

Photograph of the Original Indian Deed

of Grosse Isle Between Pottawatomi Indians and Alexander and William Macomb


July 6, 1776



Section B Page 1
Thursday, July 1, 1976
TWIN BICENTENNIAL ISSUE

Know all men by these presents that We, the Chiefs and principal Leaders of the Pottawatomi nation of Indians, at Detroit for ourselves made by and with the advice and consent of the whole of our said nation, or consideration of the good will, love & affection, which we and the whole of said Nation have and bear unto Alexander Macomb and William Macomb of Detroit Merchants, and also for some other good causes and considerations, as the said Chiefs and of our nation heretofore moving, have given, granted, aliened, conveyed & confirmed, and by these presents do give, grant, alien, convey, & confirm unto the said Alex Macomb & William Macomb, all that Mesnage or Tract of Land known by the name of Grosse Isle, and called in our Language Kibiki's name or Grand Island, situate lying and being in the mouth of Detroit River when it empties itself into Lake Erie approaching the North shore of said River and bounded by the waters of said River, containing
 appertinances &c unto the said Island appertaining or in any way belonging and the revenues & resources, remains & remainders, Rents & services of the said Premises, and also all the estate, right, title, interest, property claim, or demand whatsoever of us the said Chiefs or any one whatsoever of our said Nation of or unto the said Island and premises, and of, in and to every part and parcel thereof with the appertinances. We have and to hold the said Island, mesnage, tenement, lands, Hereditaments and premises hereby given and granted or mentioned or intended to be given and granted unto the said Alex Macomb and William Macomb, their Heirs and Assigns to the only proper use and behoof of them the said Alex Macomb & William Macomb their Heirs and Assigns for ever. And the said Chiefs aforesaid for themselves and in behalf of the whole of their Nation, their heirs executors and administrators do warrant, promise and grant, to and with the said Alex & William Macomb their Heirs and Assigns by these Presents that they the said Alex & William Macomb their Heirs and Assigns shall & lawfully may from henceforth forever after peacefully and quietly have, hold, occupy, possess, and enjoy the said Island mesnage or tenement, Lands Hereditaments and premises hereby given and granted or mentioned or intended to be given and granted, with their & every of their appertinances, free, clear and discharged or well and sufficiently saved kept harmless and undisturbed, of form and against all former and other Gifts, Grants, Burgons, Sales, Frontiers, Settlements, Dower Estates, Entails Rents, Recharges, Arrangages of Rents, Salutes, Judgments, Recognizances, Statutes, decrees, and of the People, Colonies, and of from and against all former and other Titles, Doubts, Charges, and Incumbrances whatsoever, had done or suffered, or to be had done, or suffered by them, the said Chiefs, or by any one whatsoever of the said Nation, their Heirs Executors or Administrators any other person or persons lawfully claiming, or to claim by, from or under them or any or either of them. And by these presents do make this our Act and Deed irrevocable under any pretence whatsoever, and have put the said Alexander Macomb and William Macomb in full possession and Seizure by delivering them a piece of said Island on the premises. In Witness whereof we, the said Chiefs aforesaid for and in behalf of the whole of our Nation of Pottawatomi have unto these presents set our hands and seals at Detroit this Sixth day of July of the Tenth year of the Reigne of our Sovereign Lord, George the Third by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King &c &c. And of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred & seventy six
 476


In presence of
 J. Sidouchang
 Dr. J. Farmer

Kewitsonne 

Cocoutan or Jon 

Mecoo 

Choya & Sheakubra 

Mewanayua 

Manaboto 

Megua 

Lonafhe 

Jagonebi 

Aphaa 
 Nautewah 

Mudaga 

Nedasha 

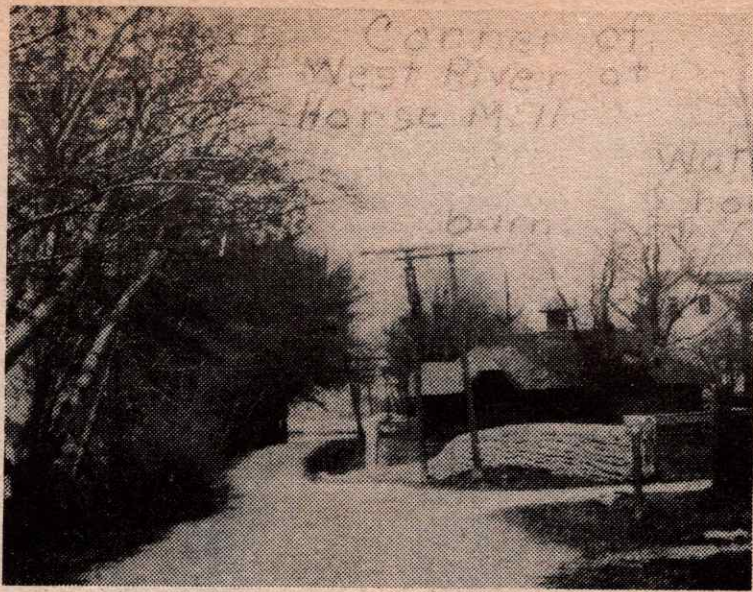
Banocahel 

Ohan 

Registered in the Register of Detroit No. 2 folio
 64195
 W. Macomb & A. Macomb

This Deed was acknowledged
 One of the Chiefs of the Pottawatomi
 Nation before me J. De Cuyster
 Council 1780
 Majoral More Delivered
 One Copy to Macomb 1776
 W. Macomb





THE CURVE OF West River Road at the north end of Grosse Ile looked like this in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The Cameron D. Waterman home (formerly Keith home) once stood just south of Horsemill. Here Waterman brought his bride to Grosse Ile in 1879. The house burned about 1900. A wealthy gentleman farmer, Waterman had barns located in the gully. His ferry dock at the foot of Horsemill was busy transporting horses, wagons, farm machinery and later cars to the mainland by a scow towed by a launch.

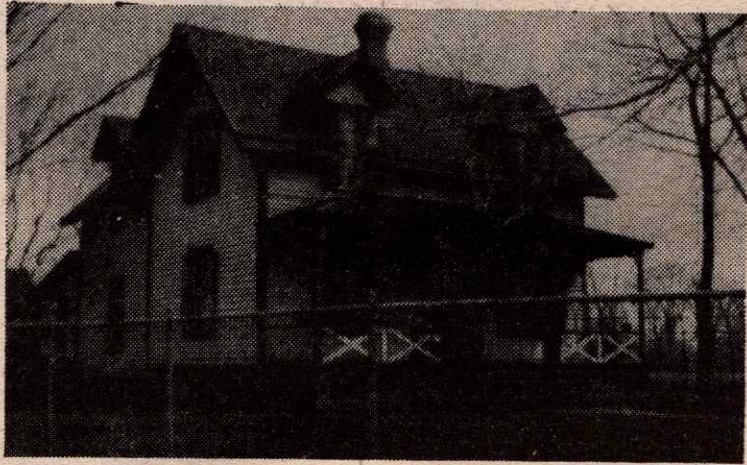
Waterman financed the first telephone cable to Grosse Ile in 1890. The cable enabled two families to be on a party line.

The Waterman boys invented the outboard motor and tested the first model, an adaptation of a motorcycle engine, in the Detroit River waters off the farm. Patents to the engine later became the property of Evinrude.

(Data from Tour Guide to Grosse Ile. Photo from the Grosse Ile Historical Museum.)

Waterman Farm

1870 - 1910



THIS IS A farm house on the Waterman farm.



Island Beautification Committee

STRIVING TO FULFILL OUR THREE GOALS

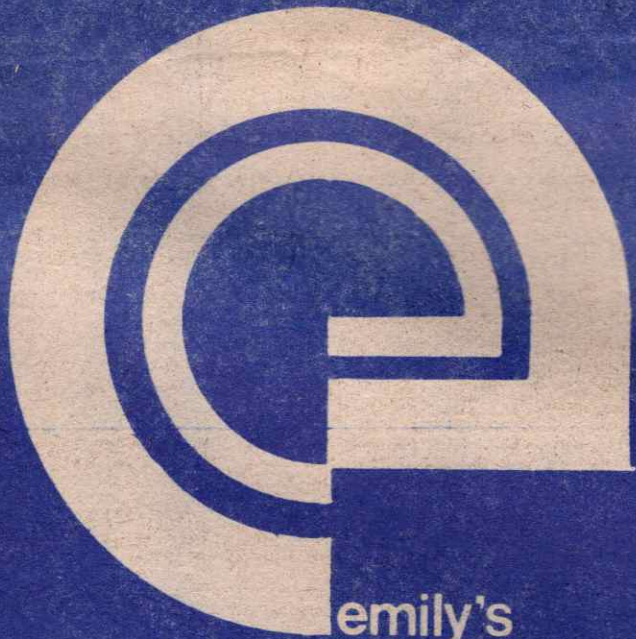
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(to preserve Grosse Ile's natural beauty)
- ★ *Recycling:*
rather than wasting our national resources.
- ★ *Anti-Litter:*
(to Keep the Island Clean)

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We, the People of Grosse Ile, Own an Airport

Today's islanders look south to a onetime farm and see an airport that they own.

On April 5, 1971, the 604-plus acres were transferred from the federal government to Grosse Ile Township.

Prefacing this was a yearlong period of indecision about what would happen to the onetime Navy Air Base.

Some wanted it for a community college; the Coast Guard

wanted a part for a rescue base. Wayne County Road Commission wanted it for an airport to relieve the load of small planes at Metro Airport.

Grosse Ile had first choice after federal agencies turned it down. Residents approved a \$750,000 bond issue in 1968 to give the new airport initial funds to make repairs and begin operations as a general service airport. The township won the ownership.

Arthur Schultz, who had

started at the base as a cadet in 1939 and returned as a base commander, became chairman of the first Airport Commission. He was a retiree living on the island at that time.

Today, "Bud" Quinn manages the airport, and the industrial park section that once contained the Navy barracks, recreation building and mess hall.

Operating on a pay-as-you-go basis and with some cash advances from the township, the airport has made repairs, done some improvements and stayed in the black financially.

All this was done without tapping the \$750,000 bond issue voters had given the Airport Commission eight years ago.

The Municipal Airport is home today to 140 planes of various types.

The first all-talking motion picture, "The Lights of New York," was previewed at the Strand Theater in New York City on July 6, 1928. Starring Cullen Landis and Helene Costello and produced by Warner Brothers, this film was a follow-up to the studio's introduction of sound in the "Jazz Singer" a year earlier. It was instrumental in creating public demand for sound movies and the resulting demise of the silent film by 1930. Motion picture equipment dating from the beginning of this typically American industry is on display in the communications section of the Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn.

In the industrial part are 33 various businesses and industries. These vary from metal fabricators, pelletizing equipment, machine shops, plastic and furniture industries, casket manufacture, heating and cooling, to a number of aircraft-

related businesses plus a racquet club.

With a staff of five full-time and six part-time persons, the airport operated this year on a \$665,000 budget—most of that went into capital improvements.

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THIS 1970 PHOTO records four of the original founders of the Grosse Ile Historical Society. Mr. and Mrs. William W. Crebs, left, Ile historian Miss Isabella E. Swan, and Edward DeMille Campbell (now deceased) were among those presented scrolls as society founders. Pat Coakley, president of the Historical Society, presented the scrolls.



Once upon a time...

At age 18 and with capital of \$50, A.B. Milkins started his boyhood dream: the A.B. Milkins Jewelry Store.

The store was founded in 1905 in a so-called "Flat Iron" building west side of Biddle Avenue, Wyandotte, between Eureka Road and Orange Street.

So that every penny could go into stock for his store, Mr. Milkins walked one way to Detroit each week to pick up supplies and rode the street car home.

Married in 1910 to Mary H. Czirr, A.B. Milkins and his wife had their first son, Burdette A., in 1913 in the same room in which the father was born at the family homestead at Pine and Third street.

In 1914, Milkins moved the business and his home to 27 Biddle Ave., in the Marx Theatre building, later called the Rialto Theatre. It was located at the northwest corner of Biddle and Sycamore Streets.

One show window at this site was in the lobby of the theatre; the other faced Biddle Avenue. Adding popularity to the business, especially for young people attending the movies, was an ice cream and candy parlor.

In 1921, Milkins bought out the Skeman Jewelry Store at 31 Biddle, the same location held today by the store. The number is changed to 3160 Biddle.

Burdette A. Milkins operated the business during his dad's retirement and until the senior Milkins' death in 1955. Since he grew up with jewelry and spent much of this time in his dad's store, Burdette learned to assist customers at an early age.

When Burdette died in 1965, the firm was carried on by Douglas, Bruce and Virginia Bruce Milkins.

In 1973, the company acquired Yoas Jewelers, 13 Washington St., Monroe, MI.

The family has lived on Grosse Ile since 1951.

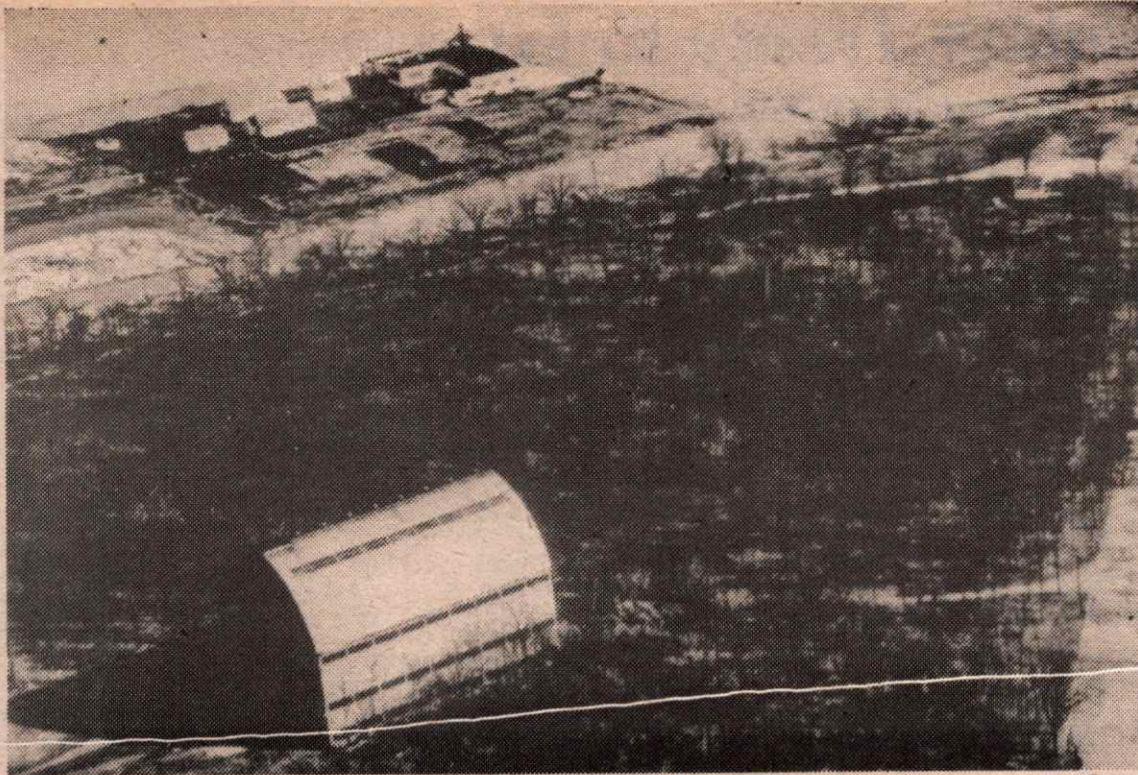
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ONE OF THE FEW available photos of the ZMC-2 hangar is this one loaned by T.J. Doyle, ADC, USN. It shows what the bay area part of the former Navy Air Station looked like in 1930 before considerable development occurred. At the center right is the seaplane hangar and barracks. You are looking south toward Lake Erie in this photo.

Will-O-Wisp One of Many Legends

According to an old legend, a will-o-the-wisp once lived in the marshy swamp area at the northeastern end of the island.

Many a stranger to the area was said to have sought a house and walked toward the distant light only to perish in the quicksand in the area.

One night, a young couple left their home for just a short time and left their small baby alone. The will-o-the-wisp visited the home in their absence and when the family returned, their baby looked like a shriveled up cat or monkey.

It was only through "long nights of prayer" that the spell of the will-o-the-wisp was undone and the baby was returned to human form.

All-Metal Blimp Brought Air-Age

By MEG BREMER JONES
Editorial Coordinator

On Aug. 20, 1929, all eyes turned skyward over Grosse Ile.

Word had spread fast that day that the ZMC-2 was about to fly for the first time.

The ZMC-2 was an experimental all-metal dirigible that, as time passed, proved to be the only all-metal, non-rigid blimp of its kind ever built in the world.

The day was exciting, too, because at long last Grosse Ile residents could see what had

been going on inside a huge all-metal hangar with corrugated sides and roof.

Shortly after the blimp exited the hangar it was aloft. Ralph Upson, a record-setting balloonist and designer who had had the idea for an all-metal dirigible, saw his dream accomplished.

Designated the ZMC-2 by the U.S. Navy, the blimp was delivered to the Navy at Lakehurst, N.J., in 1929.

The 90-foot long blimp had a

2,000-cubic-foot capacity. Its covering was thin Duralumin sheets fitted together by an ingenious "sewing machine" that stitched a gas-tight seam in a triple row of thin rivets. The balloon was driven by two, 85-horsepower Warner engines.

The ZMC-2 was faster and had greater load-carrying capabilities than fabric-covered airships twice her size, Navy officials found.

The blimp served the Navy for (See All-Metal, Page 12)

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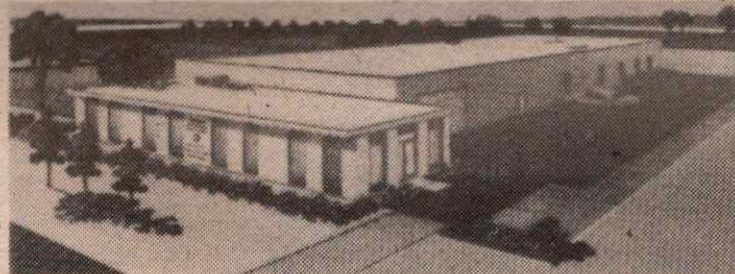
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Greek Architecture Marked Olds Estate

(Editor's note: Memories of Grosse Ile in the early 1900s are recaptured in interviews by Camera staffers. The Olds Estate on Elba Island is foremost among memories of Violet (Vi) Carpenter Oldani, now of Trenton. Her father was with Michigan Agricultural College, East Lansing, when summoned to plan the landscaping for Olds. The family remained here, and Vi married Anthony G. Oldani, attorney, who died in 1955. She has two children, Mary, and Nancy (Mrs. John) Wolfe of Brighton. Mrs. Oldani was a school board secretary four years prior to her marriage, took island census and served on election boards. She is a member of the Historical Society and a life member of the Garden Club.)

By JEAN BURNS
It was Ransom E. Olds who built the first automobile factory in Detroit in 1899. . a factory that mass-produced the low-priced (\$650) 1901 runabout and started Detroit on its career as motor capital of the world.

Early in the 1900s, Olds purchased land at the southern end of Grosse Ile that included portions of the Louis Groh farm and the old stone quarry.

Also included was property on Elba Island where Olds built a

large summer home. one of a number of residences that the automobile magnate owned in various parts of the country.

Since the Olds estate was located on Elba Island, it was named Elba Mar.

The mansion, with long lower windows and cornices at the upper windows, was among the early colonial type introduced into this country from England. It had Greek influence noted in the Corinthian colonnades forming the front porticos.

The entrance hall had black and white marble floors with arched openings leading into hallways.

In most of the 17 large rooms, the interiors were decorated using distinct makes and nationalities of furnitures in compatible periods and styles.

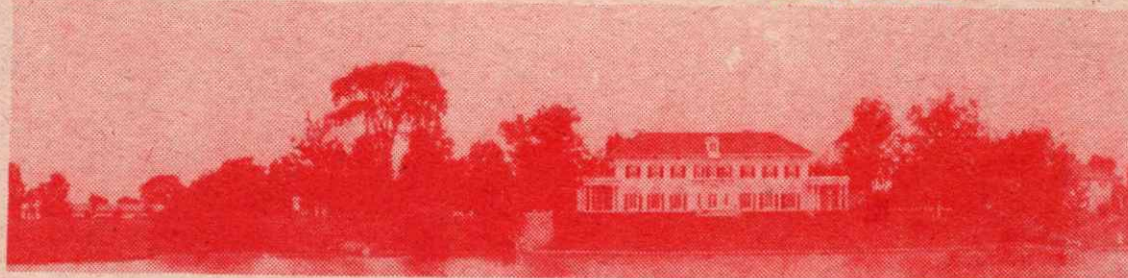
In the main drawing room, elaborate carved beams supported the ceiling with a deep frieze at the top of the panelled walls. The carved mantle piece was of Italian marble over the open fireplace. The furniture was mostly Chippendale. Also in this room was a pipe organ with its console. The pipes were installed above the curved marble stairway in the main hall.

The dining room featured Sheraton furniture but the moldings of cornices, doors and windows were conventional Colonial design.

In the sun room, with glass-panelled walls on three sides, willow furniture was upholstered in gay chintzes. Among the 17 rooms were a dance hall, billard hall and library.

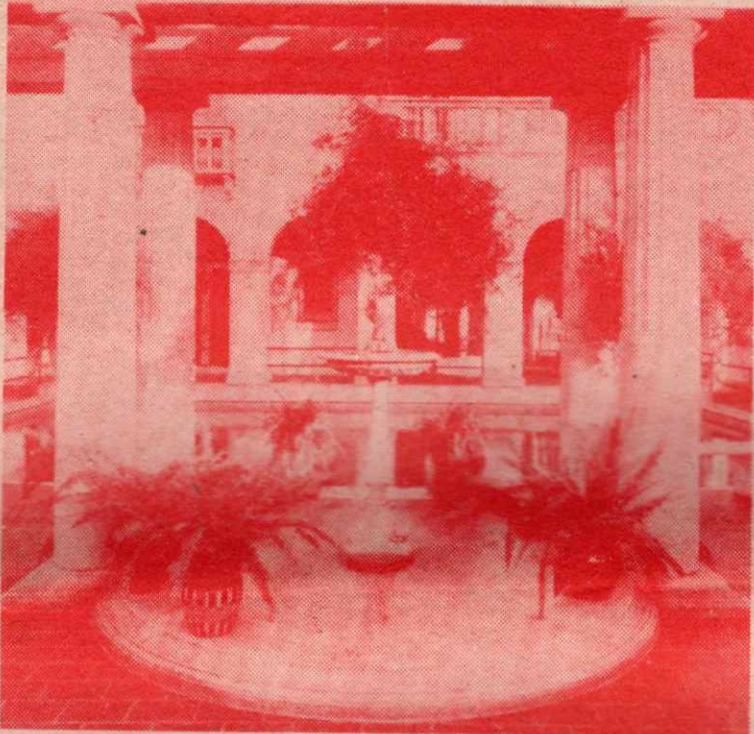
The beauty of the grounds was important to Mr. Olds.

Leading from the house to the (See Estate, Page 20)



LANDSCAPING was carefully designed at the R.E. Olds mansion, the land in front and on either side sweeping out in broad lines of velvety lawns to the banks overlooking Lake Erie and the Detroit River.

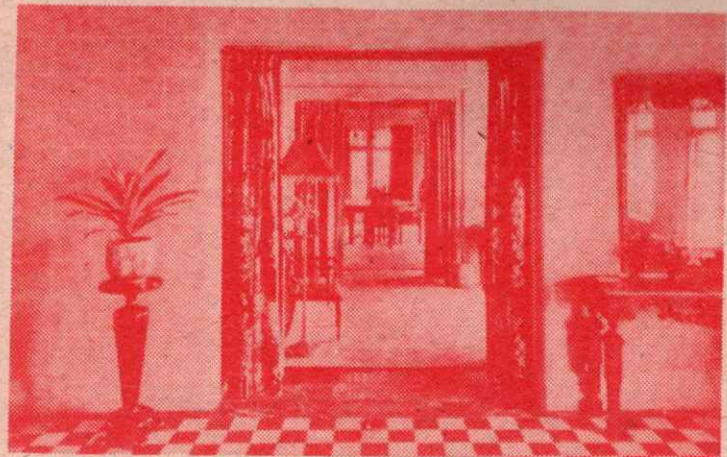
Photos loaned by Vi Oldani)



THE PERGOLA, beautifully decorated with potted trees and ferns, overlooked the large swimming pool adjacent to the home.



THE GARDENS of 'Elbamar,' the name that Olds gave to his island home, were particularly attractive and well laid out by Mrs. Violet Oldani's father who was brought from Michigan Agricultural College (now MSU) to design the landscaping.



FROM A HALLWAY of black and white marble flooring, one walked into this delightful living room with a renaissance influence. The carved mantel piece was of Italian marble. Furniture was predominantly Chippendale designs.

Vi Oldani Reminisces . . .

"No, I was not born on the Olds Estate, but I lived there as a little girl. We came to Grosse Ile in 1918 when the house was under construction.

"When the shell of the house was up, a huge camp for the workers had bunkhouses and there was a cook house where the men were fed three times a day."

"Because so many unique things were being put into the

house, some workmen were specialists like the men who built the marble fireplace.

"My father was the landscape gardener. We lived in one house on the property. A male secretary to Mr. Olds lived in another house.

"There was a huge boathouse," Mrs. Oldani recalled. The yacht

(See Estate, Page B-20)

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24 Years of Parochial School Education Ended in '71

By JEAN BURNS

Sacred Heart School on Parke Lane was completed in the summer of 1947 and the first classes were held that fall.

Teachers were provided by the School Sisters of Notre Dame, a teaching order founded in Europe in 1597. The motherhouse of the order was established in 1950 in Milwaukee, Wis.

Eight classrooms were planned for the school but only three were in use the first year for grades one through six. The enrollment for the school year 1947-1948 was 102 pupils.

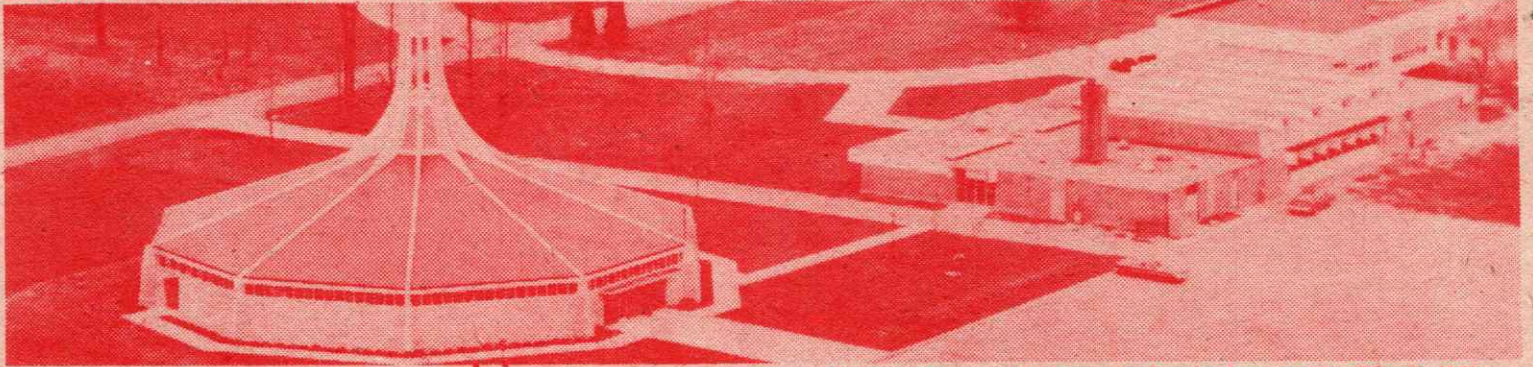
Sister M. Samuel was named the Superior. She was assisted by three other sisters...two as

teachers and the other was the housekeeper. The sisters lived in the convent which was built in

1947 at the southeast corner of Church Road and Parke Lane. The present convent which is

for Sunday masses and also as a parish hall for special occasions. Another milestone occurred in

were provided when the cafeteria was opened in 1961 and the school library was opened in 1962.



FROM THE EARLY 1800s to today, island Catholics have worshiped in varied buildings—first a home, then a onetime school before construction of permanent edifices. Today's Sacred Heart Church is 10-sided with a center altar. Beside it is Sacred Heart School which served the

parish for 24 years before closing in June, 1971. The building at the far left (not showing) was erected as a home for the religious teachers. It now is a nursery school. At the upper left is Parke Lane Elementary School.

further south of Parke Lane was built in 1957.

Twelve girls and eight boys were in the first eighth grade graduating class in June, 1950.

In June, 1949, the Rev. Father Charles Gentner became assistant pastor of Sacred Heart and he worked with the men of the Holy Name Society to raise funds for a locker-shower room at the room of the school which was constructed in 1950. At the same time, athletic equipment and improved playfields were prepared for the school athletic programs.

In 1961 four more classrooms and the combination gymnasium-cafeteria were built. The gym was used as a temporary church

1961. The Sisters were given a station wagon by the Rev. Father Edward J. Hurley. Two of the sisters enrolled in drivers education classes and received permission to wear a new type of head-dress to eliminate the "blindness." The fenders of the wagon were soon crumpled from icy trips on Island roads. The Sisters were playfully teased and in 1963, Father Hurley gave them a new car. (No mention is found in church records about the fate of car number two.)

In 1965, 427 pupils were enrolled and 48 pupils were graduated from the eighth grade. There were six sisters and four lay teachers at that time.

Cooperation with the township schools is evident in the history of Sacred Heart School. Hot lunches

Donations for the library were made by parishioners and a benefit performance was staged by the Islanders to raise funds for the books for the new library.

Grosse Ile township school district buses were used to transport children to Sacred Heart School as well as to the public schools on the island.

The Synod of 1968 of the Archdiocese of Detroit had provided for the creation of a parish council. In June, 1971, the Parish Council of Sacred Heart sadly decided that it was no longer possible to continue operation of the school because of the loss of available religious teachers and also the financial position of the parish.

Jane DeFoe
INTERIOR DESIGNER

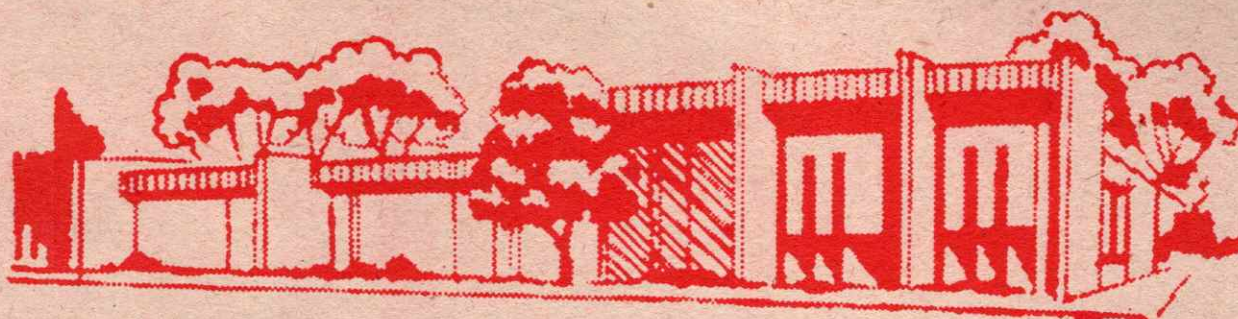
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Gray's Landing, Hollow: This Historic East River Road Site Has Had Many Labels

To many who grew up on the island from infancy, this is a memorable spot. Of course, it is the most historic spot for Grosse Ile's Twin Bicentennial.

The Treaty Tree Monument, erected in 1906, has been maintained over the years by Boy and Girl Scouts and by citizens until Dunbar and Sullivan developed the retaining wall and the landscaping around it. Now the Grosse Ile Garden Club keeps the flowers planted and tended in spring and summer and the landscaping is taken care of by club members.

The monument marks the spot where the Macomb brothers—Alexander and William—negotiated the purchase of Grosse Ile from the Potawatomi Indians on July 6, 1776. (Of course, the actual paper work is believed to have occurred in Detroit.)

At the waterfront, once called the Hollow or Gray's Landing before that at the foot of Grays Drive, a commuter passenger boat operated. When called the Hollow, the site was a popular swimming spot for youngsters until the Michigan Department of Health clamped a no-swimming order there.

Now walled off, the landing has been used by Dunbar and Sullivan crews to commute to and from Stoney Island. Still operating from here is the "Halfbreed," a tug in use for 48 years.



THOUSANDS of islanders pass this site daily without realizing its historical background. It has had numerous names . . . all descriptive of its use. Photo from Grosse Ile Historical Museum.

(See Related Focus, Page D-24)

A part-supply, part-crew and part-tugboat, the Halfbreed's crane was used during the Prohibition Days to retrieve many scuttled liquor bearing cars.


(left) which was popular in many spots around the island in the 1800s and early 1900s. Part of the wall which edged the Lyons farm (at the top of the knoll at left) still is visible along Grays Drive.

Dunbar and Sullivan uses Stoney Island for headquarters for its dredging equipment. The firm does dredging all over the midwest.

The stone stairway leading to the Lyons farm is gone. The land has been sloped and the new pillared home is occupied by Mrs. John J. Bidwell. The sloping bank now is landscaped as a rock garden.


Note the quarried rock wall

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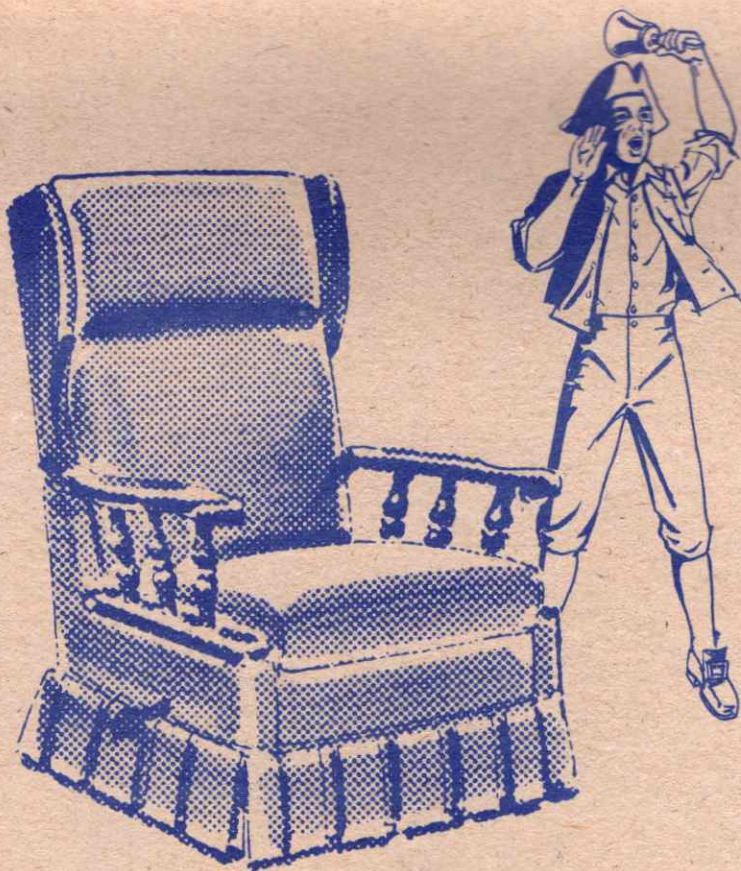
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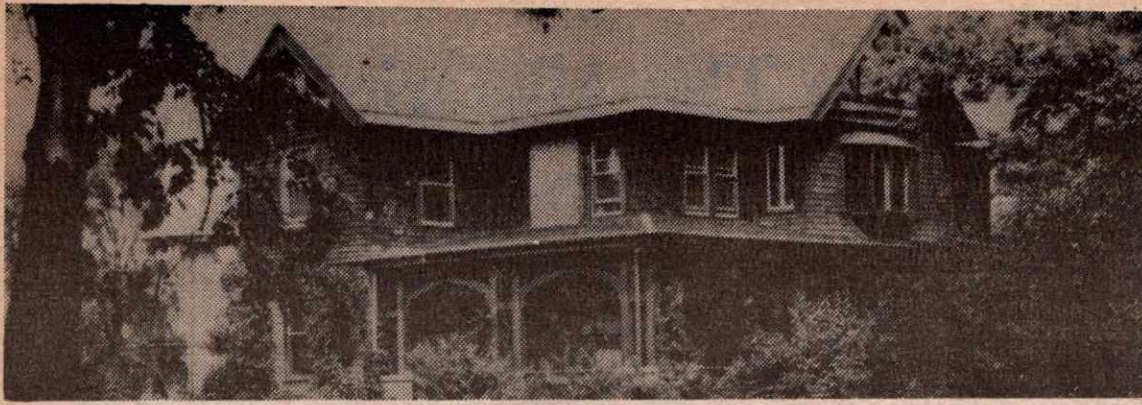
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A DEEP LAWN in front of the East River Elementary School once was the site of this home, known as the George Balch home. Those who attended school at the 1911 building in the 1920s and 1930s will remember this home. Prior to the Balch home, the land was owned by the

William S. Biddles. It is not certain what happened or where the Biddle home was moved. All of the stately homes between the East River Road school property and Grays Drive have been replaced in the past 30 or more years.

Major General Biddle: West Point Superintendent

Major General John Biddle (1850-1936) was the person who told the astonished people of Guam, following the Spanish-American War, that they now belonged to the United States of America.

Road Elementary School. John was age 6 at that time.

For 12 years, his family lived in Philadelphia, Grosse Ile and the famous Biddle House in Detroit. While on the island, John Biddle attended Rev. Moses Hunter's boys' school and later the old schoolhouse located where the present 1911 school now is.

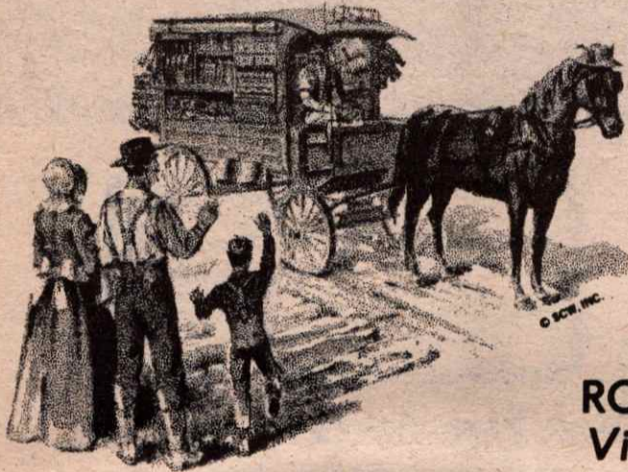
A native Detroitier whose father, William S. Biddle, received large grants of land in Wyandotte after the War of 1812, became a part-time islander when his family bought the Balch place that once was located on the lot south of the East River

His advanced education came at Heidelberg University in Germany, University of Michigan and West Point. During the Spanish-American War, he was a lieutenant-colonel and chief engineer of the U. S. Volunteers in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

Gen. Biddle's later posts included commissioner of the District of Columbia; Army observer with the Austro-Hungarian troops in Poland and Austria and superintendent of West Point. In 1917-18, he was assistant chief of staff of the U. S. Army.

During World War I, he commanded the American troops in London and took charge of arranging food for all American troops.

Following the war, Gen. Biddle had command posts at Camp Travis, Texas, and Camp Custer, Mich. He retired in 1920 to spend the remainder of his life traveling. He died in January, 1936, and was buried at West Point, N. Y.



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Bicentennial Readings

A book to read for Bicentennial history--"HATCHET IN THE SKY"--a quote from Chief Pontiac.

The book retells the history of old Detroit and Fort Pontchartrain back in the middle 1760's. It delves into the culture of the French, Indian and English as told by a young Scotsman. It's moving, intriguing and beautifully written with a realism that takes your breath away.

I hope that Simon and Schuster will see their way to reissuing it. It's now out of print.

1679 Mass Probably Was First in Southern Michigan

By JEAN BURNS

It was in 1679 that LaSalle sailed his 45-ton frigate, The Griffen, up the Detroit River and anchored just off Grosse Ile.

The Rev. Father Louis Hennepin, the Catholic priest on board ship, was brought to shore and probably said Mass in the area of the present rectory. The

Mass, said on Aug. 11, 1679, was the first Mass offered in Michigan south of St. Ignace.

By the 1800s, the hub of Catholic activity on the island was centered at the Mansion House, the large home on East River between Horsemill and Church Roads, which was owned by the Macomb family.

wooden church served the parishioners of St. Anne's parish. A stove, located near the rear of the church, was heated by chunk...lumpy pieces of wood.

In 1895, Father James Cahalan was named the first resident pastor of St. Joseph's Church in Trenton and Grosse Ile was named a mission of that parish. Father Cahalan would say early Mass in Trenton and then walk across the ice or the railroad bridge to the island.

A more permanent structure was needed for a church. During the years 1914 and 1915, parishioners worked carrying stones from Stoney Island to build the stone chapel which stands at the corner of Church and East River roads. The stone chapel was called Sacred Heart and was finally finished in 1916. In 1920, the first resident priest, The Rev. Father Francis Van Antwerp, was appointed for Sacred Heart parish. And then, after a series of fund-raising events, the rectory was built in 1925.

The Rev. Father George Pare was the pastor when the school was built in 1947. The Rev. Father Alfred H. Sadler directed the building of the Sister's convent in 1957 and The Rev. Father Edward J. Hurley was the pastor in 1959 when additions were made on the original school building.

Father Hurley also directed the planning of the new church.

George Diehl was chosen as the architect. The 10-sided building was tastefully designed in a modern style with a center altar. The stained glass windows were designed and crafted by Margaret Bouchez Cavanaugh to symbolize the waters around Grosse Ile. The stone chapel was renamed St. Anne's.

The Synod of 1968 of the Archdiocese of Detroit provided for more participation by the laity and soon the parish council was established at Sacred Heart with elected parishioners working with the pastor on church problems.

The parish now numbers 600 families and uses St. Anne's Chapel for weekday Masses and Sacred Heart Church for Masses on weekends.

The Rev. Fr. Edmond A. Fournier was appointed pastor of Sacred Heart Church in 1971 and is still serving the parish.

Road Names Change

Could you give directions to three streets on the island... Woodward, McCarty and Lagoon Avenue? An old map shows the name of Meridian as Woodward, McCarty is now Horsemill and Lagoon Avenue was the approach from Meridian to the toll bridge.

Happy Birthday

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Families living on the island gathered on weekends when the priest would come to hear confessions on Saturday nights. Then the families would sleep on the lawn or floors of the home, depending on the weather.

After the mass on Sunday, the priest who had traveled from Canada by boat or by walking across the ice, would leave to visit other isolated communities before returning to Canada. The gathered families would then prepare for the Sunday dinner before returning to their homes.

Finally it was decided that a church should be built.

Mrs. Thornton Brodhead and Mrs. John Wendell knew of the abandoned school building on Thorofare near Church Road which had been built in 1854. Volunteers provided teams of horses to move the frame building to the East River site where the rectory now stands.

For the next 46 years, the little



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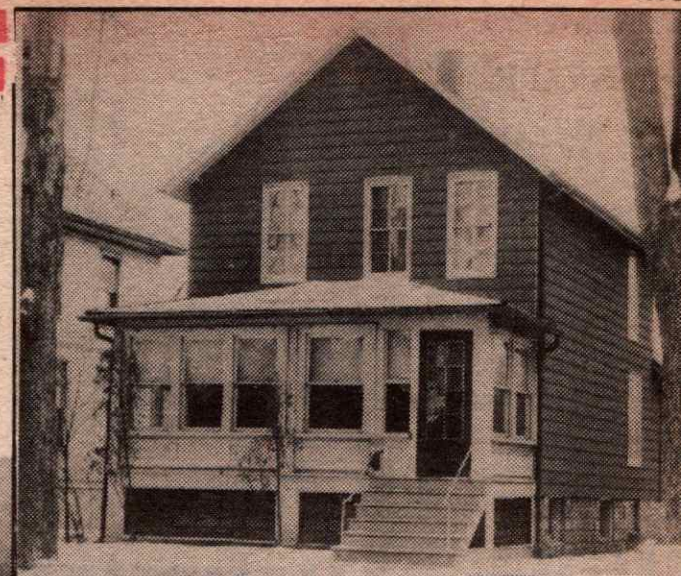
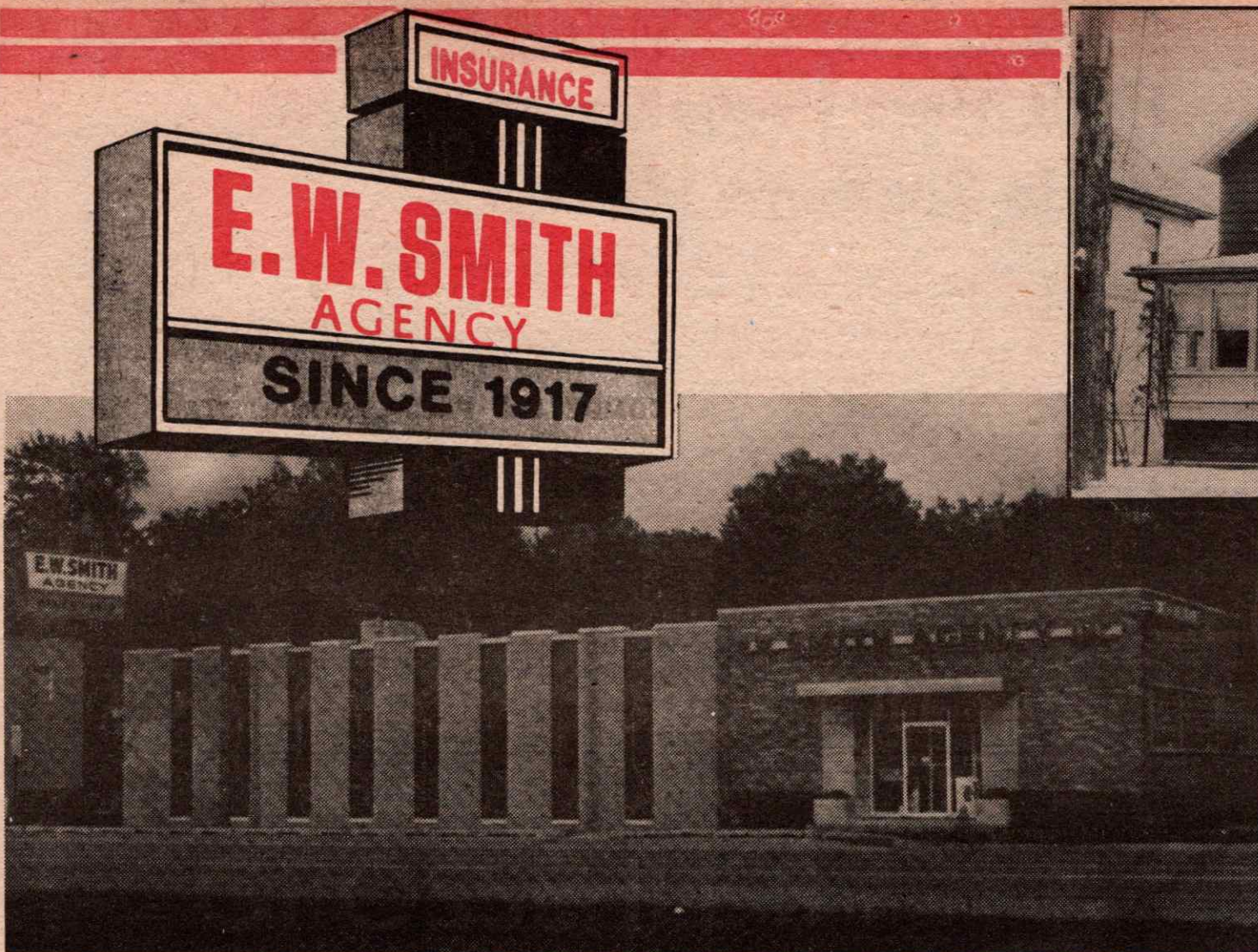
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Edgar Smith joined his father's firm and was president of the company until 1967.

Now E.W. Smith Agency is planning a large expansion program to better serve this area.

A new Southeast Michigan branch office in Flat Rock will be opened later this year.



Robert Gorst



Ralph Levely



Richard Zellner



Robert Hook



Morris Davis



David Butler



Victor Bazzani



Morris Sager



Gary Carevich



Walter Dever



Joseph Jarosz



Richard Williams



Stephen Sholtes



Jack Tallman



Robert Smith



Michael Livernois



Stanley Kwasiborski

All-Metal Blimp

(Continued from Page 4)

10 years before being dismantled at Lakehurst.

The blimp was built under a \$300,000 U.S. government contract for the Navy. Another all-metal dirigible was discussed, but before it was ordered the

world's worst depression had set in. That was the end to construction of all-metal dirigibles.

The ZMC-2 was conceived by a group of people in the automobile industry who had formed the Aircraft Development Corp. in 1922.

The promoter behind the corporation was Detroit's Carl B. Fritsche who headed a pioneer air club named "Les Voyageurs." Remember this was the period when air flight was gaining fascination in America. It was the time of Charles A. Lindbergh.

Fritsche's club took over the Olds mansion on Elba Island in May, 1925. The building was named "Chateau Voyageur."

Among auto men in Fritsche's club was Ralph Upson who had the novel idea for an all-metal dirigible.

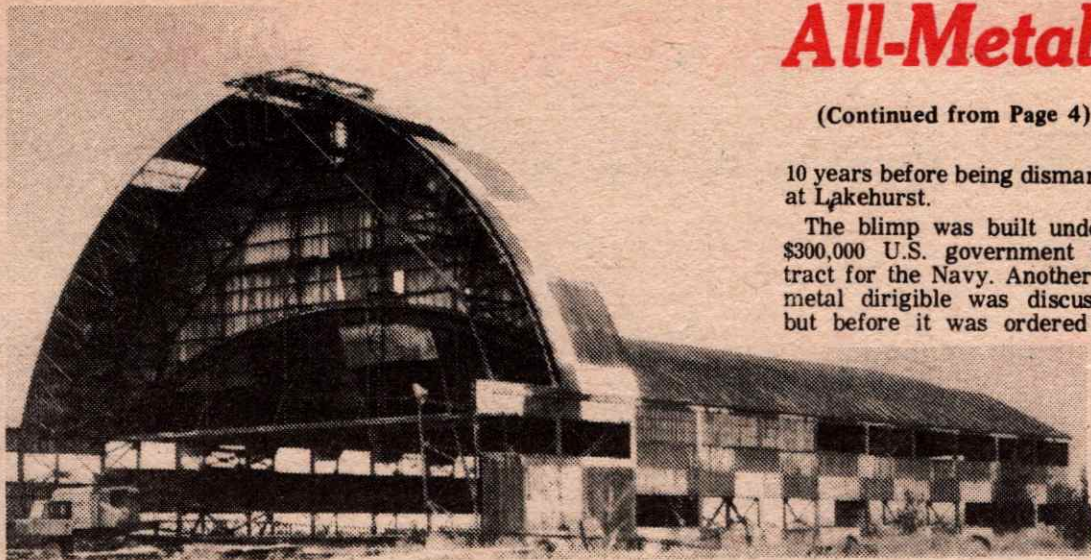
This group built the huge hangar at the southern tip of Grosse Ile where, under a \$300,000 contract from the Navy in August, 1926, work started on the all-metal blimp.

The dirigible-abandoned hangar had miscellaneous uses in the ensuing years. Island youngsters had roller-skating parties on the cement floor. It served as storage for the Navy and other uses.

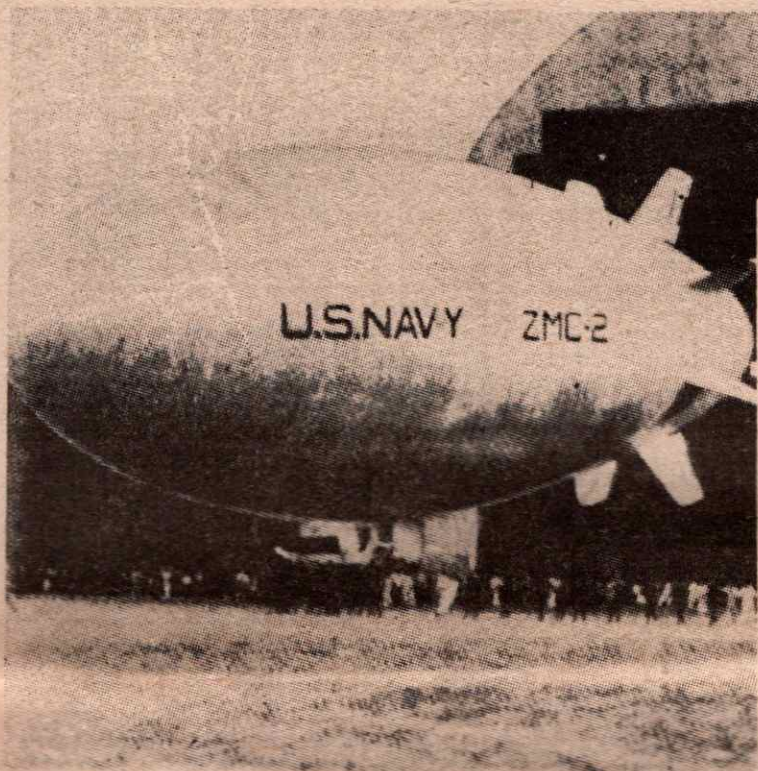
In 1976, the hangar still is being used. But is a bowling alley.

In 1960, it was purchased, dismantled and moved from the Naval Air Station to West Road, Trenton, west of Fort Street. Additions were made to the central portion of the structure.

Today, people would hardly recognize the ZMC-2 hangar as Trentwood Lanes in Trenton.



THE HUGE HANGER near the southern tip of the Municipal Airport is the building in which the only all-metal dirigible in the world was constructed. Known as the ZMC-2, it was built for the U.S. Navy and was headquartered at Lakewood, N.J.



THE ZMC-2 leaves its maternity ward on the Municipal Airport making its first flight in August, 1929. At full throttle, the dirigible could travel at 70 mph.



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Historic Homes Put Mile-Long Sector on National Maps

A row of 11 buildings—homes, a chapel, a former railroad depot—give Grosse Ile the distinction of having more nationally historic structures than any other Down-river community.

Register by the National Park Service of the Department of Interior in Washington, D.C., in January, 1975, were the buildings along East River Road that stretch from St. James Episcopal Church chapel south of Parkway and north to encompass a mile-long stretch.

Islanders have long considered this group of homes as historic. All of them have been well preserved.

First of the buildings to gain national recognition was St. James Episcopal Church chapel, the brown church that long served as the Episcopalian's worship sanctuary.

The chapel was placed on the National Historic Register five years ago.

When the group of nationally historic sites were announced 18 months ago, Miss Isabella E. Swan, Grosse Ile's historian commented:

The recognition of the St. James Chapel by state and national historic preservation officials triggered the national "look" at adjoining buildings. Several years' work was necessary to trace the history of the newest historic buildings before application could be made to Washington, D.C., for the regional recognition, she said.

Four pre-Civil War homes, a railroad depot, five other post-Civil War buildings and the chapel are in this Historic District.

Starting at the northernmost building, the island's historic homes include:

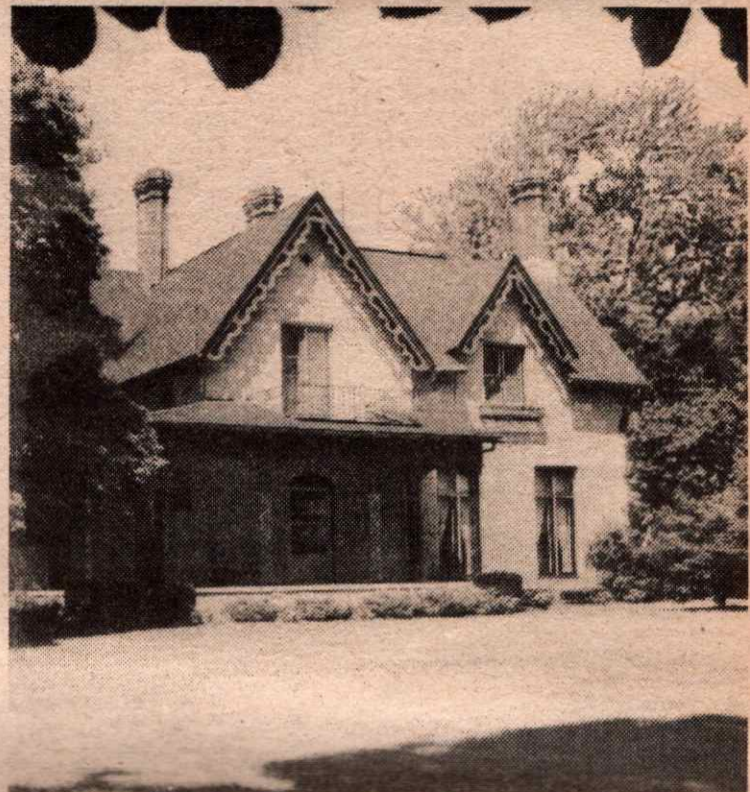
The Douglas House at 24532 East River Road which is now owned by the C.A. Baumanns. The Baumann family has restored the building and has per-

mitted its research by several groups over the years.

A gray stone house, it was built by Circuit Court Judge Samuel Townsend Douglas (who once

Anderson moved into it and lived there until it was sold to the Harry Drakes and later to the Baumanns.

Gordon W. Lloyd, a noted



THE ANTHONY DUDGEON home, built in 1860 and designed by famed architect Gordon Lloyd, is one of the homes along East River Road at Parkway which now are on the National Historic Site Register. The gray stone, the pointed gables and tall chimneys are distinguishing characteristics of the homes of that era.

spelled his name Douglass) in 1859-60. Because circuit judges also sat as Michigan Supreme Court judges in that period, Douglas also was a Supreme Court judge.

The home once was known as "Littlecote" and was the work of architect Gordon Lloyd. For numerous years... and while Mrs. Frederick Pope Anderson lived in the home... the house had no street number of other identity in the public's mind than "Littlecote."

church architect, designed the house in Gothic Revival style. A rustic building in appearance, it has scalloped vergeboards, an ornamental brick chimney that makes it quickly recognizable by passing motorists; and it has an assortment of porches.

Its construction date has been pinned down by letters from Fannie Gray to her father, Horace P. Gray, and the letters are in the Burton Historical Collection in Detroit.

(The Grays formerly lived in

After Douglas' death, Mrs.

(See Historic, Page B-18)

GOOD NEWS FROM THE TOWN CRIER

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Lions' Help to the Blind Is Year-Round Project

Perseverance against tremendous odds might be the Grosse Ile Lions Club's by-word.

Chartered in May, 1972, with 28 members, the club over the next few years lost 75 percent of their members because of company transfers.

When membership got down to seven active workers, Charles Worden, the 1975 president, launched a recruitment drive that boosted the membership drive to 40 "strong."

With such worthy projects as financial help to the Welcome

Home for the Blind, the Michigan Eye Bank, the Leader Dog program in Rochester, Mich., and the Penrickton School for Blind Children in Taylor, the members have strong incentives for keeping the Lions Club going on Grosse Ile.

Among the club's local projects have been support for the Community Center, flags for the schools and Historical Museum, white canes for island residents, an eye glasses program for children, and sponsorship of a Little League Baseball and Fun Day at the Youth Center.

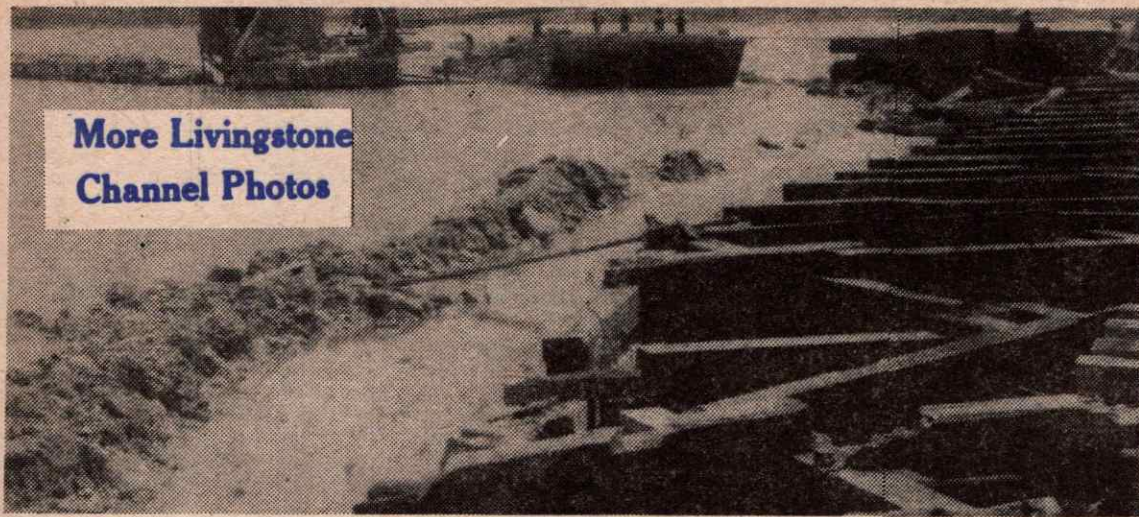
The Lions staged fund-raising projects in the spring such as White Cane Week, April 26-May 2, and a Bicentennial drawing to be held this weekend.

If anyone on the island needs help for their eyes, glasses, white canes, they should contact Dick Quinn (676-5201), Charles Worden (676-2423) or Bill Lowery (675-0417).

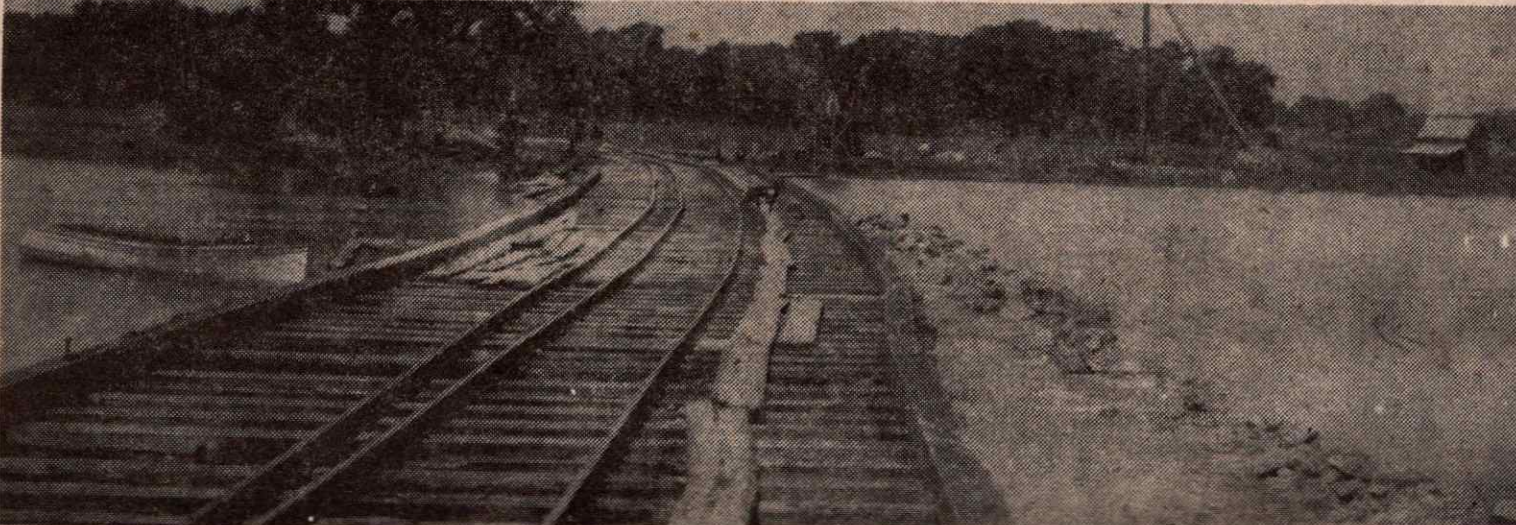
The club meets the second and fourth Wednesday of every month at the Trenton State Bank on Macomb Street. Every other month, the club has a wives and new-member dinner at the Green Oasis, Wyandotte.

Club presidents since the inception of the club included Dave McCulloch, 1972; Joe Guido, 1973; Dale Abbuhl, 1974; Charles Worden, 1975, and William Lowery, 1976.

More Livingstone Channel Photos



AFTER CROSSING Stony Island, the railroad trains were loaded onto a huge barge that transported them to Amherstburg, Ontario, Canada. This is what the dock looked like, looking toward Canada, in 1908 when the dock was being dismantled.



THE CANADA Southern Railway crossed the Detroit River to Stony Island on tracks such as this. This photo was taken in 1908 when the Livingstone Channel was under construction. This

set of tracks shows Stony Island in the background with the tracks leading to the dock where the freight trains connected with barges.



There's a lot of N.A. Mans & Sons on Grosse Ile. We've been serving you for over 75 years and it all started . . .

back in 1900, Nicholas A. Mans began selling coal and lumber with an old wagon and a team of horses. The original yard was located at West Road and Fifth Street in Trenton where the viaduct is today and the buildings consisted of a small store and the stables. The store was moved in 1938 to its present location at West Jefferson and Fifth, and the yard area has since expanded and covers the area between the two sites. For the first half of this century, coal was the main fuel used in homes and local industry, and in 1922 the six large silos were built to accommodate the demand. Although empty today, they still remain a landmark in Trenton.

Business expanded, and the Mans family grew. Nick, Fred, George, and Paul, sons of Nicholas, controlled the firm from the 1930's to the late 1960's. It was through their guidance that the company was molded into the complete home

center concept it is today. The third generation of Mans', Nick, John, and Mike, can now be found at the lumber yard, along with 25 other employees, some who have been with the firm over 20 years.

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Paul Mans - 20 year Island Resident



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When the River Was Dry - -

(See Additional Photos Page B-19)

By MEG BREMER JONES

Downriver—Michigan—industry has worldwide connections because of the Livingstone Channel.

Extending approximately 12 miles from Ballard's Reef Channel past Stoney Island and Bob-Lo Island, the Livingstone Channel in the Detroit River between Grosse Ile and Canada reaches to the deep waters of Lake Erie.

The Rivers and Harbors Act of Congress of March 2, 1907, appropriated \$6,670,950 for the Livingstone Channel work. The cost topped \$10 million when the job was completed. The first deepening was deemed necessary because of the constantly increasing size of keels on ships traversing the Great Lakes and the Detroit River.

Work on the channel started on July 20, 1907, and wound up with a huge celebration at the opening on Oct. 10, 1912. Small boats and large ships moved through the slip cut through the rock over a five-year period.

During those five years of dredging and dynamiting through six miles of limestone rock, work headquarters were centered on Stoney Island.

Here a small colony developed with its own small power plant, machinery repair sheds and storage yards.

Small homes were built for the workmen. One larger building served as a school, dance hall and church. In later years, some of the small buildings were moved across the ice and became the first room of many frame homes on Macomb Street.

To accomplish the dynamiting, workmen had to dam off sections

of the Detroit River to create dry areas.

In "Long Windows," Sid Corbett described the cofferdam project this way:

"Next time you take a ship from Detroit to Buffalo or any Lake Erie port, watch as you enter the banked, straight-away channel leading past Grosse Ile, Sugar Island and Bob-Lo into the open lake. Under your vessel is a deep sheer-sided trough, cut through the rock of the Limestone Crossing—that long-time hazard of Great Lakes shipping.

"It took months to build the side banks, block the ends and pump out the water for further deepening by blasting out the rock bottom. . . The sides were mountain high and rocks rolled down the outer slopes—and dangerous for a boat to approach.

"But in winter, it was different. Once the river froze, you could skate over, climb the high banks and look down inside.

"What a sight! From the top of the bank, the bottom of the cut was 100 feet down—straight down! Gnomelike figures scurried about that bottom. Miniature water falls cascaded down through leaks in the porous limestone walls. Great pumps clanked to keep the cut dry. Rock drills clattered. Winches squalled as huge clamshells came up out of the depths to drop their loads of broken rock atop the ever-rising side banks. It was all a little terrifying and we grew a bit dizzy from the height..."

The project was the largest undertaken at that point in history by the U.S. Government within its territorial limits.

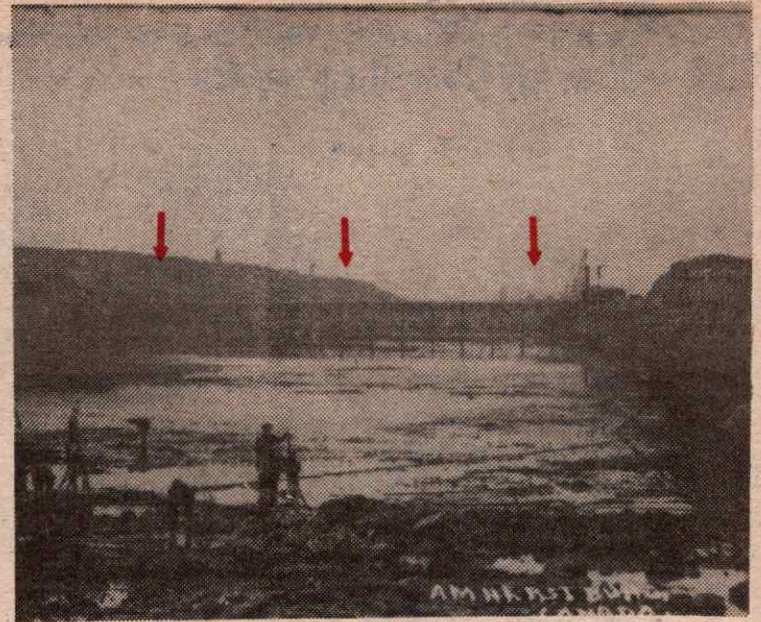
When opened, the channel was named for William Livingstone, president of the Lake Carriers Association and known throughout the midwest by the

Great Lakes shippers. While the channel was under construction, Livingston owned and lived in the historic Dudgeon home at the corner of East River Road and Parkway. A ship bearing Livingstone's name was first through the channel.

The channel served shipping for 20 years when again it had to be deepened to 27 feet for the ever-increasing sizes of ships that plied Great Lakes Waters. This second deepening project, started in July, 1962, and completed in 1963, cost \$3,250,000.

The channels have contributed to the Detroit River's record as the river in the world which carries the greatest tonnage of shipping annually.

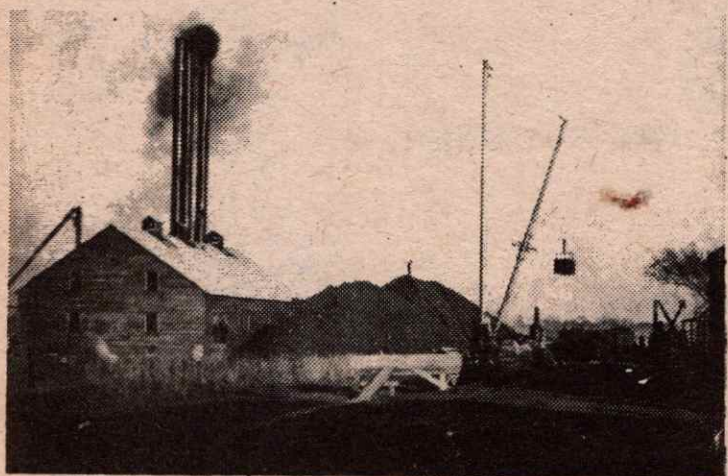
Today ships from Japan, Greece, Norway, Sweden, England and other world ports use the channel bringing worldwide ports and materials to Michiganders' front doors.



DRY DETROIT RIVER? That's what happened during the construction of the Livingstone Channel in 1907-08. A huge coffer dam such as shown here was built and the water was drained out to create a dry river-bottom for the dynamiting. Arrows point to the coffer dam.



SOME 6,000 pounds of dynamite spray Detroit River water sky-high during the 1908 period of deepening the Livingstone Channel.



A MINI-POWER plant operated during the five years of the channel construction, providing power for homes, repair sheds on Stoney Island where workmen lived and worked.

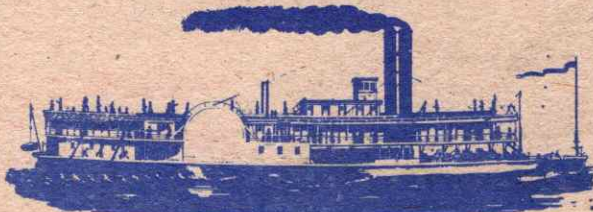
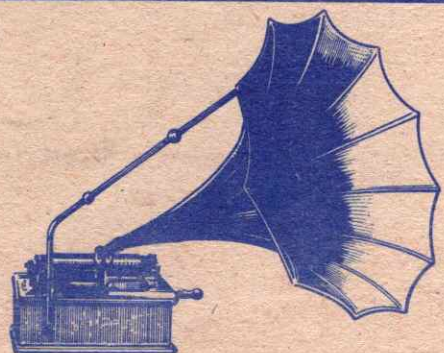
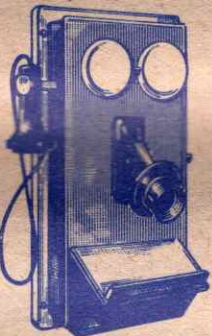
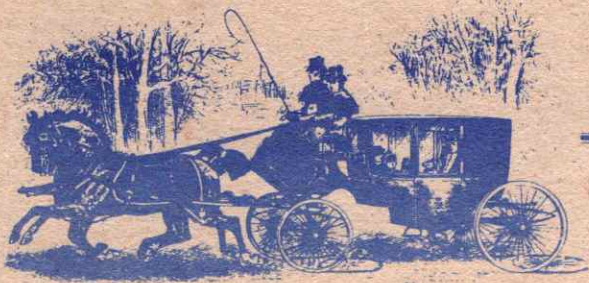


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Historic Homes Are Concentrated on East Side

(Continued from Page 13)
the area south of Macomb Street along East River Road in a home known in the early days as Gray Gables.)

The second home along the stretch is known as the Smith House.

Heinie Smith, husband of Elizabeth Anderson (oldest child of Dr. F.P. Anderson) built this home after the turn of the century. The stone was probably quarried at the airport quarry, Miss Swan said. Smith was a Detroit businessman. The house

sits far back from East River Road, giving it a wide expanse of front lawn.

The William A. Hoeyes, who were the topic in a Camera focus in February, now live in the home. Mr. Hoey owns a barge-tug boat business. This family also has done considerable maintenance to the historic home.

Next historic home is the Anderson House, built in the late 1870s by Dr. Frederick Pope Anderson. Before its completion, however, Dr. Anderson had divorced and married Mary Douglas (daughter of Judge Douglas) and she lived there until her parents died and she moved back into "Littlecote" (mentioned above).

Dr. Anderson, a wealthy physician, entertained lavishly in this home. Mrs. Anderson was one of the first women to attend the University of Michigan. She worked hard for cultural activities on the island.

The senior Frederick S. Glovers lived in this home before their own home was erected on the island. The junior Glover was Grosse Ile township attorney for many years until his retirement several years ago. He has since moved from the island to Illinois.

Currently living in the Anderson House are the Robert F. Peraults.

The "Wedding Cake" house is the Samuel Lewis House. It was built by Samuel Lewis, a Detroit hotel operator, whose younger brother was a onetime Detroit mayor.

Lewis did not live long in the home, but he often was quoted as

saying he "loved it," according to records read by Miss Swan. He called it the warmest house in the wintertime; the coolest in the summertime.

While it now has a wood veneer facing, the house was constructed of brick and covered with the wood. Typically Victorian, the house has Gothic windows, ornamental vergerboards, and board and batten wood construction.

Lewis was president of the Detroit Gas Light Co. and a director of the Detroit Savings Bank.

Subsequent occupants of the home included Kirkland C. Barker, a Detroit tobacco manufacturer who often entertained Gen. Custer in the house; Frank A. Osborne, Sid and Lucy Corbett and the Osborn's daughter and son-in-law, the D. Kenneth Laubs. Now the owners are the Joseph Cummings. Their daughter and son-in-law, the Thomas Sullivans, live in the home.

The Anthony Dudgeon House, built in 1861 as a year-around home by Anthony Dudgeon, a wealthy Detroit insurance businessman, the house has high ceilings and large and open rooms. Gordon Lloyd also was the architect of this house.

Dudgeon was a onetime Monguagon Township supervisor (Grosse Ile was a part of Monguagon Township before Trenton became a village.)

The house was built of limestone taken from the airport quarry (now the Grosse Ile Municipal Airport.)

After the Dudgeons died, the William Livingstones lived in the home. He was known in Great Lakes shipping circles, and the Livingstone Channel in the Detroit River was named for him after it was dug in 1907-11. The house later was occupied by the Fitzhugh Hardcastles, the Robert A. Alexanders, the Earl Browns and now by the Bart E. Bards.

The Railroad Depot at the corner of Parkway and East River Road is another of the historic sites. It now is the Grosse Ile Historical Museum.

Built in 1905, its design is typical of railroad stations of that period. It was built of yellow glazed brick and has a slate roof.

The station has had many uses over the years including Nan Cole's private school; a gift shop; Wayne County library; Grosse Ile Township offices and township school board offices.

The Dallas Norvell House, built about 1849, by Dallas Norvell after his father, the Honorable John Norvell, bought the land. The senior Norvell was a long-time Detroit postmaster and was Michigan's first U.S. Senator. He died in April, 1850.

Stone for the house came from the airport quarry.

Dallas Norvell operated a fishery on Stoney Island that was owned by his wife, a daughter of Samuel Lewis. After the Civil War, Dallas was a Monguagon supervisor. He later moved to Canada. Present owner of the house is Mrs. Dallas S. Kelsey.

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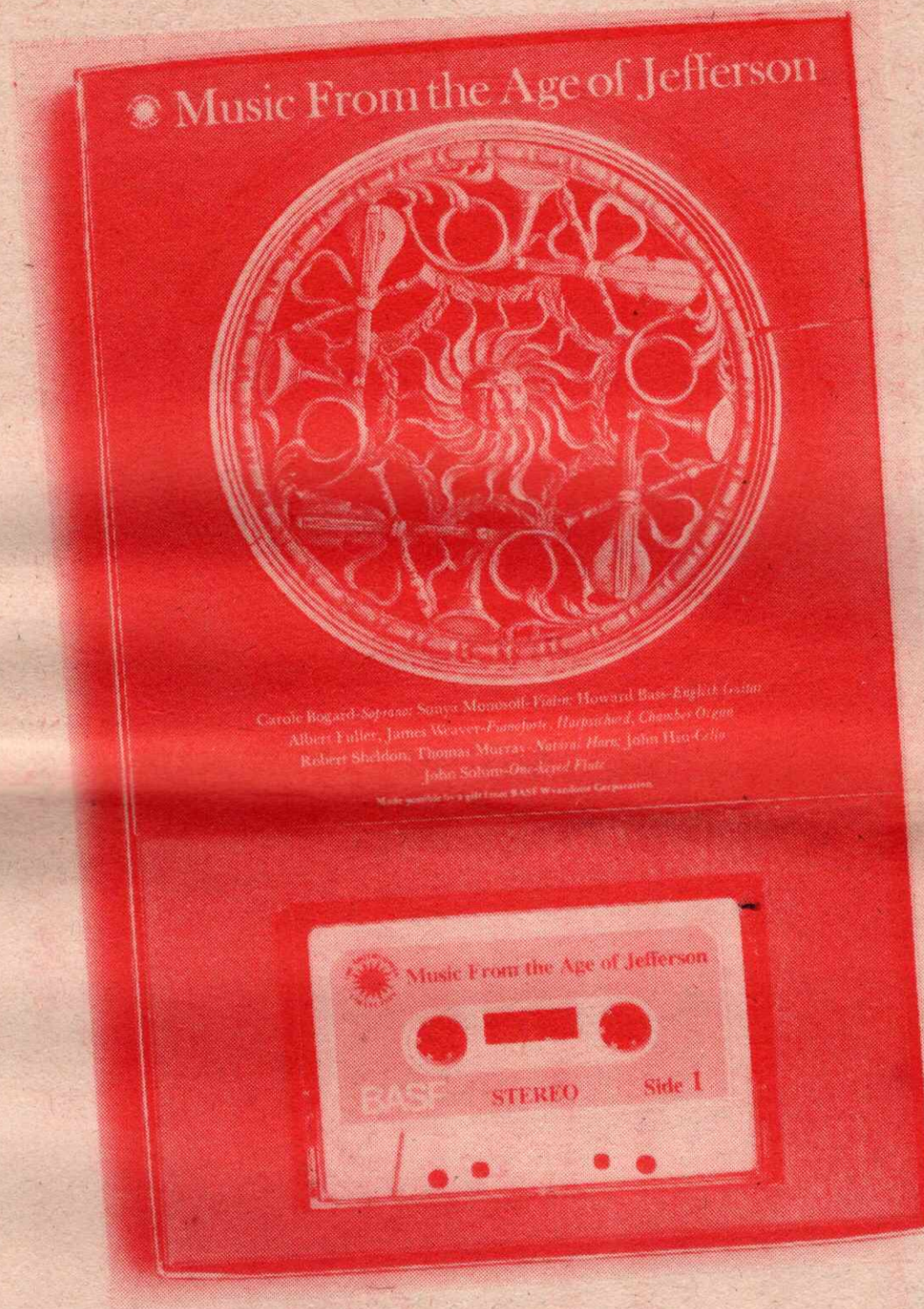
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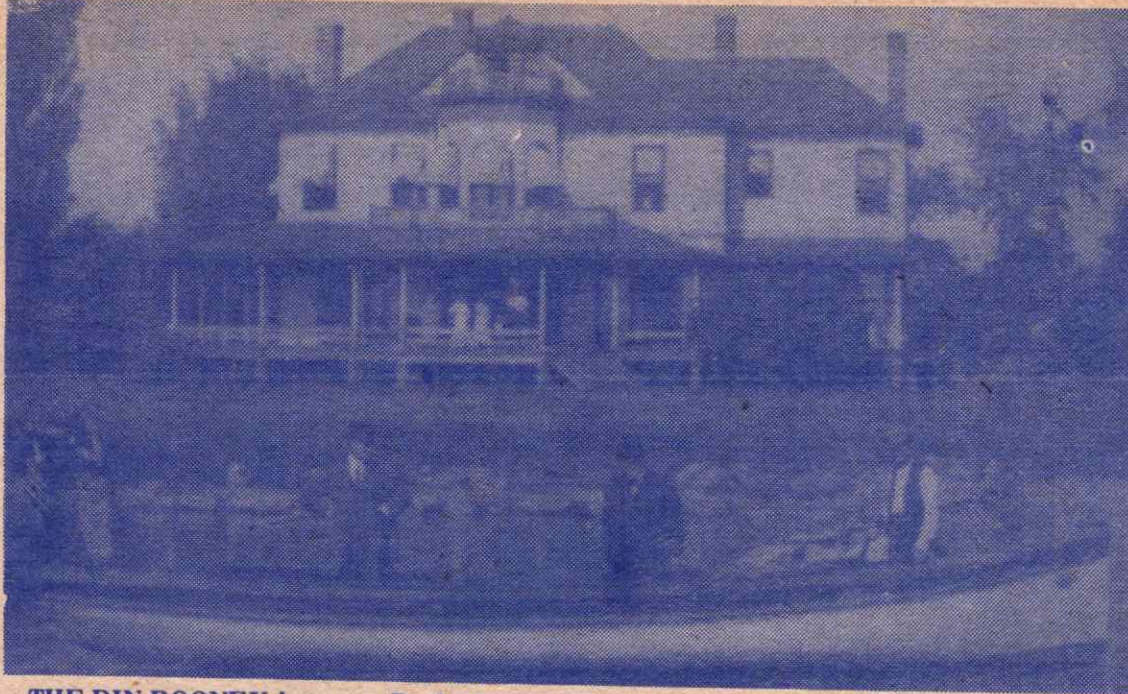
Corporation. The music was researched by the Smithsonian and performed on historic instruments from the museum's collection.

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THE DIN ROONEY home on Parke Lane was a mecca for youngsters of all ages, sizes and shapes not only from Grosse Ile but from Downriver communities in the early 1900s to about 1940. Rooney, a bachelor, bought the home from Robert MacMillan, a Detroit, about 1907. Din welcomed young people after school, weekends and in the evenings where

there was a wealth of recreational activities, picnics, berry picking, dancing, ping pong, boating, fishing and-or just talking to Din, a friend and philosopher. The house was one of the first on Grosse Ile wired for electricity which was never used by Rooney. (Photo from the Grosse Ile Historical Museum.)

38 People Once Had Daytime Phones

The earliest telephone service served only 38 customers on Grosse Ile.

Biggest complaint, however, was that when the store closed, the phones closed down, too. Islanders had to learn to do all their telephoning in the daytime.

Michigan Bell installed a switchboard in 1898 in the Coleman Bros. general store on Macomb Street. Later it became the Mickleborough Grocery and now the building is occupied by Century 21 Real Estate, Island Traveler and Bob MacKenzie, insurance agent.

The first telephone cable laid across the Detroit River was in 1905. According to Michigan Bell, the cable was a 50-pair, rubber-covered wire laid across the river to the foot of Ferry Road. River crossing by cable still was in the experimental stage.

Only two, three and four-party lines were installed to service the early customers on the island. No connection to Trenton was available at that time.

Problems evolved when the cable leaked or the wire was

broken by boats dragging their anchors.

By 1928, the original cable was abandoned. Replacing it was a 600, 12-pair cable laid to serve 220 customers. By 1938, Grosse Ile had 283 phone subscribers. Today that number is approximately 3,000 customers.

Olds Estate Memories

(Continued from Page B-6)

was 120-feet long and the crew numbered five. The Olds had another boat which was left in Florida. The members of the crew left for the winter months, but one always had to stay with the boat to chop ice from around it throughout the winter.

"Mr. Olds had many interests. He loved music and singing. He had a huge electric pipe organ installed in the house. The pipes were hidden over the staircase leading to the second floor. There were buttons in every room so you could hear the organ music.

"The couple had two married daughters who played the two pianos.

"The gardens were important to Mr. Olds. He had a windmill on the property to bring water from the river to the gardens."

Boxcars used to arrive in Trenton with trees and shrubs for Elbamar. The vegetable gardens provided for the family and servants all year long. My father used a greenhouse where he started plants. There were many fruit trees and grape vines.

"Famous guests visited the Olds home on Elba Island. They included Mr. Harvey Firestone, Mr. Eastman and Mr. (Henry) Ford.

"Behind the house were the stables where the horses for the buggies and Shetland ponies were kept. Beneath the stable was an icehouse. Ice was a big project. The blocks were covered with sawdust and even in the summer there was ice available.

"The pool, which was really lovely, was classic Greek in design. The water was provided by a filtration system which purified the water brought from the river."

Greek

(Continued from Page B-6)

edge of the water at the river was a gravel path through the well-tended grass. Along the shoreline was a miniature lighthouse and a private bathing beach, the boat-house, pier and bathing pavilion.

Built on the 600 acres of land were Greek pavilions used as summer houses, tea arbor, beautiful shade trees, shrubs and countless varieties of flowers in formal gardens and around the borders of miniature lakes on the property.

The formal Grecian swimming pool was decorated with ferns, hanging baskets of flowers and potted trees.

Connecting all portions of the property was a well graded road which entered it from the public road through an opening in a high hedge, flanked on either side by Grecian posts with semi-circular walls extending out with groups of shrubs planned to connect with the high hedge.

The road into the grounds meandered throughout the estate, through avenues of gigantic trees and over bridges built over inlets of water to the mansion and the garages and stables in the rear.


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LOOKING NORTH, the airport looked like this in 1968. The seaplane hangar is still visible; the blimp hangar is gone; runways have been built and the Navy's installation along Groh Road includes the barracks. Many barracks recently have been torn down to make way for an Industrial Park for Grosse Ile. Possession of the airport by Grosse Ile occurred on April 7, 1971.



Naval Air History Spanned 40 Years at Grosse Ile

When the 20th century dawned, transportation on Grosse Ile was limited. By mid-century, Grosse Ile was known world-wide. The airport at the southern tip changed that picture of this island.

Originally Macomb property, the land that became an airport was transferred from John Macomb to Louis Groh who worked the section as one of the largest farms on the island.

In 1878, Groh donated some land at the edge of his farm for a

public road which crosses the southern end of the island and still is known as Groh Road.

Most of this property and the limestone quarry which operated in the mid-1880's later became the Navy property.

Grosse Ile at this time had the Canada-Southern railroad link to Trenton; it had numerous farms, the beginnings of a business district, schools and even a golf course.

Many prominent businessmen

were attracted to Grosse Ile for location of summer residences. Among these was Ransom E. Olds who built the first automobile factory in Detroit in 1899.

Early in the 1900s, Olds bought land at the southern end of the island. Included were portions of the Groh farm and the old quarry. Also included was a strip of property on Elba Island where he built the Olds mansion.

(See Naval Air History, Page B-22)

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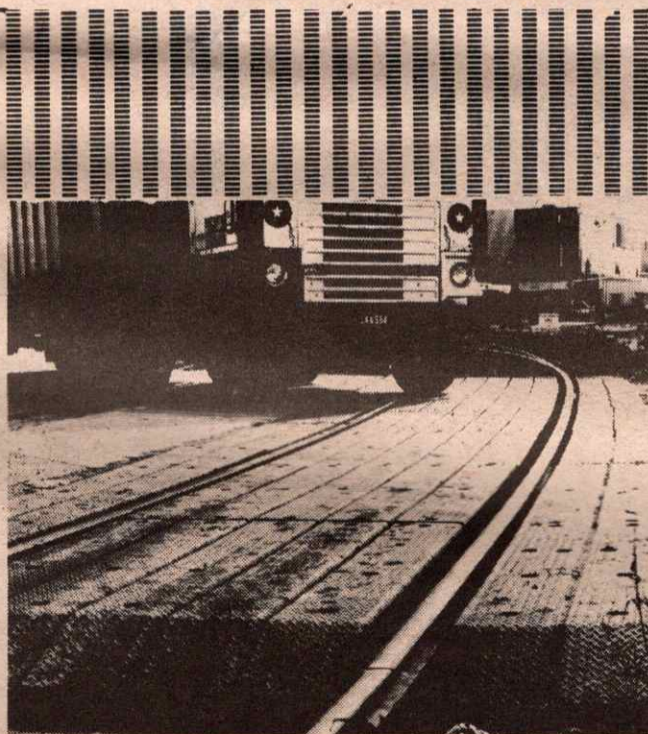
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DAVID HOOPER

Naval Air History

(Continued from Page 21)

It was the Olds farm south of Groh Road which led to aviation history on Grosse Ile. What eventually became the Grosse Ile Naval Air Station covered 604 acres of land, some owned by the state and some by the federal government.

Naval Reserve aviation was conceived and nurtured in 1925 by four Naval Reserve officers under the leadership of Lt. Robert Bridges.

Meeting at the Naval Armory on the banks of the Detroit River, the aim of these five men was to foster interest in the Navy's relatively new (14 year old) aviation program and to provide instruction in naval flight operation techniques.

Official status was conferred on the fledgling operation in 1925 and Lt. Charles D. Williams (he later became a rear admiral) became its first commanding officer. Flight operations began at the Army Air Base at Selfridge Air Force Base in Mt. Clemens.

The 28 miles between the Selfridge airfield and the Naval Armory in Detroit was a serious handicap to the Naval Air training program. So Detroit built a hangar next to the Armory and flight operations were transferred to this facility in 1926.

In 1927, the state of Michigan bought five acres of land at Grosse Ile from Aircraft Development Corp. This led to development of the seaplane facilities.

Negotiations between the state and Navy Department gave use of these seaplane facilities to the Naval Reserve Aviation Unit in 1928. Lt. C.D. Williams was designated officer in charge of the construction.

By Sept. 7, 1929, the U.S. Naval Reserve Aviation Base was officially dedicated.

From 1929, when Lt. C.T. Greber, USN, took command, the base became a training point for the Naval Aviation Cadet elimination program.

A \$250,000 construction program in 1934-35 added bachelor officer quarters, warm-up aprons, roads, parking and garages.

It was natural, with the national emergency of World War II, that Grosse Ile would be used for Naval Air training. In 1942, cadet training began both for the U.S. Navy and British Royal Navy Air Force.

The biggest expansion the island base had ever seen ensued. Doubled in size, the base acquired a drill hall, wider concrete runways, huge center mat and wide ramp next to the hangars; barracks, mess hall, swimming pool and recreation building. By the end of 1942, more than 2,000 men were training, plus an RAF cadet contingent.

As a result of the expansion, the base officially became U.S. Naval Air Station, Grosse Ile, on Jan. 1, 1943.

By the time the war was slowing down, some 1,700 RAF trainees had had their initial flight training at Grosse Ile. These men came from England, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa . . . Grosse Ile was on the international map.

The station's mission changed after the war to reserve training. Islanders soon learned a new title for men at the base: Weekend Warriors. Navy reservists were kept in readiness for any rush to duty by part-time training at Grosse Ile.

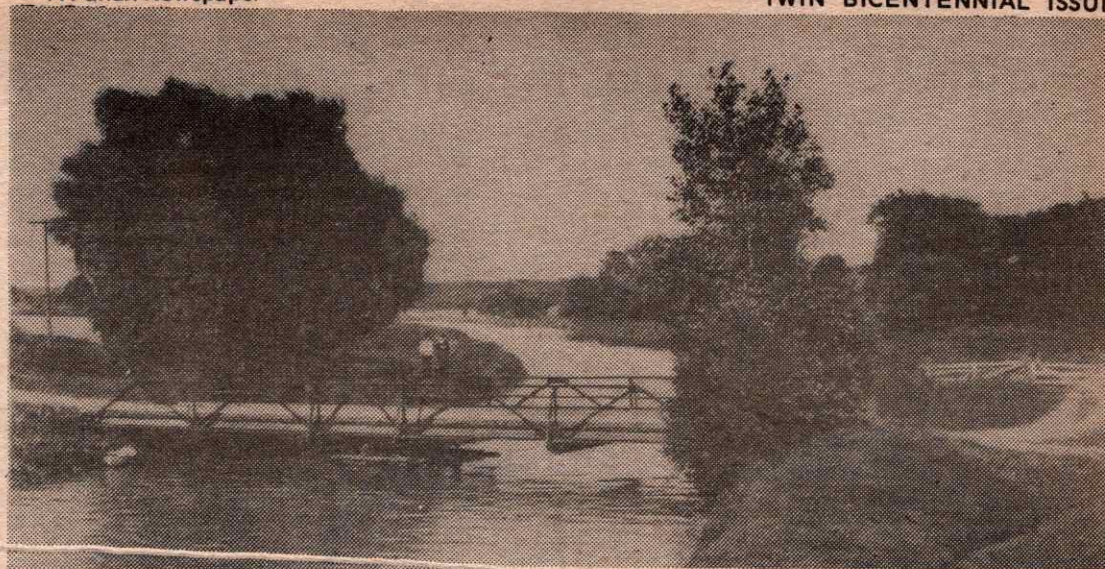
With the advent of the jet age, the need came for enlarged runways at Grosse Ile. Grosse Ile Township and citizens succeeded in resisting such an expansion because it meant the takeover of homes and land.

This spelled the gradual end to the Naval Air Station that came Nov. 2, 1969, when the last classes were held in the wooden structures.

Memories of the station linger . . . of the day-night training during World War II . . . of heroics by various personnel over the years in many parts of the world in World War II, the Korean conflict, the Berlin Build-Up.

Memories of the gigantic air show celebrated on Labor Day Weekend of 1962 with 100,000 spectators

That was the 35th anniversary of Naval Aviation at Grosse Ile. Shortly after the 40th anniversary, Naval Aviation was gone from Grosse Ile.



THIS ENTRANCE to Grosse Ile (from Trenton) would be a challenge for township planners and officials to duplicate. The site is West River Road north of Wayne County (free) bridge, looking east. (The Detroit River would be in the foreground.) The small bridge crosses the Thorofare Canal. At the right today is located Grosse Ile's sewage treatment plant. In the foreground today would be the free bridge. The photo was given to the Grosse Ile Historical Museum by Mrs. Cyrus (Edith) Kinsman.

Circle of Trees Protected Indians

In forests still standing on Grosse Ile, there are scattered circles of wild hawthornes or thornapple trees.

The trees and bushes planted by Indians long ago are arranged in large circles, with the opening always facing directly south. These were the outer "walls" of camps planted by tribes long ago who intended to camp permanently within the circle.

The thorn trees around the camp provided wind breakers and protection.

Circles of the trees are still found in the woods north of Horsemill Road.

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Stunt Pilots Trained at Curtiss-Wright

Some of Michigan's earliest flyers got their initial training at the Curtiss-Wright Aeronautical Corp., located on the site of the present Grosse Ile Municipal Airport in the late 1920's.

line pilots in the United States and Canada and-or flew missions for the U.S. Naval Air Forces.

Prefacing Curtiss-Wright was Wings, Inc., a business to sell and service aircraft and to offer flight instructions. Incorporated on

Sept. 8, 1928, in Detroit, Wings was short-lived.

President of the business was Harry Graham; secretary and treasurer was a Marine reserve aviator, C. (Chauncey) V. Burnett who lived many years on the island.

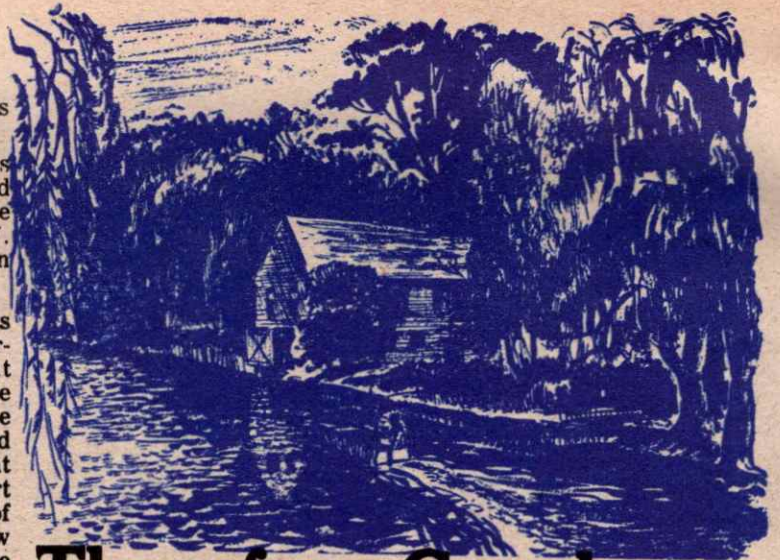
Wings had made arrangements to lease property from the Aircraft Development Corp. at Grosse Ile. A combination plane hangar and administration office of steel and brick were erected just outside a concrete circle that had encircled the field a short distance from the southern tip of Meridian Road. (The hangar now is known as Hangar 2 at the Municipal Airport and houses the administrative offices today.) Three months later, the business was sold to Curtiss Wright Aeronautical Corp. of Detroit.

The new owners hired Burnett as general manager. Ground school training started in February, 1929.

In the spring, a two-story brick barracks, costing \$120,000, was built a short distance west of the hangar.

The Naval Reserve Aviation Unit on the seaplane base, the blimp construction and Curtiss-Wright jointly used the airfield until late 1929 when the blimp was completed and additional construction was halted by Congress.

The Navy became the sole tenant in 1932 when Curtiss Wright curtailed local operations. Then the Navy began to acquire the Curtiss-Wright property.



Thorofare Canal Needs Clean-Up

The Thorofare Canal, pictured here, was a marshland of sand, silt and eroded soil prior to 1895.

In that year, property owners cooperated to dredge out the swamp. When completed, it was a gala day as Islanders gathered to celebrate the opening of this now navigable waterway.


Several years ago, another community effort, organized by Bill Smelter, township building inspector, got together 50 residents with boats, muscles and chain saws, and did a week-end long clean-out of the Thorofare in May to rid the canal of fallen trees, litter catchers and barriers to boats.

Smelter credits Tom Piper's

skill with the chain saw and Roger Lindgrove's boat among those who made the clean-out a successful operation.

Through the organizational efforts of the Island Beautification Committee, Smelter hopes that the community will unite again in an effort to clean out the Thorofare this 1976 boating season.

(The scene pictured here is one of 20 printed on notepaper from the original cuts that appeared 25 years ago in The Ile Camera when Tom Woodward was staff artist. The notepaper is available at the Tudor House on Macomb Street and at Mulias and Ellias and the Scot-Viking shops in Trenton.)



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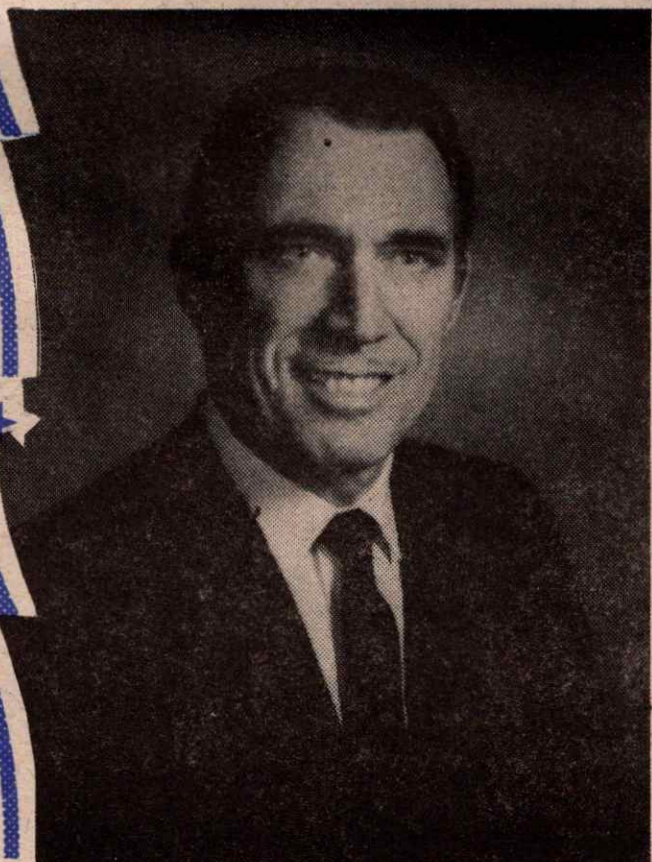
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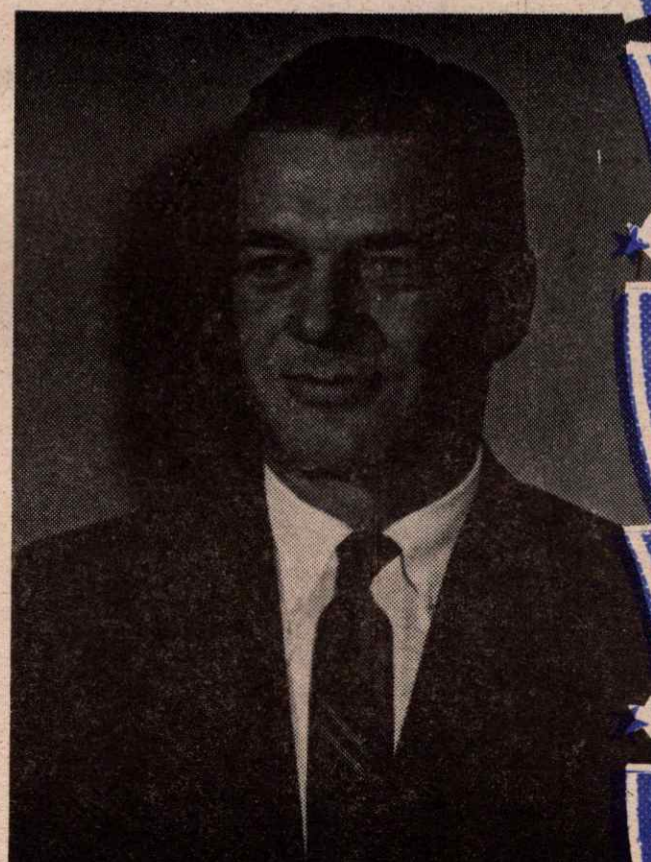
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Seaplane Base Preceded Navy Base

A cattail marsh that once was called Olds Bay still exists as the lower airport property.

In 1927, five acres of this southern tip abutting the bay was acquired by the State of Michigan from the Aircraft Development Corporation.

Shortly after that state purchase, two young Navy men from the Detroit Naval Armory, Lieut. Comdr. Richard Thornton Brodhead (a great grandson of William Macomb Jr.), and Lieut. Charles David Williams Jr., son

of the Bishop of the Episcopal diocese of Michigan) were scouting for a site for a base for Navy Reserve flight operations.

They were attracted to the southern Grosse Ile property.

The pair approached the state legislature, won a lease to the five-acre site south of the blimp hangar.

Politically astute, the officers also maneuvered a \$100,000 appropriation from the state to build a seaplane base on the property.

The marsh was dredged; some

of the cattails were filled in; piles were driven into the fill. Hangars, a repair shop, living quarters, mess halls and other buildings were built.

Work on the seaplane base was completed by 1929. By mid-year, the base was ready for operations. Eight officers and 35 or more enlisted men moved to the quarters.

The U. S. Naval Air Reserve Aviation Base at Grosse Ile was officially dedicated on Sept. 7, 1929.

It all started with the seaplane base.



SETH SMITH was Grosse Ile's first postmaster, serving about 1918. Mr. Smith owned and operated a coal yard on Macomb Street on the site now adjacent to the Grosse Ile Bakery.

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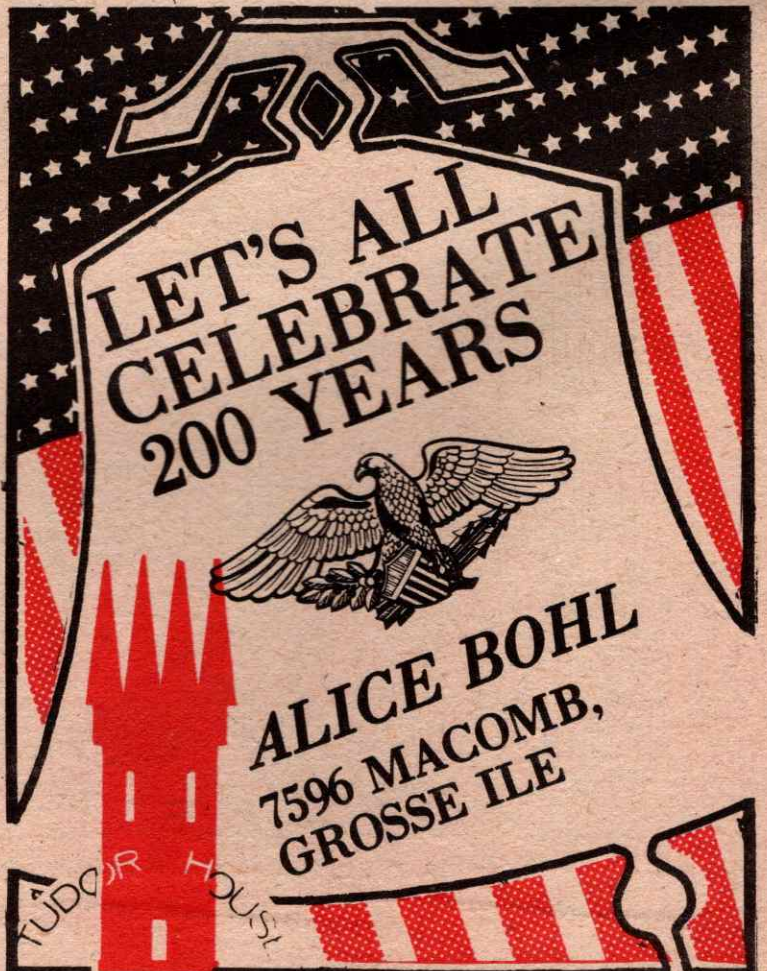
Syrup from Trees Had Many Uses

Collecting sap from trees to produce syrup was an early spring ritual for Indians of long ago.


Tribes living along the Minnesota River used the sap from birch and ash trees to produce a dark colored sugar which had a bitter taste. The sugar was used for medicinal purposes to treat many ills.

They also made a beautiful white sugar from water from box-elder trees. According to one source, there was only one problem with the white sugar... there was never enough.

Iroquois Indians caught the sweet water from maple trees in birchbark buckets which they then boiled down for maple syrup. They used the syrup for sweetening in puddings.



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