Revival style include:

- A low-pitched gabled or hipped roof with strong cornice returns. The body of the house is typically a simple square or rectangle. In Michigan farmhouses, the gable end often faces the street and a side wing is attached.
- A wide band of trim can be found just under the roofline. This trim is often a plain board, but it can be decorated with small, flat pieces of wood or plaster called dentils.
- Cornice returns (the eave line comes in part way) are common
- Windows usually have multiple panes and are surrounded with trim board. Small rectangular windows are often placed just under the roofline
- A rectangular transom is often found over the front door. Sidelights, narrow windows on either side of the door, are incorporated into an elaborate door surround.
- The porch roof is a triangular pediment supported by large columns.



Greek Revival, Pier Cove

### Gothic Revival: 1840-1880

The Gothic Revival style was a picturesque, romantic style popularized by Andrew Jackson Downing, a landscape architect. Downing made it his lifework to encourage homeowners to improve their yards and homes. As the nation became more established, he felt it was time for farmers to move beyond just subsistence living and give their residences visual appeal. Downing published a number of pattern books, such as *Cottage Residences* and *The Architecture of Country Houses* that were used by local carpenters who provided their own interpretations of Downing's designs out of local materials. Characteristics of the Gothic Revival style are:



Photo from McCord Museum website

- A steeply pitched gable roof with steep cross gables. The gables are often decorated with an elaborate, dripping trim called verge board
- Windows commonly have a pointed arch and are decorated with tracery, like a church window
- A one-story porch supported with narrow columns, sometimes grouped in threes, and intricate decoration
- Often constructed in brick, but when they are frame they typically have vertical siding

## Italianate: 1840-1885

The Italianate style is one of the most common architectural styles found in Michigan. Used for both residences and commercial buildings, it became popular at a time when Michigan was transitioning from its early pioneer period to subsequent prosperity. Farmers were beginning to see their farms become paying ventures and towns were booming as new industries were founded and railroad lines were laid. Italianate houses are most typically frame or brick. Characteristics of the Italianate style include:

- A simple, square floor plan. Most often there are two or three stories, rarely one. However, single-story Italianate cottages were found in the northern portion of the project area particularly in Muskegon, Whitehall and Pentwater.
- A low-pitched hip or pyramid roof with wide, overhanging eaves supported by heavy, decorative brackets
- Tall, narrow windows that usually have a round arch at the top and reach almost to the floor on the bottom. The windows are usually double hung and have decorative protruding moldings at the top called hoods. Shutters are common.
- The building's corners are sometimes highlighted with a rectangular block-like decoration called a quoin.
- In high-style Italianate homes, a cupola may be located in the center of the roof.

## Octagon: 1850-1870

Orson S. Fowler, a popular phrenologist, promoted this style in his book *The Octagon House: A Home for All*, published in 1848. Fowler felt an octagon house was more healthful because it eliminated dark corners, provided more light and air, and was easier to heat and cool than an ordinary house. While not an overly popular style, a number of octagon houses were built in Michigan. At least



Single Story Italianate Cottage, Whitehall



Italianate Commercial Building, Pentwater



The Hexagon Bed and Breakfast, Pentwater.

two were noted in the project area in Douglas and Pentwater. Characteristics common to the Octagon style include:

- Eight-sided floor plan, a hexagon is a rarer form
- Most have two-stories
- Low-pitched roofs with wide eave overhangs and decorative eave brackets
- Approximately half of all examples have a cupola and most have porches

## Queen Anne: 1880-1910

This is the style most people think of when they think of an old house. It was the dominant residential style when Michigan hit its economic stride in the late nineteenth century. Towns and industries were firmly established, and there was enough money in people's pockets that they thought nothing of spending for extras that would show their neighbors just how far they had come. Distinguishing characteristics of the Queen Anne style are:

- An irregular shape with gables and/or a turret
- A prominent front-facing gable with decorative gable elements
- A variety of decorative elements such as fish-scale shingles in the gable, intricate brickwork on the chimney, carved brackets and "gingerbread" trim and a general avoidance of a smooth-walled appearance
- Bay windows and stained glass; carved doors with beveled glass inserts
- A large wraparound front porch and smaller side porches



The Queen Anne style is also characterized by these sub-styles:

- The Eastlake or Stick Style is less exuberant than the typical Queen Anne. Lines are straighter and less curved; decoration is less lacy looking and more rustic.
- The Shingle Style was a reaction to what some considered to be the overly decorated Queen Anne style. The building form is still irregular but there is very little trim or decoration. Key features are a steep gable roof and wood shingle siding. Sometimes, rusticated stone is used for porches and porch columns.
- Folk Victorian is much simpler in style than a typical Queen Anne. They have a more regular shape, often a simple gable and wing, and single story residences are common. Folk Victorian incorporates a few Queen Anne decorative elements such as a bay window, decorative trim along the porch or roofline, and some panes of stained glass trim around windows.

## Richardsonian Romanesque: 1880-1900

The architect Henry Hobson Richardson popularized this style. Most commonly used for public buildings such as libraries, schools, and courthouses or churches, it can occasionally be found in a high style residence. In Muskegon the buildings surrounding Hackley Park and the railroad depot, are excellent examples of this style. Distinguishing features of the Richardsonian Romanesque style are:

- Thick masonry walls, of rough-faced, squared stonework. They look very heavy and solid.
- Distinctive round top window arches and door arches that are often wide and low.
- An asymmetrical façade with round towers and conical roofs



Richardsonian Romanesque, Muskegon

## Colonial Revival: 1880-1955

The nation's Centennial in 1886 inspired a return to the Georgian and Adams architectural styles that were popular in New England following the American Revolution. Early on, Colonial Revival style details were simply being applied to the complex floor plans of the Queen Anne, but later a more symmetrical Georgian style predominated. In the 1920s and 1930s, the use of a gambrel (barn-like) roof became popular and these houses are referred to as Dutch Colonial. An extremely simplified version of the Colonial Revival style was adapted for the majority of the mass produced small homes built to address the housing shortage that followed World War II. Distinguishing characteristics of the Colonial Revival include:

- The front door is accentuated —usually with a decorative crown supported by pilasters—and has overhead fanlights or sidelights
- The façade normally shows balance through the use of symmetrical windows and a center door
- The windows have double-hung sashes, usually with multi-pane glazing
- The windows are frequently paired



Colonial Revival, Muskegon

## Prairie: 1900-1920

The Prairie style is a uniquely Midwest style of architecture. Popularized by Chicago architects, it is most closely associated with the architect Frank Lloyd Wright. In a typical Victorian-era neighborhood, a Prairie style house stands out for its simplicity.

- Flat roof
- Very wide, overhanging eaves
- Emphasis on the horizontal
- Ribbon windows, corner windows, leaded glass, and casement windows are often used.
- Little decoration or ornamentation beyond



Prairie Style, Muskegon

- window boxes or low pedestal urns
- Long, low porches with massive square porch supports

## Craftsman: 1900-1930



*Craftsman Bungalow, Whitehall*

This style is representative of the Arts & Crafts movement that began in England and quickly spread to the United States. The movement was a reaction to the mechanization of the Industrial Revolution. Arts & Crafts movement proponents emphasized a return to handcrafted, individualistic items ranging from hand stamped wallpapers to hand carved furniture. Pewabic Pottery in Detroit was a leader in the state for this movement. Michigan's furniture industry also took up the cause; the Limbert Furniture Company of Holland produced handmade furniture equal in quality to that of the infamous Stickley Brothers furniture manufacturers.

The Craftsman bungalow was one of the most popular housing styles in America. It was well adapted for the everyday person. Built-ins such as bookcases and china cabinets reduced the need for purchasing expensive furniture. Common rooms generally had a fireplace that served as a focus for family activities and the wide front porch expanded the living space in summer. Pre-cut housing companies such as Sears, Roebuck and Company and the Aladdin and Sterling Homes Companies of Bay City adopted the Craftsman bungalow as their signature house type. These homes were inexpensive to purchase and easy to build and they were soon being constructed all over

Michigan. The Craftsman Bungalow is one of the most common house types found within the project area as they were well suited for both permanent and summer homes.



*Craftsman Cottage, Union Pier*

- Low-pitched, gabled roof or a shallow hip roof
- Wide unenclosed eave overhang with exposed rafter ends
- Simple, decorative beams or braces under the gables
- Porches, either full- or partial-width are usually present with the roof supported by tapered square columns
- Columns or pedestals frequently extend to ground level, without a break at the level of the porch floor
- Paired or ribbon windows with the top portion divided into three lights

## Mediterranean Revival Styles 1915-1940

This style was most popular in southern states like Florida, California, and Texas but a small number were built in the Midwest. Variations of this style most commonly found in Michigan include Mission Style and Spanish Eclectic. It was not unusual for a subdivision developer to include a house of this style to provide something different that would catch a purchaser's



*Spanish Eclectic, Miami Park, South Haven*

eye. Such was the case in Miami Park near South Haven where a developer proposed to build Mediterranean style homes in keeping with the promotional theme that West Michigan was Chicago's Riviera.

Characteristics of this style include:

- Flat roof or low-pitched terra cotta tile roof
- Stucco finish
- Decorative vents or tiles
- Typically one large focal window; casement windows
- Elaborated chimney tops
- Mission style commonly incorporated a curved parapet wall at the roofline and on window dormers. The Mission style was often used for larger buildings such as schools, Masonic halls, or apartment buildings. It was common to see a Mission style building constructed in gold brick with a green tile roof.



*Mission Style, South Haven*

## Art Deco 1925-1940

This style is often associated with the exuberant movie theaters of the 1920s and 1930s. Art Deco buildings were streamlined and had a vertical orientation. Decoration consisted of geometric patterns or stylized depictions of common elements with local significance such as automobile gears, ears of corn, sunrises, etc.

- Flat roof and stepped façade or parapet
- Zigzag motifs
- Metal casement windows or circular windows
- Colorful glazed brick
- Iron grille work



*Art Deco, Muskegon*

## Art Moderne 1930-1945

This style is an offshoot of the Art Deco movement and was most popular between 1925 and 1950. It is a streamlined style with little decorative elements. Characteristics include:

- Flat or low-pitched roof
- Smooth rounded wall surfaces
- Horizontal lines
- Steel casement windows and glass block windows
- Pipe rails
- In commercial buildings, a simple rounded metal awning



*Art Moderne, Roosevelt Park*

## Modern 1945-1970

Based on the International style popularized by the Bauhaus School in Germany, which discarded decorative elements in favor of clean, unbroken lines and emphasis on structural elements. The modern adaptation was used for schools, banks, libraries, and government buildings. Characteristics include:

- Flat roof
- Long ribbons of metal windows
- Use of large plate glass
- Large, blank areas of exterior walls
- Use of colorful panels was popular in the 1960s



Modern, Muskegon

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## Architect Overview

The following is a list of architects that are known to have an association with Southwest Michigan. Most worked in the region while others are native sons or owned summer homes there. This is not an all-encompassing list of architects or their work. It is meant to serve as a starting point in the development of a context of the architects and buildings of Southwest Michigan.

### **Frank S. Allen, Joliet, Illinois**

Born in Galesburg, Illinois, Allen worked in Chicago and then moved his office to Joliet. He is known for his school designs such as the Joliet Township High School in 1900. Allen later moved to California and was a founder of the Parade of Roses in Pasadena.

- Hackley School Administration Building, 349 W. Webster, Muskegon, 1892

### **Alegretti Architects, Saint Joseph, Michigan**

- Fennville Library, Fennville

### **John Watson Alvord, Chicago, Illinois**

Civil engineer John Alvord was a partner in the Chicago-based engineering firm of Alvord, Burdick and Howson established in 1902. The firm specialized in the design and construction of water treatment plans along the Lake Michigan shoreline in Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan. The Gary, Indiana, water tower built in 1909 is one of his designs and he participated in the development of Saugatuck's water system. Alvord was the Engineer of Grades and Survey for the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago in 1893. He served as president of the American Water Works Society in 1910 and the Western Society of Engineers in 1916. He died in 1943.

- 333 Lakeshore Drive, Douglas, 1901

### **Billingham and Cobb, Kalamazoo, Michigan**

Milton Billingham and Leslie Cobb were Kalamazoo based architects that actively worked throughout Southwest Michigan in the 1920s and 1930s. They designed the Marlborough Apartments in Kalamazoo and are known to have designed buildings in Benton Harbor, Watervliet, Stevensville, Battle Creek, Muskegon, and Holland.

### **Ralph Calder and Associates, Detroit, Michigan**

Founded in 1945, the firm specialized in projects for Michigan's state universities including the Student Center/West Campus complex at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo and the Library, Music Building, and Kresge Art Center at Michigan State University in East Lansing. Within the project area they are known to have designed the following buildings:

- City Hall, Jail and Fire Station, Benton Harbor
- Van Zoeren Library, New Campus Plan and the Men and Women's Dorms, Hope College, Holland

### **Antoine B. Campau, Grand Rapids, Michigan**

Born in Grand Rapids, Campau graduated from the Boston Technical Institute in 1901 and attended the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris. He joined the Grand Rapids firm of W. G. and F. S. Robinson and became a partner in the firm in 1907 when the name was changed to Robinson & Campau. He designed numerous religious and public buildings including the Central, East and West High Schools in Grand Rapids.

- City Hall, Grand Haven

### **Alexander V. Capraro, Chicago, Illinois**

A Chicago architect who designed the library building for South Lawndale, Illinois, in the 1920s, Capraro designed the summer home of Al Capone's bodyguard, Philip D'Andrea, in 1933 in Saint Joseph, Michigan.

## C. Howard Crane, Detroit, Michigan

Based in Detroit, Crane was one of America's premier theater architects, designing over two hundred and fifty theaters across the country including the United Artist Theater in Los Angeles and the August Wilson Theater in New York City. Crane designed fifty theaters in the Detroit area including the Fox Theater, Orchestra Hall, and the Detroit Opera House.

- Michigan Theater (Frauenthal), Muskegon, 1929
- Rialto Theater, Muskegon, 1929
- Majestic Theater, Muskegon, 1929
- Regent Theater, Muskegon, 1929

## Jacob H. Daverman and Son, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Born in the Netherlands, Daverman's firm has been called one of the most prolific in the nation. In the late nineteenth century Daverman designed house plans which were published in house plan books and in popular magazines like *Ladies Home Journal*. He encouraged clients to adapt the plans to local materials and conditions.

- Koning-Wiley House, 107 Butler, Saugatuck, 1922

## Ellis/Naeyaert, Warren, Michigan

- Process Development Lab, Parke Davis Company Holland, circa 1960

## Stanley Fairclough, Lakeside, Michigan

Based in Lakeside in Berrien County, Fairclough designed a number of Tudor Revival residences and commercial buildings within the community.

## Ralph S. Gerganoff, Ypsilanti, Michigan

Born in Bulgaria, Gerganoff immigrated to the United States in 1905 and attended the University of Michigan where he graduated from the architecture school in 1917. After working in Detroit, he opened his own firm in Ypsilanti, Michigan, in 1920. Gerganoff designed a number of buildings in the Ypsilanti-Ann Arbor area including the Rackham Building on the Eastern Michigan University Campus and the Washtenaw County Building in Ann Arbor.

- Reeths Puffer School, Muskegon, circa 1955

## Graheck, Bell, Kline and Brown (GBKB), Traverse City, Michigan

The firm designed the veterinary school at Michigan State University in East Lansing and many hospitals around the state.

- Saint Peter's Catholic Church, Douglas, 1957
- Sacred Heart Catholic Church, 150 E. Summit, Muskegon, 1957

## Walter Burley Griffin, Oak Park, Illinois

Walter Burley Griffin grew up in Oak Park, Illinois, and received his bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Illinois in 1899. He served as a draftsman in the office of Prairie school architect Dwight H. Perkins and in 1901 joined Frank Lloyd Wright's firm in Oak Park. In 1906 he opened his own firm and designed residences in Chicago's wealthier suburbs such as Oak Park and Evanston. Griffin was married to the architect Mary Mahony. He died in 1937.

- Mary Bovee Summer House, Epworth Heights, Ludington, 1911

## Homer Harper, Benton Harbor

- State Theater, Main Street, Benton Harbor, 1942
- Stanley Nowlen Home, Fairfax at Colfax, Benton Harbor, 1924
- Caropepo Brothers Garage, Territorial and Fourth Street, Benton Harbor, 1924
- Berrien County Country Club Clubhouse, 1924
- Central Campus, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, 1940
- Elks Club, 518 Broad Street, Saint Joseph, 1926

## **Carl Hoerman, Saugatuck, Michigan**

A native of Bavaria, Germany, Carl Hoerman immigrated to Chicago around 1905 and studied architecture there. He opened his own firm in 1909. In 1920 he moved to Saugatuck to focus on landscape painting and opened an art gallery and studio with his wife, artist Christina Ackerman. In the 1930s they became affiliated with the Taos Painters. Hoerman died in Douglas, Michigan, in 1955.

- Saugatuck City Hall Renovation, Saugatuck, 1926
- Douglas Hospital Renovation, Douglas
- Blue Water Lodge, 2420 Lakeshore, Fennville, 1937
- Kemah Cottage Renovation, Saugatuck, 1920
- Plans for the “Beautification of Saugatuck’s Waterfront and Safe Landing for Small Boats,” Saugatuck, 1924

## **Warren S. Holmes, Lansing**

The Warren S. Holmes architectural firm was founded in Lansing in 1920. They became one of Michigan's most respected school building designers. The firm merged with the Kenneth Black Company in 1973.

- Forth Ward School, Art Deco Wing addition, Grand Haven, 1927
- Grand Haven High School II (Lakeshore Middle), 900 Cutler Street, Grand Haven, 1953

## **Arthur M. Hooker, Muskegon, Michigan**

Born in Muskegon in 1904, Hooker attended Michigan State University for two years before transferring to the University of Michigan. He established his architecture practice in Muskegon in 1936 and often collaborated with the Warren S. Holmes firm.

- Phillips School, Norton Shores, 1951
- Laketon School, Muskegon, 1954
- Bluffton School, Muskegon, 1955
- Temple M. E. Church, Muskegon, 1953
- Samuel Lutheran Church, 540 Houston, Muskegon, 1955

## **David S. Hopkins, Grand Rapids, Michigan**

Originally from Argyle, New York, Hopkins moved to Grand Rapids in 1864 where he partnered with architect Sidney J. Osgood. Hopkins is noted for developing plan books of Queen Anne houses and cottages and developing a mail order house plan business.

- Charles Hackley and Thomas Hume Houses, 484 W. Webster, Muskegon, 1889

## **William Ittner, Saint Louis, Missouri**

The son of a Saint Louis brickyard owner, Ittner studied architecture at Cornell University in 1889. He was interested in school building design and served as Commissioner of School Buildings for the Saint Louis Board of Education from 1897-1910. His firm built fifty schools in Saint Louis, Missouri, and hundreds of others in at least twenty-five states. Ittner was also a proponent of Manual Training Schools. He died in 1936.

- High School Campus Plan, Muskegon. Ittner was brought in as consulting architect on the \$5 million campus project that closed city streets within six blocks of the Hackley Manual Training School.
- Community Building, Peck at Columbia, Muskegon Heights, 1924

## **W. K. Johnston, Chicago, Illinois**

- John Torrent House, 315 W. Webster, Muskegon, 1892
- Diment Memorial Chapel, Hope College, Holland, 1894
- Graves Hall, Hope College, Holland, 1894

## **Harry Leslie Walker, New York, New York**

A native of Oak Park, Illinois, Leslie worked in the offices of Frank Lloyd Wright as a young man. He attended the Armour Institute of Technology and the Art Institute of Chicago before receiving his degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He eventually moved to New York City. Walker designed numerous homes in the community of Bronxville, New York, between 1913 and 1942. In 1937 he designed the acclaimed Art Deco style Williamsburg Housing Project in Brooklyn, New York.

- Lakeshore Chapel, Douglas

## **Gordon Lloyd, Detroit, Michigan**

Gordon moved to Detroit from England in 1858. He designed many Episcopal churches in the Midwest and was the architect of Building 50 at the Northern Michigan Asylum constructed in Traverse City in 1885, as well as the David Whitney House in Detroit completed in 1894.

- All Saints Episcopal, 252 Grand, Saugatuck

## **Alexander McColl, Grand Rapids, Michigan**

A 1916 graduate of the University of Michigan School of Architecture, by 1924 McColl had his own architecture firm in Grand Rapids. He was the designer of the Crystal Downs Country Club and Resort in Benzie County around 1927.

- First National Bank Building, Ludington
- Roehry Jewelry Company, James Street, Ludington, 1924

## **Charles Wheeler Nicol, Lafayette, Indiana and Chicago, Illinois**

Nicol opened an architectural practice in Lafayette, Indiana in 1913 under the name Nicol, Scholer and Hoffman. He worked extensively in Northern Indiana including the cities of Wabash, Lafayette and Gary. He later moved to Chicago. According to his obituary in the *New York Times* he designed more than twelve hundred buildings in the United States.

- Fidelity Building, 162 Pipestone, Benton Harbor
- Tudor Revival Office Building, 161 Pipestone, Benton Harbor
- Hotel Vincent, 185 E. Main, Benton Harbor, 1925
- Four Flags Hotel, 404 E. Main, Niles, 1925

## **Normand S. Patton, Chicago, Illinois**

Born in Hartford, Connecticut, Patton studied architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He settled in Chicago in 1885 and was associated with a number of architectural firms throughout his career (Randall & Patton; Patton & Fischer; Patton, Fischer & Miller, Holmes & Flinn) Patton designed the Armour Institute, now part of the Illinois Institute of Technology, and the Chicago Academy of Science. He was a skilled architect in the creation of academic buildings designing for a number of universities including Purdue University, Beloit College, and the layout of Carleton College in Minnesota. He also designed a number of high schools including those in Oak Park and River Forest, Illinois. Patton is credited with designing over one hundred Carnegie libraries including those in Highland Park and Waukegan, Illinois, and at Oberlin College in Ohio.

- Hackley Library, 316 W. Webster, Muskegon, 1890

## **Perkins, Fellows, and Hamilton, Chicago, Illinois**

Dwight Perkins was a prominent Chicago architect that was part of the Prairie school of architecture. Perkins designed a number of Chicago schools including the Carl Schurz High School, residences such as the Harold Ickes estate in Winnetka, and the Lion House at the

Lincoln Park Zoo. The firm's offices were located at 814 N. Tower Court in Chicago. Perkins was a member of the Prairie Club, a conservationist group responsible for the establishment of state park systems in the Midwest.

- John Williamson House, Belvedere Bed & Breakfast, 3656 Sixty-third Street, Saugatuck

## Pond, Pond, Martin and Lloyd, Chicago, Illinois

Allen and Irving Pond were Michigan natives, born and raised in Jackson where their father was superintendent of the Jackson prison. Irving Pond received his civil engineering degree from the University of Michigan and later worked in the offices of noted architects William LeBaron Jenney and Solon E. Beman in Chicago. The brothers established the architectural firm of Pond & Pond in Chicago in 1886; it became Pond, Pond and Lloyd in 1925. The Pond Brothers were hired by Jane Addams to design a dining hall for Hull House in Chicago in 1905. From that experience the three remained lifelong friends. The Pond Brothers designed the Union Building at the University of Michigan and the Mutual Building in Lansing.

- Whitcomb Hotel, Saint Joseph, 1927
- Saint Joseph Congregational Church, Saint Joseph

## Charles Willard Moore, Berkeley, California

Born in Benton Harbor in 1925, Moore attended the University of Michigan and received his Bachelor of Architecture in 1947. He received a Master of Fine Arts and a Ph.D. in architecture from Princeton in 1956 and 1957, respectively and studied under the architect Louis Kahn. Moore took a teaching position at the University of California-Berkeley and became chair of the department in 1962. In partnership with architects Donlyn Lyndon, William Turnbull and Richard Whitaker and landscape architect Lawrence Halprin, he designed Sea Ranch Condominiums on the Pacific coast north of San Francisco. The distinctive redwood houses on the seaside cliffs brought world recognition to his work. Moore became chair of the Yale University architecture department in 1965. He left in 1969 and continued his architectural practice until his death. Moore is known for taking a humanistic approach to modern architecture. He died in 1993. His work includes:

- Lurie Tower, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- Beverly Hills Civic Center, Beverly Hills, California
- Kresge College, University of Santa Cruz, California

## Charles Palmer, Chicago, Illinois

The architect of the Palmer House hotel in Chicago, Palmer owned a home on Pine Island Lake, near Muskegon, Michigan, where he died on July 22, 1928. He was born in 1846.

## Marc J. Reisenger, Muskegon, Michigan

Born in the Netherlands, Reisenger received his degree in architecture and civil engineering before immigrating to the United States in 1887. In 1888 he went to work for the architect J. H. Knapp of Grand Rapids in his Muskegon office. Reisenger soon established his own firm. Reisenger drafted a design for an iron drawbridge to span Lake Muskegon from Bayou Street to the Berthaud Docks. His home was located at the corner of Terrace and Hartford in Muskegon.

- North Muskegon School, North Muskegon
- James Gow Residence, Muskegon
- Rudolf Mueller, Residence, Muskegon
- S. and B. Smith Residences, Muskegon
- Muskegon Waterworks Building, Muskegon
- Chase Piano Factory Building, Muskegon
- Good Templars Building at Lake Harbor, Muskegon

## Smith, Hinchman & Grylls (SmithGroup), Detroit, Michigan

The firm was established in Detroit in 1853 and is responsible for the design of the

Ford Piquette Plant in Detroit in 1904, Meadowbrook Hall in Rochester, Michigan, in 1926, and the Guardian Building in Detroit in 1930.

- Bell Telephone Building, 13 W. Tenth Street, Holland, 1929

### **Tiedeman and Boerner, Contractors and Builders, Ludington, Michigan**

A native of Germany, Charles Boerner immigrated to Wisconsin in 1863 where he studied carpentry. He arrived in Ludington in 1868. August Tiedeman was also a German immigrant who settled in Ludington. He served as president of the Arbeiter Society, a social organization that helped German immigrants adapt to life in the United States. The two partnered to create the building and contracting firm of Tiedeman and Boerner in Ludington.

### **Stanley Tigerman, Chicago, Illinois**

A native of Chicago, Tigerman attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology before returning home to apprentice under Modern architect, George Keck. He later received his degree from Yale University and worked with Skidmore, Owings and Merrill before establishing Tigerman and Associates in 1964. Tigerman designed the Illinois Holocaust Museum in Skokie, Illinois, and the National Training Center for the International Masonry Institute in Bowie, Maryland.

Tigerman's summer residence is located in Lakeside. Mary McCurry, Tigerman's wife, is an architect in her own right. Some of her work can be found in Berrien County.

### **Edwin Valentine, Muskegon, Michigan**

- Muskegon YMCA, East Muskegon, 1928
- Andre Pyle House, Bear Lake, North Muskegon, 1958

### **Charles Whittlesey, Chicago, Illinois**

Born in Alton, Illinois in 1868, Whittlesey served as a draftsman for architect Louis Sullivan. He practiced architecture in Chicago for twenty-five years before moving to New Mexico to work as an architect for the Atchison, Topeka, and the Santa Fe Railroad. Whittlesey designed the El Tovar, a luxury hotel at the Grand Canyon, for the railroad company in 1905. He later went on to work in California and in 1907 designed the Pacific Building in San Francisco, reportedly the largest reinforced concrete building in the world.

- 1 Lakeshore, Douglas, W. H. Simpson Cottage, 1903

### **Harold Worm, Grand Haven, Michigan**

Harold Worm was a developer from East Grand Rapids where he had built a number of Tudor inspired homes in the Woodcliff subdivision on Reed's Lake. Worm developed the Grand Haven Beach subdivision north of Grand Haven in 1927. He designed and built a number of Tudor style cottages there, including his own cottage and a miniature version of it that served as his real estate office, which later became part of the Cabana Colony Club.

- 1889 North Shore, Worm Cottage
- 19199 North Shore, built for the Carrigan family

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## Significant Architects in Southwest Michigan

### Marcel Breuer, Architect

Marcel Breuer, one of the world's most celebrated Modern architects, was born in Hungary in 1902. In 1920 he joined the Bauhaus of Weimar, Germany, an art and design school that operated from 1919 to 1933 and was one of the strongest influences on twentieth century design. Breuer worked with the Bauhaus for the next eight years, serving as the head of its furniture design department from 1924-1928. He left in 1937 to concentrate on architecture and later partnered with architect Walter Gropius, one of the founders of twentieth century Modern architecture. Breuer joined the faculty of Harvard University in 1937 and in 1946 left to practice architecture in New York City.

Breuer began designing churches in 1950 and continued until about 1970. In 1953 he designed St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota, and Annunciation Priory, Bismarck, North Dakota, in 1954. In 1964 a young and growing congregation supported the construction of a new Catholic Church in Muskegon and commissioned Breuer to do the work. Breuer's Saint Frances de Sales Church, 2929 McCracken Street in Muskegon, was completed in 1968 and is considered to be his best religious structure, receiving a Silver Medal from the American Institute of Architects. According to the book *Buildings of Michigan* by Kathryn Eckert, the design incorporates "a 75-foot-high, banner-shaped concrete trapezoid topped by a concrete trough that houses the suspended bells."



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## Alden B. Dow, Architect

One of Michigan's premier Modern architects, Alden Dow, was the son of Herbert Dow, founder of the Dow Chemical Company. Born in Midland, Michigan, Dow received his architecture degree from Columbia University in New York City in 1930. He then studied at the Taliesin School in Spring Green, Wisconsin, under Frank Lloyd Wright and adapted Wright's organic architecture to his own vision. The nationally respected Dow was a prolific architect whose reputation was established when he planned and designed the communities of Lake Jackson and Freeport, Texas, for the Dow Chemical Company. A large concentration of Dow's work exists in his hometown of Midland, where he designed residences, schools, churches, hospitals, banks, civic and library buildings. He even designed a gas station. Alden Dow's home and studio in Midland, begun in 1934 and completed in 1940, was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1989, and thirteen of the Midland homes he designed between 1934 and 1938 are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Though best known for designing residences, Dow began working with universities late in his career. He received his first university commission in 1958 from Hillsdale College in Adrian for a dining hall. He later designed dormitories and a student center for the college. In 1964 he received a commission from Saginaw Valley Community College. He began work at Muskegon Community College in 1965. Dow also designed the Administration Building at the University of Michigan and the University Center at Wayne State University in Detroit in 1966.

Dow reportedly designed the United Methodist Church of the Dunes at 717 Sheldon Road in Grand Haven and the George Canon Residence in Muskegon.

### Muskegon Community College, 221 S. Quarterline Road, Muskegon



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## George W. Maher, Architect

George Maher began his architectural career in Chicago. In 1887 he became a draftsman in the office of Chicago architect Joseph Silsbee where his co-workers included Frank Lloyd Wright and George Grant Elmslie, who went on to work with the architect Louis Sullivan. Maher opened his own practice in 1893 and worked extensively in Oak Park and the North Shore area of Chicago where he designed forty houses in the community of Kennilworth. He also designed the Gary, Indiana Heat, Water, and Light plant. Maher was one of the cornerstones of the Prairie School of architects, and his work reflects their emphasis on the horizontal and the inclusion of broad eaves and a prominent centered entry way. Maher was known for his decorative use of repetitive vegetation motifs in his buildings that were inspired from plants found in the surrounding landscape.

Maher's family summered in Saugatuck at the turn of the century. They first stayed in tent camps and later stayed at the Fernwood Resort operated by George Weed, son of the founder of the village of Douglas. The Maher family purchased a forty-six-acre working fruit farm in Douglas just north of the Weed property and built a family compound they called "*Hillaire*." Maher designed two Prairie Style cottages (2582 and 2578 Lakeshore) that were used by the family. The existing stucco farmhouse on the site was used for farm workers. Maher and his wife, the painter Elizabeth Brooks, helped to organize the Ox Bow School of Painting in Saugatuck.

In 1923 Maher was part of an effort to improve the look of downtown Saugatuck in order to make it more attractive to auto tourists traveling along the West Michigan Pike. In addition to paving roads and establishing zoning, the village decided to create a more uniform look by adopting the then popular Colonial Revival style for some of its buildings. One of Maher's contributions to the effort was the redesign of the façade of the Maplewood Hotel at 428 Butler.

Maher died at *Hillaire* on September 12, 1926.



Maplewood Hotel, Saugatuck

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## Thomas Eddy Tallmadge, Architect

Thomas Tallmadge grew up in Evanston, Illinois, and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1898. Tallmadge joined the Chicago architectural firm of Daniel H. Burnham in 1898 leaving in 1905 to establish a partnership with architect Vernon Watson, which lasted for thirty-one years. The firm became known for its Prairie style residences in Chicago suburbs such as Oak Park, Glencoe and Evanston. Tallmadge also became known for the design of Gothic Revival churches, designing over thirty throughout his career including the First Methodist Church in Evanston, Illinois, in 1909 and Chapin Memorial Presbyterian Church in Niles, Michigan, in 1915. Tallmadge was a lecturer at the Armour Institute and the Chicago Art Institute and is credited with coining the term "The Chicago School of Architecture."

In the 1920s, Tallmadge served as a consultant with architectural historian Fiske Kimball on the J. D. Rockefeller funded restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. Tallmadge also served as the architect of the "Colonial Village" for the Chicago "Century of Progress" World's Fair in 1933. As a result, he was a proponent of the Colonial Revival architectural style that became popular nationally after World War I.

Tallmadge spent summers in Saugatuck from 1915, when he first stayed at the Riverside Inn, until 1940 when he was killed in a railroad accident. He was one of the founders of the Ox-Bow School of Painting in Saugatuck. His work in southwest Michigan includes:

- Kemah House, Saugatuck – Tallmadge was the original designer, the home was (later redesigned by Charles Hoerman),
- Marigold Lodge, Waukazoo, Holland
- Saugatuck Women's Club Auditorium built in 1935 (Hoffman and Butler Streets)
- Fursman House, 246 Mary Street, Saugatuck. Tallmadge remodeled the Pine Grove schoolhouse as a summer cottage for the Ox-Bow School director, Frederick Fursman in 1927.



Women's Club, Saugatuck



Marigold Lodge, Holland

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## Frank Lloyd Wright, Architect

Frank Lloyd Wright was one of America's most original and widely known architects, pioneering the Prairie Style of architecture that utilized the Midwest landscape for inspiration. Wright's homes embrace the topography and natural landscape of the site and are characterized by a horizontal orientation, flat or shallow hip roof, wide eaves and ribbon and corner windows. Entryways are typically low and narrow opening into a great room with a hearth and fireplace and large windows that bring the outside in. Wright was one of the first to experiment with reinforced concrete as a building material. He trained at the University of Wisconsin, School of Engineering and took a job with architect, Louis Sullivan in Chicago in 1888. Wright opened his own practice in 1893 and by 1901 had designed fifty houses. According to the *About Architecture* website, about four hundred of the buildings designed by Wright are still standing. Wright designed a total of thirty-seven residences in Michigan, twelve of which are located in the project area.

Six of the twelve Frank Lloyd Wright-designed cottages in the project area are located in the Birch Brook Subdivision in Whitehall, which contains a total of seventeen homes overall.

Thomas Hart Gale, a lawyer and developer that attended the University of Michigan, established the subdivision in 1896 with his friend Walter Gerts, a brush manufacturer. The two men had married sisters and both lived in Oak Park, Illinois near Frank Lloyd Wright's home and office. Gale asked Wright to design a residence for him in Oak Park as well as a summer cottage at White Lake. The Thomas H. Gale Cottage at 5318 South Shore was completed in 1897. Wright also designed a house for Walter Gerts at 5292 South Shore, which has since been gutted and altered. In 1905 Gale asked Wright to design rental properties at 5324, 5370, and 5380 South Shore. Walter Gerts' parents commissioned Wright in 1909 to build a cottage for them at 5250 South Shore. Wright's design for the site was a double cottage connected by a bridge that crossed over a small stream on the property, a precursor to his masterwork, *Fallingwater*.



Gerts House, 5250 South Shore, Whitehall, 1909

In 1916 Wright designed three homes in the resort community of Grand Beach in Berrien County. The William S. Carr House at 46039 Lake View, built in 1916, was demolished in 2004. The Joseph J. Bagley house was once a series of pavilions separated by open space, which have since been enclosed. The Ernest Vosburgh House at 46028 Crescent retains much of its original design integrity.



Joseph J. Bagley, 47017 Lake View, Grand Beach, 1916



Ernest Vosburgh House, 46028 Crescent Road, Grand Beach, 1916

# Significant Architects – Frank Lloyd Wright

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Following World War II, Wright was commissioned to build at least three homes in the St. Joseph-Benton Harbor area. These include the Howard Anthony house in 1949 for Ed Heath, who developed the popular "Heathkit" electronics, the Ina Harper house at 207 Sunnybank in Saint Joseph, and the Carl Schultz House at 2704 Highland Court Road in 1957.



Howard E. Anthony House, Benton Harbor, 1949



Ina Harper House, 207 Sunnybank, St. Joseph, 1950

In 1961 Wright's son-in-law, William Wesley Peters, an architect with Taliesin Associated Architects, an affiliate of the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, was commissioned by local developer Sahag Sarkisian to design a motel in Lincoln Township in Berrien County. Peters was a follower of Wright's organic architecture and according to an oral interview with Barry Spitzman, this was his first solo design project. The fifty-seven-room Snowflake Motel featured a distinctive saw tooth roof line, an interior star shaped court with linear pool, and a decorative geometric metal frame dome over a swimming pool. The building was demolished in 2006.

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## Country Life Movement Estates

The Country Life Movement in America occurred between 1900 and 1930. Two important influences on the movement were horticulturalist Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr., a native of South Haven, Michigan, and architect Charles Adams Platt.

Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. was born in South Haven in 1858 and grew up on a farm noted for its exemplary apple orchard. He attended the Michigan Agricultural College (MAC) in 1882 and after graduation worked at the Harvard Herbarium for two years under Asa Gray, one of the most important botanists of the nineteenth century. He returned to the MAC to teach before accepting a position at Cornell University.

Bailey was named the director of Cornell University's Department of Agriculture in 1903. While at Cornell he worked to reshape rural life in America. In 1908 Bailey was appointed chair of the Country Life Commission by Theodore Roosevelt. The purpose of the commission was to conduct a survey of farm and rural life and make recommendations for its improvement. This was a time when America was transitioning from a rural agrarian economy to an industrial one and young men were leaving the nation's farms to take factory jobs in the city and hopefully find a better life. In the early 1900s, a large number of family farms had simply been abandoned or were being farmed by men over the age of fifty. President Roosevelt felt this was an impending crisis that could affect the nation's food supply and believed there was a need to establish a program that would improve rural life and introduce more scientific farming practices so that the nation's brightest young men would find farming a viable occupation. In 1911 Bailey's committee issued "The Report of the Country Life Commission." Its recommendations included the establishment of a national agricultural extension service (which was accomplished through the Smith-Lever Act of 1914); a survey of rural farm life; inclusion of agriculture economics and rural progress programs in universities; and the development of a campaign to promote rural progress.



Liberty Hyde Bailey, Jr. Home, 903 Bailey Avenue, South Haven

An outcome of Bailey's work with the Country Life Commission was the periodical entitled *Country Life in America*. Wilhem Miller, a landscape architect who had grown up in Detroit and attended the University of Michigan, became editor of *Country Life in America* while employed by the University of Illinois Extension. Miller was a strong promoter of the Prairie landscape style (use of native plants) and helped to popularize it in the Midwest through a column he wrote for the magazine. *Country Life* promoted an advanced rural lifestyle as well as the use of scientific farming methods. Through the magazine Bailey nationally influenced the development of America's rural landscape by promoting the beautification of farmsteads and the use of flowers and colors to create an attractive home environment.

At the turn of the century, the architect Charles Adams Platt received commissions to design summer estates for wealthy patrons around the country including Edith Rockefeller McCormick in Lake Forest, Illinois, and Russell Alger, in Grosse Pointe, Michigan. Platt's residences were typically very formal in appearance adopting the Italian Renaissance or Georgian style. They were symmetrical and often displayed two end chimneys and a front portico flanked by Palladian windows. Platt, a member of the American Arts and Crafts summer colony at Cornish, New Hampshire, often designed gardens to complement his residences. These gardens were sweeps of color based on the design principles of British landscape gardener Gertrude Jekyll.

A number of wealthy businessmen in the east and Midwest adopted the idea of the "gentlemen farmer" put forth by Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. through the *Country Life in America* magazine. They

# Architecture – Country Life Movement Estates

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bought large tracts of land and developed model farms using the most scientific methods for farming and conservation. For their residences, they used local architects to adapt the regal architectural styles introduced by Charles Platt. Between 1900 and 1930, the establishment of gentlemen farms as summer estates became a popular hobby for wealthy Chicago businessmen. Many purchased existing farms along Lake Michigan's shore to create large summer estates that embodied the design ethics and scientific farming practices promoted by the American Country Life Movement. Below are some that were identified during this project, there are undoubtedly others.

## Dorr E. Felt Estate, Shore Acre Farms

66th at 138<sup>th</sup> Street, Laketown Township,  
Allegan County

Dorr Eugene Felt was the inventor of a popular calculating machine called the Comptometer, the first such machine to do complex calculations including square roots. Felt patented and marketed the machine through the Felt and Tarrant Manufacturing Company in Chicago. Felt was named Midwest Regional Director of the Resources and Conversion Section for the Chicago area during World War I and was later appointed as Director of the United States Chamber of Commerce. In 1919 he began buying land in Laketown Township

north of Saugatuck and by 1925 owned nine hundred acres on Lake Michigan's shore. Felt hired Grand Rapids architect Frederick P. Allen to design a residence for the estate in 1927. The estate was a summer playground for Felt and his Chicago friends and associates containing a tennis court, bathhouse, deer park, small zoo, and a series of skyline drives he constructed along the top of the sand dunes. Felt built two bathhouses that provided access to the beach, one the bathhouses he opened to the public. He was also involved with dune conservation and planted over three thousand trees to stop dune erosion. The estate was an actual working farm and Felt took pride in the quality of his orchards and fruit. He developed an irrigation system activated by the wave action on Lake Michigan and supplemented by a windmill. He even built a dock so that he could ship his fruit directly to the Chicago market.



**John D. Williamson Residence  
(Belvedere Bed and Breakfast)**  
3656 Blue Star Highway, Saugatuck

This Italian Renaissance Revival style home was built in 1912 as a summer residence for the John D. Williamson family of Chicago. Williamson was the vice president of People's Gas and Electric Company. The house was designed by the Chicago architectural firm of Perkins, Fellows, and Hamilton. Williams intended to develop a working farm at the site.



## Marigold Lodge

116 Hazel Avenue, Holland

Egbert H. Gold, president of the Chicago-based Vapor Car Company made his fortune through the invention of a heating system that was adopted for use by the railroads. In 1919 he built Marigold Lodge, one of the first summer resort homes constructed on Lake Macatawa in Holland in the Waukazoo Resort. Chicago architects Thomas Eddy Tallmadge, a strong supporter of the Ox Bow School of Painting in Saugatuck, and his partner Vernon Watson designed the Prairie style stucco house. The grounds were landscaped with plants from England and the Netherlands.



## Lakewood Farm and Zoo

264 Lakeshore, Holland

George F. Goetz was a coal magnate from the city of Chicago. In 1910 he purchased seventy acres of land north of Holland, in what became Park Township, to build a summer estate. He added sixty-three acres in 1916, and the farm eventually grew to 253 acres. Goetz operated a working farm on the site, growing fruit and vegetables, and was known for his prize chickens. Goetz was most known for his collection of exotic animals. He purchased his first in

1913 and eventually constructed a zoo, which he opened to the public attracting up to twenty thousand people each summer. A popular feature of the zoo was Nancy the elephant. Goetz also built cottages, a botanical garden, and a movie theater on his estate. In 1928 the Ottawa County Road Commission changed the name of the Alpena Beach Road to Lakewood Boulevard in honor of Goetz's farm after Goetz donated fifteen thousand dollars for paving the road. In 1930 Goetz participated in a land exchange with Ottawa County that resulted in the creation of Tunnel Park on Lakeshore Road. Goetz was forced to close his zoo in 1933 after a severe storm damaged many of the animal habitats. Because of the Great Depression, the cost of repair was prohibitive and Goetz sent the majority of the animals to the newly established Brookfield Zoo in Chicago. The Goetz home was purchased in 2007 and is being rehabilitated as a private residence.

The following Country Life estates once existed in the project area but have since been demolished:

- **Bluffwood Farm, Stevensville**

Irwin Rew of Evanston, Illinois, who developed the DeKalb County Gas Company, and his wife Katharine purchased thirty-five acres of Lake Michigan shore land near Stevensville and maintained a working fruit farm on the site known as Bluffwood Farm. The house, built in 1916, had sixteen rooms. Rew participated in early reforestation efforts by planting much of the land with pines and hemlocks. Bluffwood Farm was later

purchased by local developer Shag Sarkisian, the original owner of the Frank Lloyd Wright designed Snowflake Motel.

- **Jacobia, Hagar Township, Berrien County**

Henry Jacobs was an inventor who made his fortune designing improvements for railroad cars. Based in Chicago, Jacobs purchased a farm owned by George Freemeyer in Hagar Township in 1914 in order to build a summer home. Jacobs eventually purchased one hundred and eighty acres and built a water tower with a "Hungarian baronial" look.

Jacobs also built what is today Hagar Shore Road. Jacobs made the farm his permanent home in 1918 but died soon after. Today, almost nothing remains of the estate.

Information on the following estates was found but the fate of these estates is not known.

- **Hadleigh Farm, Royalton, Berrien County.** Also known as the W. Woodbridge Estate the house was designed by Pond and Pond, architects from Chicago.

- **Augustus Perrotet, Ganges, Allegan County.** Perrotet purchased eighty acres on the Lake Michigan shore with the intention of developing a model farm on the site. He created a romantically landscaped grove along the lakeshore that also served as a windbreak combining conservation and design. Perrotet was said to have all the taste of an artist combined with the skill of a practical horticulturist.

- **Bertram Sippy, Ludington, Mason County.** Sippy was a Chicago doctor who created a fourteen hundred-acre ranch near Ludington. The buildings burned in the early 1920s but there were plans to replace them in 1925 according to an entry in the August 25, 1925, *Michigan Contractor and Builder*. It is unknown if this occurred and if the residence is still standing.

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## Diners

The diner is a product of the industrialization of American society and merits its strong and continued association with America's blue-collar workers. Diners were created in the late nineteenth century to serve meals to factory employees working the night shift. Because regular restaurants closed early in the evening, night shift workers, often called nighthawks, had nowhere to eat. Walter Scott of Providence, Rhode Island, was the first to convert an old freight wagon into a "lunch wagon" to feed night shift workers. This first lunch wagon provided shelter only for Scott, who sat inside and served food through openings cut to face both the sidewalk and the street. The lunch wagon business took off when Sam Jones of Worcester, Massachusetts, designed and constructed the first purpose-built lunch wagon. Jones' lunch wagon was the first to allow customers to actually enter and stand protected from the elements while their meals were cooked. On September 1, 1891, the first patent for a lunch wagon design was awarded to Charles H. Palmer.

In 1897 T. H. Buckley of Worcester, Massachusetts, established what we still think of today as the classic diner aesthetic when he introduced the White House Café lunch wagon series. The exterior of these wagons was painted a bright, sanitary white and windows of frosted glass with red and blue flash glass encircled the wagon on all sides. The first lunch wagon with interior seating was introduced in 1905. This wagon had a center kitchen area surrounded by a U-shaped service counter. An eating shelf with stools encircled the perimeter of the wagon's interior. This style set the standard for the interior floor plan of diners for years to come.

In the 1920s the term "lunch wagon" was replaced with the term "diner," which better reflected the expanded menus that included breakfast, lunch, and dinner all available 24-hours a day. Although turn of the century diners were located near factories in urban areas, when the automobile became the primary mode of transportation they began showing up along roadsides and highways, marking the beginning of the "roadhouse." A phenomenon of the 1920s was the use of the building or site itself as a draw or advertisement resulting in a vernacular form of folk art that is today referred to as "Roadside Architecture." A diner owner might add detailing to a building to make it resemble a teapot or construct a large statue of an elephant or a duck in front of the building simply to attract attention. Another trend of the 1920s was an effort to standardize both food preparation and building design resulting in what became known as a chain restaurant. One of the earliest and most successful restaurant chains was the White Castle hamburger restaurant chain of Wichita, Kansas. White Castle buildings had a distinctive castle shape covered in white porcelain enamel panels. The interior was all stainless steel for easy cleaning. In 1928 an organization known as the Hi-Way Diners Club of New England, Inc. was created with the goal of creating a chain of diners along national highways that would be recognizable by auto tourists and provide a quality of service on which they could rely.

During the Depression diners had to cut back by limiting the menu and streamlining operations so that one cook would be sufficient if the restaurant was to survive the economically difficult times. As a result, the demand for smaller diner units grew, prompting the creation of the "dinette" designed especially for the short-order trade. Stainless steel diners were built between 1939 and 1942 and quickly became cultural icons. These diners looked like railroad cars and reflected the streamlined, speed-inspired Art Moderne style that industrial designers were applying to trains and automobiles. The pre-fabricated buildings were built at the factory and then hauled to the site. The interiors were typically stainless steel while the exteriors were either of steel or porcelain enamel panels. This era saw the appearance and use of several new materials, such as Formica, Naugahyde, glass blocks, and stainless steel used in diner construction.

Another important innovation in diner design occurred in 1941 known as the "split diner." Attributed to Paramount Diners, the design allowed two or more sections of a prefabricated diner to be assembled on-site. This feature became especially important as baby boomer families

began to dine out in the 1950s--diners had to grow to accommodate the crowds. These models were almost always built in multiple sections.

As fast food, chain restaurants began to dominate the roadside market the owners of non-chain restaurants had to find a way to stand out and draw in customers. In the early 1950s they turned to a bold, futuristic look based on Modern architecture. The look is said to have originated with the architect John Lautner, a native of Marquette, Michigan, who practiced in Los Angeles, California, when Lautner designed three diners for the Coffee Dan's restaurant chain. As a result, the term "diner" was replaced in the 1950s by the term "coffee shop." In 1949 Lautner designed a Modern style coffee shop in Los Angeles that was called "Googie's." This later became a common name for the architectural style associated with 1950s and 1960s diner architecture. The Modern or "Googie" coffee shop is characterized by a clean uncluttered look with large areas of plate glass; bold angles; sweeping, cantilevered roof lines; exposed steel beams and the use of decorative starburst or boomerang shapes.

At the same time that the ultra modern Googie diners began to appear on the West Coast, communities in the East were looking to the past to set their buildings apart, marking the birth of the "colonial diner." This new style of diner was the result of city planning boards, recently created out of the urban-renewal craze of the 1960s, who began to legislate architectural styles used in communities. Planning boards did not approve of flashy stainless steel diners and their bright neon signs. In many regions of the country, new diners had to conform to strict regulations that banned things like stainless steel and even the word "diner." Colonial diners were typically single story, flat roofed buildings made of concrete, brick or stone. They typically contained picture windows and often had a large hearth at one end. The buildings looked more substantial and permanent and were referred to as "family restaurants" rather than diners.

There were once dozens of "mom and pop" diners found throughout West Michigan; many were in business for thirty or more years. Most succumbed to the standardization brought on by the popularity of chain restaurants in the 1970s and had to close. Some of the diners still found in the project area include:



**13967 M-140, South Haven**  
Ma's Coffee Pot

Ma's Coffee Pot is a Double Deluxe Model 2449 Valentine Diner from the 1960s. Arthur Valentine founded the Valentine Lunch System in the 1920s in Wichita, Kansas. By the 1930s Valentine operated thirty diners himself and offered his pre-fabricated buildings for sale to other potential diner operators. While World War II

temporarily halted production of the diners, Valentine began manufacturing diners again in 1947. Valentine Diners have two distinguishing characteristics a wall safe located inside the door featuring a heart with an arrow through it and in diners built after 1950 there is typically a serial plate with the Valentine name.





**1063 Chambers Street, South Haven**  
Chuck's Cafe

Chuck's is a vernacular concrete block building with a lunch counter.



**151 W. Muskegon, Muskegon**  
U.S. 31 Barbeque

This 1960s era diner is a restrained version of "Googie" coffee shop architecture.



**9489 Red Arrow Highway, Bridgman**  
Get-Away-Saloon

Built around 1950, this diner displays characteristics of a typical colonial style diner including picture windows and a hearth.



## 1971 S. Sherman, Muskegon Cherokee Restaurant

Built in the 1960s, the interior of the Cherokee is typical of a “family restaurant” of the period. The teepee entryway harkens back to roadside architecture of the 1920s.

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## Drive-In Restaurants

The invention of take-out food service is attributed to Harold Fortune who owned a popular drugstore in Memphis, Tennessee in 1905. The first curbside restaurant that catered to automobile drive-up traffic was the Pig Stand established in 1920 in Dallas, Texas. At early drive-ins, patrons would sit in their cars while a carhop would come to the window to take their order. The food would be delivered on a tray that hung over the outside of the partially rolled down window. When the meal was complete, the customer would turn on their headlights and the carhop would return to remove the tray. The popularity of drive-ins peaked in the 1950s when automobile culture was at its height in America. Drive-ins in Southern California were famous for their outrageous neon lights and Modern architecture. Carhops often wore roller skates to speed up the delivery of meals. Innovations such as the introduction of a speaker system, in which the customer pushed a button to order, decreased the time it took to receive a meal. Early drive-ins were typically locally owned, one of a kind, "mom and pop" restaurants, or small regional chains. The White Castle hamburger stands of Wichita, Kansas, are credited with developing the idea of "fast food" where a limited menu is offered so that food can be prepared quickly. In 1948 the McDonald brothers developed a system of "Speedee Service" that merged the concept of the drive-in and fast food. The idea was perfected and promoted into a national phenomenon under the McDonald's brand by Ray Croc.

The Dog 'n Suds drive-in restaurant chain was created in 1953 by two music teachers at the University of Illinois-Champaign, James Griggs and Don Hamacher, looking for summer employment. The bright, cheery building design and quality root beer and Coney dogs turned the business into an overnight success, and soon franchises were opening up across the mid-West. By the 1970s there were six hundred Dog 'n Suds franchises located in thirty-eight states. Corporate in-fighting led to the decline of the chain and today there are only sixteen Dog 'n Suds locations still in operation, two of which are in the project area.



**Dog 'n Suds**  
4454 Dowling, Montague

Opened in 1963 by a Montague teacher who operated the stand during the summer, it was purchased by the current owner in 1966.





## Dog 'n Suds

4421 Grand Haven Road, Muskegon

This Dog 'n Suds was purchased and restored by the owner of the Montague restaurant.

Other drive-ins in the project area include:



## Mikey's Drive-In

9096 Red Arrow Highway, Bridgman



## Smokin' Woody's

12620 Red Arrow Highway, Stevensville



## Henry's Hamburgers

1761 Fair Avenue (M-139), Benton Harbor

Henry's hamburgers opened 1959. The building has been rebuilt but the original sign is still in use.



## Roxy's Drive-In

247 E. Main Street, Benton Harbor



## Roxy's Hamburger

2926 Cleveland Road, Saint Joseph





**50's Drive In**  
8510 M-140, South Haven



**Pronto Pup**  
313 S. Harbor Avenue, Grand Haven

More of a walk-up than a drive-in, Pronto Pup was established in 1947 by Dr. John Montgomery of Spring Lake. Pronto Pup was a hot dog stand franchise based on a Tex Mex recipe for a corn dog coating created by Alex Sulmonetti of Texas. Montgomery had the franchises for Ottawa and Muskegon counties. His nephew Charles Nelson operated the Grand Haven store and it still remains in the Nelson family.



**Masar's Drive-In**  
3690 Airline, Muskegon

The Masar's originally owned a restaurant on Apple Avenue in Muskegon that was established in the 1940s. The family recently purchased this drive-in, which was a former A & W Drive-in Restaurant.

## Gas Stations

When the automobile first came on the scene there was no infrastructure in place for refueling or maintaining them. Gas had to be hand filtered at home by pouring it through rags, a process that was rather dangerous. Around 1905, a fueling device that worked by gravity was invented. The gas was stored in an elevated tank and would run down through a flexible hose that contained a built-in filtering system. When storeowners realized they could make a little extra money and attract a few more customers by providing gasoline to their patrons, these elevated tanks sprang up along curbsides in downtown commercial areas. As the number of automobile owners began to rapidly increase, the elevated gas tanks became a safety hazard and created dangerous traffic conditions.

The first filling station built on a dedicated site was reportedly built in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1905. In 1906 John Tokheim introduced an improved gas pump with a glass dome and a measuring cylinder. It was the Standard Oil Company of California that took the filling station to a new level in 1907. The company created a standardized plan for its buildings so that motorists would easily recognize them. The tiny buildings were really just walls of windows so that at night, with the lights on, the station would shine like a beacon guiding motorists to it. The company purposefully built its stations in remote areas to encourage automobile owners to travel farther distances.

By the 1920s the number of gas stations on the American landscape had increased dramatically.



Prussa's Gas Station, Union Pier

Many were simply wooden sheds that provided the basic necessities for keeping an automobile running. In order to stand out among the mass of gas stations that existed, some station owners began using an unusual twist to the architecture of their building to attract attention. Suddenly, a rash of folk art gas stations began sweeping the country. These independently owned "mom and pop" stations were constructed to catch the eye of the passing motorist by their uniqueness. The buildings were made to look like coffee pots, teepees, or dinosaurs—a host of different objects. In North Carolina a Shell gas station owner built his stations of poured concrete in the shape of a shell; in Wisconsin a station owner

constructed stations in the shape of Chinese pagodas; in Arizona

stations were built of petrified wood. Today known as Roadside Architecture, these whimsical landmarks can still be found along some of nation's earliest highways. Another development from this period was the inclusion of a covered overhang to protect patrons from the elements as they pumped gas. Gas stations were typically constructed of wood frame or stone and the canopies supported by two simple columns. These little gas stations were as ubiquitous in America's landscape as Ford's Model T.



Blue Star Highway, Allegan County



Old M-11, Berrien County



Grand Haven Road, Ottawa County



Oceana Drive, Oceana County



*Red Arrow Highway, St. Joseph*

suburbs did not want unsightly filling stations near their homes and some of the nation's first zoning laws were put into place to regulate where a filling station could be built. As a result, a grassroots movement to improve the aesthetics of the filling station came into being. In response to complaints, the oil companies developed standard designs for their stations that were based on the popular architectural styles being used in the nation's suburbs. For example, Pure Oil, one of the first oil companies to introduce a suburban service station design, created the easily recognizable small English Cottage of white painted brick with a bright, blue roof. Standard Oil's design had a Mediterranean flair with a stucco finish and terra cotta tile roof. Other companies introduced stations using Tudor Revival, Classical Revival and Greek Revival styles. These well kept, well designed stations often served as an entry focal point into a neighborhood.

By the 1930s automobile travel had become a part of the American way of life. Industrialization had resulted in the development of a middle class that could afford to move out into suburbs in order to escape the dirt and grime of the city. Though the first suburbs were accessed by interurban trains, as the automobile became the nation's dominant form of transportation suburbanites began commuting by car. Automobile companies hired industrial designers to improve the look and comfort of their automobiles and the boxy Model T gave way to the long, sleek roadster with glistening chrome trim and white wall balloon tires. Residents in the newly constructed



*Ludington Avenue, Ludington*



*Red Arrow Highway, Saint Joseph*

In 1937 the Texaco Oil Company hired a pioneer in industrial design, Walter Dorwin Teague, to create a new standardized service station building for the company. Teague's strikingly simple design, based on the International style popularized by the Bauhaus School of Design in Europe, completely changed the way gas stations were constructed as well as the way they were viewed by the public. Teague's Texaco station was a simple box sided in gleaming white porcelain panels. It featured an office area of ceiling to floor plate glass and two garage bays. It was stripped of all decoration except for two stripes of green porcelain enamel at the roofline and a few red stars that mimicked the company's logo. Occasionally an overhang with rounded corners was incorporated. These bright, shining buildings were symbols of safety, cleanliness and service wherever a motorist traveled in the United States. Soon other oil companies adopted Teague's radical new design and it dominated the American landscape throughout the 1940s and 1950s.



*Walter Dorwin Teague's Texaco Station Design*



Blue Star Highway, Lakeside, Berrien County



Peck Street, Muskegon



1960 era gas station, Benton Harbor

The post-World War II Modern architecture movement influenced the style of gas stations constructed in the 1960s. The bold design style of this era had a futuristic look with geometric or curving shapes and oversized, upswept roofs. Phillips 66 gas stations from the 1960s are one of the best expressions of this style with their soaring triangular overhangs.

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## **Ice Cream Stands**

The concept of frozen desserts has been around for hundreds of years, but ice cream as we know it today is based on gelato, which was developed in Italy in the 1500s. In America, ice cream didn't gain mass popularity until 1843 when the hand crank ice cream churn was invented. For many years ice cream production was limited due to the necessity for hand cutting ice. The first large scale commercial Jacob Fussell reportedly opened ice cream plant in 1851. In 1870 the development of industrial refrigeration caused a boom in ice cream production and consumption. The ice cream cone gained popularity during the 1904 World's Fair in Saint Louis, Missouri. A commercial continuous process freezer was patented in 1926, which enabled the mass production of ice cream.

The origin of soft serve ice cream is unclear. The invention of frozen custard is attributed to Thomas Carvellus of New York who sold it at Coney Island in 1919. The first soft serve ice cream machine was placed in commercial production in 1939. Shortly thereafter, Carvellus opened a number of Carvel Ice Cream stands on the East Coast. In 1940 the McCullough family of Joliet, Illinois opened the first Dairy Queen store.

Ice cream stands of the 1950s and 1960s were typically made of concrete block with a flat roof. There were large plate glass windows at the front with sliding window openings. Some classic examples of ice cream stands found in the project area include:



**Former Ice Cream Stand**  
Red Arrow Highway, Lakeside



**Dairy Korner**  
1605 Lakeview, Saint Joseph



**Sherman's Ice Cream**  
Established as Sherman's Dairy in 1916, in the 1950's they developed their own ice cream recipe and converted the dairy to an ice cream bar.

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**Dairy Treat**  
218 S. Harbor, Grand Haven

Opened as a Dairy Queen in the 1960s, it operated as a franchise until 1970.



**House of Flavors**  
110 N. Williams, Ludington

The Neal family entered with dairy business in 1948 when they purchased a partnership in Ludington's existing Miller Dairy and changed the name to Park Dairy. In 1959 the business was converted solely to ice cream production and the name was changed to House of Flavors. At one time the company operated twelve franchise restaurants around Michigan. Today, only this location is still operated by the Neal family.

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## Local Brickworks and Quarries

### Veneklasen Brick

Veneklasen Brick is the local name given to polychromatic brickwork that decorates over one hundred buildings in Allegan and Ottawa counties. The style is associated with Dutch immigrants that settled the area in the late nineteenth century. According to Michael Douma in his book *Veneklasen Brick*, the pattern work was originally found in homes in the provinces of Overijssel, Drenthe, and Groningen in the Netherlands from which the Dutch that settled West Michigan came. It can also be found in areas of Dutch settlement in New York State. In Michigan, a similar type of polychromatic brickwork can be found in farmhouses in the Thumb and in Southeast Michigan near Monroe.

In West Michigan, the style is attributed to Jan Veneklasen and his son, Berend, who operated a number of brickyards throughout the area, which were eventually incorporated under the name Zeeland Brick Company. Each yard produced a different color of brick, depending on the natural clay deposits found at a specific location. For example, the Veneklasen yard in Grogninen, Michigan, produced an orange red brick while the Zeeland, Michigan, yard produced a cream colored brick.

The use of polychromatic brickwork was most widespread between 1870 and 1910. While most of the buildings using this style are houses, it was sometimes used for schools, churches—even a factory building in Ionia. The houses exhibit typical Michigan construction and, beyond the decorative elements, show little influence of other Dutch house building techniques. Common brickwork patterns include rustic diamond shapes and inverted pyramids. Occasionally a cross or religious symbol is found. Bricks would be set in a variety of ways, on end, lengthwise, etc. to achieve the pattern. In an article in the May/June issue of *Michigan History* magazine, Fred van Hartesveldt points out that the decoration is usually found under the eaves, in gable ends, and/or around the window hoods. Van Hartesveldt identifies six common patterns used for window hoods and twelve patterns used for gables. Patterns were often repeated over and under each other for a more elaborate decorative effect.

Though, no one has yet been able to determine how or where the use of this decorative brickwork started in the Holland (Michigan) area, credit is generally given to Jan Veneklasen himself. According to Douma, Veneklasen's ancestral home in the Netherlands incorporated the polychromatic decoration and he built a large brick home on a prominent hill in Zeeland, Michigan, that utilized the technique. Six Veneklasen brick homes can be found between Thirteenth and Central Streets in Holland. They were designed by Pieter Ossting & Son and built between 1890 and 1897 for Tunis Keppell who wanted to provide affordable housing for Holland's working class.

### Pentwater Brick

The Middlesex Brick and Tile Company was founded in Pentwater in 1883 by Charles Mears to take advantage of clay deposits discovered on the northeast end of Pentwater Lake. Though unsuccessful at first, the company was reorganized in 1884 under F. O. Gardner as the Pentwater Brick Company. The company quit production in the late 1890s.

Pentwater brick is a distinctive yellow brick, similar to the more well known cream brick manufactured in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. A



Peck Street, Muskegon



Hancock Street, Pentwater

number of commercial, residential, and religious buildings in the Pentwater, Hart, and Shelby area were constructed of Pentwater brick. According to the West Michigan Shoreline Historic Architecture Survey conducted in 1985, the following resources are known to be built of Pentwater Brick

- 9 Church Street, Hart
- 509 Church Street, Hart
- 16 S. Courtland, Hart
- 303 S. Courtland, Hart
- 224 S. State Street, Hart
- 185 Hancock Street, Pentwater

## Beretschy Brick and Tile Company

Watson Dudley founded the Grand Haven/Spring Lake area's first brick company in 1860 on a clay deposit discovered on the Soule property. When that deposit had been exhausted, the company was reorganized under the name of Beretschy Brick and Tile Company and moved to a deposit located on the western shore of Spring Lake three miles north of Grand Haven near Stahl's Bayou. Buildings in the Grand Haven area that are known to have been constructed with Beretschy brick included:

- The old and new Ottawa County Jails
- Savidge Block, Grand Haven
- Grand Haven City Hall, Grand Haven
- Ottawa County Poor House
- Globe Match Factory Building
- America Mirror and Beveling Company Building
- Grand Haven Electric Plant, Grand Haven
- Nichols Block, Grand Haven
- Boyden Reichard Building

## Quarries

### Shelby Limestone

A number of limestone quarries existed in Oceana County near Shelby. According to *Oceana Pioneers & Business Men of Today* published in 1890 the limestone was of a "very superior quality but of a dark color."



Church with Shelby Sandstone details,  
Shelby

### Waverly Sandstone

Waverly sandstone, a bluish gray stone first discovered in Waverly, Ohio, was found about one mile east of the city of Holland and a quarry was established in 1857. The stones for the foundation of Van Vleck Hall at Hope College were quarried there. By 1867 Waverly sandstone was being used across West Michigan for factories, schools, and courthouses, such as the Allegan County Courthouse. In 1889 the Waverly Stone Company was incorporated. The Holland City Bank building is made of Waverly sandstone.



1892 Clock Tower built of Waverly  
Sandstone, River Street, Holland

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## Log Construction

The earliest homes built in Michigan were typically made of log since timber was one of the most plentiful resources available to the early pioneers. The diverse ethnic groups that settled in Michigan--German, Norwegian, Swedish and others--brought with them the traditional building techniques of their homeland. As a result a variety of log building styles are visible on Michigan's landscape. Each ethnic tradition had its own construction style and some of the significant features that can serve as indicators include whether the log was left round or squared, notching techniques, and chinking widths. In later years, half timbering—cutting the logs in half so that the interior of the building had a smoother wall surface—was common. Logs were typically stripped of their bark to eliminate infestation from insects. Occasionally, in later resort cabin construction, the bark might be left on to create a rough, romantic appearance.

Only a few of the log cabins originally built by pioneers as temporary homes have survived. Some have been incorporated into more permanent structures while others were left to disintegrate, or when a larger, frame house was built the log house was dismantled and the timber used for other purposes. The majority of the log construction buildings found in the project area relate to the region's tourism industry, not to the early settlement period. In the 1920s and 1930s log construction was often used for tourist cabins, park buildings, camp structures and hunting and fishing lodges. These log structures were meant to create a romanticized version of rustic life in the great woods. In the 1930s, probably due to publicity surrounding restoration work at national historic sites like Williamsburg and Jamestown in Virginia, there was a national trend to construct log cabins using original building techniques. They served as both a memorial to a lost way of life and as a teaching tool to learn about the past. During the Great Depression, the National Park Service developed a rustic architecture style for national and state park buildings that incorporated log and stone construction. The purpose was to develop an architectural style that blended into the natural landscape.

The list below provides an example of the wide range of log buildings that can be found throughout the project area.

- **Michiana**

New Buffalo Township, Berrien County

Michiana is a resort community developed in 1922 by the Long Beach Company. The rustic cabins were meant to provide a sharp contrast to Chicago's city life and provide purchasers with a true "north woods" experience. A German-Swiss builder, Bill Jash, was responsible for some of the best designs and construction. Over one hundred log cabins were built in the community.



- **Judy's Motel and Campground**

8891 U.S. 12, New Buffalo

Log tourist cabins were meant to provide automobile travelers with an idealized version of a cabin in the woods. These cabins were probably built circa 1920. A 1940s postcard shows that Judy's was once known as Judy's Log Cabin Court.



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- **Mary's City of David**

1158 E. Britain Avenue, Benton Harbor

In the 1920s Mary's City of David constructed a resort that became popular with Jewish tourists. There are four log cabins on the site.



- **Keppel Log Cabin**

Lakewood & 168<sup>th</sup> Street, Albert C. Keppel Forest and Wilderness Area, Ottawa County

This cabin is a replica of one of the first log cabins built in the Holland area by a Dutch settler, Teunis Keppel, who arrived in 1847 with the Van Raalte colony. Albert Keppel built the replica in 1947 on a forty-acre site he donated to Holland public schools as a nature center.



- **Blockhouse, Muskegon State Park**

Scenic Drive, Muskegon County

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built the original log blockhouse in 1935 when federal relief money was used to improve the state park. It burned in 1962 and this replica was built in 1964.



- **Pioneer Park**

Scenic Drive, Muskegon

Built by the WPA as a mess hall in 1936, the building is of vertical log construction.



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- **Hunter's Lodge**  
2790 Blue Star Highway, Saugatuck

A 1930s era log motel.



- **Glaser's Glenn Log Resort**  
6900 Hill Street, Whitehall

The resort consists of five cabins of vertical log construction.



- **Smert's Resort at Bass Lake,**  
6567 S. Schlick, Pentwater

There are three log cabins at this resort, and while the exteriors remain intact, the interiors have been modernized. Reportedly there was already a log trapper's cabin existing on the property when it was purchased by Charles Mears in 1854. That cabin was incorporated into what is today known as Slabside Cabin. Charles Mears reportedly built a second log cabin on the site, Root Cottage. The third log cabin, Hideway Cottage, was built by Thomas Schlick around 1920 when he operated Schlick's Resort.



- **Log Resort Cabins**  
Pentwater

Probably built circa 1930 these cabins are good examples of privately owned cottages commonly found in Michigan's forests and around its interior lakes. The log cabin continued to be a popular choice for woodland retreats throughout the 1940s and 1950s.



The Log Cabin Society of Michigan has identified the following log cabins within the project area:

- **Jakway Log Cabin, 1250 Hillandale, Benton Township, Berrien County.** Descendants of the Jakway family, Larry and Mike Culby, moved this cabin from its original location at the juncture of Blue Creek and the Paw Paw River, three miles away from the present site. The Jakway family arrived in Berrien County 1839. This cabin was built in 1895 by James Jenks Jakway, who served as a state representative in 1913. The cabin is located on Hillandale Road, 2 ½ miles east of I-94 and is not open to the public
- **Log Tourist Cabins, House of David Trailer Court, M-139 Benton Township, Berrien County.** Three log cabins. Also a log cabin on the grounds of the House of David, now off-limits to the public, can be viewed from public streets off Britain Avenue on Eureka (other log cabins off Blaine were torn down in fall 1997.)
- **Log Home, 560 W. May Street, Benton Harbor, Berrien County.** Dr. Alan Honey built a log building circa 1933 for use as a dentist office. He used twelve-inch square beams taken from the old south pier by Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers. The building is located near the Saint Joseph River harbor next to Pier 1,000 Marina on May Street.
- **Higman Park Log Cabin, 185 Higman Park, Benton Harbor, Berrien County.** Built in 1943 by Dr. Bouton Sowers using old railroad ties and doors from the old Benton Harbor railroad station.
- **Log Home, 2309 Lane Drive, Saint Joseph, Berrien County.** This log home reportedly served as a stagecoach stop on land owned by a farmer named Lane. The cabin was occupied by his hired man and was located on a nearby ravine. It was moved to the present site in 1923.
- **Log Cabin, Sixty-eighth Street, South Haven, Van Buren County.** Located at the Michigan Flywheelers Museum, this log cabin was built in 1989 by Ed and Kathleen Hills.

- **Two-Story Log Cabin, Fifty-fifth Street, Pullman, Allegan County.**
- **The Dunningville Cabin, 124th Street, Fennville, Allegan County.** Located at Crane Pie Pantry Restaurant & Cider Mill, the cabin was built of railroad ties in 1914. It was moved from Dunningville in 1987 by Ed Zuverink.
- **Chief Cobmoosa Home, Lincoln & Union Streets, Hart Historic District, Hart, Ocean County.** Rebuilt log cabin.
- **1687 S. Lakeshore Drive, White Pine Village, Ludington, Mason County.** The museum includes two restored nineteenth century log cabins: the Quevillon Trapper's Cabin and Cole's General Store.

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## Pre-cut Kit Houses

As the nation's population grew rapidly in the nineteenth century, the search for housing that was affordable for the average citizen and that could be built quickly became paramount. In part because of its strong lumber industry, Michigan became a leader in the field. In the late nineteenth century the use of house plan books called pattern books were the first attempt to standardize housing. An architect or builder would develop a series of house plans published in a book that could be purchased by a homeowner or builder. A Grand Rapids architect, Jacob Daverman, became one of the nations' most successful pattern books promoters, his work often appeared in popular magazines such as *Ladies Home Journal*. A house plan from a pattern book would be copied and adapted to local materials and implemented by a local builder.

At the turn of the century experimentation with prefabricated or pre-cut housing began in an attempt to industrialize house production. A "kit house," as they were sometimes called, contained all the materials needed to build a house, pre-cut and numbered, so that anyone could put it together on site. The original kit homes were small and were typically used for temporary housing needs such as a summer cottage. The first company credited with promoting pre-cut homes was the Aladdin Company of Bay City, Michigan, in 1906. Established by Otto and William Sovereign, the company sold over seventy-five thousand "ready-bilt" homes throughout its seventy-five year history. Sears, Roebuck and Company followed suit in 1908 establishing the Sears Modern Home program that operated until 1940. Throughout its history Sears developed four hundred and forty-seven different home styles and sold one hundred thousand pre-cut homes. Sears sold three levels of pre-cut homes; the high end *Honor Bilt*, the *Standard Built*, a more moderately priced home; and *Simplex Sectional* homes, which were typically smaller in scale and un-insulated—ideal for summer cottages. Sears also accommodated homeowners that designed their own homes and submitted blueprints to Sears, which would then cut the materials for them. Sears' homes were less expensive than homes constructed by local builders because the materials could be mass-produced lowering production costs. Pre-cut materials also reduced assembly time significantly. Sears homes used new materials such as drywall and asphalt shingles that reduced costs and enabled fast construction. Sears promoted the use of modern conveniences of heating and indoor bathrooms as well. The lumber for kit homes was usually stamped with the company name and often an assembly number.

Due their popularity, pre-cut home kits were soon being offered by companies such Montgomery Ward, Sterling, and Gordon Van Tine. In addition to homes, these companies offered a full line of utility buildings such as garages, barns, gas stations, chicken coops, etc. Kit buildings were inexpensive, easy to construct, affordable dwellings for Americans. By 1926 Sears, Roebuck and Company had become the largest manufacturer of pre-cut homes.

Reportedly the first homes built in Grand Beach in Berrien County were Sears pre-cut homes. It is likely that a large number of kit or pre-cut cottages can be found throughout the project area and more research should be done to determine their locations.

## Economy Portable Housing Company

The Economy Portable Housing Company was a local company based in West Chicago, Illinois, that offered a series of distinctive hexagon-shaped pre-cut buildings for use as farm buildings, tourist cabins, restaurants, garages and roadside stands. Their brochures noted that their sectional portable buildings were "Not ready cut but ready built. Ready to erect and use immediately at a minimum cost." The roadside stand kit came in three basic sizes: 10 x 12, 12 x14, and 16 x18. The roof was extended by twelve inches and screen openings were provided on three sides. Extensions could be added to enlarge any structure.

This roadside stand on Lakeshore Drive in Lakeside exhibits the characteristics of an Economy Portable Housing Company roadside stand. Berrien County is also home to a resort community made up of Economy Portable Housing Company tourist cabins, the Shady Shores Resort at 51256 Garrett Road, Dowagiac, in the Sister Lakes region. The Nevins family has operated the resort since 1926.



## Prefabricated Houses

In the 1940s manufacturing was directed to meet the needs of World War II and plants and forges worked non-stop. Cities began experiencing housing shortages of almost desperate proportions due to the rapid influx of labor and a ban on using materials for non-military purposes. There was an immediate need for inexpensive housing that could be erected quickly. One solution was the introduction of pre-fabricated housing. Pre-fabricated housing differs from kit housing in that significant portions of the structure, such as end trusses or the sidewall framing, were pre-assembled at a plant and shipped to the site. The *Muskegon Chronicle* on June 7, 1941, reported that the first pre-fabricated house to be erected in the Muskegon area was built at 517 Hoyt in Muskegon Heights in 1941 for a nurse, Florence Orcutt Boomer. The 33 x 25 foot house had five rooms and was developed by the Purdue University School of Engineering.

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## Quonset Huts

The Quonset hut is a portable semicircular, corrugated metal building that was developed for shelter needs during World War II. Based on a design by British Army Engineer Lieutenant Colonel Peter Norman Nissen, the first semicircular corrugated metal building was called the Nissen Bow Hut and was used to house British troops during World War I. When President Franklin Roosevelt began preliminary preparations for America to enter the European war in 1941, the U.S. Navy contracted with George A. Fuller and Company and the Merritt-Chapman and Scott Corporation to build a plant at Quonset Point, Rhode Island, to manufacture temporary housing units for the military. Architect Otto Brandenberger, a member of the Fuller Company team, was assigned the task of redesigning the Nissen Bow Hut. The navy had two requirements: the huts had to have an arch shape to deflect shells and they had to be easy to assemble quickly. Brandenberger designed the first American Quonset hut, which became known as the T-Rib Quonset. At first, Brandenberger's metal hut was still called a Nissen hut, but in July 1941 a Navy commander decreed it be called the "Quonset hut" to avoid any issue of patent infringement. The T-Rib Quonset was sixteen by thirty-six feet and incorporated one-inch of wadded paper insulation and an interior wall of thin pressed wood. Over eight thousand and two hundred T-Rib Quonset huts were produced by the navy's plant at Quonset Point by the end of 1941. In October 1941 the hut was redesigned because it was thought there was too much wasted space in the units due to the angle of the arch—furniture could not be put up against the walls. As a result a straight four-foot wall was incorporated at the base of the unit under an arched roof. The redesign also included a thinner frame and the reduction of the number of sections from three to two.

After Pearl Harbor when the need for a large number of huts increased substantially, the contract for the production of the Quonset hut was given to Stran-Steel, a division of the Great Lakes Steel Corporation based in the Penobscot Building in Detroit. In 1942 Stran-Steel again redesigned the hut returning to the full arch design of the original because it was easier to assemble. This became the standard design used for the duration of the war and, by the end of World War II, over 120,000 Quonset huts had been produced. It became the job of the Navy Seabees to erect them all over the world. The Quonset hut became a "heroic icon" on the world landscape and a served as a home away from home for millions of American soldiers.

After the war, Stran-Steel began marketing the Quonset hut for other uses. They portrayed the Quonset hut as efficient and flexible with modern clean lines able to meet the needs of the housing shortage after the war. Their efforts were enhanced when some of the world's most noted modern architects, including Eero Saarinen and Bruce Goff, used the Quonset hut as the basis for their pioneering designs in pre-fabricated housing. Camps of Quonset huts were set up at universities across the country to serve as married student housing when thousands of veterans took advantage of the G.I. Bill to attend college. Stran-Steel ran advertisements in trade magazines touting the Quonset huts as a "quick, low-cost answer to your building problem whether you want a smart summer cottage or a durable farm or business building." Gerald Ford used a Quonset hut as headquarters for his congressional campaign in 1948.

According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation "The Quonset hut has been disappearing at an alarming rate since its nomination to the National Register in 1977. . ." (Decker, p. 102) Like the jeep, the Quonset hut is a uniquely American symbol of ingenuity that serves as an icon for America's "can-do" attitude from one of the most challenging eras of our country's history.

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## Quonset Huts in Southwest Michigan

### Berrien County



### Shelby, Oceana County

A number of Quonset huts are found in Shelby adding to its distinctive character.



## Art and Culture in Southwest Michigan

Much of Southwest Michigan early arts were traditional and utilitarian in nature. These arts were influenced by the region's ethnic heritage, religions, environment, and industries and were often interconnected. For example, the furniture and metal work industries would employ artists who in turn would use the knowledge they gained about manufacturing and materials in their art.

Although the line between fine and traditional arts is often blurred, the fine arts usually took a back seat to utilitarian production during Southwest Michigan's early settlement period. After the turn of the twentieth century, as the region's economy prospered, so did its fine art culture.

### Traditional Arts

- **Native American Art** - A tradition of Native American arts in West Michigan extends from the distant past up to the present day. Archaeological sites reveal early examples of this tradition. At the Norton Mounds site (20KT1) near Grand Rapids, artifacts such as engraved turtle shell bowls, stone pipes carved in the shapes of animals, and pendants fashioned from shell demonstrate artistic traditions of two thousand years ago. In more recent times, the Odawa of west Michigan have given voice to artistic expression in carved wooden ladles, woven cattail mats, black ash baskets, and porcupine quill embroidery. The latter art form is often used to express Odawa ideas about the world and its inhabitants. Animal figures, geometric designs, and floral motifs are common themes rendered by Odawa artists in their embroidery work.
- **Maritime Arts** - The area's maritime history influenced the arts and cultural traditions. This influence can be seen in boatbuilding, model boats, leatherwork, carvings (figure heads and scrimshaw in particular), music (vocal and instrumental), dancing, the fabric arts (sails, nets, weaving), and the subject of countless paintings, drawings, sculptures, and other works of art.
  - **Fancywork** – Fancywork, a term used for the art of intricate knot-tying, was passed down through the maritime trades, often through mentorship. Exceptional work was admired and respected by other seaman. The art of knot-tying, including making decorative works, is still taught by several organizations in Southwest Michigan.
  - **Boatbuilding** was practiced throughout the region, beginning with the native tribes. At one time shipyards existed in the lakeshore communities of Benton Harbor, Saugatuck, Holland, Grand Haven and Pentwater. Benton Harbor's Dachel-Carter Company and Robinson Marine Construction Company were among the prominent ship building companies of the region. The Truscott Boat Company made small water craft, most notably the gondolas used at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Another type of small water craft built in the area was the Au Sable River Boat. This type of flat-bottom boat, developed in the 1870s, was poled and used for fishing. Saugatuck and Grand Haven's boatyards operated in the nineteenth century producing schooners and steam vessels. In the 1930s the Chris Craft Company of Algonac, Michigan, a manufacturer of high-quality mahogany speedboats, opened a factory in Holland, which became their largest. After World War II, some of Chris Craft's artisans began experimenting with modern materials such as plywood and fiberglass. When Chris Craft decided to continue using traditional materials, these artisans left and opened their own boat building companies. As a result Holland was a pioneer in the fiberglass pleasure boat industry. Fiberglass boats were affordable for the working class and boating became a national phenomenon in the 1950s and 1960s. Grand-Craft of Holland, founded in 1979 by Richard (Dick) Sligh whose father owned the Sligh Furniture Company, still manufactures mahogany runabouts based on 1920s and 1930s designs.

- **Leatherwork** - At one time, Southwest Michigan was home to several tanneries. One of the most successful was the Eagle Ottawa Tanning Works established in 1865 in Whitehall, which expanded in the 1890s to Grand Haven. (The Whitehall plant was demolished in 2008.) Early in the tannery's history they specialized in making red, orange and russet skirting for saddles. Eagle Ottawa Tanning Works was one of the earliest automobile leather suppliers in the world and its leather upholstery could be found in President Calvin Coolidge's Cadillac and Charles Lindbergh's Franklin. A large quantity of the company's scrap material was purchased by Robert Cole, an artist who tools leather. Because he grew up near the plant and often received free leather scraps, he began working with leather as a child.
- **Fabric Arts** - During the settlement period of the early nineteenth century, fabric arts (quilting, crocheting and embroidery) were associated with utilitarian tasks. Even so, they were still recognized for their artistry and beauty. Quilting in particular played an important role in early settlement life. Quilting bees and parties offered quilters the opportunity to share food, friends, and conversation and to meet prospective partners. The quilts often reflected the techniques and patterns associated with the quilter's ethnic background or religion as well as regional styles and preferences. A quilt design could be used to document the quilter's personal or family history as well as the history of the community and the nation. Quilting was traditionally a woman's activity and provided a creative outlet and relief from the hard work required of early pioneer life in Michigan. In the 1920s and 1930s the Hackley Art Gallery (now the Muskegon Museum of Art), recognized the artistry of these functional fabric items and showcased hand-woven coverlets made by Scandinavian immigrants, Hungarian embroidery, Norwegian textiles, African American quilts, Danish tonder lace and hedebo embroidery and Mexican decorative arts. The fabric arts are still prominent in the area. Almost all communities possess a quilting supply store in their downtown and are home to quilting guilds. Several of these organizations host quilting festivals. Among them is the Festival of Quilts held during the Coast Guard Festival in Grand Haven and hosted by the Lighthouse Quilt Guild.
  - **Weaving** - Weavers and spinners can be found throughout the region. Often the work is inspired by nature both in subject matter and medium. Found objects are sometimes incorporated in the work and the colors and textures found in nature are used in the pieces. Some of these artists raise sheep and spin their own yarn, weave on home-made looms, and grow flowers and vegetables for the dyes that are used in their work. Larger commissions for weavers are often alter clothes for local churches.
  - **Rug-hooking** - Although every culture has a weaving tradition, there is a type of rug-hooking that has its roots in Scandinavia and is popular in the area. Related techniques, such as lace-making, are also practiced in the region, particularly in the Holland and Grand Haven area.
- **Basketry** - Native Americans of the Great Lakes region were—and still are—known for their black ash basket weaving tradition. Michigan's Chippewa Tribe was noted for making sweet grass baskets from native grasses. Several tribe members who practice the art today have received Michigan Tradition Arts Awards and Apprenticeships that are offered through Michigan State University. At one time Southwest Michigan manufactured 95 percent of the world's fruit baskets. The basket industry was linked to the region's lucrative fruit industry and both were linked to the shipping industry because of the relatively quick transportation of produce to many parts of the country. Several communities, including Benton Harbor and Saugatuck, were home to basket companies. The Grand Haven Basket Company, established in 1879 produced baskets used not only for the shipment of fruit but also smoked fish; both significant industries of the area. While some modern day artists practice the traditional basket weaving techniques and

materials, others incorporate other media in their work to create non-traditional shapes baskets as non-functional art.

- **Woodworking** – Native Americans carved small tool handles, fishing lures, spears, and combs out of wood, bone, and antlers. The Ottawa tribe frequently decorated carved canoe paddles, canvas sails and canoes, including large freighting canoes that could navigate the Great Lakes, and decorated them with paint. Early settlers crafted tools, furniture, boats, instruments, decorative items, and toys from wood. Lumbering was a significant industry in Michigan in the nineteenth century and woodcarving competitions were not uncommon in lumber camps. Large-scale carvings were done with axes and saw. Today the tradition continues but chainsaws are used. There are numerous organizations that cater to today's craftsmen who create with wood. The Michigan Association for Woodcarvers, the West Michigan Wood Carvers, the Traditional Small Craft Association, the Wooden Canoe Heritage Association, and the National Chainsaw Carvers Guild are just a few of these organizations. The popularity of these groups attests to the widespread practice of creating artwork of wood.
- **Hand carving** - West Michigan's churches often display hand carved works of art. Ruben Llano of Claybanks Township is a present-day artist who carves in both stone and wood. He has received a number of commissions from churches across the country. The carved wood central alter panel in the United Methodist Church in Muskegon and the hand-carved cross in Whitehall's Swedish Lebanon Evangelical Lutheran church are two excellent examples of his work.
- **Wood Manufacturing** - Several industries in the region fabricated quality wood products that can be viewed as artworks in their own right. The Carrom Company in Ludington has manufactured a popular wooden game board since the 1890s. At the turn of the century, South Haven's S. E. Overton Company made popular bentwood products such as wooden trays, picture frames. A number of piano companies were established in Southwest Michigan: the Chase-Hackley Piano Company built a factory in the Lakeside District of Muskegon in 1890, the Story & Clark Piano Company of Chicago established a factory in Grand Haven in 1900 which operated until 1984; and the Bush & Lane Piano company, which opened in Holland in 1901 and closed in 1930. Members of the City of David in Benton Harbor were also known for the production of quality, handmade wooden instruments. Beebe Violins of Muskegon is a modern manufacturer of musical instruments.
- **Furniture Making** – In the late nineteenth west Michigan, especially Grand Rapids, was known as the capital of the furniture industry. The art of fine furniture making was also practiced in the Holland-Zeeland area. One of the most respected furniture manufacturers was the Charles P. Limbert Company. Originally from Grand Rapids where they manufactured Mission style furniture, the company introduced its Dutch Arts and Crafts line in 1902. Production of this line was moved to Holland, Michigan in 1906 in order to utilize the talents of the skilled Dutch craftsman living in the area. The Charles P. Limbert Company is recognized as one of the finest manufacturers of handmade furniture in America along with Gustave Stickley and Roycroft. The Limbert Company produced its Dutch Arts and Crafts designs until 1918.

Another company that combined art and design was Evans Products of Grand Haven. The company, which made wood radio case, had the distinction of working with designer Charles Eames on the creation of his early molded plywood chairs. In 1947 the Herman Miller Company signed an agreement with Evans Products to market and distribute the Eames chairs, which continued to be manufactured by Evans Products until 1949. At that time production was moved to Herman Miller's Zeeland facilities.

- **Metal Arts** - At one time, many communities of the region were home to foundries, which were established to produce and repair metal equipment for ships. Benton Harbor and Muskegon contained some of the largest. A foundry located in Montague, Whitehall Metal Studios, fabricated the world's largest weathervane as a piece of public art for the community.
- **Glass** - Glass art has a long tradition in the region. The Plate Glass Company of Grand Haven, which was associated with Atlas Works of Amsterdam, was established in 1897, is among the early glass companies in the area. Stained glass is prevalent in the region, not only in churches, but also in public buildings and private homes. Today, artists who work in glass can be found throughout the region, and particularly in Benton Harbor, Muskegon, and Ludington.
- **Pottery** - The area is known for its pottery tradition. Claybanks Township in Oceana County contains a large amount of clay, which probably facilitated this craft's original prominence in that area. Peter Johnson of Whitehall is considered as the father of a renewed pottery tradition. He has mentored other potters from the Midwest. West Michigan potters cite the natural environment as inspiration and include elements of nature in the work they create.

## Fine Arts

Fine art is defined as something that is produced for its beauty rather than for a utilitarian purpose. The fine arts include painting, sculpture and music.

### Fine Arts in the Nineteenth Century

Settlement in Michigan began in earnest around 1830 after the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825. While the early years of settlement were devoted to subsistence farming, by the 1870s Michigan was entering an age of economic growth as farms became established and railroads were completed enabling local goods to reach national markets. Some of the more successful nineteenth century artists associated with Southwest Michigan included:

- **Joseph Warner, painter, Holland.** Born in London in 1830, Warner immigrated to America eventually settling in Chicago where he became a portrait artist. George Eastman's introduction of a simple to operate camera in 1844 and the resulting affordability and popularity of photographs undermined Warner's portraiture business. He left Chicago and moved to Holland where he took up landscape painting. Warner was known for his bird's eye views of area communities, including Hamilton, Zeeland and Saugatuck. He also painted hundreds of local scenes. For the tourist trade, Warner painted landscapes on luncheon plates that were sold as souvenirs. Two of his paintings are in the Holland Museum collection and are awaiting restoration.
- **Fran Snyder**, a decorative painter for the Chicago and West Michigan Railroad.
- **Lewis Lumen Cross, painter (1864-1951), Muskegon.** Cross is best known for his paintings of passenger pigeons, which are now extinct. His work can be seen at the Muskegon County Museum.
- **J. D. Westerveld, photographer, Muskegon.** Westerveld was one of Michigan's leading photographers. In 1875 he established a studio in Muskegon above the post office. His photographs were used to create the steel engravings used in the state's county histories.

- **John Nequist, painter, Whitehall.** Nequist was born in Sweden in 1844, and moved to Whitehall in 1868 with his wife, Mary, and two daughters.
- **Fredrick Norman (1846-1928), painter, White Lake.** Seventeen original oil paintings by Norman are displayed at the National City Bank in Whitehall and one of his paintings is at the Montague's historical museum,
- **Ezekiel Ashley Turner (1854-1899), painter, Muskegon.** A native of Branch County, Michigan, Turner moved to Muskegon in 1883. He was hired by Charles Hackley to create a painting of the dedication of Hackley Library, which was completed in 1897. Turner was able to travel to Paris to study with the funds he received. Upon his return he was commissioned to paint a portrait of Charles Hackley and his wife.

An event that influenced the art scene in Michigan during the late nineteenth century was the establishment of an art school in Chicago in 1879. The school and its collection expanded rapidly and in 1893, in time for the World's Columbian Exposition, it opened its new Beaux Arts style building in Grant Park under the name of the Art Institute of Chicago. The institute attracted many talented artists that made their way to Michigan for rest and relaxation.

## Fine Arts in the Twentieth Century

By the turn of the twentieth century Southwest Michigan was working hard to reinvent itself. Lumbering, the region's top industry had begun to decline and lumber companies moved west as Michigan's forests were logged off. To jumpstart the local economy, entrepreneurs were building resort hotels in communities up and down the Lake Michigan coast in order to create a new tourism industry. The construction of the first improved automobile highway, the West Michigan Pike, brought thousands of auto tourists from Chicago to Michigan's coastal towns. Among them were artists who stayed at local inns or purchased summer homes. Sometimes a word of mouth recommendation on the accessibility and beauty of a local landscape for painting led a group of artists to establish themselves in one area. The most influential of these artist colonies was in Saugatuck.

The first known incident of artists coming to the Saugatuck area was recorded in the local newspaper in 1891, when four male artists established what they called *Camp Artist's Dream* along the river. A Saugatuck native, Bessie Bandle, enrolled in the Art Institute of Chicago in 1898 and shortly after invited a group of classmates and friends to Saugatuck to stay at her father's resort, Riverside Rest, and paint the local landscape. This first visit was the start of a trend and more artists and art students began visiting the area. The first summer art school in Saugatuck was opened in 1904 by John Johansen, an instructor at the Art Institute of Chicago. But it was the founding of the Summer School of Painting in 1910 by artists Frederick Fursman of Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Walter Marshall Clute of Chicago that brought the first real attention to Saugatuck as a summer art colony. With financial backing from architect Thomas Eddy Tallmadge, Fursman purchased an old resort, the Riverside Hotel, in 1920 and by 1922 established an art school called the Ox-Bow School of Summer Painting. (In 1995 the School of the Art Institute of Chicago took over the administration of the Ox-Bow programs.) Ox-Bow became a draw for both tourists and the arts and made Saugatuck one of Michigan's most popular summer resort towns. The *Plein Air* tradition of American painting has deep roots in Saugatuck and many of the artists associated the Ox-Bow School have been well documented in the book *Painting the Town: A History of Art in Saugatuck and Douglas* by Kit Lane. Artists associated with the Ox-Bow School include: Albert H. Krehbiel, John Warner Norton, Walter Enright, Galin Joseph Perrett, and Horace Brown. Carl Hoerman, originally an architect from Chicago, became one of the best-known of the area's landscape painters. He also designed several buildings in Saugatuck, including the building that houses the present-day C. Petters Gallery building at 161 Blue Star Highway—the doors were hand-carved by Hoerman. Two of the most well known artists with Ox-Bow School ties were pop artist Claes Oldenburg and illustrator LeRoy Neiman.

According to James Schmiechen in the book *Off the Record* in the 1940s “The upper floor of the Saugatuck Village Hall became the village’s focal point for art-related activities. It was frequently the site of lectures organized by Ox-Bow in addition to providing a venue for exhibits featuring Ox-Bow artists, such as the school’s founder, Frederick F. Fursman. The village and Ox-Box regularly held what was called “Art Week” to promote works of Ox-Box Artists, and one of the most popular events of Saugatuck’s summer season was the annual “Arts Ball” at the Big Pavilion.”

After World War II some artists became disenchanted with the Saugatuck art scene believing the art was becoming too commercial and that there was too much emphasis on amateur art classes. A few serious artists began looking for alternative areas to paint and live. Some moved to Muskegon. The Muskegon Board of Education had received a gift one hundred and fifty thousand dollars from lumber baron Charles Hackley upon his death, to use as a “picture fund” to purchase fine art paintings. The Board honored Hackley’s gift by constructing an art museum next to the Hackley Library in 1912. Originally named the Hackley Art Gallery, its first director, Raymond Wyer was a visionary who was instrumental in purchasing some outstanding pieces, such as a painting by James Whistler, for the museum’s collection. In the 1930s gallery director Frank Almy was able to purchase a painting by Edward Hopper. The Hackley Art Gallery brought national attention to Muskegon’s art culture.

In the early 1960s, a number of Chicago artists established an anti-establishment group in South Haven called the Space Corporation. One of the founding members was painter, printmaker, and sculptor Ted Dickerson (inventor of the Dickerson Combination Press), a South Haven native. He convinced several artists, and those of other professions such as medicine and sociology, to purchase cottages on Lake Michigan. Most of the artists were schooled and/or taught at the Art Institute of Chicago, Ox-Bow School of the Arts in Saugatuck, and the University of Wisconsin. Their main philosophy was to “knock art off its pedestal” and to have art become part of everyday life. The Space Corporation practiced several types of art forms including fine and traditional, plastic, performing and written art resulting in interdisciplinary work. They held art and musical events throughout the area. Their way of life, however, did not always agree with the religious conservative population. Although at the time they were unaware of each other, the Space Corporation’s work and values were similar to a group of artists that had formed simultaneously in Europe called Flux.

In the 1970s John Wilson, a print dealer and graduate of the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, played a vital role in the development of the art culture of Berrien County. As founder and president of Chicago’s Lakeside Group established in 1979, he is credited with establishing art shows at Navy Pier in Chicago, which led to its reinvention as a tourist attraction. Wilson purchased the Lakeside Inn in Lakeside and turned it into the Lakeside Center for the Arts, where he hosted well-known artists who visited the inn to enjoy the local scenery and to create artwork. Among them were noted sculptor Richard Hunt and abstract painter Ed Pashke. Wilson printed limited editions of the works of the Lakeside artists. He also hosted visiting artists from Russia and Eastern Europe at the Lakeside Inn during the time of the Cold War. After the break up of the Soviet Union, Wilson was instrumental in establishing the nation of Georgia’s first international art market in its capital city, Tbilisi. The project is an on-going joint effort of the New Art Union of Georgia, Elegia (Armenia) and the Union of Artists of Azerbaijan. Wilson was also the organizer of the first Chicago International Art Exposition. He is currently involved in Benton Harbor’s art scene and has recently purchased houses in the downtown area with the hope of hosting guest artists from Russia’s Georgia area as well as from India.

The following is a list of some of the significant twentieth-century fine artists associated with Southwest Michigan:

- **Wilfrid Berg, painter, Muskegon (1908-2002).** Berg was a very popular and prolific Muskegon artist who, in 1929 took classes at the Hackley Art Gallery. In the 1930s he created dioramas with artist William Hartman of Silver Lake for a Works Progress Administration (WPA) funded project for the Muskegon County Museum. The community commissioned Berg to create murals for the museum showcasing the town's history between 1888 and 1990. Berg also painted a mural at the Hackley Library.
- **Winsor McCay, illustrator, Spring Lake (1867-1934).** Born in Spring Lake in 1867, McCay was a talented illustrator who developed the comic strip *Little Nemo in Slumberland* for the *New York Herald* in 1905. The strip was published until 1911 and was even adapted as a play on Broadway. In 1914 McCay debuted a short animated film entitled *Gertie the Dinosaur*. It was the first film to use keyframe animation and to give personality to an animated character. Walt Disney credited the film as an inspiration and as a result it was included in the top fifty animated films of all time by the National Film Registry.
- **Victor Casenelli, painter, Muskegon (1868-1961).** Born in New York City, Casenelli later move to Cincinnati before moving to Muskegon in 1905. He was primarily a water color painter known for his paintings of the American West and Native American life. Casenelli was commissioned by former President William H. Taft to paint murals at the Taft home in Cincinnati. An avid art collector, Taft later donated the home to the city of Cincinnati for an art museum. In 1929 the Lumberman's Bank of Muskegon commissioned Casenelli to create seventeen paintings (now at the Muskegon County Museum). The bank provided a folder of prints of these paintings to its "premier" customers. During his sixty years in Michigan, Casenlli painted many Michigan landscapes.
- **Tunis Ponsen, painter, Muskegon (1891-1968).** Born in the Netherlands, Ponsen immigrated to the United States in 1913. He settled in Muskegon in 1914 where he resided until he moved to Chicago in 1924 to attend the Art Institute of Chicago. He often returned to Muskegon with his former teacher, Wilbur Kensler, and to the Benton Harbor area where his sister resided to paint landscapes.
- **Dawson Manierre, painter, Ludington (1887 –1969).** Born in Chicago, Manierre studied engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology and later worked as a designer at the Chicago architectural firm of Holabird & Roche. In 1910 he traveled to Europe where he sold his first painting—to the author Gertrude Stein. He exhibited his early work in the Chicago Armory Show of 1913. Manierre completely changed his life in 1914 after he married. He purchased his own land on Deren Road outside of Ludington, Michigan, where his family had a summer retreat, and devoted himself to becoming a successful fruit farmer, painting in his off time. Manierre is considered to be an originator of American abstract art and one of the nation's earliest modernist painters. His work has been exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City and the Art Institute of Chicago. According to a 1981 *New York Times* article "For a period of four crucial years, 1910-14, he produced some of the most remarkable avant-garde paintings being created in the United States."
- **Robert Lyons Stearns, illustrator, Ludington.** Born in Ohio in 1872, Robert Stearns was the son of Justus Stearns a prominent lumberman and politician in Ludington, Michigan. Stearns was a friend of Grand Rapids painter Lawrence C. Earle, who studied at the Chicago Institute of Art. Robert Stearns created the fictional cartoon character,

Ossawald Crumb, which became a local legend in the Ludington area. Several original drawings of Crumb are owned by Stearns' grandson, Robert Gable of Epworth Heights, and reproductions can be found at the Jamesport Brewery in Ludington.

- **Frederick H. Immer, painter, Pentwater.** Born in Germany in 1884, Immer traveled throughout the United States painting stage scenery. While vacationing in Pentwater, he met resident Hazel Wagner and they were married in 1924. Immer decided to settle in Pentwater and established a studio in the E. F. Kent Building. He became known for his landscape paintings. His painting entitled *The Frog Pond* hangs in the Pentwater Historical Society Museum.
- **Frank Rosetta, sculptor, Benton Harbor.** A member of the House of David commune, Rosetta designed and created pieces in a man-made material he invented called hydrostone. The substance reportedly contained fish scales, which gave it a unique luminescence. His statues were mass-produced by the House of David from 1923 until 1965 when their art shop burned. Today are highly collectible. Rosetta was also known for the intricate floats he designed for the Blossomtime Festival.
- **Paul Collins, painter, Muskegon.** One of America's most respected realist painters, Collins was born in Muskegon in 1936 but lived most of his young life in Grand Rapids. He is known for his work documenting freedom movements such as the African American civil rights experience and the Native American confrontation at Wounded Knee in 1973. He has reportedly completed over three thousand paintings. He first exhibited his work in Ludington's West Shore Art League shows.

## Music

Music, both vocal and instrumental, has a long tradition in the region. Native American instruments included rattles and drums; the French explorers favored the pan pipe. Early musical groups were often affiliated with religious organizations. The types of instruments, styles and songs that were played were typically rooted in the ethnic traditions of the immigrants that populated an area and were then shaped by regional experiences. The hammered dulcimer and the fiddle were popular in lumber camps and were often accompanied by a musical saw. The fiddler was an important community figure on the Southern Michigan frontier, not only with the New England pioneers, but also with the French Canadians before them. The fiddle was instrumental to the agricultural or contra dances that were usually danced in two-three or six-eight time.

- **Chanties** - Michigan's maritime culture popularized the singing of chanties (shanties)—work songs sung on ships. They are most often sung a capella without musical instruments. Three types of chanties were sung with different tempos for different types of work: the Castan, the Halyard and the Short Drag. Amusements and disaster songs were also part of the seaman's repertoire. Some chanties were specific for a trade such as iron ore or lumber. Other songs were particular to African Americans who often loaded ore. Songs were frequently ad-libbed, or changed to fit a particular situation, and seldom sung the same way twice. When steamships began to replace clipper ships on the Great Lakes in the late 1880s, work chanties began to disappear.

There also were lumbering chanties and camp songs, often accompanied by a fiddler, and sometimes, a musical saw player. For several years in the early 1980s, the Allegan County area hosted the Michigan Musical Saw Festival with saw playing competitions as part of the festivities.

- **Blues and Rhythm and Blues** - African Americans that settled in the region brought with them the tradition of the Blues. Vocals that sometimes were accompanied with a string

instrument were a common form of entertainment. Two communities in West Michigan, Benton Harbor and Muskegon, saw large influxes in their African American populations throughout the 1930s and 1940s. As a result, both communities were centers of African American Music in the 1950s and 1960s. An important musician from the Benton Harbor area was jazz artist Gene Harris, a pioneer in soul-jazz who helped to form the sound of notable jazz musicians Stanley Turrentine and Nate Adderly. Benton Harbor's Nikki Harris Festival, named for Gene Harris' daughter who was also born in Benton Harbor and is a jazz artist in her own right, honors and helps to continue this tradition. Muskegon was a popular stop for African American musicians traveling between Chicago, Detroit, and the historically black resort Idlewild in Lake County, Michigan. After World War II, the Sepia Club in Muskegon was a hangout out for jazz, blues, and soul fans until the 1970s when it was demolished.

- **Orchestras** - Lake Michigan's communities have long been associated with musicians from the Chicago area. Members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra would often spend summers at resorts such as Sleepy Hollow in South Haven. Composer Leo Sowerby, who received a Pulitzer Prize in 1946 for his composition "Canticle of the Sun, owned a summer home in Palisades Park and wrote many of his compositions there. Today the region is home to a number of well-respected orchestras. The West Shore Symphony Orchestra, established sixty-seven years ago, is a respected organization located in Muskegon. The orchestra offers classical and pop concerts at the Frauenthal Theater. The Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra based in Saint Joseph has much community support and appreciation, boasts a large membership base and offers a wide range of programs. A long-time resident of Saint Joseph stated, "You don't mess with the water, the trees or the orchestra around here." The Holland Symphony Orchestra is also well respected and valued by the community.

Smaller community venues and organizations abound. Almost all the communities host open-air concerts, often in a park and/or band shell. American Legion bands, citizens bands, Brass Bands, clown bands and youth bands are common in local communities.

- **Rock** - James Newell Osterberg Jr. was born in Muskegon in April 21, 1947. Raised in Ypsilanti he attended the University of Michigan but dropped out to move to Chicago for its music scene. Known as Iggy Pop his musical influence was so great in the 1970s that he is often called the godfather of punk rock. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in December 2009. Dave Carlock is a Grammy award winning sound engineer from Saint Joseph who has worked with pop musicians such diverse artists as the Eagles, Blink 182, Eric Clapton, Rodney Crowell, Dolly Parton and Pink.

## Theater

Theater was an early and prominent art form in the area with even the smallest communities possessing a space for live venues. Most typically these were called "opera houses" and were often located on the second floor above a commercial business. Sometimes they shared quarters with a fraternal organization such as the Masons or Elks Lodge. The tradition of the small theater has continued in area communities. South Haven, Holland, Saugatuck, and Whitehall all have a significant theatre presence. Whitehall's the Playhouse, today the Howmet Theater, was designed by Muskegon architect Van Zalingen, and constructed with a plaster "Kappeldome," an acoustic-enhancing feature named after a German theater designer. When the five hundred and thirty five-seat theatre opened on September 21, 1916, the seating exceeded the population of Whitehall. Playwright and lyricist Fran Ramsey Adams managed the Playhouse from 1916-1932. Adams was affiliated with the Sylvan Beach Resort and was famous for writing the words to the popular song "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" in 1909.

Muskegon, in particular, has a strong theatre tradition. As early as 1856, Muskegon had an opera house. In 1898 a large theater was built at Lake Michigan Park (now Pere Marquette Park), to

attract the vaudeville circuit to Muskegon. Among the "headliners" were "the Three Keatons," an act that featured Joe, Myra, and their son, Buster. They first performed in Muskegon in 1902. The family, along with another vaudevillian, Paul Lucier, purchased property on Muskegon Lake and built cottages at the foot of Pigeon Hill. Other actors, including silent film star Fatty Arbuckle, followed. The Actor's Colony was formally organized in 1908. In 1930, the Art Deco style Michigan Theater (Frauenthal Theater) designed by C. Howard Crane and financed by local businessman Paul Schlossman, opened its doors in Muskegon. The theater was restored in 1991 and is the site of the annual Buster Keaton film festival.

The Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp, located in the Manistee National Forest in Twin Lake northeast of Muskegon, is an under-recognized and under-utilized facility. The non-profit organization offers visual arts, drama, music and dance programs for all ages. Many performances are conducted throughout the summer with several of them free to the public. Four Michigan governors have recognized the camp as one of the state's great cultural resources.

## Significant Art-Related Regional Organizations

**The New Territory Arts Association** was founded in 1998 to promote the creation of an arts district in Benton Harbor.

**Mary's City of David** and the House of David, encouraged and promoted the arts. The House of David was a communal group founded in Benton Harbor in 1903 by Benjamin Purnell and his wife Mary. After Benjamin's death in 1930 Mary split from group and founded Mary's City of David adjacent to the original complex. Mary's City of David was a self-sufficient community, which raised and canned its own crops, used its own water supply, produced its own electricity, operated a printing press, owned and operated its own sawmill, built its structures and, for a time, had its own medical facility. The traditional art of woodworking was practiced in the community by Louie Dahlstrom. A master gardener and community member from Queensland, Australia, Louis Manthey, was instrumental in creating many of the outstanding Blossomtime Parade floats that the City of David sponsored. The sculptor Frank Rosetta designed and created sculptor pieces with his secret pearl-like finish until the 1960s. He also designed many award-winning floats for Blossomtime Parade. Mary's City of David constructed a small theater and sponsored bands. String instruments were created by members of the community (George Whiffen and Joseph Hannaford in particular), as well as paintings and drawings. The community also built a hotel in downtown Benton Harbor on the corner of Colfax Avenue and Wall Street. It was originally intended to feature a theater, but the schism after Benjamin Purnell's death the down-turn of the economy brought on by the Great Depression forced the down-scaling of the hotel.

**The Box Factory** housed in the former Williams Brothers Box Factory in Saint Joseph is home to more than twenty artist studios. Its art shop showcases and sells Berrien Artist Guild members' work. The Box Factory hosts the Second Saturday Live in Concert Series, which is sponsored by the Riversong Music Society, a Song Share, and an Open Mic Night. Art and writing classes are offered in a variety of medium and in different levels of experience.

**The Krasl Art Center** built in 1979 and operated by the Saint Joseph Art Association, Inc., had its beginning in 1962 when a small group of local artists organized a summer art fair now known nationally as the *Krasl Art Fair on the Bluff*. The Krasl has grown in size and scope as well as its presence in the area. The center boasts of a wide range of classes for all ages and skill levels, several fund raising events a year and a large membership. Four galleries, as well as the Krasl grounds, exhibit traditional fine arts, contemporary works, folk arts and crafts, and the work of local artists. Traveling exhibits come from the Smithsonian Institution, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and other major museums as well as from private collections. The focus of Krasl's permanent collection is outdoor sculpture, which is exhibited in the center's grounds and throughout the city of Saint Joseph.

**The South Haven Center for the Arts** began as the South Haven Art League in 1951. Its initial purpose was to encourage young people to pursue a career in the arts. The League organized its first art show in 1957. The group changed its name to the South Haven Art Association in 1980 and moved into its permanent headquarters, the former Carnegie Library built in 1906, in 1984.

**Ox-Bow School of the Arts** is located outside of Saugatuck. When the school was first established around 1910, students spent the entire summer there. Today, except for fellowship students, most stay one to two weeks—the length of a class. Because of its association with the Art Institute of Chicago and its close proximity to that city, a majority of the students are from the Chicago area. The School does host a few international students. Currently, professional artists and other professionals who dabble in the arts are among the students. The school's twenty or so fellowship students help run the school by cooking, cleaning, taking care of the grounds, etc. There are around forty buildings on the site and five main studios: ceramics, metal, printmaking, glass, painting, and papermaking. A history of Ox Bow entitled *A Portrait of Ox-Bow: Architecture - Art - Artists* by Judy Anthrop was published in July 2009.

**The Holland Area Arts Council (HAAC)** plays a role in the areas' cultural scene. The HAAC offers a variety of classes in visual and performing arts; exhibits local, regional and student art; and showcases classical music talent. The HAAC partners with the farmers market and offers activities for children.

**The Holland Museum** tells the unique story of the area's maritime history; it's manufacturing, lumbering and farming heritage; it's Dutch Heritage; its automobile-related industries; its wartime contributions; and the area's entrepreneurial history. The museum was founded in 1937 as the Dutch Pioneer Museum. The name was changed in 1940 to the Netherlands Museum and received several artifacts from the Netherlands' exhibition at the New York World's Fair. Holland, Michigan is well recognized by the "Motherland" and has received visits from the queen of the Netherlands. Holland citizens often sent money back home to the Netherlands, particularly during World War II. In return, they were given gifts of art, furniture and decorative items from the homeland. Many of these items are in the museum's collection. The museum, now known simply as the Holland Museum, has several exceptional Dutch paintings in its collection which are currently showcased on the museum's second floor. The paintings are shown along side artifacts that are similar to the objects seen in the paintings. House museums are part of the museum's holdings. The Settler's House, with its simple hall and parlor plan, is a rare example of a structure that is one step up from a temporary log cabin. The nineteenth-century Cappon House is a vernacular Italianate that was built for Isaac Cappon and his family.

**Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp** is a summer school of the arts located on a one thousand three hundred-acre campus (formerly Camp Hardy boy's camp) in the Manistee National Forest near Twin Lake. The camp was opened in 1966 by Fritz Stansell who as a child had spent his summers at Arens Art Colony in Wisconsin. Blue Lake has been recognized as one of Michigan's great cultural resources by four governors. It offers classes for all ages in both the visual and performing arts. (Young children and adult classes are music orientated.) Besides various band and orchestra programs, choir, dance, drama, jazz, drawing and painting, fiber arts, ceramics and sculpture courses are also offered. It hosts over five thousand students and offers over one hundred and seventy-five performances during its Summer Arts Festival. Blue Lake also operates two public radio stations and an international exchange program.

**Frauenthal Theatre** in Muskegon was constructed in 1930 as the Michigan Theater. Designed by Detroit architect C. Howard Crane it is part of the area's long theater tradition. Its Spanish Renaissance architecture and décor, the performances that it hosts, its community support, and its recent restoration work are all assets. However, the "pride and joy" of the theatre is a restored Barton Organ. The organ is featured in several film festivals including the *International Buster Keaton Society Film Festival* held each year in October.

The **Muskegon Museum of Art** is one of the significant art museums of the Midwest. The Muskegon Museum of Art owes its existence to Charles Hackley whose gifts to the city also included a library, a city park, a manual training school, a gymnasium, and athletic field for the public schools. Originally known as the Hackley Art Gallery, the Muskegon Museum of Art sponsors and collaborates on several programs. *The West Michigan Eight* is a highly selective juried show, which includes a wide range of subjects, techniques and mediums of artists who live in western Michigan. A relatively new program that has been implemented is an Open Salon (gallery) night in which artists can hang their work, converse with each other and with patrons. Museum members are allowed pre-show entry and the chance to purchase art at relatively low prices. The *Annual Muskegon County Student Art Exhibit* is held at the Museum as are film events. Various series of tours and workshops are also offered through the Museum.

**The West Shore Symphony Orchestra** (WSSO), established in 1947, is a respected organization in Muskegon. Mr. A. M. Courtright, a Muskegon Heights school teacher, and Mr. Palmer Quackenbush were instrumental in establishing the symphony.. The WSSO is one of ten orchestras nationwide selected by Carnegie Hall to participate in the Weill Music Institute (WMI) Communities LinkUP! Program. The program allows the WSSO to expand educational programs with West Michigan schools.

**Arts Council of White Lake** operates the Nuveen Community Center for the Art in Montague.

**The Artisan Learning Center** in Pentwater is an unusual organization. It is a non-profit center that operates on donations and membership fees. The center, which opened its doors in 2003, offers equipment (including a large number of heavy machinery), some supplies, classes, and mentorship in the arts of woodworking, metal works, stained and fused glass, weaving, pottering, and sometimes basket weaving.

**The West Shore Art League** was formed in the early 1960s to promote a quality, fine art fair in the Ludington area.

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## Landscape Architects and the Conservation of West Michigan

In America, the rise in popularity of landscape design is attributed to Andrew Jackson Downing, a nurseryman from New York that studied landscape gardening in Europe. In the 1840s, Downing wrote a number of pamphlets describing how to beautify the “home grounds.” He recommended paying attention to the architectural style of the residence; the layout of drives and paths; and the placement of flowers, trees and shrubs to enhance the landscape. These earliest efforts at beautifying the home landscape were called “landscape gardening.” The work of Frederick Law Olmsted in designing New York City’s Central Park in 1863 elevated landscape design to a respected profession with a new name “landscape architecture.” The World’s Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 did more than any other event to popularize the principals of landscape design in America. The site of the Exposition was designed by Chicago architect Daniel Burnham who integrated the buildings with the site’s topography and vegetation to create a stunning landscape known as “The White City.” Burnham’s design led to a new movement in city planning called “The City Beautiful.” City Beautiful principles encouraged the consideration of aesthetics in town and city development through the construction of parks and parkways; the development of decorative entry points such as ornamental bridges and entry arches or gate posts; the grouping of civic buildings into one area usually around a park adorned with monuments or public art; and beautification of the streetscape by paving the street and installing curbs, burying wires and cables underground, and the planting street trees. The City Beautiful Movement dominated American city planning from 1900 –1930. It became a national craze and even in the smallest villages grass root Civic Improvement Societies were formed to incorporate City Beautiful principles into the community.

A second movement that affected the growth of landscape architecture was more social than aesthetic in nature. The massive number of immigrants coming to the United States in the late nineteenth century resulted in overcrowded living conditions in America’s cities. Social workers, such as Jane Addams, the founder of Chicago’s Hull House, worked for the creation of recreation areas for working class families through the establishment of parks and open space. Municipalities across the country adopted the concept of a municipal park system that offered recreational opportunities to all citizens.

### The Prairie Spirit

In the Midwest a distinctive regional style known as the Prairie School arose in the early 1900s. Its pioneers were a group of Chicago-based architects, writers, artists, and landscape architects that Americanized the principles of England’s Arts and Crafts Movement. It originated with architects Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, who incorporated native organic features from the Midwest landscape into their designs, and reached the peak of its popularity between 1900 and 1915. Prairie School architecture is characterized by its simplicity and lack of ornamentation. Its long, low horizontal lines mimic the open spaces of the Midwest Prairie , and a ribbon of windows set under wide eaves lets in natural light. Other architects associated with the Prairie School include Dwight Perkins, George Maher, and Walter Burley Griffin.

Two Chicago landscape architects, are credited with developing and popularizing the Prairie School of landscape architecture, Jens Jensen and Ossian C. Simonds The Prairie spirit was incorporated into the landscape through the use of native grasses, shrubs and trees in designs that emulated natural features such as rocky riverbeds and pools. Prairie School landscape architects were also strong conservationists that worked tirelessly to protect the natural environment and often incorporated natural features directly into their designs. According to horticulturalist Wilhelm Miller, the Prairie style of landscape architecture was “a genuine style . . . based on a geographic, climatic, and scenic unit and it employs three accepted principles of design—conservation of native scenery, restoration of local vegetation, and repetition of a dominant line.”

In his publication *The Prairie Spirit in Landscape Gardening*, Miller credits landscape architect Ossian C. Simonds with creating the Prairie style when he developed the plans for Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. Simonds continued to evolve the style in his work designing Lincoln Park in Chicago and private residences along Chicago's North Shore. Though Simonds is considered its originator, the landscape architect that most strongly advocated for the Prairie spirit was Jens Jensen, superintendent of Chicago's West Parks system. In 1888 Jensen created a garden of wildflowers in Chicago's Union Park that became extremely popular with city residents who called it "the American Garden." Jensen helped to found two nature conservation organizations, the Prairie Club and the Friends of Our Native Landscapes. Both organizations were instrumental in preserving some of the Great Lakes states' most unique and dramatic features through the establishment of state park systems in Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

## **The Prairie Spirit in Michigan**

The history of the development of southwest Michigan is strongly tied with the emergence of the Prairie style of landscape architecture in the city of Chicago in the early twentieth century. Both of the Prairie style's originators, Simonds and Jensen, had strong ties to Michigan. O.C. Simonds owned a summer home in Pier Cove just south of Douglas in Allegan County. He established the landscape architecture program at the University of Michigan and designed Nichols Arboretum in Ann Arbor. Jensen was hired by Henry Ford to landscape Fair Lane, Ford's home in Dearborn. He also landscaped Edsel Ford's summer home Haven Hill in Oakland County. Jensen's daughter owned a summer home in Lakeside in Berrien County. One Prairie landscape architect's strongest impacts on Michigan's landscape resulted from Jens Jensen's hiring of a young graduate of the Michigan Agricultural College, Genevieve Gillette, as his assistant. Though she worked for him for just a few years, their friendship lasted a lifetime. When Gillette left Jensen's firm in 1922 to return to Michigan to work, he challenged her to make the creation of a Michigan state park system her mission. Gillette not only took the challenge, she excelled at it.

## **Friends of Our Native Landscape**

The Friends of Our Native Landscape was a conservation group organized by Jens Jensen in April 1913. The purpose of the Friends was to collect information on natural and scenic areas, primarily in Illinois, and advocate for legislation to protect them. The Friends were an illustrious group of wealthy and prominent citizens and included Mrs. Julius Rosenwald, wife of the head of Sears, Roebuck and Company; Stephen Mather, a Chicago business man that went on to become the first Director of the National Park Service; Dwight Perkins, a Prairie School architect; Harold Ickes, a progressive lawyer and graduate of the University of Chicago who became the director of the Public Works Administration under Franklin D. Roosevelt; and Avery Coonley, an industrialist that commissioned Frank Lloyd Wright to build him a home in Riverside, Illinois. Other members include the poet and writer Carl Sandburg and Henry Cowles a botanist from the University of Chicago who both owned summer homes in Berrien County, Michigan. Many of the Friends of Our Native Landscapes were also members of another conservation organization founded by Jensen, the Prairie Club.

The Friends planned four meetings a year, one for each season, with picturesque names like "Pilgrimage to the Crab-apple Blossom" and "Meeting to the Fallen Leaf." The first meeting was held in what later became White Pines State Park in northwestern Illinois and over two hundred people attended. It became a tradition of the Friends to produce an annual masque (a short play based on mythology) with a nature theme. Kenneth Sawyer Goodman typically wrote the masques and prominent local residents were often invited to attend and even participate in them.

The Friends visited natural areas throughout Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan. Their identification and advocacy led to the protection of some of the Midwest's most scenic areas including the Wisconsin Dells in Wisconsin, Starved Rock in Illinois, the Indiana Dunes in Indiana, and the Ludington Dunes in Michigan. A key battle for the Friends was the preservation of the Indiana Dunes. As steel mills began to establish themselves on the lakeshore near Gary, the

Friends fought hard to win national park designation for the dunes. But even their strong ties to National Park Service director Stephen Mather could not help their effort when World War I erupted. The battle for protection of the dunes continued during the War—at the state level this time—led by the Prairie Club of Chicago which was able to get state park designation for the dune land.

In 1918 the Friends organized a state park committee to promote the establishment of an Illinois state park system and appointed Jens Jensen as its chair, a position he held until 1921. The committee looked at areas consisting of one thousand acres or larger and in 1921 issued a report entitled *Proposed Park Areas in the State of Illinois*. Seven of the twenty areas included in the Friends proposal became state parks. According to Bob Grese in his book, *Jens Jensen: Maker of Natural Parks and Gardens*, the Friends were successful because they were doers that “combined scientific and humanistic approaches to studying and appreciating nature, and promoted the preservation of the nation’s heritage as part of an individual’s democratic responsibility.”

Jensen convinced associates in the states of Wisconsin and in Michigan to establish Friends groups in their states. The Wisconsin Friends of Our Native Landscapes was founded in 1920 by the first landscape architect to join the faculty of the University of Wisconsin, Franz Aust. The organization is still active in Wisconsin conservation efforts. Genevieve Gillette, the landscape architect that had once served as Jensen’s secretary, organized the Michigan Chapter of The Friends of Our Native Landscapes in 1925. She was instrumental in establishing Michigan’s state park system. According to a letter from Gillette published in the 1927 *Michigan Property Owner*, the first meeting of the Michigan Friends was held on Memorial Day weekend in 1925 at Greater Point Sable and Hamlin Lake near Ludington. Twelve Michiganders attended the meeting and a botany professor from Kalamazoo College, William Praeger, served as the first president. The Michigan Friends had two missions: develop education programs for public schools and preserve Michigan’s best natural landscapes as state parks. In 1926 the second Michigan Friends meeting was held on June 25, 1926, on the Lake Michigan shore between Sawyer and the Warren Dunes and “over 300 persons stood around the Council campfire.” Representatives from four midwestern states (Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan) were in attendance and Judge Welch, president of the Prairie Club of Chicago, dedicated the council fire to Michigan. The Michigan Friends third meeting was held in Grand Ledge.

## The Friends and the Creation of Ludington State Park

In 1922 Harvey B. Lemon, a physics professor from the University of Chicago, agreed to host a meeting of the Friends of Our Native Landscapes at his summer home on Hamlin Lake in the Ludington dunes. Jens Jensen put Genevieve Gillette in charge of reserving cabins at a nearby resort and inviting a few influential Michigan people that would be interested in assisting in conserving the dunes. In her papers, Gillette recalls that she invited H.T. Darlington and Ernest Bessey from the Michigan Agricultural College and about four professors from the University of Michigan. The Friends took a morning passenger ferry from Chicago to Ludington. Gillette was already in Michigan and greeted the boat, noting that Jensen stood on the bridge with the captain as it approached the dock. The group then took buses to the east side of Hamlin Lake where they caught a ferry that crossed to a resort located on the west side of Hamlin Lake near Professor Lemon’s cottage. During the weekend the group performed a masque written by Kenneth Sawyer Goodman that was dedicated to members of the Friends that had died in World War I. The masque was the story of a fawn that lived in beautiful woodland that was visited by a series of protagonists interested in destroying the forest for their own gain including a land looker for the timber companies and a real estate developer. The fawn was terrified until the Friends appeared in the woods promising to preserve it for him and his fellow creatures. The masques were always presented in an outdoor setting and dramatically staged to make nature a part of the performance. Gillette remembers that in Ludington the audience was seated on a slope with the setting sun at their back. A small brook ran between the audience and the “stage” which was on a large body of water. Influential local residents were strategically invited to participate as actors in

the masque. The masques were effective. The day after the Memorial Day Friends meeting, P. J. Hoffmaster, superintendent of Michigan's fledgling state park system, received a call that three hundred and fifty acres of dune land north of Ludington was being donated to the state of Michigan for the creation of a state park. Gillette recalls she was in his office at the time and their excitement was immeasurable. They talked for hours about the new acquisition. They were exhilarated and frightened at the same time asking themselves what they would do with it. They had no idea of how to go about planning a state park. Over the next ten years, the state acquired over two thousand more acres of Ludington dune land, the majority coming from the federal government. The development of Ludington State Park was one of the first Civilian Conservation Corps projects in the state of Michigan under the New Deal.

## **The Prairie Club of Chicago**

The early 1900s saw a rise in interest in nature and conservation, which can be attributed in large part to President Theodore Roosevelt under whose administration eighteen national monuments were established. In 1907 Dr. Louis Glick and other social activists formed the Playground Association of America (PAA) to guide the creation of a national public recreation movement to provide healthy play opportunities for urban children. President Roosevelt served as the group's honorary president, and Jane Addams, Chicago's noted social activist and founder of Hull House, served as the group's vice president. In 1908, the Chicago chapter of the PAA, put together a series of Saturday afternoon nature walks in the environs outside of Chicago. The walks were co-sponsored by sixteen groups including the Illinois Audubon Society, the Geographic Society of Chicago and the Women's Outdoor Art League. Over 128 people attended the first walk and a tradition that has lasted almost ninety-five years was born.

The group incorporated as the Prairie Club of Chicago in 1911 and Jens Jensen, served as its first president. Under Jensen the Club expanded its offerings from weekend walks in the Chicago vicinity to camping trips in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. They later took trips to western states to see natural wonders like Yellowstone National Park. The Prairie Club of Chicago focused its attention on encouraging the establishment of a state park system for the state of Illinois and was influential in protecting scenic areas such as Starved Rock in central Illinois. They were also involved in lobbying for the protection of the Indiana Dunes in northern Indiana. The club partnered with other conservation-oriented organizations to create the Conservation Council of Chicago to promote the preservation of Lake Michigan's dunes.

In addition to Jensen, Prairie Club members included some of Chicago's most celebrated citizens: the writer Hamlin Garland; Stephen T. Mather, a Chicago business man that went on to become the first director of the National Park Service; Chicago Art Institute director William M. R. French; Henry C. Cowles, a botanist at the University of Chicago; Lorado Taft, a sculptor who created the Charles Hackley Memorial in Muskegon in 1930. Gertrude Simonds who owned a summer home in Lakeside, Michigan and was the daughter of landscape architect O. C. Simonds and often brought the Club to visit Nichols Arboretum in Ann Arbor, which her father designed; and Prairie style architects Walter Burly Griffin and Dwight H. Perkins. Edward K. Warren of Three Oaks, Michigan, who made his fortune through the manufacture of flexible corset stays from turkey bones, was also an early member. Warren later donated land for the establishment of Warren Dunes State Park and Warren Woods Natural Area in Berrien County.

The Prairie Club was an influential group that greatly impacted the conservation of natural resources in the Great Lakes area.

## **Prairie Club of Chicago, Hazelhurst Camp, Harbert, Michigan**

In the summer of 1911, the Prairie Club established a camp at Tremont Beach in the Indiana Dunes. The club also established two camps in the Chicago area: in the Deer Grove Forest Preserve in 1919 and in Cook County's Palos Park in 1922. The Prairie Club lobbied the federal government for the establishment of the Indiana Dunes as a National Park hoping to protect them

from future encroachment by more steel plants and manufacturing facilities. The outbreak of World War I and redirection of funding to the war effort put an end to that dream and the club turned its attention to designating the site as a state park. The Indiana Dunes State Park was created in 1925 and the next year, the Prairie Club sold their camp at Tremont Beach to the state of Indiana so the land could be incorporated into the state park.

In 1930 the club purchased sixty acres of land in Harbert, Michigan from William R. Hibbs and established a new camp called Hazelhurst, which it still operates today. The Hibbs home and barn were retained as camp buildings and twenty "cottages" (little more than tents) were moved to the new site from the Tremont Camp. In 1938 a children's clubhouse was built at the Hazelhurst Camp. Today there are ninety-four privately owned cabins in the camp, which operates as a cooperative.

## Significant Landscape Architects in West Michigan

### Ossian Cole Simonds (1855-1931)

A native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Ossian Cole Simonds attended the University of Michigan, and received his degree in Civil Engineering in 1878. While at the university, Simonds studied architecture under William LeBaron Jenney, an architect who developed Chicago's West Parks system. Following graduation, Simonds joined Jenney's Chicago office and was placed in charge of surveying land for the expansion of Graceland Cemetery. In 1880 Simonds joined with architect William Holabird to establish the firm of Holabird and Simonds (The firm later became Holabird & Root one of Chicago's premier architectural firms). Simonds found that he preferred landscape design to architecture and took the position of superintendent of Graceland Cemetery in 1881, a position that he held for five years. While at Graceland, Simonds began experimenting with landscape gardening techniques evolving his own style based on the use of native plants in the design. He also included non-native flowering shrubs such as lilacs, roses, and forsythia, for increased beauty. Graceland Cemetery was considered Chicago's finest and many of the city's most prominent citizens including Cyrus McCormick, Marshall Field, and Louis Sullivan are buried there. In 1903, Simonds opened his own landscape architecture firm and became a consultant in the development of Chicago's Lincoln Park along the Lake Michigan shore. Simonds was hired by the town of Quincy, Illinois, to develop a park and boulevard system. He also landscaped the North Shore estates of many of Chicago's wealthiest citizens. In Michigan, Simonds is best known for his design of the Nichols Arboretum at the University of Michigan where he established the landscape architecture program in 1908. He was also hired by the city of Menominee to develop a municipal park system. Simonds was one of eleven founding members of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

In the late nineteenth century, Simonds purchased and rehabilitated a farmhouse in Pier Cove, just south of Saugatuck as a summer home (2320 Lakeshore). When he bought it, the surrounding land had been harvested for timber and little vegetation remained. This provided a perfect landscape for Simonds to create an arboretum to study the characteristics of different species of trees and shrubs and their reaction to the Midwest climate. Simonds was an active supporter of reforestation efforts in the state. In 1905 he testified before the Michigan Forestry Commission. He told of the difficulty he had in finding lumber for the restoration of his home. Though abundant when the house was constructed, certain types of trees had disappeared from the Michigan landscape due to over cutting and now had to be purchased from Western states and shipped to Michigan. The arboretum still exists and Simonds ashes are scattered there.

### Jens Jensen (1860-1951)

Born in Dybbøl, Denmark, Jens Jensen immigrated to America and landed in Chicago around 1885. In March 1886 Jens Jensen was hired as a laborer for the Chicago West Parks systems. At a time when most parks were planted with gardens in the Victorian style—colorful flower beds in odd shapes highlighted with exotic specimen plants—Jensen planted a small garden in Union

Park using native perennial wildflowers and shrubs commonly found in the Midwest landscape. Known as the “American Garden,” it was wildly successful with park visitors and Jensen was made supervisor of a major park in West Chicago, Humboldt Park. Jensen lost his job in 1900 when he challenged the system of graft that dominated the city by refusing to accept a shipment of coal that did not meet the full amount ordered. He opened a private practice and began a lucrative landscape business working on the wealthy estates of Chicago’s North Shore suburban communities such as Glencoe, Evanston, and Fort Sheridan. Jensen was rehired by the city of Chicago in 1905 as superintendent of all the West Parks, a position he held until 1921. During that time, he transformed the landscape of Chicago’s Humboldt, Garfield, and Douglas Parks based on the Prairie style. His work in Columbus Park, with its native plants, subtle grades, “rivers” and lagoon is considered to be the apex of his career and is a remarkable display of his theory on natural plantings and park design.

Besides his work in the North Shore, Jensen held memberships in a wide range of civic clubs that put him in contact with some of Chicago’s most influential people. They were helpful in the advancement of his ideas about the preservation of scenic sites and conservation of the natural landscape. Some Chicago-based clubs of which he was a member include the City Club, the Cliff Dwellers, the Chicago Architectural Club, the Chicago Art Institute, the Municipal Art League, and the Chicago Academy of Science and the Geographic Society. Jensen helped to found two organizations that directly influenced the landscape of Southwest Michigan, the Prairie Club in 1908 and the Friends of Our Native Landscapes in 1913.

In Southwest Michigan, Jensen developed plans for Grand Beach Subdivision and Golf Course in 1919 though it is unclear if they were ever implemented. He also drafted plans for Jean Klock Park in Benton Harbor that were not implemented. Designs for residences include the F. H. Albright (1908) and Humphrey Gray (1917) residences in Benton Harbor, the John Williamson residence in Saugatuck (1914), and four residences in Lakeside: Edward K. Warren (1909); the Jerome residence (1909); the Louis Ruckheim residence (inventor of Cracker Jack), and the Toby Ruckheim residence. It is unknown if the plans for these residences were ever implemented. At the request of E. K. Warren, Jensen landscaped a small four-cottage complex called Saint’s Rest in Lakeside, which Warren built as a retreat for missionary families. These cottages have been demolished.

## **Genevieve Gillette (1898-1986)**

A native of Lansing, Michigan, Genevieve Gillette was one of the first women to graduate from the landscape architecture program at the Michigan Agricultural College in 1920. Jobs were scarce due to World War I and after graduation Gillette sent out forty-eight resumes and received forty-five responses that were all the same—“closed for the duration.” As a result, she decided to work as a secretary in the Chicago office of Jens Jensen, the noted Prairie school landscape architect, a position she held for two years. Gillette was well aware of Jensen’s importance and the prominence of his clientele when she took the job, and she felt the experience would be difficult, but beneficial. At the time, Jensen was serving as president of the Friends of Our Native Landscapes organization, a midwestern-based group that encouraged states to purchase land of exceptional beauty and protect them for use by the people as a state park. Gillette noted that during her job interview, Jensen had a design plan for Starved Rock State Park in Illinois on his easel. This was her first encounter with the concept of a state park system. Throughout the time she was employed by Jensen, he encouraged her to start a Michigan chapter of the Friends of Our Native Landscapes. After spending two years with Jensen, Gillette took the job of landscape architect with the city of Lakeland, Florida, which she held for a year. She returned to Michigan to work with John Brightmeyer and Son’s Florists in Detroit as their garden designer around 1924. Upon her return she organized a Michigan Chapter of Friends of Our Native Landscapes.

One of Gillette’s most noteworthy accomplishments is the role she played in the development of Michigan’s state park system. Gillette had continued her acquaintance with a former classmate from the Michigan Agricultural College, P. J. Hoffmaster, who was named the first superintendent

of Michigan State Parks in 1922. At first Hoffmaster would ask Gillette informally to visit a specific site that had state park potential whenever she was traveling for her job with Brightmeyer. As time went on the excursions became more involved. Loaded with detail maps she would invite three or four students from the landscape architecture programs at the University of Michigan or the Michigan Agricultural College to travel with her—their professors would often accompany them as well. The group would camp and cookout sometimes spending up to a week at one location. During these visits the team would assess the elements of the site against criteria they had developed to determine its suitability for development as a state park. Gillette and her teams were instrumental in locating sites for approximately thirty Michigan state parks. The preservation of some of Michigan's most significant natural areas including Pictured Rocks, Tahquamenon Falls, Sleeping Bear Dunes, Hartwick Pines, Wilderness State Park, and the Kensington Metro Parks are attributed to her hard work and perseverance.

In 1924 Gillette became garden instructor for the Detroit Parks and Recreation Department. During the Depression, Gillette helped Detroit residents develop "Thrift" gardens to produce fresh produce for local citizens. This work led to her appointment in 1933 as manager of an experimental housing community development outside of Pontiac sponsored by the Federal Relief Emergency Administration to create housing for working class citizens. Known as Westacres, the subdivision design included large lots that enabled property owners to plant their own vegetable gardens.

In 1943, Gillette opened a private practice in Ann Arbor. Her clients included Albion College and Ferris State Colleges and the village of Big Rapids. In the 1950s, Gillette organized the Michigan Parks Association and served on the Natural Areas Council that lobbied for and won a \$100 million bond for improving Michigan state parks. In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson appointed her to the President's Council on Recreation and Natural Beauty. Her contributions included the inclusion of landscape design in the federal highway program by connecting the importance of scenic highways to tourism. This resulted in the restriction of billboards and the use of native plants along America's highways. Following the untimely death of P. J. Hoffmaster in 1951, Genevieve Gillette was given the task of finding a natural area that could be turned into a state park and named in his honor. She chose an area between Grand Haven and Muskegon and the state proceeded to acquire land. In 1967 P. J. Hoffmaster State Park was dedicated. The Genevieve Gillette Dunes Center was established within P. J. Hoffmaster State Park, a fitting honor for the two people responsible for building Michigan's state park system.

### **Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. (1858-1954)**

Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. was born in South Haven, Michigan, in 1858, his father owned a farm located at 903 S. Bailey Avenue that was noteworthy for its apple orchard. The farmhouse is now the Liberty Hyde Bailey Museum and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. The Bailey Farm was considered to be a model farm with over three hundred cultivars. As a young man, Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. gained recognition in the community for his grafting ability, and his skill was much in demand among the fruit farmers of the region. He attended the Michigan Agricultural College in 1882 and after graduation worked at the Harvard Herbarium for two years under Asa Gray, a Harvard professor considered to be the most important botanist of the nineteenth century, who developed a uniform taxonomy for plants. Bailey returned to the Michigan Agricultural College in 1885 as a professor and established the horticulture and landscape gardening program, the first such program in the nation. In 1888 Bailey was offered the position of Chair of Practical and Experimental Horticulture at Cornell University, which he accepted. In 1903 he was named the director of the Cornell University Department of Agriculture.

While at Cornell Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. helped to reshape rural American life. In 1908 he was appointed chair of the Country Life Commission by President Theodore Roosevelt. The purpose of the Commission was to conduct a survey of farm and rural life and make recommendations for its improvement. This was at a time when the nation was in transition from a rural agrarian economy to an industrial one. Young men were leaving rural farms to get a factory job in the city

and hopefully find a better quality of life. By the early 1900s, a large number of family farms had simply been abandoned or were being farmed by men over the age of fifty. President Roosevelt felt there was a need to establish a program that would improve rural life and introduce more scientific farming practices so that the country's brightest, young men would find farming a viable occupation. In 1911 Bailey and the Commission issued its final report, *The Report of the Country Life Commission*. The main recommendations of the report were:

- Establish a national agricultural extension service (which was accomplished through the Smith-Lever Act in 1914);
- Conduct surveys on rural farm life to provide information and statistics for planning and education purposes
- Initiate agriculture economics and rural progress programs in universities
- Develop a campaign for rural progress

To promote a modern farming lifestyle, Liberty Hyde Bailey Jr. established the periodical *Country Life in America*, based on a British publication entitled *Country Life*. According to its editor, landscape architect Wilhelm Miller of the University of Illinois, the magazine was "a flagship for the Back to Nature movement."

*Country Life in America* influenced the development of "gentlemen farms" across the country. In Southwest Michigan these farms were typically established by a wealthy industrialist or entrepreneur, typically from Chicago, and often incorporated hundreds of acres of land. Some gentleman farmers actually ran working farms and took the lead in utilizing the most current scientific theories in farming, constructed the most modern buildings using the latest theories and practices, and experimented with new crops. Others simply built country estates with neoclassical homes on well-landscaped lawns that were showplaces of the community. Within the project area, examples of gentleman farms that embodied the principals of the Country Life Movement in America include Shore Acre Farms, the Dorr Felt estate north of Saugatuck, and Lakewood Farms, the George Goetz estate north of Holland.

## **August I. Silander and Anna Nanninga Silander**

August Silander came from Aaland, Finland to Chicago in the late nineteenth century. He was employed at the Pullman Works where he learned civil engineering and land surveying, and it was at Pullman that he first became interested in landscape gardening. He and his wife first visited the Ludington area in 1908 when they took a fruit boat and then the Dummy Line to a beach "shack" on Hamlin Lake. They later inherited the shack and built a more permanent home there. Silander was named president of the Hamlin Dam Association in 1929. He brought civil engineers from Chicago to oversee its repair and eventually signed the dam over to the Department of Natural Resources for inclusion in Ludington State Park in 1937.

According to an account in *Historic Mason County*, Anna Silander, August Silander's wife, was an avid gardener and served as the president of the Mason County Garden Club. In 1952 the Silander's designed the landscape for the newly created Leveaux Park in Ludington. Originally known as East End Park, it was renamed for a World War I veteran, Casmer Laveaux. The Silanders were also responsible for the landscaping of the Pere Marquette monument, the United Methodist Church, the Mason County Courthouse Clock, as well as numerous private homes in the area. Under Anna's presidency, the Mason County Garden Club provided scholarships to Mason County teachers enabling them to attend the conservation school at Higgins Lake. The scholarship program received an award from the National Federation of Garden Clubs. The Silanders' sons and grandsons continued the engineering tradition establishing the Chicago engineering firm of Robert G. Silander and Albert and Robert his sons.

## Living Memorials

Planting a tree or creating a park as a living memorial was a popular practice in the early twentieth century. These “living memorials” were used to honor the nation’s war dead, celebrate a centennial, or recognize a local leader. Families would often plant an evergreen tree in their front yard to commemorate personal landmarks such as a birth or anniversary. Memorial tree planting initiatives were undertaken at the national, state and local levels. They also helped in reforesting the state to alleviate the affects of lumbering.

### Celebrating America’s Centennial with Memorial Plantings

A tree planting program was undertaken in Philadelphia in 1876 in conjunction with the Centennial Exposition held there to honor the nation’s one hundred year anniversary. The idea received national attention when President Rutherford B. Hayes planted a centennial tree in the White House garden. As a result, many communities adopted the idea of planting trees to commemorate the nation’s centennial year. A common practice was to plant maple trees along roadsides.

In 1876 the city of Holland invited families to plant trees in Centennial Park to commemorate the centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. According to Arend Visscher in a report to the Michigan Pomological Society, the park “started as a bare strip of sand, not a tree there.” Centennial Trees were also planted in Holland’s public school yards. Visscher himself planted a row of twenty-five to thirty trees at his own home, which he and his family referred to as their “Centennial Row.”

### Arbor Day and World War I Memorial Trees

Arbor Day was first proposed by a journalist, J. Sterling Morton, a former resident of Detroit and graduate of the University of Michigan, who had moved to Nebraska in 1842. In 1872 he approached the Nebraska legislature to designate January 4 as Arbor Day. Over one million trees were planted that first year and the idea quickly gained popularity with other states. In 1882 American schools adopted Arbor Day nationally.

The Michigan legislature passed a resolution enabling the governor to name a day to be known as Arbor Day in 1885. In 1919 Michigan’s Governor Sleeper called for the citizens of Michigan to use Arbor Day as an opportunity to plant living memorials to honor the state’s World War I dead. The death and destruction that occurred during World War I deeply affected the American people. With over 320,500 American soldiers wounded or dead, almost every community felt a sense of loss. The following Southwest Michigan communities were among those that responded to the Governor’s request.

- Saugatuck chose to plant three trees in the southeastern portion of the public square. From south to north the trees were named for Charles Freshe, Frank Smith, and Earl Brunner, Saugatuck citizens that had been killed in the War.



Maples Trees along the Blue Star Highway, Casco Township, Van Buren County



Public Square, Saugatuck

- Holland School Commissioner Nelson Stanton introduced a plan in which each child graduating from the eighth grade would donate a tree to be planted by the Ottawa County Road Commission—it was estimated that there were six hundred graduates a year. The Commission agreed to care for the trees for four years to ensure their health. The trees were to serve as a living memorial to the men that died in World War I.
- A pin oak tree was planted in each of Holland's six parks as a memorial to the soldiers that fought in France during World War I.
- The American Legion planted elm trees in Stearns Park, Ludington as a World War I memorial.



*Stearns Park, Ludington*

## World War I Memorials - Black Walnut Trees

In 1919 the Daughters of the American Revolution planted at least one hundred walnut trees grown from seed taken from the walnut trees at Mount Vernon along the Victory Memorial Highway which ran from Benton Harbor to Port Huron.

At the beginning of World War I, President Wilson issued a call to the Boy Scouts of America to determine the location of black walnut trees in their local forests. Black walnut wood was used for making gunstocks and the available supply of the wood was already scarce as the war effort geared up. In March 1922 the American Legion recommended that black walnut trees be planted along highways in the United States as a living memorial to those that died in World War I and to replenish the stock of wood which might be needed for future war efforts. Many Michigan American Legion posts adopted sections of their local highways and planted black walnut trees along them. Their efforts were aided by the American Forestry Association.

## World War II Living Memorials

According to Nicolaus Mills in the introduction to his book, *Their Last Battle: The Fight for a National World War II Memorial*, there was a strong movement in the years following World War II to honor the nation's war dead with living memorials. Leaders like New York City's park commissioner called for "living trees and parks, lakes and clean streams" while author Louis Bromfield endorsed "a forest or a game sanctuary or a lake" over a "useless" statue. By celebrating life, it was hoped the nation could put behind it the tragedy and death it had experienced during the four years of the war. A living memorial avoided directly dealing with death and sacrifice as well as the task of commemorating the individual lives lost in World War II.

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## Reforestation

Michigan's forests seemed endless in the early nineteenth century when lumbering began. The state's earliest commercial lumbering industries started in the Saginaw Bay area and quickly spread to other areas wherever rivers and deep harbors made it easy to transport logs to saw mills. In the *Preserve America* project area, while there was some early lumbering south of Muskegon, it never reached the scale of operation that occurred north of the Muskegon River where forests were more plentiful. The lumber in Southwest Michigan was logged off early and was quickly replaced by fruit farming.

During the nineteenth century, the Michigan legislature placed few checks and balances on a lumber industry that brought significant revenue to the state. Lumber companies were able to abuse the Homestead Act of 1862 with no recourse, hiring men to purchase government land that contained the best timber for \$1.25 an acre. Once it was logged off the lumber companies moved on leaving the barren land to revert back to the state for non-payment of taxes. In October 1871, on the same day as the Chicago fire, dry weather conditions and high winds fanned a fire that burned two million acres of timber and scrubland across northern Lower Michigan. Any timber that had remained after the fire was abated was quickly logged off to meet the accelerated rebuilding needs of the city of Chicago. As a result, by 1900 Michigan's once majestic forests were virtually gone. In Muskegon, for example, the last log drive occurred in the winter of 1904.

By the time the lumber industry had pulled out of Michigan and moved west, the northern Lower Peninsula had been denuded; all that remained was cut over land covered with stumps. The boomtowns that had grown up around lumber camps and sawmills were abandoned as quickly as they had risen and were left to rot. Once busy wharves sagged neglected into harbors. Under these conditions, speculators began buying up the barren land under the Homestead Act of 1832 and advertising it as farmland to immigrants looking for a better life in America. At first this seemed like an admirable solution but it soon became clear that land suitable for growing pine forests was no fit for farming. It was either too sandy or acidic or the humus and topsoil, no longer protected by the forest undergrowth, had burned or blown away resulting in erosion and nutrient loss. Unfortunately, many of the immigrants that had purchased the land had little or no experience in farming. Unable to own land in their native countries, they were simply trying to live out their dream of landownership in America. The farms, commonly referred to as "blue sky" farms, were often abandoned within a year or two, once again reverting back to the state for non-payment of taxes.

In the late nineteenth century organizations that supported those that made their living from the land, such as the Michigan Horticulture Society and the Michigan Agricultural College (MAC), began to put pressure on state legislators to address the problem of the vast amount of abandoned, idle, cut over land that existed across the state. In 1900 the Michigan Horticulture Society sent out a call for action stating that "The forestry question is of growing importance, our state is not only a great loser, but the people of Michigan must share in responsibility for the wasteful (we may almost say wanton) destruction of the grandest forests of any state in the union." They called for a statewide land survey to identify land quality and types and enable resource planning. Many were convinced that much of the land of the northern Lower Peninsula was unsuitable for farming and should be reforested. Forestry was a newly emerging field at the time and Michigan was at its forefront. An early leader in Michigan's forestry movement was Volney Spalding, a professor at the University of Michigan who developed the first formal forestry course to be offered in America in 1882. William Beal, a botany professor at the Michigan Agricultural College, offered a forestry course in 1883.

In 1887 the Michigan legislature passed Public Act 259 that established a State Forestry Commission, headed by William Beal, to review Michigan's forest problem and make recommendations for a course of action. According to the Michigan Environmental Council's History Project website the legislature abolished the commission "in backlash to its conservation

proposals. Over 95 percent of the state's virgin forest has been cut, yielding \$2.5 billion to private interests, but little of it has been replanted."

In 1889 the State Forestry Commission was permanently reestablished and Charles W. Garfield of Grand Rapids was named Michigan's first forestry commissioner. Garfield was a state legislator that helped to establish Arbor Day in 1881. Forestry commission directors included Mrs. Francis King of Alma, a respected and well-known author of gardening books, Charles Monroe of South Haven and T. M. Sawyer of Ludington. One of the forestry commission's first recommendations was to withdraw two thousand acres of state land that was being offered for sale to out of state investors in order to curb the sale of unsuitable land for "blue sky" farms and stop the negative cycle of tax reversion of lands.

Encouraged by the state's commitment to reestablish its forests, the Michigan Agricultural College instituted the first Department of Forestry in 1902 headed by E. E. Bogue. Today it is the longest, continuously running forestry program in the United States. The University of Michigan followed soon after with the establishment of its Department of Forestry in 1903 headed by Filbert Roth.

According to the annual report of the Michigan Horticultural Society, one of the first reforestation efforts was the planting of Slocum's Grove in Muskegon County in 1900. The grove was planted with a wide variety of trees in order to determine their growth habits and suitability to Michigan's climate. How little was known about conservation at the turn of the century is evident in a report to the Michigan Forestry Commission in 1905 which noted that "natural reforestation" was occurring on a farm near Shelby where "on several high knolls which had not been touched during the past three years, a flourishing growth of young forest trees, maples, basswoods, and other varieties . . . were springing up naturally." In 1905 the Forestry Commission heard testimony from Prairie landscape architect, Ossian C. Simonds, regarding the destruction of Michigan's forestland. Simonds had purchased a farmhouse in Pier Cove just south of the Saugatuck/Douglas area. He testified that in order to match the existing cherry wood in the house he would have to purchase the material from a Western state since the trees had been logged off in Michigan and no longer existed. Simonds planted an arboretum on denuded, logged over land near his home in Pier Cove to test tree varieties, their growth habits, and adaptability to Michigan's climate. The arboretum still exists today.

In 1908 the Michigan Commission of Inquiry, Tax lands and Forests was created to review the issue of tax reverted lands in the state. They recommended that the state use much of its tax reverted lands to create state forest preserves. In 1909 the Public Domain Commission was created (it became the Department of Conservation in 1921). That same year Theodore Roosevelt signed into being Marquette National Forest in Chippewa County. In 1911 the U.S. Congress passed the Weeks Act that laid the foundation for the federal purchase of forestland. It also provided matching funds to state agencies authorized to purchase lands to conserve forests.

In the decade between 1913 and 1923 over two thousand farms were abandoned in Michigan and two-fifths of the state was in idle land. Over fifty thousand people, farmers and loggers, had left Michigan's northern lower peninsula. In 1929, while Berrien, Van Buren, and Ottawa counties had no tax reverted lands owned by the state due to the suitability of the soil for fruit farming, Allegan County had 245 acres, Oceana County 600 acres, Muskegon County 1305 acres, and Mason County 2,390 acres. Between 1921 and 1932, the state gained title to over two million acres of tax reverted land.

## **Michigan Land Inventory**

In Spring 1920 at its twenty-fifth annual meeting in Ann Arbor, the Michigan Academy of Science passed a resolution requesting that the state legislature pass a law that would enable an inventory of the state's land resources by county. The inventory would identify and classify soil conditions in order to determine the best use for the land. It would also collect economic data

regarding land use. Thus, fertile soils would be classified for agricultural purposes while sub-marginal land could be used for forests or recreation.

The Land Economic Survey was approved and placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Conservation in 1922. Michigan became the model for developing a statewide land classification technique. The survey covered eighteen counties in the northern Lower and the Upper Peninsula, took eleven years, and was completed in 1934. The information gathered helped the state develop a plan for the property it had obtained through tax reversion. Where appropriate, the sub-marginal lands held by the state were to be used for conservation purposes rather than returned to private ownership. For example, sub-marginal land in Muskegon, Oceana, and Mason County became part of the Manistee National Forest in 1938.

## State Highways, Tourism, and Reforestation

In the early 1920s the State Highway Department named Charles F. Boehler, as the department's landscape engineer to assist in the reforestation of right of ways along newly developing state trunk lines. Boehler believed "nature left in our charge magnificent forests which we destroyed" and that the people of Michigan must "start a comprehensive tree planting program to replace it." He also stated that Michigan's "timber supply was popularly supposed to be inexhaustible and trees were considered only for their value in lumber or they were considered to be a detriment to the use of land for agriculture. In an incredibly short time the forests were largely cut and now Michigan is a consumer rather than a producer of timber."

Michigan's public officials realized that automobile tourism would be a vital new component to the state's economy. To beautify the state and reestablish the natural forests that had been removed through lumbering, the state agreed to embark on a tree planting program along state highways. In a speech to the Good Roads Convention in 1920, Boehler made the case that "There is no conflict between the attractive and the practical roads. . . As in buildings, so in roads, beauty and practicability must go hand in hand." He went on to say "We must make our roads attractive to tourists for we cannot hope to attract people year after year to a region with the tree growth destroyed, with fires yearly burning off all the young trees and even hummus from the soil."

According to Boehler

The resort industry is yet in its infancy and its possibilities are great, but unless we take steps to preserve some of the natural tree growth and do planting to take the place of trees already cut or now being cut, we will lose all of the chief attractions to our summer guests. We cannot hope to attract tourists to a barren land devoid of natural tree and shrub growth; with nothing but charred stumps and burned logs to look at. Michigan will increase her fame as a resort state if we will only give nature a chance to give shade and beauty to our roadsides.

Boehler advocated that the highway department planting program should use native plants and trees that grew naturally in Michigan claiming "it would be folly" to cut wild grapes, sumac and hawthorns and replace them with lilacs, quince, and roses in a beautification effort. Instead, he recommended preserving "what is suitable and natural." He also recommended planting trees that were "long-lived substantial varieties for permanent results" rather than quick growing varieties that were unsuitable for Michigan's soils and climate. According to Boehler, Europe had implemented a roadside tree planting program some years earlier in an effort to curb blowing snow across its highways. The Europeans tended to plant fruit and nut trees, which Boehler felt would be a good addition to the standard oak, maple, and elm used in America but cautioned that



Maple tree on Holland Street in Saugatuck  
the original route of the West Michigan Pike

fruit bearing trees would require extra care and maintenance. Boehler thought it important that locale be considered when determining how a roadway should be planted. He recommended that “in places we should plant straight rows, in places we should plant irregular groups and colonies, and in places omit planting trees, but each road should be a study in itself to make the best of future appearance.”

He also thought that plantings could be used to make Michigan’s highways safer. For example, he thought that a dangerous curve could be “planted with white birch, beech, sycamore and others conspicuous in their color” to give warning to motorist approaching the curve. He also advocated for the construction of small wayside parks in naturally scenic locations to provide travelers with a place to stop and rest.

In 1921 state senator Harvey A. Penney of Saginaw introduced legislation that would enable the state highway department to plant shade and nut trees and shrubs along state trunk lines and Federal Aid roads. According to an article in *Michigan Roads and Forests*, “Michigan was the first state in the Union to legalize such a process of roadside embellishment and the legislation attracted considerable attention.” The legislation gave the State Highway Department the unilateral right to cut and care for trees within the highway right of way and enabled property owners of adjacent lands to harvest fruit from right of way trees or to plant tree varieties approved by the highway department. Secretary Rogers of the State Highway Department made it clear that the law would be strictly enforced.



Rows of trees planted on land bordering the Blue Star Highway north of South Haven

## Volunteer Tree Planting Programs

Service groups and other organizations were anxious to assist the State Highway Department to help reforest the state and beautify Michigan’s highways by volunteering to plant trees. For example, in 1922 the Automobile Club suggested that each of its members plant a tree along a highway. The American Legion undertook one of the most extensive tree planting programs through the introduction of their “living memorial” program to commemorate the men that had died in World War I. In an article in *Michigan Road and Forests*, a Legion representative stated “no monument can be more lasting or more significant than a tree. For this reason mile after mile in this and other states have been bordered with trees by the American Legion and other organizations in memory of the soldiers dead the World War. No shaft, no mausoleum, no block of marble no matter how delicately carved and traced can approach the beauty of a tree.”

In an article first printed in *American Legion Weekly* (reprinted in *Michigan Roads and Forests*, March 1922) Philip Von Blom stated the “federal government financial assistance to states in construction of public highways is closely related to the Legion’s policy of planting tree memorials” and that the Legion would plant trees “along the nation’s highways and memorial drives, parkways and parks.” The American Legion was assisted in their planting initiative by the American Forestry Association who provided advice on the best types of trees to plant and their care. The Legion agreed that memorial trees should be “of the kind which are observed thriving in the locality of the planting site,” however they did promote the planting of black walnut trees as memorials. Black walnut wood was the only wood used for gunstock and it seemed a fitting tribute for fallen soldiers. The Legion also considered how their memorial tree planting program would benefit the state’s fledgling tourist industry. A *Michigan Roads and Forests* article about the Legion’s program entitled “Lasting Monuments” asks “Would a tourist from Chicago rather drive along a barren highway than beneath two rows of overhanging trees?” Trees planted by the American Legion as tribute to the country’s war dead bordered “mile after mile” of Michigan’s highways, and those of other states.

In the 1920s, the *Detroit News* did a series of articles about Michigan's devastated forests and the over one million acres of tax reverted, barren land that existed which the state could not afford to reforest. According to the *Detroit News*, the state could only afford to pay to replant 15,000 acres a year. The paper decided to implement its own plan that would enable individuals and organizations to participate in reforesting the state. Under the plan, for a one hundred dollar donation forty acres of land would be planted with white pine seedlings. These plantation plantings would also serve as "living memorials" and the name of the donor would be placed on a steel sign. The program operated from 1932 to 1942 and forty thousand dollars was collected—a significant sum considering it was the Depression. A total of fifteen thousand acres were planted. Surplus funding was used to plant memorial forests honoring U.S. Presidents and Michigan governors. One of the driving forces for the *Detroit News* plan was beautification of Michigan's roads and highways.

This work is expensive. It will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. But we are satisfied that this is a good investment for the state, for attractive highways are necessary to the tourist trade on which the northern portion of the state depends. . . A highway of barren stump land is simply a means of transportation. A highway adorned by beautiful trees has a charm apart from utility.

The recreation industry of the state, even though a growing one at present will be given tremendous impetus. Tourists, health seekers, vacationists and resorters know the value of tree growth. They cannot be content without it. It creates resorts and camping sites; it shares trout streams and lakes, keeps water cool.

One of the early leaders in West Michigan's conservation efforts during the 1920s was, Edith Munger of Hart. She was one of eleven delegates appointed by then Governor Green in 1926—and the only woman—to serve on a commission to select the first Director of Conservation for the state of Michigan. Munger was active in many fields from food conservation to women's rights, but she was also a strong conservationist and had long been active in the Michigan Audubon Society. She later served as the first president of the Michigan Conservation Council and vice president of the Michigan Forestry Association. She actively worked to get a strip of Lake Michigan dune land north of Little Point Sable designated as a state park.

Michigan's highway beautification efforts throughout the 1920s paid off. In February 1930 the *New York Times* ran an editorial that declared the state of Michigan to be a "shining example" for other states. The editorial praised the appointment of a landscape engineer by the State Highway Department to oversee a statewide tree planting program and to work with local civic groups in the planting of trees and shrubs to beautify Michigan's highway system.

## Depression Era Relief Programs

In the 1930s, Franklin Delano Roosevelt established the New Deal federal relief programs to help lift America out of the Depression. The New Deal put funding into improving and/or establishing the country's infrastructure from roads to schools to post offices to housing. An important New Deal program was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which put young men in their twenties to work. The CCC reforested Michigan in the single largest conservation effort the state has ever seen. According to Donald Dickman in *The Forests of Michigan*, the CCC planted more trees in Michigan than in any other state. The CCC established a nursery at Higgins Lake in May 1933 and in 1934 planted over twenty thousand acres of seedlings, mostly red pine. Forty-two CCC camps were established in Michigan in 1933 alone. Between 1933 and 1942 a total of one hundred and twenty-three CCC camps had been established employing over 102,000 men. In 1938 through the leadership of Hugh J. Gray, head of the West Michigan Tourist Association, the Manistee National Forest was established in Oceana and Mason counties utilizing the CCC and other New Deal programs. In 1938 Mortimer Fuller donated eighty-five acres of land in Van Buren County to the state for state forest land. (It was recognized as the only state forest land in

Southwestern Michigan in 1953 by the Conservation Commission.) In 1939 the Ottawa Soils Conservation District utilized the services of the CCC for a five-year soil erosion control project in Ottawa County. Over 750,000 red, white, and scotch pine trees were planted in seven townships on reclaimed farm land.

## Christmas Trees

In the 1920s a number of ideas were floated regarding the growing of Christmas trees as part of Michigan's reforestation efforts. One such idea was to plant evergreens between deciduous trees lining the state's new trunk line highways. The thought was that the evergreens would be harvested as Christmas trees when they reached a certain height, leaving the matured deciduous trees to beautify the roadside. The tree plantings would answer an immediate need to beautify Michigan's roads and the harvesting of the evergreens as Christmas trees would provide increased revenue for the state. It is unclear if this plan was ever actually implemented.

Farmers were also encouraged to plant Christmas trees on denuded land that was not suitable for other crops. According to David Siebold in *Grand Haven In the Path of Destiny*, the first Christmas trees in Ottawa County were planted by the VanSlooten Family in 1928 in Port Sheldon Township.

Prior to World War II, 90 percent of all Christmas trees in America were harvested from natural growth forests. In 1936 the Forestry Association in Hart, Michigan established an experimental Christmas tree plantation. After the war the Michigan State University Agricultural Extension began promoting the growing of Christmas trees as a supplement to traditional farming and many farmers adopted the practice. Michigan farmers would plant Christmas trees on the portions of their land that were unsuitable for other crops. In the 1970s the number of part time growers declined and full time Christmas tree growers increased. In 2002 Michigan was the third largest producer in the nation of Christmas trees, harvesting over five million trees annually. The majority of Michigan's Christmas tree farms are located in West Michigan, Menominee County, and the Thumb region. Over one hundred and thirty thousand acres in Michigan are planted in Christmas trees and almost all are family-owned farms.



*Christmas trees and asparagus grow side by side in Oceana County*

There are a number of Christmas tree farms in Oceana and Mason counties including Needlefast Farms at 3930 W. Hansen in Ludington, which was established in 1956 when William Nickelson purchased an existing Scotch Pine tree farm.

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## Soil Conservation Districts

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, as dirt from America's Midwest Dust Bowl clouded the skies in Washington D.C., Congress realized there was a need for a national program to stop soil erosion and return farmland to productive use. To that end it passed the Soil Conservation Districts Act in 1937, which enabled states to establish soil conservation districts. The legislation required a state to set up a statewide soil conservation commission to oversee the activities of local conservation districts. To establish a local soil conservation district, twenty-five property owners in a region had to come together and officially petition the state Soil Conservation Commission Committee to create a conservation district in their area. The committee then held a public hearing and worked to determine the appropriate boundaries of the proposed district. All property owners within the proposed district would vote on a referendum to accept or reject the district. Once established, a conservation district remained in place for five years at which time the property owners would again vote to dissolve or continue it.

The purpose of a soil conservation district was to assist farmers in stopping soil erosion caused by water and rain. Farmers were assisted in developing soil management plans and educated in the best soil protection practices. They were also provided with the equipment and planting materials needed to accomplish their goals. Examples of the type of work a soil conservation district accomplished included reforestation, planting of pastureland, constructing open drains to make adjacent land farmable, sodding waterways to prevent gullies forming from water run-off, and planting windbreaks and cover crops. The soil conservation district also served as a co-op, providing tree planting machines, nursery stock for planting, gas and oil, etc. to district members at a low cost.

The first soil conservation district formed in Michigan was the West Ottawa district in 1938, followed by the South Muskegon District that same year, and the North Muskegon District in 1939. By 1944 a total of nineteen soil conservation districts had been established within the state including districts in Allegan, Mason, and Van Buren counties and in northern Berrien County. In Michigan, the majority of the soil conservation areas were clustered in two areas on the Lake Michigan shore: from Muskegon south to the Benton Harbor area and to the north in the Traverse City-Petoskey area—typically in areas with sand dunes and sandy soils. By 1957 there were seventy-five soil conservation districts in Michigan and two thousand and seven hundred nationwide.

### West Ottawa Soil Conservation

According to Anne Read in *Whispering Sands: a History of Port Sheldon*, soil conservation began in earnest in Ottawa County in 1932 when Leo Arnold, the county agricultural agent, encouraged the planting of dune grass in addition to the pine trees that were being planted in a reforestation effort. Farmer Albert De Ridder was the first to plant dune grass, which he obtained from the Fred Miles farm. In 1935 the city of Holland established a reforestation course in its high schools and initiated a school forest. When Congress passed the Soil Conservation Districts Act in 1937, the groundwork had already been laid in Ottawa County and county officials were ready to make application for a soil conservation district, making them the first area in the state to do so. In 1939 the West Ottawa Soil Conservation District decided they needed to establish their own pine tree nursery. With the help of a Czech immigrant, Holoman Lehotsky, who had received his degree in forestry from the University of Michigan, the county sent away to Czechoslovakia for pine seeds. A nursery was established on the Frank Garbrecht farm and pine and spruce seedlings were grown for reforestation plantings.

### Contour Farming

In 1935 the Soil Conservation Service introduced a program to test new methods of erosion control. The Benton Harbor farming community participated as one of the first of one hundred and

fifty-seven demonstration projects implemented nationwide. In Benton Harbor sixty farms comprising four thousand acres growing twenty-three different crops, in thirty-three different soil types participated. One known participant was the Lindhal Farm. The project was to test the concept of contour farming in which planting furrows are plowed to follow the natural topography rather than in straight lines. The project required terracing hillsides and that grassy areas be left where water ran naturally down the hillside. Woodlots were planted in strategic areas to reduce sand blowouts. Sod was placed between tree rows in orchards to prevent bare earth from blowing away.

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## African American Heritage

Today two of the five Michigan cities with the highest percentage of African Americans in their populations are located in Southwest Michigan. Benton Harbor in Berrien County is ranked second with 92 percent and Muskegon Heights in Muskegon County is ranked fourth at 77 percent, just behind Detroit, which is ranked third with 81 percent.

### Early African Americans in Southwest Michigan

It is a commonly held misconception that African Americans arrived for the first time in the Southwest Michigan region following the Great Depression when many industrial and migrant workers from southern African American populations were recruited by northern industries. However, long before this period African Americans came to the area as both landowners and farmers. There are documented accounts of African Americans living in Michigan since the mid-eighteenth century as participants in the fur trade. According to Leo Lillie in *Historic Grand Haven and Ottawa County* published in 1931 “the larger fur trading companies used slaves as part of the trapping operations.” Lillie states that records show that on September 10, 1742, a Father Coquart baptized the Negro slave of Charles Langlade, a fur trader working on the Grand River. In November 1779 Samuel Robertson, the captain of the sloop *Felicity*, noted in his log that “the negro on the River Mishigon (Muskegon) also told me that none of the traders had yet passed for the Grand River.”

African Americans began arriving in Michigan in significant numbers between 1830 and 1840. This was part of a national trend that saw over thirty-two thousand African Americans leave the slave states of the South for free states in the Midwest. Many were freed slaves others were escaped slaves that came up through the Underground Railroad. Two rural counties in Southwest Michigan, Berrien and Cass, are unique in that relatively large concentrations of African Americans have lived there since before the Civil War. A study conducted by Richard Harshorne in 1938 found that “Western Michigan . . . shows the unusual pattern of a widely scattered rural Negro population in a northern state.” While it was common for African Americans from the South to migrate to northern urban areas such as Chicago, Detroit, or New York, it was extremely rare for them to settle in rural areas. Two incidents stand out as reasons why Southwest Michigan became a rural area where former slaves felt comfortable settling. First, in 1836 a group of southern Quakers established a colony in Calvin Township near the community of Vandalia in Cass County. Affirmed abolitionists, they assisted slaves via the Underground Railroad reportedly helping over fifteen hundred slaves escape to the North. Some of the slaves continued on to Canada while others stayed and established a rural community of African Americans in the Chain of Lakes area of Calvin and Penn Townships in Cass County. They were offered five to ten-acre plots of land if they agreed to provide manual labor for five to ten years. As a result, a cabin village of African Americans known as Ramptown eventually grew up on a site donated by Cass County’s largest landowner, James Bonine. In 1846 the executor of the estate of Sampson Saunders of Virginia approached the Cass County Quakers looking for a place where forty former slaves, freed by Saunders in his will, could purchase land and start a new life. The Quakers agreed to help the estate establish small farmsteads for Sampson’s freed slaves in Calvin Township. The second incident occurred when violent clashes between abolitionists and anti-abolitionists broke out near Cincinnati, Ohio, in the late 1840s. Hearing of the farmsteads that had been established in Calvin Township an African American, Kinchen Artis, led twenty African American families to Cass County in order to escape the violence. Artis later enlisted in the First Michigan Colored Infantry in 1863 and served during the Civil War. A number of the descendants of Artis’ group later moved to the Benton Harbor area.

By 1850, while the city of Detroit had the highest concentration of African Americans in Michigan with 697 residents, Cass County and adjacent Berrien County had the second and third largest populations of African Americans in the state at 376 and 215, respectively.

African Americans In Southwest Michigan in 1850*	
County	Number
Allegan	5
Berrien	215
Mason	0
Oceana	19
Ottawa	35
Van Buren	2

\*From the Report of the Michigan Secretary of State

## Covert, Van Buren County

Covert, a small town in western Van Buren County, was originally established in 1855 as the village of Deerfield. (The name was officially changed to Covert in 1876.) In 1860 there were no African Americans in the village but by 1884 there were 115, 9.3 percent of the population.

Among the earliest African American settlers in Covert were William Frank Connor and Himebrick Tyler, both former slaves who had found their way to the settlement established for African Americans by Quakers in Cass County. The men had purchased land in Covert Township before joining the Union Army and they settled there after returning from the Civil War in 1866. William Bright Connor, William Frank's father, purchased land adjacent to his son's. His land included a school building and it was clearly Connor's intent that African American children would attend the school, a radical act since at the time Michigan had a long standing law that forbids integrated education. According to Anna-Lisa Cox in her book *A Stronger Kinship*, Covert's school was able to accommodate both black and white children because Adolphus Sherburn, a young member of the school superintendent's board that was surveying school age children in the township, purposefully left off the children's race in his final report. William Frank Connor and Himebrick Tyler eventually sold their land to a lumberman, William Packard, and purchased better farmland closer to town. Packard, an abolitionist from Massachusetts, opened a lumber mill and insisted that his logging camps, mills and the Congregationalist church he built in town be integrated. Packard's partner, Edward Rood, supported him in his endeavors. The combination of the strong will of these founding African American families and the abolitionist principles of Packard and Rood enabled the village of Covert in Van Buren County to become one of the most integrated communities in Michigan in the late nineteenth century.

Two young African America brothers, Napoleon and Washington Pompey, also settled in Covert Township; their father, Dawson, soon moved up from Indiana to join them. In April 1868 Dawson Pompey was a successful man owning 159 acres of farmland. He ran for and was elected to the position of highway overseer for Highway District 7 in Covert Township. This was an unusual occurrence since the fifteenth amendment giving African Americans the right to vote was not ratified until 1870 so those that voted for Dawson Pompey would have been white. According to Cox, by 1871 sixty African Americans had moved to Covert. Most had prospered—none of the farms they owned were less than forty acres—and African American farmers were members of the local Grange, typically a conservative group. The farms of the African Americans were interspersed among the farms of white men creating a truly integrated landscape. In addition to Dawson Pompey, other African Americans were able to hold positions of power in the village. Three were elected to local government positions in 1874. Washington Pompey was elected highway overseer, Napoleon Pompey was elected constable, and William Frank Connor was elected Justice of the Peace by one hundred and thirty-six votes to eight for the opposing white candidate.

Covert's African-American residents established a tradition of holding an "Emancipation Day" celebration at which nationally known speakers would address issues and educate listeners about race-related topics of the day. By 1904 of Covert's eighteen hundred residents, one hundred and thirty-three were African-American. The village's overall population began to

diminish over the next decade as rural children began moving to cities to take advantage of high paying factory jobs and the social amenities offered by larger communities. By 1920 the number of African Americans had been reduced to fifty while the population overall stood at a little over twelve hundred people.

## Other Southwest Michigan African Americans of the Nineteenth Century

Below are some of the African Americans known to have been living in Southwest Michigan during the mid-nineteenth century:

- **A. S. Pompey, Covert.** Owned a livery stable and served in a number of local government positions including on the road commission.
- **Stewart Montell, South Haven.** Montell was a Chicago businessman that reportedly owned a 167-acre gentleman's estate near South Haven where he raised mink and cattle.
- **James D. Corrothers, South Haven and Muskegon.** Corrothers' family moved from the South to the African American settlement established by Quakers in Calvin Township, Cass County. After the death of his mother he was taken to South Haven during the city's lumbering peak in the 1870s to live with relatives. According to Corrothers in his autobiography, *In Spite of the Handicap*, there were a handful of African Americans living in the South Haven area at the time, including a man named Jim Green who had served in the Union Army. Anna-Lisa Cox in *A Stronger Kinship* reported that according to the census, there were thirty-one African American residents in South Haven Township; most were day laborers and only one family owned a farm. Corrothers left South Haven when he was fourteen and took a variety of jobs. He recounts a rare scene of mob violence against blacks that occurred at a South Haven Fourth of July celebration. He blamed sailors that were not citizens of South Haven for the riot and noted that as restitution the citizens of South Haven agreed to host an "Emancipation Celebration" organized by residents of Covert in 1881. (He also noted that it was not well attended as people chose to attend the original celebration in Covert.)

By 1884 Corrothers had moved to Muskegon to live with an uncle and work in the lumber mills. Here he found that "Colour prejudice in Muskegon was not especially noticeable. The city was too busy to pay much attention to the colour of a man who was a good worker and paid his bills." Corrothers noted there were about fifty African Americans in Muskegon at this time. He eventually landed in Chicago where he met a man that paid for his tuition to Northwestern University where Corrothers studied to become a minister. He returned to South Haven in 1904 when he inherited several city lots from his uncle, John Ray. While in South Haven he worked to organize a church for the seventy-two African Americans living in the community. He began construction work on the Union Baptist Church, located at the corner of Center and Superior, but left South Haven for Dowagiac before the church was completed when his desire to bring more African Americans to the community met with opposition from whites. Corrothers wrote at least two books, his autobiography *In Spite of the Handicap* and the novel the *Black Cat Club*, and numerous poems and short stories.

- According to Bea Kraus in *A Place to Remember*, the 1870 census shows one African American family, the Samuel Brown family, was living in South Haven Township in 1870. Kraus also notes that another African American, John Dungill, owned a barber shop in the city in 1878 and served as the pastor for the African American Methodist Episcopal

Church which disbanded in 1889. Dungill once ran for treasurer of South Haven Township. He later moved to Kalamazoo.

- **Abner Bennett, Montague.** (1799-1879) Bennett and his wife, Mary (a mid-wife), were former slaves that made their way to the White Lake area prior to 1853. Abner Bennett was one of the founders of Montague and served as a Deacon in the Methodist Church. In September 1855 he was appointed by the Michigan Conference of the Methodist Church to head the White River Circuit. Bennett and his wife helped run-away slaves move along the White River. Their original farmhouse still exists in Montague though it has been altered and moved to its current location at 7945 Old Channel Trail. Some accounts indicate that the Bennetts later moved into town and lived in a house at 8899 Park Street. They were respected members of the community and are buried in the Montague cemetery.
- **Isaac W. Berd, Montague.** An African-American who lived in Montague c. 1882. Berd was born a slave in Virginia and forced to fight in the Confederate Army. After escaping, he served as a steward on Lake Michigan ships. He married, moved to Montague and became the proprietor of the Franklin House Hotel and then the Sylvan Beach Hotel. He once served as postmaster of the Wabaningo Post Office and reportedly also owned a restaurant in Muskegon. Berd died in 1911.
- **William Allston, Shelby.** An article by the Oceana Historical Society in *Michigan History* stated that in 1889 the manager of the Spring Lake Iron Company Kilns in Shelby, R. Dickie, went to South Carolina to recruit workers for the company's thirteen charcoal burning kilns. Dickie returned accompanied by eight African American men but only one man, William Allston, elected to remain in Shelby.

A significant abolitionist from this period, Captain Jonathan Walker, was caught transporting seven slaves from Key West, Florida, to freedom in the Bahamas in 1844. As part of his punishment, Walker's palm was branded with an "SS" for "slave stealer." Known as "The Man with the Branded Hand," Walker later moved to Muskegon and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery. An obelisk was erected near the entrance of the cemetery in his honor. The monument was paid for by Photius Kavasales Fisk of Boston, a Greek born into slavery under the Ottoman Empire. Fisk made it his life mission to mark the graves of abolitionists in order to honor those that had given aid and funding to the cause of freedom. Since 1955, the Greater Muskegon Urban League has presented "The Jonathan Walker Award" to a person in the community who has worked to improve interracial harmony.

## The Early Twentieth Century

By 1915 there were 1,385 African Americans engaged in farming in Michigan on a total of 640 farms. Within the *Preserve America* project area the breakdown of African American farms is depicted in the following chart.

African American Farms in Southwest Michigan*		
County	Total Number of Farms	Number of Acres
Allegan	48	2,986
Berrien	23	1,313
Mason	0	0
Muskegon	5	134
Oceana	3	100
Van Buren	78	4,990

\*From the Freedman's Progress 1915

Many of the ancestors of the early African American settlers that had come to rural settlements in Berrien and Cass counties eventually made their way to Southwest Michigan's larger towns such as Benton Harbor and Muskegon. According to Benton Harbor resident Diane DeFrance, whose husband's family was part of the Artis group that came to Cass County from Ohio, the earliest African American settlement in Benton Harbor was known as "Out East" and was located on Crystal Springs Road near Boynton, Bard, and Hull roads. Most of the African American children from this area attended the Hull Elementary School. African American women from "Out East" often worked in service positions for the residents of Benton Harbor's affluent Higman Park neighborhood.

One of the most successful African Americans in Southwest Michigan during this period was Thurman Brightwell who came to the Whitehall area in 1911 from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Reportedly, he had a wealthy brother that was a mortician and politician in Chicago and owned a summer place in Montague where he raised racehorses. Thurman Brightwell was a string butcher and around 1920 opened a butcher shop in Whitehall, and from this enterprise his business began to grow. He opened a frozen food storage locker, one of the largest in West Michigan. He also started a garage and a taxi service that began by hauling tourists and their luggage to local resorts and expanded into a full-fledged trucking business that hauled freight, furniture and the U.S. Mail. When Thurman Brightwell died in the 1950s he reportedly left an estate worth over \$2 million. The family residence was on Division Street in Whitehall and the business was located on Colby.

## The Lincoln Jubilee

In 1915 a national celebration was held to commemorate a half-century of freedom for former slaves liberated by the Civil War. The Lincoln Jubilee and Exposition, as it was called, was held in Chicago and was meant to highlight the accomplishments of African Americans in the arts, science, manufacturing and agriculture. Each state was charged with establishing a committee to assess the fifty-year history of its African-Americans and five thousand dollars was appropriated out of each state's general fund for the project. Michigan's committee totaled fifty-seven delegates; two of which were residents of the project area: Charles Collier of 167 Baird Street, Benton Harbor and William Rider of 509 Church Street, St. Joseph. To show that African Americans had become productive members of society, Michigan's Lincoln Jubilee Committee compiled a list of the state's African American property owners as of 1915. The printed report from the Jubilee, entitled *Freedmen's Progress*, includes numerous photographs of the well-kept homes of Michigan's African American citizens.

## The Great Migration and World War II

The period between 1914 and 1950 is often referred to as the Great Migration in African American history. It was a time of deep poverty for Southern blacks caught up in a cycle of systematic economic repression at the hands of the Southern white population. Jim Crow laws kept blacks from establishing effective political representation and kept educational opportunities for blacks separate and unequal. The agricultural system of sharecropping was a thinly veiled form of economic slavery. Black farmers remained in debt to white farm owners who paid them little for their crops while extracting exorbitant fees for seeds, equipment and land rental. Blacks had little hope for betterment in the South where entrenched attitudes of prejudice allowed for little upward movement within the existing social system.

This was also a time when America began to industrialize. Word that newly established northern factories, whose production needs increased when World War I was declared, required more laborers was a light at the end of the tunnel for many Southern black men. They began leaving the South en masse. Nearly six million Southern blacks headed north to make a new life. While in 1900 90 percent of America's African American population lived in the South, by 1960 only 10 percent remained there. Southern blacks typically went to urban areas where factory jobs were available. Mainly uneducated, they relied on information provided by word of mouth through

relatives, friends, and churches about where to go to find jobs and room and board. The north-south route of Highway 61 provided a direct flight path from the Mississippi Delta to Chicago whose African American population increased 148 percent between 1910 and 1920. In Michigan, the city of Detroit and its newly established automobile industries provided a prime opportunity for southern blacks; Detroit's black population increased 611 percent in the decade between 1910 and 1920.

In 1927 massive flooding on the Mississippi River led to the loss of homes and goods of many poor southern blacks; the Dust Bowl conditions and Great Depression of the 1930s further aggravated their plight. The mechanization of farming also displaced black farm workers, as men were no longer needed for jobs that could be accomplished more quickly and cheaply by a machine. The only hope for survival for southern blacks seemed to be in creating a new life in the North. Unfortunately, northern communities were ill prepared for the vast numbers of southern blacks that found their way to their midst in a very short time period. Segregation was a common practice during these years and there was simply not enough housing in black neighborhoods to meet the needs of the massive number of migrants. Eventually, overcrowding pushed blacks to look for housing in what had been traditionally all white neighborhoods, which often set off a firestorm of prejudicial behavior that led to racial violence between the two groups.

According to the website *Digital History*:

Access to housing became a major source of friction between blacks and whites during this massive movement of people. Many cities adopted residential segregation ordinances to keep blacks out of predominantly white neighborhoods. In 1917, the Supreme Court declared municipal resident segregation ordinances unconstitutional. In response, whites resorted to the restrictive covenant, a formal deed restriction binding white property owners in a given neighborhood not to sell to blacks. Whites who broke these agreements could be sued by "damaged" neighbors. Not until 1948 did the Supreme Court strike down restrictive covenants.

Confined to all-black neighborhoods, African Americans created cities-within-cities during the 1920s. The largest was Harlem, in upper Manhattan, where two hundred thousand African Americans lived in a neighborhood that had been virtually all-white fifteen years before.

## The Great Migration and Southwest Michigan

Two communities in the project area, Benton Harbor and Muskegon, saw the most dramatic increases in their African American populations due to the Great Migration. Both cities had a number of established forges and foundries that needed laborers. According to the book *Deadly Dust* "Especially during the 1920s as immigration from Europe was severely restricted, blacks found the foundry . . . one of the "dirty, hot, unpleasant" industries that saw an almost spectacular increase in the proportion of Negroes. From a negligible percentage in 1915 African Americans come to represent over one third of all foundry workers."

The need for foundry laborers increased even more as war preparedness projects started up in the late 1930s when Nazi Germany's aggressive actions in Europe made the prospect of United States intervention more inevitable. The foundries went into full scale, twenty-four hour a day War production after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 to meet the needs of America's huge military effort. To ensure a smooth transition between peacetime industry and war production, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the War Manpower Commission in April 1942 whose purpose was to identify and balance the labor needs of agriculture, industry and the military during World War II. The Muskegon and Benton Harbor foundries were directed by the federal War Manpower Commission to tap pools of under-utilized Southern workers for the war production effort.

## Muskegon's African Americans

Some of the earliest African Americans to inhabit Muskegon had come to work in the city's sawmills in the late nineteenth century, and by the 1920s Muskegon already had an established African American community. The first African American church in the area, Bethesda Baptist, had been built on Getty Avenue. A second African American church, the John Wesley AME Church, was founded in Muskegon by O. Stearns of Grand Rapids in 1923. According to Alice Prescott Kyes in *Romance of Muskegon*, members of the John Wesley AME Church "first met at the Colored Masonic Hall on Western Avenue and later moved into a dance hall on Water and Jefferson Streets." The AME congregation announced plans to build a new church building on Webster Avenue off Pine Street in 1925. An article in the July 2, 1925, *Muskegon Chronicle* reported that the city's three colored churches (AME, Zion Baptist, and Bethesda Baptist) were uniting to hold a July Fourth picnic in McGrath Park. In 1927 Bethesda Baptist was in the process of building a church at the corner of Pine and Webster and had completed the basement, which housed a kitchen and meeting rooms. That year, they hosted the 84<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Chain Lakes Association at which the Bethesda Jubilee Singers performed.

The vast majority of Muskegon's African America population migrated to the area from the South to work in the city's foundries, including Campbell, Wynant, and Cannon in Muskegon Heights, which supplied engine blocks for automobiles. These workers were often recruited and sometimes paid to relocate to the north. By 1930 the census showed that there were over 1,370 African American residents in Muskegon. The cities foundries were employing a total of 4,800 people in 1936 and that number increased when contracts were received from Great Britain to meet the needs of its war effort against Nazi Germany. According to Frederic Read in the bicentennial publication, *A Long Look at Muskegon*, Muskegon's African American population rose sharply between 1940 and 1950 from 1,781 to 7,382 with 1941 the peak year. Muskegon's foundries had been directed by the War Manpower Commission to recruit their needed employees from the South where unemployment was still a significant problem due to the Depression. While the foundries intended to only recruit a few hundred employees, word of mouth between family and friends about the opportunities that could be found in Muskegon brought many hopeful blacks from Depression devastated southern states such as Arkansas, Alabama, and Tennessee to the city. Like most northern cities during this period, Muskegon simply wasn't prepared for the large influx of migrants that arrived within a short period of time and the result was an extreme housing shortage for African Americans. They ended up camping on the Muskegon County courthouse grounds or renting a cot in a boarding house, typically run by a man named Porter Anderson, for an eight-hour shift. So severe was Muskegon's housing shortage that a federal War Housing Commission was appointed to address the issue. Fairview Homes, a federal housing project for African Americans was built in 1943 on Hovey Street between Jarman and Hawley Streets in a predominantly white area of Muskegon Heights. Ryerson Heights was another housing project constructed for African Americans. However, these housing projects were seen as coming too late to meet the needs of Muskegon's African American residents. The majority of newcomers had already settled in an area called "The Bottoms" located between Pine, Webster, Cedar and Spring Streets (north), Western Avenue (east), and Ottawa and Muskegon Avenues. Here Muskegon's African Americans created their own community. A barbershop built in the early 1920s and operated by "Dr. Terry" later became the Sepia Tavern, which went on to become a center of African American social life in Muskegon. Another barbershop was located on the corner of Webster and Spring Streets. People often used the living rooms of their homes for storefront businesses. It wasn't until 1964 that an organization entitled Home Equity, Inc. was formed to help blacks purchase homes in integrated neighborhoods within the city.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, Muskegon was home to a vigorous music scene as many of the African Americans recruited from the south to work in Muskegon's factories brought their musical culture with them. Many started singing with church choirs like those at the Muskegon Heights Philip Chapel AME Church. In 1944 Ruby Brown opened a popular jazz club, the Sepia Club off Ottawa Street and the club became a landmark in the Muskegon African American

community. It was demolished after it closed in 1965. Brown's family had moved to Muskegon Heights from Missouri in 1922. He became the first black student to attend and graduate from Muskegon Heights High School in 1929. For a time, Brown ran the Pine Street Tavern with Henry Perlas and then opened the Central Garage at 234 W. Clay Street. Brown served on the Muskegon Housing Commission in the 1940s. Brown lived at 464 Monroe Avenue, Muskegon, and was a resident of the city for over fifty-five years. Other popular African American clubs included the Ebony Club at White Lake Drive and Russell Road and the Apollo Lounge (Nubby's) at 604 E. Sherman.

Another of Muskegon's prominent African Americans was William R. Howell who came to Muskegon from Arkansas in 1926. His son, Frank Howell, a Muskegon Heights dentist, became the first African American elected official in Muskegon in 1956. A second son, Willie Howell, served as the Muskegon Heights police chief in the 1970s.

## Muskegon and Negro Baseball

In Michigan, African American baseball got its start around 1867 when the first documented all black team, the Rialto Base Ball Club of Detroit, was formed. Michigan's first documented baseball game between a black and a white team occurred in Battle Creek in 1871. There was little integration in baseball over the next fifty years and African Americans developed their own teams, leagues, and circuits. The League of Colored Base Ball Club was formed in 1887 but quickly failed; a second attempt at an organized African American baseball league was tried in 1906 but was also short lived.

The era 1900 to 1920 saw the establishment of many African American teams. While there was almost no integration in regular league play, many Negro teams participated in a "barnstorming" circuit and regularly played white teams in exhibition games. One such example was the Page Fence Giants of Adrian, Michigan; an African American team founded by Bud Fowler of Stillwater, Minnesota, one of the few black ball players that had been able to play for a white team. In 1920 the National Association of Colored Baseball Clubs was formed and the Negro Leagues were finally a success. They thrived until Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier for good in 1946.

The construction of Marsh Field in 1916 brought semi-professional baseball to Muskegon but financial trouble prevailed and by 1925 there was no league play in Muskegon. According to Mark Okkonen in *Baseball in Muskegon*, "With no league baseball for 1925, interest once again focused on local amateur and semi-pro teams." Company teams like the Alpha Creameries and the Mona Lake Ice were popular with the home crowd. Local white teams like these would play Negro League all-star teams in exhibition games. For example, Muskegon's Coca Colas played an exhibition game with the Detroit Colored Giants in June 1925 while the Alpha Ice Creams played the Illinois Colored Giants. The *Muskegon Chronicle* noted "there is always plenty of fun when a team of colored boys play ball" and that "the colored boys are favorites with local fans who have seen them in action for the last couple years." The *Chronicle* also notes that "colored baseball players are not allowed in organized leagues and thus the gentlemen of color gather in semi-professional teams." The author further indicated that "they [Negro teams] could cause trouble to even the major league teams."

Though little has been written about them, articles in the *Muskegon Chronicle* reveal that Muskegon had its own Negro teams such as the Muskegon Colored Athletics, organized by R. E. Glover; the North Muskegon Colored Giants; and the Campbell, Wynant, and Cannon Foundry team called "The Cleaners." The Negro teams played at Marsh Field and seem to have been part of the West Michigan Professional Baseball Tournament in 1925. According to a roster published in the June 20, 1925, *Muskegon Chronicle*, North Muskegon played the Colored Giants of North Muskegon as part of the tournament.

In 1950 Muskegon became home to Elston Howard and Fred Barnes, the first African Americans to be signed to the New York Yankees. They were sent to Muskegon to play in the Central

League for the Yankee's farm team, the Clippers. Elston Howard played in Muskegon for two years and in 1963 became the first African American to be named the American League's Most Valuable Player.

In 2005 the Muskegon County Museum of African American History was established at 7 E. Center Drive. A documentary about Muskegon's African American history "Up from the Bottoms: African American Migration to Muskegon, Michigan" is currently in production through a partnership with Grand Valley State University, Clear Vision Films, and the Bottoms Committee of Muskegon.

## Benton Harbor's African Americans

As noted above, in the late nineteenth century a community of African Americans had formed in the Benton Harbor area known as "Out East" located on Crystal Springs Road near Boynton, Bard, and Hull roads.

In the 1930s, Benton Harbor's Mayor John Sterling visited the South to encourage both African Americans and whites to come to the Benton Harbor area to work as migrant workers picking fruit. The migrants worked a circuit picking strawberries, raspberries and cherries in Berrien County in the early summer then migrating to Ludington to pick sour cherries, traveling to Bay City to bring in the beet crop, and then returning to Benton Harbor for the peach and apple harvest. In 1942 Hispanic workers primarily took over the migrant circuit after the establishment of the federal Braceros work program.

A second and larger wave of African Americans came to Benton Harbor, mostly from Arkansas, in the 1930s to take jobs in the city's foundries and forges. They settled in an area known as "The Flats" off Territorial Road near Second Street not far from the area once known as Little Italy. Like other northern cities, Benton Harbor was ill prepared for the large influx of African Americans that came to the city in the 1940s to take factory jobs during World War II. The Flats was overcrowded. Homes were converted into boarding houses, and businesses and stores operated out of front rooms. The area was razed through urban renewal in the 1960s.

In 1945 a colored women's club, the Mary McLeod Bethune Club, was formed to assist in boosting "the progress of the Negro toward full and active Citizenship in our [Benton Harbor] community." Members included Mary Be-Foe, who became president of the local NAACP and Lulu Lee who in 1962 was elected Benton Harbor's first African American and first female city commissioner.

Professional wrestler Bobo Brazil (born Houston Harris in Benton Harbor) became the first African American to integrate the sport of professional wrestling in the 1950s. He was the first African American to win the World Heavyweight title in 1962 and was inducted into the World Wrestling Federation Hall of Fame in 1994. Brazil returned to Benton Harbor in his later years and operated a restaurant called Bobo's Grille. The city's community center is named in his honor.

In the 1960s Benton Harbor's population was about 25 percent African American. In the 1970s Benton Harbor began to experience strong racial tension after a court ordered the desegregation of the city's schools. Violence erupted that led to a surge of white flight. Today the city has a population that is over 90 percent African American and an unemployment rate of over 25 percent.

Some of the resources associated with Benton Harbor's African American history include:

- **Fair Avenue between Territorial Road and Main Street** was once lined with black-owned businesses such as Robbins Brothers Funeral Home; Dr. C. Bassett Brown, Dentist; and Quentin Fulcher, Attorney.

- **Morton Elementary School** (West of Pipestone, Ox Creek Valley & Hall Park) was almost entirely black in 1962.
- **Blossom Acres** was a low-income housing project populated by African Americans. Built in 1962, it was located on East Main Street beyond Fair Avenue and south of Highland.
- **Saint Augustine of Canterbury Church**, 1753 Union Street, Benton Harbor. In 1928, the Holy Trinity Episcopal Church on Pipestone built a new church in Saint Joseph. One of the parishioners, Mrs. H. A. Arnold suggested that the old church be donated to an African American congregation that had been meeting over a store. The church was renamed St. Stephens and in 1958 a white rector, Bruce Wheller, was appointed to the church and worked to integrate it. After relocating to temporary quarters on Napier in Fairplain, a new modern church in the “Japanese style” with a sloping, stepped copper roof was constructed at 1753 Union Street in 1962. At the time the church population was 60 percent African American and 40 percent white. Today the building is known as St. Augustine of Canterbury Church.
- **The Establishment Supper Club**, 311 W. Market, has been popular with the city’s African American clientele since the 1960s.

## African Americans and Travel

At the beginning of the twentieth century few African Americans traveled for vacations unless it was to visit relatives. Discrimination and segregation policies kept them out of most hotels across America. According to a report by Horace Sutton reprinted in the 1950 *Negro Digest*,

travel for Negroes inside the borders of the United States can become an experience so fraught with humiliation and unpleasantness that most colored people simply never think of a vacation in the same terms as the rest of America.

It was difficult for African Americans to find places to stay. According to the Henry Ford website, black newspapers such as Detroit’s *Michigan Chronicle* or the *Chicago Defender*, would publish advertisements for the few hotels that were open to African Americans.

In 1936 the *Negro Motorist Green Book* was published by an African American, Victor S. Green, “to save the travelers of his race as many difficulties and embarrassments as possible.” Green provided the names of hotels, restaurants, barber and beauty shops, and other businesses that provided services to African Americans. The book wasn’t the first such guidebook to be published. According to the introduction to the 1949 edition, “during these long years of discrimination” a number of guidebooks geared toward the African American traveler had come and gone. However, the *Green Book* became popular and expanded from a regional publication covering metropolitan New York City to providing information for the whole United States and even internationally. The *Green Book* was endorsed by two African American special representatives of Esso Standard Oil, Wendell P. Alston and James Jackson. In an introduction to the 1949 edition, Alston states “more white corporations cognizant of the mounting purchasing power of the Negro consumer have Negro representatives in the field, a number of whom, like ourselves, spend half the year traveling.” The publisher of the *Green Book* admitted that they did not have the staff to provide a comprehensive listing of businesses for the African American traveler and that more businesses that provided services to African Americans were sure to exist. The website 37 Days posted a quote from a presenter at a Martin Luther King Celebration in 2007 who talked about the importance of the *Green Book* to African Americans. He said:

We obtained the most important book needed for Negroes who traveled anywhere in the United States. It was called the ‘Green Book.’ The book contained a directory listing the places where a Negro could obtain lodging and food in each state. The ‘Green Book’

was the bible of every Negro traveler in the 1950s and early 1960s. You literally didn't dare leave home without it . . .”

While the *Green Book* listed a number of sites in Detroit and throughout Michigan only a small number of businesses in Southwest Michigan were listed in the 1949 edition of the book:

Research Pleasure Club, 362 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Benton Harbor  
R. C. Merrick Tourist Home, 65 E. Muskegon Avenue, Muskegon  
Shady Nook Farm owned by Mrs. M. Johnson, South Haven

In 1950 it was estimated that there were only twenty resorts in the entire United States that openly catered to African Americans. Known resorts include Idlewild, Lake County, Michigan; Fox Lake Resort, Angola, Indiana; Lincoln Hills Country Club, Gilpin County, Colorado; Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, and American Beach, Florida. When African Americans traveled it was typical for them to stay with relatives or acquaintances since few white hotels would accept African American patrons. Black entertainers traveling a circuit would learn which hotels accepted African Americans and the information was then passed by word of mouth.

### African American Resorts in West Michigan

According to John Corrothers in his book *In Spite of the Handicap* there was an unsuccessful attempt to establish an African American resort in South Haven at the turn of the century. He writes

A syndicate of coloured businessmen from Chicago and St. Louis secured an option on an abandoned white resort on the lakefront, with a view to establishing a coloured summer resort. Bitter opposition to this plan developed among a certain element of white newcomers, and the local papers were bombarded with protests. The impression soon got abroad that Negroes were not wanted in that community. (p. 217)

An African American resort community was established in Michigan in Lake County around 1915. Known as Idlewild, it became a resort destination for African American across the nation thanks to the writings of W. E. B. DuBois who owned a summer home there. Idlewild became a stop on the black entertainment circuit and some of America's most respected African American musicians and entertainers performed there each summer between 1920 and 1970. In the early 1920s, thanks to the success of Idlewild, a second African American resort area was established in Michigan at Woodland Park by Marion Auther of Cleveland, Ohio and A. E. Wright of Chicago, Illinois. The resort reportedly included a fifty-six room hotel called the Royal Breeze, a clubhouse that could accommodate up to “one hundred couples for dancing,” a boardwalk, and forty cottages. Paradise Lake in Cass County was a popular resort area for African Americans from Chicago. According to the Northern Indiana Center for History website, the land for Paradise was owned by the Bonine family, one of a number of Quaker families that assisted in the establishment of a farm colony for former slaves in the Vandalia/Chain Lakes area of Cass County. Dr. Bonine became a prominent oculist that received worldwide attention.

Within the *Preserve America* project area William and Birdie Thorton purchased a farm near South Haven in 1932 and established Thorton's Resort for African Americans, which operated until World War II. The property was eventually sold to the state for the construction of M-140.

According to advertisements in the 1954 *Summer Vacation Guide* edition of *Ebony Magazine* the following resorts in Southwest Michigan accepted African American patrons:

- **Fireside Cabins, New Buffalo.** The cabins were built by the Bass Brothers of Chicago in 1949. The resort integrated in the 1970s and operated as the Three Bees.
- **Evergreen Resort, South Haven** owned by Rupert Simmons.

- McGuire's Lakeshore Acres, South Haven on Lakeshore Drive, owned by D. F. McGuire.

After World War II, Covert became a popular site for black laborers looking to escape crowded conditions in Chicago. Cheap land attracted former Pullman porters, International Harvester workers, Armour & Swift employees and U.S. postal workers. The 1956 *Ebony* vacation guide listed Pitchford's La Maison in Covert as a former residence that had been turned into an African American resort in the late 1930s. The 1962 *Ebony* vacation guide included the Blue Bird Motel in Covert, which was established by Harold White of Chicago in the 1960s.

The Gordon Beach Inn in Union Pier catered to an African American clientele in the 1960s as did Gun's Tourist Home and Motel. The community's popularity among African Americans was demonstrated when Jesse Owens, an African American track star that won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics, purchased a vacation home in Union Pier in 1969.

In a 1964 article entitled "Segregation: Cottage Rental in Michigan" published in *Phylon*, Patricia Pilling noted that in 1962 the Archdiocese of Chicago opened the Holy Family Resort in Benton Harbor which welcomed white and black patrons. She also found an African American resort area on Little Pleasant Lake near Jackson with a "preponderance" of Negro cottage owners and a cottage community known as "Midwest" owned by a black physician and his brother.

## Other African American Sites

### Emmanuel Community Church, 322 Elkenburg Street, South Haven

Built in 1928, Emmanuel Community Church was the first African American church constructed in South Haven. The congregation formed in 1923 by Hulda Brown and was known as the Church of the Living God. An addition to the church was completed in 1950 and again more recently but the entry is reportedly the original church.

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## Dutch Heritage

### Holland

The history of the Dutch in Holland, Michigan has been well documented and therefore was not a focus of this report. In summary, a group of sixty Dutch Calvinists seeking religious freedom settled in the Holland area in 1847. Led by Albertus Van Raalte, the group cleared a channel to Lake Michigan and created a town square, known today as Centennial Park. A school established in 1850 later became Hope College. Many resources relating to Holland's Dutch heritage can be found in the city including the Cappon House at 228 W. Ninth Street and the Van Raalte House located at East Twenty-Fourth Street and Country Club Road

### Graafschap

A group of seventy people from Graafschap, Betheim, founded the village of Graafschap just south of Holland, Michigan, in June 1847. They were later joined by thirty-four immigrants from Drenthe, Netherlands. Erected in 1862 Graafschap church was the center of this Dutch immigrant community. The Graafschap church was affiliated with the Reformed Church in America in 1850 but severed that tie seven years later to become one of the founding members of the Christian Reformed Church which followed Dutch customs, for example church's parishioners continued to speak Dutch for two generations.

### Grand Haven

Dutch settlers began coming to Grand Haven around 1847 shortly after the colony was founded in Holland. These early settlers clustered near the south channel north of town.

### Muskegon

Muskegon has a large Dutch population. The first Dutch immigrants began settling there around 1852. Students from Hope College in Holland, Michigan often found for summer jobs loading boats at the Muskegon docks and either remained in Muskegon or returned later to take up residence. Muskegon also became home to Dutch immigrants that first settled the rural area between Holland and Muskegon but soon found they preferred commerce to farming. By 1888 there were more than five thousand Dutch residents in Muskegon. Among the first recognized leaders of Muskegon's Dutch community were Isaac and Cornelius Brandt who settled there in 1856. Three Dutchmen have served as mayor in Muskegon: Martin Waalker in 1888 (his son Bert served as an alderman and lived at 77 Monroe), Leonard Eyke who lived at 268 Webster, and Harry Rietdyk who resided at 136 Peck. The numbers of Dutch in Muskegon continued to increase throughout the twentieth century and by 1947 one quarter of Muskegon's population was Dutch. The majority all came from the same province, Groningen, in the Netherlands.

A Dutch immigrant, Julle Bierema, established a lucrative celery farm on two hundred and fifty acres of muck land in east Muskegon in the late nineteenth century. The venture was successful since the Dutch were experienced with wetland farming techniques. By 1919 Muskegon was the second largest celery-producing region in the state, second only to Kalamazoo.

In Muskegon, immigrants from the Netherlands typically settled around Myrtle and Spring Streets in the western part of Muskegon. The First Reformed Church was established in 1874 and was first located on Spring Street near Apple; it has since moved to Ada Avenue. Bethany Christian Reformed Church was founded in 1890 and was located on Harford at Terrace. Other Dutch Reformed churches were located on Spring, Myrtle, and on Allen Avenues. According to an article in the 1916 *Muskegon Chronicle*, there were a total of nine Dutch Reformed churches in the community that year accounting for the largest religious presence in Muskegon followed by

the Catholic churches. The Holland Reformed and Christian Reformed churches were located in the Second, Third, Fifth and Sixth Wards and its other churches in the Fourth and Fifth Ward

The following buildings were identified as having been built by Dutch residents of Muskegon:

- Mulder Block, 134 Pine. A brick commercial block constructed at the corner of Pine and Myrtle (134 Pine) by Johannes and Adrian Mulder for their grocery business.
- Wagener Block, 49-51 Myrtle. A commercial block built by Gerrit Wagener at Spring & Myrtle (49-51 Myrtle)
- Karrell & Dekker Hardware, 114 Pine
- Jone Boersema, Hardware, 271 W. Western (Home 248 Wood)

## Berrien County

### **Hellenga Centennial Farm, 7701 W. Elm Valley Road, Chickaming Township**

Fedde Hellenga purchased land in Berrien County in 1881. Hellenga was born in Birdaard, Friesland, Netherlands and immigrated to South Holland, Illinois before moving to Michigan in 1866. He established the First Reformed Church in Three Oaks. The Hellenga farm was planted in grapes and blackberries. The farm still produces concord and Niagra grapes for Welch's. Eldon Hellenga was owner/operator of the National Grape Association Co-op and was one of the first to experiment with irrigation to prevent frost damage to grapes.

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## Eastern European Heritage

### Czech

The first wave of Czech immigrants came to America in 1843 settling primarily in rural communities in Texas and Wisconsin. By 1870 there were over forty thousand Czechs in the United States and the largest Czech urban population was located in Chicago, mostly in the Pilsen neighborhood on the city's southwest side. One of those immigrants, Anton Cermak, became mayor of Chicago in 1931. Mayor Cermak and other Czech immigrant families began coming to the New Buffalo-Union Pier area to vacation in the 1920s. Early Czech resorts included Vavra's Resort in Union Pier (now Sweethaven Resort), Prusa's on U.S. 12 in Union Pier, and Libuse Inn on Townline Road.

Joe Babko of the Bohemian Club of Chicago established Camp Sokol on Marquette Road outside of Union Pier in 1905. A sokol is an organization that promotes traditional folk culture and physical and mental health. Camp Sokol became one of the largest Bohemian summer camps in the United States housing over two hundred campers.

### Lithuanian

Lithuanians began arriving in the United States in force around 1918 after World War I. Chicago became the center of population for Lithuanian immigrants and many lived in the Bridgeport community on the city's southwest side. A strong Lithuanian community also grew in the Lawn and Marquette Park neighborhoods between 1920 and 1950. Stalin's policies after World War II forced a large number of Lithuanians to leave their country and join family and friends already settled in Chicago. In the 1960s the all white Lawn neighborhood became a battleground for the civil rights movement as African Americans began moving into the area. The neighborhood became a target for groups that were both for and against integration. This stressful environment contributed to a need for peace that many Lithuanians sought in the resorts of Union Pier. Resources in Union Pier associated with Lithuanians include:

- Gintara's - Algirdas and Viktoria Karaitis came to the United States in 1949 as "displaced persons" after World War II. They purchased the former summer home of Paul Gray Hoffman, chairman of the board for Studebaker-Packard Company. Hoffman was also known as the administrator of the Marshall Plan in Europe after World War II and many celebrities visited his Union Pier Home including Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. The Karaitis' constructed cottages on the property and provided traditional Lithuanian meals. As a result over 98 percent of their clientele was Lithuanian. The Lithuanian chess master, Tautvaissa, vacationed there and the Lithuanian Architects and Engineers Society held their annual meetings at Gintara's. In the 1970s and 1980s a Catholic Lithuanian mass was held on the bluff overlooking the beach.
- Milda's Grocery
- G & K Party Store
- Fire Fly Resort (formerly Nerigna)
- Gordon Beach Inn (formerly Rambyna's)
- Evergreen Resort (formerly Egle)

## Polish

Poles first came to America in 1608 and were among the settlers of the Jamestown colony in Virginia. Two Poles, Kazimierz Pulaski and Andrezej Kosciuszko, played a large part in the military operations associated with the American Revolution. Polish immigrants were recruited to come to Michigan to work in the lumber camps in the 1870s and a large contingent of Poles settled in Presque Isle County near Posen.

One of the first Polish immigrants in Ludington was Frank Boguszewski (nee Bogus) who came in 1894. He first worked in the city's lumber mills and eventually became head firemen at the Stearns Salt Plant. Other Polish immigrants soon followed, helped by Bogus who provided them with room and board. This enabled them to save money to send back home to assist relatives in making the journey America. By 1901 over sixty Polish families had settled in Ludington, most living in the Fourth Ward.

Fifty-three of the Polish families living in Ludington joined together in 1897 to purchase five lots on Third Street to construct a church. The Saint Stanislaus Church and school were completed in 1900 and Reverend Joseph Pietrasik served as the first pastor. A rectory was built in 1907 and the school was first opened to students in 1907. The Rosary Society constructed the Grotto of Our Lady of Fatima in 1949. The church was renovated in 1977.

## Muskegon

A number of Polish immigrants settled in the Muskegon area to work in the lumber industry. Some of the resources associated with Muskegon's Polish heritage include:

### Saint Michael's Catholic Church 1716 Sixth Street

The church was established in 1912 to serve the Polish parish.



### Polish Falcon Club 1014 W. Hackley

Patterned after the Czech Sokol, the Polish Falcon organization was founded in Lwow, Poland in 1867. The Falcons encouraged exercising both the mind and body through gymnastics and acted as a fraternal aid organization for Polish immigrants. In 1884 there was a push to expand the organization worldwide and the first Polish Falcon group was founded in Chicago in 1887. At the turn of the twentieth century after the Tsar was overthrown in Russia, the Falcons supported a free Poland and the creation of a Polish Army. The Muskegon Polish Falcons lodge (Nest 276) was organized in 1911.



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## German Heritage

German immigrants came to America in two great waves. The first occurred between 1830 and 1860 when over one and a half million Germans, the majority from southern Germany, entered the United States. The second great wave occurred between 1880 and 1889 when another one million Germans arrived, this time most were from northern Germany and Prussia. Some were escaping an intolerant political system but most were peasants drawn to America by the prospect of owning their own farmland for the first time. Many Midwestern states actively recruited German farm families to help tame America's forests and prairies by publishing advertisements in German newspapers; publishing brochures in German about the crops, climate and soil conditions in their state; and even opening offices and sending representatives to Germany and to American cities like New York or Chicago that served as immigrant entry points.

In Michigan a large contingent of Germans from Wuertemberg and Westphalia settled in western Washtenaw County in the 1830s. The settlement was aided by the work of Pastor Friedrich Schmid who established forty German churches in southeast Michigan in the 1830s. The villages of Ann Arbor and Manchester in Washtenaw County served as regional centers for Germans settling the farmland in adjacent townships. The farms were quite successful and letters sent home encouraged other Germans to come to and try their luck in Michigan.

### Germans in Berrien County

A large population of German immigrants came to New Buffalo in Berrien County and the surrounding township in the 1850s. Claus H. Schultz of Holstein, Germany, arrived in 1852 and became a local leader in the New Buffalo community. Trained as a blacksmith, Schultz manufactured ornamental rustic ironwork for gardens. He also cultivated wild grasses and imported flowers and for over thirty years operated a successful fruit and flower nursery for the Chicago market. Schultz built a number of buildings in New Buffalo and served as its president. By 1906 half the population of New Buffalo Township was German. Other German settlers included George Weimer, Frede Gerdes, J. C. Schwenck, and William H. Seitz. Organized in 1858, Saint John German Evangelical Lutheran Church at 200 West Buffalo in New Buffalo is one of the oldest German Evangelical churches in Southwestern Michigan. The church building was constructed in 1863 and moved to its present location in 1890.

During the mid-nineteenth century, Russia's Catherine the Great encouraged German farmers to settle an area of land in eastern Russia where the Volga River meets the Black Sea. She hoped to turn it into productive farmland and offered the Germans attractive incentives, such as no taxes or military service, for them to immigrate there. Around 1890 those privileges were revoked and the Germans that had settled in Russia began leaving for the greater freedoms offered in America. Many settled in the prairie states of Kansas and Nebraska, but a large contingent came to Michigan and settled in the Saginaw Bay area and in Berrien County in Saint Joseph, Sodus, Baroda, and Bridgman. According to the 1920 U.S. Census there were 510 German Russian families (2,920 individuals) in Berrien County. Today, Berrien County has the world's largest concentration of Germans from eastern Russia (Volhynia, now located in Ukraine) in America.

By 1917 over eighty thousand Michigan residents were German natives. The anti-German sentiment created by World War I led many German immigrants to abandon German traditions and accelerate their efforts to assimilate into American culture. For example, many German churches stopped holding German language services during this period.

### German Prisoners of War as Fruit Farm Laborers

The Geneva Convention of 1929 permitted prisoners of war (P.O.W.) to be put to work while being held captive on American soil as long as their compensation and accommodations were as good as those of state-side American soldiers (Hahn, 170). As a result, local Michigan farmers

would pay wages directly to the U.S. Army for use of P.O.W. labor on their farms during a nationwide shortage of regular seasonal workers throughout World War II (Hahn, 170). In West Michigan, these German P.O.W.s came from Camp Hartford and Camp Sodus and some chose agricultural work as a respite from their captivity. (Hahn, 171). In 1945 there were five to eight thousand German P.O.W. workers documented as fruit harvesters on Michigan farms (Hahn, 170). The most well-documented piece of this agricultural history occurred at the William Teichman farm of Eau Claire, Michigan, (9351 E. Eureka Road), which is today an important U-Pick and Agri-tainment destination in Southwest Michigan known as the Tree-Mendus Fruit Farm.

William Teichman's family had themselves emigrated from Germany in 1890. William was born shortly after their arrival and therefore acquired enough German language skills in his youth to communicate with the German workforce on his farm in the 1940s (Hahn, 172). He even translated for local fruit farmers that were also working with other German P.O.W.s. He was fondly remembered by his workers who continued correspondence with him after their return back to Germany or shipment to other P.O.W. camps throughout Europe after the war. Workers also remember the tasty Michigan crops, or "schöne Pfirsiche" (beautiful peaches) (Hahn, 173). This readily available German P.O.W. labor force during an otherwise national shortage helped to sustain incredibly profitable harvests throughout the wartime years for Michigan farmers. Without them, the industry could not have succeeded as it did. The memories and letters between the former workers and William Teichman have been preserved by the Teichman family, most notably Herb, operator of Tree-Mendus Fruit Farm, and his sister Emily Foster.

## **Other German-related Resources in Southwest Michigan**

### **Grand Haven**

A group of Prussian Germans settled on Grandville Road near the old Oconto station on the Michigan Lakeshore tracks in 1870. The German Lutheran Church at 15424 Lake Michigan Drive was built in 1877 and was moved to its present location in 1955. At the turn of the century it was located on the West Michigan Pike at Winans in Agnew. Many of the cottages in the Highland Park resort community in Grand Haven were built by a German immigrant, August Boesker, between 1886 and 1917.

### **Muskegon**

Saint Joseph Catholic Church located at Fifth and Monroe in Muskegon was built in 1883. According to a July 11, 1918 article in the *Holland City News* the church dropped the inclusion of a service in the German language in 1918 because of the ill feelings resulting from World War I. Another church, Trinity Evangelical Lutheran on Bourdon Street, was also founded by Germans.

### **Ludington**

Henry Neuman came to Saginaw from Germany in 1859 and moved to Ludington in 1875. He formed the German Worker's Society to provide aid to German immigrants. In 1881 the society built the Abeiter Hall at 302 James Street. The group disbanded in 1912 and the hall was demolished in 1925. Neuman purchased the Cartier-Filer Store at 13f0 W. Ludington in 1888.

August Tiedeman, of the building and contractor firm of Tiedeman and Boerner, served as president of the Arbeiter Society. Charles Boerner immigrated to Wisconsin in 1863 where he learned the carpentry trade. He moved to Ludington in 1868 and went into partnership with Tiedeman in 1877. The firm was responsible for the construction of many prominent buildings in the community.

## Whitehall/Montague

German immigrants settled on the north side of town. Originally the German Catholic Church was located in Whitehall, but because a majority of the Catholics lived in Montague, the church was moved across the ice to Montague. (The building no longer exists.)

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## Greek Heritage

From the late nineteenth century until World War II, Chicago was the center for the majority of Greek immigrants that came to America seeking a better life. Many Greeks first came to Chicago to take advantage of the labor needed for reconstruction following the Chicago Fire of 1871. By 1930 there were approximately thirty thousand Greeks in the city.

The number of Greeks that settled in Southwest Michigan was not large. In the book *Greeks in America*, Thomas Burgess provides the following data from the 1910 census for Greeks in Southwest Michigan.

Greeks in West Michigan*	
County	Number
Allegan	19
Berrien	6
Mason	7
Muskegon	18
Oceana	2
Ottawa	0
Van Buren	3

\*From the 1910 Census

According to Stavros Frangos in his book *Greeks in Michigan*, a small number of Greek fruit farmers established farms in the area between New Buffalo and Muskegon. One example is Nick Katsulos, a Greek immigrant who first settled in Chicago and then purchased a fruit farm outside the village of Stevensville in Berrien County in 1912 with a friend John Giaras. In 1916 the men purchased a truck to haul fruit grown by Stevensville area farmers to the fruit market at Benton Harbor. By 1921 they had thirteen trucks and had formally organized as the G & K Trucking Company. G & K Trucking was soon hauling fruit directly to the Chicago market in the summer; in the winter they began hauling merchandise for Sears, Roebuck & Company on return trips. The trucking company eventually expanded its business to haul fruit from the Shelby-Hart area to the Muskegon docks. They also began hauling celery from Holland in the winter months. The partnership folded in 1925 and Nick Katsulos formed the Michicago Motor Express in 1926. Michicago hauled fruit purchased at the Benton Harbor Fruit Market to the National Tea Company in Chicago and groceries from National Tea warehouses to their stores in Benton Harbor, Saint Joseph, and Niles. Katsulos opened the Market View Restaurant in the Benton Harbor Fruit Market in 1936 and operated it until 1966. Another successful Greek fruit farmer was Nick Argondelis who established the Pearl Grange Fruit Exchange outside Benton Harbor.

The majority of Greek families that settled permanently in Southwest Michigan were Chicago residents that first visited the Lake Michigan shore as tourists. Some saw an opportunity to offer services to resort visitors and returned to open restaurants, hotels, and candy stores. Over time, Berrien County grew to have the largest concentration of Greek residents in Southwest Michigan. While there were 6 Greek residents in Berrien County in 1910, by 1940 there were 74 and around 175 by 1960. The city of Benton Harbor served as the population center for Southwest Michigan's permanent Greek residents. In 1949 a Greek Orthodox Church was constructed at 725 Broadway in Benton Harbor. In the 1960s, mounting racial tensions and a declining economy forced most Greeks to move out of the city to more suburban locations in the surrounding area. A new church site was purchased in New Buffalo in 1982 and the highly decorated interior of the original Benton Harbor church was moved there.

Greeks that summered in Southwest Michigan were almost exclusively from Chicago, typically the Halsted Street area, or from Gary, Indiana. The more well-to-do Greeks stayed at Greek resorts in Berrien County such as the Riviera Resort and Coldwater Cabins, the Fruit Farm

Resort in Stevensville, or at the Sunset View Cabins in Hagar Township. Greeks with less money stayed at primitive cabin resorts that had community showers and bathrooms. In the early twentieth century, mothers and children would come for the summer and fathers would continue to work during the week and visit on weekends. It was approximately a three-hour drive by car and typically two or three families would share one automobile sitting on laps and singing Greek folk songs. The Greek language was spoken at the resorts. Entertainment was simple consisting of Greek music played on a lira, mandolin, and accordion accompanying Greek circle dances and the singing of traditional songs or the Greek National anthem. Greek picnics were sponsored by the Greek Orthodox Church and consisted of Greek chicken and potato salad. A lamb farm outside Stevensville provided meat for barbecues and roasting. Canning fruit and tomatoes was a form of entertainment for the city dwellers. During summer months Greek "resorters" engaged in the same activities as other Southwest Michigan tourists—swimming at Silver Beach, taking trips to the House of David Amusement Park for baseball and ice cream, or attending a movie at the outdoor theater in Stevensville. Card games and playing the slot machines at Emery's Resort were also common.

Greeks stopped coming in numbers to Southwest Michigan in the 1960s for a variety of reasons. The political difficulties that dominated their homeland before and after World War II finally ended and Greeks could return home to Greece for visits. The economic success Greek families found in America increased their ability to travel farther afield for vacations. The children of Greek immigrants preferred to assimilate and no longer wanted to isolate themselves at Greek resorts. Many were able to purchase a suburban home and the need to leave the hot dirty city in summer was removed.

One of the area's best-known Greeks from Southwest Michigan was George Coutoumanos a respected nature poet from the turn of the century that lived in Saugatuck.

Photius Kavasales Fisk, a Greek from Boston, made a significant mark on Michigan's landscape. A chaplain in the U.S. Navy, Fisk was born into slavery in the Ottoman Empire. As a result, he made it his mission to honor American abolitionists by erecting monuments at their gravesites. Fisk paid for the monument that marks the grave of abolitionist Captain Jonathan Walker buried in Evergreen Cemetery in Muskegon. In 1844 Captain Walker was caught transporting seven slaves from Key West to freedom in the Bahamas. Part of his punishment was the branding of his palm with an SS for "slave stealer." Fisk paid for the marble obelisk that denotes Walker as the "Man with the Branded Hand."

## Greek Heritage Resources

- **Annunciation and St. Paraskevi Greek Orthodox Church**, 17769 Behner Road, New Buffalo. The church is the site of the former Golden Door Restaurant purchased and remodeled in 1994. The highly decorated interior is from the original church built in Benton Harbor in 1949. The interior was moved to this site in 1995. The church contains a permanent exhibit entitled "Greeks of Berrien County." Two annual events celebrating Greek Culture are held at the church: a Greek picnic on the last Sunday in July and a Greek dinner on September 29.
- **105 E. Buffalo, New Buffalo, Internet Café**. Formerly the Log Cabin Inn, one of a number of Greek-owned restaurants in New Buffalo that catered to a Greek tourist clientele from the 1920s to the 1950s.
- **Karagon's Grill**, U.S. 12 just north of the Indiana state line south of New Buffalo.
- **725 Broadway, Benton Harbor**. The former site of the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church was built in 1949.
- **J & J Restaurant**, U.S. 12. New Buffalo has had the same Greek owner for the past thirty-three years.

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## Hispanic Heritage

Migrant farm workers have been coming to Michigan since the 1920s when farm hand shortages became acute as young men left rural areas for higher paying jobs in newly industrialized cities. According to a report on migrant workers by Refugio Rochin for the Julian Samora Research Institute

In the 1930's, farmers in Western Michigan became important employers of migrant workers for strawberries and "stretch crops" like cherries, peaches, and apples. Berrien County growers went to Arkansas and south Texas to recruit seasonal workers. The Arkansas workers were mostly white and black. The Texas workers were almost exclusively of Mexican descent and referred to as Tejanos.

A large number of Michigan's migrant families were Tejanos, people of Mexican heritage born in Texas, from a farming area in southern Texas known as the Valley. The migrants would arrive in Michigan in late April and begin picking spring crops, such as strawberries, and stay on throughout the growing season picking peaches, blueberries, cucumbers, and apples as each crop ripened. According to a paper by Juan Martinez and Victor Garcia of Michigan State University, some migrants worked for corporate farms and alternated between the companies' farm holdings in Florida and Michigan. Most Hispanic migrant farm workers during this period returned to Texas and Mexico for the winter months.

In 1938 sugar beet growers in the Great Lakes region recruited Mexican migrant workers to the area when the European sugar beet workers working the Michigan fields attempted to organize labor unions. Under an organization called the Beet Growers Employment Committee, sugar beet growers developed a sophisticated recruiting network to bring Hispanic workers north. Most of the Committee's recruiting was done in San Antonio, Texas in an effort to find rural farm families that were experienced in farm labor but had little experience with organized labor. Families would arrive at the residence of a licensed labor contractor in San Antonio, sleeping in cars or camping until a caravan to the Great Lakes was organized.

Due to the shortage of labor brought on by World War II, the United States and Mexican governments signed an agreement establishing a guest worker program for farm laborers on August 4, 1942. Officially called the Mexican Farm Labor Program, it is most often referred to by its colloquial name, the Bracero Program. The program enabled Mexican farm workers to legally enter the United States to work and to remain year round. The first workers under the program went to work in the sugar beet fields in California but employment quickly spread to other agricultural areas around the country including Michigan. Though successful, the Bracero program was not without its problems. There was little oversight of the program and some participating farmers violated federal regulations by providing substandard housing and working conditions. It also resulted in an increase in illegal immigration. As those back home in Mexico saw the family members and friends participating in the program making higher wages, they too wanted to come to America to work but quota limits of the Bracero Program fell far short of the demand. Thus, many Mexicans chose to cross the border illegally and work for less than the required pay under the government program. Farmers would hire illegal immigrants at a lower wage. Due to the burgeoning social and civil rights issues associated with migrant labor, the U.S. Congress voted not to renew the Bracero Program in 1964. The struggle for civil rights for Hispanic farm laborers was later taken up by activists like César Chavez.

In Michigan of the five counties that employ half of the state's migrant work population, four are located in West Michigan and three of those are in the project area: Berrien, Van Buren, and Oceana Counties. The strawberry, peach, grape and tomato crops of Berrien County, the blueberry plantations of Van Buren County and the pear orchards and asparagus farms of Oceana County all rely heavily on migrant labor. Over the years, many former Tejano and Mexican migrant workers have chosen to stay in Michigan. According to Martinez and Garcia, in

2000 Hispanics became the second largest ethnic group in Van Buren County “surpassing the African American community by 1,633 or by a little over 40%.” They noted that there were thirty-four Hispanic owned farms in the county, the majority of which grew blueberries. The majority of the overall Hispanic population in Van Buren County is centered in the Lawrence/Hartford area and is associated with the grape industry.

According to Larry Massie in his history of the Holland area, the old Olive Township Hall in Ottawa County served as a community center for Braceros and migrant workers in the 1940s, and they would gather there at least once a week. Holland has a sugar beet industry as well as the Heinz Company, which purchases cucumbers for pickling, both of which employed Tejano and Mexican migrant workers. After the Bacerco Program ended in the 1960s, their was a lack of a sufficient number of migrant workers to pick the cucumber crops which led the Heinz Company to develop a smaller cucumber that could be picked by machine. In 1965 the Latin Americans United for Progress organization was established to promote education, fair housing practices, and social services for the area’s Hispanic population. They also established a Mexican Festival in Holland to celebrate Hispanic cultural heritage. In recent years, the city of Holland has seen a dramatic increase in its Hispanic population. According to an article in the *Holland Sentinel* “From 2000 to 2007, Ottawa County’s population grew over 8.77 percent, from 238,314 to 259,206. The county’s overall Hispanic population grew from 16,692 to 20,804, an increase of 24.63 percent.”

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## Italian Heritage

The majority of Italian immigrants entered America between 1890 and 1910. Mutual aid societies were commonly organized by newly arrived immigrants to assist others to come to America. The societies also assisted the new immigrants in settling into their new environment, provided health insurance, helped pay for funerals, and provided community functions that perpetuated aspects of their traditional native culture.

### Berrien County

Berrien County has a sizable Italian population, many of Sicilian descent. A number of these Italian residents left Chicago between 1910 and 1915 to escape the violence organized crime perpetrated on business owners in Italian neighborhoods to get them to pay protection money. In 1915, the *Chicago News* reported that 55 bombs had gone off in Chicago's Italian neighborhoods within a three-month period so the threat and fear were quite real.

Benton Harbor housed a concentration of Italian immigrants in a neighborhood that once existed between Main and Riford Streets off of Paw Paw Avenue. Today, only a marker erected by the Italian American Society of Benton Harbor commemorates the city's "Little Italy" that was demolished for urban renewal in the 1960s. Italian homes and businesses co-existed in the neighborhood. Second Street, north of Territorial, and Riford Street were primarily residential while businesses grew up along Main Street and Territorial Road. One of the centers for Benton Harbor's Italian community was Phil Marsala's Barber Shop on Riford Road.

A number of Italian men gave up their businesses in Chicago and moved to Southwest Michigan to try farming. Amerigo Maffei was the first Italian to settle in the Glenlord Road area. Maffei purchased a farm and grew tomatoes, grapes, pears, and peaches. He constructed a sixteen-room house so that rooms could be rented to Italian Chicago families during the summer. Other Italians purchased small twenty-acre farms in Benton, Hagar, Coloma and Watervliet Townships near Riverside. Both Hagar #6 and Pier elementary schools in Hagar Township had large populations of Italian children. Monte Packaging Company in Riverside, founded in 1925 by an Italian immigrant, is still in operation making fruit baskets and containers.

The Glenlord/Ridge Road area of Hagar Township, Berrien County, became a popular Italian resort area. Joseph and Tina Capozio established the La Conca D'Oro Resort on Ridge Road that was popular with Chicago's Sicilian immigrants. The resort closed in 1945 and became the site of Surfside Apartments. Other Italian resorts in the area included Clamar Court, Glenlord Vista, Pisa, Foreani and Carmaniagni.

Resources related to Berrien County's Italian heritage include:

- **Vitale's Market**, Blue Star Highway, Hagar Township
- **DiMaggio's Pizza**, Blue Star Highway, Hagar Township, established in 1957
- **Capozio's Italian Restaurant**, Red Arrow Highway, Chikaming Township, established 1949.
- **Santaniello's**, 2262 W. Glenlord, Stevensville. Formerly the site of an Italian resort the Glenlord Vista, it was purchased by the Santaniello's in 1967.
- **Tosi's Restaurant, Red Arrow Highway, Stevensville** was established by an Italian immigrant living in Chicago. He purchased ten acres of land from the House of David in 1922 and opened the Resort del Lago. The resort predominantly catered to Italian immigrants that had settled in the Chicago suburbs of Cicero and Berwyn. Tosi's son eventually took over the restaurant and in 1950 added a new dining room. In 1952 the resort was closed and Tosi's was operated solely as a restaurant. In 1960 an outdoor garden and more dining space was added, and in 1964 an additional dining room was added bringing total capacity to 225 guests. In 1973 the restaurant was sold to Herman

Berghoff of Berghoff's in Chicago who operated it for ten years. The restaurant is still in operation.

- **St John's Catholic Church and School** and Calvary Cemetery on Columbus Avenue in Benton Harbor.
- **North Shore Memory Gardens**, Napier Road

## Muskegon

The Jackson Hill neighborhood in Muskegon, bounded by Muskegon Lake, Ryerson Creek, and Getty Ave, (Terrace, West and Apple), was once known as the city's Little Italy. At the turn of the century, a campaign to attract Italian immigrants was carried out by Muskegon's civic leaders who encouraged immigrants them to take jobs in the city' foundries. Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church was formed in 1922 and catered to the city's Italian population. Their first church building as constructed at the corner of Jackson & Charles Street 1923. It was replaced in 1949 by the current church building, which is located at the corner of Getty and Marquette. The adjacent elementary school was built in 1960. The church replaced Our Lady of Grace held popular spaghetti suppers in the Muskegon Armory—in 1968, over 4,800 dinners were served in one night.

## Grand Haven

The city of Grand Haven also had a strong Italian immigrant community. Two related resources include:

- **Fortino's** began as a fruit store in Muskegon operated by Louis Fortino, an immigrant from Italy. Fortino moved the operation to Grand Haven in 1907. After a fire, Fortino built the current store building at 114 Washington Street in 1923 and rented it to other businesses until 1930 when he moved his grocery business into it. The Fortino's son, Paul, purchased the store in 1941 and converted it to a gourmet grocery after World War II.
- **Fricano's Pizza Tavern** at 1400 Fulton Street was opened in 1949 by Gus Fricano, a Sicilian immigrant who once worked in the Kieft celery fields outside of Grand Haven. When Fricano returned home from World War II he purchased the Ottawa Tavern, built in 1911, and opened a restaurant. By 1951 he had developed his own pizza sauce recipe and converted the restaurant to a pizzeria.

## Al Capone

One of the most infamous Italians with a reputation of frequenting Southwest Michigan was Chicago's notorious organized crime boss, Al Capone. Capone began his life of crime as a bootleg liquor distributor in the Chicago area and quickly rose to become one of most feared crime bosses in the nation. During the era of Prohibition (1920-1933), Capone reportedly visited rural Southwest Michigan to vacation or to hide out when things got too "hot" in Chicago. Bootleg liquor was sold and gambling often occurred at the hotels and casinos along Lake Michigan in the early 1920s. Most accounts place Capone as visiting establishments between New Buffalo and South Haven. While none of the resources related to Al Capone listed below have been verified, most appear in more than one source.

- Al Capone once owned the eighty-acre farm at 1400 Kephart Lane in Berrien Springs that is currently owned by heavy weight champion, Muhammad Ali.
- Capone's accountant, a man named Irwin, reportedly owned a home at 2135 W. Glenlord Road in Stevensville that was later demolished when I-94 was constructed.
- Capone's Bodyguard, Phil DeAndre reportedly owned a home at the east end of Highland Road in Saint Joseph.

- Capone was reportedly a friend of an entrepreneur named John Flynn who opened the Flynn Theater in Sawyer, which still exists as does Flynn's home which Capone reportedly visited.
- Capone sightings were commonly reported along the West Michigan Pike at gas stations like Prusa's in Union Pier and at golf courses such as Berrien Hills Country Club and the South Haven Golf Course.
- Reportedly Capone stayed at the Lakeside Inn in Lakeside and at the Sleepy Hollow Resort in South Haven. He was also reported to have stayed at the Whitcomb Hotel in Saint Joseph and frequented restaurants in Benton Harbor's "Little Italy."
- Capone's girlfriend, Floria, is said to be buried in McDonnell Cemetery in Casco Township, Allegan County, not far from the South Haven Golf Course.

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## Jewish Heritage

In the 1880s a rise in the persecution of the Jewish people through pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe led to a wave of immigration of Jews to the United States. At a time when Jews could only rent land in Eastern Europe these immigrants were enthused with an idealistic vision of a new life in America where they could own their own farm land. American-based Jewish newspapers such as the *American Jewish Advocate* and the *American Israelite*, fueled interest in immigration by promoting the virtues of the United States and encouraging Jews to leave Eastern Europe and try an agrarian life in America.

In 1881 Rabbi A. R. Levy of Chicago set up a committee to provide aid to Jewish immigrants that wanted to come to the Midwest and establish themselves as farmers. Levy's committee formalized as the Jewish Agriculturalist Aid Society of America in 1900. Commonly known as the Chicago Society, by 1908 it had assisted forty families in establishing farms in the Midwest. Twenty-three percent of those families chose to settle in Michigan, the second most preferred state in the Midwest for Jewish families. The Jewish Agriculturalist Aid Society of Chicago remained in existence until 1912 when the death of Rabbi Levy led to its demise. By that time, Baron Maurice de Hirsch had established a national Jewish Agricultural Society, and it became the preeminent agricultural assistance society for Jewish farmers.

Baron Maurice de Hirsch was a European banker and philanthropist who in 1891 established the \$2.4 million Baron de Hirsch Fund in New York to support Jews emigrating to the United States from Eastern Europe. The Jewish Agricultural Society was established through the Hirsch Fund in 1900 to support the settlement of Jewish agricultural colonies throughout the United States. According to an article in the 1913 *American Jewish Year Book* "While Jewish farmers are to be found in every part of the United States, the most important settlements are those in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Massachusetts in the east; Ohio and Michigan in the Midwest; and North Dakota in the Northwest." (p. 79)

The Jewish Agricultural Society assisted four thousand and nine hundred families establish farms in America and extended almost \$15 million in loans to farmers in forty-one states. In addition to providing low interest loans to farmers, the society provided legal and technical advice, funded scholarships to agricultural colleges and supported the establishment of a Yiddish farming publication, the *Jewish Farmer*. The society supported the construction of synagogues and Jewish community centers in rural areas to ensure a good quality of life for Jewish farmers. The Baron de Hirsh Fund also supported the establishment of the first secondary education facility to specialize in agricultural training at Woodbine, New Jersey, in 1894. Henry Geller, a graduate of Michigan Agricultural College, served as its Superintendent for six years.

### Jewish Farmers in Michigan

A Chicago banker, Lazarus Silberman, funded the first known settlement of Jewish farmers in Michigan in 1882 when twelve Jewish families established a colony at Carp Lake in Emmett County.

The first recorded Jewish farming settlement in Michigan was the Palestine Colony located about four miles from Bad Axe in Michigan's thumb region. The colony was established in 1891 by a group of Russian Jews that had immigrated to Bay City. Peddlers by profession, they bought twelve adjacent parcels of land with the hopes of settling down to an agricultural way of life. Lack of experience and the hardships of farm work proved to be too much. Even with financial assistance from the Baron de Hirsch Fund, the Panic of 1893 and subsequent two years of crop failures put an end to the colony in 1895.

## Jewish Farmers in Berrien County

In 1890, Isaac Berliner received assistance from the Jewish Agriculturists Aid Society of Chicago to establish a colony of twelve Jewish farms at Twelve Corners on Lake Michigan in Berrien County near Benton Harbor. This colony did well and by 1892, over fifty Jewish families had been assisted by the Chicago Society to settle in the area. They helped to establish the area's fruit farms that became so important to the economic success of Michigan's Fruit Belt and also took part in dairy, poultry, and vegetable gardening. By 1940 there were 250 Jewish families farming in an area just east of Benton Harbor, between Sodus, Berrien Springs, Eau Claire and Dowagiac, the largest aggregation of Jewish farmers in the state. The Jewish farms in Berrien County ranged from ten to two hundred acres. The Rosenberg Brothers Farm in Sodus was one of the largest, expanding from sixty to three hundred and eighty acres. Benjamin Rosenberg was one of the first farmers in Berrien County to raise asparagus, which he did from 1927 to 1979. In 1948, he was the first Jewish delegate from the state of Michigan to attend the Democratic National Convention.

The Jewish Farmers in Berrien County started their own organization, the Jewish Farmers Association (JFA), in the 1930s. The purpose of the JFA was to provide a sense of community for the farmers and their families, sponsoring socials and celebrating holidays. It even helped to bring Yiddish vaudeville acts to rural Michigan from Chicago. The JFA also served as a co-op for Jewish farmers for buying farm-related resources such as fertilizer and gasoline.

The first synagogue built in Benton Harbor was the Orthodox B'nai Israel on 8<sup>th</sup> Street. By 1942 Benton Harbor had three Jewish synagogues:

- Ahavas Shulem, Orthodox, 117 Seeley Street
- Congregation of Israel, Conservative, 118 Lake Avenue (Masonic Lodge)  
(Ahavas Shulem and the Congregation of Israel merged in 1950 under the name of B'nai Shalom Synagogue and expanded the 118 Lake Avenue building for their use.  
In 1960, they built a new building at 2050 Broadway.)
- Temple Beth-El, Reform, 214 E. Britain (constructed in 1948) (Ebenezer Baptist)

In 1938 Mary's City of David partnered with three Jewish physicians from Chicago, Morey Lapin, Joseph Silverstein, and Charles Lapin to build a small hospital that could accommodate up to thirty-five patients on the sect's grounds. The hospital was nonsectarian and incorporated the newest medical equipment. Unfortunately, due to infighting over finances, the hospital only operated until August 1939. A synagogue built in conjunction with the construction of the hospital remained in operation serving the Jewish patrons of the Mary's City of David tourist cabins. Mary's City of David was popular with Jewish vacationers because of its vegetarian restaurant, which served kosher meals. In 1942 Mary's City of David built a home for the synagogue's rabbi "in a gesture of thankfulness to the Jewish community for their patronage."

## Jews in South Haven

Jewish families first came to the South Haven area in the 1880s and three Jewish families were listed in the U.S. Census for that year. Among them was the Nathan Gassin family that had immigrated to Chicago from Odessa, Russia. The Gassins were able to receive assistance from the Jewish Agricultural Society (JAS) to purchase a farm to the southeast of South Haven where they grew hay and small fruits such as strawberries. Around 1911 more Jewish families received assistance from the JAS to establish farms in the South Haven area. One was the Morris Fidelman family, which purchased a farm on Bangor Road (M-43), another was the Abraham Reznik family, which purchased a farm on Phoenix Road. In 1914 the Morris Androfsky family came from Kiev, Russia, and purchased an apple and pear farm on M-140 south of South Haven. The Solomon Zlakin family purchased Plum Orchard Farm on the Blue Star Highway in 1916. By

1920 the U.S. Census showed there were sixty-two Jewish adults living in South Haven, Casco and Geneva Townships, of which fifty-four listed their birthplace as Russia and twenty-two listed their occupation as farmer.

Family, friends and neighbors from the old tenement neighborhoods in Chicago were soon heading to the South Haven farms during the summer months to find relief from the city's grime and heat. Visitors would assist the family in the daily operation of the farm by picking and canning fruit, feeding animals, and baling hay. They found the experience a fun and welcome change from city life. At first the visitor's stayed in tents, but as more and more people offered to pay to stay at the farms, the farm family would move out of their home into tents and rent the rooms in the house to visitors. This proved to be so lucrative that an evolution in thinking took place and by 1918 a number of these farmers were advertising their farms as resorts. Soon they were increasing guest accommodations by building additions to their farmhouses, rehabilitating barns for sleeping quarters, or adding cottages or small hotel buildings to the property. Among the earliest of the South Haven Jewish farmers to advertise their farm as a resort was the Gassin family who called their farm the Geneva Resort in 1918. In 1920 Gassin purchased an early South Haven hotel, the Clifton Hotel (originally the Lake House) and moved it to his farm resort on Phoenix Road. Other Jewish farm resorts included Rezik's Farm Resort and Fidelman's. These small Jewish farm resorts operated successfully throughout the 1920s. The completion of a continuous improved highway from Chicago through West Michigan, the West Michigan Pike, improved automobile access to scenic areas along Lake Michigan and increased the need for tourist accommodations. In addition, a rise in anti-Semitic feeling during this decade resulted in more restrictive practices that limited the accommodations available to Jewish patrons at gentile owned hotels. According to the book *A Time to Remember*, there were over thirty Jewish-owned farm resorts operating in the South Haven area by the end of the 1920s. Some like Weinstein's and Zlatkin's continued to operate throughout the 1950s; Fidelman's remained in operation for seventy-five years attracting celebrities, governors, and labor leaders.

South Haven's Jewish farmers first organized as a congregation in 1920 and immediately began efforts to construct a place of worship. According to Bea Kraus in *A Time to Remember*, a substantial contribution toward their efforts was received from Julius Rosenwald of Sears, Roebuck and Company known for his philanthropic assistance to African American educational facilities in the South. The Jewish Synagogue and Community Center on Phoenix Road opened on November 13, 1921. The building served the Jewish farming community until the 1930s when it was sold. It was demolished in the 1970s. In 1922 a second organization formed among Jewish residents within the city of South Haven called the Hebrew Education Alliance. They purchased a house at the corner of Broadway and Church streets for use as a Hebrew school. When the Jewish Farmers and Hebrew Education Alliance merged in 1927 as the First Hebrew Congregation, plans were initiated to build a new synagogue on the site of the existing Hebrew School, which was moved to Phillips Road southeast of La Grange. The new synagogue was designed by architect C. C. Elwood of Elkhart, Indiana.

The resort business along South Haven's North Shore Drive began when Henry and Ellen Avery built a two-story cottage resort to rent to visitors from Chicago in 1883. In 1910 the Steuben family moved to South Haven and was one of the first to open a Jewish oriented resort, Steuben's Summer Hotel at 56 North Shore. Others Jewish families quickly followed; the Mendelsohns, Barons, Zippersteins, and Glassmans all built resorts in the 1920s. By the start of the 1930s, the resort business in South Haven was booming. Many of the early Jewish farm resort operators were in a position to expand their operations. Others sold their farms and bought land closer to Lake Michigan and the city of South Haven and built resort hotels closer to the city's scenic and cultural amenities. Many of the new resort proprietors came first as summer vacationers and, enjoying the experience so much and seeing so much potential, bought land and built new resorts. Thus began the golden age of Jewish resorts on South Haven's North Shore Drive, which lasted for thirty years until the 1960s. South Haven's Jewish resorts were to Midwestern Jews—especially those from Chicago—what the Catskills, Atlantic City and Miami Beach were to the Jewish population on the East Coast.

To accommodate the needs and customs of Jewish resorters, a number of auxiliary businesses owned and operated by Jewish proprietors grew up in downtown South Haven, predominately in the 400 block of Phoenix Street. They included:

- Arkins Gift Shop, 526 Phoenix
- Cohen's Real Bakery, 426 Phoenix
- Antler's Bakery, 414 Phoenix
- Reznick's Meat Market, 410 Phoenix
- Braslawsky's Meat Market, 424 Quaker
- Panter's Kosher Market, 408 Phoenix
- Panter's Restaurant, 114 Dyckman
- Mickey's Sandwich Shop, 70 North Shore
- N & R Store, Corner Phoenix & Center
- Goldberg's Hardware, 420 Phoenix

## Muskegon's Jewish Heritage

The first known permanent Jewish resident of Muskegon was Israel Goldman, a Russian-Polish immigrant who came to America in the 1860s to escape persecution. He found work as a traveling peddler serving Muskegon's logging camps and other lakeshore communities. Over time, he was able to establish a clothing store in Muskegon, which he operated until the lumber industry went into decline around 1890. Muskegon's boom economy drew other Jewish merchants to the city. Samuel Rosen, an immigrant from Thorne, Prussia, came to Muskegon in the 1880s as a tailor and, with his brother Samuel, was able to purchase a clothing store, which they called Rosen Brothers. Henry Rubinsky established a scrap iron business, which decades later still operated as the Muskegon Scrap Material Company. Israel Rudesky opened a clothing store that was in business for thirty years. By 1890 there were about a dozen Jewish families living and working in Muskegon.

As Muskegon's economy began to decline when the lumber industry came to an end, the city's lumber and business leaders decided to take action to diversify the area's businesses. Samuel Rosen, a prominent Jewish businessman, was a member of the Retail Merchants Association, which soon merged with the Board of Trade to create Muskegon's chamber of commerce. The chamber actively worked to bring new manufacturing enterprises to Muskegon.

In 1901 Muskegon's Jewish families organized as an official congregation, founding what later became known as the Congregation of B'nai Israel under the Rabbi Abraham Smith from Chicago. The congregation first met in a room at 67 S. Terrace, but in 1905 moved to larger space in a hall on the second floor of Wesley Woods' real estate business at 78 Pine Street. In 1905 Henry Rubinsky's daughter Sadie married a wealthy Wisconsin man, Isaac Grossman, who opened a store in Muskegon that later became Grossman's Department Store, which operated for fifty years. Grossman donated a house at 33 E. Muskegon Avenue for use as a synagogue to accommodate the city's growing Jewish population as the success of the new industry coming to Muskegon brought more Jewish families to the area. In 1917 a local chapter of B'nai Brith was established and in 1922 the Ladies Aid Society was established. Muskegon's earliest Jewish settlers Israel Goldman and Samuel Rosen are buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Muskegon. The Jewish congregation was able to purchase one hundred and three lots in the Mona View Cemetery in 1929 to serve the Jewish community.

In the 1930s, a number of Jewish manufacturers established businesses that became quite successful. One was started by Jacob "Kelly" Kaufman founder of the American Showcase Company, which manufactured fixtures for Sears, Roebuck and Company and the American Grease Stick Company, The fixtures were based on a patent undertaken by the Rosen brothers, who manufactured lubricants to the automobile industry. The thirties also saw a rise in anti-

Semitism in the city when the Muskegon Country Club tried to expel prominent Jewish businessmen from its membership.

By 1945 Muskegon's synagogue was serving about six hundred people. That year, fundraising began for the construction of a new temple at 391 Webster. It was designed by architect Ernst Grunfield and opened in 1948.

## **Padnos Family of Holland**

The Padnos family is a prominent Jewish family in the city of Holland. In 1905 Louis Padnos moved to Holland, Michigan, to establish a peddling business. A native of Slavyon, Russia, he immigrated in 1890 due to increased persecution of Jews in his homeland. Padnos went first to the Netherlands, where he learned to speak Dutch, and then came to America where he undertook different jobs as he moved around the country. In Chicago he learned of Holland, a Dutch colony in West Michigan, and decided to use his Dutch language skills to establish a peddling route in the area. It was here that he opened a scrap paper and scrap metal business on Eighth Street that became the foundation of his success. By 1910 the business was flourishing and it continued to do so throughout World War I and the Depression. In 1933 Padnos purchased the former Ottawa Furniture Factory on North River Avenue and opened a scrap paper grading facility. Padnos increased his scrap metal business during World War II, collecting metal for the war effort. In 1946 Padnos' son Seymour took over the business and it was incorporated as the Louis Padnos Iron & Metal Company. By then the business included a small scrap yard on the corner of Fifth and Central. The Padnos business continued to expand after the war as the company kept pace with modern technology and business practices. It also was able to purchase war scrap from the government that could be resold for civilian use. By the early 1950s the scrap business started by Louis Padnos had become a \$2 billion dollar industry. The business continued to grow in the 1960s when the company purchased an automobile fragmentizer that enabled the metal in cars to be shredded and reused. In the 1970s, Padnos built a deepwater dock on the site of the former West Michigan Furniture Company on Lake Macatawa; it eventually became the Macatawa Bay Dock and Terminal Company.

Seymour Padnos was part of the team that created Holland's popular Windmill Park in 1963. He served as treasurer of the effort to bring a two hundred-year old windmill from the Netherlands to Holland.

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## Scandinavian Heritage

Railroad companies that received land grants from the state and federal governments were able to sell land along the railroad right of way in order to pay for its construction. In Michigan much of the land was cutover timberland that was thought to be good for farming. To entice settlers to Michigan, railroad companies would often hire agents to recruit or advertise the available land to potential immigrants. According to Willis Dunbar in his book *All Aboard*, the Grand Rapids and Indian Railroad recruited heavily in Norway and Sweden in 1870 and many settlers came to west Michigan to own their own farms.

### Danes

The first Danes came to Michigan around 1850 and settled in Montcalm County. Christian Jensen settled there in 1853 and sent letters home encouraging others to follow. August Rasmussen arrived soon after and by 1914 there was a large Danish population in the county near Grant and Trufant. From these settlements the Danish population began to spread west into rural areas of Muskegon and Manistee Counties and into Mason County and the city of Ludington. In 1882 H. J. Pederson of Elk Horn, Iowa purchased forty acres of land near Grant to establish a traditional Danish folk school, one of five folk high schools in the nation that operated under the Grudtvigian Tradition.

By 1900 the largest concentration of Danish immigrants in the United States was in Chicago. One of the best known was Jens Jensen who was instrumental in helping to found the Michigan state park system. The Danish America Society was founded in 1906 by a Racine newspaper man to help to retain traditional Danish culture.

### Swedes

A major immigration of Swedes to America occurred between 1868 and 1873. This was a time when Sweden was experiencing famine due to three years of crop failures and there were active campaigns to recruit Swedish immigrants come to the Midwest. Emigration promoters were often hired by railroad companies to recruit Swedish laborers for railroad construction. One of the most successful was Hans Mattson who brought scores of Swedes to Minnesota. In 1870 Josiah Tustin of Grand Rapids, an Episcopalian minister, was hired by a railroad agency called the Continental Improvement Company to recruit Swedish immigrants to a colony called Dalarna in Mecosta County as laborers. Soon after a group of Swedes settled in Osceola County in a community called New Bleking (later renamed Tustin). Other early centers of Swedish concentration in Michigan were Lisbon (Kent City), Sparta, and Alpine. Muskegon was one of five cities in the lower peninsula to have a Swedish language newspaper.

### Berrien County

In 1906 a Swedish Baptist Church located on the south side of Chicago purchased a forty-acre fruit farm outside of Sawyer, Michigan. The land was platted into cottage lots, the sale of which went to support the construction of a summer camp for poor children to be called Bethany Beach. Anton Noreen headed the effort to develop the camp. The camp is still in operation and a tabernacle built in 1924 is still in use today. The Bethany Beach camp and resort brought many Swedes to the region. One of America's most famous Swedish citizens, Pulitzer Prize winning poet and author Carl Sandburg, purchased a summer home in nearby Harbert, Michigan, in 1930 and lived there before moving to North Carolina in 1945. The Swedish Bakery in Harbert that still serves Bethany Beach residents has been in existence for over one hundred years. Other Swedish resources in Berrien County include the Saron Lutheran Church in Saint Joseph, founded in 1875 by small group of Scandinavians. The property located at 4835 Pier Road in Hagar Township was once owned by John and Christina Hultgren, Swedish immigrants who

moved to Michigan from Chicago. They purchased the twenty-three acre farm in 1915 and operated it as a dairy and orchard until the mid 1960s.

## Whitehall

Norwegians were the first Scandinavians to settle in Whitehall and the early settlement was located on the site of what later became the Idlewild Resort. Later, a Norwegian settlement called Bunker Hill developed in an area roughly bordered by Lake Street, Sophia, Mears and Division Streets. Andrew Krogstand owned a grocery on Mears Avenue that served as the heart of the community.

## Swedentown

Charles Johnson is credited with being the first Swedish settler to arrive in Whitehall in 1866. Thanks to his encouragement and support, a large contingent of Swedes came to the city to work in the lumber mill and tannery. Many Swedes lived around Main Street at the south

end of Whitehall. When they first arrived, most of the Swedish immigrants lived in a boarding house that still exists on Main Street. The Lebanon Lutheran Church located at 1101 South Mears Avenue was built in 1877. By 1882 over seven hundred Swedes had settled in the area,

most were concentrated in what became known as Swedentown (Johnson's Addition). August Edlund, who worked at the Whitehall tannery, assisted a number of Swedes in finding jobs there after the lumber industry began to decline in the area.

Charles Johnson's grocery store served as the gathering place for Whitehall's Swedish population. The Johnson family also sold milk and produce to early resorters. The Johnson's were one of the first farm families in the area to take in summer vacationers as boarders. The venture was so successful that the Johnson's eventually quit farming and operated a resort full time. They built cottages and a dining room for the resort trade and continued to farm enough to provide fresh produce for their guests. Nora Svensson, one of the Johnson's daughters, later operated the White Lake Villa Resort in Whitehall.

Mrs. Carl F. Beausang started the White Lake Swedish Mid-Summer Festival in 1936, which received national attention. The festival ran until World War II ended such activities.

## Pentwater

Frederick Nielsen of Aarhuus, Denmark, came to Pentwater in 1865. He became the spokesperson and advisor for the Scandinavian members of the community and served as village president for five years. He worked for the C. Jensen Company, who built the first brick



commercial building in Pentwater. In 1884 Swedish Baptist church services were conducted in Pentwater by students from the Morgan Park area of Chicago.

## Ludington

In 1876 R. Rasmussen came to Michigan from Denmark and opened a boarding house in Ludington's Fourth Ward called the Lake House. Rasmussen served as president of the Danish Aid Society. John P. Rasmussen came to Ludington from Denmark in 1879 and worked as a blacksmith.

Many young Scandinavian men left their home country to avoid serving a compulsory three-year term in the Russian Army. Ludington saw an influx of young Scandinavian men around 1885 when they came to the city to work in the lumber camps and many lived at a boarding house located at the corner of Buttersville and Island Streets. An area known as Finn Town was made up of about thirty families.

A number of Scandinavian families settled in area known as Fish Island on the Pere Marquette River in the Fourth Ward. At the turn of the century, Scandinavian fishermen would sail five to ten miles out on Lake Michigan to set nets and would pull in around two to three hundred pounds of fish a day, primarily lake trout. Fish Island was really just a collection of fishing shanties and piers. It was a difficult life as there was no running water, electricity, or schools nearby. Eventually these fishing families left Fish Island to live within the city of Ludington, most settled in the Fourth Ward. The Charles Johnson family was the last to leave the Island, finally settling on West Loomis Street. Other Scandinavians that lived in Fish Island included: Andrew Newborg, Andrew Borg, Andrew Gustafson, Emil Bishop Matt Lindquist, and Alex Holmstrom.

Churches typically served as the center of Scandinavian cultural life. Churches in Ludington related to the city's Scandinavian heritage include:

- **Washington Avenue Baptist Church.** Built in September 1877, it served eight of the thirteen Scandinavian families then living in Ludington. Services were often conducted in two languages Danish and Swedish, which elongated the service. The Danes broke off from the church in 1890 to form their own church. By that time the Swedish Baptist Church had about forty members.
- **Bethany Lutheran Church.** Formed by a group of Danes that began meeting at the Clemenson house at 1006 Washington, the first church was built at 903 Madison. It was demolished in 1970. The parsonage was located at 1101 Madison.
- **The Swedish Free Evangelical Church** was formed in 1887. It later became known as the Trinity Evangelical Free Church and a church building was constructed at Emily and Melendy Streets. All services were conducted in Swedish until 1925. The church was enlarged in the 1950s.
- There was a Swedish Colony in 1880 in Golden Township that established the Swedish Covenant Church. Members included Peter Johnson, Fred Peterson, John Lind, Hand Larson, Lars Jenson, Magnus Petersen, Peter Anderson, and Alfred Pearson.
- In 1860 a small group of Swedish settlers inhabited the northern corner of Victory Township in Mason County just north of Ludington. They were affiliated with a lumber mill established by Charles Mears that became known as Lincoln. Once the timber was logged off, they stayed on and established farms. Other Swedish immigrants settled in nearby logging towns such as Butterville and worked for Justus Stearns, a Ludington lumber baron.

## Muskegon

- Scandinavians came to Muskegon to work in the lumber industry. Many settled in the community of Lakeside, which was established in 1840 and had five sawmills. They generally settled in the western part of the city. Resources associated with the Muskegon's Scandinavian heritage include:
- **Samuel Evangelical Lutheran Church** was established at 540 Houston in 1875 by a group of Norwegians, Swedes and Danes.
- **Central Bethlehem Lutheran Church** was established in 1873. It is located at Jefferson and Centre and is currently an African-American parish. Originally it had many Danish members.
- **Our Saviour's Church** was established in 1886 and is located at Grand and Barclay.
- **First Lutheran Church** was constructed in 1929, by a group of Norwegians. The church was originally located on Yuba Street. It was moved to White Lake Road and now houses an African-American congregation.
- **The Scandinavian Evangelical Church.** The church was constructed in Benona & Claybanks Township in 1869 on three acres purchased from Tollef Brady.

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## Natural Features

Southwest Michigan has some of the most outstanding natural features and fragile eco-systems in the country. While lumbering defined Southwest Michigan's history in the nineteenth century, the conservation of these resources significantly shaped the area's twentieth century history thanks to the early realization that the protection of the region's natural environment was essential to its tourism and agricultural-based economies.

### Lake Michigan

Lake Michigan is the largest freshwater lake in the United States, the largest lake in the world located entirely in one country, and the sixth largest lake in the world. Approximately 307 miles long and 118 miles wide, with over 1660 miles of shoreline, it is the second largest of the five Great Lakes. Lake Michigan is around 580 feet above sea level and has an average depth of 279 feet—its greatest depth is 925 feet. It is considered to have some of the best fishing for steelhead trout, Coho salmon, perch, Chinook salmon, rainbow trout, lake trout, brown trout, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass and walleye in the Midwest. Swimming beaches in Southwest Michigan are typically clear with sand bottoms.

### Sand Dunes

The world's largest collection of sand dunes on fresh water is found in Michigan. There are a total of 275,000 acres of dunes, 70,000 of which are on public lands. These dunes are among the state's youngest natural features formed when the glacier lakes began to recede. The dunes in Southwest Michigan are called parabolic dunes and have a distinctive U shape. There are four areas associated with parabolic dunes that occur in a succession:

- Beach
- Foredunes, a series of low, open dunes that sit just back from the beach;
- Interdunal wetlands, located behind the foredunes in a depression or trough that often fills with groundwater to form ponds
- Backdunes, a higher ridge of dunes covered by forest.

Another type of dune found in Southwest Michigan is called a perched dune. Perched dunes are sand dunes that rest on another surface such as a layer of clay or glacial moraine. The most striking examples of perched dunes are found in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore north of the project area. Much smaller perched dunes, rising only about three feet in height, are found at the Rosy Mound Recreation Area south of Grand Haven at 13925 Lakeshore Drive.

In 1976 the state of Michigan passed the Sand Dune Protection and Management Act that required sand mining companies to develop a rehabilitation plan for dunes after they had been mined. Over eighty thousand-acres of sand dunes were designated as Critical Sand Dunes under the act. The act was amended in 1986 to require a permit for any development or recreational activity undertaken in designated critical dunes. The amendment enabled a local community to adopt an ordinance to manage and protect dunes within their jurisdiction; only the community of Bridgman in Berrien County has adopted a dune ordinance to date.

Lake Michigan's sand dunes can be accessed at state, county and township parks along the state's western coast. The Genevieve Gillette Sand Dune Center at P. J. Hoffmaster State Park in Muskegon County has an interpretive sand dune display. Within the project area, state parks on Lake Michigan that preserve sand dunes include:

- Warren Dunes State Park, Sawyer
- Grand Mere State Park, Stevensville
- Van Buren State Park, South Haven

- Saugatuck State Park, Saugatuck
- Holland State Park, Holland
- Grand Haven State Park, Grand Haven
- P. J. Hoffmaster State Park, Norton Shores
- Duck Lake State Park, Muskegon County
- Muskegon State Park, North Muskegon
- Silver Lake State Park, Hart
- Charles Mears State Park, Pentwater
- Ludington State Park, Ludington

## Major Watersheds

The area between New Buffalo and Ludington includes the longest river in Michigan, the Grand River, which runs through Ottawa County and is 260 miles long. Other major watersheds include:

- Big Sable River, Mason County
- Black River, Allegan County
- Kalamazoo River, Allegan County
- Lincoln River, Mason County
- Macatawa River, Ottawa County
- Muskegon River, Muskegon
- Pentwater River, Oceana County
- Pere Marquette River, Mason County
- White River, Oceana County
- Saint Joseph River, Berrien and Van Buren Counties

## National Wild and Scenic River Systems

The National Wild and Scenic River System was created by Congress in 1968 to ensure that America's rivers "possess outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural or other similar values, shall be preserved in free-flowing condition, and that they and their immediate environments shall be protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

Sixty-six miles of the Pere Marquette River in Mason County is designated a National Wild and Scenic River System. The designated area begins downstream from the junction of the Middle and Little South Branches and runs to the river's junction with U.S. 31. The Pere Marquette is known for steelhead trout fishing and canoeing. A section of the national North Country Trail crosses the river. Historically, the Pere Marquette was associated with the fur traders and Jesuit missionaries that first explored Michigan and as well as with Muskegon's nineteenth century lumbering industry. The river and its tributaries are also designated as State Natural Rivers.

The White River from U.S. 31 to the Manistee National Forest boundary is currently under Congressional study for a Scenic River designation.

## Michigan's Natural Rivers Program

Legislation enabling the establishment of a Michigan Natural Rivers Program was proposed by the Parks Division of the Department of Natural Resources in 1970. Passage of the bill was delayed while the legality of the state's zoning authority was investigated but the program was finally established. (sec. 305 of PA 451 of 1994). Since that time 2,091 miles of sixteen of the state's rivers have been designated as state Natural Rivers. Three rivers in the project area, the Pere Marquette, the White, and the Kalamazoo Rivers have received the designation. The purpose of the program is to preserve and enhance the aesthetics of the river as well as its recreational and historic resources and free-flowing condition. Designation requires the development of a river management plan.

## Wetlands

Another prominent natural feature found in Southwest Michigan is the wetlands that are produced at the mouths of tributary rivers that have become blocked by sand from the surrounding coastal dunes. The sand bars can back up the river flow for up to twelve miles creating a vast wetland environment. Potawatomi Bayou on the Grand River is a good example of this type of wetland. Wetlands also form where inland lakes in the dunes meet a tributary river, as is the case in the White Lake and Muskegon Lake areas. Yellow Pond Lilly and Arrow Arum are water plants commonly found in the wetlands of the Muskegon River; they rarely occur north of the Muskegon River. Plants such as arrowhead, pickerel weed, and burr reed are common in the wetlands north of Muskegon. A rare form of wild rice also grows in the Southwest Michigan wetlands.

## National Natural Landmarks

The National Park Service runs the National Natural Landmarks program which honors outstanding examples of the nation's biological and geological history—both publicly and privately owned—and promotes their conservation. There are six hundred designated National Natural Landmarks in America, twelve in Michigan. Two National Natural Landmarks are located in the Preserve America project area:

- **Warren Woods Natural Area, Chikaming Township, Berrien County**

Located on the Galien River in Berrien County, Warren Woods is a three hundred and twelve-acre tract of old-growth beech-maple forest. The forest was owned by E. K. Warren, the inventor of a corset stay called "featherbone" which was manufactured in nearby Three Oaks. Warren was a founding member of the Prairie Club and was a member of the Friends of Our Native Landscapes, a group influential in establishing the Michigan state park system. Warren Dunes State Park in Berrien County was also once owned by E. K. Warren. In 1960 the Michigan Botanical Club sponsored a ten-year campaign to identify Michigan's heritage trees in order to assist in their protection. The survey used information from volunteers participating in the project. Trees that had the largest girth when measured at a height of four and half feet above ground level were included in a list of Michigan champion trees published in 1970. That list identified one hundred and seventeen trees in forty Michigan counties. The champion trees were marked with a 4 x 6 inch aluminum plaque with the wording "Michigan Big Trees." An American Beech tree in Warren Woods measured 154 inches at its girth, 145 feet tall with a crown spread of 96 feet. The tree was designated a National Championship Tree as part of the American Forests National Register of Big Trees program.

- **Grand Mere Lakes, Sawyer, Berrien County**

The twelve hundred-acre tract was designated a National Natural Landmark in April 1968. Nine hundred sixty-five acres are located in Grand Mere State Park. The area includes three shallow inland lakes behind the fore dunes, a hemlock swamp, and a former cranberry bog.

## Bird Sanctuaries

In 1899 the editor of *Forest and Stream* magazine, George Bird Grinnell, was appalled at the large-scale slaughter of the nation's birds and encouraged bird lovers to organize and find ways to protect them. In Michigan it was the destruction of the passenger pigeon flocks that caused citizens to establish the Michigan Audubon Society, named for naturalist John James Audubon, in 1904, a year earlier than the establishment of the National Audubon Society, which incorporated in 1905.

Michigan's passenger pigeon population was once so abundant that a flock in flight was estimated to range for forty miles. Numerous reports can be found in county histories of how the sky would go dark for hours when the pigeons returned to Michigan in the spring because there were so many of them they blocked the sun. Such a report from Shelby indicated that in 1874 five hundred strangers came to the village to watch the pigeon influx. In 1876 they estimated the pigeon's local nesting range to be three miles long and eleven miles wide. Two major nestings of passenger pigeons are known to have occurred in Michigan in 1878 and 1881. The pigeons would nest in beech groves located between two hills and many of the places once associated with them along the Lake Michigan shore were called Pigeon Hill. In the late nineteenth century, the pigeons were harvested commercially. Hunters would capture them live in nets and send them to Chicago and other major cities on the east coast where they were served as squab in restaurants and saloons. A commercial hunting ground known as Hatch's Woods was once operated in Berrien County in what is now Grand Mere State Park. Overhunting and the destruction of their natural habitats by urban development led to the extinction of the passenger pigeon in 1914.

The Michigan Audubon Society joined the national Audubon organization in 1972. There are four local Michigan Audubon Society chapters within the project area: Holland Audubon Society, Owashtanong Island Audubon Society of Grand Haven, Muskegon County Nature Club, and the Sable Dunes Audubon Society of Pentwater. The Michigan Audubon Society has nineteen designated bird sanctuaries in Michigan, two of which are in the project area:

- **Sarett Nature Center, 2300 Benton Center Road, Hagar Township, Berrien County.** This eight hundred-acre parcel was once owned by Mary's City of David in Benton Harbor. Today there is a five-mile trail system that includes boardwalks and observation platforms providing access to wetlands along the Paw Paw River. The nature center is a noted bird watching center for waterfowl.
- **Owashtanong Islands Sanctuary, Grand Haven Township, Ottawa County.** Located across from East Grand River Park on an island in the Grand River, the wetlands are a stop for migratory birds. The island is only accessible by boat.

On May 31, 2001, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service designated critical habitat areas for an endangered species of bird, the Great Lakes Piping Plover. Within the project area, thirteen miles of Lake Michigan shoreline at Nordhouse Dunes and Ludington State Park in Mason County and all of Muskegon State Park in Muskegon County were included within the critical habitat areas. The state of Michigan has enacted a piping plover recovery program. It is estimated that only one hundred birds remain in the Great Lakes area.

## Nature Preserves & Sanctuaries

A nature preserve is an area designated to protect a segment of the natural environment for its flora, fauna, or geological features. Governments or private entities, typically nonprofits, can designate nature preserves. There are five known land conservancies that are active in Southwest Michigan: the Land Conservancy of Southwest Michigan, the Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, the Michigan Nature Association, Chikaming Open Lands, and the Nature Conservancy. Some of the nature preserves that are available for use by the public include:

- **Robinson Woods, East Road, Lakeside, Berrien County.** Protected by the Nature Conservancy, the eighty-acre preserve includes virgin forests and former farms and streams that have cut deep valleys into the landscape. The preserve is home to rare birds such as the long eared owl.
- **Ross Coastal Plan Marsh Preserve. Off County Road 376, Van Buren County.** H. Stewart Ross donated the land for the creation of this preserve in 1988. Now at more than fourteen hundred acres the preserve is owned by the Nature Conservancy. The

preserve includes sand dunes and three coastal plains marshes with plant species and animals typically found on the Atlantic coast. Eight plant species listed as endangered or rare are found in the preserve.

- **Lawrence and Mary Bell Wade Memorial Sanctuary, Sixty-Second Avenue, Saugatuck, Allegan County.** Seventy-two acres of woodland with a concentration of dogwoods and hemlocks, the sanctuary provides canoe access to Silver Lake. The site is protected by the Michigan Nature Association.
- **Minnie Skwarek Nature Preserve, Leonard Road, Spring Lake Township, Ottawa County.** Twenty-four acres along the Grand River, its nature trails pass through wetlands and forest. The area is protected by the Land Conservancy of Southwest Michigan.
- **DePersia South Highlands Nature Preserve, Brucker Street, Grand Haven Township, Ottawa County.** Protected by the Land Conservancy of Southwest Michigan, this area provides access to sand dunes and a beech-maple forest.
- **Kuker-Van Til Nature Reserve, Perry Street, Park Township, Ottawa County.** There is a loop trail though the forty-five acres of forestland with sand blowouts protected by the Land Conservancy of Southwest Michigan.
- **Palomita Nature Reserve, Lake Shore Drive at Lake Michigan Drive, Grand Haven Township, Ottawa County.** This reserve includes forty acres of wetlands on the Little Pigeon River, which are accessed via a boardwalk and a loop trail through an adjacent woods. It is protected by the Land Conservancy of West Michigan.
- **Genevieve Casey Nature Sanctuary, Buchanan Road, Oceana County.** The twenty-three acres that make up this sanctuary were once part of a parcel of land that was owned by Daniel Webster, a gift to him from President James Buchanan for whom the road it is located on was named. The site contains wetlands and a pine-cedar forest and is protected by the Michigan Nature Association.
- **Lake Breeze Preserve, Ridge Road and Lake Breeze Road, Oceana County.** Thirty-five acres of birch and hemlock forest with two streams and a loop trail, the preserve is located next to sixty-five acres of private land protected by the Land Conservancy of Southwest Michigan.

## Conservation Projects

- **Fenn Valley Vineyards, Allegan County.** The Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy holds a protective conservation easement on one hundred and forty-five acres of Fenn Valley vineyards and interspersed natural areas adjacent to the Allegan State Game Area.
- **Macatawa Greenway Project.** This is a plan to protect and connect land, streams, and open space in the Holland/Zeeland Area.
- **Michigan Dune Alliance.** Established in 1999, this partnership is working to protect two hundred and fifty thousand acres of West Michigan dune lands from the Indiana state line to the Mackinac Bridge. To date, a total of around seventy thousand acres have been protected. Southwest Michigan members in the alliance include the Nature Conservancy, the Land Conservancy of Southwest Michigan, Southwest Michigan Land Conservancy, and Chikaming Open Land.

- **West Michigan Forest and Savannas.** Established by the Nature Conservancy to protect the land surrounding the White and Muskegon Rivers that is quickly succumbing to development.
- **West Michigan Strategic Alliance Green Infrastructure Project.** The alliance was established as a regional approach to the protection of natural areas in the Holland-Grand Haven-Muskegon-Grand Rapids area. The purpose is to identify and protect the waterways and green space connecting these areas.
- **Chikaming Open Lands.** Established to protect the Galien River watershed in southwest Berrien County, including natural, scenic, and agricultural areas through conservation easements.
- **Black River Watershed Project.** Established in 2006, this three-year project is to identify water quality problems in the 287-square mile Black River watershed. The Black River runs through Allegan and Van Buren counties and enters Lake Michigan at South Haven.
- **Preserve the Dunes.** A nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting Southwest Michigan's sand dunes from sand mining. They also sponsor a design competition for residential housing that minimally impacts the dunes.

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## Amusement Parks

It is generally considered that amusement parks evolved from European pleasure gardens, a popular form of entertainment between 1550 and 1700. Tivoli Gardens in Denmark is an example of an early pleasure garden that included areas for bowling, dancing, music, and even a few primitive rides. The first amusement park similar to those we know today was built in 1843 on the Isle of Wight in England. The World's Columbia Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 included a fairway called the "Midway Plaisance" whose bright lights, games, and gaudy facades became the standard pattern for amusement park and fair "midways" for years to come. The first "Ferris Wheel," designed by inventor George Ferris, was also introduced at the Columbian Exposition. In 1894 Chutes Park was opened in Chicago to take advantage of visitors to the exposition. The first amusement park to be enclosed and to charge admission was Seal Lion Park built at Coney Island in 1895. Other amusement parks were soon built at Coney Island including Steeplechase Park and Luna Park, which replaced Sea Lion Park and included rides and attractions. At the turn of the century interurban companies that wanted to establish destination sites to encourage use of their electric railways constructed amusement parks. Since electric companies charged the interurban companies a flat fee per month, there were no extra charges for electricity for the parks. By 1910 over two thousand amusement parks had been built across America.

Walter Knott developed the first themed amusement park in Buena Park, California, in 1940. Knott ran a popular restaurant at his fruit farm and moved historic buildings from abandoned mining towns to the site to create a ghost town as a means of entertaining patrons waiting for a table. He soon began charging admission and Knott's Berry Farm became the first and most successful theme park in the country. When Walt Disney opened his theme park, Disneyland in Anaheim, California, in 1955, a new standard was set for quality in design and creativity that has yet to be surpassed. In 1961 Angus Wynne Jr. opened the first Six Flags amusement park in Arlington, Texas. The 1970s saw the opening of hybrid amusement/theme parks, such as Cedar Point Amusement Park in Ohio that offered shows, rides and themed attractions.

It is not known when the first amusement park opened in Michigan. On the eastern side of the state, Tashmoo Park was opened on Harsens Island in 1897; it included a casino, dance pavilion, and roller rink. The first amusement park constructed in the Detroit area was Electric Park built in 1906 near the Belle Isle Bridge. Amusement parks seemed to have developed earlier on the west side of the state.

### Southwest Michigan Amusement Parks

Lake Michigan Park began as an interurban park established by the Muskegon Traction and Lighting Company in 1890. When it opened, the park provided a bathing pavilion and access to the beach. Over the next decade entertainment opportunities in the park expanded to include concessions, a dance pavilion, and a roller coaster. A six hundred-seat theater was opened in 1898 and members of the nearby Actor's Colony, including silent screen star Buster Keaton and his family, would annually produce and star in a vaudeville show. After 1911 a bowling alley, roller rink and shooting gallery were added to the park. The park began to decline in the 1920s and was demolished in the 1930s. The land that was once the site of the Lake Michigan Beach Amusement Park was combined with property donated by the Pere Marquette Railroad to create Pere Marquette Park.

An amusement park known as Silver Beach Amusement Park opened in Saint Joseph in 1891. Logan Drake and his brother-in-law, Louis Wallace, who founded the Silver Beach Amusement and Realty Company, developed the park. The park featured such amusements such as an indoor heated pool that encapsulated and heated lake water for swimmers, roller coasters, a fun house, and a carousel. One of the areas' first bowling alleys was installed at Silver Beach in 1917. The Shadowland Dance Hall, which hosted marathon dances throughout the Depression, was built in 1927. Two significant events relating to early air travel occurred at Silver Beach. In

1898 Augustus Moore Herring undertook the first successful airplane flight over sand—nearly five years before the Wright brother's flight. In 1913 Logan Vilas made the first successful airplane flight over Lake Michigan when he flew from Chicago to Silver Beach in a double-wing open cockpit airboat. The flight took one hour and forty minutes to travel sixty-two miles. Silver Beach Amusement Park was demolished by a controlled fire in 1975 and the site was purchased by Berrien County in 1990. It has since been used to host the city's annual Venetian Festival in July. A museum commemorating the park is being constructed on the site.

In 1891 Luman Jenison purchased the Shady Side Resort (formerly Scott's Macatawa Grove), on Lake Macatawa in Holland. He renamed it Jenison Park in 1892 and began a series of improvements to the existing hotel and platted three hundred lots for cottages. Upon Jenison's death in 1899 the land went to an heir whose husband was an officer with the Grand Rapids Electric Railway Company, which had begun operating interurban trains to Macatawa Park in 1898. In 1903 the railway company began construction of an amusement park on the site of the Jenison Park resort and renamed it Jenison Electric Park. That first summer a labor union outing held at the park was attended by over twenty-thousand members.

An amusement park built on the riverfront in South Haven around 1900 was known as Mooney's Park and included a roller coaster, dance hall, games and concessions. It was demolished in 1925.

In 1903 Benjamin Purnell and his wife Mary moved to Benton Harbor to found a religious community based upon the principles of the Christian Israelite faith. The House of David colony was regionally and nationally renowned for music, art, sports, agriculture, recreation, resorts, and inventions such as the sugar waffle ice cream cone. Members were required to provide a resume when under consideration for inclusion into the community of inventors, builders, engineers, musicians, athletes, and skilled artisans that made up the House of David. The community became the largest property owner in the city of Benton Harbor and owned much of the agricultural lands in the surrounding area. They were major fruit producers and operated their own cannery. The success of an ice cream parlor established in 1906 led the House of David to build an amusement park called the House of David Eden Park and Zoo in 1908. The park included a popular miniature train ride; a zoo with roaming peacocks and alligator ponds; an open-air garden with live music and vaudeville shows; midget automobile rides, and a baseball park. It also included a vegetarian restaurant and tourist cabins. The House of David amusement park operated until the 1970s.

The only amusement park still in operation within the project area is Michigan's Adventure in Oceana County. Founded in 1956 as Deer Park, a petting zoo, it was purchased in 1968 by Roger Jourden who changed the name to Deer Park Funland and added amusement rides like the Tilt-a-Whirl and Scrambler. In 1988 a roller coaster was added and the name was changed to Michigan's Adventure. The Wildwater Theme Park was added in 1991. Cedar Fair Entertainment Company, owners of the Cedar Point Amusement Park in Ohio, purchased the site in 2001.

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## Bowling

Archaeologists have evidence that a primitive version of the game of bowling was played in Egypt as early as 3200 B.C. It has been documented that the game was popular among the British, Germans and the Dutch from around 200 A.D. Initially the game was played outdoors on lawns or a “bowling green” and was a nine-pin game using a wooden ball. The first recorded enclosed bowling center was built in London in 1455. In the seventeenth century European settlers brought the game to the American colonies. Bowling suffered a negative image around 1870 when it became associated with gambling and the sport was outlawed. A ten-pin game was created in order to bypass laws that made nine-pin bowling illegal. There was no uniform set of defined rules for ten-pin bowling until 1895 when members of various bowling clubs came together in New York to develop regulations. The outcome of the meeting was the formation of the American Bowling Congress (ABC). Though women played the game, bowling associations and teams were open only to male players until 1917 when women bowlers gathered in Saint Louis to form the Women’s International Bowling Congress.

Southwest Michigan became instrumental in the development of bowling as one of America's favorite leisure sports when the Brunswick Company was established in Muskegon in 1895. Brunswick pioneered new technologies that improved the sport and worked to increase its popularity worldwide.

### Brunswick Company, Muskegon

John Brunswick came from Switzerland to Cincinnati, Ohio, and opened a carriage factory in 1841. The company launched a successful new business centered on recreation when it built its first billiard table in 1845. By 1885 the company had moved to Chicago where it was one of the city's largest businesses. John Brunswick's son-in-law Moses Besinger, who had been instrumental in establishing the American Bowling Congress in 1895, became president of the Brunswick Company in 1890 and is credited with making bowling a popular recreational sport. Under his leadership, the Brunswick Company began making wooden alleys and bowling balls. (One of the first operational bowling centers to be installed by Brunswick, a three-lane alley at Georgian Court University in Lakewood, New Jersey, in 1899, was restored in 2008.) Brunswick owned timberland in Michigan's Upper Peninsula; logs were milled in Big Bay, Michigan; and the wood was transferred to a drying yard—one of the nation's largest—in Muskegon. In 1906 the Brunswick Company constructed a one hundred thousand square foot plant in Muskegon to produce their brand name bowling equipment. They also built twenty-four homes known as Brunswick Row for Brunswick factory workers (demolished).

Bowling balls were first made of wood; the first hard rubber ball was introduced in 1905. The Brunswick Company pioneered the creation of a new material in 1914 called Mineralite, a unique rubber-like compound that changed how bowling balls were made and ultimately helped to standardize the equipment of the game. Another historically important addition to bowling equipment that originated in Southwest Michigan was the invention of the automatic pinsetter. Until its introduction, young boys were hired by bowling establishments to manually reset pins. The automatic pinsetter was designed and patented by the Benton Harbor-based Israelite community known as the House of David for their amusement park. There is evidence that the group advertised their automatic pinsetter for sale as early as 1913. The House of David later sold its patent to Muskegon's Brunswick Company.

According to the *Old Bowling* website, Brunswick had hired a Norwegian inventor, Ernest Hedenskoog, in 1911 to improve bowling technologies. J. O. Matteson, an executive with the Brunswick Company and Hedenskoog, were members of the Muskegon Elks Lodge and six state of the art bowling lanes were added to the lodge located on Western Avenue in 1936. It is not known if these alleys still exist.

Though bowling was a popular pastime in America in the 1920s, the Depression curtailed its full development as a leisure sport. Bowling came into its own when the United States military adopted bowling as a form of recreation for the men and women serving in the Armed Forces during World War II. Between 1941 and 1945, the military constructed more than four thousand five hundred bowling alleys, thereby bringing the sport to the American masses. In the post-World War II years of the 1950s, bowling was the sport associated with blue-collar factory workers, and it became one of the top pastimes in America.

The first Brunswick automatic pinsetter was installed in a Michigan bowling alley in 1952. Following this local installation its use became widespread helping to spread the success of the sport nationally. In 1978 the House of David donated a variety of their original automatic pinsetters to the American Bowling Museum in Saint Louis, Missouri. In recent history, Brunswick was known for introducing the popular black light or “cosmic bowling” idea into its many bowling centers. It was a trend that was mimicked nationwide, responsible for reviving the sport among younger bowlers across America.

## **Southwest Michigan Bowling Alleys**



**Kelly's Bowling**  
2705 Cleveland, Saint Joseph



**Lakeview Lanes**  
229 Center, Douglas

This barrel roof building was constructed in 1947.

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**Sherman Bowling Center**  
1531 W. Sherman Blvd, Muskegon

Opened in August 1958 with twenty-eight lanes; an additional twenty lanes were added in 1960. Formerly owned by the Brinten family, it was sold in 2004.



**Park Lanes**  
1963 N. Lakeshore, Ludington



**Fraternal Order of Eagles Bowling Alley**  
4555 N. Ocean Drive, Hart

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## **Recreation/Entertainment – Bowling**

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## Boxing

Boxing as a sport has been around for centuries. The first commercial boxing in America is considered to have occurred in 1818 in New York, even though boxing was not condoned at the time and there were many laws barring fights. The first heavyweight fight in America occurred in 1849 in Baltimore for a purse of five thousand dollars. Boxing as we know it today is based on the Marquis of Queensbury rules published in London in 1867. It wasn't until after World War I that many of the laws banning boxing were repealed. Thus, boxing came into its own as a professional sport in America in the 1920s. No doubt due to its healthful climate and proximity to Chicago, close enough for promoters to conduct business but far enough away to keep the boxers from temptation, Southwest Michigan became an area where boxers would come to train for important fights.

- According to the *Boxing Scene* website one of the great moments in boxing occurred in Benton Harbor on July 5, 1920, when "Benny Leonard knocked out of the ring in five rounds, climbs back in to KO Charley White, nine rounds."
- Benton Harbor was again the site of a "great moment" in boxing when in September 1920 Floyd Fitzsimmons, a sports promoter from Benton Harbor, promoted a fight between World Heavy Weight Champion Jack Dempsey and Bill Miske as "The Slaughter on Fair Avenue." It was Dempsey's first fight after winning his first World Heavy Weight Title where he beat Jess Willard on July 4, 1919. Fitzsimmons, who owned a sport complex on Fair Avenue in Benton Harbor, was allowed to promote the fight after Dempsey's manager, Doc Kearns, argued with Dempsey's usual promoter, Tex Ricard. Dempsey trained in Benton Harbor before the fight and in his book *Round by Round* states "It felt good to be in the open country again, after so many months in cities and on trains. The eastern shore of Lake Michigan is beautiful in late summer, just as Maumee Bay is beautiful in the spring I enjoyed the long walks, hotel life, and rich food."

Dempsey thought the crowd was small for a championship fight—the purse was only \$134,904—and blamed it on a problem with the referee. Dempsey's manager had wanted to use a specific referee, Jim Dougherty, who was not licensed in Michigan. The State at first refused to license Dougherty but then conceded, issuing a license just before the fight. Dempsey knocked out Miske in three rounds. Jack Dempsey was the World Heavyweight Boxing Champion from 1919 to 1927. In his book, Dempsey claims he was visited by Al Capone while in Benton Harbor and Capone invited him to stage an exhibition fight at a private club in Chicago. Dempsey said the amount of money he was offered by Capone was tempting, and he visited Capone's office in Chicago to further discuss the offer, but in the end declined to box for him.

Jack Dempsey reportedly also stayed at Lakewood Farms north of Holland, owned by George F. Goetz who operated a zoo on the site.

- Pine Wood Lodge (now the Grand Beach Inn) at Grand Beach served as a training camp for boxers in the 1930s including boxer Jim Braddock, during the time he was the World Heavyweight Champion and boxed Joe Louis and lost. King Lavinsky also trained there for a fight with Max Baer, which Lavinsky lost. The U.S. Golden Gloves team trained at Pine Wood Lodge for the Irish Amateur.
- World Heavy Weight Champion Joe Louis trained in Stevensville where his manager, Julian Black, owned a house on Saint Joseph Street. (The house was demolished when the entrance ramp to I-94 was constructed.) As part of his training, Louis would run from Marquette Woods Road to Roosevelt Road to Glenlord Road to U.S. 12. Louis came to Stevensville to recuperate after losing a big fight to Max Schmeling, an eight to one

underdog, in 1936. While training in Stevensville, Louis posed for a photograph with the House of David baseball team.

- As an advertising strategy Ted Cheff, president of the Holland Furnace Company, sponsored a training camp for Rocky Marciano in 1953 as he trained for a rematch with Jersey Joe Wolcott, whom he had beaten in thirteen rounds in 1952 to become the World Heavyweight Champion. Marciano knocked Wolcott out in the first round in a match that was held in Chicago on May 15, 1953. Marciano left his training camp at Grossinger Resort in the Catskills to stay at the Cheff home in Holland for about nine weeks before the fight. According to Marciano's son there were cocktail parties, boat rides, and fishing expeditions during "training" and "the days spent in Michigan were some of the happiest . . . and Rocky and his friends returned many times."
- One of the country's most popular boxers, three time World Heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali owns an eighty-eight acre farm at 1400 Kephart Road in Berrien Springs. Reportedly Chicago gangster Al Capone once owned the home.

## **Boxing Clubs in the Project Area**

- Muskegon Boxing Club, 2543 Peck, Muskegon
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## Dune Rides



**Mac Woods Dune Rides, 629 N. Eighteenth Street, Mears**

Malcolm H. Wood started farming in Oceana County in 1910 at the age of seventeen. He quickly discovered that it wasn't his calling. He preferred renting his house to tourists, which was much more lucrative. Wood eventually established the Flora Dale Resort on the south shore of Silver Lake in the

1920s. As a means of entertaining the resort's guests, Wood modified a Model A Ford that held four passengers and took them for rides through the sand dunes. It was so popular that he charged twenty cents a ride. In the early days, the Woods' dune "scooters" would sometimes drag people on water skis through the dunes. Today, modified four wheel drive vehicles carry up to twenty passengers each.



*Flora Dale Resort\**

In 1950 John Klomp of Grand Haven opened a dune schooner ride based on Mac Woods dune rides. Klomp operated his dune rides on land rented from Construction Aggregates on North Shore Drive into the 1960s.

## Saugatuck Dune Rides, 6495 Blue Star Highway, Saugatuck

Ron Jousma established the Saugatuck Dune Rides in 1954. After returning from a stint in the Army, at age twenty-one he purchased a former resort on Gorshorn Lake and patterned his dune rides after Mac Woods. Jousma started with a 1942 Ford convertible. The Saugatuck Dune Rides incorporate two hundred acres. The original log welcome center is still on the site, which also contains the remnants of the former Pine Crest Tourist Inn, built in 1938 and once owned by Mildred Dvorak of Spring Lake.

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\*The Mac Woods postcards are from the Manx Dune Buggy Club website at [www.manxclub.org](http://www.manxclub.org).

## Golf Courses

### Overview of the Development of Golf

The earliest known golf course is the Old Course at Saint Andrews in Scotland where golf games have been played since 1362. Golf was first introduced in the United States when Russell Montague constructed a few holes on his "Oakhurst" estate outside of Boston. The first golf course constructed in America was a nine-hole course in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, completed in 1884. It was called "Oakhurst Links" in honor of Russell Montague's estate where the layout for the course was developed. The first incorporated golf club in America was the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club in Southampton on New York's Long Island. Shinnecock was a twelve-hole course designed by Willie Dunn. Golf came to the Midwest via Charles Blair MacDonald, a Chicago businessman that had emigrated from Scotland. MacDonald built a seven-hole course on the estate of a friend in Lake Forest, Illinois, around 1890. In 1892 the Chicago Club, a group of golfers organized by MacDonald, constructed the first eighteen-hole golf course in the country on a two hundred-acre site in Wheaton, Illinois. In 1894 the Amateur Golf Association of the United States (aka the United States Golf Association) was formed. The association developed rules for the game and held the first U.S. Open in 1895.

Initially golf was a game for the wealthy but in 1895 the first public course was opened, Van Cortlandt Golf Course in the Bronx. By 1900 golf fever had captured the nation—twenty-six golf courses had been built in the Chicago area alone. Interest swelled even more in 1923 when Bobby Jones, a popular professional golfer with a dynamic personality, won the first of four U.S. Opens. He went on to win thirteen major championships between 1923 and 1930 and is the only player to win all four majors in the same year. Golf courses across America reported that use nearly doubled within one year of Jones' championship win. The "golden age" of golf in America lasted from 1900 until the Great Depression in the 1930s. After World War II there was renewed interest in the game and the late 1950s and 1960s saw the construction of many new golf courses in America.

### Golf Course Design

The earliest golf course designs evolved in Scotland in the mid-seventeenth century. These were naturalistic courses that utilized existing topography and incorporated the natural lay of the land into the course using existing natural features, such as marshes or streams, as hazards. Such courses were almost exclusively laid out on the sandy, rolling scrubland along the coast of Scotland that was unsuitable for farming. A true golf "links" is one with this type of typography and is rarely found outside of Scotland.

The late nineteenth century saw the appearance of what is sometimes referred to as "the dark ages" for European golf courses. The rapid rise of the sport's popularity resulted in courses that were quickly laid out by untrained designers on unsuitable sites close to major population areas. The approach was to standardize the design of the courses in an effort to make them fairer. The design focused on forcing straight, down the middle shots; placed hazards on the sides of fairways; made all bunkers visible; and tried to remove any natural features or hazards in the course that would result in unpredictability in the game. This style also incorporated the Victorian love of all things exotic or strange and golf courses often included geometric shaped mounds, built up tees, and coffin shaped bunkers. Players soon came to view these courses as dull and contrived and they quickly lost favor.

At the turn of the century, a new school of golf course design began to evolve. According to Thomas MacWoods the author of a series of articles entitled *A Timeline of Golf Architecture*, this school was based on the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement that originated in England and was popular from 1880 to 1910. A reaction to industrialization, the movement was based on the writings of architect John Ruskin and championed a return to craftsmanship and nature that

emphasized handmade products and natural materials. Golf course design followed the same trends that influenced landscape architecture during this period. The central theme was to preserve as much of the natural beauty of a site as possible and to use native species of plants that were indigenous to the region. MacWoods claims Horace Hutchinson, a golf writer that wrote a column for *Country Life* magazine, helped to popularize a new style of golf course design. Hutchinson was the first person to objectively study and critique golf course architecture, visiting numerous courses across the British Isles and analyzing why they were or were not successful. In his column he advocated for the incorporation of the best features of both the early naturalistic style courses and the contrived Victorian style of golf's "dark ages" into a new design style, which became known as the "strategic style." In the strategic style designers used the natural topography of the landscape but also inserted challenges in the course that required the golfer to ponder different options on how to address a specific hole. This added variety to the game and to the course, as a different option could be applied to the same hole depending on the physical condition of the player, the environmental conditions on a given day, etc. Hutchinson's ideas greatly influenced the development of American golf course design. One of the nation's first golf course architects, Charles B. MacDonald of Chicago, invited Hutchinson to America to play a number of east coast golf courses and critique them. MacDonald then incorporated Hutchinson's ideas into his golf course designs. One of the most outstanding of the early golf course architects, Donald Ross, spent a summer with Hutchinson playing and critiquing England's golf courses. Thomas Bendelow, a golf course designer that promoted the creation of public golf courses, was also strongly influenced by the basic principles of the Arts and Crafts movement. Typically designing golf courses for municipalities, Bendelow was pragmatic in incorporating whatever natural landscape he was provided into his design in order to keep costs to a minimum. He was one of the first to use topographic maps in designing his courses.

The Great Depression and World War II slowed golf course construction, though golf courses were often built in conjunction with park projects through Depression-era federal relief programs such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Perry Matthews is considered one of the top WPA golf course architects. He designed a number of courses in Oklahoma during the Depression. In Michigan, Matthews designed the Crystal Downs Golf Course in Franklin in 1928 just before the Great Depression hit. He also designed the University of Michigan Golf Course, constructed in 1931.

After World War II, there was a second boom in golf course construction across the country. During this period, golf architect Robert Trent Jones Sr. developed the "heroic school" approach to golf course design so named because it took the overall concept of the strategic school but added dramatic hazards to some of the holes. He also promoted the idea of a "signature" course that included a feature that could be attributed to a specific designer. This design style dominated the courses constructed in the late 1940s and 1950s.

## Golf Course Designers

### Donald Ross

Donald Ross is one of the most respected of the golf course architects that practiced in America. Ross, a native of Dornoch, Scotland, studied greens keeping under Old Tom Morris in St. Andrews, Scotland. He immigrated to America in the summer of 1899 to teach golf to wealthy families in New England. He was asked to construct the golf course for the Oakley Country Club in Boston in 1901 and that winter was hired to remodel Pinehurst Golf Course in North Carolina. His success at Pinehurst led to other commissions and Ross eventually designed more than 413 golf courses in the United States. His Michigan golf courses include Oakland Hills Country Club in Bloomfield Hills, Franklin Hills Country Club in Farmington Hills, the Detroit Golf Club, and Rackham Golf Course in Huntington Woods. Many American golf championships are played on Ross designed courses. Donald Ross was a founder of the American Society of Golf Course Architects in 1946. He died in 1948.

Ross followed the “strategic school” of golf course design. In his book *Golf Has Never Failed Me*, he sets down the framework for the design of a good strategic school golf course. The ideal property for such a course was fan shaped and between 125-150 acres. The most desirable length for a course was about six thousand feet. There was no preference as to nine or eighteen holes; it depended on the quality of the configuration that worked best with the lay of the land. Ross stated that the clubhouse should be placed at the starting point of the course and an adjacent caddy shack and garage should be provided. Ideally, the clubhouse would have a rear service drive so that no paths or roadways cut through the course itself. The first two holes should be simple so as not to cause a delay in play. Hazards and bunkers should be placed to “force a man to use judgment and exercise mental control.” Bunkers should always be placed clearly in view and water hazards should be limited to three at the most. Holes should be zigzagged, not laid in a straight line. Hole length should be based on the natural landscape, but every course should contain at least one long hole of five hundred yards or more. Two-shot holes were recommended over three-shot holes and all short holes should be difficult. At least one dog leg hole was encouraged at it was “the most delightful type on any course.” Ross was one of the first to use tees that could be adjusted according to wind conditions. He advocated for tees “fifty yards long or three or four separate tees at every hole.”

Donald Ross designed naturalistic courses that followed the topography of the land. According to Bradley Klein in his book *Discovering Donald Ross*, there are a number of strategic elements that form the foundation of a course designed by Ross. They include:

- Efficient routings with little distance between the holes so there is no need for signage or paths.
- The first few holes were easy and simple to complete in order to encourage a quick getaway and discourage bottlenecking players
- Generous fairways with forty-yard corridors on short holes and fairways and roughs sixty to ninety yards in length on longer holes. Clearing lines were typically irregular for added interest.
- Subtle angles of play that required the player to make a strategic choice. Ross often relied on offset bunkers to achieve this. Early work relied on cross bunkering of the tee. Another tactic was shifting the rhythm of the course from the right to the left tee and vice versa.
- Offset tees/S shaped fairways. This feature has often been straightened over the years to accommodate irrigation lines and allow for easy maintenance.
- Demanding iron play. Ross typically included one demanding par four hole
- Slightly raised putting surfaces with bunkers built to the fill pad.

Within the Preserve America project area, the original design of the Muskegon Golf Club has been attributed to Donald Ross; it was redesigned by Jerry Matthews in 1989. The club was the project of Louis Carlisle Walker, one of the founders of Shaw-Walker, an office furniture company based in Muskegon. Golf architect Tom Bendelow was hired to lay out the club's first nine holes in 1908; the second nine were completed in 1910. Louis Walker owned a winter home in Pinehurst, North Carolina where he became familiar with the work of golf architect Don Ross. On May 29, 1920 the Muskegon Country Club voted to sell one thousand feet of lake front property to the east of the clubhouse to the adjacent Central Paper Company for twenty-thousand dollars. Following the sale of the land, Walker commissioned Donald Ross to redesign the Muskegon Golf Club course.

## Thomas Bendelow

The nation's earliest golf courses were small three- to six-hole courses built on private estates. The rapid rise in popularity of the game led to the construction of nine- and eighteen-hole golf courses. These were typically associated with high society and only accessible through private country clubs requiring dues or membership fees and the “right” equipment and clothing. Golf was

too costly for the workingman until golf course designer Thomas Bendelow helped to popularize the construction of municipal golf courses that were inexpensive or free to the public.

Tom Bendelow was born September 2, 1868, in Aberdeen, Scotland, to John and Mary Ann Bendelow who ran the Bendelow Pie Shop (which remained in business until 1960). He immigrated to New York in 1892 at age twenty-four with his wife and daughter. A typesetter by trade, he worked at the *New York Herald* until 1895 when he answered an advertisement for a golf instructor. The position was to teach the Charles Pratt family to play the game of golf. In a bit of good luck for Bendelow, Pratt turned out to be one of the founders of the Standard Oil Company. Bendelow laid out a six-hole course the Pratt's Long Island estate and taught the family and their friends to play golf. In 1895 Bendelow opened America's first golf instruction school in the Berkley Gymnasium at Carnegie Hall in New York City. In 1898 Bendelow laid out the first municipal golf course built in America, Van Cortland Park in the Bronx, and began working with Spalding & Brothers Sporting Goods Company to promote the development of other public golf courses. In 1900 Bendelow moved to Chicago to work full time for Spalding. He operated a golf school, designed courses, and promoted new golf equipment. He served as editor of Spalding's *Official Golf Guide* from 1907 to 1916. In 1917 Bendelow went to work for the Thomas E. Wilson Sporting Goods Company designing golf clubs, developing a caddy manual and continuing to promote golf for the masses. In 1920 he joined a Chicago company called American Park Builders as chief golf course designer, a post he held until 1933. (Myron West, the landscape architect in charge of developing Chicago's Lincoln Park system, was the founder of American Park Builders.) While at American Park Builders, Bendelow became a lecturer on golf course design at the University of Illinois. Bendelow's long and successful career of promoting and creating public golf courses earned him the nickname of "the Johnny Appleseed of Golf Course Design." Bendelow designed over seven hundred golf courses in the United States and Canada. The Medinah Country Club, designed in 1925 for the Medinah Shriners in Medinah, Illinois, is considered to be his best work. Thomas Bendelow died at his home in River Forest, Illinois, in 1936. He was named to the Illinois PGA Foundation Hall of Fame in 2005. Two Bendelow designed golf courses, located in city parks in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and Denver, Colorado, have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The naturalistic, strategic style course was at the height of its popularity when Thomas Bendelow was promoting the sport for the workingman and public golf courses were springing up across the country. According to Donald Ross, "The development of municipal golf courses is the outstanding feature of the game in America today. It is the greatest step ever taken to make it the game of the people, as it should be . . . ."

## Tom Bendelow's Work in Southwest Michigan

According to an article in the June 2004 *Michigan Golfer*, approximately fifty-five courses were designed by Thomas Bendelow for construction in Michigan between 1898 and 1929. Bendelow was commissioned to design the following courses in the *Preserve America* project area:

Grand Beach Country Club	1912	9 holes
Ludington Golf Course	1920	9 holes (now Lincoln Hills)
Michiganago Country Club	-----	18 holes
Palisades Park	1906	9 holes
Spring Lake Golf Club	1911	18 holes
South Haven Golf Club	1910	9 holes
White Lake Golf Course	1916	18 holes

According to Bendelow's grandson Stuart, Thomas Bendelow was hired by the Palisades Park Company to develop a golf course for the two hundred-acre summer resort subdivision the company was developing in northern Van Buren County. As payment, Bendelow was given a number of lots in the subdivision. He built a summer cottage there in 1919, "Balgownie," which is still owned by the Bendelow family. The Palisades Park Golf Course was abandoned during the

Great Depression due to cost of upkeep. The South Haven Golf Club was drastically altered in the 1950s and no longer retains any of its historic integrity as a Bendelow design. The Spring Lake Golf Club was renovated by Bruce and Jerry Matthews in 1978 and 1985 and by W. Bruce Matthews III in 1999. It is unclear whether the Michicago golf course in Benton Harbor was ever constructed. Though Stuart Bendelow includes White Lake Golf Club in his list of courses designed by his father, other sources attribute it to a different designer. However, Thomas Bendelow's grandson Jack served as a golf instructor in Montague for many years.

## Other Golf Course Designers

**Robert Bruce Harris** was a native of Illinois and laid out his first course in Hoopeston, Illinois, in 1927. He designed over 150 golf courses during his career, which ended with his death in 1976. Harris served as the first president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects and was inducted into the Illinois Professional Golfer's Association in 1993. He is noted for training a number of successful golf architects including Richard Nugent and Kenneth Killian, both of whom have designed Michigan courses. Harris designed the Old Channel Trail-Woods course in 1926. A chain ferry took golfers across White Lake between the Michilinda Beach Lodge and the golf course.

**Robert Trent Jones, Sr.** was born in Ince, England, in 1906 and immigrated to America in 1911. He is credited with being the first person to receive a professional degree in golf course design, devising his own curriculum at Cornell University. Following graduation, Trent worked with Stanley Thompson on a course at Banff, Canada, and also completed designs for six WPA-funded courses during the Depression. Jones' career took off after World War II when he worked with golfer Bobby Jones on the design of Peachtree in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1948. Robert Trent Jones gained national recognition for his sensitive redesign of Donald Ross' Oakland Hills Golf Course in Bloomfield Hills for the 1951 U.S. Open. Jones was a founding member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects. He designed the Point O'Woods Golf Course in Benton Harbor in 1957. Everett Kircher, the owner of Boyne Mountain Ski Resort, hired Jones to design a course at Boyne Highlands in 1968. Called "The Heather," it "was the first course in Michigan designed by an internationally recognized architect since the days when Donald Ross roamed the state."

**W. Bruce Matthews** was a Michigan golf course designer that developed at least seventeen courses across the state on his own and twenty-seven with his son, Jerry, after they established the firm of W. Bruce Matthews & Son in 1959. Matthews designed, built, and ran the Grand Haven Golf Club in 1965. *Golf Digest* included the club among its top fifty public courses in America for over ten years. Also attributed to Matthews are the Blossom Trails Golf Course in Benton Harbor completed in 1952 and the West Ottawa Golf Club in Holland in 1967. Matthews was named the first president of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation in 1956 and was inducted into the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame in 1993. Matthews died in 2000. His son Jerry and his grandson W. Bruce Matthews III are both successful golf course designers.

**Jerry Matthews**, son of W. Bruce Matthews, is a graduate of Michigan State University. He joined his father in the firm W. Bruce Matthews & Son in 1959 and has designed over one hundred new golf courses and redesigned over two hundred courses. Matthews owns the Grand Haven Golf Club. He is president of Jerry Matthews Natural Course Design, Inc.

## History of Michigan Golf Courses

According to research conducted by Orren Mohler, the first golf course in Michigan was most likely a six-hole course built in 1894 by Senator James H. McMillan on the infield of Hamlin Park, a private racetrack in Grosse Pointe Shores. In 1895 MacMillan's sons built a nine-hole course called the Wanikin Club. That course was expanded to eighteen holes in 1897 and renamed the Country Club of Detroit. Art McCafferty, editor of the *Michigan Golfer* magazine, found that Wequetonsing and Roaring Brook (demolished) golf courses were constructed in 1895 in the

Harbor Springs area to accommodate Chicago resort tourists that came to Northern Michigan via passenger steamers on Lake Michigan. McCafferty has identified twenty-three golf courses that were constructed in Michigan between 1896 and 1911. These include the original Kent County Country Club built in 1896 on the site of what is now Blodgett Hospital in Grand Rapids (The club expanded and moved to its current location in 1899); the national register-listed Wawashkamo Golf Club, Mackinac Island, 1898; the Les Cheneaux Golf Club, Cedarville, 1898; Manistee Golf Club, 1901; Portage Lake Golf Course, Houghton, 1902; Kalamazoo Country Club, 1909; Muskegon Country Club, 1910; and Spring Lake Country Club, 1911. One of Michigan's most renowned golf courses is the Oakland Hills Golf Course in Bloomfield Hills designed in 1918 by Donald Ross. It is consistently listed among the world's top ten golf courses.

During the Great Depression a few golf courses were completed by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a federal relief program in the 1930s, in conjunction with the development of municipal parks. In Michigan, a prime example is Milham Park Golf Course in Kalamazoo.

The Michigan Turfgrass Foundation was formed at Michigan State University in 1956 to promote the development of turfgrass and related industries. The first president was golf course architect W. Bruce Matthews.

In the mid 1950's Everett Kircher of the Boyne Mountain Ski Resort developed a smaller type of nine-hole course he called an "Executive Course" which, according to the Travel Michigan website set off a "building frenzy" of golf courses in Michigan. In 2008 Michigan had more than 860 golf courses located across the state.

## Golf Courses in Southwest Michigan

Over fifty-three golf courses were identified within the project area. Of those, fourteen were built more than fifty years ago and are listed in the table below.

Extant Golf Courses in the Preserve America Project Area Built between 1900-1940						
Course Name	Municipality	Address	Year Built	Original Designer	Type	Holes
Muskegon Country Club	Muskegon	2801 Lakeshore	1910	Don Ross	Private	18
Spring Lake Country Club	Spring Lake	17496 Fruitport Road	1911	Tom Bendelow	Private	18
Grand Beach Golf Course	Grand Beach	48200 Perkins Blvd	1912	Tom Bendelow	Public	9
Chikaming Country Club	Lakeside	15029 Lakeside Rd	1914	Harvey Collis	Private	18
West Shore Golf Club	Douglas	14 Ferry	1916	George Ferry	Public	18
White Lake Golf Club*	Whitehall	6777 S. Shore	1916	E. E. Roberts	Private	18
Pebble Wood Country Club	Bridgman	9794 Jericho Rd	1923		Public	18
Holland Country Club	Holland	51 Country Club Rd	1925	Redesigned in 1986 by Bruce & Jerry Matthews	Private	18
Glenn Shores	South Haven	7097 Orchard Lake Dr	1926		Public	9
Old Channel Trail - The Woods	Montague	8242 N Old Channel	1926	Robert Bruce Harris	Public	9
Lincoln Golf Club	Muskegon	4907 Whitehall Rd	1927		Semi-Private	18
Ottawa Beach Golf Club	Ottawa Beach		1936			18
Clearbrook	Saugatuck	6494 Clearbrook Drive	1937		Semi-Private	18

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The **Grand Beach Country Club** in Berrien County was developed as part of the Grand Beach resort community established by Floyd Perkins and George Ely. By 1911 forty-eight homes—twenty of them Sears, Roebuck and Company catalog homes—and an eighteen-hole course designed by Thomas Bendelow existed on the site. Jens Jensen is credited with landscaping the golf course and subdivision in the Prairie style in 1919. In 1922 Perkins built the Golfmore Hotel, and nine additional holes were added to bring the total number of holes to twenty-seven. The Great Depression hit the resort hard and the hotel closed in 1933. It reopened as a gambling casino in 1936 and was shut down by Michigan's governor in 1937. In 1939 the Golfmore Hotel burned to the ground and Perkins put the golf course up for sale. A group of Grand Beach property owners collected six thousand dollars to purchase nine holes of the course and donated them to the village.



**Chikaming Golf Club** in Berrien County was established in 1918. In 1911 the residents of the community of Lakeside had organized the Chikaming Country Club and leased the former Pine Lake Resort owned by Clarence Wilkinson for their clubhouse. When the club was incorporated in 1912, the first membership certificate was issued to Jane Addams, the noted social worker from Hull House in Chicago. Addams and a number of her colleagues at Hull House were frequent summer residents of Lakeside. In 1914 the Lakeside Golf Club was formed and Harvey Collis, the golf professional from the Flossmoor Country Club in Flossmoor, Illinois, was hired to design a nine-hole course. In 1918 the Lakeside and Chikaming clubs merged into one, the Chikaming Golf Club. The club purchased the Pine Lake Resort land in 1923 and expanded their holdings by purchasing land from E. K. Warren of the Warren Featherbone Company. An eighteen-hole golf course was laid out and dedicated in 1925. Through the efforts of Lakeside resident O. T. Henkle, vice president and manager of the Union Stockyards and Transit Company in Chicago, a clubhouse was obtained. It was a replica of Shakespeare's birthplace that had been constructed for the International Livestock Exposition held in Chicago in 1924. The Shakespeare House, as it became known, was dismantled and shipped to Lakeside and reconstructed under the supervision of Stanley Fairclough, a local architect that designed a number of English Tudor-inspired homes in the Lakeside community. The golf course has been redesigned by Jerry Matthews.



**Glenn Shores Golf Club** in Allegan County was the vision of developer Lee Chamberlain. The nine-hole course was built as part of the Glenn Shores resort subdivision platted by Chamberlain around 1927. Typical of the period, the clubhouse for the golf course is a converted barn that existed on the property when Chamberlain purchased it. Two original pergolas grace the course. The Glenn Shores subdivision never lived up to its potential, falling victim to the Great



Depression after just a few homes were built. The current owner is John Fines whose father purchased the golf course in 1946. No major alterations have occurred to the course except to renumber holes 5 and 9 and to repair and expand some greens. An addition on the barn was dismantled and the lumber was used to construct a shed. The Glenn Shores Golf Club retains a high degree of its historic integrity and is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.



**West Shore Golf Club** in Douglas was established in 1916 as a nine-hole course. An article in the August 10, 1916, *Saugatuck Commercial Record* announced “We May Have Golf Club” and noted that a group of summer visitors met to discuss the formation of a golf club. Plans included establishing a membership fee of two hundred dollars and borrowing ten thousand dollars to erect buildings and layout a nine-hole course. The course design is attributed to George Ferry. (According to a February 24, 1916, article in the *Commercial Record*, a George B. Ferry served as resident manager of the West Shore Farm owned by George Kingsley.) The course was expanded in 1932 to eighteen holes. It is reported that nine holes have been sold and are being developed for residential use.



The **Old Channel Trail – Woods** golf course in Whitehall was designed by Robert Bruce Harris in 1926. A chain ferry took golfers across White Lake between the Michilinda Beach Lodge and the golf links. Old Channel Trail – Meadows, completed in 1967, was designed by W. Bruce Matthews. In 1995 a third course called the Valley Nine was added. It was designed by Jerry Matthews.

**White Lake Golf Club** was established in 1916 when Judge M. Henry Guerin acquired fifty-eight signatures on a petition in support of its construction. E. E. Roberts was named chair of the club and the group purchased a farm owned by Mrs. George H. Mason. Roberts laid out a nine-hole course, which was opened to the public on July 4, 1917. Roberts served as club president from 1925 to 1949.



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## Miniature Golf

The first known miniature golf course was developed at the estate of James Barber in Pinehurst, North Carolina, in 1916. The course, called Thistle Du, was highlighted in an article in *Country Life in America* magazine in 1920 and caught the interest of an Englishman living in Mexico, Thomas McCulloch Fairborn. In order to build a “green” on Mexico’s sandy soil, Fairborn created a mixture of crushed cottonseed hulls, which he died green to resemble grass. This mixture served as the basis for all miniature golf course greens until after World War II when imitation turf was introduced. Miniature golf first became popular with the American public when Drake Delanoy and John Ledbetter built a course on the rooftop of a skyscraper in the New York City financial district. By 1928 there were over one hundred rooftop miniature golf courses operating throughout New York City.

In 1927 Garnet Carter opened an attraction at Lookout Mountain in Tennessee that included the first miniature golf course to incorporate cartoon-like obstacles based on a fairyland theme. Carter later founded the Fairyland Manufacturing Company and marketed miniature golf franchises under the name of Tom Thumb Golf. By 1930 he had sold three thousand Tom Thumb franchises. (A Tom Thumb course was built near Khardomah Lodge in Grand Haven just east of 13233 Lake Avenue utilizing the dyed crushed cottonseed hulls for the greens that was common for the day) Carter’s idea was copied and many “mom and pop” miniature golf courses were constructed between 1930 and 1970 using local materials and themes. The resulting homemade course obstacles provide a form of folk art unique to an area. A Pennsylvania businessman named Al Lomma improved the miniature golf course in 1955 by incorporating moving obstacles, such as windmills, that required precision timing and brought renewed popularity to the game.

In 1952 Don Clough developed Putt Putt Golf. Meant to turn miniature golf into a competitive sport, Putt Putt eliminated obstacles and created greens that required some skill to maneuver. Clough sold about five hundred Putt Putt franchises across the country but it never reached the potential he had hoped.

While early miniature golf courses were flat, in the 1990s a mountain style course based on a jungle or pirate theme was introduced. This style is still popular today.

### Miniature Golf Resources

- **Captain Mike's Fun Park**, 10975 Red Arrow Highway, Bridgman
- **Fideland Fun Park**, 68099 Phoenix, South Haven. This park is built on land that was once part of Fidelman's Resort, a popular Jewish resort that operated between 1930 and 1960.
- **Yogi Bear Fun Zone**, 10990 U. S. 31 North, Grand Haven
- **Rinaldi's Mini Golf and Ice Cream**, 31 W. Lowell, Pentwater
- **A. J.'s Adventureland**, 8942 North Business 3, Pentwater
- **Jaycees Miniature Golf**, 900 W. Ludington, Ludington

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## Motorcycle Racing

Motorcycles first came on the scene in 1869 when inventors took bicycles and added steam engines to propel them. One of the first in America was the Roper Steam Velocipide. In 1885 Gottlieb Daimler built what many consider to be the first true motorcycle in that a gasoline engine was incorporated into its construction when it was built. The first mass produced motorcycle was put on the market in 1894 and three years later, the first recorded motorcycle race occurred in Surrey, England. The first motorcycle race in America took place in Los Angeles in 1901. Races took place on existing tracks or public roads until 1909 when standardized tracks called "motordomes" were introduced. As motorcycles increased in power, the "hill climb" race became a popular form of motorcycle racing. Hill climbs reached their peak of popularity in the 1920s and declined with the advent of the Great Depression in the 1930s.

### Mount Garfield Motorcycle Hill Climb

5803 Lake Harbor Road, Muskegon

In 1919 Dan D. Raymond opened the Raymond Motor & Cycle Company on Ottawa Street. Raymond organized the Muskegon Motorcycle Club in 1920 and in 1921 leased a nearby sand dune, Mount Garfield, for a motorcycle hill climb. The Muskegon Motorcycle Club purchased Mount Garfield in 1923, the same year that over three thousand spectators attended the climb. The club also purchased a farmhouse, which was converted into a clubhouse, and improved the hill with wooden steps, an observation tower, and clay surfacing. Mount Garfield was the site of the first professional hill climb in America. The Muskegon Motorcycle Club received the National Championship Hill Climb award from the American Motorcycle Association (AMA) in 1929. Though the Great Depression curtailed participation in the popular climb, in 1939

the AMA decided to hold a national hill climb event at Mount Garfield. For the event, a concrete staircase with the name of a sponsor etched in each of the three hundred and thirteen stair slabs was installed. The climb was suspended during World War II but it came back in 1946. A stone monument to the Muskegon Motorcycle Club members that died in World War II was erected at the entrance of the Mount Garfield grounds in 1949. The club also has a two hundred-acre site at 6925 W. 112 in Grant, Michigan, which was named the

Dan Raymond Memorial Park in 1993 to honor its founder. The park contains a 200-foot, sixty-five degree hill known as "The Wall" and a 180-foot hill with a single jump at its base known as "the Dance Floor" because the club used to hold dances on its concrete slab pit area.

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## Parks

### Overview of Park Development

From elaborate displays such as the Hanging Gardens of Babylon to public greens or commons where livestock were allowed to range, parks and open space have been part of the urban landscape since people have been living in a community setting. Modern park design utilizes garden elements taken from a number of historic periods including medieval herb gardens; fifteenth century Italian gardens with their loggias, sweeping staircases, pergolas, and sense of perspective; and the contrast of formal geometric gardens against naturalistic settings popular in the seventeenth century. However, it was the introduction of landscape architecture and the development of ornamental gardening in eighteenth century England that most influenced the design of early parks in the United States. The industrial revolution resulted in the rise of a new wealthy class in Britain who hired landscape architects such as Capability Brown and Humphry Repton to design gardens and pastoral parks for their elaborate estates. The nineteenth century saw the British Empire at its height and new plant specimens were being discovered in foreign lands around the world and sent back to the homeland for exhibit. Specimen planting of exotic plants such as the large leafed castor bean or caladium, the use of topiaries, and bright colored annual plants planted in formal, shaped beds were common.

In America green space was included in the earliest town plans. The town commons, an open field or green where sheep grazed communally, was popular in New England. As people moved west, the idea became more formalized and many towns included a central town square in their plats. Typically civic buildings were built in or around the square and the open space was decorated with trees and plantings. It wasn't until the Industrial Revolution changed the American landscape that the need for planned open spaces in cities became more critical. As young men left farms to take jobs in factories and immigrants poured into America to find a better life, city populations swelled. The long, tedious hours of factory work, the close living conditions of tenement housing, and the polluted air that resulted from unregulated factories made people long for a place in nature where they could relax and breathe fresh air. Oddly, it was the opening of the beautifully landscaped Mount Auburn Cemetery outside of Boston in 1831 that emphasized the need for more urban parks. Designed by horticulturalist Henry A. S. Dearborn, Mount Auburn included nature trails, vista points, and architectural and water features. Soon hundreds of people were taking the streetcar to Mount Auburn Cemetery to hike and picnic. When New York City hired landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead in 1852 to design a Central Park in the city's midst, the sweeping beauty of Olmstead's landscape inspired other cities to invest in public green space and the park movement in America truly began.

American parks can be categorized into four distinct periods and styles of development:

**Pleasure Grounds 1850-1900** - Pleasure Grounds were typically large areas designed to be idealized, romanticized versions of the natural landscape. Popularized by Frederick Law Olmstead, they are characterized by broad sweeps of open meadow fringed by undulating plantings of shrubs and trees that blend to create a mass of greenery that looks like a natural woods. Hillocks were artificially built into the meadows, as were broad ponds and small rippling streams. Paths meandered and curved and typically led to a destination point or object of interest, such as a tower or statue. While tree lined boulevards often led to the pleasure ground, vehicular traffic was typically confined to the outskirts of the park. Pleasure grounds included large areas for picnicking and open areas for outdoor concerts and boats or canoes were provided for relaxing entertainment. Belle Isle in Detroit and Nichols Arboretum in Ann Arbor are good examples of a pleasure ground.

The World's Colombian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893 did much to popularize the idea of the urban park. Daniel Burnham, the head architect of the Exposition's site,

created a “city” in which the buildings blended with the topography to create a classic sense of beauty and unity. It became known as “the White City” and cities and small towns across America soon copied its incorporation of boulevards, neo-classical buildings, and gardens. It was so popular that it inspired a nationwide planning movement known as “The City Beautiful.” The basic principals behind City Beautiful were aimed at creating an aesthetically pleasing urban environment. They included making distinct entry points to the community by using a decorative bridge or gate posts, grouping all civic buildings in one location usually around a public square which contained public art, creating a park system within the community connected by parkways, removing unsightly wires by burying them underground and adding beautifying features such as decorative street lights. By beautifying its downtown a community showed that it had come into its own and prospered and was no longer a rough, frontier town. Typically a group of local citizens would come together as a Civic Improvement Association and work with the city and utilities companies to implement the City Beautiful principles. In the project area, Hackley Park in downtown Muskegon ringed by Richardsonian Romanesque civic buildings is an excellent example of a City Beautiful era park. Other parks such as Central Park and Duncan Park in Grand Haven, Centennial Park in Holland, Lake Bluff Park in Saint Joseph, Stearns Park in Ludington, and portions of McGrath Park in Muskegon all reflect how Michigan towns adapted the City Beautiful to their resources and budgets. Most city park systems can be traced to this period.

**Reform Park 1900-1930** - The reform park was an outgrowth of the late nineteenth century social work movement that evolved to improve the quality of life of children in urban areas by providing green space where they could play. Progressives like Jane Addams in the city of Chicago were the first to advocate for the inclusion of playgrounds in neighborhoods. There was no romanticizing of the landscape with these parks; they were practical and efficient and meant for exercise. Paths were straight and buildings were utilitarian. They were typically geared toward children and provided activities such as wading pools, sandboxes, and crafts. Monroe Park in South Haven (now known as Kid's Korner) was built during this period.

**Recreation Parks 1930-1965** - By the 1930s, the idea that a park should offer recreational facilities was an accepted part of municipal culture. The concept expanded beyond just offering play areas and equipment for children to offering recreational facilities for all ages. These parks included fields for baseball and football, basketball and tennis courts, swimming pools, shuffleboard courts, and chess/checker tables. In larger parks, municipal golf courses were sometimes included. The parks often had band shelters and field houses where indoor events and crafts could take place. Landscaping was minimal and used to provide a shaded grove for picnicking and to delineate the different functions of the park. The vast majority of America’s parks were improved or built during the Great Depression when New Deal federal relief programs were made available to municipalities. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) and the Civil Works Administration (CWA) were the agencies most often associated with city, township and county park development while the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) centered on state park construction. Examples of recreation parks in the project area include Tunnel Park in Holland; McGrath Park, Mona Lake Park, and Pioneer Park in Muskegon; and a small park with tennis courts on Business 31 in Pentwater.

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## Historic City, Township and County Parks

Below are some of the historic parks found within the project area.

### Berrien County



**200 N. Whittaker, New Buffalo**  
Lion's Park

### Weko Beach, Bridgman

Weko Beach was established in the 1930s by the Weber and Kohnlander families, hence the name Weko. The park had a bath house that also housed a popular German restaurant and dance hall in the 1940s.

### Cherry Street Beach, Chikaming Township

E. K. Warren, the owner of the Featherbone Corset Company in Three Oaks, Michigan, who donated two other sites in Berrien County for public use, Warren Woods and Warren Dunes State Park, also donated the land for the Cherry Street Beach to the township in 1922.

### Glenlord Beach, Stevensville

The Glenlord/Ridge Road area was once a popular vacation destination for Italian immigrants that settled in the Chicago suburbs of Cicero and Berwyn. Joseph and Tina Capozio established the La Conca D'Oro Resort on Ridge Road that was popular with Chicago's Sicilian immigrants in the 1930s. Other Italian resorts in the area included Clamar Court, Glenlord Vista, Pisa, Foreani, and Carmaniagni. Though the resorts are gone, the Italian legacy lives on in nearby restaurants like Sanataniello's at 2262 Glenlord Road and Tosi's at 4332 Ridge.

### Lake Bluff Park, Saint Joseph

This park was originally established in 1865. It contains war memorials, art work and statues. Some of the most notable include the Maids of the Mist fountain that was made for the Inter State Industrial Exposition building at the World's Fair in Chicago and the Fireman's Monument, first monument to be electrified, which was created in 1898 by W. Cottrel. Lake Bluff Park acted as the entryway to the city from Lake Michigan beaches and from the railroad depot at the bottom of the bluff. At the turn of the century the park contained a moving staircase which conveyed people to the top of the bluff and to the Whitcomb Hotel.

## Silver Beach, Saint Joseph

In 1880 Logan Drake purchased twenty-two acres of dune land on Lake Michigan in Saint Joseph. He formed a partnership with his brother in law Louis Wallace in 1891. Together they planned the development of a tourist resort, which they called "Silver Beach." It began with a handful of cottages that soon blossomed to eighty. In 1898 August Herring launched a biplane at Silver Beach that flew through the air for about ten seconds, preceding the Wright brothers' flight at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, by five years. Drake and Wallace began offering amusements at their resort when they established steam launch cruises on the Saint Joseph River. Other amusements quickly followed including a bathhouse, boardwalk, dancing pavilion, roller coaster, carousel, bowling alley and other concessions. By the turn of the twentieth century Silver Beach Amusement Park was in full swing and it remained a popular destination until the 1970s. The amusement park has been torn down and a museum commemorating the park is opening. Silver Beach remains one of the most popular beaches in Lower Michigan.



## Jean Klock Park, Benton Harbor

John Nellis Klock donated ninety acres of Lake Michigan dune land to the city of Benton Harbor in 1917 to create a park and bathing beach. Klock was the owner of the Benton Harbor newspaper and was a member of the Benton Harbor



Development Company. The park was given in honor of Klock's daughter, Jean, who died in infancy. The park was improved with entry posts and a brick drive called Grand Boulevard. An allee of cottonwood trees lined the roadway where it passed the beach. The noted landscape architect Jens Jensen was invited to draw up a plan for the park, which he did. Though it was never implemented, the plan can be found in the Bentley Library at the University of Michigan. Today portions of the park are being incorporated into a golf course and housing development.

## Rocky Gap County Park, Benton Township

In 1929 Mrs. Mary Carus and Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Switzer donated land in Benton Township for the creation of a park. The gift was directly tied to the development of automobile tourism in the county. It was given to support the construction of a new county road, North Shore Road, which connected the West Michigan Pike (U.S. 31) to the lakeshore. Mrs. Carus' gift was one thousand two hundred feet of Lake Michigan frontage off Glenn View Boulevard for a beach and park. The park was the county's first use of Covert Act funding for park construction.

## Hagar Township Roadside Park, Hagar Township

Michigan, along with Oregon and New Hampshire, pioneered the establishment of roadside parks in the 1920s to provide rest areas for the growing population of automobile travelers. According to *Carefree Days in West Michigan*, the Michigan Department of Highways worked to enhance the "conveniences of those who travel by motor car" by building and installing



amenities such as picnic tables and stoves and supplying drinking water and toilets along the state's popular tourist highways. The goal of the program was to have a roadside park within a one-hour drive of each other from any point on a state trunk line road. The federal relief programs of the Great Depression, particularly the Works Progress Administration (WPA), enabled the expansion of Michigan's popular roadside parks program. At the request of the public, in 1937 the Department of Transportation was able to almost double the number of picnic tables along Michigan's highways from nine to fifteen hundred tables. The Michigan Highway Department took great care to landscape these roadside parks in an inviting manner so they would appeal to travelers. The rustic architecture of the well shelter at this park is representative of a style developed by the National Park Service for federal and state parks constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression of the 1930s. This park is located on the Blue Star Highway and a similar roadside park with a log shelter is found on the Blue Star Highway north of Saugatuck.

## **Van Buren County**

### **Covert Township Park, Covert Township**

In 1919 the C. J. Monroe and Sons Real Estate Company offered to deed over ten acres of land to Covert Township for a public park if the township would build a passable road to Lake Michigan within one year. The Monroe Company planned to develop the Monroe Park resort subdivision and was concerned about the lack of good roads that could be used by resort residents. Covert Township completed the road on time and land for the park was deeded to the township in 1924. In 1982 sixty-five acres were added to the park.



### **Riverfront Park, South Haven**

At the turn of the century the city of South Haven developed a string of parks along the Black River that were accessed by river launches. The parks typically included a dancing pavilion, a restaurant, picnic grounds and other entertainments and attractions. Riverfront Park was one of these early parks. Other parks included Crescent Park, which opened in 1902, Midway Park (renamed Mooney's Park) 1906, and Oakland Park at the mouth of Black River established in 1871.

### **Monroe Park (Kid's Korner), South Haven**

In August 1925, the South Haven city council approved the purchase of a block of land bounded by Saint Joseph, Monroe, and South Haven streets and J. H. Monroe Boulevard for the creation of a children's park. The initiative had been a project of the special playground committee for the Kiwanis Club. The land was purchased for a little over eight thousand dollars, three thousand dollars less than its estimated value thanks to the assistance of L. G. Monroe.

## **Allegan County**

### **Beery Field, Douglas**

The site has served as a sport field since 1860. It was improved in 1935 through the Works Progress Administration program during the Great Depression. Today, it is home to the Douglas Dutchers, a historic base ball team. According to their website "The Douglas Dutcher were

fashioned after a local club, the Douglas Athletic League, which first played in 1905. In 1996, the Vintage Baseball Association was formed to preserve the historical presentation of America's favorite pastime. The Douglas Dutchers Club has been a member since its inception in 2003."

## Blue Star Highway Memorial Park, Saugatuck

This park was originally built as part of a state roadside park system for automobile travelers that developed by the Michigan State Highway Department in the 1920s. The roadside parks offered picnic tables, water, and stoves and served as rest stops for people driving up the West Michigan Pike to Michigan's northern resorts. The park includes a log picnic shelter constructed in the standard rustic design developed by the National Park Service for national and state parks developed with federal relief funding during the Great Depression. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) built this shelter when the West Michigan Pike (U.S. 31) was realigned and the Saugatuck bypass was constructed in 1937. A similar log well shelter can be found at the Hagar Township Roadside Park in Berrien County. By 1953 Michigan had seventy-five road parks.



This park also contains a Blue Star Memorial Highway marker. The Blue Star Memorial Highway program began in Michigan in 1947 when the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan asked the Michigan legislature to designate U.S. 31 as part of a national garden club memorial effort to honor veterans of the two World Wars. The purpose was to create a living memorial by beautifying the designated roadway with native trees and flowers in a naturalistic style. The park includes what the garden club called an "intermediate" marker sponsored by the Daisyfield Garden Club of Mason, Michigan. It is imbedded in a cairn of square cut stone and displays the signature blue star that mimicked the service flags that hung in the windows of homes with sons or daughters in the armed forces during World War II. The main markers were made of bronze. Eleven original Blue Star Highway markers were placed between Niles and Sault Ste. Marie from 1948 to 1958.



## Cook Park, Saugatuck

Mrs. David Cook, whose husband was a publisher from Chicago, donated the land along the Kalamazoo River in Saugatuck for a park. The Cook's built a summer compound in Saugatuck Township in 1915 and were strong supporters of the Forward Movement Camp (Camp Gray, Presbyterian Camps). The park contains a historic band shelter.

## Pier Cove Park, Ganges Township

In the mid nineteenth century, the village of Pier Cove existed on this site. The village consisted of about twenty families and included a sawmill, a few hotels and commercial buildings, and two three hundred foot piers which were destroyed by storms in the early twentieth century. Pier Cove Park is adjacent to the Orchard House, the Greek Revival style summer home of the renowned landscape architect Ossian C. Simmonds. A native of Grand Rapids, Simmonds designed Chicago's famed Graceland Cemetery in 1881 and Nichols Arboretum at the University of

Michigan in Ann Arbor in 1906. When Simmonds purchased the property on Lake Michigan, it was cutover land devoid of trees. He planted an arboretum across from the cottage to test how different tree species would react to the Midwest climate. After his death, Simmonds ashes were scattered under a large tree in the arboretum. While the arboretum can be accessed by the public and is protected by a land conservancy, its location is not highly publicized and this should be respected.

## Public Square, Saugatuck

The Colonial Revival style Christian Science Society building was designed by architect Howard Cheney in 1925 and borders Saugatuck's public square. The adoption of this style was part of Saugatuck's master plan to create a uniform appearance in order to make itself a more attractive tourist destination. Chicago architect Thomas Eddy Tallmadge, who owned a summer home in Saugatuck, was a strong supporter of the plan and a number buildings were redone in the 1920s to create a sense of consistency. The public square is also a "living memorial" to Saugatuck's veterans' of World War I. The city chose to plant three trees in 1919 in the southeastern portion of the square to honor Charles Freshe, Frank Smith, and Earl Brunner, who had been killed in the war.



## Oval Beach, Saugatuck

In the late 1920s Michigan's State Highway Department announced a plan to create a scenic road system that would encircle the perimeter of the state and provide automobile tourists with access to Lake Michigan dune and beach areas. Little was done on the project until federal relief programs enacted during the Depression provided funding for road projects. During the 1920s and 1930s Michigan's beach access roads typically ended in a large oval that provided a parking area for visitors and a loop road exit. On the state's west side the parking ovals were often referred to as "Sunset Ovals." The city of Saugatuck built their oval in 1936. One of the first "Sunset Ovals" constructed in West Michigan was built at Grand Haven in 1925 when it became the terminus for M-16. Ovals were also constructed in Muskegon in 1927 between Beach Street and the Coast Guard Station at what was then known as Pere Marquette Park.

## Shore Acres Recreation Park, Laketown Township

This park was once part of the estate of Dorr E. Felt, a Chicago businessman that invented a successful, complex calculating machine called the Comptometer. After vacationing in the area, Felt began purchasing land north of Saugatuck in 1919 and by 1925 owned nine hundred acres on the Lake Michigan shore from which he operated a working orchard and fruit farm called Shore Acres Farm. He developed an innovative irrigation system that was activated by the wave action on Lake Michigan and supplemented by a windmill—remnants of it can reportedly be found along the dunes within the park. He even built a dock so that he could ship his fruit directly to the Chicago market. Felt was also involved with dune conservation and planted over three thousand trees, many of them walnut trees, to curtail dune erosion. In 1927 he hired Grand Rapids architect Frederick Allen to design a fireproof residence for the estate (originally Felt and his family lived in the existing farmhouse east of the



mansion). The estate became a summer playground for Felt's Chicago friends and associates containing a tennis court, bathhouse, deer park, small zoo, and a series of skyline drives he constructed along the top of the sand dunes. Felt also built two bathhouses that provided access to the beach, one of which he opened to the public. Felt eventually sold the land to the catholic dioceses and a seminary was constructed on the site between Lake Michigan and the Felt mansion. The seminary later was sold to the State of Michigan and became a prison. It was demolished when Laketown Township took ownership of the land. The park is adjacent to Saugatuck Dunes State Park.

## Shore Park, Saugatuck

Shore Park in Saugatuck was constructed in 1937. The park included eight hundred feet of Lake Michigan frontage and cost a total of thirty-five thousand dollars to build, twelve thousand of which was provided by the Public Works Administration (PWA).

## Wicks Park, Saugatuck

This park was once the site of the shipbuilding yard operated by Captain R. C. Britain and James Elliot. Today it is the launch site for the Saugatuck Chain Ferry. Chain ferries were once a common means of crossing a small body of water. Originally, the ferry was a very simple vessel.



## Ottawa County

### Holland



## Centennial Park, Holland

In 1876 when America celebrated its centennial, a tree planting program was undertaken in Philadelphia in conjunction with the Centennial Exposition held there. The idea became a national trend when President Rutherford B. Hayes planted a centennial tree in the White House garden. In 1876 the city of Holland established its own Centennial Park on land that had been used for an open air market and invited families to plant trees there to commemorate the centennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. According to Arend Visscher in a report to the Michigan Pomological Society, the park "started as a bare strip of sand, not a tree there." The city chose to plant maple trees and a Mr. Dutton offered to provide them for fifty cents. (Trees were also planted in Holland's public school yards and Visscher himself planted a row of about twenty-five trees at his own home, which he and his family referred to as their Centennial Row.) A flagpole was installed in the park 1877. Tenius Tne Houten donated a twenty-foot high fountain of tufa-stone (coral) that was installed on a rise in the center of the park and surrounded by a cast iron fence. A lily pool also of tufa-stone and protected by an iron fence is also found in the park. Lighting was first added in 1884. Comfort stations and a bandstand were added in 1908; the bandstand was demolished in 1937. A number



of the old trees were lost in a windstorm in 1964 and the comfort station was remodeled in 1971 after a fire. In 1985 a Veteran's Memorial was erected in the park.



## Windmill Island, Holland

Holland, Michigan, businessman Carter Brown, with encouragement from the director of the Netherlands Museum, W. Wichters, worked with the Netherlands government to get a two hundred year old windmill transferred to America to honor the connection between the Dutch settlers of Holland, Michigan, and their homeland. The "DeZwaan" windmill was disassembled and shipped to Holland and reassembled in 1964.



## Tunnel Park, Park Township

Lake Shore Drive

Tunnel Park in Holland was created in 1930 and was the first county park constructed in Ottawa County. The county acquired four acres of land through a land exchange with George Getz, a prominent Chicago businessman who had developed a private zoo on his summer estate north of Holland. When Getz decided to open the zoo to the public and it became a popular tourist destination, he wanted a more accessible entrance to the estate. Getz traded two hundred feet of Lake Michigan frontage to the county

in exchange for sixty-six feet at the end of what became Lakewood Boulevard. Lakewood was the name of the Getz estate. The Holland Chamber of Commerce donated fifteen hundred dollars to build a concrete tunnel through a sand dune to enable access to the beach to from the picnic grounds. The Ottawa Road Commission constructed the sixty-foot tunnel, which was eight-foot in width so that a team of horses could enter and grade the floor bed. A one-story frame bath/concession house containing ten changing booths, a shower and a concession room was designed by Carl T. Bowen, county road commissioner engineer, to save architect expenses. Local contractors Arnold Brandenhorst and John Nyland of Holland constructed the park buildings. The park retains its typical 1930s design around a single oval loop drive. When Ottawa County supervisors toured the finished park, they were treated to a ride on an elephant at the adjacent Goetz Farm. According to reports in *Michigan Roads and Airports* on May 1, 1930 and July 3, 1930, Ottawa county commissioners toured the park in 1930, "no little merriment" occurred when four of their members rode an elephant at the adjoining Goetz Zoo.



## Grand Haven

### North Beach Park, Grand Haven

This was the second park constructed by Ottawa County. Under Public Act 90 of 1913 the Board of County Commissioners was designated county park trustees. Only two county parks were created in Ottawa County before 1950, Tunnel Park in 1929 and North Beach Park in 1941.



### Central Park, Grand Haven

Central Park in Grand Haven was established in 1889. Originally, it was the site of the city cemetery but as part of a city beautification project the bodies were exhumed and removed to Lake Forest Cemetery. The site was dedicated as a park in 1889. A fountain that had been removed from the courtyard of W. C. Sheldon's Magnetic Springs Sanitarium after the resort was destroyed by fire in 1889 was placed in the park. In 1913 the Grand Haven Bird Club erected a cement bird feeder in the park.



### Duncan Park, Grand Haven

Martha Duncan donated forty acres on Lake Avenue in memory of her husband, a 46-year resident of Grand Haven. The Grand Haven Women's Club promised to fund the construction of four fieldstone pillars in the park to honor Martha and Robert Duncan for their donation to the city. The construction of pillars was put on hold while Sheldon Avenue was paved. The pillars were designed by a Grand Rapids architect and the construction work was done by Blakenmeier and Spencer of Spring Lake. The pillars were to have electric lights on the top.

### John Kelly Park, Grand Haven

Grand Haven City Hall and John Kelly Park were completed and dedicated on Armistice Day 1934. Half of the funding for the park was obtained through the Federal Highways Program in Michigan as part of the upgrading of U.S. 31. The two-story, brick city hall building was designed by the architect A. D. Campau of Grand Rapids was completed with Civil Works Administration (CWA) funds, one of the earliest of the New Deal federal relief programs.

## Muskegon County

### Muskegon

#### Pere Marquette Park, Muskegon

Lakeshore Drive at Beach Street

The Muskegon Traction and Lighting Company began buying lakefront property in 1890 to provide an attractive terminus with public access to the beach. The area was later developed into Lake Michigan Park that, overtime, included concessions, a dance pavilion, two bathhouses, and a roller coaster. In 1898 a six hundred-seat theater was constructed where residents of the nearby Actor's Colony at Bluffton would put on an annual show. In 1911 a roller rink, bowling alley and shooting gallery were introduced. By 1930 the park had deteriorated and that year the buildings were razed and the land was donated to the city. Just to the north of Lake Michigan Park was 113 acres of land owned by the Pere Marquette Railroad Company who agreed to deed eighty-seven acres north of the channel to the city of Muskegon. In June 1927, the first concrete oval parking lot/drive was completed at Pere Marquette Park. A one hundred thousand dollar Works Progress Administration (WPA) project in 1935 created ore ovals and a new road. The city purchased seventy-five acres from the Meeske estate around 1937 enable a road to be constructed that connected the park to Sherman Boulevard.



**Pioneer Park, Muskegon**  
Scenic Drive

It is unclear when Pioneer Park was established but it was developed by the WPA federal relief program during the Great Depression. According to the park brochure the log lodge that exists on the site was first used as a mess hall for WPA workers and became a community hall once the park was opened. With its old growth trees and classic loop design, this park is an excellent example of a 1930s park maintaining its setting and feeling. A number of historic features including two small concrete bandstands still remain in the park. The park also has tennis courts and a campground.



**McGraft Park, Muskegon**

According to Richard Harms in the book *Life After Lumbering*, the land for McGraft Park was sold to the city for one hundred thousand dollars by Newcomb McGraft in 1894. The money was placed in a trust and used to improve the Muskegon



Lake shore in an effort to attract new businesses to the area. McGraft was a civic leader that served as mayor of Muskegon in 1886. He partnered with L. N. Keating in 1887 to establish the Muskegon, Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad, which operated until 1896 when it merged with the Pennsylvania Railroad. In 1894 McGraft introduced the idea of establishing a bonus fund to encourage new industry to come to Muskegon, a successful venture that brought companies such as Brunswick and the Campbell, Wynant and Cannon forge to the city. The forty-five acres of the park's terrain bordering Ruddiman Creek still retains the naturalistic landscape associated with City Beautiful Movement parks. In 1900 McGraft's daughter, Edith, married the wealthy Clarence Wickham of Manchester, Connecticut, the inventor of the window envelope, whom she met on a trip to Europe. Edith continued to actively participate in McGraft Park's development, providing funds for the construction of the community building. Edith McGrath Wickham set up a trust fund that would benefit the park upon her death in 1960. Funds have been used to build tennis and basketball courts, a baseball diamond, and other facilities related to active sports. The first public tennis courts in Muskegon were constructed in McGraft Park. The Wickham's donated their estate in Manchester to that city for the creation of a park upon their deaths.



## **Richards Park and Veteran's Memorial Park, Muskegon**

Ottawa Street at U.S. 31

In 1924 the chair of the Muskegon Chamber of Commerce, Louis Lunsford, announced plans to develop a park to honor the one hundred and four Muskegon men killed in World War I. Lunsford wanted to develop fifty-five acres of marshland between Muskegon and North Muskegon, an eyesore filled with lumbering debris, into a memorial park with lagoons, curving paths, and statues and dedicate it to Muskegon's veterans. Considered a folly at first, the idea eventually gained support and the Michigan State Highway Department agreed to build a divided highway with parallel bridges over the wetlands if the county paid for any extra expense incurred beyond the cost of a standard bridge design.



After Franklin Roosevelt instituted the New Deal program to combat the Great Depression, funding for the project was accessed through the National Recovery Highway Act, which was used to realign U.S. 31 and improve the Causeway. As part of the beautification project, the State Highway Department built the Ottawa Street Bridge, located on the original route of the West Michigan Pike. The bridge was completed in 1934. Ottawa Street was also widened to provide a forty-foot entrance to the causeway. The \$750,000 project was to serve a dual purpose as a war memorial and as an entrance to

the city of Muskegon for those traveling south along the Scenic Highway. The project included the construction of four bridges at a cost of \$300,000; another \$100,000 was used to create the landscape of lawns and lagoons.

Landscape architect Willard G. Gebhart a native of Hart, Michigan was hired for the project. Gebhart had been working as landscape architect in Washington D.C. where he designed the Arbremont Estate in 1926,



which later became Hillwood, a museum established by Marjorie Merriweather Post. At the completion of the Muskegon project Gebhart was hired by the Michigan State Highway Department to beautify a network of scenic tourist highways around the state's perimeter. A special appropriation from a federal landscaping fund enabled the planting of hundreds of trees along the lagoons of park. Construction on a forty-foot steel beam stringer span northbound bridge began in 1928; the companion southbound bridge was completed in 1931. Work on Veteran's Memorial Park continued over the next three years and the formal dedication was held on Armistice Day, November 11, 1934. The design of the memorial itself was approved by the American Legion and consisted of a fountain and mirror pool encircled by stonewalls. Limestone pillars with bronze plaques listed the names of the one hundred and four World War I veterans who died between 1917 and 1918. Monsieur Rene Weiller, Chicago Consul of the Republic of France, planted several of the two hundred fleur de lis bulbs, which were a gift from France, among the myrtle at the base of the columns.

The Muskegon Causeway project was just one in a series of highway beautification projects undertaken to create a system of scenic shore and inland roads for automobile tourists carrying them to some of the state's most beautiful vacation spots. The first such project was undertaken on U.S. 12 to create a beautified entry road into Michigan from the Indiana State Line to New Buffalo. Other landscape projects had been completed between Lansing and East Lansing and in Saint Ignace, Alpena, and Saginaw. Remnants of the work at Muskegon are still visible at Richards Park.

## Oceana County

### John Gurney Park, Hart

John Gurney Park was donated to the village of Hart in 1912 by a former state senator and his wife to honor their son, Lieutenant John Gurney, who had died at the Battle of Santiago de Cuba during the Spanish American War. In 1914 the Progressive Park Association erected the entrance arch as a memorial. The Pentwater River was dammed in 1925 for the city's new hydroelectric plant. The park was listed in West Michigan tour guides of the 1920s and 1930s as a campground for auto tourists.

### Park, U.S. 31 Business Route (Monroe Road), Pentwater

The small park east of the cemetery retains the setting and feeling of a standard design for a 1930s-era park. The park retains two small Craftsmen style shelters, basketball and tennis courts, and a picnic area.

## Mason County

### Stearns Park, Ludington

The American Legion planted elm trees in the park as a World War I memorial.

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## The Development of Michigan's State Park System

*The freedom of the out-of-doors with its attendant exhilaration of life devoid of every sense of limitation finds its appeal in the heart of every red-blooded person. Only too limited have been the forests, meadows, the lakes and the streams, where the majority of people are given the liberty to enjoy a day or week or month close to nature. The appearance of "No Trespassing" and "Private, Property Keep Out" signs has been a growing one, all tending toward an approaching era of exclusion of the great mass of our residents and visitors from the wonderful recreational advantages offered by the State. . . It should be borne in mind that the park sites established by the State of Michigan are the pleasure grounds for everyone. There is no class distinction. There is no clannish discrimination. They are established and maintained by the people of the State of Michigan for the enjoyment of their friends and themselves.*

The Parks of the People, the Department of Conservation of Michigan.

The State of Michigan first accepted land for the creation of public parks in 1895 when Mackinac Island and Fort Michilimackinac were received from the federal government and placed under the Mackinac Island Park Commission. It wasn't until after the turn of the century with the sudden explosion of automobile travel that occurred after Henry Ford made the automobile affordable for everyman, that it became clear that states needed to set aside recreation land that could be easily accessed and used by the public. The automobile gave travelers a freedom they had rarely experienced before and enabled them to travel long distances to once inaccessible places. At first, there were no hotels or restaurants available to house or feed these pioneering automobile travelers. They typically ended up camping in a farmer's field and purchasing food items from them. At first this was an acceptable arrangement. Travelers brought news and provided interest to farmers in remote regions, but as the number of automobiles increased the sheer number of travelers became a nuisance. Soon "Keep Out" and "Private Property" signs were springing up around the state and trespassing complaints were being lodged with state legislators. The state's leaders soon realized that something had to be done to provide public access to some of the state's most magnificent natural features.

To answer that need, Michigan's state park system was established in 1919 with the passage of Public Act 218, which created the Michigan State Park Commission. The commission's purpose was solely to recommend potential state park sites and acquire lands for state parks. According to an oral history account by Genevieve Gillette, Michigan's first state park was developed at Glen Haven on thirty-two acres donated by D. H. Day of Leelanau County. She believed that D. H. Day had had conversations with Chicagoans visiting resorts in the Traverse City area who told him about Chicago landscape architect Jens Jensen and this work with the conservation group Friends of Our Native Landscapes to create a state park system in Illinois. These conversations inspired Day to donate land for a state park. Shortly after Day made the first donation of parkland to the state, a donor in the Ludington area gave three hundred and fifty acres of dune land north of the city. Carrie Mears of Oceana County followed shortly with donations of land for two parks, Mears State Park and Silver Lake State Park. By March 1921 fourteen locations had been approved for the creation of state parks, including the sites that became Silver Lake, Charles Mears, and Grand Haven State Parks. Also under consideration at the time was a one hundred-acre area between Benton Harbor and Saint Joseph, but it never received final approval.

Improvements on the sites began in June 1921. Only one hundred and fifty thousand dollars had been appropriated for purchasing and improving park sites so the land for Michigan's first state parks typically was acquired through donations made by private individuals. In 1922 the Michigan State Parks Commission was abolished and state parks were placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Conservation. At that time P. J. Hoffmaster, a graduate of the Michigan Agriculture College and an employee of the Detroit Parks and Boulevards Department, was named the first superintendent of Michigan's state parks, a position he held until 1934 when he was named director of the Department of Conservation.

Hoffmaster worked closely with Genevieve Gillette to identify potential sites for Michigan state parks. Gillette had been Hoffmaster's classmate at the Michigan Agricultural College. Upon graduation she had gone to Chicago to work as an assistant for Jens Jensen, and it was there that she learned of his efforts to conserve natural features in the Midwest by proposing that state's adopt a state park system. After returning to Michigan, Gillette spent her personal time visiting sites that Hoffmaster thought would make a good state park location. She put together a team of professors and students from both the Michigan Agricultural College and the University of Michigan that accompanied her. The team worked with Hoffmaster to develop criteria for judging what locations would make the best state parks. The criteria, in order of importance, included:

- **Water.** The site should contain sufficient frontage on a Great Lake. Inclusion of inland lakes and rivers was encouraged.
- **Forests.** The forests should represent the character of the Michigan woodlands and include as much soft wood tree acreage as was possible, though it was noted that most had been depleted by lumbering. Hardwood forests should, at a minimum, be no less than 3,000 acres.
- **Sand Dunes.** A portion of all types of Michigan dunes should be preserved. Hoffmaster noted that "West Michigan sand dunes will surpass all others, both for size and grandeur." In addition to the dunes, they included wetlands and flats to preserve plant life such as the water lotus and migratory birds.
- **Mining Resources.** Certain topographical features related to iron and copper mining and salt brine wells should be preserved
- **Mountains.** Preservation not only of formations that are outstanding, but also those that are characteristic and typical to the state.
- **The Straits and the St. Mary's River.** The distinctive and interesting features connected to the Straits should be protected to provide a place for the public to view the passage of freighters between the eastern and western ports.
- **Historical Places.** Places associated with historical feats or that possessed unusual natural qualities.

In addition to these criteria, Hoffmaster pressed for larger sites of five hundred to fifty thousand acres, which would be less expensive to maintain and would preserve more of Michigan's natural conditions. By 1923-24 he realized the need to acquire more parkland in southern Michigan where the majority of the population was located. "The rapidity by which our water frontages is being acquired, developed and "built up" by private persons and corporations is in turn making such sites almost prohibitive for park purposes."

Three time periods stand out in the development of Michigan's state park system:

- **1919-1930** - Early state park development
- **1933-1943** - The Great Depression during which a massive park development program was undertaken with the aid of federal relief programs such as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Progress Administration (WPA)
- **1944-1970** - The post-World War II years when very little funding was spent on Michigan state parks until the 1960s when a state bond was passed to fund park improvements and legislation was enacted to enable park entrance fees

## Early State Park Development 1919-1933

In the 1920s the construction of buildings and other physical improvements in state parks was minimal. Some sites had originally been municipal or county park sites and some features already existed at the time of donation were simply retained. Other sites were minimally improved often with a bathhouse or picnic shelter and picnic tables. According to the 1921-22 Department of Conservation Biennial Report, a state park was to be a cross between the formality of a city park

and the naturalness of a national park. As much naturalness as possible should be maintained while making the park “useful by putting in roads, sanitary convenience, and other accessories and conveniences for the use of tourists.” Early park development followed the architectural style of the Arts and Crafts movement that was popular for during this period. Park buildings were small, simple, rustic frame structures with exposed rafter ends. Park landscaping followed the romantic style and incorporated stone stairways and paths; twig railings, bridges and furniture; and flower gardens with day lilies and climbing roses. Very few resources from this era remain.

Some of Michigan’s most beautiful and scenic state park sites remained inaccessible to the public due to a lack of good roads. It made little sense for the state to spend money on their improvement until tourists could access them. Therefore in Michigan, the establishment of the state park system and the state trunk line system went hand in hand. This was especially true in West Michigan where strong advocacy organizations such as the West Michigan Tourist Association based in Grand Rapids and the West Michigan Pike Association promoted the development of both good, scenic roads and of state parks that would provide free camping facilities for auto tourists. Most of the earliest paved roads in southwest Michigan were built to encourage tourism and passed by or led directly to one of the new state parks. According to the State Highway Commission Biennial Report for 1927-28:

Good roads, automobiles, and State parks are closely allied as regard their purposes. It would seem then their growth should be somewhat proportional. Why build this great system of roads leading to our lakes, streams, and forests if they cannot be made available? Unless these natural resources are available they are of no benefit and to the general public only publicly owned areas on our lakes and streams will assure the people of permanent access.

The connection was so critical that in 1929 the Michigan legislature passed Public Act 77 which enabled the state highway commission to build state trunk lines to or through state parks or other state property and to build connections between state trunk lines and highways running to, upon, or through state parks and other state-owned property.

## The Depression Era 1933-1941

In 1932 P. J. Hoffmaster noted that the “era of state park acquisition in Michigan is about ended.” The next phase would be the improvement of existing parks through beautification and the addition of amenities. Real development of Michigan’s state parks did not occur until the federal relief programs established by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to counteract the effects of the Depression were implemented in the 1930s. This massive infusion of funds for park development resulted in a golden era for state parks and left a lasting legacy on the nation’s landscape. Throughout the decade, federal relief help to improve fifty-three Michigan state park sites; a dollar of state money was spent for every four dollars of federal funding.

While some early work in state parks was done through relief agencies such as the Works Progress Administration (WPA), Public Works Administration (PWA) and Civil Works Administration (CWA), it was the creation of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) that resulted in an army of labor that allowed states to undertake massive conservation and construction projects. The CCC was composed of young men between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two as well as veterans of World War I. Run much like the military, CCC camps were established regionally throughout the state and young men were put to work clearing timber for fire safety; building roads, bridges and dams; carving out trails; and reforesting barren lands. The labor at some camps CCC camps was specifically dedicated to state park creation and improvement. The National Park Service (NPS) worked closely with the states in the design and construction of state parks that used CCC labor. The NPS developed a rustic architectural style for use in the parks that minimized man’s intrusion on a natural site. NPS published a pictorial book entitled *Park and Recreation Structures* that highlighted good examples of park architecture and features that ranged from amphitheaters to fire rings. The design intent was to minimize the intrusion of

buildings into the landscape by combining two to three functions (bathhouse, store, picnic shelter) into one building. Buildings were designed to look as if they were a part of the natural landscape by blending into the topography and vegetation. Natural materials found locally were used in construction so that resources are unique to their sites. Because labor was abundant, hand construction, craftsmanship, and attention to detail were the hallmark of these resources. A system of one-way vehicular routes and loop roads were designed to minimize the need for informational signage. Landscaping utilized native plants but romanticized the natural environment somewhat through groupings of trees or variation of tree and shrub types. At first the NPS developed the state park plans and drawings for state park buildings, but they quickly transferred the responsibility to designated state architects that adapted the NPS principles to the resources of the state. In Michigan Ralph Herrick and George Page designed most of the early buildings, while Ernest Hartwick, formerly employed by noted Michigan architect Albert Kahn, was responsible for the buildings constructed at the end of the decade.

In 1933 Michigan applied to the National Park Service for a Civilian Conservation Corps camp to be placed at Ludington in order to develop the site as a state park. Ludington Camp SP No. 2, established July 1, 1933, became the first CCC camp in Michigan dedicated to the creation of a state park. It was one of the two premier state park projects both in size and scope, along with J. W. Wells State Park in Menominee County, undertaken in Michigan during this period. Ludington was especially unique for its focus on landscape design and the use of bricks for park buildings.

Another phenomenon related to Depression-era state park development was the reclamation of sub-marginal farmland for park purposes. The creation of Recreational Demonstration Areas at Waterloo in Washtenaw County and Yankee Springs in Barry County was directly tied to social programs to aid poor and disabled children. Outdoor centers, or group camps, were built to provide inner city children with an opportunity to take advantage of the fresh air and become familiar with the natural environment. The recreation areas were built by the National Park Service and later became part of the state park system.

## **Post World War II 1945-1960**

Park construction halted during World War II as materials and labor became impossible to obtain and maintenance took a back seat to the war effort. Even after World War II, Michigan appropriated very little money for state park maintenance or construction. It was during this period that the “rustic architecture” and natural design approach to park development that dominated the 1930s was abandoned in favor of utilitarian, cost effective construction. The lack of improvements and maintenance, coupled with record visits to the parks by baby boomer families throughout the 1950s, put Michigan’s state parks at risk. In the early 1960s, the Automobile Association of America (AAA) published a series of articles that showed Michigan’s state parks had reached a crisis point. Citizens like Genevieve Gillette, who had been deeply involved with the creation of the state park system in the 1920s, quickly responded and encouraged legislators to enable a vote on a \$100 million bond for state park improvement. The bond was approved by a resounding 70 percent margin. The late 1960s saw a new wave of park acquisitions and improvements across the state. The state also established a small entrance fee that helped in the maintenance of the parks.

## **State Parks in the Preserve America Project Area**

There are thirteen state parks within the project area, a testament to the beauty and uniqueness of the sand dunes of the state’s western shore. Below is a short summary of the development of these parks.

# Recreation/Entertainment – State Parks

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State Park	County	Date Established
Charles Mears	Oceana	1920
Silver Lake	Oceana	1920
Grand Haven	Ottawa	1920
Muskegon	Muskegon	1923
Van Buren	Van Buren	1924
Holland	Ottawa	1926
Ludington	Mason	1927
Warren Dunes	Berrien	1930
Warren Woods Natural Area	Berrien	1949
P. J. Hoffmaster	Muskegon	1967
Saugatuck Dunes	Allegan	1971
Grand Mere	Berrien	1973
Duck Lake	Oceana	1974
Van Buren Trail	Van Buren	1994

**Charles Mears State Park** in Pentwater, a sixteen-acre tract with seven hundred feet of Lake Michigan frontage, was acquired as a gift to the state in 1920 from Carrie Mears, daughter of Chicago businessman Charles Mears, to honor her father. Located just two blocks off the Main Street of the village of Pentwater on what was then State Trunk Line 11, in 1921, the village built a sixteen-foot entry road “from the city down to the gravel park drive.” The park boasted views of Big Point Sable lighthouse, the U.S. Life Saving Station, Oceana Beach Resort on the south side of the channel, and one hundred and fifty foot tall sand dunes. It was determined to be desirable only for “bathing” as state foresters were unable to find a variety of tree that would survive in the shifting dune sands. A bathhouse and pavilion, built by the village of Pentwater, already existed on the property when the state acquired it. The twenty-four stall bathhouse was “built by individuals” who each owned their own stall; the state purchased the structure for \$140.00. In 1923 a concrete roadway was constructed and a grass seeding program was initiated to help retain the dune sands. Playground equipment that had been donated by Pentwater’s citizens was installed. Due to a significant increase in park attendance in 1925-26, a number of improvements were made at Mears State Park including the rehabilitation of the bathhouse and the rehabilitation of the old concession building into a caretaker’s headquarters. In 1927 more grass was seeded on the dunes in order to create a campground. The campground is no longer used but its remnants are still visible at the entrance of the park. The original bathhouse was dismantled and a wood frame building on concrete foundation was constructed in 1930. Little more than minor maintenance occurred in the park throughout the years of the Depression and World War II. In 1957 the campground was improved and a toilet/laundry/shower building constructed. In 1959 the state appropriated \$20,500 for the purchase of a thirty-four-acre addition to the park and a master plan for the park’s future development was completed in 1963.

**Silver Lake State Park** (called Dunes State Park in 1922) was established in 1920 when Carrie E. Mears donated twenty-six acres of dune land in honor of her father Charles Mears, a Chicago businessman successful in the lumber industry who was influential in the development of Oceana County. According to the 1921-22 Biennial Report for the Department of Conservation, the thirty-five-acre site located in the “great sand dune region” with its “goodly supply of trees for shade” and “a lake at hand for fishing and boating” brought the “standard of the high in the rank of State Parks.” At the time of the donation there was no road access to the site and the park remained undeveloped until 1925 when a road was constructed along with a well, box toilets and picnic tables. In 1927 the park grounds were improved; deadwood was cleared away, and a temporary park headquarters building, two toilet buildings, and stoves were constructed. No major improvements occurred in the park throughout the Depression and World War II. In 1960 the

campground was extended and eighty-five new camping spaces were added and a new toilet/shower building constructed.

**Grand Haven State Park** was donated to the state by the city of Grand Haven in 1920 and comprised twenty-five acres on Lake Michigan accessed by a concrete road off State Trunk Line 11 and by the interurban line. Early improvements to the park included the completion of a concrete oval drive with three hundred parking spaces. A combination bathhouse/concession building was completed in 1924 and electric lighting was also added to the park. By 1925 attendance at Grand Haven State Park so high that a caretaker lived on site for five and a half months out of the year and an assistant was added in July and August. In 1925-26 the park became the terminus for a major east-west trunk line M-16, also known as the Grand River Road, which began in Detroit. The Department of Transportation improved the concrete oval in the park, extending it to the north and south, doubling the parking capacity. Centrally located flush toilets were also installed. In 1927 the state introduced a pilot program of offering winter sports in Michigan's state parks. Five state parks were included in the initial experiment, Grand Haven, East Tawas, Grayling and two of the Dodge Parks near Detroit. Amateur sports facilities were established in the park such as skating, snowshoeing, and coasting. The Department of Conservation hoped to introduce professional winter sports events into these parks in 1928. In 1927-28 a storage building and playground equipment were added and the sewage system was improved. In 1930, the caretaker's cottage was expanded to seven rooms and the concrete parking oval was again enlarged, this time by ten feet on the lakeside to create a safer pedestrian walkway. In 1937, the city of Grand Haven donated two parcels of land to the park, one parcel was former lighthouse property, bringing the total number of acres to about forty-five. In the 1930s, Depression-era federal relief projects greatly benefited this park. A large improvement project was undertaken in 1937 using Works Progress Administration (WPA) funding. The park's sewer system was hooked up to the city sewer line, sand hills were leveled to create a new campground, and concrete park roads and sidewalks were completed. A modern concrete bath house/concession building in the Art Moderne style was built with Public Works Administration (PWA) funds. In 1946 a combination garage/workshop/office and living quarters were constructed in the park.

**Muskegon State Park.** Thirty-seven acres of dune land on Lake Michigan at Muskegon was accepted by the Michigan State Parks Commission around 1920 with the provision that no improvements would be made on the land for state park purposes until local authorities had built an adequate road leading to the site. In 1923 through a joint effort by the state, Muskegon County, and the cities of Muskegon, Muskegon Heights and North Muskegon, the Muskegon State Park site was expanded to 844 acres. In 1925 the Muskegon County Road Commission used Covert Act funds to build a good road to the new state park. This well landscaped road, which ran from North Muskegon through Muskegon State Park to White Lake, was completed in 1927. Known as the Scenic Highway it acted as a tourist destination in its own right providing vistas of Lake Michigan and its sand dunes. The Boy Scouts, Kiwanis, Rotary Club, and Izaak Walton League, under the supervision of the Muskegon County Agricultural Extension Agent, planted over 20,000 seedlings of White and Norway pines in the northern end of the park. A shelter and toilet building were constructed using slab lumber to create a log look. In 1927 a number of improvements were made to the park including the construction of a residence for the park superintendent, a garage/shop, and a campground containing a combination building. Two log shelter buildings, enclosed on three sides, were constructed from lumber taken from park trees removed during the construction of the Scenic Highway. In 1928 twenty-eight additional acres were purchased near the entrance of the park. To facilitate the management and maintenance of Michigan's state parks, in 1930 the state was divided into thirteen district park districts and Muskegon State Park served as headquarters for District 10. In 1930, an old lumber dock that existed in the park was overhauled and a boathouse, concession, and a new road accessing it were constructed. The boathouse was also to serve as a center for winter sports in the park.

New Deal relief labor was first used in the park in 1931. Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers came from Muskegon and Muskegon Heights to clear deadwood from six hundred acres of the park as part of a fire prevention program. In addition, they removed old slabs and edgings left over from the sawmills that once existed on the shores of Lake Muskegon. In December 1933, a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp was installed in Muskegon State Park. The CCC constructed six campground toilets, built rowboats and picnic tables, cleared eight acres for the construction of a campground, planted 3,000 native trees and shrubs, graded a road to the boat channel, built a lookout block house made out of twelve inch timbers, constructed an group camp building, and installed over 1,400 feet of log parking rail. In 1939-40 the CCC built a bathhouse, a campground toilet/laundry building, and a toboggan slide. Two other federal relief agencies also sponsored work in the park, the Federal Emergency Relief Agency (FERA) and the Civil Works Administration (CWA). In 1941-42 one hundred and sixty acres were added to the park in a land exchange and work continued on making the park a winter sports complex through the addition of a skating rink. By the end of New Deal era (1933-1943) over \$338,380 had been spent in developing Muskegon State Park, more than any other state park in Michigan. In 1946-48, a new ranger residence was built. The group camp building built by the CCC was demolished in 1955 "for health and safety reasons." A beach stairway was constructed in 1955-56 and a garage/shop/office building was built. A campground toilet/laundry/shower building was constructed in 1957-58 and a new picnic area and parking space for 290 cars was completed in 1960. Toilet buildings were constructed at Snug Harbor in 1963 and \$20,000 was appropriated for the construction of a new blockhouse. A new campground was developed in 1969. A fishing pier was constructed in 1973-74 for \$54,000. In 1984 the idea of building a winter sport training site for the Olympics was proposed. While voters rejected the idea of building a ski jump and skating rinks, they did approve the construction of cross country ski trails, a sports complex building (completed in 1990), and a luge run. The luge run, built in 1984 on the site of an old CCC built toboggan run, is one of only four in the nation. The sports complex operates a "learn to slide" program open to the public in hopes of developing new Olympic athletes. Mark Grimette, a 1998 Olympic Bronze Medal Winner and a 2002 Olympic Silver Medal winner, trained on the luge run at Muskegon state Park.

**Van Buren State Park** was established in 1923. The total park acreage consisted of ninety acres. Seventy acres were delinquent tax land while twenty were acquired by Van Buren County and donated to the state for park use. South Haven Township graded the road to the park, the only improvement made in 1923-24. In 1925-26 a series of old logging trails that existed within the park were linked and graded to create a road system. Stoves, wells, toilets and picnic tables were built and a topographical survey completed. In 1927-28 a group camp was completed, one of eight group camps built in the state that year—the first time this type of facility had been built in Michigan. Group camp construction included a main building and two toilet buildings, improvement of the sand road with clay and gravel, and the installation of playground equipment. No major improvements were made to the park in 1930. In 1931 it was noted that the relocation of US 31 had made the park more accessible from the highway. Two hundred and twenty-four acres were added to the park in 1966. An organizational camp was added in 1976.

**Holland State Park** was established in 1926 on the site of the Ottawa Beach Hotel, which had burned. The thirty-three-acre site included two thousand feet of Lake Michigan frontage along the channel to Lake Macatawa. Donated to the state by the Ottawa Beach and the Macatawa Beach Resort companies, the property contained an existing bathhouse. In 1927 a new concrete road and a parking lot were completed and the bathhouse was remodeled to include a store, office, and living quarters for the caretaker. A toilet building, storage building, and playground equipment were also erected and water, sewage and electric lines were laid. In 1929 two lots with cottages were acquired and one of the cottages was moved to the entrance of the park and rehabilitated for a park headquarters. In 1930 the parks' bathhouse was moved to a more central location. During the Depression, Holland State Park benefited from federal relief funding. The WPA made a number of improvements in the park between 1937 and 1938, including the

expansion and electrification of the campground, construction of a concrete road and parking area, and the installation of thousands of feet of galvanized pipe guard rail. PWA funds were used to construct a bathhouse, which was completed in 1939-40. New staff quarters were constructed in 1946-48. Ninety-eight acres were added to the park in 1965.

**Ludington State Park.** According to the papers of Genevieve Gillette, the land that became the basis for Ludington State Park was acquired in 1922 as a direct result of the efforts of Chicago landscape architect Jens Jensen and the Friends of Our Native Landscapes. In 1921, Jensen asked Genevieve Gillette to coordinate a Memorial Day weekend outing for the Friends to visit the Hamlin Lake area. Dr. Lemon, a physicist at Evanston University who owned a summer cottage on Hamlin Lake, volunteered to host the friends. Jensen asked Gillette to find three or four Michigan representatives to attend the outing; Gillette remembers inviting Dr. H. T. Darling and Dr. Bessey from Michigan Agricultural College. The friends took a passenger boat from Chicago and landed at the port in Ludington. From there they took buses to the east side of Hamlin Lake and then motor boats across the lake to a cabin resort on the west side, near Lemon's home. As was common practice, the friends presented a short play (called a masque) that was written by Kenneth Sawyer Goodman. The theme of the Ludington masque was about a faun that lived in a forest. The forest was visited in turn by a timber man, a land looker, and a developer each describing a project that would require destroying the forest. As the faun lay dying of heartbreak at the thought of the destruction of its home, the friends came in a purchased the land and saved it for the faun—and for the future. According to Gillette the play was held at the base of a slope with a small brook or pond separating the seating area from the stage and the sun at the back of the audience. The Friends always assigned influential local people parts in the masque so they were a part of the experience.

The efforts of the Friends of Our Native Landscapes were successful. According to Gillette "by the time we all went on Monday morning, it had been decided that they [the locals] would raid the money in Ludington and buy some land and give it to Michigan for parks." Shortly thereafter, 350 acres of dune land on Lake Michigan were donated to the state. Gillette remembered that she and P. J. Hoffmaster sat in his office "gloating" over the acquisition asking each other "now, what are we going to DO with it? How do you make a state park out of it?"

In the early 1920s, Congressman James McLaughlin submitted a bill that would enable the transfer of over nine hundred acres of government land associated with the Big Point Au Sable Lighthouse north of Ludington to the state of Michigan for use as a state park. The bill was approved as the Hooper McLaughlin Act in February 1926. The land had been open to settlers for over 75 years but when no one ever staked a claim on it, it reverted to the federal government as federal forest land and remained in their hands for almost fifty years. The Hooper McLaughlin Act was considered to be "the first step in the program for a system of state parks extending all along the west shore of Lake Michigan by the park commission and the chamber of commerce." Because the dune land was only accessible by boat from south Hamlin Lake, the new act stipulated that adequate public access to the resource must be created, which enabled the construction of a new "scenic" highway in Mason county north of Ludington to the new park.

Over the next ten years, very few improvements were made to the park. Two local businessmen, C. L. Lind and H. T. Stolberg, worked to get possession of tax delinquent land adjacent to the Big Sable land for the park. In the 1931-32 biennium, the state was able to acquire five adjoining properties that equaled over 2,000 acres bringing the total acreage to 2,991. Funding for the land acquisition came from a number of sources including \$10,000 from the state, \$10,000 from Mason County and \$15,000 in private subscriptions.

According to P. J. Hoffmaster in the Department of Conservation 1931-32 biennial report it was "an excellent tract of park land—a combination of Great Lake and inland lake frontage, river bottom land and river frontage, virgin forest and sand dune. Some of the finer dunes in Michigan are included in this tract." He credited the Mason County Board of Supervisors and the road commission for the transaction.

No improvements had been made in the park until 1933 when Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp (Ludington-Pere Marquette SP-2) was established. Ludington State Park was the first park in Michigan to be developed by the CCC. Raymond H. Wilcox, a nationally known landscape architect, was brought in to supervise the development of the park. Work continued until 1936 when the park was officially opened on August fifteenth. The Beechwood campground, an extensive system of hiking trails, erosion control on the banks of Hamlin Lake and a brick bathhouse were part of the improvements. In the 1950s Ludington citizens organized "Operation Face-Lift" to provide much needed maintenance that had been put off during the World War II years. Over \$328,000 was spent on the development of Ludington State Park between 1933 and 1943.

**Warren Dunes.** Early in the development of Michigan's state park system, it was noted that more parks were needed in southern Michigan where the majority of the state's population was located. In 1926 P. J. Hoffmaster recommended that state park land be found in Berrien County in large part to protect dune land from the rapid subdivision for private homes. He recommended that the state acquire a tract of land between Sawyer and Bridgman that had once been owned by Chicago businessman, Edward K. Warren. Warren was a founding member of the Prairie Club and was a member of the Friends of Our Native Landscapes, a group influential in establishing the Michigan state park system. A lifelong philanthropist and an early conservationist, he helped to pass the first legislation in Michigan that enabled the establishment of philanthropic foundations and reportedly established the state's first foundation, the E. K. Warren Foundation, in 1917. In the late nineteenth century, Warren had purchased land that contained some of Berrien County's most significant natural features including 252 acres with 5,300 feet of Lake Michigan frontage and sand dunes in Lake Township. After his death in 1919 and the site came under the control of the W. K. Warren Foundation and was leased to the state for a state park.

The park was expanded by more than sixteen hundred acres in the 1940s when the first improvements were undertaken around 1945. In 1960 a new toilet/shower building was constructed in the campgrounds, which were extended to include seventy additional camping spaces. Forty-four acres were added in 1966-67.

**P. J. Hoffmaster.** Ninety-six acres was first purchased to honor the first superintendent of state parks in 1964. Twenty-one acres were added in 1965. The campground area was developed in 1969. The E. Genevieve Gillette Nature Center was dedicated in 1975-76. Other improvements included a beach house, park manager and assistant manager residences, an entrance booth and walkways.

**Saugatuck Dunes State Park** was established in 1977 when 549 acres in Lake Town Township was acquired by the Michigan Department of Corrections for a prison. The site included the 1920s estate of Chicago businessman Dorr Felt that had been purchased by the Catholic Church in 1949 and used as the Saint Augustine Seminary. Felt was the inventor of a popular calculator called the Comptometer, which could perform four math functions. He purchased land north of Saugatuck for a summer estate in 1919 and turned it into a working farm called Shorewood Acres. Felt built a brick Neo-Classical style house there in 1925 that later served as the state police office associated with the prison. Forty-four acres of the site were used for the prison, the rest of the land was transferred to the Department of Natural Resources state parks division, including the outbuildings, barn, tennis courts, and farmland associated with the Felt estate. In the 1990s the prison was closed and Lake Town Township purchased the Felt mansion and restored it for community/meeting space. The seminary dormitory buildings that had served as the prison were demolished and the land became part of the state park.

**Grand Mere State Park** was established in 1973. The one thousand-acre site encompasses the sixteen-mile Grand Marais embayment that runs along Lake Michigan. It also includes three inland lakes (South, Middle, and North Lakes) within in the park's boundaries. In the late

nineteenth century, the area was a commercial hunting ground known as Hatch's Woods. A migratory spot for passenger pigeons, the pigeons were hunted and sold to East Coast restaurants as squab. Over hunting soon led to the complete destruction of the flock. In 1887, T. W. Dunham owned the majority of the property that now comprises the park. Dunham operated a sawmill in the late 1860s and then switched to farming planting a peach orchard on the southwestern side of South Lake. From 1900-1912, South Lake served as a commercial cranberry bog that at times employed five hundred pickers. From 1900-1920, North Lake was the site of an icehouse operated by Dunham. Dunham also constructed a pier and a resort on Lake Michigan in 1900. In 1908 Chicago architect Frederick Lindquist and a realtor, James Fox, purchased land and developed the Fox-Lind subdivision, later known as Waver Over Land, and finally as Waverland Beach. In 1965 the Manley Brothers and Peters Company purchased thirty acres and began sand mining at the site. In response, a conservation group, the Grand Mere Association, purchased twenty-two acres at Waverland Beach in 1965 and established the Grand Mere Nature Study Preserve. In 1973 the state created Grand Mere State Park from 393 acres purchased from the Shapiro Estate. The Nature Conservancy sold over 490 acres to the state for the park in 1986.

**Duck Lake State Park.** Five hundred and sixty-one acres were purchased in 1973 for the creation of a new state park.

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## Pleasure Boats

West Michigan has a strong history of ship building, Saugatuck and Grand Haven in particular had successful sailing vessel and steam ship industries, but only a few communities stand out for their pleasure boat industries that relate to the recreation/entertainment theme. A pleasure boat is one that is used for recreation or sport. It is typically motorized and often includes accommodations for long or overnight trips.

### Truscott Boat Manufacturing Company, Saint Joseph

Thomas Truscott came to America from Cornwall, England. After stops in Chicago and Grand Rapids, Michigan, he and his sons started a boatbuilding business in Saint Joseph in 1892. The Truscott Company built the gondolas that were used on the canals of “the White City” built for the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893. By the 1900s Truscott employed over six hundred people and produced wooden row and sailing boats and later steam launches used at Michigan resorts for excursions.

### Boat Building Industry, Holland

Boat building in Holland can be traced to 1835 when the *A.C. Mitchell* was constructed at Waukazoo Woods. Boat building became a significant commercial industry for the area around 1901 when the Wolverine Motor Company moved its marine engine operations to Holland and began building small engines for pleasure boats. The Wolverine Motor Company was founded by Clark Sintz in Grand Rapids circa 1890 to manufacture automobile engines. In 1901 Sintz sold the business to a former customer, Charles Snyder, whom he met when designing a small gauge railway for Snyder's banana plantation in Panama. Snyder established a marine engine division of Wolverine Motor in Holland in 1901. Since then, Holland has been the home of at least thirty boat-building companies. The industry gained footing when the Chris-Craft Company opened a plant in Holland in the 1930s. Some of company's artisans left and started their own firms after World War II in order to experiment with making boats using the new materials developed during the War. As a result, in the 1950s and 1960s Holland became a leader in the design of lightweight, affordable pleasure boats made of plywood or fiberglass. Geoffrey Reynolds, director of the Joint Archives of Holland at Hope College, has identified at least thirty boat companies that have operated in Holland since 1901. Some of the most successful and influential have been:

- **Chris-Craft.** Christopher Columbus Craft established a wooden boat building company in Algonac, Michigan, in 1847 to build duck hunting boats. With the introduction of the small gasoline engine by the automobile industry, Craft began to experiment with the use of the engines as outboard motors on his boats. After World War I, the motorboat gained enormous popularity and Chris-Craft became the world's largest producer of mahogany boats by 1927. A controversy with the union over wages caused the plant to look for a location outside of Algonac when the company was ready to expand. The company purchased twenty-two acres in Holland and spent \$300,000 on a new plant that opened in 1939. During World War II, Chris-Craft built over ten thousand landing launches for the military. In the 1950s Chris Craft began to diversify purchasing companies that made plywood, steel and fiberglass boats. They purchased the Holland-based Roamer Boat Company, manufacturers of steel hull boats, and the Lake 'n Sea fiberglass boat company of Boca Raton, Florida in 1957. By 1959 Chris Craft had established ten factories employing 5,000 workers nationwide; the Holland plant remained its largest. Chris-Craft remained in operation in Holland until 1989. Today the site is an industrial plant and the water tower with the Chris Craft emblem still exists.
- **Beacon Boat Works.** In 1937 Kenneth Campbell established the Campbell Boat Company on the southeastern shore of Lake Macatawa to manufacture sailboats. A former resort hotel building that was used as the company offices still remains on the site.

Campbell, served as a Naval architect for Holland's military boat contracts during World War II. In 1953 Campbell Boat Works was leased to Beacon Boat Works. Beacon built sailboats and in 1954 received a military contract to build wooden mine sweepers for the U.S. Navy for use during the Korean War. The Beacon Boat Works site became the South Shore Marina in 1963. The marina closed in 2003 and the site has become a township park.

- **Slick Craft Boat Company.** Slick Craft was established by Leon R. Slikker in 1955. Slikker, an employee of Chris-Craft from 1946 to 1954, began experimenting with building boats during a strike in 1952 when he partnered with another Chris Craft employee Jason Petroelje to build ten boats. Petroelje went on to found Skipper-Craft boats while Slikker returned to Chris-Craft for two more years. In 1955 he struck out on his own establishing a boat works at 791 Washington Street in Holland. Slikker chose to build boats that were affordable for the working class, at first building boats with hulls of molded plywood and later experimenting with fiberglass. Decks were made of mahogany and chrome was used for the trim. By 1959, the hulls were manufactured at a plant on Sixth Street and sent to the Washington Street plant for finishing. By 1962 Slick Craft boats were completely made of fiberglass, which enabled more experimentation in different hull designs and the growing company moved to larger factory space at 1145 South Washington Avenue. The company first introduced an inboard/outboard motor model in 1963. Slick Craft gained international popularity for its high quality and reasonable prices and by 1967 had opened a new manufacturing facility at 500 East Thirty-Second Street in Holland. Slikker chose to sell the company to the American Machine and Foundry Corporation (AMF) in 1969. He left the company shortly after and began manufacturing fiberglass sailboats under the name S2 Yachts.
- **Jesiek Brothers (Eldean Marina) 2223 S. Shore Drive.** The Jesiek Brothers Boat Yard was established in Holland in 1910 when the company moved from Grand Rapids to a location near Jenison Park on Black Lake. Jesiek Brothers operated a ferry service to the summer resorts around Black Lake. They also built boats, such as the launch they used for their ferry service. After the boat works were destroyed in a fire in 1913, Jesiek Brothers relocated to a site adjacent to the Graham and Morton steam ship docks near Macatawa Park. In 1924 the company wanted to expand their business to include a boat storage facility and purchased eight acres that was once the site of the Lakeside Resort. The site contained the Mary Jane Hotel, which served as an office building for years until it was demolished in 1978. Jesiek Brothers constructed the largest marine railway on Lake Michigan's west coast in 1935 and added a second dock in 1937. A former interurban building was moved to the site in 1942. During World War II, the boat works was leased to the Victory Shipbuilding Company of Chicago, who constructed the first significant naval boat built in Holland for the war effort, a submarine chaser. Jesiek Brothers was purchased by the Eldean family in 1978 and soon after the Eldean family opened the Sandpiper Restaurant.
- **Mac Bay Boat Company.** Established in 1948 the company was an early producer of inexpensive plywood hull boats. The hulls were "ready-made" by a Grand Rapids Company and the Mac Bay Company was reportedly the first company in the United States to add an inboard motor to a pleasure speedboat. The company was first established at 409 West Fourteenth Street and moved to 92 East Seventh Street in 1949.

- **Roamer Boat Company.** Founded by Robert Linn around 1946 after a two-year apprenticeship at the Campbell Boat Works, Linn established a plant on Washington Street in Holland to manufacture steel boat hulls. Roamer was purchased by Chris-Craft in 1956 and the steel boat production was moved to a plant on Lakewood Boulevard. The company began manufacturing its first aluminum boats in 1962 and throughout the 1960s produced the popular *Riviera* model. Production was moved to Pompano, Florida in 1975.

## Barteau Boat Works (Maple Grove Marina), White Lake

Built by Albert Pack, president of Hubbard Steel Foundry in Chicago and owner of the Montague Iron Works, in 1922. The marina provided service to the 1925 Gold Cup races. It was later run by Edward Barteau and Sons and the Wabaningo Class sailboat was produced there.

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## Rise of the West Michigan Resort Industry

### Early Inns 1820-1879

The earliest hotels in Michigan were geared toward settlers or laborers rather than pleasure travelers. As people came west to see what Michigan had to offer in terms of harbors, rivers, forests and farmland, small inns at key population centers were constructed. These inns were typically found along water transportation routes or, after stage travel was introduced, along the three main trails that crossed southern Michigan in the early nineteenth century: the Chicago Road, the Territorial Road and the Grand River Trail. It was typical to have inns located within a short proximity of each other due to the limited distance that could be traveled by horse, wagon or stage in one day. Between 1820 and 1840, these inns were usually built of wood frame construction. They were not large and commonly included a few sleeping rooms and a taproom with a large fireplace where meals could be cooked and served.

After 1840 the completion of the Erie Canal and the construction of railroads across the state brought a wave of immigrants from New England to Michigan. The existing inns proved to be too small to accommodate the vast number of travelers entering the state and larger hotels were built. The larger hotels were typically constructed of brick to reduce fire risk. A good visual example of this trend is the two Walker Taverns that can still be found on the Old Chicago Road (U.S. 12) in Lenawee County. As railroad lines began to be more fully developed in Michigan around the time of the Civil War, hotels were built in towns near railroad passenger stations to accommodate the many travelers that were quick to adopt this fast and efficient mode of transportation. These hotels typically included a dining room in addition to sleeping rooms. Although almost every town had at least one hotel to accommodate visitors, very few of these hotels have survived. Either they burned, were demolished, or were incorporated into other buildings. Early hotels that once existed in the project area include the Forest House built in 1853 in South Haven (the building was reportedly moved to 313 Center Street around 1890 and is still in use as an office building), the St. Charles Hotel in Saint Joseph, which opened in 1866 and later was demolished when the spa-like Whitcomb Hotel was constructed; and the Cutler House in Grand Haven, which opened in 1872.

### Michigan's Resort Era 1880-1940

America saw the rise of a new, wealthy class in the 1870s. Many of its members had profited from the Civil War, others had gambled on industrialization and won by establishing factories to make commonly used goods, while others had taken advantage of the ability to exploit the nation's natural resources through lumbering and mining. The era became known as "the Gilded Age" for the opulent lifestyle that a small number of people were able to pursue. This wealthy class had the time and means to spend the entire summer in leisure pursuits. It became a summer ritual for wealthy families to take a "Grand Tour" of Europe or to spend "the Season" at a large resort hotel to escape the grime, heat and noise of America's growing industrial cities. The first such resorts sprung up in New England along the Atlantic coast in towns such as Newport, Rhode Island, and Bar Harbor, Maine, but they quickly spread to mountains and lakes across the country, including Michigan.

Interest in Michigan's natural beauty and healthful climate for recreational and medical purposes came about in the late nineteenth century in large part due to the construction of railroad lines that made scenic lakeshore areas accessible. Between 1860 and 1870 the number of miles of railroad track in Michigan increased from 779 to 7,243 miles. As railroad lines were completed along Michigan's West coast, travel into the northern Lower Peninsula became relatively simple. The first Michigan vacationers were really adventurers who came north via train for hiking and fishing trips and set up rough tent camps for accommodations. Word spread quickly about the area's beauty and interest in its development potential soon followed. The completion of the

Grand Rapids and Indiana rail line from Cincinnati, Ohio, to Petoskey in 1873 provided the first real access to this scenic area.

In the late nineteenth century it was common for railroad companies, working to encourage use of their expanding rail lines, to partner with private groups and/or local communities to develop destination spots for tourists. To encourage such cooperation, in 1856 the Federal government gave the state of Michigan and the railroad companies over 5 million acres of public land to construct rail lines. A railroad company typically owned between fifteen and forty miles of land on either side of a proposed rail line and was allowed to sell any of the land it did not use along its right of way for money that could then be reinvested in the construction of more rail line. The Bay View resort in Emmett County, considered to be the first of Michigan's west coast summer resort communities, is an example of a resort destination constructed through the encouragement of a railroad company. Built near Petoskey in 1875 by members of Michigan's United Methodist Church on land provided by the Grand Rapids and Indiana railroad, the Methodist Assembly agreed to develop and offer a Chautauqua-style summer meeting camp in return for the site. The railroad hoped that the events offered by the Chautauqua would attract other tourists and lead to the construction of other resorts nearby thus increasing ridership on their rail line. By 1900 over 420 cottages had been completed at Bay View and the terraced, park-like setting soon included three hotels. The construction of a Presbyterian resort, Wequetonsing, at Harbor Springs, followed shortly in 1877, and in 1878 the Harbor Point Association resort was established near Harbor Springs. In the early 1880s the Charlevoix Resort and the Chicago Club were both established at Charlevoix and the Topinabee resort was constructed on the eastern side of the state near Mullett Lake in Cheboygan County. In 1887 the opening of the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, built as a joint project by the Michigan Central and the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroads, brought national attention to Michigan's budding resort industry when William Vanderbilt, the wealthy head of the Michigan Central Railroad, attended the hotel's opening celebration.

Within a few short years, the success of the resorts in northwestern Lower Michigan made it clear that the unique sand dunes, clear waters, and temperate climate made Michigan's west coast the perfect environment for growing a strong resort economy. By 1886 the state's profitable lumber industry was ending since Michigan's once vast forests had been completely cut down. The small communities that had sprung up around the sawmills that dotted Lake Michigan's shoreline and whose commercial viability was based on providing services to loggers, had been in decline for almost a decade. Civic leaders were quick to see the potential in encouraging the resort trade as a means of economic survival as lumber companies closed down operations and left the state. These leaders began acquiring cut over land near scenic areas and platting out resort developments.

In addition to the railroads, the earliest of West Michigan's resorts benefited from the improvement of passenger steamship travel on Lake Michigan. The Goodrich Transit Company began operating the first passenger steamers on the lake in 1856 providing service between Chicago, Milwaukee, Grand Haven, and Muskegon. Excursion and resort passenger travel was greatly enhanced when the company built a special steamer named the *Christopher Columbus* in 1893 to take passengers to the World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago. The steamer was elegantly appointed with electric light, a grand saloon and a promenade deck. It is estimated that over 2 million passengers sailed on the *Christopher Columbus*, which remained in operation until 1933. John Graham and Stanley Morton established a passenger steamer route between Chicago and Saint Joseph and Benton Harbor, Michigan, in 1875 and later expanded their service to Holland and Grand Haven. The original purpose was to transport the region's fruit crop to the Chicago markets. The fruit was typically shipped at night so that delicate fruits like raspberries and strawberries would benefit from traveling during cool evenings, arriving fresh at the market in the early morning when the buyers began their work. Rather than send empty steamers back to Michigan, the Graham and Morton Line began transporting people from Chicago that wished to come to Michigan's lakeshore for the day or weekend. It proved to be the perfect combination. In 1912 the Georgian Bay Line was established on Lake Michigan providing

transport between Chicago and Duluth. The company wintered its boats at Saugatuck until 1924 when it purchased a dock on Sixteenth Street in Holland. The passenger steamers would ply the West Michigan coast stopping at resorts or the small resort towns that were developing along the route to their major destinations.

## Resort Hotels

The resort hotels of the turn of the century were often grand affairs containing over a hundred rooms. The earliest resorts were built specifically for their function, not adapted from other buildings, using the latest styles and materials. The architecture of the resort hotel was eclectic and reflected the detail and intricacies associated with the Queen Anne style that was so popular during the Victorian-era, such as a complex floor plan with towers and turrets. A long porch or veranda that offered a sheltered area to sit and view the lake, and served as a promenade for evening walks and rainy days, was almost always included. The Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island is an excellent example of this style. Built of balloon framing, these massive resorts were prone to fire damage and many burned within ten years of construction. In Michigan, it was typical for a resort to contain one to three large hotel buildings as well as a plat of small lots that could be purchased for the construction of a private summer cottage.

Resort hotels differed from regular hotels in a number of ways. First, they were built to accommodate wealthy families that would settle in for a month or more at time rather than transients staying a single night on their way to somewhere else. To that end, resort hotels were often run on what was known as “the American Plan” which meant that the price included board and three meals a day. Resort hotels were constructed with dining rooms and great halls where people could mingle, play cards or games with other guests, or simply relax in a comfortable chair and read. Resort hotels were expected to provide “amusements” for their guests such as tennis, croquet, and shuffleboard and “entertainment” such as plays and contests put on by guest. Outings to local attractions by rail or boat for picnics and hikes and information on good fishing sites were also important. Typically, families would return year after year to the same resort in order to meet up with friends they had made in previous summers. “Resorters,” as the locals often called them, considered themselves to be “summer people” rather than tourists--residents of the community as indigenous to the locality as the native population.

The Southwest Michigan resort trend began in earnest with the construction of Macatawa Park in Holland in 1881. In the 1870s taking a picnic lunch to Black Lake and organizing large camping parties on the Lake Michigan shore had become a popular leisure pastime. To take advantage of the phenomenon, a group of Holland's citizens joined together as the Macatawa Park Association and purchased land on the south side of the Black River in order to develop a resort. The group was able to change the name of Black Lake to Lake Macatawa, a romanticized version of an Indian name which they thought would be more alluring to tourists. They built three hotels and a number of cottages on the site. The resort was an instant success and in 1884 a fourth hotel was built. The grandest and most elegant of the Macatawa Park hotels, the Hotel Macatawa, was built in 1895. One of the most famous residents of Macatawa Park was Frank Baum, author of the *Wizard of Oz* children's classics.

The success of Macatawa Park led to the development of other resorts around Lake Macatawa. In 1884, W. J. Scott built a small resort adjacent to the east side of Macatawa Park called Scott's Macatawa Grove. It was later purchased by Luman Jenison and renamed Jenison Park. Jenison built a hotel and platted three hundred lots for summer homes and cottages in 1900. The Jenison resort later became the site of a popular amusement park. The West Michigan Park Association, a group of Grand Rapids citizens that included United States Senator William Alden Smith and several officers of



Ottawa Beach Hotel

the Chicago and West Michigan Railroad, established the Ottawa Beach resort on the north side of Holland's Lake Macatawa in 1886. The association purchased a tract of land on Lake Michigan with plans to build a resort hotel, the Ottawa, and a dock for a passenger steamer that the Chicago and West Michigan Railroad would connect with its line in Holland. One hundred and fifty cottage lots were laid out on the dunes overlooking Lake Michigan. A number of common areas or parks were incorporated into the design. Cottage development began at Ottawa Beach in June 1886 and by 1890 twenty cottages had been constructed. Melvin R. Bissell of the Bissell Carpet Sweeper Company of Grand Rapids owned the cottage at 2427 Terrace. In 1885 Colonel Charles Nix, who operated resort hotels in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and in Saint Joseph, Michigan, took over operation of the resort. In 1890, when the passenger steamer was replaced by railroad service from Holland, the Hotel Ottawa became popular with day and weekend visitors. Later acquired by the Pere Marquette Railroad, the hotel was enlarged in 1896 and in 1901 and renamed the Ottawa Beach Hotel. The hotel burned in 1923 and the land was eventually sold to the state of Michigan, which established Holland State Park on the site in 1926.

In 1887 a citizen's improvement association decided an up scale resort hotel should be built in Saint Joseph and commissioned John O. Plank, the designer of the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island, to design it. The Cincinnati, Wabash, and Michigan Railroad donated fourteen acres on Lake Michigan for the project and the Detroit and Cleveland Steamship Company, citizens of Saint Joseph and Benton Harbor, and John Plank himself put up funds for the project. The result was Plank's Tavern one of the largest and grandest of Michigan's resort hotels with a veranda that measured four hundred feet in length and twenty-four feet wide. The resort never reached the success that had been hoped for it. It burned in 1898.

In 1900 a Holland attorney, J. C. Post, and a Judge Everett from Chicago, joined forces to create the Waukazoo Resort in Holland. Everett was able to purchase six hundred acres of land from Hope College for the creation of the resort. Everett used inventive marketing ploys, such as hosting a yacht race from Chicago to Holland, to promote the new resort.

The resort industry in South Haven got its start around the same time period as the Holland resorts when Henry and Ellen Avery moved to the area and built a cottage on North Shore Drive. Friends from Chicago were invited to visit that summer to enjoy the lakeshore. They returned the next summer, inviting their friends, and Ellen Avery quickly saw the potential for starting a resort business in South Haven. In 1883 she built a simple two-story, frame cottage, called the Cottage Vendome, for summer guests. It was so successful that she added a second cottage in 1885. The resort complex became known as the Avery Beach Hotel. (The resort was sold in 1894 and burned in 1905.) Other entrepreneurs followed Mrs. Avery's example and began building resort hotels along North Shore Drive. The first grand scale, resort hotel built in South Haven was constructed by William and Amy Newcome in 1910 and was known as Newcome's Resort. It was three stories and a long veranda. A resort hotel originally built by Barney and Julia Dyckman is still in operation today as a bed and breakfast known as the Last Resort.

By 1915 South Haven's successful resort industry began to see a shift in its clientele. At a time when segregation was common and facilities were restricted by race, religion and/or ethnicity, some South Haven resort owners openly welcomed Jewish guests. Soon Jewish families from Chicago who had visited and enjoyed these resorts were purchasing or constructing resorts themselves. By the mid-1920s North Shore Drive contained over fifty Jewish resort hotels and became known as the "Catskills of the Midwest," a reputation it maintained until the 1960s.



A typical resort hotel, the Biltmore Hotel, in South Haven

The resort business in the Muskegon area also got its start in 1883 when farms in the Lake Harbor area on the southern side of Mona Lake began taking in city tourists. In 1886 J. O. Antisdale built a resort hotel at Lake Harbor. A new owner, E. R. Swett, doubled the hotel's size and added a golf course, stable, and bowling alley. The hotel burned in 1918. Remnants of the resort can still be found in Lake Harbor Park. In 1892 a resort subdivision called Hackley Park was platted near Lake Harbor.

In 1891 entrepreneurs began construction of a large resort hotel in downtown Pentwater called the Valeria Hotel. Financing for the project fluctuated and a new floor was added whenever funds were available. Consequently, the enterprise was not a success and was dubbed the "White Elephant." It never operated as a resort hotel but was instead used for other purposes. The building burned in 1927.

In 1893 an entrepreneur, Isaac Smith, established the foundation for the lucrative resort industry at Union Pier in Berrien County. Smith purchased a 165-acre farm on Marquette Road north of New Buffalo and converted it to a resort in order to attract some of the thousands of visitors that were traveling to Chicago to attend the World's Columbian Exposition. He later built a ten-room main building, ten cottages and a ballroom.

The Ludington area resort era began in earnest with the establishment of the resort community of Epworth Heights to the north of the city in 1894. The Epworth League assembly of Big Rapids, a youth society associated with the Methodist Episcopal Church, struck an agreement with the Citizens Development Company of Ludington and representatives of the Flint & Marquette Railroad. In exchange for 240 acres of land fronting Lake Michigan, the assembly agreed to bring Chautauqua programs to Ludington for a minimum of fifteen years. The assembly constructed a hotel, auditorium, classrooms and an observatory. In 1927 Epworth Heights advertised itself as "a gentile family resort one night from Chicago or Milwaukee by excellent steamers" and "Ideal for a weekend with Entertainment by artists and other local talents." Epworth Heights offered "Protection against the cheap merry-go-round-chute-the-chute and jazz of the average resort," a slap at the attractions being offered by resorts like Jenison Park in Holland. After Epworth Heights was established, resorts began springing up around Hamlin Lake north of Ludington. In 1902 J. S. Stearns built the first resort hotel in downtown Ludington, a concrete block building, with a porch and balcony that ran the length of the building. The Stearns Hotel, though extensively altered over the years, still exists in its original location and operates as a motor inn.

The twentieth century saw a boom in resort hotel construction in communities all along the Lake Michigan shore. While most burned or were demolished, a few still exist. One of the best examples is the Lakeside Inn, Lakeside. The Michilinda Resort at White Lake, though the building has been extensively altered, still retains the setting and feeling of an early resort.

## Resort Associations

Not everyone enjoyed the experience of staying at a large resort hotel, some preferred to purchase a lot and build a summer cottage. As a result a number of resort associations were established throughout West Michigan around the turn of the century. In a resort association, property owners pay a fee to support a governing body that manages the resort's amenities and enforces conditions and restrictions such as housing height, construction materials, etc. The Highland Park Association in Grand Haven was established in 1886 and by 1917 there were over one hundred cottages in the community. It was also common for resort associations to form in order to put restrictions in place that would protect an area from overdevelopment and preserve the natural beauty of the site, as was the case with the Shorewood development established in Saugatuck in 1902. Developers who wanted to ensure that the resorts they were building met a certain standard created some of the resort associations found in West Michigan, as was the case with Palisades Park established c. 1911 in Van Buren County. Some resort associations restricted the type of people that could purchase property there by ethnic or religious association.

According to Clare Gunn in his master's thesis on the evolution of tourism buildings in Michigan, around 1914 a number of resort associations were established because individual small cottage owners did not bring the same monetary advantages to a community that large resort hotels did. Rather than being encouraged and welcomed, cottage owners "often found themselves at odds" with local residents and governments. As an example, Gunn sites a road tax of over one thousand dollars that was assessed on cottage owners at Sylvan Beach near White Lake. At the time of the assessment, the cottage owners complained that no road had ever been built to their cottages and that they accessed their properties via boat. Thus, in order for individual cottage owners to have more political clout with local governments, they organized into associations that would better represent their interests. Gunn states that "on the west side of the state in 1914 from Grand Haven to the tip of the peninsula fifteen resort associations representing 2,500 families were banding together to oppose alleged unjust taxation without representation." (p. 37)

## **Sanitaria, Mineral Baths and Mineral Springs**

Mineral springs have long been thought to have curative powers. One of the most famous of America's mineral springs, Hot Springs, Arkansas, was named a national reserve in 1832 and by the early twentieth century eleven bath houses had been built in the city to give the public access to the warm spring water. In the 1850s Saratoga Springs in New York became a popular destination for its spa resorts and mineral baths and in the 1860s Calistoga Springs in California was established. The city of Mount Clemens on Michigan's east side is credited with being the earliest and best known of Michigan's mineral bath resort towns. Mineral springs were discovered there in the 1860s and the first mineral bath building was constructed in 1873. By the end of the nineteenth century Mount Clemens was known as "Bath City" and had over eleven bathhouses and numerous resort hotels related to the spa industry. Within the project area, the most significant mineral springs finding occurred in 1870 when the Spring Lake Salt Company hit a magnetic mineral spring while drilling for salt. The ensuing rush to build resorts and cottages for those wishing to partake of the water resulted in a boom for the small community. A large resort hotel called the Spring Lake House was built in Spring Lake in 1870.

In the late 1870s Colonel Harry Eastman purchased land in Benton Harbor that contained numerous springs and turned the property into the beautifully landscaped Eastman Springs resort, which he operated until 1920. Eastman Springs were eventually sold to the House of David who marketed the Silver Queen brand mineral water as effective in slowing the aging process. In 1930 the springs became part of the Mary's City of David resort complex. Benton Harbor was also the site of the National Hotel mineral spa.

The popularity of mineral spas and healthful treatments received a boost in 1878 when Dr. John Harvey Kellogg took over the Western Health Reform Institute in Battle Creek, Michigan, that had been established by the Seventh Day Adventists in the 1860s, and renamed it the Battle Creek Sanitarium. He expanded the programs it offered to promote healthy living and eating habits. Kellogg developed new food products such as a new type of granola; Postum, a cereal-based drink to replace coffee; and peanut butter. When the old sanitarium building burned in 1902, Kellogg rebuilt a state of art facility on the site. Kellogg's wellness institute enterprise brought attention for Michigan as a mecca for health treatments and created an interest in the state's spa and mineral baths. Drinking mineral water and soaking in mineral baths became a national craze that lasted from the 1870s until the 1930s.

One of the region's largest mineral spa hotels was built in Saint Joseph. Originally a small hotel known as the St. Charles Hotel built in 1866, it was renamed the Whitcomb Hotel in 1891. In 1905 a sulfur spring was discovered near the hotel and the owner decided to create a mineral bath spa on the site and market the hotel as a health resort. The Whitcomb's close proximity to Chicago paid off and it soon acquired a large clientele. In 1927 a group of local businessmen raised one million dollars in six weeks to construct a new, modern hotel on the site, which opened on May 23, 1908. The firm of Pond, Pond, Martin and Lloyd of Chicago, were chosen as architects. The architects Allen and Irving Pond were Michigan natives, born and raised in Jackson, and were

friends of Jane Addams who frequently vacationed at Lakeside in Berrien County. The new Whitcomb Hotel had 225 rooms, a dance floor, an eight hundred seat dining hall, and a sunken garden. A bathhouse containing sixty tubs was constructed on the site. The Whitcomb quickly became known as one of the finest hotels in Southwest Michigan. The hotel closed in 1966 and became a retirement residence in 1973.

## “Mom and Pop” Farm and Ethnic Resorts

The turn of the century brought a tidal wave of resort development of a different type to Southwest Michigan. While the resorts of the late nineteenth century were large affairs designed for the wealthy and undertaken by business associations, the early twentieth century was marked by the establishment of small scale “mom and pop” establishments and the development of ethnocentric resorts. This phenomenon was the result of the factors outlined below.

In addition to the wealthy leisure class, the Industrial Revolution also created a new middle class comprised of company presidents, administrators, and managers, and a working class of well-paid laborers. Between 1900 and 1930, labor unions worked hard to improve the pay and working conditions of America’s workers and to establish fair labor practices that included shorter working days and vacation time. In 1910 less than thirty percent of America’s male workers received paid vacation leave. While the idea of the eight-hour workday first surfaced around 1888, it was violently opposed by many business owners and was not widely instituted until the United States Supreme Court upheld it in a 1917 decision. It wasn’t until the 1940s that the forty-hour work week and a week of paid vacation became the standard for America’s workers. Studies show that only about 25 percent of union workers received a paid vacation in 1940. This dramatically increased to 92 percent by 1957. While the middle and working classes could not afford to spend an entire “Season” at an elegant resort hotel, a working husband could afford to send his wife and children to a small, nearby resort for a week or two and join them there on the weekends. The Grand Beach community in Berrien County used its close location to Chicago as a marketing tool, advertising that it was a short auto or rail trip to the city that could easily be made in the evenings or weekends by working fathers.

The completion of a north-south rail line by the Central and West Michigan Railroad from Chicago to Petoskey in 1894 really opened up the state’s west coast to tourism. In 1904 the Central and West Michigan Railroad merged with two other railways to form the Pere Marquette Railway, becoming Michigan’s largest railroad company. The Pere Marquette had a large marketing division, which promoted the resort communities along its rail line. In June 1904 the Pere Marquette Railroad introduced the first *Resort Special*, a train that ran from Chicago to Bay View stopping at almost all of the small resort communities along Lake Michigan’s eastern shore. The train ran from late June to early September and at its peak in the 1930s offered four trains a day.

The introduction of the automobile and the advancement of the Good Roads movement in West Michigan resulted in an even more dramatic change to Michigan’s tourism industry. When Henry Ford made the automobile affordable for the workingman in 1908, civic leaders in communities all along Michigan’s west coast recognized the need to create a well-marked, continuous system of hard surface roads that would make it easy for vacationers traveling from Chicago to reach the resort communities on Lake Michigan. The automobile changed how people vacationed. The middle and lower classes that could not afford to take off work for the summer “season” to stay at a resort were now able to travel for their vacations or for long holiday weekends. Since it was a short and inexpensive drive, the proximity of Southwest Michigan to the city of Chicago made it the ideal resort location for middle class workers and laborers. As a result, a new type of resort developed—small “mom and pop” resorts that catered to working class vacationers. These early resorts often started out as farms. As automobile travelers drove out from Chicago into the countryside they often needed a place to camp for the evening. Farmers were willing to let them stay under trees in an orchard or in an out of the way corner of a field. When a family returned the next year, for a small fee the farmer would rent them a room in the house. As the numbers of automobile travelers increased dramatically after the introduction of the mass-produced Model T,

some farmers began to see that renting rooms to travelers might be more financially lucrative than farming. Many of these farmers were immigrants who had been recruited to try their hand at farming cutover timberlands in the state. They had little farming experience but were driven by the dream of owning their own land, which they had not been able to do in Europe. Unknowingly they had purchased farms where the land was sub-marginal—sandy and infertile—and would never have been good for farming. These farms became known as “blue sky farms” and many were simply abandoned after a few years of poor crop production. The more enterprising of these immigrant farmers saw that city people enjoyed participating in farm activities as part of their vacation experience. Picking fruit and vegetables and canning it or tending farm animals was all part of the fun. This type of partnership was advantageous for both parties. Over time some of the “blue sky” farmers shifted their focus and became full-time resort operators. At first they simply converted the farmhouse to serve as a boarding house for summer visitors. Sometimes the farm family would move into tents for the summer and rent the whole house to tourists. As farmer resort operators built up capital, they constructed resort buildings that accommodated vacationers that would stay a week or two at time. A resort building was typically a two-story frame structure containing sleeping rooms, modern shared bathrooms, a lounge and a central dining hall. As business grew, stand-alone cottages were often added to the landscape. These small resorts most often relied on public access to beaches, parks, golf courses, fishing areas, etc. for their guests’ entertainment and did not build the elaborate recreation facilities that could be found at larger resorts.

Another aspect of mom and pop resort development was the segregation of vacationers by ethnic class. It is important to remember that the West Michigan resort industry developed at a time when the United States was experiencing mass immigration from Germany and Eastern Europe. Many of these immigrants settled in Chicago and it was understandable for people to want to vacation with their families, friends, and neighbors at a resort where their native language was spoken and the cultural practices and sources of entertainment were familiar to them. Food preparation was also a key factor in the segregation of resort communities. For example, Jewish visitors might require a kosher kitchen and resorts soon developed that catered specifically to that special need. As the populations of ethnic visitors increased, not only individual resorts but whole areas became known as a place where an Italian, Greek, Slovak, or Swedish clientele would feel welcome. This was especially true in Berrien County, the resort area that was the shortest drive from Chicago, where every community seemed to have an ethnic affiliation. Grand Beach was associated with Chicago’s Irish Catholic community and was the location where Chicago’s mayor Richard Daley’s family built a summer home. (The Daley family still has homes in the community). The Union Pier area became the place of choice for Czech and other Eastern Europeans and after World War II a large Lithuanian population. Harbert was the chosen site of Swedes, whose children attended the nearby Swedish Lutheran Bethany Beach camp, while Benton Harbor and Hagar Township saw a large number of Greek visitors. The Glenlord Road area near Stevensville was preferred by an Italian population.

Less understandable by today’s standards was the practice of restricting a resort to exclude religious or ethnic groups. It was common practice for some resort owners to place a sign in the window that read “Gentiles Only” and not allow members of the Jewish faith to stay there. Other times the prejudice was more subtly enacted; potential patrons that appeared to be Jewish were simply told that the resort was full. In reaction to the restrictions imposed by some resort operators, a number of Jewish farmers and businessmen created resorts that catered strictly to Jewish visitors. The North Shore Drive area in South Haven became a favorite area for Jewish resort owners and by the 1930s there were over fifty Jewish resorts in the area. Food preparation and keeping a kosher kitchen were important factors for some Jewish tourists. Mary’s City of David, a vegetarian community, built a number of tourist cabins that were predominately visited by Jewish residents from Chicago. A synagogue was built on the site in the 1930s.

African Americans have long encountered exclusion and prejudice when they traveled and many resorts and hotels were not open to them. When African Americans traveled prior to World War II it was typical for them to stay with relatives or acquaintances since few white hotels would accept

African American patrons. According to a report in the 1950 *Negro Digest* by Horace Sutton, black entertainers traveling a circuit would learn which hotels accepted African Americans and the information was then passed by word of mouth. In 1937 a travel guide called *The Negro Motorist Green Book* was published and listed hotels and tourist homes that welcomed African Americans. Michigan was unique in that a major African American resort community had been established in Lake County around 1915. Known as Idlewild, it became a resort destination for African Americans across the nation thanks to the writings of W. E. B. DuBois who owned a summer home there. Idlewild later became a stop on the black entertainment circuit and some of America's most respected African American musicians and entertainers performed there each summer between 1920 to 1970. Within the *Preserve America* project area William and Birdie Thorton purchased a farm near South Haven in 1932, which later became Thorton's Resort for African Americans. It operated until World War II and the property was eventually sold to the state for the construction of M-140 in 1950. The Oceana County Historical Society's Sesquicentennial publication includes information on the Val Du Lakes Farm Resort, located in Golden Township, which was operated by African American's Lila and David Duncan in the 1940s. In the 1960s the Gordon Beach Inn in Union Pier was popular with African Americans.

The mom and pop resorts established at the turn of the century flourished until the 1960s when a number of factors combined to cause their demise. Most importantly, immigrant families became established and more prosperous and able to purchase homes in the suburbs surrounding Chicago. They no longer needed to drive to Michigan to escape the city's grime and heat. The advent of commercial air travel after World War II also changed how people vacationed. As immigrant families became more prosperous they could afford to travel farther to more exotic places. Many of the difficult political and social conditions that had existed in their homelands when they immigrated to America were alleviated after World War II and by the 1960s immigrants were returning to their homelands for their vacations to visit with family and friends that they had left behind. The children of immigrants that were born and/or raised in America wanted to assimilate into American society rather than segregate themselves as their parents had and had no wish to return to the ethno-centered resorts that their parents frequented. The social revolution that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s blurred the lines between gender, race, and class and brought an end to the need for segregated resorts. By the 1970s, many of the old mom and pop resorts had closed and were converted to apartments or demolished.

## Resort Subdivisions 1927-1929

By the end of the 1920s, the newness and excitement of automobile travel had begun to wane and the expanding middle class looked for a new vacation experience. In the prosperous 1920s, more and more people could afford to purchase a second home away from the city in a scenic spot. Work habits had also changed and more women were working and families could no longer spend weeks at a resort during the summer, they were limited to weekends and vacation days. With people looking for a new vacation experience, real estate developers from both Chicago and West Michigan hit on an idea to entice tourists to West Michigan communities--the resort subdivision. According to the May 1928 Resort Edition of the *Michigan Property Owner* magazine "The next improvement in Michigan services to summer vacationers will be in the real estate field. The long automobile tour was a vacation in its day of novelty, but today the only way to find rest and pleasure is to settle down somewhere for a week or two . . . "

A survey conducted by Michigan realtors in 1928 showed that in 1925, 1926 and 1927 there was an increase of 20-25 percent annually in summer home construction in West Michigan. Another contributing factor was that within a five-year period, between 1921 and 1926, developers had overbuilt in the suburbs surrounding Chicago. Enough homes had been constructed to meet the demands of the market for the next fifteen years. As a result Chicago developers began to look to Southwest Michigan where some of Michigan's most scenic land along Lake Michigan—even in prominent resort areas such as South Haven and Ludington—was still undeveloped because it was only accessible by foot. These realtors understood that prospective buyers from Chicago would pay for a private vacation home that required minimum upkeep and maintenance.

According to the *Michigan Property Owner*

A realtor no longer offers his city client a piece of wild land for a summer house site but instead provides his subdivision with all the comforts and conveniences . . . The sand pit at the 9<sup>th</sup> green, a trout stream overhanging with blackberry briars, an all night dancing party and a partner in bridge who can't tell the 3 spot of diamonds from the queen of spades have become the height of hardship for 1928.

According to Lawrence Sheridan, a developer from Indiana, there were three types of summer resorts being constructed in the late 1920s: a single lodge building built on a large area of undeveloped land used for hunting and/or recreation purposes, summer camps for boys and girls, and summer home resort subdivisions. "Preservation of the natural scenery," "beautiful views and attractive approaches" were important, as was the "character" of surrounding development—"no unsightly shacks or noisy concessions." Resort subdivisions should be located near permanent communities that could offer entertainment and near good fishing areas and beaches. A good resort subdivision was easily accessible by boat, train or automobile. The resort subdivisions of the late 1920s differed from cottage resort associations of the late nineteenth century in that they offered an infrastructure equal to that of a city neighborhood that included hard surface streets, water and sewer systems and electric lighting. Sheridan noted that "The advent of resort subdivision c 1927 completely reinvented what a "lake cabin" would be like. Homes were of more permanent construction than the cedar post foundation, unfinished interiors of the earlier cabins." The homes in a modern resort subdivision had stone or concrete block foundations and plastered interiors as well as a source of heat, most typically a fireplace, as they would be used year round. Developers also realized that resort property owners would want to rent their properties out when they were not using them.

In Michigan, the earliest of the modern resort subdivisions included the two thousand-acre tract of 120 country estates at Glen Lake, known as Day Forest Estates; Crystal Downs north of Frankfort in Benzie County which opened in 1927 and included an English style clubhouse and cabins patterned after Swiss chalets designed by Grand Rapids architect Alexander McColl; and Boulder Park in Charlevoix by the architect Earl A. Young. These early resort subdivisions were soon followed by Houghton Lake Forests, a community of log structures, and Eden Shores at Torch Lake with its "log effect" cabins erected by the Ewing-Granger Company of Lansing.

The first planned resort subdivision to be built in the Preserve America project area was Miami Park in Casco Township in 1926. It was to be built on North Shore Drive, on what was then known as the South Haven plains, by the Miami Park Realty Company of Chicago. Jay Hadesman, president of the company, envisioned Miami Park as a suburb of Chicago—in Michigan. His dream was to establish a commuter airline that would make the commute to Chicago in about thirty minutes. In 1928 he negotiated with the Price Aerial Service Company of Chicago to establish daily flights between an airfield reportedly under construction at Miami Park and downtown Chicago. Hadesman platted small 500 by 100 foot lots, and contracted with local farmers to create roadbeds for the proposed concrete streets that were to be lined with electric street lights. Hadesman rented buses to bring prospective buyers out from Chicago to the Miami Park site for the day. According to an article in the 1928 resort issue of the *Michigan Property Owner*, hundreds of lots had been sold in the Miami Park subdivision and Hadesman was planning a third addition. Miami Park offered housing in styles other than the traditional "American Colonial" which was popular for summer homes at the time. Instead, Miami Park houses were to be of "a distinctly Spanish type" or in an "Italian style" of architecture that "strike the eye of the observer as quite in harmony with the open summy surroundings." The subdivision was to include a city park, an eighteen-hole golf course, and an outdoor gym on the beach. The *Michigan Property Owner* article stated that members of the



Chicago Civic Opera compared the buildings and climate at Miami Park to that of Santa Monica, California. The opera had reportedly established a summer training quarters there and “many unique ballet dances were devised on the beach.” Many of these claims seem to have been advertising hype as the roads are still dirt and only a handful of homes were ever built in the subdivision. The stock market crash in 1929 ended the Miami Park dream. Most lots sat idle until after World War II when they were replatted to meet modern size standards.

Other resort subdivisions under construction between 1927 and 1929 were:

- **Mount Pleasant Lakeshore, Casco Township.** Originally established in 1924 as the Workmen’s Circle Lakeshore subdivision, the resort was built for Jewish families whose children attended the adjacent summer camp, Camp Kinderland, sponsored by the Jewish socialist organization, the Workmen’s Circle. Further developments were made by the Mount Pleasant Lake Shore Development Company of Chicago (2538 W. Division St.). The company built its own electric plant, the Mount Pleasant Light and Power Company, which it later sold to Consumer’s Energy. By 1928 thirty homes had been completed in the subdivision. According to the *Michigan Property Owner*, resort subdivisions such as Mount Pleasant were “responsible for the rapid spread of electric light and telephone lines into many sections of Michigan which were considered way out in the woods a few years ago.” Mount Pleasant included a small grocery store that sold locally grown produce. City bus service to South Haven was available on the weekends. A significant feature of the subdivision was a “budke,” the Russian word for a small rest house, built at the top of the stairway to the beach. It has been demolished.
- **Grand Haven Beach, Grand Haven.** Harold Worm was a developer from East Grand Rapids that had built a number of Tudor inspired homes in the Woodcliff subdivision on Reed’s Lake. He began buying land near the Lake Michigan shore in Grand Haven during the nineteenth century and eventually owned three miles of dune land that extended from the Grand Haven Pier to what is today the boundary of Hoffmaster State Park. In 1927 he was able to purchase lakefront property north of Grand Haven that had belonged to Orphie Otto of the Long Beach Development Company, which had created the resort community of Michiana in Berrien County, when Otto began having financial trouble. Worm built a Tudor Revival-style cottage for his own use on the property along what later became North Shore Road (18889 North Shore). In 1929 he platted the Grand Haven Beach Subdivision and managed to survive the Great Depression by continuing to build and forming a syndicate with family members and by selling land to Construction Aggregates for sand mining. Worm built a small replica of his own Tudor house to serve as his real estate office. It was later moved a short distance and became part of a popular club during Prohibition called the Cabana Colony Club. Worm also built a Tudor-inspired cottage at 19199 North Shore. Today the subdivision is known as North Shore Estates.
- **Holcomb Hills, Grand Haven.** Platted in 1928, this subdivision encompassed a tract of two hundred homes to the south of Grand Haven and was developed by Grand Haven realtor Fred C. McCrea. Holcomb Hills connected to an existing resort established in the late nineteenth century, Highland Park, and included concrete roads and homes of “a very high type.”
- **Glenn Shores, Casco Township.** Glenn Shores was to be a “highly restricted” subdivision built by developer Lee Chamberlain of Grand Rapids. Chamberlain purchased farmland that had originally belonged to Christopher Smith. Chamberlain constructed a nine-hole golf course (which he intended to expand to eighteen holes),



converted the existing Smith barn into a clubhouse, and laid out the streets and planted street trees for shade. He moved the old Smith home to a site on Lake Michigan and added two wings with the intent of creating a restaurant. However, due to the stock market crash of 1929 and the Depression that followed, very few homes were actually built in the subdivision. The Smith home was purchased in 1938 by a golf supply salesperson, Bill Bounds. The Glenn Shore Golf Club was still in operation in 2008 (though up for sale) and retains much of its historic integrity.

- **Sunset Shores, Casco Township** was a 1927 subdivision of all-season homes built by Hardt and Clark, developers from South Haven.
- **South Haven Highlands**, established in 1927 by Isaac Newman of Newman-Sneider Realty Company of Chicago, was a resort subdivision whose bungalows were to be built as all season residences rather than just summer homes. Newman intended to build a large hotel and bathhouse to take advantage of mineral springs near the South Haven Country Club.
- **Marquette Woods**, Stevensville in Berrien County was platted in 1927.
- **Grand Haven Beach** was inaccessible until developers Worm and Vercoem of Grand Rapids built a concrete road to the area and constructed the first subdivision north of the Grand River, across from Highland Park, in 1928.
- **Eaglecrest Park** was reportedly developed by John Arendshorst of Holland on North Black Lake. According to a report in the *Michigan Property Owner* “It had one of the most interesting systems of concrete drives ever built in the dunes.” Footbridges were constructed over ravines to enable residents to walk to neighboring homes, and steps and an observation platform were built to the beach.
- **Idlewood Beach, Park Township**. The Idlewood Beach resort located to the north of the Ottawa Beach Resort, was built by Isaac Kouw, a leading west Michigan developer from Holland.

Most of the resort subdivisions were never full developed as funding dried up during the Great Depression.

## The Rise of Auto Touring

The earliest automobiles were considered playthings that only the rich could afford, but Henry Ford changed that when the Ford Motor Company released the Model T in 1908. With the introduction of the assembly line at Ford's Highland Park factory in 1914, the Ford Motor Company was able to mass-produce its automobile—300,000 in one year—and further reduce the purchase price. As a result, the automobile quickly became the preferred mode of transportation in America, and taking a Sunday drive became one of the most popular forms of entertainment for the working and middle class.

## Auto Camps

As roads improved and Americans indulged their wanderlust by taking longer drives, they often found themselves camping out at the end of the day, either inside their new automobile, or beside it in a tent. Often these makeshift camps were made on private land. In the earliest days of the automobile, farmers were happy to share a corner of their land with a solitary traveler. But as the number of automobiles in the state dramatically increased and more and more travelers hit the road, the makeshift camps became a public nuisance. Communities near popular natural features such as lakes and rivers complained about trash and sanitation problems associated with the

makeshift camps and local citizens complained about trespassers on private land. A number of actions were taken in response to this growing problem.

At the state level, the Michigan legislature authorized the creation of the Michigan State Park Commission in 1919 to lay the groundwork for the establishment of a state park system to preserve the state's best natural features and to provide public access to them. A central feature of the new state parks was to be the development of free public campgrounds. Four state park locations in Southwest Michigan were accepted by the State Park Commission in 1921 as part of the list of the first state parks to be established: Charles Mears, Silver Lake, Grand Haven, and Muskegon. Muskegon had been accepted with the caveat that no development of the park would occur until a road could be constructed from the city of Muskegon to the park. A fifth park site had been proposed at Benton Harbor but was not accepted.

Private organizations that promoted good roads, and tourist associations looking to jumpstart economic development of an area through tourism, also took an interest in building free standardized, public auto camps. The Michigan Tourist and Resort Association, established in Grand Rapids in 1917 to promote West Michigan, proposed developing a series of auto camps along the West Michigan Pike that could be accessed within a short day's drive from each other. The camps were to be based on the same principles of quality, construction and service that Fred Harvey had developed for the lodging and restaurants built by the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway to open the western states to tourism. The Michigan Tourist and Resort Association plan called for five free municipal camps to be constructed along the West Michigan Pike in 1920, including camps at St. Joseph and Holland. Auto camps of the 1920s typically provided only the basics: clean drinking water and restroom facilities and an open grassy area under a canopy of large trees, where a tent could be pitched next to the driver's automobile. They sometimes offered fire pits for cooking.

In 1922 the Automobile Association of America called for more automobile camps to be constructed in Michigan. They believed Michigan had a "national advantage to become the greatest tourist state in the country" if a strong infrastructure of good roads and auto camps were constructed to entice visitor's to the state. By 1923 auto camping had become a national phenomenon and the Detroit Automobile Association estimated there were three hundred free tourist camps in Michigan—"some delightful places in which to pitch a tent," others merely "adjuncts to stores, gasoline stations or alleged soft drink parlors."

Throughout the 1920s auto camps began appearing up and down Michigan's West coast. According to the *West Michigan Vacation Directory*, in 1924 free tourist camps were in operation at Dunes Park (North Muskegon), Dunes Park (Silver Lake), Charles Mears State Park (Pentwater), and Grand Haven State Park. There were also free auto camps established in Benton Harbor (Burton Oil), Montague, Muskegon (on the shores of Mona Lake), New Buffalo, Saugatuck, and South Haven. A camp at Saint Joseph was privately owned but city regulated and offered cottages and a \$2.50 lunch to travelers. A tourist camp, known as John Gurney Park, was already in existence in 1924 at Hart on the banks of the Pentwater River. The river was dammed in 1925 for a hydroelectric plant, creating a recreational lake. A state camp was then added on the north side of the lake in the vicinity of State Road. The remnants of an early auto camp can be found in Muskegon at Hidden Cove Park near the intersection of US 31 and Airline Drive. A circa 1920 bridge and the open space and large trees of the campground landscape still exist.

In 1927 the Castenholtz Tourist Park existed across from the Lincoln Hills Golf Club in Oceana County on what is now the site of the Michigan's Adventure theme park. The 1931 *West Michigan Vacation Directory* shows that an automobile camp had been developed at Hall Park in Benton Harbor (Main at First) and that the Central Auto Camp was located on US-12 near the municipal beach in St. Joseph. Municipally owned auto camps were in operation in Holland and Muskegon, and auto campsites had been built at Shelby, Spring Lake and at Whitehall on White Lake at the

southwest corner of the city. A tourist camp is also shown in Ludington to the northwest of the Stearns Hotel.

Auto camps continued to be popular throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s. However, the idea of free municipal camps began to lose favor as unsavory characters began staying at the camps on a permanent basis. Sometimes regulations were introduced limiting the amount of time people could stay at a camp. In other places the municipal camps gave way to privately owned camps that charged a small fee for better services and amenities.

The poverty of the Depression did not stop people from traveling but it did cause people to look for ways to take inexpensive trips closer to home. In the 1930s, Franklin Delano Roosevelt instituted a number of federal relief programs under the New Deal to counteract the effects of the Depression. The purpose of these programs was to build America's infrastructure: roads, bridges, dams, waterworks, sewers and sanitation, schools, public buildings, parks and even housing. It was during this decade (1933-1943) that Michigan's state parks saw their most significant development. Two New Deal programs, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA), were primarily responsible for park development. The CCC typically worked at the state park and state forest level while the WPA built or improved city, township and county parks. The CCC constructed campgrounds at both Ludington and Muskegon State Parks and improved camping facilities at Grand Haven State Park. The WPA developed county parks such as Pioneer Park in Muskegon County or improved municipal parks and camping facilities such as John Gurney Park in Hart.

In 1937 the Department of Conservation reported that camping in Michigan state parks had reached a peak. To meet the new and heavy demand of the "trailer car" tourist the state had worked to expand the number of campsites available and by summer of 1937 there were 15,036 trailer campsites in state parks. Electrifying state park campgrounds became a top priority and in 1936 twenty state park camps were electrified resulting in half of Michigan's state parks providing electric service to campers.

World War II and the redirection of funding to the War effort virtually ended state and municipal park development in Michigan. Even after the War the state put little funding into its state park campgrounds until the Automobile Association of America (AAA) published articles warning that the Michigan State Park system was in crisis. With steadily increasing attendance and little funding allocated to park maintenance and development, the state's parks were stressed to the breaking point. Thanks to the lobbying efforts of landscape architect Genevieve Gillette, who had been a leader in the creation of the Michigan state park system, funding was secured for a new era of state park development in the 1960s.

## Tourist Cabins, Motor Courts, and Cottage Courts 1920-1930

As auto tourists became more sophisticated and the adventure of camping began to wane, they began to seek accommodations that would better protect them from the elements and enable them to travel more lightly. This resulted in the development of a new type of housing for tourists—the tourist cabin. The tourist cabin had its origin in Douglas, Arizona, where a group of nine cabins, originally constructed for workers at a copper smelting plant, were converted for use as an auto tourist court. In 1914 the city of Delavan, Kansas, built the first municipally owned "camp house" for tourists. It consisted of two bedrooms and two garages. The house was left open twenty-four hours a day providing the traveling public with a free place to stay. By the 1920s the tourist cabin industry had taken off, especially in the West and South where desolate conditions and extreme temperatures made camping more difficult. In the more populated Midwest, tourist cabins got a slightly later start.

A tourist cabin provided private shelter for an individual or family via a small building or cabin that contained the minimal furnishings necessary for an overnight stay. In popular scenic areas where people might want to stay longer than overnight, a tourist cabin would be outfitted with a kitchen

and a bathroom with a shower. The earliest of the tourist cabins were very simple structures. Typically they were small, gable roofed frame buildings with a front door and window. They were often constructed at existing auto camps or next to gas stations on major highways. As the cabins became more popular with motorists, they were built on their own sites out of more substantial materials like brick, concrete block, or fireproof tile, and typically had a pyramid roof. Sometimes the cabins included carports or, more rarely, a garage. The cabins were typically spaced along a semi-circular gravel drive; an office was also located on the site. A popular gimmick was to use the building's architecture as advertisement. For example a place called the "Wigwam Motor Court" would have cabins constructed to look like teepees. Another gimmick was to create a romanticized version of "home" by using screen doors, front chimneys made of rough stone, small porches outfitted with metal lawn chairs, and windows boxes planted with brightly colored flowers. The log cabin was also a popular theme signaling that the motorist had succeeded in leaving the city behind and entering "the great north woods." The humble tourist cabin is greatly underappreciated today and is rapidly becoming extinct. In the project area a few good examples of tourist cabins are still in operation including Sand Castles in Hagar Township, Berrien County; Bear's Den, Whitehall Road, Muskegon County; Pigeon Hill Beach Resort at White Lake, and the Pentwood Resort in Pentwater. A number of others have been converted to apartments such as Sunnybrook Cottages in Holland or the stone cottages at Thunder Mountain in Van Buren County. Log tourist cabin buildings exist at Judy's Motel on U.S. 12 in New Buffalo, at Mary's City of David in Benton Harbor, and at Smert's Resort on Bass Lake near Pentwater.

By the mid-1930s the concept of the tourist cabin had expanded to include a diner and gas station and some form of entertainment, such as a playground, picnic area, or pool. These complexes were called motor courts. A tourist cabin in a motor court would bring in anywhere from fifty cents to one dollar per night, and their popularity with motorists created a boom in the tourist cabin business. Motor courts were being constructed at the rate of eight hundred per year and there were nearly ten thousand locations across the nation by 1935 and over 225 million by 1941. The sudden success of the motor court worried traditional hotel owners who lobbied Congress to regulate the tourist cabin trade but this only caused tourist cabin owners to upgrade their facilities in order to better compete with the hotels. Owners of traditional hotels had good reason to worry; it wasn't long before the tourist cabins had put many of them out of business.

While tourist cabins and motor courts were geared for overnight stays for traveling families, the cottage court was a phenomenon that occurred in resort areas where families planned to stay in one place for a week or more. Cottage courts were a slightly higher grade of construction and cabins were larger in size than a typical tourist cabin and offered kitchen facilities. In Michigan, cottage courts were typically simple, frame Arts and Crafts style bungalows grouped in a U shape around a central lawn area that was often enclosed by a hedge or picket fence. A number of cottage courts still exist in Union Pier including the Paradise Villa and one that is today known as the Firefly Resort. The Parkview Cottages in South Haven is another example.

## **Post War Motels 1945 – 1970**

After World War II there was once again a change in the type of lodging that was popular with motoring tourists. According to the book *Home Away from Home: Motels in America*, by "1956 the average American income was 50% higher than in 1929, the year of the previous high." The landscape was decidedly different for American families after the War than it had been during the decade of the Depression. There were plenty of jobs, homeownership was at an all time high thanks to liberal mortgage programs for veterans, and there was more leisure time due to the institution of the forty hour work week and paid vacations in most American factories and businesses. . By 1957 over 90% of American workers were receiving paid vacation time. The family-oriented years of the post-War baby boom saw a rise in a new style of lodging called the "motel" (p. 80). The word "motel" is a coupling of the words "motor" and "hotel." It entered the popular American vernacular in the 1940's, approximately fifteen years after the first mom and pop motel originated in the United States. Motels differed from the tourist cabins and motor courts of the 1920s and 1930s. Instead of a grouping of separate sleeping units or cabins, the rooms

were joined together into one linear unit—most likely to reduce construction costs for heating and plumbing. Their designs allowed for direct outdoor access to each individual room from a parking space in front of the room door. In the 1940s Michigan State University's Cooperative Extension Office produced a series of circulars with titles like "Planning Better Motels." They were aimed at the mom and pop hotel owner and showed the right and wrong motel design. According to the circulars to attract customers, a central office with two attached wings that fanned out from the center in a broad V-shape was the best and most welcoming design. The motel should be set on a well-landscaped, semi-circular drive. By the 1950s a motel sometimes included a small, attached restaurant—a swimming pool was almost a requirement if the owner was to stay competitive. By the 1960s, two story motels were being constructed to increase room capacity.

Motels originated as local family-owned businesses. In 1952 national chains, such as Holiday Inn and Howard Johnson's were established and quickly dominated the industry in large part due to the construction of the federal highway system in the late 1950s. The chains provide a consistent, standard experience from state to state along. While they lacked the uniqueness of the individual mom and pop motel, they were a safe bet for a tired family. By the 1970s, mom and pop motels had lost favor and were no competition for the large advertising budgets of the chain motels. Fortunately, many small, family operated motels have survived in places like the Upper Peninsula where the chain motels did not think they could turn a large enough profit.

Several examples of motel architecture from the post-World War II tourism boom remain in the Southwest Michigan lakeshore region. However, Michigan's most interesting and distinct example, the Snowflake Motel on Red Arrow Highway in Lincoln Township, Berrien County was demolished in 2006. The Snowflake Motel was designed in 1961 by William Wesley Peters, a member of the Taliesin School and Frank Lloyd Wright's son-in-law.

There are a number of examples of the post war motel within the project area that still function as motels. The city of Ludington appears has a largest concentration of mom and pop motels still in operation.

## Bed and Breakfasts

At the turn of the century, it was not uncommon for people in resort areas to purchase a large home and rent out room to tourists. These "tourist homes" became even more popular during the Depression when many Americans opted to rent out a room or two in their home to travelers in order to make ends meet. However, the concept of a bed and breakfast as we know it today is one that is usually associated with the United Kingdom where families rent a traveler a room in their home for a night and provide them with breakfast in the morning. The popularity of European travel after World War II exposed Americans to bring the concept and they brought the idea home with them at a time when historic neighborhoods were going into decline as people moved to more modern suburbs. The passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, establishing the National Register of Historic Places, brought attention to the nation's historic resources. This attention was increased during America's Bicentennial in 1976. Establishment of the federal preservation tax credit program that year enabled owners of income producing National Register properties to receive a 25 percent rehabilitation tax credit. As a result, people purchased large home, most typically in the Queen Anne style that had once belonged to some of the town's wealthiest and most influential citizens, that ha and adapted them as lodging. Ludington Street in Ludington, where five bed and breakfasts occur in a two-block area, is an excellent example of this.

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## West Michigan's Jewish Resorts

The Jewish resort business in South Haven began with the conversion of farms to farm resorts. Jewish families first came to the South Haven area in the 1880s. Among the first were the Nathan Gassin family, the Morris Fidelman family, and the Abraham Reznik family, all of whom purchased farms east of South Haven on Phoenix Road. In 1914 the Morris Androfsky family purchased a farm on M-140 south of South Haven and the Solomon Zlakin family purchased a farm on the Blue Star Highway in 1916.

Family, friends and neighbors of these Jewish farmers from their old tenement neighborhoods in Chicago visited the South Haven farms during the summer months to find relief from the city's grime and heat. Visitors would assist the family in daily operation of the farm by picking and canning fruit, feeding animals, baling hay, and finding the experience a fun and welcome change from city life. The first visitor's stayed in tents, but later the farm family would occupy the tents and rent the rooms in the house to visitors. Among the earliest of the South Haven Jewish farmers to advertise their farm as a resort was the Gassin family who called their farm the Geneva Resort in 1918. In 1920 Gassin purchased an early South Haven hotel, the Clifton Hotel (originally the Lake House) and moved it to his farm resort on Phoenix Road. Other early resorts included Rezik's Farm Resort and Fidelman's. These small Jewish farm resorts operated successfully throughout the 1920s. The completion of a continuous improved highway from Chicago to west Michigan, the West Michigan Pike, improved automobile access to scenic areas along Lake Michigan and increased the need for tourist accommodations. In addition, a rise in anti-Semitism during this decade resulted in more restrictive practices that limited the accommodations available to Jewish patrons at Gentile-owned hotels. According to the book *A Time to Remember*, there were over thirty Jewish-owned farm resorts operating in the South Haven area by the end of the 1920s. Some like Weinstein's and Zlatkin's continued to operate throughout the 1950s; Fidelman's remained in operation for 75 years attracting celebrities, governors, and labor leaders.

The resort business along South Haven's North Shore Drive began in 1883 when Henry and Ellen Avery built a two-story cottage resort to rent to visitors from Chicago. In 1910 the Steuben family moved to South Haven and were one of the first to open a Jewish resort on North Shore Drive, Stueben's Summer Hotel at 56 North Shore. Others Jewish families quickly followed: the Mendelsohns, the Barons, the Zippersteins, and the Glassmans all built resorts in the 1920s. By the start of the 1930s, the resort business in South Haven was booming. Many of the early Jewish farm resort operators were soon in a position to expand their operations. Others sold their farms and bought land on North Shore Drive closer to Lake Michigan and the city of South Haven's scenic and cultural amenities. Many of the new proprietors arrived first as summer vacationers and, enjoying the experience so much and seeing so much potential, bought land and built their own resort. Thus began the "golden age" of Jewish resorts on South Haven's North Shore Drive that lasted for over thirty years until the 1960s. South Haven's Jewish resorts were to Midwestern Jews, especially those from Chicago, what the Catskills, Atlantic City and Miami Beach were to the Jewish population on the East Coast.

A number of the South Haven's Jewish resort buildings still exist including:

- 227 Oak Street (Victoria Resort B&B). Established in 1924 as Glassman's Resort by Albert and Anna Glassman. Glassman's was one of the few certified kosher resorts in the area.
- 203 Dyckman (The Sand Castle Inn B&B). Once known as the Shamrock Resort, a gentile resort that began taking Jewish patrons at the urging of Albert Glassman who then transported Jewish guests to his own establishment for Kosher meals.

- 86 North Shore (The Last Resort B&B). Known as the Plaza Resort 1923-50
- 64 North Shore (Apartments) Formerly, the Oakland Hotel operated by David Mendelson from 1920–50. The resort was popular with Jewish vacationers from Chicago, Detroit, Cincinnati and St. Louis.
- 56 North Shore. This first became a resort around 1899 when it served as the annex for the Marsland Resort. In 1920 it became Steuben's Summer Resort, one of the first Jewish Resorts on North Shore Drive.
- 1601 North Shore (Sleepy Hollow) This Art Moderne cottage resort built by Earl Gray in 1927 was frequented by author Studs Terkel and comedian Martha Raye.
- The North Shore Club Condominiums were once part of Samson's Resort which operated from 1930-1950.
- The Sea Wolf Restaurant on the Blue Star Highway is the original dining hall of Weinstein's Resort a popular early Jewish resort operated by Max and Lena Weinstein.
- 68299 County Road 388 (Camp Agudah Midwest) This was once Fidelman's an early Jewish farm resort that became one of the largest and most well-known of the South Haven's Jewish resorts.

To accommodate the needs and customs of Jewish resorters, a number of auxiliary businesses owned and operated by Jewish proprietors grew up in downtown South Haven predominately in the 400 block of Phoenix Street. These included:

- Arkins Gift Shop 526 Phoenix
- Cohen's Real Bakery, 426 Phoenix
- Antler's Bakery, 414 Phoenix
- Reznick's Meat Market, 410 Phoenix
- Braslawsky's Meat Market, 424 Quaker
- Panter's Kosher Market, 408 Phoenix
- Panter's Restaurant, 114 Dyckman
- Mickey's Sandwich Shop, 70 North Shore
- N & R Store, Corner Phoenix & Center
- Goldberg's Hardware, 420 Phoenix

Just north of South Haven in Casco Township, Allegan County is a former Jewish resort subdivision. Originally established in 1924 as the Workmen's Circle Lakeshore subdivision, the resort was built for Jewish families whose children attended the adjacent summer camp, Camp Kinderland sponsored by the Jewish socialist organization, the Workmen's Circle. Further developments were reportedly made by the Mount Pleasant Lake Shore Development Company of Chicago (2538 W. Division St). The company built its own electric plant, the Mount Pleasant Light and Power Company, which it later sold to Consumer's Energy. By 1928 thirty homes had been completed in the subdivision. Mount Pleasant included a small grocery store that sold locally grown produce. City bus service to South Haven was available on the weekends. A significant feature of the subdivision was a "budke," the Russian word for a small rest house, built at the top of the stairway to the beach. It has been demolished.

## Other Known Jewish Resorts in West Michigan

Michiana, a resort development in Berrien County, was built by the Long Beach Development Company in 1927. Though the Depression hurt development, it began again under new owners in 1932. Michiana is distinctive for its log cabin cottages—over one hundred were built there. The community has always been an unrestricted resort and a large number of Jewish families from Chicago purchased cottages there.

A Jewish physician from Chicago, Louis Gordon, built the Gordon Beach Inn in Union Pier in 1925 in response to the anti-Semitism he encountered trying to find a place to stay on Lake

Michigan. Gordon purchased a former apple orchard on Lakeshore Drive and built a resort for Jewish families. Paradise Villa, a small cottage resort for Jewish families run by Joe Kahn, was established just down the road. Karonsky's Hotel, also known by its Yiddish name Scheine Vista (today it's the Inn at Union Pier), was built in 1920 by Louis and Sarah Karonsky of Chicago who operated it as a kosher hotel—the only one that existed in Union Pier, until the 1950s.

A large Jewish population existed east of Benton Harbor where over 250 Jewish farmers had established themselves in the Sodus/Eau Claire area. According to researcher Elaine Thomopoulos, a Jewish resort community developed along the 200 block of Fair Avenue near Seely and Highland Streets in East Benton. Not far from there on Brittain Avenue, Mary's City of David built a resort of tourist cabins in 1930 that quickly became popular with Jewish visitors from Chicago, in large part due the vegetarian menu the resort served. In 1938 Mary's City of David partnered with three Jewish physicians from Chicago to build a small hospital that could accommodate up to thirty-five patients on the sect's grounds. The hospital was short-lived. Mary's City of David built a synagogue and rabbi's home in 1942 to accommodate and thank their Jewish patrons.

In Saint Joseph, Manley's Myrtle Banks Resort on Langley Avenue opened in 1908. They welcomed Jewish guests from the start and quickly became popular with Jewish vacationers from Chicago.

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## African American Resorts in West Michigan

Segregation was a common practice across America prior to the social revolution of the 1970s. Even in northern states like Michigan, African Americans were unwelcome in most hotels and restaurants. As a result a small number of businesses that catered solely to African Americans were established, often by African Americans themselves.

John Corrothers, an African American minister that grew up in South Haven and Muskegon, wrote in his book, *In Spite of the Handicap*, that there was an unsuccessful attempt to establish an African American resort in South Haven at the turn of the century. He wrote “A syndicate of coloured businessmen from Chicago and St. Louis secured an option on an abandoned white resort on the lakefront, with a view to establishing a coloured summer resort. Bitter opposition to this plan developed among a certain element of white newcomers, and the local papers were bombarded with protests. The impression soon got abroad that Negroes were not wanted in that community.” The incident so disheartened Corrothers that he left South Haven for the Benton Harbor area around 1904.

Idlewild, an African American resort community, was established in Michigan’s Lake County around 1915 and quickly became a destination for African Americans from across the country in part due to the writings of W. E. B. DuBois who owned a summer home there. Over the years a small entertainment center of nightclubs and theaters was constructed at Idlewild and it became a popular stop on the black entertainment circuit. America’s most respected African American musicians and entertainers performed there each summer from the 1920s to the 1970s. In the early 1920s, thanks to the success of Idlewild, a second African American resort area was established to the south of Idlewild at Woodland Park by Marion Auther of Cleveland, Ohio, and A. E. Wright of Chicago. The resort reportedly included a fifty-six-room hotel called the Royal Breeze, a clubhouse that could accommodate up to “one hundred couples for dancing,” a boardwalk, and forty cottages. Paradise Lake in Cass County was a popular resort area for African Americans from Chicago. According to the Northern Indiana Center for History website, the land was owned by the Bonine family, one of a number of Quaker families that assisted in the establishment of a farm colony for former slaves in the nearby Vandalia/Chain Lakes area of Cass County. Dr. Bonine became a prominent oculist that received world-wide attention. In the 1930s the Gray Hotel was in operation there.

Within the *Preserve America* project area William and Birdie Thorton purchased a farm near South Haven in 1932 and established Thorton’s Resort for African Americans, which operated until World War II. The property was eventually sold to the state for the construction of M-140. According to the 1956 *Ebony* vacation guide, Pitchford’s La Maison in Cover, was a former residence that had been turned into an African American resort in the late 1930s.

In 1936 a publication called *The Negro Motorist Green Book* was established to provide African Americans with travel information for New York City. Prior to that time African Americans had to rely solely on word of mouth to find places that were open to their patronage. With the assistance of the United States Travel Bureau’s Negro Affairs Division the guide was expanded in 1937 to include the entire United States. By 1949 it had expanded to eighty pages. Within the project area the following African American resources were listed in the *Green Book*.

- Research Pleasure Club, 362 Eighth Street, Benton Harbor
- Hamilton Farm Tourist Home, RFD #1, Grand Junction
- Mrs. R. E. J. Wilson Tourist Home, 210 E. Fourth Street, Hartford
- Crosby’s Farm, Hartford
- R. C. Merrick Tourist Home, 65 E. Muskegon Avenue, Muskegon
- Shady Nook Farm, Mrs. M. Johnson, South Haven

The Oceana County Historical Society's Sesquicentennial publication includes information on the Val Du Lakes Farm Resort located in Golden Township that was operated by African American's Lila and David Duncan throughout the 1940s. Lila Davis' father Moses Davis, a former school teacher, had purchased the farm in 1930 and grew cherries, pears, and apples.

According to a report by Horace Sutton reprinted in the 1950 *Negro Digest*, "Travel for Negroes inside the borders of the United States can become an experience so fraught with humiliation and unpleasantness that most colored people simply never think of a vacation in the same terms as the rest of America."

In the 1950s there were still only a handful of established African American resorts including Idlewild, Lake County, Michigan; Fox Lake Resort, Angola, Indiana; Lincoln Hills Country Club, Gilpin County, Colorado; Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts; and American Beach, Florida. Even in the 1950s when African Americans traveled it was typical for them to stay with relatives or acquaintances or at African American YMCAs since few white hotels would accept black patrons. According to Sutton, a William Butler compiled another travel directory for African Americans entitled *Travel Guide for Negroes*.

In 1945 John H. Johnson of Chicago started *Ebony* magazine to give a national voice to America's growing black middle class. *Ebony* began publishing an annual vacation guide of resorts and hotels open to African Americans. According to advertisements in *Ebony*'s 1954 *Summer Vacation Guide* the following resorts in southwest Michigan accepted African American patrons:

- Fireside Cabins, New Buffalo.
- Evergreen Resort, South Haven owned by Rupert Simmons.
- McGuire's Lakeshore Acres, South Haven on Lakeshore Drive, owned by D. F. McGuire.

After World War II, the village of Covert in Van Buren County became a popular site for black laborers looking to escape the hot crowded conditions of Chicago tenements in the summer. Cheap land attracted former Pullman porters, International Harvester workers, Armour & Swift factory workers, and U.S. postal workers who purchased lots in the rural Michigan community. Before the 1970s, Covert County Park was considered to be the African American beach while Van Buren State Park served as the white beach. The 1962 *Ebony* vacation guide included the Blue Bird Motel in Covert, which was established by Harold White of Chicago in the 1960s.

The Gordon Beach Inn in Union Pier catered to an African American clientele in the 1960s as did Gun's Tourist Home and Motel. African American Olympic medalist Jesse Owens owned a summer home in Union Pier, which added to its popularity as a resort community for African Americans in the 1960s.

In a 1964 article entitled "Segregation: Cottage Rental in Michigan" published in *Phylon*, Patricia Pilling noted that in 1962 the Archdiocese of Chicago opened the Holy Family Resort in Benton Harbor, which welcomed white and black patrons. She also found an African American resort area on Little Pleasant Lake near Jackson with a "preponderance" of Negro cottage owners and a cottage community known as "Midwest" owned by a black physician and his brother.

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## Ethnic Diversity of Berrien County Resorts

Resort communities in Berrien County developed an ethnic diversity that was atypical of other regions in West Michigan. This was due in large part to the influx of a new immigrant population in the United States in the late nineteenth century. Many of those immigrants ended up in Chicago. The short commute to the beaches of southwestern Michigan by automobile made it an inexpensive vacation trip for working class immigrants. Many remember that two or three families would pile into one car with the kids sitting on laps. They would sing songs to make the two to three hour drive seem to go faster.

A specific ethnic group would gather in one place. Some of the reasons given were that they felt more comfortable with people that spoke their language, understood the traditional cultural practices of their homeland, and ate the same types of foods. Settling in one area also enabled support businesses—bakeries, restaurants, and meat markets—to establish themselves.

The following areas resorts were associated with specific ethnicities:

The Grand Beach resort in Berrien County was popular with Irish Catholic immigrants from South Chicago. Richard Daley, Chicago's mayor, built a summer home in the community and the Daley family still owns vacation homes there.

Before World War II, Union Pier was popular with an Eastern European population, especially Czech immigrants. One reason was the founding of Camp Sokol in New Buffalo in 1905 by the Bohemian Club of Chicago. Sokol's were used to educate Bohemian children in the culture and traditions of their homeland in order to keep them alive; they also promoted physical education. By 1921, New Buffalo's Camp Sokol was considered to be the largest Bohemian camp in the United States housing over 200 guests in tents. In the 1930s, cottages were built on the site. Parents of the children attending Camp Sokol began vacationing in nearby Union Pier while their children attend the camp. Throughout the 1930s and 1940s a host of facilities that catered to Czech vacationers opened in the area including Vavra's Resort (Sweethaven Resort), Prusa's Dance Hall and Cabins on Red Arrow Highway, and the Little Bohemian Restaurant in New Buffalo (last known Hannah's).

In the 1960s Union Pier's Czech vacation population was replaced by a predominately Lithuanian population. A strong Lithuanian community had begun to immigrate to two neighborhoods in Chicago, Illinois, Lawn and Marquette Park, around 1920. There was a substantial increase in Lithuanian immigrants after World War II due to Josef Stalin's harsh post-war policies. In the 1960s the Marquette Park area experience racial tension as African Americans began to integrate the all white area. Many Lithuanians sought respite in the sand dunes of southwest Michigan. One of the most popular Lithuanian resorts was Gintara's. The former summer home of Paul Gray Hoffman, chairman of the board for Studebaker-Packard Company, was purchased in 1949 by Algirdas and Viktoria Karaitis, two Lithuanians that had been displaced by the War. They built cottages on the property and provided traditional Lithuanian meals. Over 98 percent of their clientele was Lithuanian. Kalus' Royal Blue Grocery store (Milda's) in downtown Union Pier was a popular Lithuanian gathering place.

Swedish Baptists from Chicago's south side established a summer colony near Sawyer called Bethany Beach. In 1906 they had built a summer camp for children on Lake Michigan's shore and soon the parents of camp attendees were building summer cottages near the camp. Many of the homes are still owned by descendants of the original founders. Chicago-based photographer Ralph Eugene Jackson photographed Bethany Beach extensively between 1907 and the 1920s. The Swedish Bakery in Sawyer was established in 1901.

The Glenlord Avenue/Ridge Road area of Hagar Township became a popular Italian resort area. In the mid 1940s, Joseph and Tina Capozio established the La Conca D’Oro Resort on Ridge Road in Berrien County, which was popular with Chicago’s Sicilian immigrants. Other Italian resorts in the area included Clamar Court, Glenlord Vista, Pisa, Foreani, and Carmaniagni.

A number of Greek immigrants established fruit farms between New Buffalo and Muskegon. Family and friends from Chicago that came to visit liked the area and began to vacation there. Greeks that summered in southwest Michigan were almost exclusively from Chicago, typically the Halstead Street area, or Gary, Indiana. Astute Greek businessmen saw an opportunity to offer services to resort visitors and returned to open restaurants, hotels, and candy stores. Indiana. The more well-to-do Greeks stayed at Greek resorts in Berrien County such as the Riviera Resort and Coldwater Cabins, the Fruit Farm Resort in Stevensville, or at the Sunset View Cabins in Hagar Township. Berrien County grew to have the largest concentration of Greek residents and Benton Harbor was considered to be the center of the region’s Greek population until the 1960s when increased racial tension caused them to move out of the city—many settling in the New Buffalo area.

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## Sport Fishing

As the country became more settled and there was more leisure time, sport fishing came into vogue around 1840. New types of rods, reels, hooks and lines were invented in the mid-nineteenth century, which greatly enhanced the sport, and these developments were promoted in newspapers and farm journals helping to expand its popularity. In 1848 the J.T. Buhl Company of Vermont began manufacturing the first fishing spoon lure. The casting reel had been invented in 1810, but it wasn't until an improved reel made by J. F. & B. F. Meek came on the market in 1840 that sport fishing exploded as a national hobby. By 1859 there were so many sport fishermen on Michigan's inland lakes and streams that they clashed with the state's commercial fishermen. The sport fisherman noticed an extreme drop in the number of fish available and called for the regulation of commercial fishing practices. Within a year, fourteen counties in lower Michigan had adopted laws that banned or regulated net fishing on inland lakes and streams to ensure that there were enough fish to meet the needs of the recreational fishing craze.

Improvements in fishing equipment throughout the nineteenth century further increased interest in sport fishing. The steel fishhook was introduced around the turn of the century. Michigander James Heddon, who fished the Dowagiac Creek in Berrien County, invented the surface bass plug. The bamboo fly rod, first developed in 1801 in England for trout fishing, was improved over the years until H. H. Leonard perfected a six-strip bamboo rod in 1870. In 1896 William Shakespeare Jr., a patent medicine salesman from Kalamazoo, Michigan, developed what he called the "level-wind" reel. Tired of his fishing line tangling when he tried to rewind it, he cut grooves into his reel spool to ensure the line would wind straight. Local fishermen quickly saw the advantage. Shakespeare patented his idea and established the Shakespeare Company in Kalamazoo in 1897 to produce the reel spool. The company soon diversified into other fishing gear including lures, tackle and rods. In the twentieth century the Shakespeare Company revolutionized the sport fishing industry when it introduced the first fiberglass fishing rod, the "Wonderrod" in 1946.

State licensing for sport fishing began in Michigan in 1928, but was required only for trout fishing. Michigan passed its first sport fishing law, Public Act 165, in 1929. This law declared that the fish in Michigan's lakes, rivers, and streams were the property of the state and gave the state the authority to regulate where and how recreational fishing could be carried out as well as the types of fish that could be fished for recreational purposes. In 1933 a comprehensive fishing license was introduced for all sport fishing on inland lakes, streams, and rivers.

Early sport fishing occurred almost exclusively on Michigan's inland lakes and streams, not on the Great Lakes. In 1937 when a commercial fishery in the Upper Peninsula realized the economic potential of charter fishing and received the first commercial fishing license for sport fishing, and a new tourist industry was born. However, very little sport fishing actually took place on the Great Lakes until Coho and Chinook salmon were introduced by the Department of Conservation in 1965 and 1966, respectively. A general sport fishing license for fishing on the Great Lakes was first required in 1968.

There was a transformation in sport fishing after World War II due to the evolution of recreational boat design and construction. In his book *A History of Michigan Fisheries*, Wayne Tody states that "between 1945 and 1955, fishing boats changed—from wooden rowboats to steel, aluminum, and fiberglass craft of all sizes and description . . . They came not by the hundreds, but by the thousands, until Michigan led the Nation in boat registration (p. 111)." Fiberglass as we know it today was first introduced by the Owens-Corning Company of Toledo, Ohio in 1936. Experiments related to World War II enhanced its use. The first fiberglass boat body is credited to Ray Greene of Toledo, Ohio who worked for Owens-Corning and experimented with sailboat construction. However, the recreational boat building industry in the city of Holland that flourished after World War II was on the cutting edge of the fiberglass revolution.

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## Summer Camps

The idea of summer camps for children originated in the late nineteenth century as part of a larger social movement to improve the living conditions for poor children in America's cities. Along with the push for child labor laws, improved diet, and better health care, the idea of exposing city children to nature was meant to enhance their quality of life. The summer camp movement got its start in Europe but the concept was quickly adopted in the United States, especially in the northeast where the country's largest urban centers existed.

The earliest summer camps, established in the 1890s, were typically of two types. The first type was operated by a social organization such as the Boy or Girl Scouts, Campfire Girls or YMCA. They were based on a regimented program reminiscent of the military. Summer programs included calisthenics, long walks, and group activities to ensure that children received the fresh air and exercise needed to build their bodies and spirits. The onset of World War I reinforced the militaristic character of these early camps. For girls, the camp experience also included lessons in "home front" skills such as first aid. These turn of the century camps typically consisted of large tents placed in a U shape around a flagpole. Service organizations had little money for the purchase of sites or for the construction of permanent buildings and movable tents best met their needs. The second types of camps were those that were privately owned and operated, often by teachers or educators. These camps were geared more toward nature and science education.

After World War I, regimented camps went out of fashion as the realities of the war ended any romance associated with militarism. Their demise was hastened by *Redbook* magazine, which sent a representative to visit summer camps across the country and review their amenities. The magazine then published a booklet of available children's camps in order to help parent's make informed decisions about where to send their children. In the 1920's parents were looking for improved camps that offered cabins, rather than tents, arranged in a manner that took advantage of a site's beautiful natural landscape. Such camps were geared to teach children recreational activities such as tennis, canoeing, and boating as well as establishing a sense of community and service that would continue into their adult lives. The camps themselves were usually meant to conjure up a romanticized version of early pioneer life. Cabins were built of log and the camps and buildings were often assigned Indian names.

The 1920s saw a boom in the number of children's summer camps that were established. Due to the strong economy after the war, there was an increase in middle class families that could afford to send their children to summer camp. The advent of the automobile and the ensuing national obsession with automobile travel and camping helped to increase interest in nature and natural sites and parent's felt more comfortable sending their children off to camp. A number of ethnic groups that had immigrated to America, used summer camps as a way to keep the culture of their homeland alive for their children. Bohemians from Eastern Europe established Sokols to exercise the campers' hearts and minds. According to Abigail Van Slyck in her book *A Manufactured Wilderness*, "Jewish camps enjoyed a surge of popularity between the 1920s and 1950s, as they sought to maintain ethnic practices threatened by modernization and assimilation."

In the 1930s the federal government supported the construction of organizational or group camp facilities in state parks through federal relief programs. National Park Service (NPS) design teams developed camp layouts and a rustic style of architecture that utilized local materials. These camps offered an idealized version of nature. The landscape design built upon the existing topography and vegetation to create a picturesque version of it. NPS group camps consisted of small cabins that held six to eight children. The cabins were typically placed in a semi-circle around a main lodge building that housed the dining hall, lounge and sometimes toilets and showers. Many of the group camps were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC.) or the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Sometimes the NPS took on the design and construction work themselves, as was the case in recreation areas located in southern Michigan. The NPS

also provided design examples to state architects and then worked with them to ensure that the camp layouts and buildings they developed met NPS standards.

## Summer Camps in Michigan

According to State Welfare Department reports, the oldest recorded children's summer camp in Michigan was Camp Echo established in 1896. In 1900 Dr. Gray of the University of Chicago and the Normal School of Physical Education founded the Forward Movement Camp (later renamed Camp Gray in his honor) in Saugatuck. In 1903 the Congregational Assembly for Bible Students of the Middle West built a summer camp called Potawatomi Point in New Buffalo Township. A boy's camp, Camp Hayo-Went-Ha, was established at Torch Lake in Antrim County in 1904. Owasippe Scout Reservation located near White Lake, the oldest continuously operating scout camp in America, was established in 1911. The camp consists of over four thousand eight hundred acres.

It is unclear when state licensing of summer camps came into practice but by 1926 there were a total of ten state licensed camps in all of Michigan. Within a decade, that number had risen to one hundred and forty. Forty-nine of the camps were boys' camps, thirty-nine were girls' camps and fifty-two were co-ed. Sixty-six of the camps were organization camps including eighteen YMCA camps, seventeen Boy Scout Camps, six Girl Scout camps and five Camp Fire Girl camps. The remaining camps were affiliated with a church or club. The number of licensed camps peaked in 1939 at one hundred and seventy-three and began to decline after the start of World War II. However, there was some recognition that day camps and long-term boarding camps would help to alleviate the increased need for childcare during the war when both parents were either serving in the armed forces or working for the war effort.

In the 1930s federal relief funds were used to develop organizational camp facilities in Michigan's state parks. In southern Michigan the National Park Service used the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) to develop sub-marginal land unsuitable for farming into Recreational Demonstration Areas. The locations were chosen because they were close to the state's centers of population and could be easily accessed for use by city schools and organizations. The purpose was to provide a healthful climate for poor children whose families did not have the means to take them away from the city heat during the summer. Yankee Springs Demonstration Area in Barry County and Waterloo Demonstration Area in Washtenaw County were the two primary recreation areas developed by the National Park Service and then turned over to the state. In addition many of the state parks being developed by the CCC across the state contained organizational or group camps. Such camps would typically include cabins, a central dining hall, central shower/toilets, campfire ring, and a play area. Less often they would include a craft building. Within the project area, group camps were constructed in Muskegon State Park and Van Buren State Parks.

## Summer Camps in Southwest Michigan

Due to its close proximity to Chicago, access to the lake, rural setting and healthful climate Southwest Michigan made an ideal location for the establishment of summer camps for children. In some cases, an organization would develop a cottage resort community near or adjacent to the camp property to provide a place for parents to stay while children were in camp. Southwest Michigan's summer camps reflected all types of camps from religious to organizational to welfare camps. According to a State Welfare Department report, there were fifteen summer camps in the project area in 1936.

Some of the known summer camps that operated in the project area included:

## Berrien County

- **Camp Sokol for Bohemian Children.** Established in New Buffalo in 1905 and still in operation, the camp taught traditional Bohemian art and culture and emphasized physical and mental fitness.
- **Forest Beach.** In 1918 the YWCA of Chicago purchased a former sanitarium that had been built by a Dr. Barlow just south of New Buffalo and opened a girls' camp. The camp consisted of four permanent buildings and a number of tents that housed up to 150 girls. The tents were replaced with permanent cabins in 1923. The camp was recently sold for development.
- **Camp Warren.** Established in 1921 by the Berrien County Sunday School Association. The camp was developed on the site of the former Pottawatomi Park and was donated to the Association by John Klock under condition that the camp be named in honor of E. K. Warren who had passed away in 1917. Located off M-63 north of Benton Harbor it was sold in the 1990s.
- **Tower Hill Camp.** E. K. Warren donated the site of the Tower Hill Camp in Sawyer to the Congregational Conference of Illinois in 1922. Since, 1957 the United Church of Christ has operated the camp.
- **Bethany Beach.** Established in Sawyer in 1906 by the Swedish Baptist Church of Chicago's south side. A forty-acre fruit farm was purchased and cottage lots were platted, the sale of which went to support a summer camp for poor children. Anton Noreen lead the effort to develop the camp. In 1924 a tabernacle was built that is still in use today.
- **Chicago Commons Farm Camp.** Located on Maudlin Road, New Buffalo, the camp operated from 1920-1980.

## Van Buren County

- **Camp Kinderland.** Located in Casco Township north of South Haven, the camp was built in 1923 by the Workmen's Circle, a Chicago-based Jewish organization that helped working families. The purpose of the camp was to expose children to arts and culture. One of the camp counselors, Pearl Lang, was a dancer with the Martha Graham Dance Troupe and later became a choreographer in her own right, eventually working with the pop singer, Madonna. The camp was sold in the 1970s.
- **Camp Gray.** Humphrey S. Gray of Benton Harbor established Camp Gray on Lake Michigan.

## Allegan County

- **Camp Gray, Douglas.** Originally established in the late nineteenth century by a group of Presbyterian progressive thinkers as Forward Movement Park, a camp for "deaf, crippled, and blind" children from Chicago. Young workers from Jane Addams' Hull House often served as staffed. The camp was revamped and renamed Camp Gray in 1913 to honor a former camp president. Paths and roads in the camp were named for famous literary figures such as Browning and Tolstoy. Noted female aviator Amelia Earhart spent the summer of 1917 at Camp Gray.

## Muskegon County

- **Owasippe Scout Camp**, 9900 Russell Road, Twin Lake. First established as Camp White in 1911 by the Chicago Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America on land donated by the White Lake Chamber of Commerce. It reportedly is the oldest continuously operating Boy Scout camp in the nation. In 1920 the council expanded the number of camps it operated in Michigan and Owasippe became the overall name used for a small collection of summer camps built by Chicago-area Boy Scout districts. Owasippe is home to the E. Urner Goodman Scout Museum.
- **Lions Club Fresh Air Camp**. Tuberculosis was a life threatening illness in the 1920s before vaccines were developed to control its spread. Patients were typically isolated from the general population and underwent a treatment of healthy diet and exposure to as much fresh air as possible—even in winter. The Muskegon County Sanatorium was constructed in 1925, three miles outside the city. In 1926 eighty children were withdrawn from Muskegon's public schools because of "conditions that threatened them" with development of full-scale tuberculosis. It was recommended that these children spend the summer "in bathing suits on the shores of Lake Michigan" soaking in the sun and breathing the healthy lake air. To accommodate them, the Muskegon Lions Club funded a Fresh Air Camp for children. The first year, a tent was set up in a shady area near the beach; in 1927 a permanent building "with dressing rooms and toilets" was set up. The children met at a central point in downtown Muskegon after lunch every day and took the streetcar to the beach where they spent the afternoon. The Lions Club paid the streetcar fare and provided milk for the children.

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## Theaters

### Opera Houses

Before there was radio, television or movies, live performance in theaters served provided the main entertainment for America's cities and towns. In the late nineteenth century it was common for an entrepreneur to construct a live performance theater in even the smallest of downtowns. These theaters were colloquially called "opera houses" and were usually located on the upper floor of a downtown commercial building. Some were quite grand and elaborately decorated while others were simple in design with the only decoration consisting of a stage curtain painted with a pastoral scene. The opera house served as a venue for live music, plays, and lecturers and sometimes even sports events such as basketball games. Theatrical producers put together regional circuits and a show would travel from town to town throughout a designated circuit. One of the best known was the vaudeville circuit, popular between 1880 and 1930, which included a variety of popular live acts ranging from comedians to acrobats to musicians to sports heroes.

### Movie Houses

By 1896 Thomas Edison had perfected the first commercial movie projector, introducing a new form of entertainment, the silent film, to audiences across the nation. Films quickly became a form of inexpensive entertainment popular among the working class. In June 1918 the Robin Hood Theater of Grand Haven was involved in a court case and fined ten dollars for opening and showing movies on Sunday, which violated the state's Sunday Amusements Act. The argument put forth by the theater's attorney was that "well to do" people owned automobiles and could take drives "through city and country" while "a poor man that works hard all week and who has only 15 cents to spend for a little pastime on Sunday he takes his enjoyment seeing a good picture."

(*Holland City News*, June 16, 1918)

Opera houses and existing live performance theaters were adapted for showing silent films with the addition of a screen and projector. After the first "talkie" film was released in 1927 a new venue dedicated to showing "moving pictures" emerged. As the popularity of "the movies" exploded it had become necessary to build theaters that would accommodate the specific technical needs of sound films as well as to hold the large audiences they attracted. Movie houses were constructed in America's downtowns throughout the 1930s even though the country was in the middle of the Great Depression. Movies were an inexpensive way for America's weary citizens to forget their troubles and get caught up in the manufactured glamour of Hollywood. The single screen movie theater became an economic and cultural anchor in nearly every American downtown between 1925 and 1970. This form of entertainment was so popular that many towns had more than one theater. Movie theaters provided entertainment for audiences of all ages and each theater was designed with its own unique architectural flair so that just entering the theater was itself an experience. Fantasy versions of Moorish castles, mini Taj Mahals, Egyptian or Old English motifs were all used to decorate movie theaters. The streamlined Art Deco style and the use of neon lighting were also popular. Detailing was important; interiors were decorated with gold leaf, terrazzo flooring, marble columns, and wrought iron fixtures to create an elegant environment. Murals were often painted on the theater wall and there were rows of fixed plush seating. Movie theaters could be small single story structures or large venues with two or three balconies. Elaborate marquees with row upon row of single light bulbs and the theater name displayed in large neon letters attracted attention from afar. In larger towns, theaters were sometimes grouped in one area so that the bright lights of the theater marquees created a "Great White Way" reminiscent of Times Square in New York City. Theater names were often chosen to be representative of the surrounding community, i.e. the Grand Theater of Grand Haven, or to evoke thoughts of foreign countries or big city theaters with names such as the Bijou or Riviera, or even their design, such as the Modern Theater in South Haven.

One of Michigan's premier movie theater architects was C. Howard Crane of Detroit. Crane designed more than two hundred and fifty theaters in America, fifty of which are located in Detroit including the Fox Theater and the Detroit Opera House.

## Drive-In Theaters

Richard Hollingshead of Camden, New Jersey, built the first drive-in movie theater in 1928. Hollingshead received his first patent for a drive-in theater in 1933. The sound system for the initial drive-ins was located on either side of the screen and it was difficult to hear. Over the years, the in-car speaker was perfected, and after World War II the drive-in theater gained national attention. The baby boom of the post-War years helped promote the popularity of the drive-in theater in the 1950s as it provided entertainment for the whole family. Mom and dad could forget about babysitters, put the kids in the car and take a short drive from their suburban home to an outdoor theater. The design of a drive-in theater was really just a large gravel parking lot with the addition of rows of speakers on short poles. The speakers were removed and placed in the car window, which was rolled up to hold them in place. The movie could be viewed directly from the car on an immense outdoor screen. A ticket booth, concession stand, and sometimes an outdoor playground were typically part of the outdoor theater complex. At the height of their popularity there were over five thousand drive-in theaters in America but as baby boomer children matured and the novelty of the automobile wore off in American culture, drive-ins began to lose favor. The large parcels that the outdoor theaters inhabited were attractive to developers and as suburban land values rose, many theater owners chose to sell off their properties. The Getty-4 Drive-In Theater at 920 E. Summit in Muskegon is the only remaining drive-in movie theater in the project area. Built in 1949, it was originally known as the NK Drive Inn for its builder, Nick Kuris.

## Multi and Megaplexes

The rise of television after World War II led to a decline in movie theater attendance. In the 1960s families were moving to the suburbs. In an effort to entice them back to the movies, theater owners began building newer, bigger theaters on the outskirts of town near the new shopping centers and malls that were being constructed. Stanley Durwood, the son of a Kansas theater chain owner constructed the first multiplex theater (one with two or more screens) in Kansas City in 1963. By the 1970s, older movie houses located in downtowns began offering foreign or classic films since they could no longer compete with suburban multiplex theaters that offered first run movies. In the 1980s many of the old movie theater interior spaces were divided to accommodate multiple screens; many simply closed. In 1995 the first megaplex theater (sixteen or more screens) was opened in Dallas, Texas, by AMC Grand. Today, multiplexes are built as part of or adjacent to malls or shopping complexes in suburban areas.

## Southwest Michigan Theater Chains and Moguls

### W. S. Butterfield Inc.

One of the largest theater chains in Michigan was operated by W. S. Butterfield Inc. Walter Scott Butterfield, a native of Ohio, came to Michigan from Chicago where he first worked at the Haymarket Theater and later as a booking agent for vaudeville acts. In 1906 he purchased the Hamblin Opera House in Battle Creek and by 1909 had built a new theater in Battle Creek called the Bijou. Butterfield began to expand his Michigan theater empire purchasing small existing theater chains such as the one owned by Fitzpatrick and McElroy. In 1924 he moved the W. S. Butterfield Company headquarters to Detroit and by 1928 owned seventy-five theaters across Lower Michigan. At the time of his death in 1936, W. S. Butterfield, Inc. owned ninety-six movie theaters in Michigan. The company continued to operate its theaters through the 1960s.

Within the project area the following theaters were identified as having been part of the W. S. Butterfield chain:

- Liberty, Bijou, and Bell Theaters, Benton Harbor
- Caldwell Theater, Saint Joseph
- Centre Theater, South Haven
- Colonial and Holland Theaters, Holland
- Grand and Robin Hood Theaters, Grand Haven
- Michigan, Regent, State, and Strand Theaters, Muskegon
- Lyric and Kozy Theaters, Ludington

## Fitzpatrick-McElroy Company

The Fitzpatrick-McElroy Company began in Chicago, Illinois in 1910 where they opened a three hundred-seat open air theater called an “air dome.” In 1911 the company began to expand its theater holdings opening two more theaters in Chicago. They began purchasing and building theaters in Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan owning forty-five theaters in 1925. In Michigan the company eventually owned theaters in Benton Harbor, Saint Joseph and Ludington as well as in Alpena, Cadillac, Adrian, Traverse City, Big Rapids, Manistee and Three Rivers.

## Other Theater Companies

John “Jack” Loeks Sr. of Grand Rapids was another successful force in the Southwest Michigan movie business. His first theater, the Midtown, opened in Grand Rapids in 1944. Loeks has been involved in the creation of theaters from single screen cinemas to modern-day megaplexes.

Between 1915 and 1917, Paul Schlossman of Muskegon established the Schlossman Company and contracted with architect C. Howard Crane to design three theaters in Muskegon: the Rialto, the Majestic and the Regent theaters. In 1920 Schlossman was named secretary-treasurer of the Strand Amusement Company of Muskegon Heights and supervised the construction of the Strand Theater on Broadway. Perhaps Schlossman’s greatest achievement was his collaboration with C. Howard Crane on the design of the Art Deco style Michigan Theater, now known as the Frauenthal Theater.

## Theater Resources



### Flynn Theater

5861 Sawyer Road, Sawyer

John Flynn was a teamster that moved from Chicago to the village of Sawyer in the 1920s. He opened the Palm Tea Room and the Flynn Soda Grill and built this commercial block, which housed the Flynn Theater. Flynn was rumored to be an associate of organized crime leader, Al Capone.

# Recreation/Entertainment – Theaters

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## State Theater

148 West Main Street, Benton Harbor

Benton Harbor's only remaining downtown movie house, the State is an Art Moderne style theater built by the Butterfield chain in 1942 and operated by them until May 1960 when it was closed. At one time Benton Harbor had three other theaters the city, the Lake, and the Liberty Theater, which was built in 1920 and purchased by the W. S. Butterfield chain in 1930. All three have been demolished.



## Michigan Theater

210 S. Center, South Haven

This theater was once part of W. S. Butterworth chain.

## Crescent Theater

1103 Washington, Grand Haven

Built in the 1920s and operated as a theater until World War II when it closed.



## Grand Theater

22 Washington Avenue, Grand Haven

The Grand Theater opened in 1928 at a cost of \$175,000. Architects were Christian Brandt and H. D. Ilgenfritz of Detroit. The theater was once part of the Michigan-based W. S. Butterfield chain and was purchased by the Grand Rapids-based Jack Loeks Theater chain in the late 1960s and remodeled. Loeks Theaters sold it to an independent operator in 1996 and the theater closed in 1999. The interior of the theater was demolished in 2005 and only the façade and marquee, which was erected in 1958, remain of the original theater building. They now serve as the façade of a new condominium development.

## Knickerbocker Theatre

86 E. Eighth Street, Holland

The Knickerbocker was built by Tieman Slagh in an attempt to bring performers on the vaudeville circuit to the Holland area. Named for a popular New York City playhouse, construction on the theater began in 1910. Unfortunately before the Knickerbocker opened, Slagh was killed when he was putting light bulbs in the marquee and fell off a ladder. A new owner was eventually found, and the theater opened in 1911 as a vaudeville house. Soon after, the theater began to screen movies as well. Years later the Knickerbocker Theatre was purchased by the W. S. Butterfield theater chain and received a new name, the Holland. In the 1960s, the Holland was modernized and its neo-classical façade was covered. In 1988 the theater was purchased by Hope College, which renovated the interior, restored the exterior to its original appearance, and reinstated the theater's original name.



## Park Theatre

248 South River Avenue, Holland

Originally a woodworking mill and feed store, the building was converted to a theater in the 1920's called the Colonial Theater and operated by the W. S. Butterfield theater chain. The interior burned in 1935 and the theater was reopened as the Park Theatre in 1936.