

OTTAWA BEACH 1899 - 1926

The year 1899 was very successful for the resorts. In August a train with 1,000 passengers left Grand Rapids and it added many other passengers on stops en route to Ottawa Beach. On another day the steamer, CITY OF MILWAUKEE, came with 800 excursionists from St. Joseph and Benton Harbor.

One of the exciting events of the year occurred on the Fourth of July when an errant firecracker started a fire under the flooring of the Annex of the hotel. Both the Life Saving crew and the Holland Fire Department helped to extinguish the flames which were extensive enough to cause guests to begin throwing trunks and personal effects out of the windows.

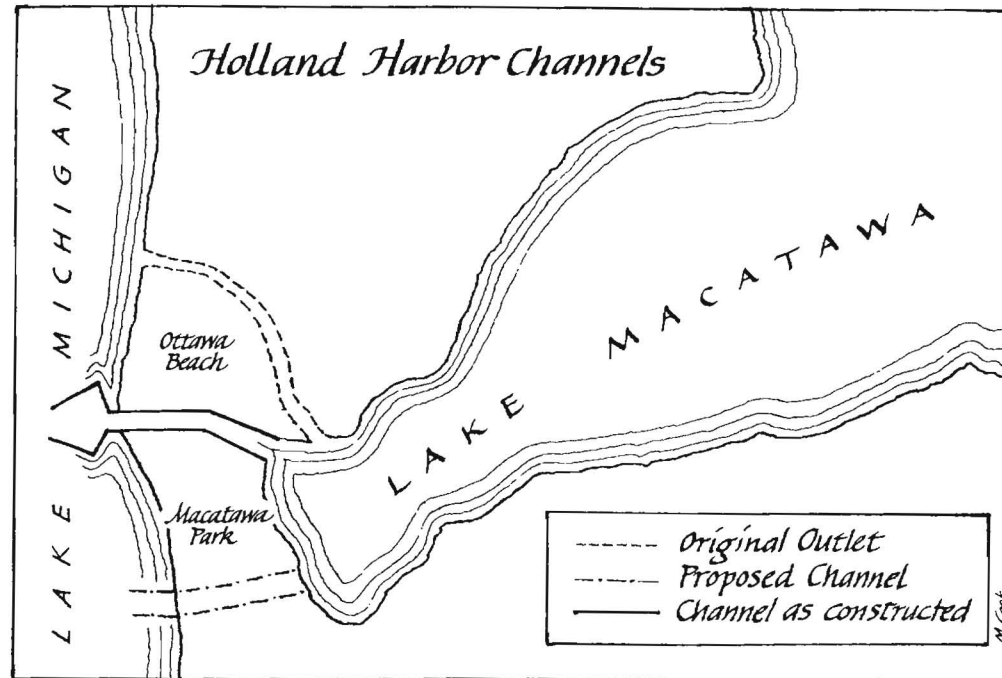
In November, 1899, the Pere Marquette Railroad was formed and its Articles of Association were filed. One of the objectives of this new company was to acquire the C. & W.M. Railway, which it did. C.M. Heald, formerly of the C. & W.M., became President of the Pere Marquette, and he immediately announced that improvements and changes would be made at Ottawa Beach.

The permanent residents of the beach area frequently had to cross Black Lake, summer or winter. One special reason would be to ride the new Interurban rail line which had service to Holland and Grand Rapids during the long fall and winter season. In February, 1900, several of the young people had a cool adventure while crossing on the ice. The newspaper reported:

Mary, John and Henry Bakker met with a dangerous adventure last Sunday night. They are the children of Mr. Bakker, the Ottawa Beach ice-man, and they were on their way home from a visit with friends living on the south shore.

About 10 o'clock at night they started to skate from the fruit dock to Ottawa Beach. When about one third of the distance had been covered, John, a young man of 19 who was ahead, skated into an airhole. Luckily he struck a submerged cake of ice and the force of the fall threw him to a large cake some distance away. He arose just in time to catch his brother Harry, who plunged head first into the water. Harry was followed by Mary, a young lady of 21, who escaped by the merest accident. She struck the water head first and when she came to the surface it was so dark that her brothers could not see her. Luckily she can swim, and she kept afloat until John grasped her by the dress and pulled her to the cake of ice. They stayed there until it floated towards the solid ice when John made a jump and landed safely. Harry and Mary were not so fortunate, but as they struck the water John helped them out.

During all this time of peril the young men and their sister were coolheaded and maintained rare presence of mind, and to this they are indebted for their safety. After reaching the solid ice they had to walk a distance of two miles to their home, and though they suffered greatly from the cold, they show no ill effects of their dangerous experience.



The 1900 resort season began, as usual, with a pre-season April train for the cottagers who wished to look over their properties. This was especially necessary because of the barrenness of the area and the great amount of shifting sand which settled on verandas and blocked walkways and doors. On this train trip Mr. Heald announced that F.B. Stearns would be the hotel manager and that in another year the hotel would once again be enlarged. In May the following announcement was made:

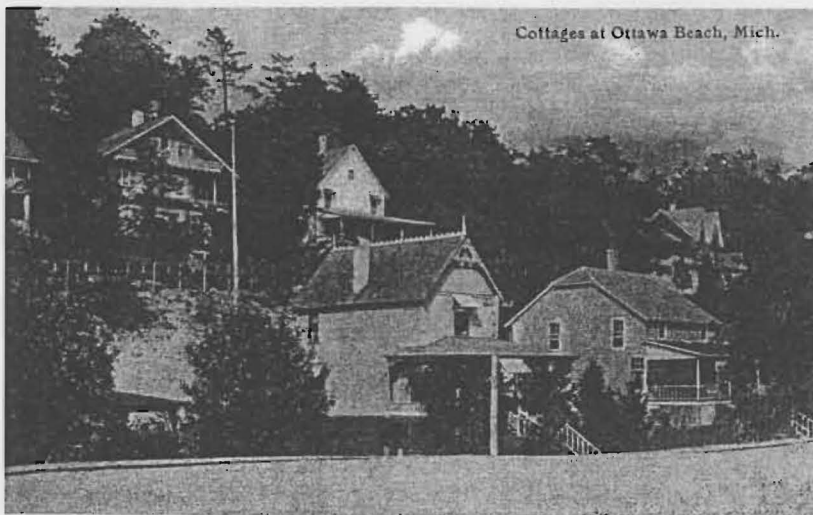
The Pere Marquette Boat Line between Ottawa Beach and Chicago will begin operations next Monday. This line will run in connection with the passenger train from Detroit. The train will leave Detroit at 5:15 p.m., arriving at the beach at 11 o'clock, when the steamer will leave for Milwaukee. A steamer will also leave Milwaukee every night, arriving at the Beach in time to connect with a train for Detroit at 6 a.m.

This important event took place and later the newspaper reported:

The new Pere Marquette Boat line from Ottawa Beach to Milwaukee began operations last Monday. The first boat in port was the PERE MARQUETTE NO. 3. She made the first trip in place of NO. 4, which was undergoing repairs at the time and was not put on the line until Wednesday. The PETOSKY arrived Tuesday morning and with the NUMBER 4 will remain in service during the season. Both steamers are ranked with the finest in the lake and are handsomely equipped to take care of the passenger and freight traffic.

Captain Joseph Dorrity is in command of the PETOSKY and Capt. Joseph Russell has charge of the NO. 4. Both captains are veteran seamen and their record in marine circles is A-1.

Passenger Solicitor Cleveland, representing the Milwaukee end of the line, was in Holland on Tuesday and, in company with Agent J.C. Holcomb, visited many points of interest in this city.... Parties desiring to go to Milwaukee under the present arrangement must go either by the



street car to Macatawa Park or go to Ottawa Beach on a train leaving here at 9:55 p.m. Later in the season, probably about June 15, excursions will be given from Milwaukee to Ottawa Beach and from Ottawa Beach to Milwaukee every Saturday night at one fare for the round trip.

Entertainments of various kinds were always featured at the resorts. In August, 1900, a balloon ascension was arranged and John Grouix of Grand Rapids was the featured aeronaut. The ascension was made in the late afternoon when there was little wind.

As the balloon left the earth the clever young athlete performed gymnastic feats and waved a goodbye salute to the crowd. Never was a finer ascension witnessed. Every move of the young man showed that he knew not the meaning of the word "danger." When he reached a height of about 2,500 feet the crowd watched while he left the balloon and started down with the parachute. A sudden jerk caused him to lose his grip and, to the horror of the spectators, he fell to the water.... He came whirling through space, his arms and legs dangling and twisting. Then his body... started to turn over and with frightful rapidity as he plunged to death. He struck in about 2 feet of water a few rods east of the Pere Marquette freight dock. His body bounded in the air and a shower of water was dashed in the air....

The rail and boat service of the Pere Marquette continued all through the summer and it was discontinued at the end of the season on October 14. At that time the newspaper noted:



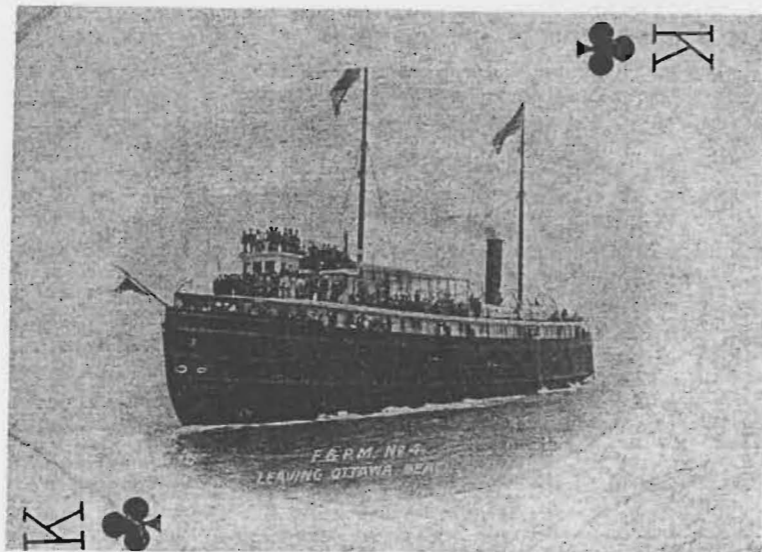
The lack of vegetation gives a clue to the massive amounts of sand which were shifted each year by autumn and winter winds. There is much more plant life in the area at the present time.

The Pere Marquette Railroad Company is considering plans for the establishment of an elaborate freight and passenger car ferry service between Chicago and Ottawa Beach. The scheme is to operate the boat lines in connection with the railway system. The company is now having built an immense ferry car with elaborate passenger accommodations, and it is said that this, with three other boats of equal size, will be put on the Chicago-Ottawa Beach line.

For several years the Chicago and West Michigan road, which is now part of the Pere Marquette system, has been operating through passenger trains between Chicago and points on the line north of New Buffalo, Indiana, as far as Grand Rapids. Between Chicago and New Buffalo the trains are operated over the Michigan Central, for which the Pere Marquette pays the former \$2 for each passenger carried between Chicago and New Buffalo. As the Pere Marquette has gone into the ferry business extensively, its officers are of the opinion that the lake service might be extended to cover the Chicago business.

The idea is to take freight and passengers by ferry from Chicago to Ottawa Beach, and there to connect with the railroad for this city, Mackinac, and Detroit, to all of which points the road has through lines. The company now operates freight and passenger car ferries between Milwaukee and Ottawa Beach, Milwaukee and Muskegon, and Milwaukee and Ludington. It also operates ferries between Manitowoc and Ludington.

The changes proposed were further explained when the details of the remodeling of PERE MARQUETTE No. 5 were announced. It was proposed to convert



GD. RAPIDS, OTTAWA BEACH AND MILWAUKEE LINE

GOING WEST				Mls.	*Every day.	GOING EAST				
				0	Lv. GRAND RAPIDS..Ar					
				6.1	..GRANDVILLE.....					
				7.4	..JENISON.....					
				11.9	..HUDSONVILLE.....					
				16.5	..VRIESLAND.....					
				20.8	..ZEELAND.....					
					Ar. HOLLAND.....Lv					
					Lv. HOLLAND.....Ar					
				24.4	Lv. WAVERLY.....Lv					
				32.0	Ar. OTTAWA BEACH..Lv					
				117.0	Ar. MILWAUKEE..Lv					
					(Steamer)					

J. K. V. AGNEW, Superintendent, Grand Rapids.

From a 1900 timetable

the freighter into a passenger boat to operate between Holland and Milwaukee. Part of the change involved making cabins on the upper and lower decks, as well as an area for evening entertainments. These changes would provide space for many more passengers.

In the summer of 1900 the Pere Marquette also announced plans for a massive extension and enlargement of the Hotel Ottawa. The changes were estimated to cost over \$50,000. The changes were not implemented immediately; after a delay of a year the newspaper stated:

The Pere Marquette will break ground for the immediate erection of a \$40,000 hotel at Ottawa Beach. The plans are not yet drawn but the contractor has instructions to commence operations at once, and he will be furnished running plans so that no time will be lost. Mr. Heald, President of the Pere Marquette, called on Architect William Williamson and told him he could go ahead and put up the hotel, a rough sketch of which was prepared a year ago at the time that Mr. Heald announced that the property at Ottawa Beach would be enlarged.

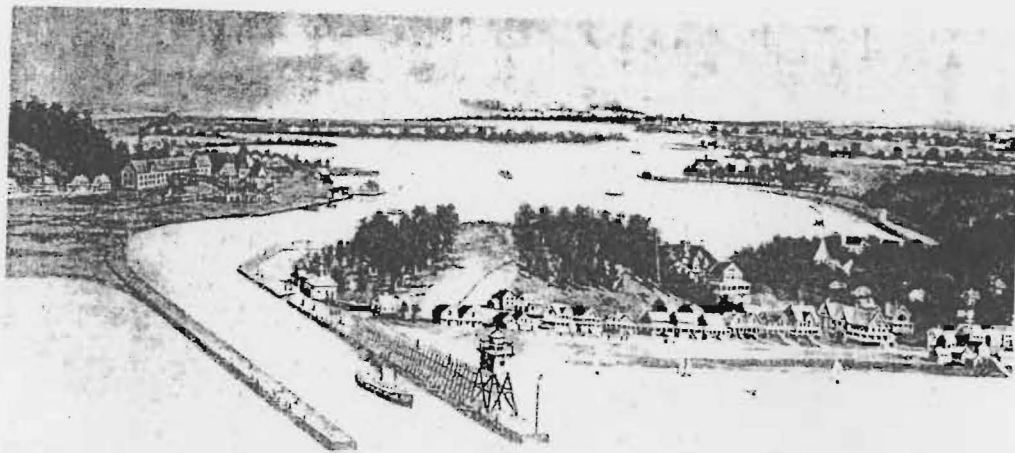
The new part will have a frontage of 318 feet on the channel and will be 64 feet deep. It is designed to follow the bend of the channel just below the present house; and at the extreme west end towards the big lake, there will be a T shaped wing. The top of the T will be 152 feet long and 45 feet deep. An idea of the magnitude of the new hotel when it is added to the present accommodation may be obtained from the statement of the architect that there will be 185 rooms available for guests. This will take care of any crowd that has ever been in the resort and provides for growth.

The new hotel will contain 32 rooms with private baths which will be a convenience not often met with in summer resort houses.

July 1 is the date set when the building must be completed and ready, not only to be turned over to the Pere Marquette, but also to be used by guests. To carry out the work the architect will rush the plans, not preparing any elevation designs or perspectives. He will furnish Henry Green, to whom the contract for the hotel has been awarded, the plans for the foundation and work will immediately begin.

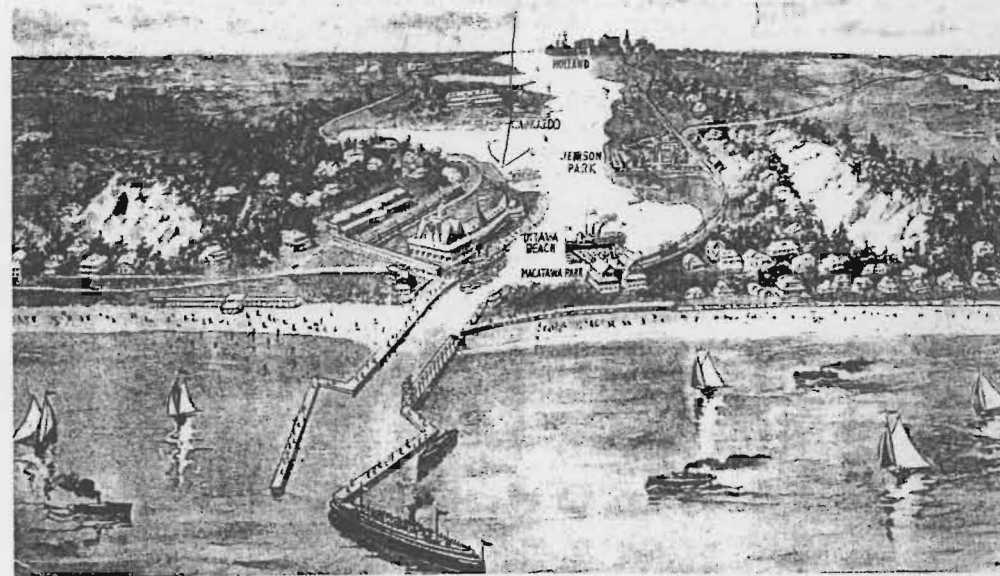
Early in 1901, the Pere Marquette, which had not previously kept the Ottawa Beach branch line open in winter, cleared the line from Waverly to the Beach so that materials for the hotel construction could be brought in. The hotel work then went ahead all that spring. In March it was announced that,

The \$50,000 Pere Marquette hotel which is being erected at Ottawa



An artist's sketch of the entrance to Black Lake in 1900. The Ottawa Beach Hotel is a three story building with a walkway to the Annex which is behind it. The railroad comes between the Hotel and the Annex. The piers are straight.

97a



An artist's sketch of the entrance to Black Lake in 1910. Notice the great length of the Ottawa Beach Hotel and the railroad with its five sidings. The arrow shaped piers extend quite far into Lake Michigan.

97b



Beach will be leased to J. Boyd Pantlind, proprietor of the Morton House. The deal is not entirely completed but it is expected that it will be announced with full particulars on Mr. Pantlind's return from the South. He and Pres. Charles M. Heald of the P.M. are together at Hot Springs, Arkansas, and it was stated before they left that the terms would probably be arranged before the trip was finished. Chief Clerk J. Mortimer Rathbone of the Morton will be put in charge of the Ottawa Beach Hotel by Mr. Pantlind if the arrangements are carried out. Mr. Pantlind himself will probably have little personal supervision over the house except as he will be the Manager and will make frequent visits to see the place and keep in touch with the conditions. Naturally, the furniture men will be turned toward Ottawa Beach when Mr. Pantlind assumes control, and it is believed that many of them can be taught to come to Michigan for resorting as well as for furniture. The new hotel is to be opened on July 4 if all goes well. The contractor promised to have it ready for use on July 1, and the force of men that he has at work now shows that he means business. At present the men are putting in the 140 odd piers. These are of concrete and have a spider base.

Mr. Pantlind, an experienced hotelier from Grand Rapids, had ideas on daily room rates, on bringing in "a skilled corps of colored waiters," and also on bringing in special bands and entertainments. He also planned on having the families of out-of-state furniture buyers (who went to Grand Rapids each year for special furniture buying days) stay at Ottawa Beach.

A major improvement for the hotel and its guests in 1901 was the installation of an electric light plant which could provide electrical power for



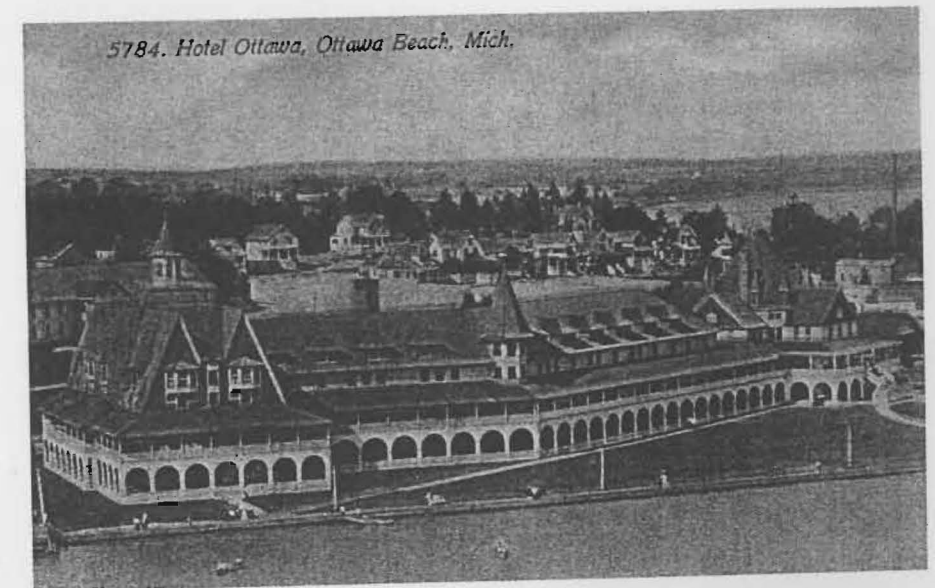
GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF OTTAWA BEACH.

A rare post card view of the Ottawa Beach Hotel before it was enlarged in 1901. Note the walkway going over the railway to the Annex.

the hotel and for the entire area. A second improvement was the enlargement and strengthening of the Ottawa Beach pier. The pier improvement was very necessary for the safe landing of the Flint and Pere Marquette boats NO. 3 and NO. 4, but "the water at the harbor is too shallow to admit [boat] NO. 5 and until some dredging is done at this port she will run on the Ludington-Milwaukee Route." A later dredging eliminated the shallowness, and the F. & P.M. NO. 5 began coming to Ottawa Beach in June.

The hotel work went forward in the spring; J. Boyd Pantlind arranged for the purchase of over \$10,000 worth of new furniture and furnishings. The newspaper noted:

On the Ottawa Beach side naturally everything is centered in the building of the hotel...for the Pere Marquette. One can hardly realize what a big thing the house is going to be unless it is seen. The old part of the hotel is retained but it is dwarfed by the addition. The trains are running to the lower end of the new house, nearer the big lake, and the P.M. passenger boats for Milwaukee are stopping at the wharf at that end and not at the old wharf opposite the station where the Holland-Chicago line of boats stopped. On the Beach side too, cottages are being rebuilt and generally there are signs of the approach of the holiday season. Later, when the hotel is completed, there will be some improvements made to the grounds which will add greatly to the appearance of the resort as it is approached from the lake. The acquisition of the Holland line of boats by the Graham & Morton people is considered very fortunate for the Beach by those who have cottages there. They say that Chicago is covered with signs announcing and booming the



season of the famous little Michigan resort and that the boat line will pour resorters in there when the weather warms up.

The greatly enlarged hotel opened, as planned, early in July, 1901, and it had a very successful summer season. Before the season ended, there were announcements of still other improvements which would be made for the next year's guests:

Tennis courts and golf links are going to be a feature at Ottawa Beach by another year. There is plenty of room for them directly near the hotel and within a score of feet of the waters of Black Lake.... These sports will be of interest, not only to players, but to guests of the hotel from the porches. At the hotel too some changes are going to be made. It is understood that the Ottawa was taken by Pantlind as an experiment, but that it has proved a great success so that the house will probably run more full days than any other hotel in the north and that Mr. Pantlind will take the management again for another season.

Many of these plans matured. The Pere Marquette purchased the 160-acre Bosman vineyard which was later developed into a golf course. Improvements were planned on the pavilion and a small rail line to the beach at Lake Michigan. The railroad also gave B.J. Reynolds, a Grand Rapids cigar dealer, a six-year lease of the "provision and souvenir stands at Ottawa Beach" which had previously been operated by F.K. Colby who now operated the concession at Macatawa.

Colby had been the first operator of the concession and, among other things, had a small popcorn wagon at the docks. His stand was very popular as passengers on the steamers frequently called down to the dock for popcorn or



peanuts. Fred would tell them, "Throw your nickel and you get the corn." When the coin came, then Fred was a sure shot with either bags of popcorn or peanuts. Colby made enough money from his years of operating concessions to enable him to retire to California.

During that winter 28 new cottages were built, as well as a new depot with pedestrian walkways both to the hotel and to the beach. A pair of bowling alleys was built as were the tennis courts and the golf course. The large dock was repaired; on Sunday, May 25, 1902, the steamers to Milwaukee began their daily crossings.

Fishing was always a popular activity at Ottawa Beach. The following account, in a 1902 newspaper, includes the name of Bill Murphy whose name was for decades connected with Ottawa Beach:

A gentleman employed by the P.M. railway at Ottawa Beach has a new name. His friends call him "Pitchfork." He borrowed a pitchfork from a friend and went out to spear fish. Luck was with him and he impaled on the glistening tines a ten pounder. He thought it was a muskellunge and invited his friends to dine with him. They did so but found that the tempting looking dish of fish was hard to chew. This led to investigation and it turned out that it was not a 'muskie' but a tough dog-fish. They say that spearing with a pitchfork is now the style at Ottawa Beach and that Murphy, the keeper of the fishing tackle, is going to put in a stock of pitchforks and rent them instead of hooks and lines.

Another fishing story, of a slightly later period, is told by Stanley "Doc" Curtis. He tells of seeing plump Chicago ladies with bejeweled hands who



were sitting on the docks on hotel chairs and fishing for perch. When a fish was hooked they would pull it up so a bellboy could take the fish off the hook and place a new bait on the hook so that the ladies could again place their lines in the water.

In June the Pere Marquette steamer NO. 5 came to Ottawa Beach to begin a daily run to Milwaukee. Over \$50,000 had been spent on remodeling the ship which was 226 feet long and 31 feet wide. This steamer, along with PERE MARQUETTE NO. 2, continued on the cross lake run until September, 1902. The steamers always carried passengers, but their major function was to carry "break bulk" freight to and from Milwaukee. This cargo was unloaded at Ottawa Beach and loaded into railroad cars for shipment to the east.

The Ottawa opened with a fanfare on July 4, 1902. The season was a good one. One macabre event, a practical joke, took place in August:

They are looking for a fresh resorter at Ottawa Beach. He did his grand fool act last Saturday night. The steamer HARVEY WATSON was at the dock which was very crowded. A splash was heard and the cry went up "man overboard." Capt. Frank Van Ry peered over the steamer's rail and saw a dark object struggling in the water. He is an ex-life saver and his first thought was to jump to the rescue. He seized the life buoy and was about to leap into the water when a woman became entangled in the line. When the tangle was cleared the object had disappeared. The captain knew then that it was useless to jump and started an investigation. Screams from the dock told plainly what had happened. One woman



The Heald cottage, which is still at Ottawa Beach, was taken over by the Pantlind family who lived in it for many decades. The porch and the roofline have been modified in recent years.

said a large dog had shoved a little girl off the dock. Another said a child was in the water. All agreed that something dreadful must have happened. The danger signal was blown and the life saving crew responded. The hooks and grapnels were thrown overboard and the search for the body was begun. An object was brought to the surface. In breathless suspense the crowd peered into the black water and saw a log. Another object was brought to the surface. It looked white, like a face, but it was a string of fish.

The search for a body was fruitless. But the keen-eyed life savers discovered a clue. On a timber under the dock was the imprint of a wet arm, further on was another imprint. From timber to timber they followed the damp trail. It led to the platform skirting the hotel grounds and there they found the imprint of bare feet leading to the lawn. Under the dock they found two skirts and then it dawned upon the frenzied crowd that it was the victim of a cruel joke that some young resorter, whose brains are in his feet, had dressed in his sister's clothes and jumped off the dock, that he had crept ashore over the timbers, and that he had fled to his cottage to laugh to his heart's content....

Although the season was moderately successful for the hotel, the Pere Marquette, as a railroad, did not do very well. At the close of the year President Charles M. Heald and most of the Board of Directors had to resign. They were replaced by a new Board with F.H. Prince as President, and M.J. Carpenter as Vice President and General Manager. A few months later an announcement was made that the PERE MARQUETTE NO. 2, 3, and 4 were sold. The following spring the company announced that it would no longer run trains to connect at Ottawa Beach with the Graham & Morton steamers until the heavy summer season began. This lack of service led to a greater cooperation between the Interurban Rail-



The Pantlind cottage in the 1920's

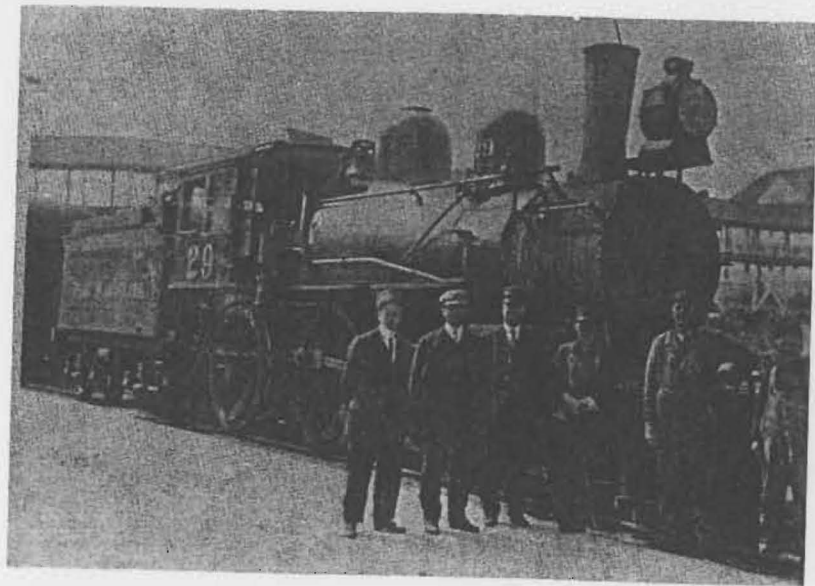


road at Macatawa and the Graham & Morton Line. It also laid the groundwork for the later closing of the rail line to Ottawa Beach.

The golf course was laid out and developed in 1903. W.H. Symons, a golf expert from the Kent County Golf Club, came to put the new course into first class condition.

The newly enlarged hotel required a reliable staff and 50 German people were brought in from Chicago to help with the hotel services. At various times in previous years there had been problems of staff dishonesty but this change of staff, in 1904, seems to have eliminated such problems.

Once again, in 1904, there was a renewal of the long dormant feud between authorities at Ottawa Beach and Macatawa Park. The Macatawa ferry boats, HARVEY WATSON and POST BOY, refused to pay for landing rights at Ottawa Beach. This meant that those Graham & Morton passengers wanting to go to Macatawa had to disembark from the steamer directly to the ferry boat without stepping ashore at Ottawa Beach. (The Pere Marquette wanted \$350 docking privileges for the season.) In retaliation the ferryboat from Ottawa Beach was not allowed to land at the Macatawa dock although it could, and did, land passengers at the Life Saving Station. It took several months to settle these differences and by that time the ARTHUR S., owned by boat liveryman Arthur Tanner, and the GLADYS, also entered the ferry business. The Waukazoo authorities did not enter into this controversy and their ferry, JENNIE G., under Captain Oliver Deto, continued to serve all the resorts.



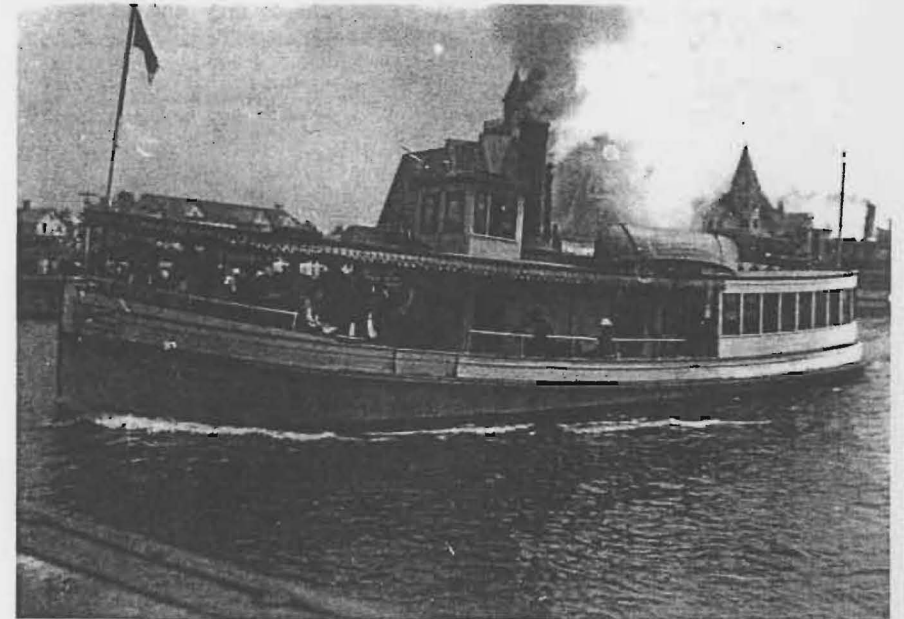
A 4-4-0 locomotive inherited by the Pere Marquette from a previous railroad line. This engine was useful when there were sharp curves, steep grades and a roadbed that was not well stabilized. Such engines were chiefly used for branch work and thus were well suited to work on the Ottawa Beach line.

Murphy collection

In 1904, Fred A. Wurzburg was appointed Postmaster at Ottawa Beach. He also took over the entire management of the pavilion, the grocery store, and the art store, all of which were in one large building. The 1905 season was a good one. In July, the Ottawa had its greatest day ever for it served 328 breakfasts, 364 dinners, and 386 suppers. It should be noted that in that year the lake water was abnormally high and it flooded over the lawns and cement walks near the water's edge. Albert Tanner, the custodian, had to lay planking on the walks so as to enable people to walk near or on the docks.

The tourist activity to the Holland resorts became very significant in the first decade of this century. Many ferry boats were built and operated at this time. The Wolverine Boat Works built a resort ferry boat, the SKIDOO which was 45 feet long and with a 16 foot beam. It was powered by a 27 horsepower gasoline engine. Judge Everett also contracted, with the Bird Company of Saugatuck, for a ferry steamer for his Waukazoo resort. This boat, the TUS-CARORA, was also gasoline powered and it was 45 feet long with a 12 foot beam. W.J. Murphy of Ottawa Beach purchased a 30-foot boat with a 10 horsepower engine so that he could ferry passengers to Jenison Park. This boat was named the QUO VADIS. Other boats in operation in 1906 were the HARVEY WATSON and the MARY.

The increased depth of the channel made it possible for the G. & M. line to plan for its steamers to stop at both Ottawa Beach and Macatawa. Dredging continued at the Ottawa Beach dock but the waters were very shallow and the steamship line finally made arrangements for all freight to go by way of the Interurban to Grand Rapids. The Pere Marquette only handled freight for cities beyond Grand Rapids.



At Ottawa Beach Mr. H. Baker, who had a grocery business, opened with an enlarged stock in 1906. A relative, Capt. Gus Baker, went into commercial fishing at this time. He would set his nets out in Lake Michigan and then, from day to day, he would lift them. He sold his fresh fish to the resort hotels and also to the cottagers. In this year the Michigan Bankers Association held their convention at Ottawa Beach in late June. One of the features of the hotel was the 9-hole golf course managed by W.H. Downs. The course opened on June 25 so that the visiting bankers could have a round of golf on the new course.

One of the summer outings that year was a group from the Kent Scientific Museum of Grand Rapids. Seventeen young men came to collect insects; in 10 days they collected 20,000 insects of about 600 different species.

The highlight of the season was the Venetian Night held on August 2. Over 300 boats participated. They were all lighted and decorated as were the docks, the hotels, and the cottages. A cannon was placed high on the Ottawa Beach dunes so as to boom the signal for the fireworks display to begin in the harbor.

In the days before movies, television, radio, and all other forms of entertainment, Venetian Night was a marvelous entertainment. Stanley "Doc" Curtis mentions the large numbers of people who came by ship, or by the Inter-urban, and he tells of the great numbers of Pullman cars which came with guests from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and elsewhere. These people lived in their Pullman cars on the sidings behind the Ottawa Beach Hotel for the few days of Venetian Night. The entertainments were the lighted and decorated boats which paraded around the shores of Black Lake. At the hotels and at many private lakefront homes Japanese lanterns were part of the beauty and glamour of the



night. The hotels and the yacht clubs also sponsored fireworks which were, at times, set off from a barge in Black Lake, but at other times from the sand dunes at Macatawa. Truly it was a glamorous and festive night.

The success of the shipping and the passenger service encouraged the Graham & Morton Line to take the PURITAN out of service at the close of the 1907 season so that she could be rebuilt at Manitowoc. The ship was cut in two, and fifty feet were added to her length, making a total of 300 feet. The PURITAN was a very fast ship and usually made the trip to Chicago in less than six hours.

In 1908 the ferrying of passengers around the lake was taken over by the new Macatawa Transportation Company which did the ferrying for the resorts and for the rail and steamship companies. The new company had four boats: NIMA, SKIDOO, HOLIDAY, and FLORENCE. Since the owners of the company no longer competed with each other and did not duplicate services, the business grew very rapidly.

Fishing continued to be a major lure of the Holland resorts. The newspaper reported:

Seldom has the fishing been as good in local waters as at present. The fishermen at the piers and breakwater have had very good success this summer catching perch and, with a westerly wind blowing, the white bass fishing was never better than it is this season. Great schools of them enter the channel and fishermen have had the best of luck. The black bass, large and small mouth, are biting well, to say nothing of the pick-erel and other game fish.

The newspaper also reported on the growth of Holland's tourist industry:

All the resorts this season have been doing a phenomenal amount of business. The volume of business far exceeds that of last year or, in fact, any previous year in the history of the resorts. One rather



PERE MARQUETTE							
CHICAGO-GRAND RAPIDS-OTTAWA BEACH TRAINS							
TO THE BEACH	Sat'd'y Only	Daily Ex.Sat.	Every Day	Week Days	S'nd'y Only	Week Days	S'nd'y Only
Lv. Chicago.....	PM 11 55	PM 11 55	AM 7 40	AM 7 40	PM 2 30	PM 2 30	PM 7 00
Grand Rapids....	.....	.....	9 00	12 05	5 20	6 10	7 00
Ar. Ottawa Beach..	AM 8 52	AM 6 45	AM 9 55	1 15	PM 3 30	PM 6 10	PM 6 00
OTTAWA BEACH TO GRAND RAPIDS AND CHICAGO							
FROM THE BEACH	Week Days	S'nd'y Only	Week Days	Week Days	S'nd'y Only	Week Days	S'nd'y Only
Lv. Ottawa Beach..	AM 7 05	AM 10 20	AM 11 50	PM 3 25	PM 5 00	PM 8 40	PM 9 15
Ar. Grand Rapids..	AM 8 00	AM 11 10	AM 1 35	AM 4 15	AM 6 00	AM 10 20	AM 11 55
Ar. Chicago.....	AM 8 52	AM 11 55	AM 4 50	.....	PM 8 55	PM 6 55	AM 8 55

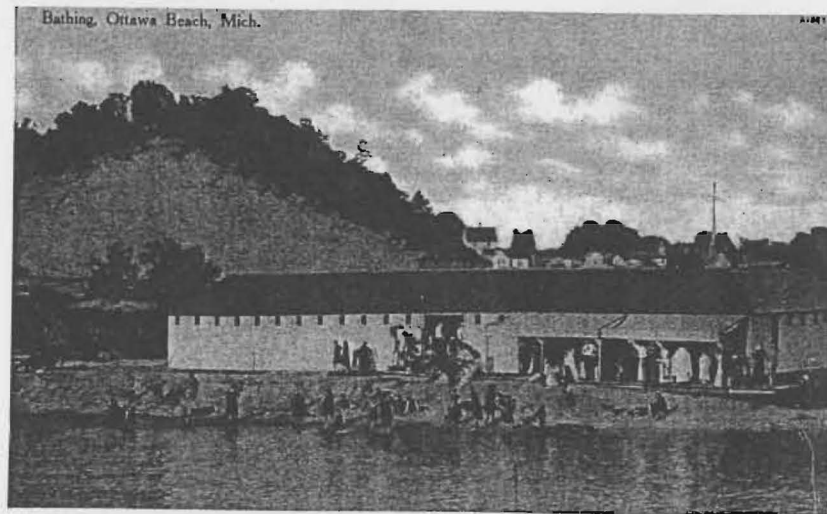
Through sleeping car leaves Chicago Saturday night only at 11.55 PM, arrives Ottawa Beach 8.52 AM. Leaves Ottawa Beach Sunday night only at 9.15 PM, arrives Chicago 8.55 AM.

Taken from the 1908 timetable

observing businessman estimates that the amount of business was fully double that of the 1906 season, and even greatly exceeding the business of 1907.

In all departments of the resort activity the businessmen are more than satisfied. The hotel business, boat ferry, boat livery, laundry, grocery, and all the other lines of business were exceptionally good this year. This is all the more remarkable on account of the shortness of the season.

The level of Black Lake varied from year to year. In the winter of 1908-1909 the level was again extremely low. In many places boat houses were so high out of the water that men could walk under them. They almost seemed like bird houses as they perched on their pilings.



Note how close the bath house is to the water's edge

Unusual ships came to Holland from time to time. In July, 1909, the WOLVERINE, a three-masted, iron-hulled man-of-war which had been launched in 1843, arrived on a tour. The ship had been built to protect the interests of the United States in the Great Lakes, and it was powered by steam as well as by sails. [The WOLVERINE was scrapped in 1949 in Erie, Pennsylvania.]

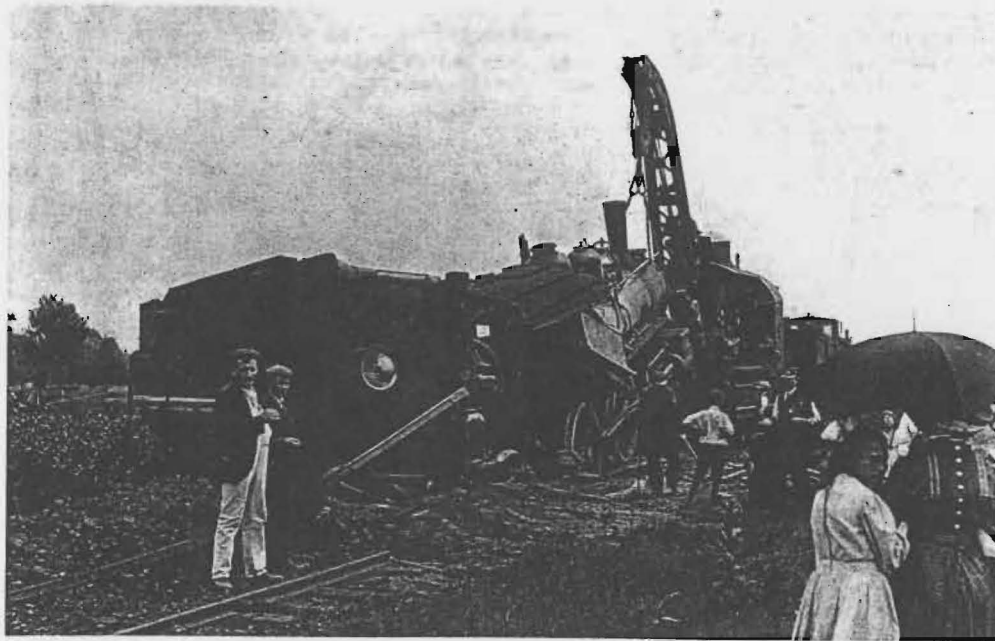
On Monday, July 26, 1909, the Pere Marquette rail line to Ottawa Beach had its first and only fatal accident. The line to the beach was single track and trains often backed down the six mile length of track since there was no way to turn the engines around at the end. On this morning Engineer Michael Powers had a train consisting of a baggage car and several coaches. The wheels of the engine's tender, which carried coal and water, jumped the tracks northwest of Waukazoo, and the baggage car and coaches broke loose and went a quarter of a mile on the incline. The engine's driving wheels jumped the track; after riding on the ties for a few yards, the engine fell over on its side and into a nearby ditch. The fireman, L.E. Lewis, was then hurled through the doorway and landed near the fence line 25 feet away. Powers, the engineer, did not have a chance to save himself, being penned in the cab. Farmers from the neighborhood came to the scene and managed to release Powers; however, he died soon after.

The wreck caused about 500 feet of damage to the track but that was soon repaired and was in use again. At the coroner's inquest it was reported that the train was going about 30 miles per hour instead of the normal 12 miles per hour.

Mail service to Ottawa Beach was very poor for most of the year. In the summer time there was a fourth class post office; the Postmaster was paid, not for the stamps sold, but for the stamps cancelled which, in 1909, amounted to \$352. There was twice a day mail service to Ottawa Beach, but there was no



No. 8 was a 4-4-0 type locomotive built in 1871. It had been owned by the Chicago & West Michigan Railroad.



Views of the train wreck on the Ottawa Beach line on July 26, 1909

mail box service for residents of the area who had to depend on kindly neighbors for help with their mail. After every resident signed a petition asking for a mail route extension, Rural Route Number 11 was extended to the area residents.

The success of the 1909 ferrying service to the resorts encouraged Captain Frank Van Ry to look for an additional steamer for the next season. He was able to purchase the 84-foot YORK at Peoria, Illinois, and added it to the ferry fleet with the name D.P. PERRY.

The major event in Holland in June, 1910, was the state G.A.R. encampment. This was planned for early in June when all the area hotels, including the Ottawa Beach Hotel, opened early to accommodate the many visitors. Boyd Pantlind, who had just signed another 5-year lease for the Hotel Ottawa, provided quality service at the beach as well as in his Grand Rapids hotels, the Morton House and the Pantlind Hotel.

The affairs of the cottagers and the land owners at Ottawa Beach were always somewhat confused. In July, 1910, the newspaper reported:

The Ottawa Beach Improvement Association, which has been in operation for the past 3 years, plans merging with the old West Michigan Park Association. The latter organization has been inactive for many years, but an order of the Kent Circuit Court just issued has revived it. By the decision, the Park Association was held to have no legal control over the affairs of the resort, and as the Improvement Association acted merely on agreement, a merger was planned.... It is hoped that the tangled affairs of the resort management may be straightened out.

The Association's controversy with the railroad continued for many years.



The ferry D.P. PERRY in the channel with the Hotel Ottawa at the right. Note the elevated walkway to the Annex which was on the hillside.



In January, 1912, Judge Padgham of the Allegan Circuit Court decided that the West Michigan Park Association could not eject the railroad from the lands in controversy. Because this decision did not decide all the points at issue in the controversy, it was decided to carry the matter to the Michigan Supreme Court for a decision.

When the lots at Ottawa Beach were platted and houses built, there was no provision made for automobiles or other conveyances. The houses were very close together, but there were park areas which created open space for the cottagers. The closeness of the houses was a serious problem when fires broke out from time to time.

In August, 1910, there was a serious fire. It began in the chimney of the Ralph Dutton home and burned that cottage as well as the Steinhardt, Ross, and Bates cottages. The Life Saving crew took charge of the fire fighting; they were assisted by the ferry boat crews who used the hoses from the ferry boats. Another hose line was run from the Ottawa Beach electric power plant. It took 1½ hours to bring the fire under control.

Other fires, in boathouses, took place in August and October, 1911. In the latter fire the boathouses of Alfred Baxter and Charles B. Judd were destroyed as well as some of the boats which were in storage.

The impact of the automobile first struck the Holland resorts in the summer of 1912. Business was slow because it was thought that people were beginning to travel from place to place during their vacation instead of staying in a single location. The summer was cool and rainy; this, too, had adverse effects on the resorts. Even the Venetian Night was neglected.



The cement water tower is still standing by the last house on Auburn Avenue.

Kiekintveld collection

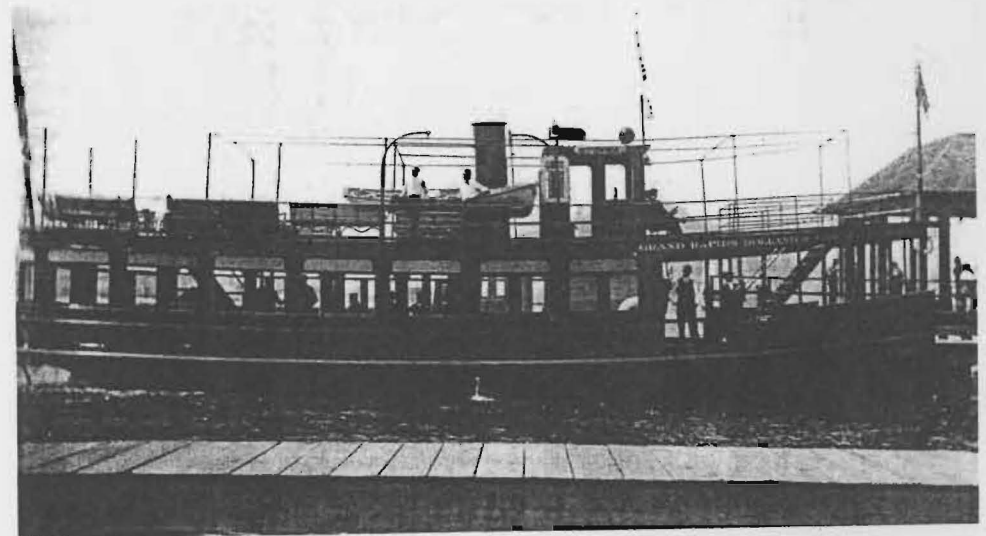
In 1913 the Pere Marquette Railroad Company, which was in receivership, discontinued the rail service to Ottawa Beach. It was at this time that Benjamin S. Hanchett, who controlled the Interurban (Grand Rapids, Holland and Chicago Railroad) which ran on the south shore of Black Lake, said:

The Ottawa Beach trade has never received special attention from the Holland Interurban road, but it is our intention to give particular thought to the future development of the Beach service.

One immediate outcome was the establishment of a ferry service by the Interurban to the north shore resorts. Hanchett also ordered a new ferry boat, the OTTAWA, from the Johnson Boat Company of Ferrysburg; it was launched on June 5, 1914. The OTTAWA had very modern facilities, and it could carry 250 passengers on its ferrying run from the Interurban dock at Jenison Park to Ottawa Beach and to Waukazoo.

The cessation of the railroad service also generated other new ideas. J. Newton Hind of Ottawa Beach stated:

It is entirely probable that within the next year or two the Ottawa Beach branch of the Pere Marquette railway will pass into the hands of the company which has so recently taken over the Holland Interurban. With frequent trains early and late in the season, and some change in the line of the road, the North shore of Black Lake will become dotted with cottages just as the South shore is now lined with them. There will be a steady growth at Ottawa Beach, and at Waukazoo, the latter already a community of fully 40 cottages, with a hotel which is always filled when open. Presumably when the present Ottawa Beach branch of the Pere Marquette is electrified, the line will swing into Waukazoo....

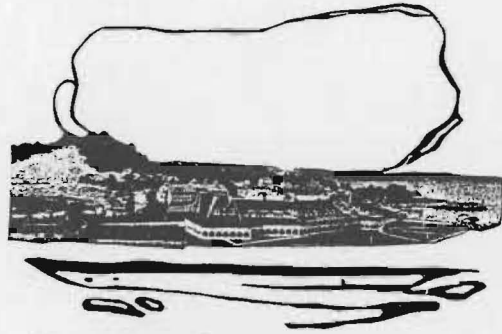


The OTTAWA was built by the Interurban railroad so as to provide service to the guests of the Hotel Ottawa.

Center for Archival Collections
Bowling Green State University, Ohio

In June, 1913, Hanchett (of the Interurban), Morton (of the Graham and Morton Line), and J. Boyd Pantlind (of the Grand Rapids hotels) secured an option on the Ottawa Beach Hotel from the Pere Marquette Railway. That summer, under the management of M.H. Turner, everything was very successful. The Hotel was well booked for the entire season; on one occasion there were over 500 guests who were served dinners.

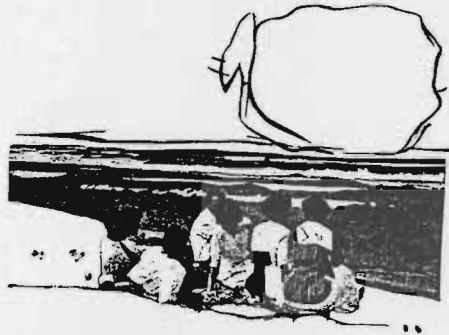
The new owners of the Hotel created two different companies in 1914 to conduct their affairs. One company, the Ottawa Beach Resort Company, capitalized at \$40,000, would handle the affairs of the resort, i.e., the beach, the bathing, etc. The other company, the Ottawa Beach Hotel Company, capitalized at \$50,000, controlled the hotel itself. J. Boyd Pantlind, one of the owners, was in overall charge of managing the hotel although there was a resident manager who was concerned with daily affairs.



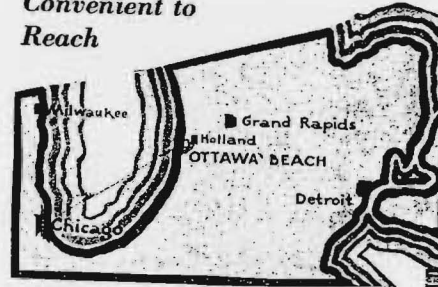
O T T A W A

Opens June Twenty-seven
Nineteen Fourteen

E A C H



Convenient to
Reach



To those who do not know the Ottawa Beach Hotel it may be said that Ottawa Beach is in Michigan, across Lake Michigan from Chicago. It is in an ideal location, with the Big Lake on one side, and Black Lake or Macatawa Bay on the other, these making a harbor for passenger steamers. At the head of this bay is Holland, five miles from Ottawa Beach. The Beach is reached by the splendid steamers of the Graham & Morton Transportation Company, plying from Chicago to Holland, first stopping at a Resort Pier directly in front of the hotel, built to accommodate this Summer Traffic. From this Pier to Grand Rapids there is a high speed double track electric railway running half hourly cars and making the trip in an hour. Thus located, let us revert to the interesting news that the Ottawa Beach Hotel Company has been reorganized with Mr. J. Boyd Pantlind as President. The fact that Mr. Pantlind will again personally manage the Hotel assures a brilliant and successful season.

The Hotel has undergone extensive improvements since last season. It has been

Other changes and improvements were also made. Highland & Green, a Chicago architectural firm, made plans for doubling the size of the dining room by extending it into the porch. The office was enlarged, and the parlors on the second floor were converted into suites with full baths. Other rooms with baths were placed on the third floor. The Annex, which was on the hill behind the railroad, was turned around to give the rooms frontage on the lake; there were also porches added to the Annex. On the lake front the old freight house and dock, formerly used by the Pere Marquette, were removed to provide better views of the lake. There were also improvements on the grounds, principally better walks and better lighting.

A new resort company, later called Chippewa Resort, was planned at this time by the Kent-Ottawa Realty Company. The officers of this new company were James Buys, President; Isaac Kouw, Vice President; William H. Hinsey, Secretary; and G.J. Stewart, Treasurer. Access to this 75 acres of resort land, just east of the Ottawa Beach Golf Club, was by ferry boat from both Ottawa Beach and Jenison Park although it was hoped that the electric railway would be coming through on the Pere Marquette right-of-way.

By the summer of 1915, Chippewa Resort, with 205 lots platted, was in the process of building a dock 168 feet long so that there would be plenty of space for any of the ferry boats. William Van Anrooy, Holland's waterfront contractor, completed this dock.



PLATTED AND OWNED BY

Big Bay Realty Co.

Chippewa Resort as shown by the plat is a strip of land containing 70 acres of choicest lakefront property. The lake frontage consists of shallow beach for 150 to 200 feet from the shore with beautiful white sand bottom, making one of the finest bathing beaches on Black Lake. [An early brochure]



One of the challenges for the new owners of the Ottawa Beach Hotel was to have a bar for its patrons. No bar had been permitted for several years, and the new owners wanted to have one. The problem was not as much in securing a license as in securing bondsmen for the license. The Holland Township Board would not recognize any bonds from outside the township. Applicants for the licenses could get bondsmen from outside the township, but the Board noted that the law stated "they were compelled to approve those who had sufficient amount of property in the township, and then the Board had to approve both the bonds and the license for the bar at the Hotel Ottawa."

The resorts did not have any outside source of electric power until, in the spring of 1915, the Muskegon Power Company made plans to put power into every store and cottage. The Hotel gladly made use of this new power source, but it continued to operate its own generator so that there would not be any problems for hotel guests.

The golf course, which had opened many years earlier, was remodeled in the spring of 1915. The clubhouse was moved from the first hole to the latter part of the course at a higher elevation. In this new hillside location people had a view of the entire 9 holes as well as of Black Lake and the shoreline. The President of the club, J.B. Howard, also made other improvements for the golfers.

George Getz, who lived a mile north of Ottawa Beach, and Egbert Gold of Waukazoo, were both energetic men who were actively engaged in community matters. Both men were honorary members of the Holland Chamber of Commerce. At one meeting of the Chamber in 1915, Getz mentioned that the very poor docking facilities in Holland did not encourage cottagers to trade in the city. Both Getz and Gold also pointed out that there was a need for a good road to



The club house at the Ottawa Beach Golf Course (ca. 1915)

Kayes collection

Lake Michigan now that many more people were using automobiles. These ideas encouraged the merchants, the cottage owners, and Holland's merchants and citizens to collect money for building a concrete highway on Alpena Beach Road (now Lakewood Boulevard.) Road construction was begun late that year, and Getz and Gold contributed \$3,000 as their share in building three miles of an 8-foot wide cement highway towards Lake Michigan. This 8-foot wide highway was useful, but soon there were complaints about it; people felt the need for a 16-foot wide roadway. In the general discussion which ensued the Ottawa County Road Commission proposed to make road improvements "providing Park Township is willing to do their bit." It was proposed to vote on a bond issue so as to complete the roads. [Note: Park Township was set off as a separate township in 1915.]

In August of 1915, the newspaper reported:

Fishing has been better during the past two weeks than at any time during the past 20 years. Thousands of perch have been caught. Three weeks are left before the new law goes into effect that sets limits on the number of perch that anyone can catch to twenty-five. Many persons are taking advantage of the time left and are doing as much fishing as possible now.

The last week of August in 1915, there was a massive Beach Party at Ottawa Beach with a band playing every afternoon and evening. The lighted boardwalk from the hotel to the beach made walking easy for both old and young. Many activities were planned for both the beach and the water. Balloon ascensions were made daily; these attractions, together with a round trip ferry ride from Holland for 25¢, brought thousands of people to the beach. This was the parting event of the summer for most of the hotel staff. Housekeeping, dining room, and kitchen help were all transferred to the Pantlind Hotel in Grand Rapids even before Labor Day.



At the beginning of 1916, the resorts had problems. The high price of gasoline made it unprofitable to run the ferry boats to the various resorts. Only the Interurban ferry, the OTTAWA, continued to give regular service from the trains coming to Jenison Park. The OTTAWA did not give any other ferry service. The great heat of that summer drew many thousands of people to the beaches; the season was successful until the resorts closed abruptly before Labor Day because the labor unions promised a general strike which would close down all the rail service in the country.

Minor changes and improvements were always being made at Ottawa Beach. The amenities of civilization gradually appeared. In 1916 the Ottawa Beach Hotel Company purchased several all steel community garages for the many automobiles of its guests. A boon for the area residents also came when gas (made from coal) was promised. Prior to this time much of the lighting at many of the cottages was with kerosene lamps, and heating of both foods and space was by gasoline and kerosene stoves. With the advent of piped gas, life would be easier for resorters because the danger of fires from leaking stoves would be decreased.

Although all the resorts closed for the winter, activity continued at Ottawa Beach and all around Black Lake. When it was cold enough for the ice to form, people crossed from shore to shore on the lake. In December, 1916, Ryan Baker, the Ottawa Beach iceman, claimed the honor of being the first to cross Black Lake over the ice when he crossed to Jenison Park on a Monday morning. He reported that there was already 4 inches of ice. This news brought out the fish shanties allowing the ice fishermen to indulge in their wintertime activity. The news of the ice crossing brought out tales by other of Holland's stalwarts, such as John Van Vulpen and Fred Quist, who claimed to have walked from Central Park to Marigold Lodge on the previous Saturday. Joe Shauguay, too, had crossed the ice when he went to work at the Aniline Factory on Saturday. The continuing cold weather brought on the annual harvest of ice from Black Lake.

Storms and weather are a continual part of the story of Ottawa Beach. The fact of summer sunshine and sand are a bright memory for anyone who has vacationed there, but there are other seasons as well. In late August, 1917, there was a summer storm which, to older resorters, was fierce and furious beyond any of their memories. Waves went over the breakwaters, spraying as high as the lighthouse. A few weeks later an inexplicable seiche occurred:

A medium sized tidal wave washed up from the lake on the beach covering the entire space between the water line and the sidewalk. The water for a brief time was even with the walk along the lake. It came up through the floor of the bathhouse, wetting the feet of the employees. The wave receded very soon and no serious damage was done.

Indians, who were the original residents at Ottawa Beach, continued to be a part of the summer population there. The newspaper, in 1917, reported:

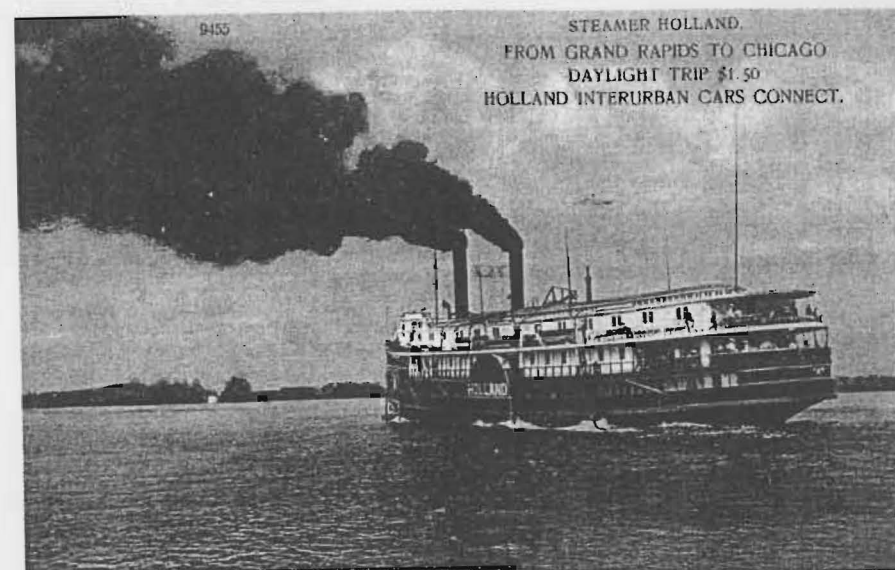
A fire Monday evening totally consumed the cottage belonging to the three Indians who have been in the basket making business at Ottawa Beach for a great number of years, consuming the house, a large consignment of baskets, reeds, and other Indian wares, besides the furniture of the house.

The mother and daughter had packed their trunks ready to depart for Canada for the winter. They had lighted a lamp and then strolled to the docks where several fishermen were fishing. They watched the men for a while and were about to return when they saw that their dwelling was in flames.

The alarm was quickly given and the Coast Guard, together with the fishermen, tried to be of service but the fire had gained such headway that nothing could be saved, so they centered their attention on the cottages of the immediate neighborhood, and it was only through diligent efforts that these were saved. The night was very quiet and this no doubt had a great deal to do with saving a block of 12 cottages which were separated from one another by only a few feet.

It is said that the Indians also had a large amount of money hidden away in the house which was also destroyed. The Benedicts have been very thrifty Indians and their Indian wares of baskets and curios have had a ready sale among the resorters for several years. Although the place is insured the loss will be a heavy one for the Benedicts.

Prior to 1917 the residents of Park Township were not concerned with road improvements; but in October of that year the property owners met and decided to work towards building a 16-foot wide concrete road. This was a significant development, for such a road would open both Waukazoo and Ottawa Beach to increasing automobile traffic. In March, the property owners voted on this project. At that time the property values were listed as farmland, \$184,000, and resort property, \$672,775. A road bonding proposal was passed so that concrete could be laid on Alpena Beach Road [Lakewood Boulevard.] The township planned on paying for 1 3/4 miles expecting the county to pay for an additional mile. But, promises are not facts; early in 1921 the road was still not com-



Van Ark collection

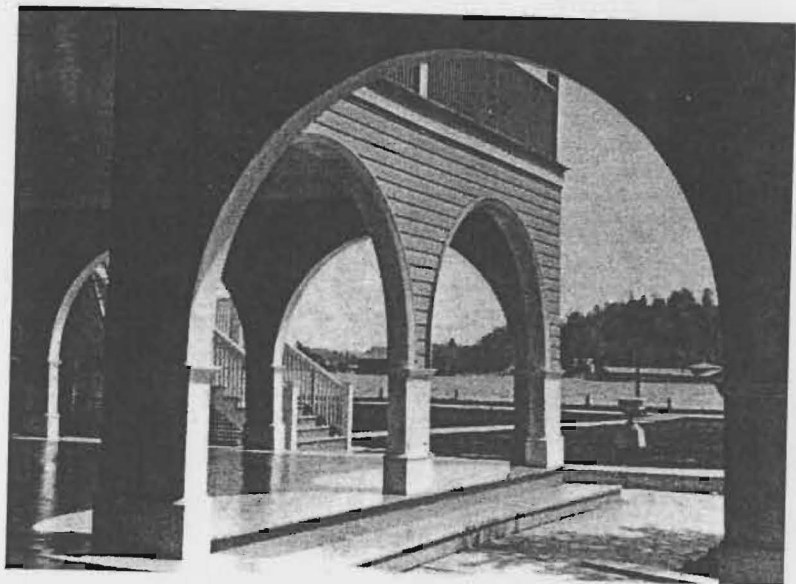


pletely surfaced. At that time part of the road was concrete, 8 feet wide, part was 16-foot wide concrete, and part of it was macadam. The road was not completed until 1923 when George Getz loaned the Ottawa County Road Commission the \$8,000 needed for the last bit of roadway.

On November 6, 1917, the United States entered World War I. Prior to this date the effects of the war were beginning to be noted as when resorter A.W. Hempe sold his 75 foot yacht DOLOMA to the U.S. Navy. By the end of November the newspaper reported that the hotel at Ottawa Beach was being considered as a reconstruction hospital for "wounded American soldiers who return from the front incapacitated for further war service." Nothing ever came of this idea.

The war had other effects on the local scene. In June, 1918, a ship from the Great Lakes Training School came for a brief stay. The ship, the ISLA DE LUZON, had been captured in Manila Bay in 1918, and it housed 75 sailors who were being trained for other wartime service. At this time the licensing and registering of boats over 16-foot long was required. A wartime fuel tax was also imposed, but there was no limit on the use of fuel on boats.

In May of 1918, one of Ottawa Beach's notable citizens, "Big Martin" Witteveen, died. He had come from the Netherlands in the late 1860's and settled at the mouth of Holland Harbor. He was involved in the building of the first cottages, the hotel, and the adjoining docks. He served as custodian of the hotel and the grounds. Besides considerable acreage, he also had a very special 10-acre vineyard which, in season, drew great numbers of visitors. The newspaper reported that "He was big in heart, and big in person, and well known and popular with the thousands of resorters who have known him for many years."



The famous arches on the veranda of the Ottawa Beach Hotel

Murphy collection

The major event at Ottawa Beach in 1919 was the annual meeting of the Society of Automotive Engineers. The entire hotel was booked for this event which opened on June 23, a week earlier than the normal hotel opening. One of the special features of the convention was a daily seaplane to Chicago for carrying mail back and forth.

The same group came to Holland early in the 1920 season. The scheduled events of speeches, voting, exhibits and lectures were only part of the program which also included water sports, dances, and lawn tournaments. The engineers stayed at the Ottawa Beach Hotel and its Annex as well as at Waukazoo and Macatawa. One night everyone was aroused by a unique advertising stunt:

When the guests were quietly sleeping at 4 o'clock, everyone of the 600 rooms contained excited guests. At the given hour 600 new alarm clocks went off at the same time. When the guests opened the doors they found, tied with baby ribbon, an alarm clock about the size of "Little Ben," to the knob of each door, and these were merrily jingling at intervals until the occupants got up and stopped them. Attached to each clock was "Presented by Mr. Klaxon of the Hyatt Roller Company."

The winter of 1918-1919 was the beginning of the end of the ice harvest from Black Lake. In January, 1919, the ice was only 5 inches thick, hardly enough for cutting; and by February 20 the channel to Lake Michigan was open. In Holland the Superior Ice Company, which could manufacture 16 tons of ice per day, was able to provide for all the ice dealers. The Ottawa Beach Hotel, however, had to get its supply of ice from Grand Rapids.

Fires continued to be a problem and in July, 1919, one of the many fires at Ottawa Beach occurred. The details, as reported in the newspaper, give us a good idea of the life styles and the habits of the era.

One of the most disastrous fires in years destroyed four cottages at Ottawa Beach and nearly consumed a fifth Tuesday morning.

The fire started in the Sherwood-Hall Cottage in amongst the hills at 6:30 and soon communicated itself to several other cottages alongside. The fire originated, it is said, from an oil stove that the maid had lighted, preparatory to getting breakfast ready for a family.



All Steel Garage - Hotel Ottawa

Murphy collection



The story goes that after the maid had lighted the fire she then returned upstairs to complete her toilet, and upon returning found the stove and part of the kitchen in a blaze. Her cries brought the members of the family and neighbors. Fire soon spread to the Wegusen cottage, E.N. Brown cottage, and the cottage of Joe Siegel, who are all Grand Rapids people.

The intense heat caused the fire to spread to the home of Charles Springer. The loss to the buildings and furniture of more than \$15,000 is only partially covered by insurance.

The hills at Ottawa Beach are littered with furniture. Cottage owners all along the hill streets are dragging out the contents of their homes and depositing these out of possible reach of the flames. Joe Siegel of Grand Rapids, owner of a jewelry store, had planned to take his employees for a day's outing on Thursday.

An alarm was sent to Holland. The run was made in 15 minutes. The cottages, however, are more than 2,000 feet from Black Lake and the fire truck did not carry sufficient hose to reach that far.

The Coast Guards at Macatawa, as usual, did valiant service. Francis Deto, Tony Vander Bie, Alvin Smith, and George Haas saved the Bunnel cottage through the aid of a bucket brigade.

Jacob Witteveen, custodian of Ottawa Beach, also did excellent work, but the man of the hour was Bill Murphy, the Mayor of Ottawa Beach, who not alone proved to be the chief executive of the summer resort but chief of police and chief of the fire department as well.



A later photograph of Bill Murphy. Note his fishing houseboat at the end of the dock.

Murphy collection

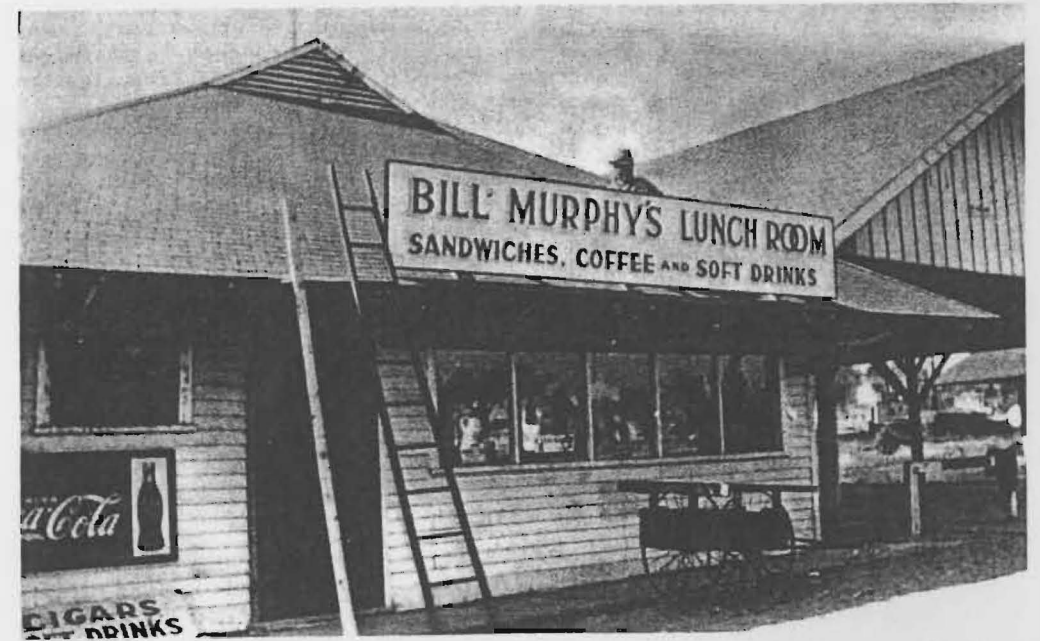
When the alarm was given Bill pulled out, singlehanded, the hand reel filled with hose, connected this up with the Ottawa Beach waterworks hydrant nearby, and soon had a stream playing on the fire. It was impossible to save the four cottages for these were closely nestled in together and it is doubtful if any kind of protection could have saved them. Murphy did save the cottages in close proximity, where repeatedly small blazes started in the roof by heat and sparks from the burning buildings.

At no time was the big hotel in danger....

The next month, at the annual meeting of the West Michigan Park Association, plans were put in place to have a local fire department. At the meeting it was noted that every available cottage was being occupied. The Association elected Howard F. Baxter, Fred Z. Pantlind, and Charles H. Springer as Directors for the next year.

Swimming and bathing at Ottawa Beach came to a sudden end late in August, 1919, when the lumber barge DELTA, with 400,000 feet of hardwood lumber, broke into two parts just north of the Holland breakwater. The lumber drifted all along the shore, but it was thickest at Ottawa Beach where it was a serious hazard to water activity. The DELTA was finally torn apart to clear the area.

There was a fire in the Annex to the Ottawa Beach Hotel in August, 1920. The story of this fire appeared in the newspaper and the facts, as presented, show some of the firemen's problems.



Besides a lunch room, Bill Murphy had a boat livery and a bait and tackle shop.

Murphy collection



A large part of Holland motorists made flying trips to Ottawa Beach at 9:30 last evening when news quickly spread that the big hotel, filled with guests, was all ablaze and Holland's aid was needed to put out the fire.

Chief Blom received a phone message that the hotel was afire and to come as quickly as possible. He turned in an alarm from Box 21, Hotel Holland corner, and the fire department was soon on hand to answer an alarm in this section of the city. The chief then instructed some of the firemen of Company 1 to man the big pumper and go immediately to Ottawa Beach.

It took about 5 minutes to gas up sufficiently should the pumper be needed for any length of time.

The chief, before hopping off with the pumper, delegated Patrolman Steketee to follow with 500 feet of extra hose which the patrolman quickly did with the Citizens Transfer Company's truck.

It took the Holland department just 30 minutes to get to Ottawa Beach and start fighting the fire after the phone call was received. When Holland's force arrived they found that the blaze was in the attic of the Annex which is some 500 feet from the main hotel and connected with the hotel with a sort of a bridge.

Bill Murphy and his crew of excellent fire fighters were already busy on the job and had the fire pretty well under control. The local firemen, however, aided with chemicals and between the two firefighting forces the blaze was soon extinguished.

Ottawa Beach Hotel is filled with guests and these, with the guests from the other parts of the resorts and hundreds of automobile loads from Holland, made up a vast crowd.

City motorists impeded the speed of the big pumper as there was a regular parade of automobiles from Holland going to Ottawa Beach, many of them trying to get around the truck in order to beat it there. At one time there was a jam lasting about 5 minutes and the fire fighters simply had to wait until the congestion was relieved.

The bad stretch of road just before coming to the turn to Ottawa Beach, dubbed the "cinder path," also gave the driver of the pumper some trouble and all these things certainly were not conducive to any speed making. Notwithstanding all these handicaps, the management of the hotel and the guests were loud in their praises of Holland's fire department.

The fire has damaged two of the rooms, part of the roof, and some bedding. The total loss will not exceed \$500 and the damage will not in the least inconvenience the guests or the management of the hotel.

Theft was another problem at the Ottawa Beach Hotel. In July, 1920, a nickel plated, six-volt Sireno horn was stolen from the automobile of Lewis Heath of Grand Rapids. Since this was really a siren, Heath wrote to the County Sheriff to say that it would be easy to identify. At the same time the West Michigan Park Association offered a \$50 reward for information about the theft of the siren. Other thefts took place in the hotel itself; from time to time sheriff's deputies were called in to investigate thefts of jewelry.

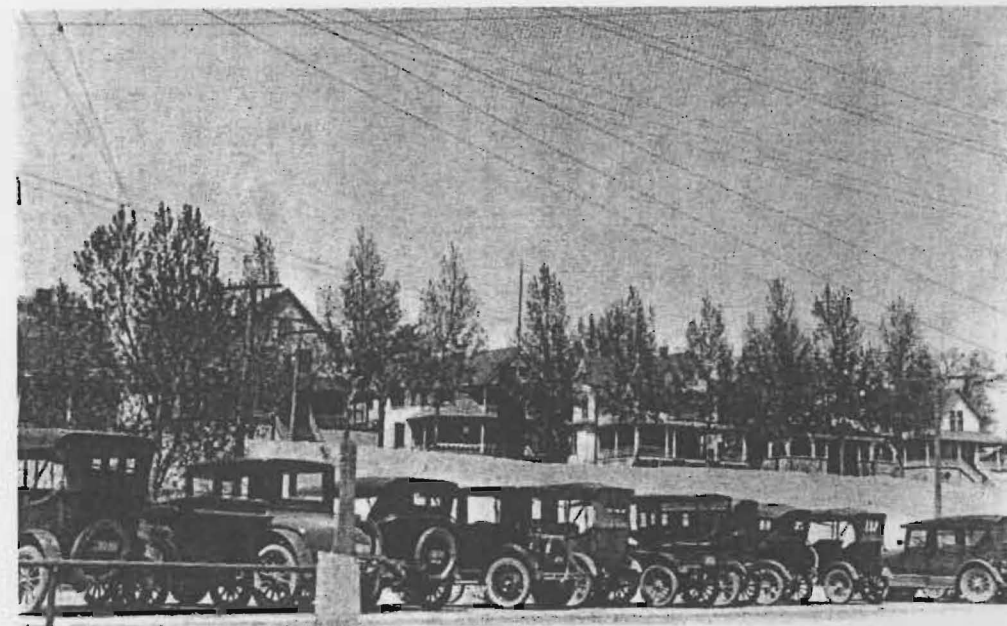
The proprietors of the Hotel did what they could to attract business. In the summer of 1921 they posted conspicuous yellow signs along the highway from Chicago all the way to the resort. One such sign, in front of Holland's Tower Clock Building, said, "Ottawa Beach 7 3/10 miles." These signs attracted

many good people, but they also attracted many others. In 1921, Deputy Jacob Witteveen had to protect a man, by arresting him, who had been molesting and pinching women in the ballroom of the hotel. A crowd of angry men was going to assault the man when the deputy appeared on the scene.

Michigan fishing laws were frequently a problem for resorters. At times the rules for lakes open to Lake Michigan were different from rules for inland lakes. In 1921, for example, there was no longer any limit on the number of perch that could be caught; but now a rule, that perch had to be at least 7 inches long, came into effect. The newspaper stated that the "application of the 7-inch rule will practically stop the perch fishing in that lake."

August, 1922, brought two tragedies to Ottawa Beach. One of the waiters, a "colored boy" named James Hudson, drowned while swimming. Although the Coast Guard recovered the body very quickly, the crew could not resuscitate him. The second tragedy was the robbery of the safe at the hotel. Word of this did not come out very quickly because it was not discovered until guests, several days later, began to claim the jewelry they had left in storage.

Early in 1923 Jim Baker of Ottawa Beach purchased the winter fishing business (the rental of fishing shanties) from the Jesiek Brothers. All the shanties were taken to Ottawa Beach and were rented from that location. A significant real estate transaction took place in 1923 when the Ottawa Beach Hotel and its grounds, including the golf course and 600 acres of land with frontage



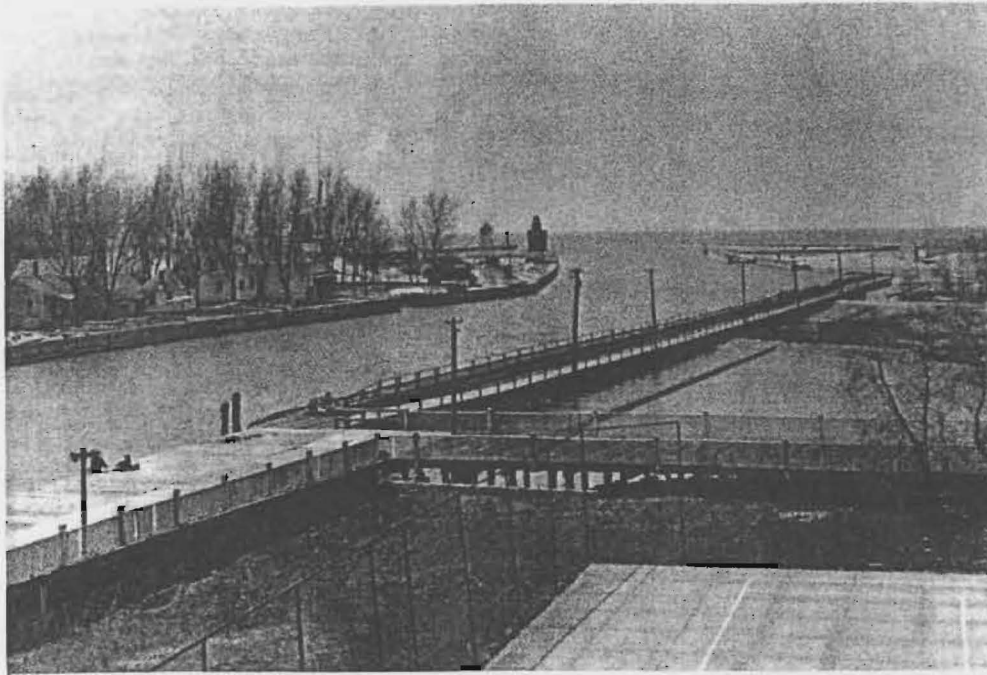
The automobiles of cottagers parked on the road below the hill Murphy collection



on Lake Michigan, the channel, and on Black Lake were purchased by the Michigan Railway and the Graham & Morton Steamship Company. The purchasers, including Fred Z. Pantlind and George Getz, made immediate plans for improvement of the entire property, besides the usual remodeling and decorating. The developments included "a large outside playground, a covered playground for rainy weather, a dancing pavilion, and a much larger garage, a cement road from the hotel to the beach, and an improved road from the hotel to connect with the main roads on the outside." At this time it was reported that the resort still had "about 300 building sites" which could be opened to would be purchasers.

The new owners started with a policy of inviting the people of Holland to come to Ottawa Beach to enjoy themselves. [Note: At this time the Interurban railroad, which ran through the city of Holland, was still carrying its passengers to Macatawa, the competitor of Ottawa Beach.] The welcome to the people of Holland included the use of the porches, the pier, the bathing beach, dancing pavilion, cafe, and any part of the grounds. It was at this time that the Hotel Ottawa Company placed two thousand \$100 par value shares of preferred stock on the market place. The directors of the company included such notables as G.J. Diekema, A.H. Landwehr, Charles R. Sligh, Wm. T. Bertles, Nat Robbins, George F. Getz, Robert Erwin and Ferry K. Heath.

An extensive advertising campaign accompanied the new ownership. Signs



In the foreground are the Ottawa Beach tennis courts and dock. Across the channel are the Coast Guard station and the lighthouse.

Murphy collection

were posted all along the West Michigan Pike from Chicago to Holland. A large lighted billboard, 12 feet high by 30 feet wide, was also placed at the corner where Alpena Beach Road went west from the Pike. Great numbers of guests came and convention groups were welcomed. In June the naval veterans from the Furniture City Post of the American Legion came with 50 automobile loads of people with banners and streamers. In July the Michigan Master Painters and Decorators Association came; they were followed in August by the Ohio Life Insurance Company. The season was so successful that the hotel stayed open until the middle of September.

A great improvement in the access to Ottawa Beach came in the summer of 1923 when the new concrete Alpena Beach Road was finally completed. Near the hotel itself a new concrete road followed a part of the right-of-way of the old railroad tracks. A larger parking area was provided on the grounds of the hotel. The entire resort had been laid out in days when automobiles were not known and no space had been provided for them.

Part of the attraction of Ottawa Beach was its nearness to Chicago which made it practical for short yacht races to and from that city. The Ottawa Beach Yacht Club, under the leadership of George Getz and Fred Pantlind, arranged for a massive Labor Day race and outing at Ottawa Beach in 1923. Besides the different classes of boat races, there was also a large, well advertised water carnival. There was competitive swimming and diving, and the U.S. Coast Guard arranged to provide a display of both its equipment and its skills.



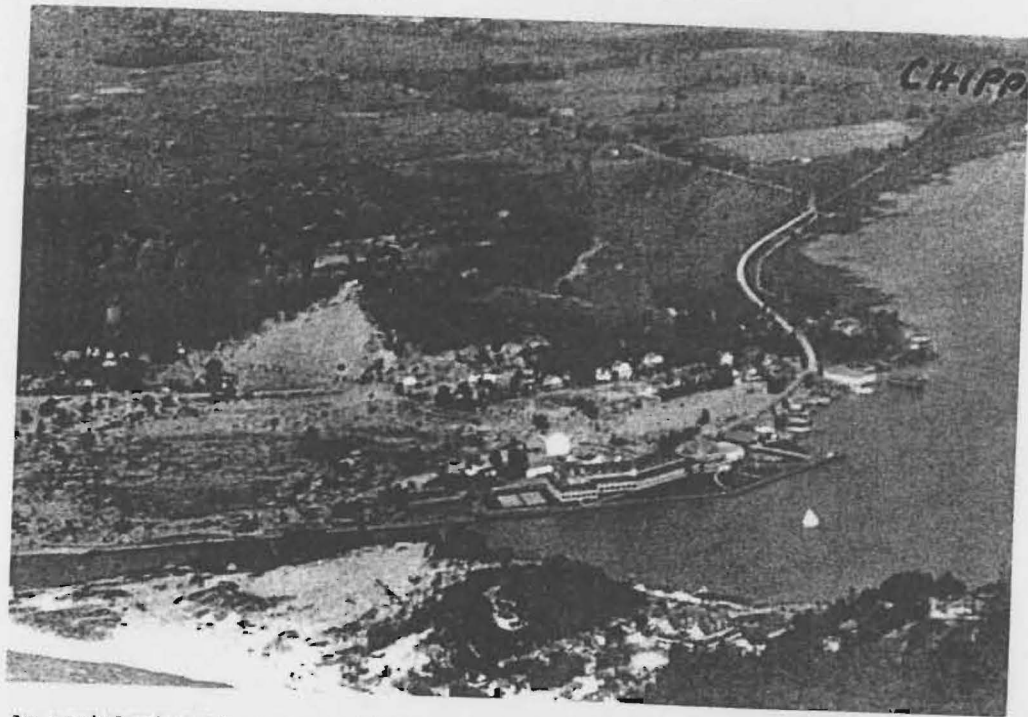
Parking problems at the Ottawa Beach Hotel

Murphy collection





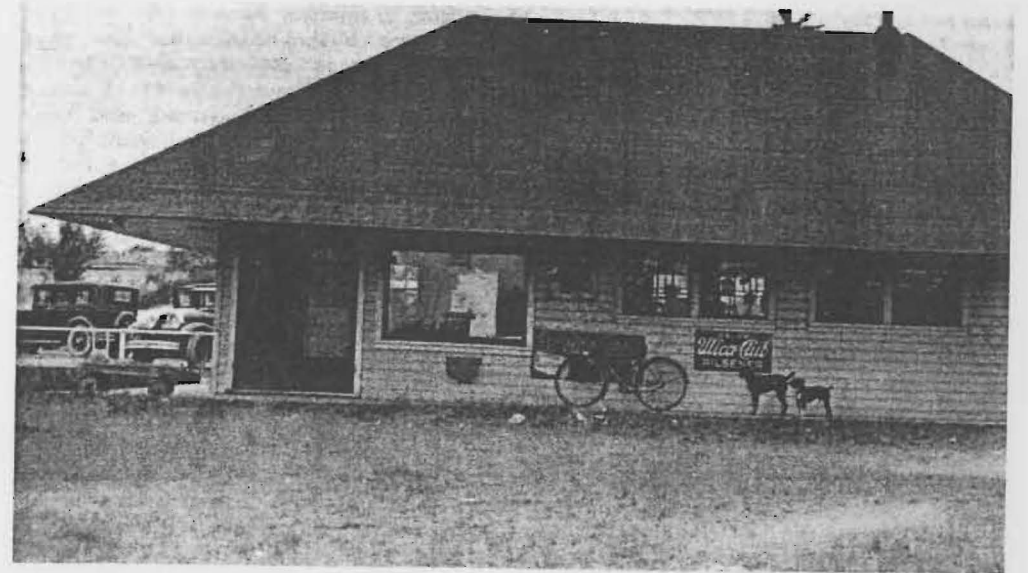
The Ottawa Beach Hotel truck in 1923



An aerial view of Ottawa Beach and Chippewa Point in the summer of 1923



Reroofing the Annex in the summer of 1923. The Annex was also painted.



The Post Office at Ottawa Beach



Chicago Yacht Club Day

-AT-

OTTAWA BEACH, SEPTEMBER 1st, 1923



OFFICIAL PROGRAM

THE FOLLOWING ENTERTAINMENT
FOR THE DAY AND EVENING:

- Ottawa Beach Yacht Club, Sail Boat Race on Lake Michigan, 10 a.m.
Arrival of Chicago Yacht Club, Sailing and Power Boats, expected during the forenoon, depending upon the weather.
Finish of Race at outer Light House, Lake Michigan.
Special exhibition by the U. S. Coast Guards—2:30 p. m.
Starting at 1:30 p. m., the following events will be given in front of the Ottawa Beach Hotel and in order as named below:
1. Fancy Diving
 2. Boys Swimming—50 yards
 3. Girls " "
 4. Men " 100 "
 5. Surf Board Riding
 6. Johnson's Water Bug Ball (given under auspices of Corner Hardware, Holland).
 7. Mystery Swimming Race (Men only)
 8. Canoe Race—1/2 mile straight away (2 Boys to Canoe)
 9. Evenrude—Single Motor—and out board } 1 Man to Boat
Evenrude—Double } 1 mile (1/2 return)
 11. High Power Speed Boats
 12. Apple Swimming Race
 13. Water Melon Race—Motor Boats—(Evenrude or Out-Board (2 to a Boat))
 14. Melon Race—Canoes (2 to a Canoe)
 15. Punting Contest from Boats
 16. Tub Race—Boys
 17. Motor Boat Race (Evenrude or Out-Board)
 18. Sailing Boat Race—Black Lake
 19. Greased Pole Climbing—open to all
 20. Pillow Fight—open to all.

FIRE WORKS—8:30 P. M.

In event of rain the various events (except the Chicago Yacht Sailing) will be postponed. Same place and time, Monday, Sept. 3rd (Labor Day).

OTTAWA BEACH YACHT CLUB.

reflected the enterprise, skills and talents of the leaders of the Ottawa Beach Hotel which, obviously, was well advertised in affluent yachting circles.

On Tuesday, November 6, 1923, the hotel at Ottawa Beach burned. The story was well reported in the local newspapers. The following are segments of the stories as reported in the Holland City News:

A half million dollar fire and the loss of one of the finest resort

The Milwaukee Yacht Club and the Chicago Yacht Club had numbers of sailing yachts in the Labor Day race to Black Lake. There were other races, all with prizes of gold cups provided by Getz, Gold and Pantlind, for local sailboats and speedboats. The swimming and beach events, which were directed by Commodore George Getz, went on through the afternoon with interruptions for the slowly arriving sailboats which endured an almost windless day. One notable sailing yacht, the NAKOMIS, captained by Howard Wetzell, came from Saugatuck flying a pirate skull and bones with its bare-chested crew standing on the rigging in full pirate regalia of white trousers, red sashes, and swords and cutlasses. This ship received a great ovation from the very large crowd and from the thousand "jackies of the training ship WILMETTE." These "jackies" entered into the spirit of the day with many individuals participating in the day's events. The prizes for individual events were \$5 gold pieces.

In the early evening there was a dinner at the hotel at which over 900 guests were served. Later in the evening, after the fireworks from a scow on Black Lake, there was a dance in the well-decorated Ottawa Beach Hotel. In the morning the yachtsmen were first entertained on the Gold houseboat and home; later in the afternoon they went to the Getz summer home to see his farm and zoo.

The success of this first water carnival of the Ottawa Beach Yacht Club (which used the Getz boathouse as its headquarters) led George Getz to say, "This year is only a start - watch us next year!" The entire holiday enterprise

hotels in Western Michigan - that is the loss that Holland and the resort region sustained late Tuesday afternoon when fire wiped out the big Ottawa Beach Hotel. For it is a loss to Holland as well as to the resort. Ottawa Beach Hotel was a great asset to this city and during the past summer it had taken on a new life.

Holland's fire department did valiant work in saving the other buildings at Ottawa Beach, and hundreds of automobiles went to the scene of the fire on both sides of the bay. Volunteers from Holland helped the firemen, and it was due to these factors that the fire was confined to the Hotel, the Hotel Annex, the hotel laundry and other buildings immediately connected with the hotel. So effective was the work of the fire fighters that even the pavilion, only a few paces away from the new addition, was saved, as was the dock building and the nearby Murphy residence.

The fire started about 5:15 o'clock, a short time after the last workman, engaged in putting on the finishing touches to a magnificent \$15,000 dance hall addition, had left the hotel - placed in order only a few days ago for the opening of the next season.

The first sign of the fire, a blaze so small that spectators believed it might have been quenched with only a bucket of water, was discovered by Edwin Antisdell, clerk at the hotel for the past few summers. He said he was passing the main building, when he saw a burst of flames inside. Before he was able to call for aid and dash toward the building, the fire had started its work of destruction and within ten minutes the building was doomed.

Despite valiant cohorts of a hundred volunteers aided by a crew of Holland firemen and members of the Coast Guard crew in the harbor, the fire quickly passed along a hall extending to the hotel annex, and attacked the hotel laundry, a two story building equipped with rooms for girl employees, the cooks' quarters which contained 22 rooms, the kitchens, two storage buildings, and a small garage.

The fire originated either in the hotel barber shop or manicuring parlor near the center of the main building. The cause may never be determined. The only theory advanced by Fred Z. Pantlind, president of the Ottawa Beach Hotel Company, who was the first officer of the company on the ground, was that defective wiring had caused the blaze.

Antisdell, upon seeing the flames, called Mrs. William Murphy, wife of the custodian, who lives in a cottage nearby, and she immediately called to Holland for aid. A hurriedly organized crew of volunteers began firefighting operations against hopeless odds, despite the hotel's elaborate fire equipment, including 1,600 feet of hose and a tank constructed to provide sufficient pressure to send water to every part of the hotel grounds.

The water tank was drained a few days ago when the custodian left on a deer hunting trip to northern Michigan, and in consequence water, which might have saved the Annex and some of the smaller buildings from destruction, was lacking. Usually the tank was not drained until freezing weather set in.

A brisk wind, sweeping down the lake shore from the northwest, fanned the flames, and with the hotel and its contents doomed, the fire-fighters concentrated their efforts to save the Murphy cottage, the cottage of Mrs. Boyd Pantlind nearby, the store and post office, the boat houses, the resort garage and the docks.

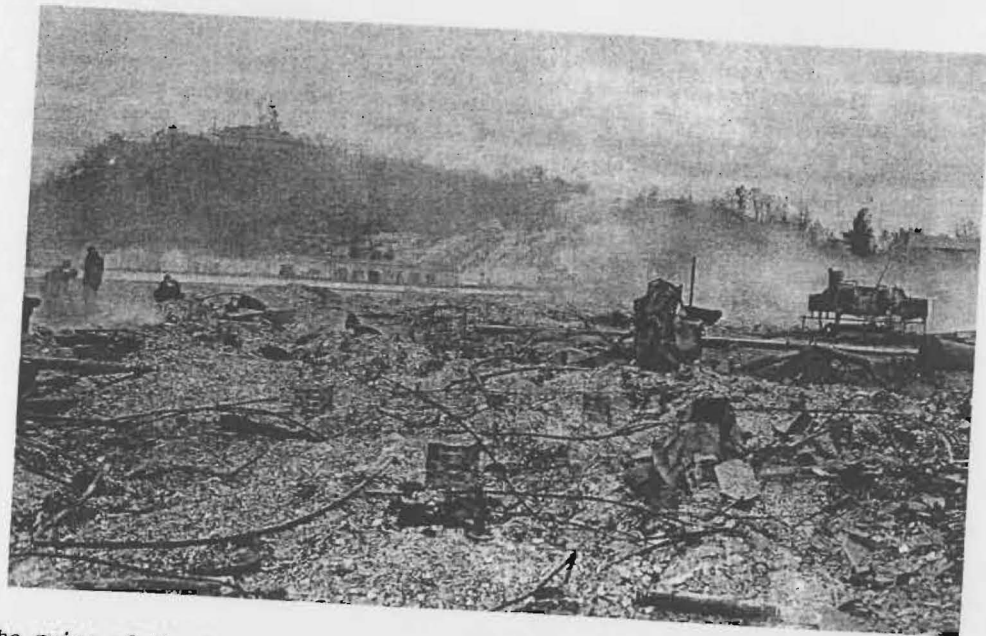


The Pantlind and Murphy cottages and about 75 others on the slope above the hotel would have been doomed, but for the direction of the wind and the heroic efforts of the volunteers. Recent reshingling of the dock buildings and the store in the path of the flames, probably averted their destruction, new roofing forming a protection against the falling embers.

Plans for rebuilding the hotel will be discussed Thursday at a meeting of the officers of the company in the Hotel Pantlind in Grand Rapids according to Fred Z. Pantlind, President of the company.... He estimated the hotel could not be replaced under the present building conditions for less than \$750,000. Insurance approximating \$300,000 was carried on the hotel property, but this included docks and boathouses that were not damaged.

In another story the newspaper reported:

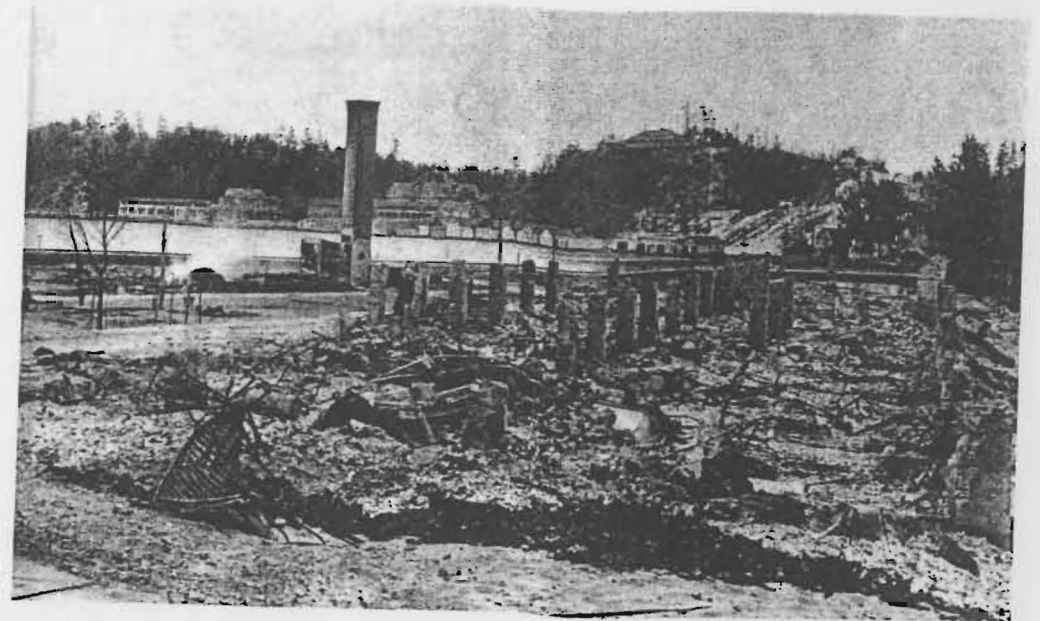
Charles Jackson of Lakewood Farm deserves a great deal of credit in helping to prevent confusion among those who offered their services to fight the fire at Ottawa Beach Tuesday night. Mr. Jackson took it upon himself to direct the work and his expert knowledge of the place and its equipment stood the fire fighters in good stead. He superintended the laying of the plank road to the water's edge on which the pumper could run and he directed the men who formed the bucket brigade to put out the miniature fires on the docks. He brought a truckload of hose from Lakewood Farm to help in the work. Fourteen hundred feet of hose of the Holland Fire Department was used, as well as a considerable length of hose belonging to the Ottawa Beach Association, which was coupled on to the Holland hose.



The ruins of the Ottawa Beach Hotel which burned on November 6, 1923



A view northwards from the dock across the ashes of the Ottawa Beach Hotel. The cottages are on the hillside facing Black Lake.



Looking west along the ruins of the Ottawa Beach Hotel. It was built on the series of concrete pilings.



To those who went to Ottawa Beach, Macatawa Park and Jenison Park on Tuesday night to watch the big fire it appeared as if every person in Holland who has a car was there. There are no statistics or even estimates as to how many cars went to the scene of the fire, but there has seldom been a celebration when more automobiles were parked at the various resorts. The scene was the same on both sides of the lake. Every available inch of space was taken by a car and the traffic jams were at times serious. Some people were compelled to walk a long distance being unable to get near the usual parking space and being compelled to leave their cars along the roadside.

* * * * *

The Holland Fire Department made the run to the Ottawa Beach fire in 20 minutes Tuesday night. When the alarm was turned in and the call for help came from Ottawa Beach, the big pumper was immediately manned and it was rushed to the scene of the blaze without the loss of a minute. Every ounce of determination of the firemen was put back of the job and the firemen fought from the first to last with all the energy at their command.

The first difficulty encountered was to get the heavy pumper from the concrete road at Ottawa Beach to the water's edge so that the sucker could be put into the lake. A road of heavy planks had to be laid, and the firemen and a large number of volunteers took part in the work. It took but a short time when the work had once been begun.



The ruins of the Ottawa Beach Hotel Annex as seen from the veranda of the Pantlind Cottage. Some of the concrete pilings were still on the hillside in 1986.

The next difficulty was to get the suction hose laid so that it would not suck sand from the bottom of the lake and thus clog the pipe. Some of the firemen took off their shoes and stockings, rolled up their trousers, and went into the water to build a platform of boards on which to lay the hose

... All the gasoline supply tanks at Ottawa Beach were drained to supply the big pumper with enough fuel, and in addition to that a supply was sent from Macatawa Park.

* * * * *

It was due to the quick work of a group of Holland men on their way to the Ottawa Beach fire that the cottages on the south side of the bay at Virginia Park were saved from destruction. A blazing piece of material had been blown across the water and had started a blaze in the boat house of Dan Steketee. The Holland men, passing by on their way to Jenison Park, saw the blaze and stopped to put it out.

The fire had obtained a hold at the base of the boat house and it looked as if it would be impossible to get at it. Moreover, the Holland men had no pails or axes or other implements with which to fight the blaze. They borrowed some things and broke into other empty cottages to get the necessary equipment for dipping up water. With the aid of axes they broke into the boat house and were finally able to get the fire under control.

After the Ottawa Beach Hotel burned, area residents wanted to see the ruins. The most conspicuous relic was the massive brick chimney, but that too, for safety reasons, had to be demolished. The sightseers went out on Alpena Beach Road, a very narrow highway which was only a single lane of concrete at places; during the day cars were lined up for several hours. One man made a report that it took three hours to drive to the beach and return to Holland.

The burning of the hotel necessitated many decisions by diverse groups. The owners had to decide on a building program, but they sensed that the investment of great sums into a hotel with a limited season was not really a good investment. In March, 1924, grandiose plans were made for a large club house to be built at the edge of the sand hill where the Annex had stood. This club house would have a great hall, 35 by 80 feet, and would face Black Lake at one end and Lake Michigan at the other end. A residential wing of 40 to 60 rooms was also part of the plan. In August still other plans were made for rebuilding at Ottawa Beach.

One of the problems inherent in any rebuilding program was to have a clear title to the property. When the hotel was moved in 1895, it was moved to a site originally platted as a park by the Association. Since the title was not cleared for individual ownership, it was not prudent to invest in developments. There has never been any building on the site of the Annex or of the Hotel.

The Interurban railroad, which ran on the south shore of Black Lake, had its own ferryboat, the OTTAWA, which had carried passengers from Jenison Park to Ottawa Beach since 1915. After the hotel fire there was no longer a need for this ferry boat, and it was sold to the Cleveland Cliffs Company for service on Lake Superior.



On December 17, 1925, the newspaper headline read: STATE PARK BOARD ACCEPTS THE OTTAWA BEACH SITE. This news was a surprise to Holland residents; it so happened that Fred Z. Pantlind was a member of the State Park Board, and he had encouraged the Board to buy the beach property. The newspaper prophetically stated:

The Ottawa Beach State Park bids fair, within a year or two, to become one of the most popular spots in this section of the state and will become a recreation spot for people from all parts of this and many other states.

Many plans were made in 1926 for the development of this park. The Ottawa County Board of Supervisors authorized and began planning 3½ miles of new roadway to Waukazoo, to Big Bay, and to the State Park. Later it was announced that the Road Commission would use the grade and roadbed of the Pere Marquette line to Ottawa Beach. The rails and most of the ties were long gone, but the grade was well preserved and the "new road will make for a pleasant drive since it will be laid through the dense woods of Waukazoo, while the last 2½ miles of it will skirt Macatawa Bay. Although highway plans were developed, the cement for this construction did not arrive until May, 1927, when it came on the SAMUEL L. MITCHELL.

Pantlind's Ottawa Beach Resort Company also planned its own improvements in the area with a swimming pool, a dance pavilion, lighting, water, etc., but once again, the dreams did not mature.

One unique development on the dunes was sponsored by the Grand Rapids unit of the Campfire Girls which acquired the duneland and beach just north of Ottawa Beach. They immediately built an extensive resort in 1926 which could, in the course of a summer, accommodate thousands of campers. The 21 acres of land was purchased for \$20,000; Holland's Bolhuis Lumber Company contracted the erection of the necessary buildings. The kitchen, dining hall, and officer's quarters were permanent buildings, but 25 tents, with solid wood floors and partial walls, were erected for the campers. The first 95 campers

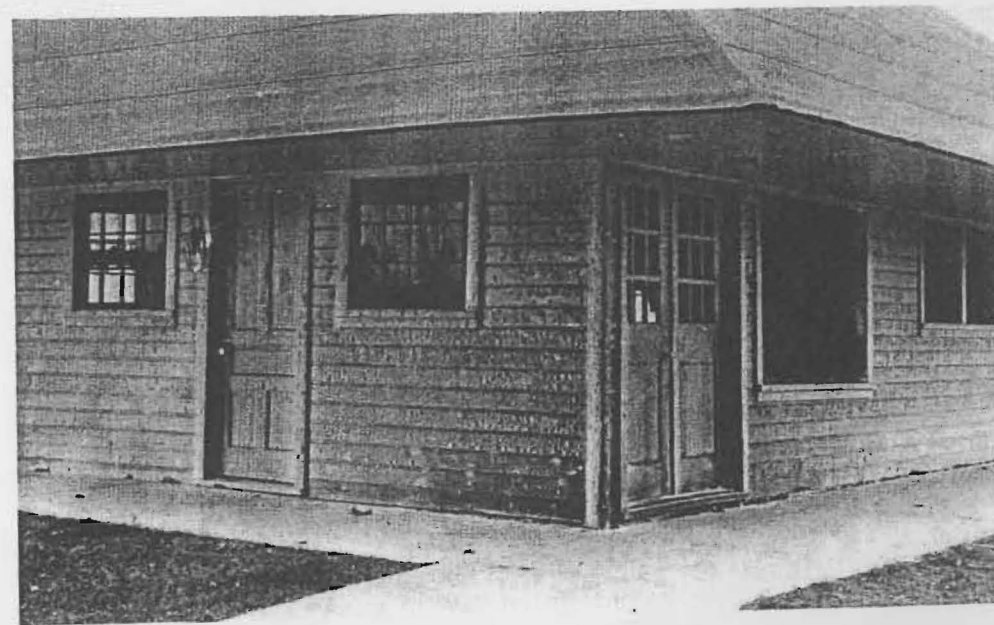


came to Camp Keewano Wohelo in July, 1927. The camp was used by the Campfire Girls for many decades. In very recent years the Spyglass Condominiums have been built on this site.

Part of the normal activity at the Hotel Ottawa was the nine hole golf course. After the hotel burned, the golf course, which ranged up and down the dunes (at the present site of the Macatawa Camp Ground), continued to attract area golfers. It had its own club house and its own officers. The caddies continued to have their annual tournament as late as 1926 when Gerrit Hoving, Richard Baker, Andrew Witteveen, and Jack Woodall won prizes.

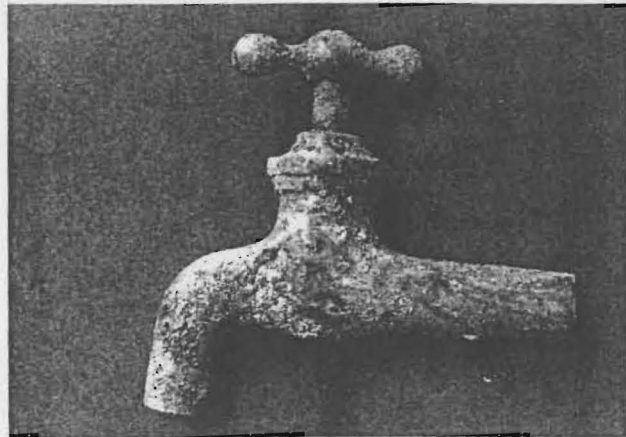
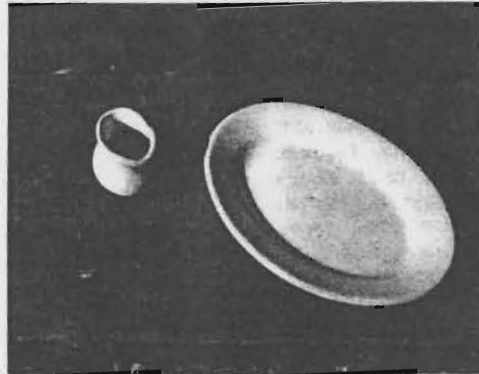
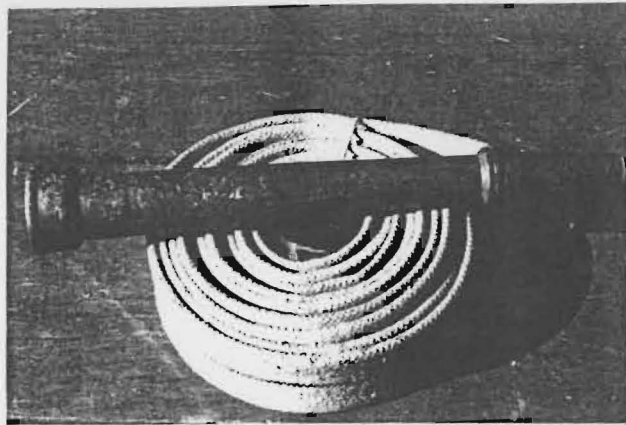
In the 1920's Maurice Collins and Elton Cobb were both caddies at this course; the 'pro' was M.G. 'Mitt' West whose wife was also involved in the clubhouse. On summer evenings, A.H. Landwehr of the Holland Furnace Company, as well as his brothers and cronies, often came to the beach for a round of golf. When they came to the 7th hole, which was up the hill and then beyond the crest of the hill, the men would send the caddies to the top to observe the golf balls as they were driven. The caddies would, if the ball was reasonably close to the hole, call down, "It's in!" Then they would go to the hole (the men being slow to climb the hill) and place the ball in the cup. [Note: Collins reports that there was frequently a cash tip when this occurred.]

One of Holland's long forgotten authors, Rev. John M. Vander Meulen, wrote a book about Christians and golfing called Getting Out of The Rough in which he describes one of the boorish foursomes which he met at the Ottawa Beach Golf Course. He used their boorishness as a basis for a speech at the dedication of the Holland Country Club the next day.



The Post Office building was scorched by the Ottawa Beach Hotel fire.





Relics of the Ottawa Beach Hotel

Doust collection

OTTAWA BEACH AND HOLLAND STATE PARK 1927 - 1946

In the summer of 1927, Alpena Beach Road was extended to the east of U.S. 31 (River Avenue), the concrete road to Waukazoo from Alpena Beach Road was being built, and the road along the old rail bed (Ottawa Beach Road) was being developed. In July, 1927, the State released \$30,000 for necessary improvements at the new 32-acre state Park; however, by that time it was too late to have any effect on the park for that season. The money was spent on camping and sanitary facilities. A 90 room bathhouse already on the property was donated to the state by Fred Pantlind and this was remodeled.

There was no blaring of trumpets nor assemblies of politicians when Holland State Park opened in 1928. There is, in fact, little mention of the event in the local newspaper. An early report tells of the teachers of Washington School going there for a beach party the day before Decoration Day in 1928. Great numbers of visitors came to the beach on the Fourth of July but the numbers given, 60,000, were for both the Grand Haven and Holland State Parks.

The State Park was a success from the time it opened. The fact that there were good roads to the park, and that there was an oval around which people could drive to see the lake, the beach, and the lighthouse was pleasurable. Visitors could park for long periods of time for fishing, bathing, and for picnicking, and that too made for great numbers of visitors. In the summer a water slide and several land slides were placed along the beach for the pleasure of the children. People came to the State Park from the immediate area, but many families came from Grand Rapids and from even further away.

In 1930 state funds were allocated for park improvements and plans were considered for extending the oval to the north and to the east where there was undeveloped land. Because \$3,450 did not go very far, no improvements were made. The next year there was much local agitation to get an enlarged oval. A committee was sent to Lansing to see what could be done, but the State, because of the Great Depression, had cut the total budget of all the state parks from \$415,000 to \$86,000. With such a drastic reduction of funds, no improvements could be considered at any of the state parks.

In those depression days people could and did camp at the State Park even though there were severe restrictions. At most state parks the limit for camping was 15 days, but at Ottawa Beach the limit was only 7 days because the park was so crowded and so busy. The newspaper reported:

Last year there was altogether too much congestion at the Oval for comfort, but this year it is even beyond congestion and has become a stampede.

The attendance reports for those early years show 1929, over 631,000