



Thank you
O.C. Simonds
John Butler Johnson
Dean W.S. Curtis



≈ INTRODUCTION ≈

While Pier Cove presently consists of relatively few residences, the maps from 1869 and 1873 of the Village of Pier Cove show that it was once a bustling village, with a multitude of citizens. Boats docked at the pier to pick up loads of products such as fruit and lumber. For a time there were two piers present, flanking the creek.

The Village included a church, a hotel, a post office, various shops including a butcher/grocer, a dry goods proprietor that sold boots, shoes and clothing, and a fruit canner/winery. A school stood at the present site of Jim and Mary Ann's house. A saw mill and a grist mill stood at the base of the Mill Pond, where the creek emptied into Lake Michigan. Monroe Street, now Ravine Trail, ran between the Johnson-Field House and the Gauntlett properties, and Adams Street would now lead you past the tennis court and barn. South Main Street is gone, as are Mary Street and Ann Street. But possibly these street names provided inspiration for future generations, as there are many Marys and Anns in the family trees - - not to mention a Mary Ann!

So, as many places in the rest of the world are over run with suburban sprawl, Pier Cove has downsized from a busy village to an enclave of homes. With a smattering of year round residents, and other lucky visitors in the summer, the area has less activity than in the past - - which is the way we like it, and is why we love it.

Although, bringing back that on-site winery would be nice.....

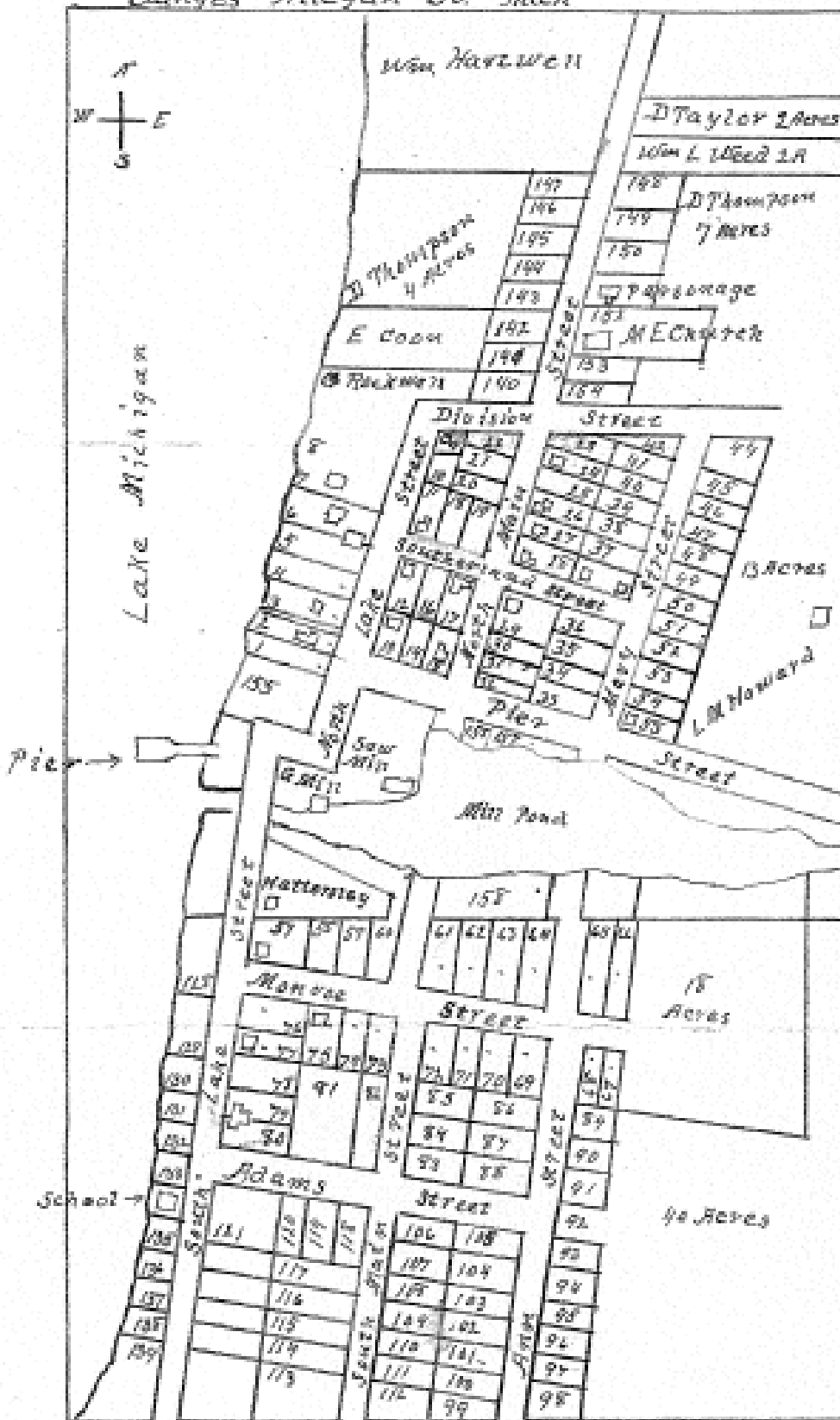


Dean Curtis entry from September 5, 1902 in the Simonds Cove Book:

I now say as the vacation draws to a close
That here is where I wish to come every summer.
Artificial so-called attractions are absent and the young and old
Are thrown upon their own resources, a fact which I am sure the young folks
Gathered with us will look back to with gratitude.
I have never seen happier faces.

Map of **PIER COVE** in 1849
 Chonges Allegan Co. Mich

Scale
 24 rods per inch
 Copied from original
 Blue Print by H.N. Musker
 Jan. 1 1916 HASTSIZ



- Buildings**
- Lot 56 Owner
 - 9 J. Hattersley
 - 10 R. Payne
 - 14 D. Thompson
 - 7 Bidwell
 - 26 J.T. Parrish
 - 27 E. Weaver
 - 6 B.F. Hall, Res't Store
 - 11
 - 19 Store
 - 28 Store
 - 37 P.J. Allade
 Shop & Residence
 - 12 Mrs. Weed
 - 17 Hotel
 - 3 F.S. Raymond
 - 13-15 G.S. Rockwell
 Store & Res.
 - 55 Betsy Goodale
 - 2 J. Edriage
 - 79-80 A.P. Adams
 - 134 School

First pier built
 in 1849
 Last pier aban-
 doned Aug. 1917



Pier Cove Business Directory.

Wares, Dealer and Proprietor of Washington Market at Sargentsk.
 Joseph Hildige, Proprietor of Castle Mills.
 C. R. Goodrich, Physician and Surgeon, Sec. 5.
 H. Andrews, Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Boots, Shoes and Clothing at Pinesville.
 M. Hunsbary, Fruit Dealer and manufacturer of Wine, Sec. 18.

DEAD BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Recall Boom Days Of Another Ghost Town

Pier Cove Once Busiest Port Between St. Joseph, Muskegon

GLENN, May 6.—Pier Cove, a thriving lumber and shipping center in pre-Civil War days, lies a nearly forgotten ghost town in the shady woods of northwestern Allegan county today.

The town, once described as the busiest port between St. Joseph and Muskegon, is now marked only by a bridge and a ruin in the Lakeshore road, four miles north of Glenn.

Just those of the original century old houses remain, and the two huge piers for which the town was named have long since tumbled into Lake Michigan.

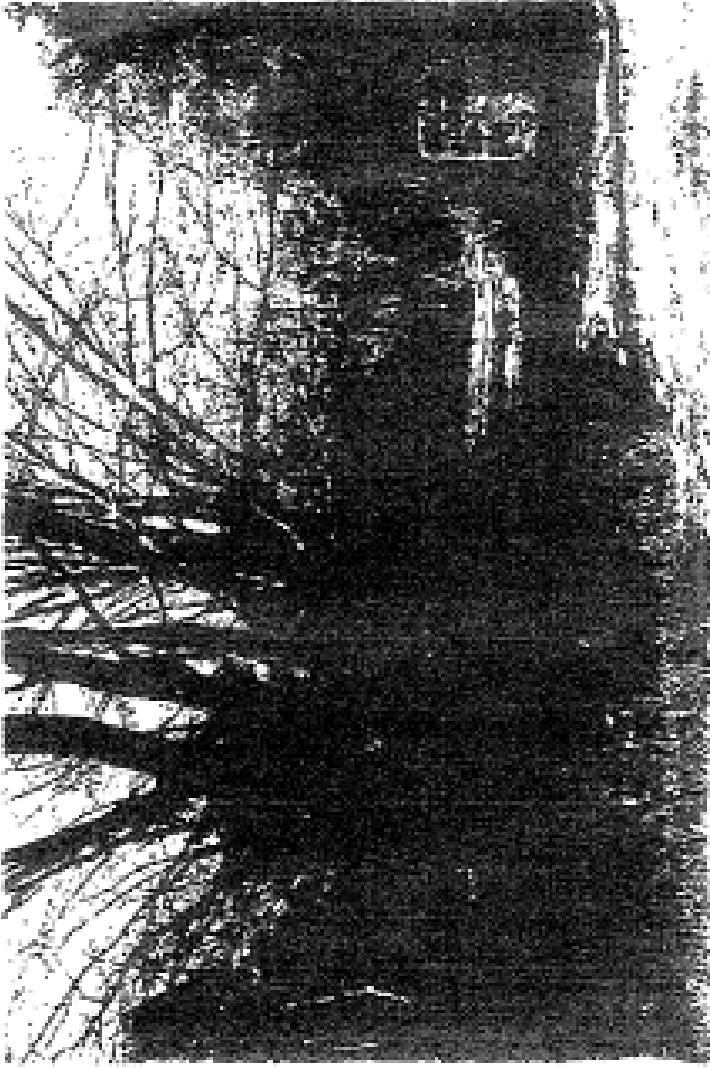
The history of the town was brought to light again at a recent Allegan summer liberal and society meeting at Chesham, when Mrs. Walker revealed three records of the city kept by her father.

In 1846 the first cover sheet saw mill was built on the creek about 100 yards above where it empties into the lake. The town that grew around it was first called Case after the general settler, but the name was changed to Pier Cove later when the first of two large piers was extended into the lake.

A brisk lumber business between Chicago and Pier Cove developed and, according to Mrs. Walker's history, old railroads came to have carried no more as 77 miles coming and going from the place at one time.

GIANT PIER
The piers were glassed. A team of horses could pull a load of lumber 200 yards across the water and turn around at the far end.

On the eve of the Civil War, Pier Cove's trade prospered so that Governor's health was requested a fine cabinet shop, cabinet, and bill cabinet shop. Railway, great Michigan trees, as the planned port across a variety of plants on the



MAIN STREET IN GHOST TOWN: Only last automobiles or nature lovers pass down what once was the main street of Pier Cove, a bustling town more than 100 years ago. (News-Palladium photos)

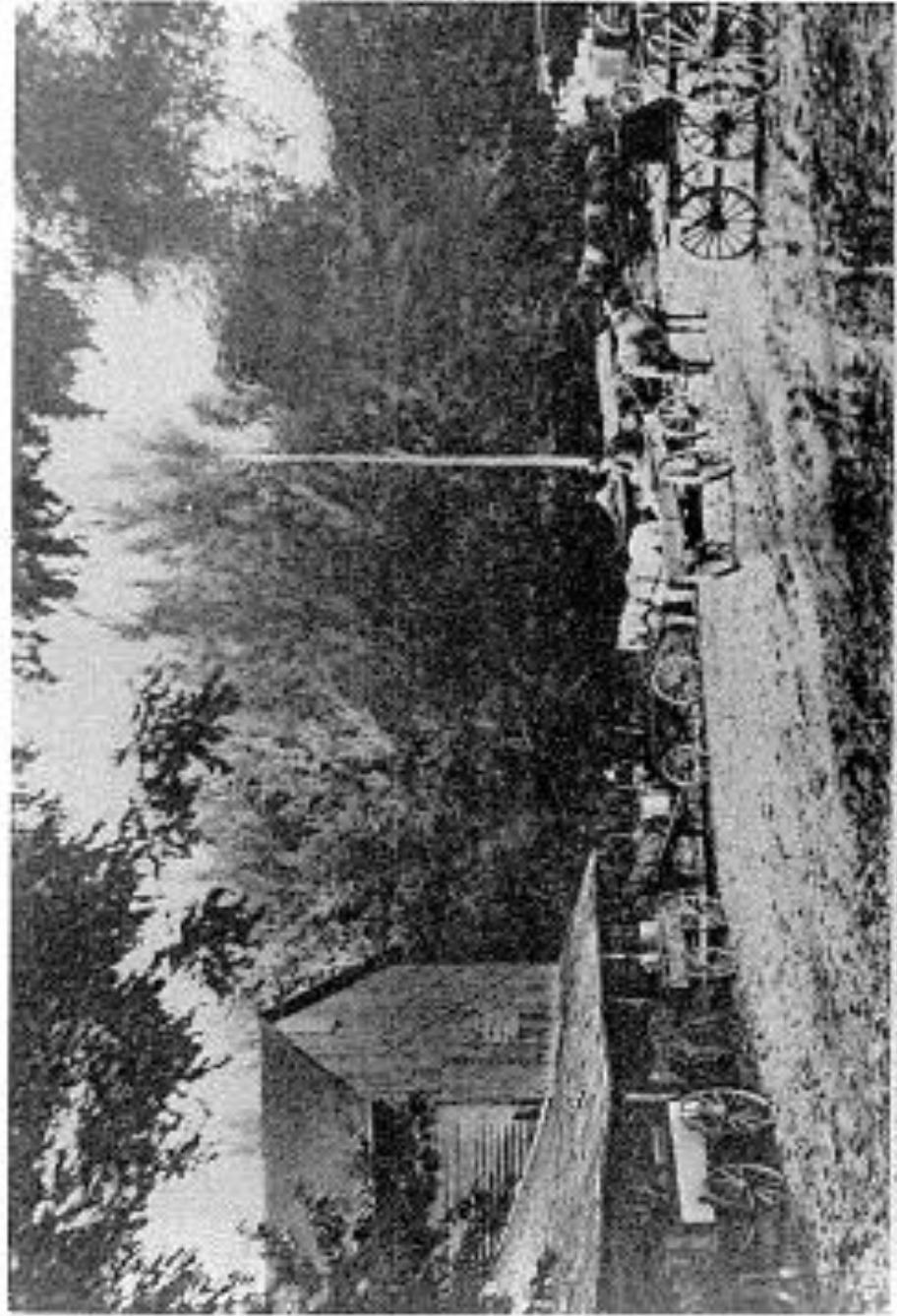
THREE STREETS

Although Pier Cove flourished into a garden spot, trees that now are still noticeably growing in straight rows. Streets from the old mill race are used as a substitute for streets of the three original Pier Cove towns.

Mrs. Walker, now in her seventies, said she planned port across a variety of plants on the

grounds that once were Pier Cove, and garden clubs now four lands that once bore the hottest lumbering boom on the east shore of Lake Michigan.

NOT LONG BEFORE THIS END: The sun was already setting on Pier Cove when this picture was taken years after the Civil War. Although the forest was closing in, wagoners still had to line up for service at the grist mill.



PERMANENCE of a story and place in the "good days" of Pier Cove near Clark, in Allegan county, last week started old memories for Murray Sepp, 76, of 1134 Channing street, Boston Harbor.

Sepp was born two miles south of Pier Cove along the Lake Michigan shore, and spent his youth on his father's farm there.

As a young man, he recalls, he used to earn his money at odd jobs as a laborer on the two giant piers that cross the Pier Cove "the brackish part" between Sandusky and St. Asaph.



Sepp

By the time of the century, when Sepp started on the docks, Pier Cove was already on the long decline from a thriving town before the Civil War to the same town in the road it is now.

The harbor that had been its chief commodity was gone, Sepp recalls, and the only trade was one that had a day that came from Chicago during the harvest season.

Life At The Cove

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"And so to Bed" Pee Simons

The
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PRE YELP REVIEWS OF VACATION TIME AT PIER COVE

(taken directly from various Simonds Cove books)

Hurrah for the Cove! It is the place to have fun in the summer.

-Herbert R. Simonds, 1896

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Tho' far and near I wander

Tho' near and far I rove

Four plunks I bet, I don't forget

These four days at the Cove

-Arthur Howell Sharpless Knox, Aug 26 1900

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The "Cove" is a most enjoyable place.

-J Roy Munson, July 1902

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Never shall I forget these four pleasant days spent at the "Cove".

-Grace Henderson, Aug 15, 1902

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There is no place like the Cove

-Laura Johnson, Aug 26, 1902

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If you want to have a good, restful time, come to the Cove

-Agnes L. Johnson, Aug 26 1902

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Every year when we are spending our time here, Pier Cove seems to be growing more pleasant

-Marshall Simonds, July 26, 1904

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With regrets that the pleasant vacation at Pier Cove is ended

Mabel Ellis, Aug 27, 1904

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I look forward to the time when I shall stay even later and possibly make this my home. This season has been eventful in our relation to the "Cove"; we bought the Adams place and have been busy getting it into better condition. It will do now very well as a summer home, but I wish to add to its productiveness so that we can come and live on it the year round.

-Wm S Curtis, Sept. 12th, 1904

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One of the best of places to come to and one of the hardest to leave

Frances Burnett, Aug 21, 1905

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If I only had one week end left to spend with my wife I would rather spend it here.

-Bob Johnson, Dot Johnson June 23, 1918

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Here's hoping that the same tradition may continue at the Cove for generations to come

-Laura, the Spinster, 1918

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The Cove still seems to be the finest place in the world. It was doubly fine this year as "she" was here with me.

-D.R. Simonds, June 14 - 24, 1919

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I have had a grand time

-Pearl Foster, 8 years old. 1920

This is my second time visiting the Cove. Every time I like it better. I have had a week of pleasure here.

-Miss Pearl Foster, 9 years old.

We have spent eight happy days at the Cove and each day loaded with joy and pleasure.

-Pearl Foster, 1926

I have had one more wonderful time. Each day has been filled with all sorts of pleasure and joys.

-Pearl Foster, July 12, 1927

Just another grand time at the Cove

-Pearl Foster, July 5, 1929.

As a sign of the kids growing up: the July 9, 1937 entry by Pearl's mother indicates "Roland, Ethel and Pearl here for the Fourth of July but had to go back to hot old Chicago to work"

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The Garden of Eden has nothing on Pier Cove

-C.E. Godshalk, September 9 1923

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The beauty of Pier Cove surpassed my fondest expectations. A 3 A.M. canoe ride with Mr. Simonds was a rare treat. My first visit has been a most delightful one.

-Arnold Roehl, August 23, 1926

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I have been, probably, the eatin-est and the sleepin-est guest the Cove has ever had!

-Ida Mann Caswell, July 1½, 2, 3, 4, 1927

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I have fried steak but never before on hot stones. I have walked in ravines, but never before in the Ravine. I have enjoyed hospitality but never before at the Cove. Shall I ever forget it? No! Never, what, never? NO. NEVER.

-Earl W. Albright, Sept 22, 1929.

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Four days of heaven on earth -- and oh what a sunburn I am taking back with me! It's like pulling teeth to have to leave this glorious place.

-Esther Bradley, 1929.

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We have had a wonderful visit and will never forget this marvelous place. I will always love to think of the moonlight ride on the pond with Marshall's music floating over the water. *(Editor's note: apparently the family was known to take the hand cranked Victrola out on the pond and play records. No Wi-Fi back then).*

-Florence P Gochnauer, July 31, 1930.

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I cannot give expression this year however without mentioning the terrific and ever present void caused by the absence of O.C. It was beautiful on his pond where I took Martha in a canoe on this trip.

-Herbert, June 25, 1933

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For thirteen happy summers I have been here at the "Cove". It has taught me to appreciate nature. To watch the little brook wind itself through the ravine is one of my greatest pleasures.

-Peggy Simonds, August 27, 1933

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And in summary:

**All I can say is "ditto" to all that has been said throughout this entire
book**

-Mary Foster, 1926

May we all help to preserve the quiet,
restfulness, and beauty, of "The Cove" in
loving remembrance of "Old J. B." — "Old J. B."
who never would have grown old and whose
life will continue to be our inspiration for us
Sept. 1, 1903 O. C. Simonds

OSSIAN C. SIMONDS
1855-1931

Landscape Architect
Pier Cove Cottager

Ossian Cole Simonds was landscape architect for Chicago's Graceland Cemetery, its Lincoln Park and the popular Morton Arboretum. The Pier Cove area, too, would benefit from his work as the denuded land around Pier Cove Creek was gradually transformed into lush green forest bursting with flowering shrubs.

Simonds was born in Grand Rapids and graduated from the University of Michigan in 1878 with a degree in civil engineering. After a brief stint as an architect he found his life's work in landscape design. He became a landscape architect for Chicago's Graceland Cemetery in 1881 and was a major influence on the development of the area for the next 50 years. He popularized the idea of simplicity and natural beauty in cemeteries and public parks rather than the formal contrived and clipped aspect of earlier parks and public gardens.



Ossian C. Simonds

Other projects include extensive parklands in Madison, Wisconsin; work in the Illinois cities of Quincy and Springfield, and an extension of Lake Shore Drive and Lincoln Park, Chicago. One of the feeder roads for Lake Shore Drive is called Simonds Street. He made the original plan for Fort Sheridan, Illinois, and was the designer of Nichols Arboretum at his alma mater in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and the famous Morton Arboretum near Chicago. In 1929 he wrote that his work for private parties took him "from Maine to California and from Minnesota to Florida."



The Simonds house at Pier Cove

When he was beginning his career in Chicago he had frequent reason to travel between his home near Grand Rapids and the city, sometimes taking an overland route to Pier Cove where he caught a steamer for Chicago at the pier that jolted into Lake Michigan. Simonds became interested in the potential of the denuded land with an old mill near the piers. In 1889, Simonds bought the first portion of the land from Joseph Eldridge who had owned the mill. This included a residence. He subsequently purchased additional land and slowly transformed the sandy slopes surrounding the little stream that enters Lake Michigan at Pier Cove into a beautiful natural park, filled with hundreds of varieties of trees, shrubs and flowers, both native and exotic. There are large plantings of azaleas, rhododendrons and mountain laurel and

several kinds of ferns, shining club moss, and pitcher plants. Three different kinds of trillium have been found there. In 1960 the route of I-196 threatened a portion of the arboretum. Opposition to the route came from family members, nearby residents, and members of other nature-oriented organizations who wrote more than 300 letters to the state. Finally a slight reverse curve was built into the interstate highway so that it might miss a particular grove of trees, which included a large beech tree, sometimes called the Church Beech, where the ashes of Simonds and his wife had been scattered in accordance with their instructions.

Simonds was a charter member of the American Society of Landscape Architects, founded in 1899, and the author of numerous articles on landscape architecture and one book, *Landscape Gardening*, published in 1906. He was instrumental in founding a chair of landscape design at the University of Michigan and was for some years a non-resident lecturer. In 1929 he was awarded an honorary master's degree from the University of Michigan.

Simonds was married in 1881 to the former Martha E. Rumsey. The couple had six children. Descendants still live near Pier Cove Ravine which, in 1973, was given by the Simonds estate into the management of The Pier Cove Ravine Trust Association which is charged with the task of "maintaining the land, paths and foot bridges in its natural and undeveloped state for all to view its natural beauty without damage to the vegetation, animals or birds."

JOHN BUTLER JOHNSON

1850-1902

*Engineer, Professor
Early Pier Cove Cottage*

John Butler Johnson was born of Quaker parents June 11, 1850, in Ohio and attended the local high school where Dr. T. C. Mendenhall was the principal. In 1866 the family moved to Kokomo, Indiana, where John attended Holbrook Normal School in Lebanon. After graduation he taught in schools in Arkansas, Ohio and Indiana before going to Indianapolis in 1872 where he was instructor in the high school and secretary of the school board.

Johnson entered the University of Michigan Engineering School in 1874 where he became acquainted with fellow student Ossian C. Simonds. Probably in the summer of 1876 or 1877 the two civil engineers secured a contract to make a geodesic survey of the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. Working as a team they rented a horse drawn conveyance and fitted it out with a sextant, transit and other needed items. This job brought them to the area known as Pier Cove with which they were most pleased, both agreeing to return in the future to purchase property. After graduation in 1878 each pursued his separate professional field, yet the bond of fellowship from college was to bring them together again in later years.

In 1879 John Butler married Phoebe Henby, and the newlyweds moved to Detroit where Johnson joined the Office of the U. S. Lake Survey in Detroit, conducted by the Corps of Engineers, where he remained for two years. In 1881 the Johnsons moved to St. Louis, Missouri, and joined the Office of the Mississippi River Commission as an assistant engineer in charge of a field party. By 1893, with a growing family, Johnson joined Washington University, St. Louis, as a professor in civil engineering remaining until 1899, when he was called to the University of Wisconsin as the first dean of the College of Mechanics and Engineering. By this time Johnson had five growing children, a thriving consulting engineering company and had completed several engineering text books.

In 1897 the Johnson family purchased lot 56 of the Village of Pier Cove plat from Sven Benson and had a summer house constructed on the lot. The large five bedroom structure had porches all around the outside of the building, upstairs and down, thus the name, "The Porches." The house is still standing on Lakeshore Drive, several hundred feet south of O. C. Simonds' house.



John Butler Johnson
and the Johnson family at the Porches

Having established himself as an outspoken proponent of technical education he vigorously took up the challenge when the University of Wisconsin set up a new Mechanical and Engineering College. In 1899 the family moved to Madison, Wisconsin.

John Butler Johnson was killed in a horse and wagon accident near his Michigan cottage on June 23, 1902, at the age of 52. He and son, Robert, were bringing a load of furniture from the railroad station in Fennville for the house at Pier Cove. About 123rd Avenue, the load shifted pushing John under the wagon wheels. Eight-year-old Robert ran all the way to the house to get help, but it was too late.

Phoebe Johnson continued to summer at "The Porches" for many years. The structure remains in the family having passed from Phoebe through the five children, to Robert C. Johnson, and his wife Dorothy, to their three children, Dorothy, Mary Ann and Robert D. Johnson. In 1987 Robert D. and his wife, Ellen, opened The Porches Bed and Breakfast. —by Robert D. Johnson

From 'Heroes, Rogues and Just Plain Folks: A History of the Saugatuck Area'. Published by Saugatuck Douglas Historical Society, 1998. Page 21.

The Porches, after being run as B&B for several years, was purchased in 2013. The home was razed and a new private residence was built on the site.

WILLIAM SAMUEL CURTIS
1858-1938

Education, University Dean, Cottager

William Samuel Curtis, known as "The Dean" or "Will" bought 40 acres of land in the south portion of Pier Cove from Hiram A. and Dorothy F. Adams, June 28, 1904, and also a strip of land 5 rods by 28 rods, a part of 20 acres formerly owned by Louis Patch. This land had been reduced to sand dunes by logging and the resultant loss of protection from the winds. He was able to stabilize the land and start a fruit farm. Some of the vines he planted were from Switzerland where he and his wife, Hapa, had honeymooned and continued to visit. They named their only child, Edward Elton Curtis, in honor of the town of Glion in Switzerland.

The Dean became acquainted with the Pier Cove area through two Johnson brothers, Albert and his older brother, John Butler Johnson. Both brothers were associated with Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri—John, a professor of engineering and Albert, a student.

The Dean was born June 19, 1858, in Newport, Wayne County, Indiana, earlier called Fountain City and still earlier known as New Garden. The earliest settlers were a group of Friends from Guilford County, North Carolina. The Wesleyan Methodist Church was founded in Fountain City, fleeing with the mother church over slavery. The Dean's grandfather, Joseph Curtis, was descended from one of the Friends' families of Bugbrook, England, settling in New Jersey, east of Philadelphia. The settlements of Mt. Pleasant, Ogsden and Bugbrook in various states

show the westward movement of these descendants. The Dean was one of seven children, five daughters and two sons, born to William Crawford and Elizabeth Rebecca Harker Curtis. He attended schools at Hennepin, Florida; Troy, Ohio; McKendree College; and Washington University in St. Louis, then taught school at various places including Smith Academy, a boys' preparatory school for Washington University. He then went to Omaha, Nebraska in 1884 where he practiced law for ten years. In 1894 he returned to St. Louis to become Dean of the Law School of Washington University, a post he held until 1915.

He was known as a prankster. One summer, as a way of objecting to fancy dressing during vacation time, he and his wife appeared at a formal party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. O. C. Simonds in their party clothes—but barefoot! This is said to have led to less formality. One of his hobbies was carpentry, mostly crude, uncomfortable chairs and tables for the cottage. One of his successes was a simple dining room table which would be extended by adding wooden pieces to each end.

He had three wives, the first, Hope Goodson, was the mother of his only child, Edward Elton Curtis. The land at Pier Cove has since passed on to Edward's five children and their descendants. Edward's children were: Edward Elton Curtis, Jr., of the Consulate Service of the State Department; Thomas Bradford Curtis, a lawyer and former Congressman from Missouri; Ernest Miffin Curtis, a CPA; William Shapley Curtis, MD, a radiologist, and James Wallace Curtis, an Episcopal priest.



William S. Curtis

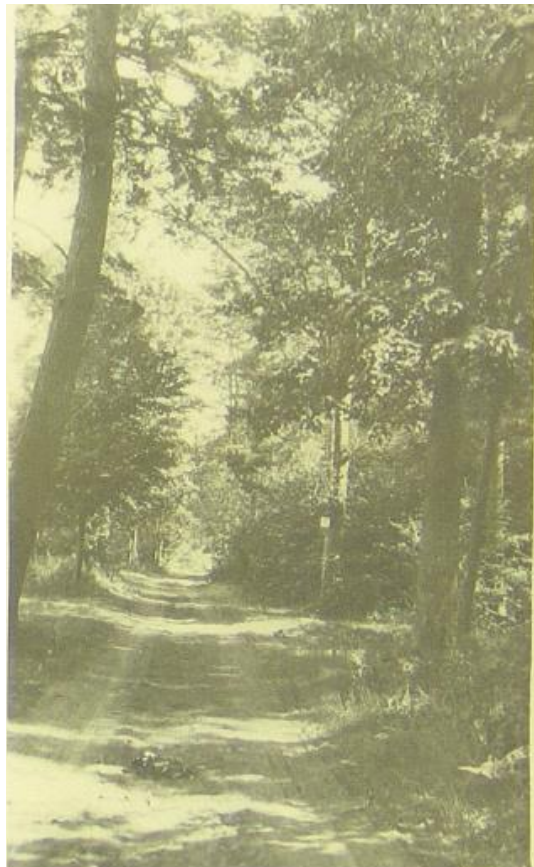


HOW THE SIMONDS, JOHNSONS AND CURTISES CAME TO PIER COVE

In the summers of 1877 and 1878, the Army Corps of Engineers contracted OC Simonds and JB Johnson, both studying civil engineering at the University of Michigan, to come to the Saugatuck area to do Lake Surveys. (Bob Simonds and Bob Johnson have found OC and JB's names in the Corps records, but have no idea what "Lake Surveys" means. The landlines were already established.) OC and JB loved the area and decided that they would come back to purchase land. Both graduated from the University of Michigan in 1878.

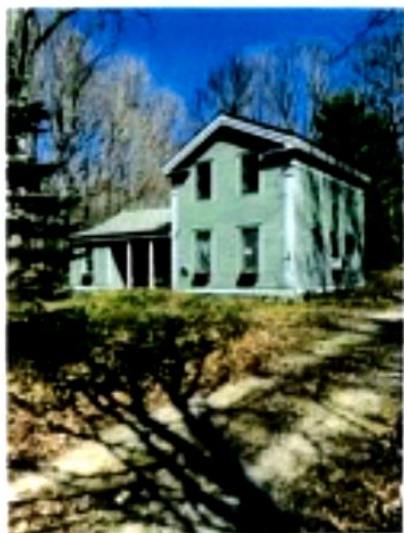
OC joined a prestigious architecture firm in Chicago, which eventually became Halliburton, Roach & Simonds. He got into landscape architecture as a result of his work there. He did the landscaping for Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. He encouraged the University of Michigan to establish a Department of Landscape Architecture and landscaped the Nichols Arboretum in Ann Arbor.

In 1889, OC bought land in the Pier Cove area and bought other tracts between then and 1895. JB Johnson bought land in Pier Cove in 1897 and built the Porches. JB was teaching at Washington University in St. Louis, where he met William S. Curtis and convinced him to buy land in Pier Cove, which he did in 1904. (Unfortunately, JB was killed in 1902 when a load of furniture he was bringing to the Porches shifted and pushed him under the wagon wheels.) In 1909, AL Johnson, JB's much younger brother who had been at Washington University, built a cottage on the lake, which is now known as the Field cottage.





The Curtis Farmhouse



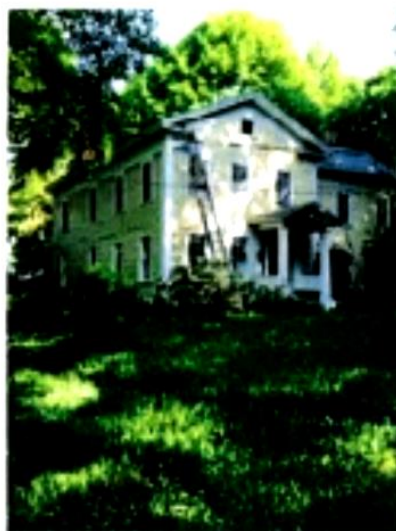
The Parsonage



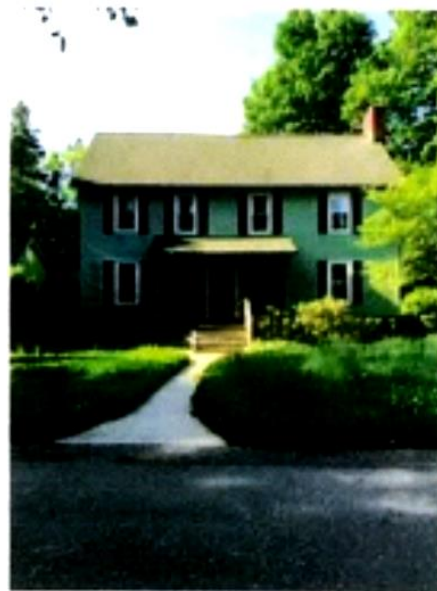
The Porches



The Johnson-Field House



The Orchard House



The Gauntlett Farmhouse

Photos by Bob Foster

THE SIMONDS HOUSES

Ossian Cole Simonds (1855-1931), a landscape architect, married Martha E. Rumsey in 1881. They had six children: Gertrude (1883-1967), Laura (1886-1888), Marshall (1888-1986), Herbert (1887-1980), Donald (1895-1980), and Robert (1898-1957).

In 1889 O.C. bought the first portion of land in Pier Cove from Joseph Eldridge, who owned the gristmill in Pier Cove Creek. This included the Orchard House, a Greek revival residence built in 1855. Robert was given the Orchard House by Gertrude Walker in 1951. Robert C. Simonds (Nibs), born in 1930, is the only child of Robert. The Orchard House is now owned by Nibs, who lives in the log house that he and wife Jody built in 1997. They have one daughter Eve McKeown and a son Bill Simonds.

The “Wedding Cottage”, given to Marshall and Marian by Aunt Julia Rumsey, was built in 1903 and remained up on the bluff until November 2001 when it was taken down. Marshall, the father of Peggy Simonds and Barbara Valentine, built his retirement home in 1954 on the lot next to it. The “Wedding Cottage” was removed and a new house was built over the same space in 2010 by the Frazier family of Chicago.

Gertrude and William Walker built the brick house with arches on the porch in 1938. This house contains the fireplace from O.C.’s house in Chicago. The Walkers had no children.

After Martha Simonds death, in the depths of the depression, the entire Pier Cove “Ravine” property was put up for sale. The Walkers bought the entire acreage except for the Gauntlett Farm House. William was the sixth vice president of the Illinois Continental Nation Bank and Trust of Chicago. The Walkers retired to Pier Cove in 1948 and William died three years later.

Donald Simonds built the gray-colored ranch at 2308 Lakeshore Drive in 1962. It was designed by Florence (Danny) Hunn, a well-known interior designer from Chicago. Miss Hunn also had a home in Pier Cove called the “The Doll House”, built in 1858. Donald had three children: Joanna, Donald and Dick.

Between 1889 and 1895 O.C. purchased additional acreage east of Lakeshore Drive and south of 123rd Avenue to where Interstate 196 now runs. O.C. wanted to create an arboretum and to replant the cutover lands that had been stripped of the native white pines and hard woods before and after the great Chicago fire of 1871. Today the area is known as the Pier Cove Ravine. Included in the Ravine are many experimental plantings such as rhododendrons which O.C. brought from North Carolina. These have now spread along the Pier Cove Creek. There are also some rare Magnolia Grandiflora, which are mostly seen in more southern tropical

climates. It was his creation of the evergreen screening that helped create the protected micro-climate conditions that has allowed these plants to survive and flourish for over 100 years. O.C. also loved the combination of American Beech trees and hemlocks. These can be seen further up the Ravine at a place known as the “Church Beeches”. This is a small place of reverence on the top of a bluff which he chose as his burial site. His wife Martha was also buried there in 1937.

In 1973, a non-profit trust was established to maintain the lands as O.C. had planted them. The property has passed from O.C.’s estate to the Walkers to Marshall Simonds, who turned it over to the trust.

History records that Interstate 196 makes a curve at that point to avoid disturbing their resting place.

THANK YOU O.C.



Freeway Won't Threaten Alleghan Wilderness Tract



A PLEASANT PAUSE IN SIMONDS' RAVINE
A Lifetime Went Into Re-creating This Wilderness

Pier Cove—"Simond's Ravine"—a unique, 100-acre tract on Lake Michigan's eastern shore in Allegan county where one man spent nearly a lifetime re-creating a typical American wilderness—has been saved from becoming part of a freeway.

Saturday Highway Commissioner John C. Mackie said the future route of US31 freeway could be shifted about 1,000 feet to the east to miss the area entirely.

The ravine, a privately owned arboretum, became the center of conflict between two old, familiar adversaries—nature and the world of progress.

Visitors were touched with sadness when they saw the bright yellow stakes, in sharp contrast to the soft greens of spring foliage which march through plantations of pine, cedar and hemlock on the high ground and slash through the tangled wilderness of the ravine, across the creek and tamarack swamp where the wild orchids grow.

Then, the Highway.

Builders of highways looked at their maps months ago and decided to relocate US31, a badly crowded two-lane ribbon of patched concrete a mile east of the sanctuary, and made it a modern freeway, hacking 800 feet of right-of-way through the length of the tract.

Resident owners of the tract Mr. and Mrs. Marshall Simonds and Mrs. William Walker, appealed to Gov. Williams and Highway Commissioner John Mackie to shift the proposed location of Interstate Route 96 so the arboretum—to which the late Ossian Simonds devoted 60 years—could be spared.

Mackie was not unsympathetic to their cause, and first, before his Saturday announcement, agreed to their pleas to keep the highway at least 100 feet from a huge beech tree called by the Simonds, "The Church Beech."

Overlooks Deep Ravine.

The tree spreads its limbs like an affectionate canopy over a high point overlooking the deep ravine and rough-sawn sections of logs provide a primitive seat. Beneath the branches are scattered the ashes of Ossian Simonds and his wife in accordance with their oft-expressed wishes.

The "Church Beech" is no more a memorial to Ossian Simonds than any of the other thousands of trees, shrubs and plants which the nationally known landscape architect planted during 60 years he devoted to transforming 100 acres of blow-sand and cutover timberland into a botanical paradise.

The entire tract stands today as a monument to a family determined to preserve a relatively small bit of typical American wilderness.

He Had Vision.

Tramping over Pier Cove's sand dunes in 1890, Ossian Simonds, a member of a prominent Chicago architectural firm and founder of landscape architecture departments at both the University of Michigan and Michigan State university, had a vision of an arboretum the equal of that then found only in a few of the nation's largest cities.

Within a few decades after he bought the land, the ravine and its borders had become known as one of the finest arboretums in the midwest. Beeches, hemlocks and other native trees grew quickly to the size of ancients, and the same protection from frost in spring and

fall that has made Lake Michigan's eastern shore an ideal fruit belt also made it possible to introduce species of azaleas, mountain laurel, rhododendrons, magnolia and holly unheard of this far north.

More than 50 species of trees, shrubs and wildflowers and 60 species of birds have been catalogued in the sanctuary. Deer have returned to the deep woods, raccoons snack on crayfish along Mill creek and frogs in the Tamarack swamp around Bassett's spring. Pheasants, possum,

rabbits and muskrat abound, squirrels scold visitors from the safety of tall trees and Marshall Simonds recalls seeing beaver on the millpond and tracks of lynx on the sandy ridges.

With the announcement Saturday of the development of an alternate route for that part of US31, 60 years of fallen pine needles carpeting the trails will not have to desaden the sound of swift highway traffic. The dream of eternal tranquility of Ossian Simonds for his arboretum has been insured.

THE PORCHES

The Porches was the summer home for John Butler Johnson, my grandfather, and Phoebe Henby Johnson along with their five children: Marjorie, Paul, Agnes, Laura and Robert, my father. John Butler, known as JB, at age 28 was an 1878 Engineering graduate of the University of Michigan with a bachelor of Civil Engineering. JB married the love of his life, Miss Phoebe Henby, a proper Quaker young lady. They were married November 8, 1878 in Wabash, Indiana.

While at the university JB met and began a life-long friendship with a fellow civil engineer by the name of Ossian C. Simonds, known as OC. The story is told that JB and OC participated in a summer job during college which involved a survey project along the Lake Michigan shore in the Saugatuck area. Both young men were taken with the serene beauty of the shore line property in the Village of Pier Cove, south of Saugatuck.

Both men did return and purchased property in Pier Cove. OC purchased several large tracts of land along Lake Michigan and encompassing a small creek. JB purchased a small lot known as lot 56 in the Village of Pier Cove. This lot was the site of one of the two piers which provided the village name of Pier Cove.

JB designed the Porches for use as a summer house only, with no intent of ever using the house for year round use. The construction of the house was started in 1896 and completed in 1897. No knowledge is available to the writer as to who the builder might have been. There was an existing structure on the lot before the current house was constructed. The existing structure was located on a stone foundation over-looking the pond to the north of the property. This small two story building was used as the kitchen and dining area with sleeping space above, allowing JB and family a summer retreat for several years prior to the construction of the current Porches, and was located to the south and available by steps down to the older structure.

JB only enjoyed his creation for five years due to his accidental death on June 23, 1902 while bringing a wagon loaded with furniture for the house from the railroad station in Fennville. For whatever reason, the wagon jolted and JB was thrown forward under the wagon, which ran over him. My father Robert, who at 8 years of age was riding with JB, ran to the house to tell of the accident, which happened on 123rd Avenue.

Phoebe continued to bring the five children to Pier Cove each summer. As the children grew up and moved on, the house became the responsibility of my father Robert Colton Johnson, who married Dorothy D. Dexter on December 27, 1917. Robert and Dorothy and their three children Dorothy, Mary Ann and Robert along with the maiden aunts continued the summer use of the Porches. Dorothy married Neal A Hess September 2, 1943; Mary Ann married James Wallace Curtis

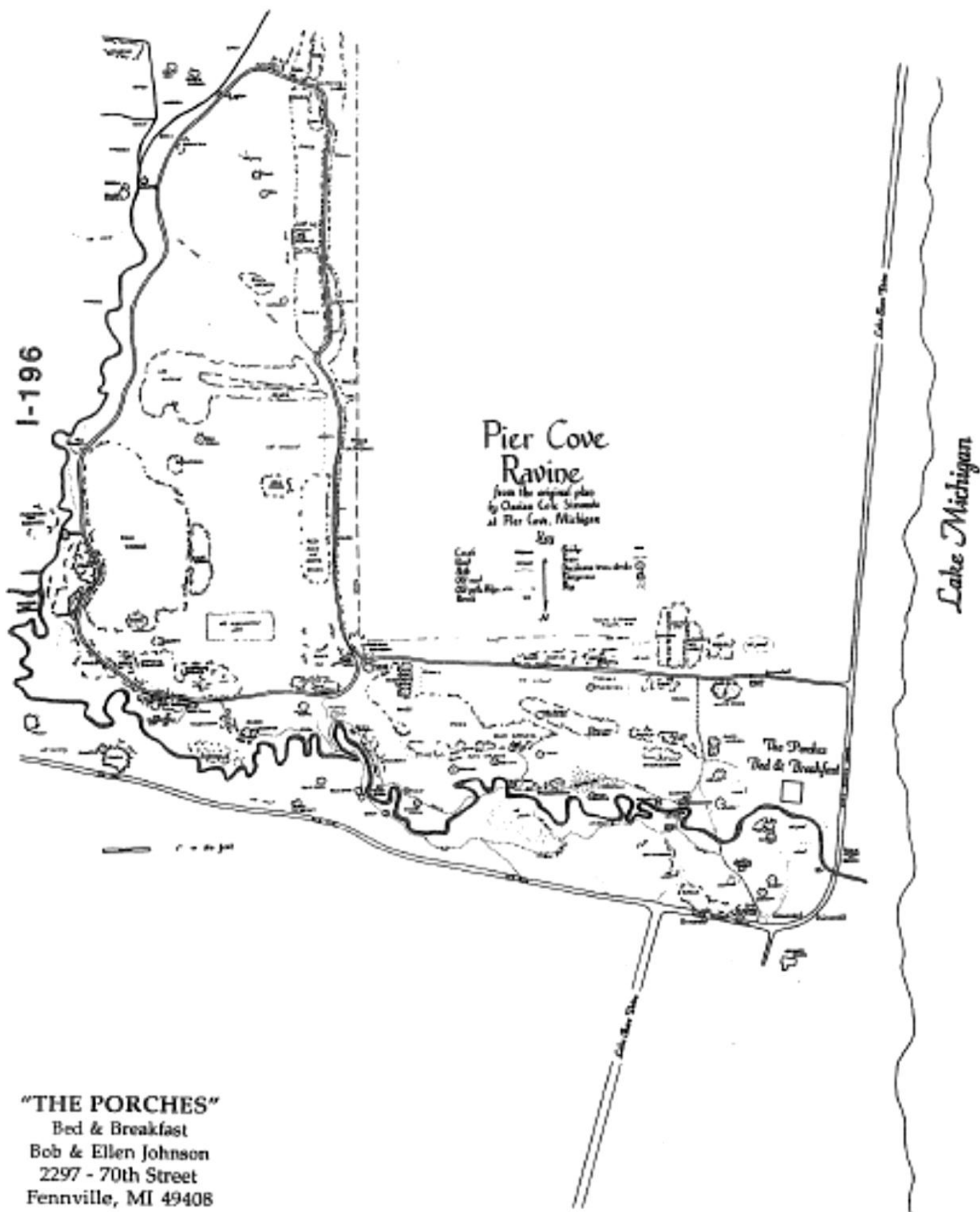
November 27, 1943 and Robert married Ellen Williams August 22, 1953. After Robert C. Johnson died the property was conveyed to his wife Dorothy, who signed the property to the children. In 1989 Robert and Ellen purchased Mary Ann's and Dorothy's shares.

Going back several years to 1916, the old kitchen and dining room building was torn down, leaving the stone wall to its own demise. A new structure was constructed adjacent to, but not connected to, the existing front house. This new structure provided a dining room, a kitchen, a pantry and a back porch as well as a large sleeping room on the second floor above the dining room.

The stone wall with its two cement block stairways became the basis for Aunt Mode to develop a wonderful flower garden with stone lined paths meandering through the area. Due to the lack of skilled care and a tender loving hand, the garden and the wall have fallen into disarray, with the elements taking over.

With the suggestion from cousin Jane praising the work of a Ted Reyda from Saugatuck, the seed was planted to repair the old wall. During 1994 Bob, with the help of a hired hand, completely dismantled the old wall. A new concrete foundation along with a drain system was installed on the back side of the wall. Ted Reyda was engaged to undertake the reconstruction of the wall, which he began in the spring of 1995, working into early summer to complete the task. The fruit of his expertise is the wall we see today.

--Robert D. & Ellen W. Johnson, November 17, 1996.





THE STUDLEY COTTAGE, PIER COVE, MICHIGAN

The Studley cottage was built for Charles W. Melcher of Hinsdale, IL sometime between 1897 and 1902.¹ The Melcher family - Charles, his wife Anna B., a painter, and their children, were friends of the Simonds and had visited them in Pier Cove. According to Marshall Simonds "Herbert Simonds, Austin Melcher and Paul Johnson helped build the [Simonds cottage] at 15¢ an hour. Then they went over to work on the Melcher cottage (now Jeanette Studley's).² Jeanette D. Studley ("Aunt Jeanette"), whose parents bought the cottage from the Melchers, remembers hearing that the cottage was built by the Melcher, Benson and Simonds boys, plus Glion Curtis, working under supervision for 10¢ an hour.³ By either telling, it seems clear that the young men of Pier Cove put the Studley cottage together at a great price.

However, they did not finish the cottage. Aunt Jeanette also remembers that there was no second floor ceiling. Also, the Melchers did not stay long. Mrs. Melcher was sick, and didn't want to live in an unfinished house. And she didn't want to keep house there - cooking and cleaning. When the Melchers owned the cottage, they took meals at the Farm House, with Sven and Louisa Benson. Louisa Benson & her daughter Emily recall that in 1903 the Bensons transferred their Pier Cove farm to the Simonds & moved to another farm they bought on M-89.⁴

The Melchers rented their cottage to the Studley family of Grand Rapids for the summer of 1906, with an option to buy the cottage. Louisa Benson remembers that Myra Robinson (she married Dr. Wilber Studley in 1897), had first come to Pier Cove in 1892 as a guest at the Simonds house.⁵ Her family knew the Simonds family, and she had been working in Chicago and living with the Simonds. She had returned to Pier Cove over the years, and, after renting the Melcher cottage for the summer of 1906, Myra Robinson Studley did purchase the cottage that September. The original price was \$1000 for the furnished cottage, but it was reduced to \$800, and Myra purchased additional land just south of the cottage for \$200 from O.C. Simonds the following year.

Aunt Jeanette remembered that "when my parents bought the house it was not completely finished. It was in fact a cottage set on a sand dune. There were posts holding it up, and on the front porch there were locust logs in an upright position to hold up the roof of the porch."⁶ She also recalled that "the vertical siding on the cottage was nailed directly on the house framing with no insulation. Some of the framing was visible in the inside in rooms that had not been insulated. Also, there were no closets in the bedrooms, and people hung their clothes on hooks on the wall. When it rained, clothing on the hooks could and did get wet."⁷

"Our cottage originally was built/constructed of wood that was placed perpendicularly from the ground to the roof. As the years advanced, these timbers shrank so that finally the wind came in through the boards, and also the rain came in [probably more than before]. In 1938, my father ordered lumber and started putting siding on the house. These wide pieces of siding were each one painted before it was put on the house. Part of the house was done in 1938... in 1939, my mother had the siding put on the rest of the house. This made a great difference, and the house was much more weatherproof that it had been before."⁸

"To the south of the kitchen door there was a wooden well curb and the well [99 feet deep, her father said] with a pump which we used to pump any and all water needed. Near the pump, there was a locust tree. My father built a little shelf on the locust tree where we kept a washbasin. The front porch...had an icebox along the wall and a man...used to come once or twice a week bringing us large cakes of ice. At one time, too, my father experimented with a shower. This consisted of an open trough, which was hung from the porch floor at the southwest corner of the porch. Then there was a little hose that went from the bottom of the tank to the ground below. My father's theory was

that...the sun would warm the water in this shower tank in the afternoon, and he could go down and take a shower. As I recall, this did not turn out to be too satisfactory.”⁹

“We did not have electricity in those days, of course, and we used kerosene lamps, which had to have their chimneys washed every morning when they were brought down to the kitchen from the bedrooms.”¹⁰ Electricity came in 1929 or so.

One of Mrs. Melcher’s paintings is still in the cottage; Aunt Jeanette described it: “[p]ainted...around 1906 and given to my mother, this picture shows the lake, the beach, the silver poplar, the sun at that time was to the north as it was summer.”¹¹

Over the years, there have been several interior renovations - for example, the cast iron woodstove in the kitchen was replaced, and other kitchen improvements came along. Chicago architect Ruth Perkins, a classmate of Jeanette’s from the University of Michigan in the early 1920s, designed a new bathroom, which was added in 1960. Danny Hunn provided plans for the living room that included larger windows. And in 1966 she designed the “Lake House” a second building with a garage on the first floor and a couple of bedrooms and a bathroom on the second floor (and it appears that the cost for the design, the new building, furnishings, road grading, driveway, and landscaping may have been under \$5000).

Aunt Jeanette noted in 1973 that the cottage remained very much in 1973 as when it was built. And “[o]riginally there were very few trees and the house was surrounded by beach sand, but over the years planting was done to hold the sand - and now it is a wooded area.”¹² The cottage still had the wide plank pine floors, stained dark green, the tall windows with many panes of old wavy glass that seemed to stretch from floor to ceiling, and the interior door to the living room that Mrs. Melcher had painted with branches and leaves.

But the rising waters of Lake Michigan necessitated big changes. By 1997 the beach was entirely gone, and the lake pushing against the steep bank brought down trees and threatened the house. Ed Karaus used a crane to build two sea walls to support the bank, and after a few years the beach returned. However, the cottage foundation would not support the cottage for much longer and in 1998 Jeanette and Wes engaged Leon Meiste to rebuild and expand the cottage and to open up new lake views. This resulted in a larger cottage that was finally fully weatherproof, and would hold the Studley/Stackhouse/Pickard family: Jeanette Studley, Wes Pickard, and Kendal, Kadah, Mary Jeanette, and John Stackhouse.

¹ From 1906 entry by William S. Curtis in the Simonds Cove book.

² Report of the Committee on the History of the Pier Cove Ravine, 4 Aug. 1979.

³ Information from Jeanette D. Studley 25 Aug. 1984 for Susi Chivvis Curtis Pier Cove history notes (Aug. 1985)

⁴ *The Life Story of Louisa Berglund Benson*, by Louisa Benson as told to her daughter Emily in 1919.

⁵ *Louisa’s Reminiscences of Pier Cove*, prepared for the 1915 reunion.

⁶ *Our Early Years at Pier Cove*, oral history by Jeanette D. Studley, 19 Sept 1982.

⁷ Notes from Jeanette D. Studley conversations with niece Jeanette A. Studley, probably in 1990s.

⁸ *Our Early Years at Pier Cove*, *supra*, note 6.

⁹ *Our Early Years at Pier Cove*, *supra*, note 6.

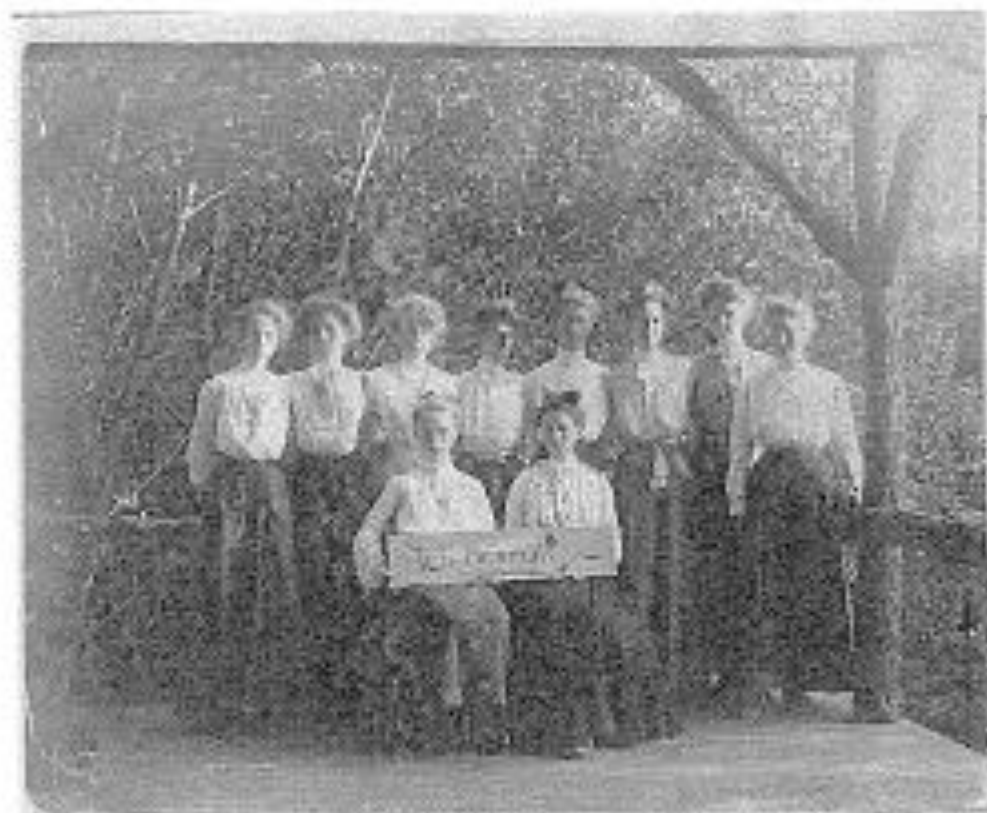
¹⁰ *Our Early Years at Pier Cove*, *supra*, note 6.

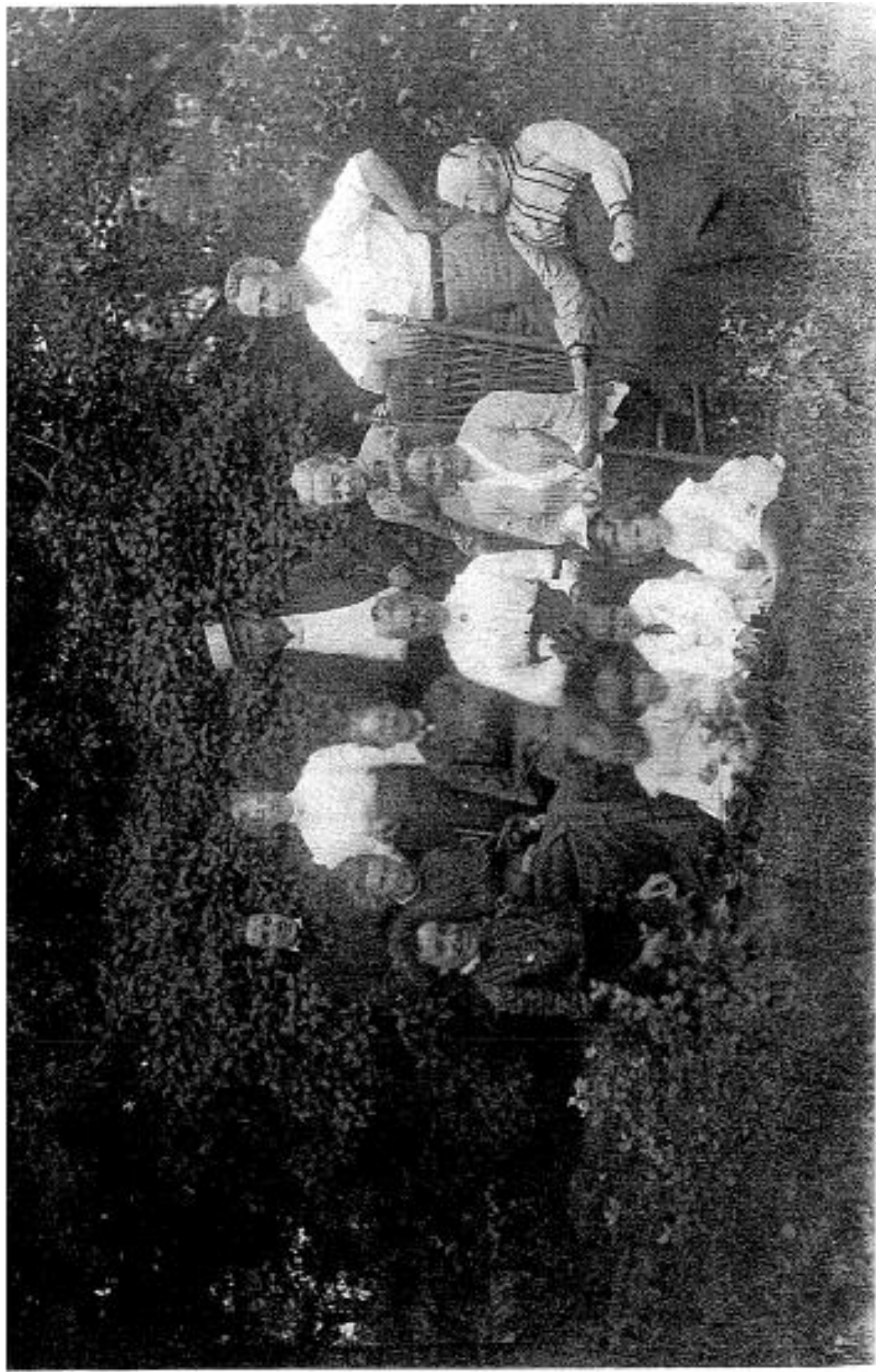
¹¹ Jeanette D. Studley Family History recorded 30 July 1994 at the cottage with JAS and cousins.

¹² JDS note about the cottage, July 1973.



STUDLEY COTTAGE SOMETIME AFTER 1906 WITH LAKE MICHIGAN IN BACKGROUND





Marian J. Mrs. Melber, Dean Curtis's son, Metcalf
Mrs. Hope Curtis, Aunt Elizabeth's son, Phoebe J. Mrs. Metcalf
George Curtis, Dr. J., Albert J. Melburt, mother Emily
Marian J.

GAUNTLETT FARM HOUSE

The Gauntlett house was part of O.C. Simonds original purchase of land in Pier Cove. Sven Benson and his wife Louisa came to Pier Cove and worked for O.C. for many years. They cared for the family, visitors and the Orchard House. While living there two of their five children were born. In 1896, Sven decided he should have his own farm and purchased 40 acres from O.C. This property is south of the creek, where the Gauntlett Farm House is today. Herbert Simonds, Austin Melcher, and Paul Johnson helped to build this house. In 1903, the Benson family moved inland about 3 miles. O.C. assisted with this purchase and in return became the owner of the Farm House.

O.C. retired into that house from his Chicago home in 1928. He brought along his books and the fireplace mantel in the living room. The house sits on 26 acres of land, and was then a working farm with horses and cows in a barn to the east. The barn sat behind a double row of cathedral pines, which O.C. planted for wind protection. He had the house raised so that a chicken brooder could be placed underneath for raising chickens.

After Martha Simonds' death in 1937, the farmhouse was put up for sale and it was purchased by Elise Dexter, sister of Dorothy Dexter Johnson (Grand Dot). It was later passed to another sister, Edwina Dexter (Eddie), who had married Ward Gauntlett. Eddie and Ward had two children, Jane (1929-2000) and Dexter (1932-1996). Eddie passed away in 1983 and Jane and her husband Don Badamo came to live in the house. Don lived in the house until he died in 2002. Jane's brother Dexter had died earlier so his son Dexter moved from California to live in the house.

Dex and Celeste were married in the Gauntlett Farm House in 2009. In 2012, they built their home on the west side of the Farmhouse.



Sept. 8th, 1903. 61
7 P. M.

The great question is, "will the boat stop?" Sometimes the boat stops. If she does not stop to-night I shall be obliged to wait to see whether she stops to-morrow night or haul my fruit to Ferrville. However, on this last day of my vacation I feel so well set up by my Pier Cane summer that I can endure slight disappointments without great grief.
W. S. Curtis.

W. S. Curtis

Monroe C. Forbes, Sept. 11, 1903.



SIMMONS &
DEAN CURTIS

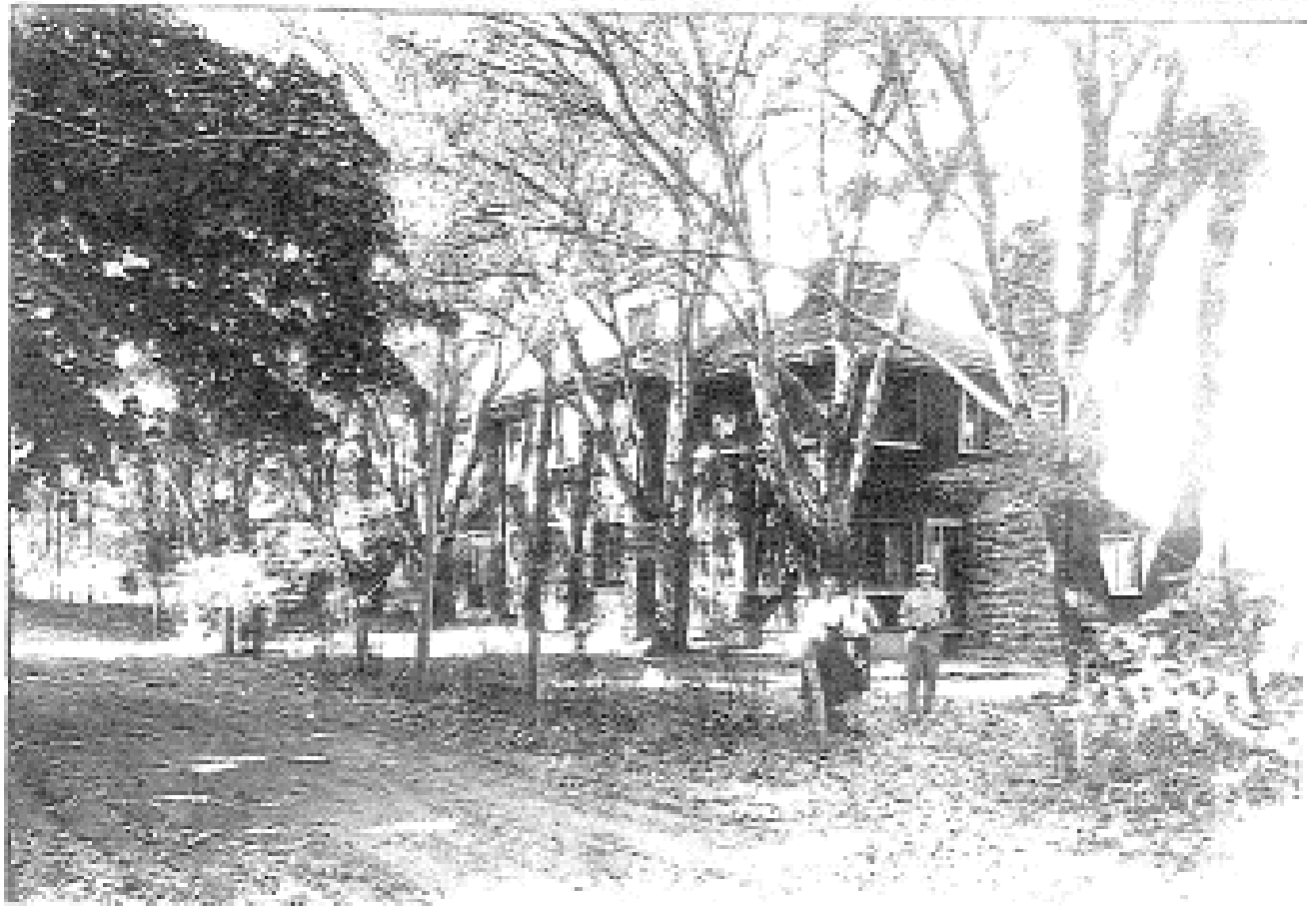
JOHNSON/FIELD COTTAGE

The cottage was built by Albert Lincoln Johnson in two sections on the lake side of Lakeshore Drive. The first section was built in 1909 and the second in 1917. A.L. was the much younger brother of John Butler Johnson, the owner of the Porches. He was an engineer and helped invent and manufacture “rebar” used to reinforce concrete. He married Marian Cox in 1896 and they had four children: Dorothy, Marian, Albert Jr. and John. Dorothy married Bradford Field and they honeymooned at the cottage. A.L. Johnson bought a 125 foot by 125 foot tract of land across the street from the cottage in 1923 from the Layman family. A clay tennis court was installed on that site. The Johnson family, the Curtis boys and others in Pier Cove enjoyed this addition.

The current southern half of the cottage is the original house – four small bedrooms, two baths, a kitchen, living/dining room and a three sided wrap porch. In 1917, the big rooms, sun porch, living room with grand fireplace, a large upstairs bedroom, sleeping porch and other additions were added.

In 1972, Brad and Mary Lee Field acquired sole ownership of the house from the other four A.L. Johnson grandsons. High water levels and subsequent erosion required that the house be moved on September 12th, 1997 to its present location on the east side of Lakeshore Drive. Alas, the grand fireplace did not make the move. A garage and basement were added at that time.





living, a banker in Grand Rapids and we regret that he could not be with us today.

Mr. Fletcher was also one of those the children looked forward to seeing. He has been dead for many years.

Speaking for myself and my own family, our connection with Pier Cove was due to J. B. and Phoebe. J. B. was sixteen years older than I and I went to live with them in St. Louis at the age of sixteen, and looked upon their house as my home until long after I graduated at Washington University. They were more like parents than brother and sister.

What is it that makes the difference between one residing place and another?

We say of resorts we like this one and we don't like that one. What is the difference? The difference to my mind is expressed in terms of pleasure. At one place, we have such a good time; at the other we are bored.

Between these places and Pier Cove, the difference can not be expressed in such terms.

Pier Cove is hallowed by joy, but it is also hallowed by sorrow. You are at home.

A. L. Johnson.

Sunday, August 8, 1915

CURTIS FARM HOUSE AND BARN

The original cabin dates circa 1830. William Samuel Curtis ('The Dean') bought the property from the Adams family in 1904. It consisted of 1 room: the kitchen was at the west end and the fireplace was at the east end. A ladder which is now in the kitchen on the wall was used to reach the rafter bedroom. The Greek revival front addition was added by the Adams', and Dean Curtis added the wrap-around porch. A packet of letters was discovered in a wall years later, written by an Adams son in 1863. He had joined the Ganges Township militia and fought in the Battle of Chickamauga during the Civil War.

Dean Curtis and his family became an active part of the Pier Cove community during the summer seasons. Later, their only child Edward Glion continued the summer tradition as he and his wife, Isabel (Granny Butch) continued to travel from St. Louis with their 5 sons: Glion, Tom, Ernie, Bill, and Jim. On September 23, 1948, Granny Butch deeded the lakeshore lots to her 5 sons.

Granny Butch continued to come to Pier Cove and the Farm House for many years in the warm months after Edward Glion's death in 1940. The five brothers helped with some of the farming but mostly enjoyed getting out of hot St. Louis. As The Dean wrote in a Simonds Cove book in 1902, "It is cool enough for all the change we need in a vacation and yet warm enough to make us enjoy going in the lake, which is a great delight "

In the early 40's, the five brothers had the living room walls removed and had a steel beam installed. The upstairs still has two master bedrooms and two single bedrooms. The upstairs bathroom was probably a crib room in the days of an outdoor privy. The living room was originally 4-5 rooms: a maid's room, study, parlor with fireplace, and parlor with entryway. The two downstairs bedrooms were once a formal dining room with three entrances: to the wrap around porch, to the living room and to the kitchen. In 1959, a third tennis court was built in Pier Cove, on Curtis property south of Adams Street. Prior to this there had been no playable court for many years.

In the 70's Tom Curtis bought out the brothers and began major updates and renovations for the entire Farm House. Dave Schrottenboer was the contractor and Florence (Danny) Hunn did the design. At that time, the wrap around porch was removed. A laundry room was installed, several bathrooms added and kitchen totally redesigned and updated. In 2017, the kitchen and the deck were updated by the 5th generation of Curtises. A furnace was also installed---now there is heat and air conditioning. Dean Curtis would be most pleased as he had hoped to have the farmhouse become livable year round.

The front yard of the Farmhouse is used annually for the Pier Cove Croquet Tournament which began in 1959. This weeklong gathering continues to bring all

“Covites” together, just as the Orchard House and The Porches had been for so many early Pier Cove years. The Curtis Farm House has evolved to be the meeting place for family and friends to gather for deck parties, weddings, social occasions or just a place to visit.

Again, Dean Curtis would be so pleased.



ST. LOUIS LAW SCHOOL
LAW DEPARTMENT OF WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
TWENTY-SEVEN AND LEIGHT STRAITS
WM. S. CURTIS, DEAN

ST. LOUIS, Feb 4th 1907.

Dear Mr. Simonds, -

I thank your letter of congratulation and protest.

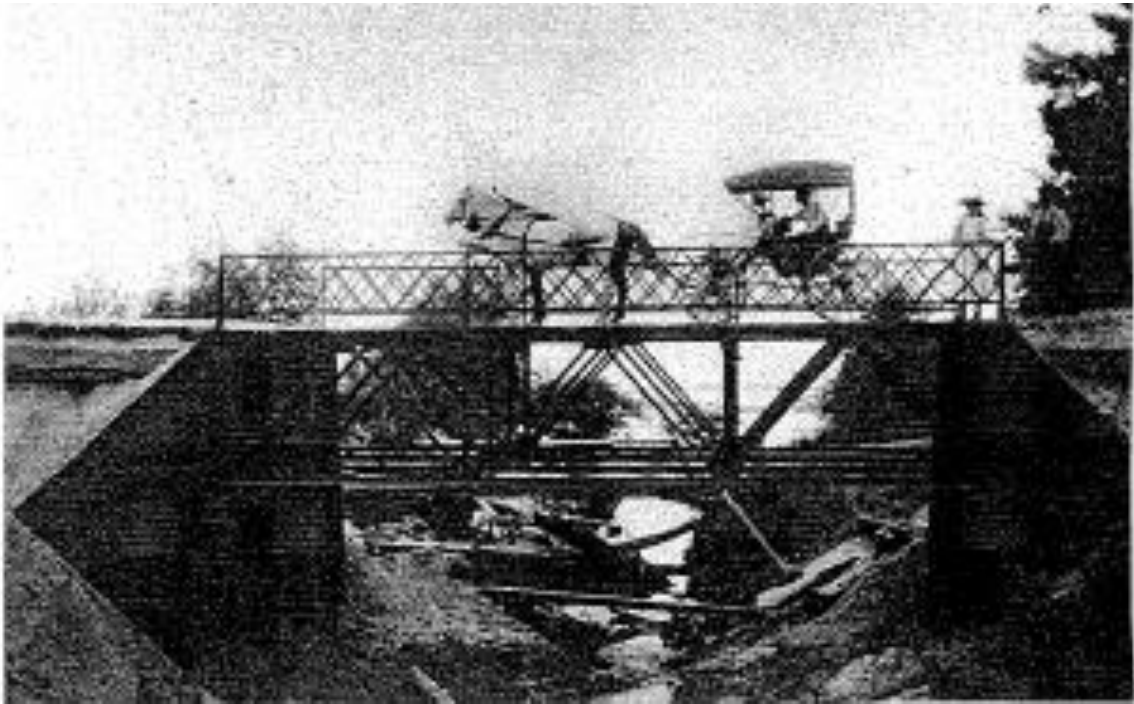
As to the former, it is true; I am to be married. The lady is a teacher of 25 years' experience. She also completed the law course here last June, after 8 years at it while teaching, besides helping to put through a blind student for his country. Her teaching has been mostly of the blind, latterly in the State Institution Colorado Springs, and London. Her name is Harriet Rice. She is now with her people in Bristol and Orange, Ill.

As to your protest - I am not going to sell the Pier Cove property soon, if at all. I still dream of coming up there with you. Please give my kindest remembrance to Mrs. Simonds and the children.

Sincerely yours -

Wm. S. Curtis.

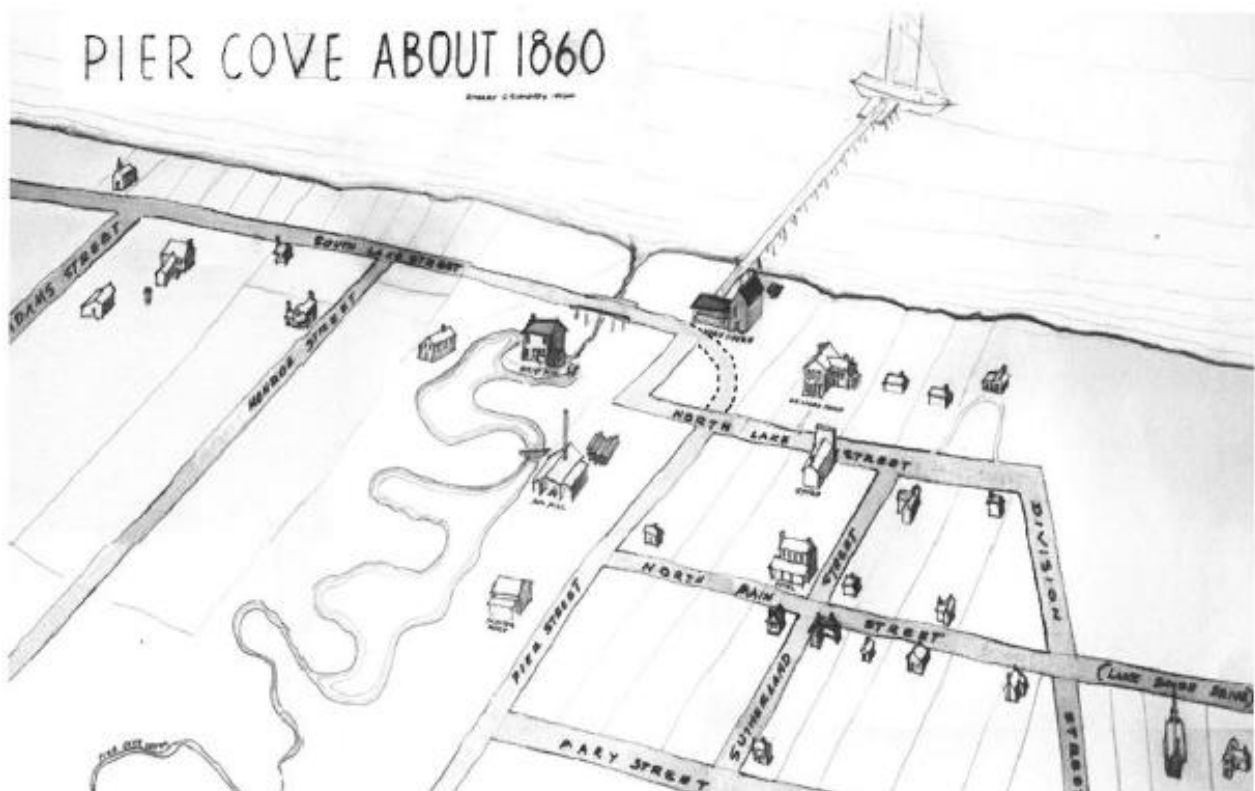




TBC LAKEHOUSE

Built in 1970 by Tom and Sue Curtis, the Lakehouse was designed by Ralph Fournier, a St. Louis architect, and Sue, who was overjoyed to have her own Pier Cove home. In the 40's and 50's, Tom, Sue, and their children Liz, Lee, Allan, Charlie, and Jon would tent on the beach by Brother Jim's house. They brought help (maids) who would stay in the Farmhouse with Grandmother Isabel Curtis. In the 60's, the Farmhouse was deteriorating and they rented the A.L. Johnson's and Simonds' cottages to stay in for their summer vacations. In the late 80's, the sand bank was eroding and a seawall was built.

In 1990, Sue and Tom moved to Pier Cove year round while Tom still kept a law office in St. Louis. The Lakehouse became a site for numerous nighty "31" card games when the locals were invaded by summer visitors.



Pier Cove in the mid-1800s

A map drawn by Robert Simonds, grandson of O.C. Simonds and present resident of Pier Cove.

In 1923 O.C. Simonds donated a portion of the beach to Ganges Township for use as a public beach.

BILL AND FRAN CURTIS HOUSE (The Blue House)

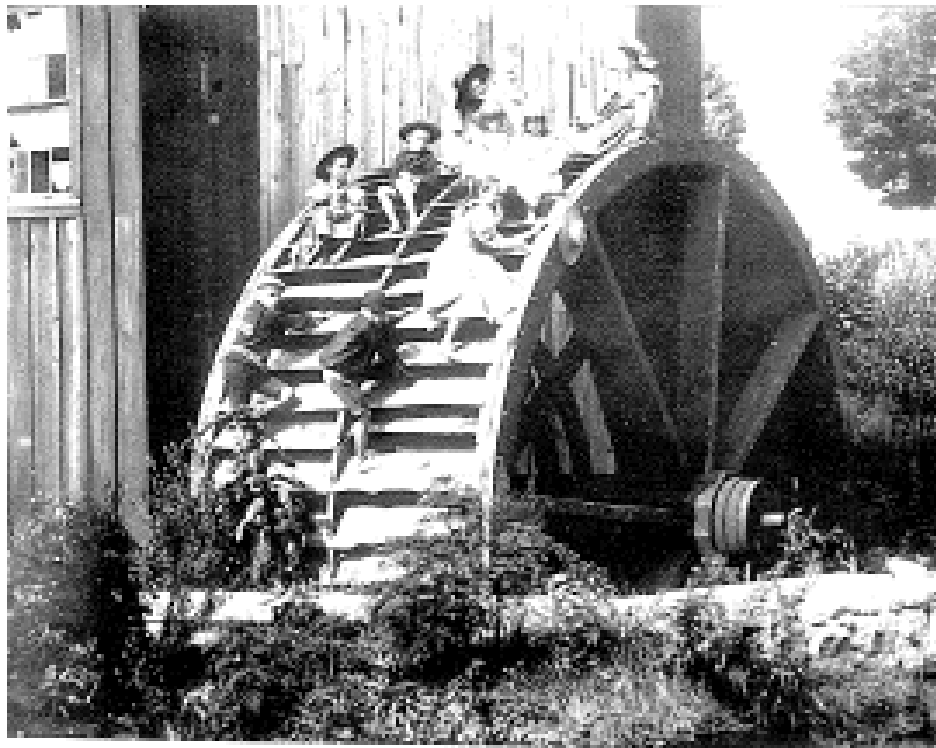
The home at 2266 Lake Shore Drive was completed in 1992 and sits between the same two brother's homes that Bill grew up between. Fran wanted the living, dining, kitchen and entry layout similar to Jim and Mary Ann's house. The kitchen faces Lakeshore Drive, with the living and dining rooms on the lake side utilizing sliding glass doors that open to the deck. They were thrilled when they were able to obtain most of the furniture and dishes from "the boys" from *The Bay*, a B and B in Saugatuck where Fran and Bill often stayed.

The basement was unfinished, but one wall was lined with single beds, a game table and toys. Years later several family members partitioned the north end of basement for an adult bedroom.

Fran and Bill would spend 2-3 months in the Cove every Spring and Fall until 2002. They had spent two Christmases and New Years at the house but got snowed in the second year and said 'NO MORE'. They died in April of 2004, one week apart.

In May of 2007 there was extensive water damage from a broken pipe on the main floor. After major repair, the kitchen was upgraded and the basement was finished with two more bedrooms.

The home is now owned by their 3 children-----Wm. S (Shep), David and Anne. The three siblings and their children and grandchildren continue to enjoy the Cove.



GLION AND MARY ELLEN CURTIS (The Green House)

Edward Glion Curtis II and Mary Ellen built their home in 1960 as he was preparing to retire from the Foreign Service. The building material for the house was cement block and steel beams, since Mary Ellen had experienced a house fire while stationed in Haiti and did not want another wood frame house. The interior was designed by Danny Hunn, a student of Frank Lloyd Wright. The house was built with a separate living suite for Mrs. Mary Chivvis of St. Louis, the mother of Mary Ellen and Sue Curtis. Glion and Mary Ellen had four children: Mary, Edward Glion III (Tig), Frank, and Susie.

ERNIE AND ANN CURTIS (The Mayor's House)

In 1954, Ernie and Ann built their home on the southern-most acreage of the five Curtis brother's property. At this time, they were the only Curtis family living in Pier Cove year round.

In Curtis tradition, Ernie was most often seen on the beach, on the croquet court, at parties and on the tennis court barefoot. "Mayor" Ann and her sister-in-law Sue Curtis were the founders of the Pier Cove Croquet Tournament in 1959 - a tradition that continues today. The Croquet trophy is now named in honor of Ann's daughter Maripat, who died in 1984. Maripat was the sister of Betsy Ann, Pete and Ric. In 1982 Betsy Ann and Mike Foster obtained the last Curtis property south of Ann and Ernie's, and they built their home in 1999. Leon Meiste, who had remodeled the Studley house, was their builder. In 1991 Ric and Natalie built their home on Ernie's property on the east side of Lakeshore Drive. After Ann's passing, they moved back across the street to his childhood home, and in 2014 Jeff Foster (Mike's brother) and his wife Ellie bought Ric's house on the east side of the road.



JIM AND MARY ANN'S HOUSE (The Little House)

Romance in Pier Cove --both summer residents -- and the rest is history:
Johnson and Curtis families unite!

Jim graduated from Webster Groves High School in 1938 at the age of 17. It was decided he was too young for Dartmouth, so it was arranged for him to “intern” with farmers in Pier Cove area for a year and a half. This is important because this interest and work lead to him being given the farm property in addition to his lakefront lot. Jim graduated from Dartmouth, enlisted in the Navy, got married and went to war. After the war, they returned to Michigan, first living in the Gaunlett Farmhouse for one winter. In the summer, they moved to the Curtis Farm House with Granny Butch while Jim and George Harrington built the original 30 x 31 cinder block house, aka “The Little House”, in 1946. It had the kitchen, bathroom, living room and an attic loft with pull-down stairs. On maps of the Village of Pier Cove, you can see that this property was originally the site of the Pier Cove School.

Jim and Mary Ann struggled as farmers and he began studying for the priesthood, becoming ordained in 1953. They moved to All Saints Episcopal Church parsonage in Saugatuck and then to a church in Gary, Indiana. The house was rented out for many of those years since the family could stay at the Porches while on vacation as this was Mary Ann’s family summer home. Though the years many improvements and additions were made to “The Little House” with most of the work being done after 1973.

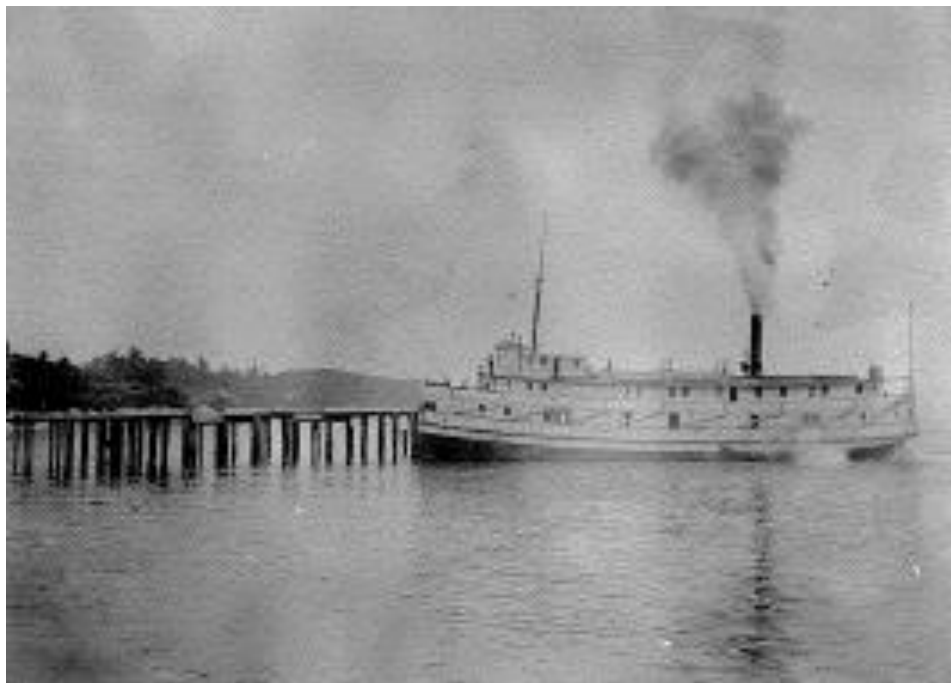
Jim and Mary Ann retired in 1983 and moved back to their home in Pier Cove. The house has always been a hub of activity year round as the five children --Curt, Betsy Elise, Helen, Dottie and Bob-- plus grandchildren loved to visit. Dottie passed away in 2016. Helen and Bob Foster built their home in 2016 when they moved back to Pier Cove from the Upper Peninsula. Their home is east of Lakeshore Drive off of Adams Street, where her father used to farm.

HALL COTTAGE

Edward Glion Curtis and his wife Isabel were close friends with Grandfather Hall, and they lived near each other in Webster Groves, outside of St. Louis. Edward Glion offered to his friend, Louis Tesson Hall, or "Big Daddy" as he was called, a small lot at the end of the Curtis property. "Big Daddy" built a two room cottage in the 1930's, complete with an outhouse. A bedroom and bunk room was soon added but little more was done until the mid 1950's when the two southern most bedrooms were added along with the bath. "Big Daddy" had three sons, Philip, George, and Louis, who spent some of the summers of their youth in Pier Cove.

The cottage was too small to accommodate all the sons, their wives, and children all at once, especially without indoor plumbing. So the families would take turns visiting. Finally, Louis's wife, Lib, gave her husband an ultimatum: she was not coming back the next year unless there was indoor plumbing. And thus, the final addition was made!

Little by little it became clear that Philip had more emotional attachment to Pier Cove than his brothers and after "Big Daddy" died in the early 1950's, Philip proceeded to buy out his brothers' interests in the cottage. Philip's only material improvement to the cottage was to add the deck in the 1970's. He loved it just the way it was. The cottage is currently owned by Phil and Jane's three daughters: Jane, Isabel, and Rosalie.



1849

Marcius Sutherland financed the building of pier at west end of the quarter line of Ganges township. According to early settlers, power pile drivers were not used at this time, so it was all built by hand. This was the first of 5 piers built between Saugatuck and South Haven. It was 200 feet long and 16 feet wide. Later it was widened to nearly 40 feet so teams could turn around after unloading a wagon. After Cordwood and Tanbark were used up but before fruit was sufficient to maintain a pier, it was ruined by ice and storms a few years before Moore & Co. pier was built.

1852

Samuel Thompson came into the cove by a boat. While proceeding up the stream he came upon several wigwams belonging to Pottawatomie Indians, who were very peaceful. Thompson searched for a spot for a future one room home. He brought his wife, two sons, and four daughters. Samuel M. Thompson became the first resident of Pier Cove. Lorenzo Weed was the second or third settler in Pier Cove. He was the first notary public until he became postmaster in 1856. The first Methodist Church was organized in Pier Cove located east of North Main Street North of Division Street. F. S. Raymond owned beachfront and house just north of creek and bend in road on North Lake Street at junction with Pier Street. Raymond ran the General Store with large and prosperous business from miles around. A store located across from his home. Sidney Squires sold water powered saw mill in Battle Creek to Mr. Cranson. It was moved to Pier Cove, and Squires came to set it up with a steam engine, and was sold to Raymond and Abbott, who had a prosperous business for some time. Logs came from miles around and it competed seriously. E. A. Fenn arranged with Mr. Raymond to move the Pier Cove saw mill to Fennville and use it as a shingle mill. This was an unpleasant surprise for loggers and Pier Cove citizens, many of whom followed the old mill to Fennville.

1853

Mr. Cranson built the first general store. The post office moved to the store and was made into a money order office after being in little shack. David Crowson was the first blacksmith in the town. John Billings started the first grocery store in Pier Cove. He sold the store to Payne, who also bought and tore down Mr. Weaver's store. Hall bought Billing's old store and moved to Fennville.

1854

Sidney Squires moved into the woods to operate saw mill. Squires had to go to Allegan to grind wheat, and Mrs. Squires propped the doors shut with rails since she was afraid of the wolves howling around the house. Charles Richards built wood turning shop and furniture factory using local hardwoods. Hardwoods are not good for lumber, but used for cordwood to heat buildings before coal and to run steamboats. Sold to Nichols and turned into Grist Mill in 1856. Samuel W. Thompson arranged to call village PIER COVE in order to open the area's first post office in his kitchen. Campbell (postmaster general) appointed Thompson as the postmaster. Billings carried mail on horse from Allegan to Singapore, then through Pier Cove and Plummerville to South Haven once a week. Weed became postmaster when Thompson died in 1856. The post office was moved to little shack west of O. C. Simond's orchard house. The office was once again moved to Cranson's store and became money order office. Pratt moved it to present site on Russell's land in Ganges south of church, school and cemetery in 1882.

1855

Giles Rockwell built the first part of the hotel in 1855, which was the same year Mrs. Fiegert came to Ganges. Later Rockwell built a second part of hotel with a hall on the second floor. It was the only hotel in Ganges township and was a popular assembling place for elections and social gatherings. The hotel was located on SW corner of Sutherland and North Main Street. In turn by Rockwell, Ballard, Scott, and Mack, Cook also managed it at least from 1869 to 1873. H. H. Goodrich and William Sheffer built fanning mill shop on the flat back of the saw mill. It did some turning and fancy work. John Thompson was born on December 14th and was the first child born in Pier Cove.

1857

The first school in Pier Cove was established in Thompson's kitchen. Patch was the first teacher and the school house was later built on the lake bank south of the creek.

1862

Village of Pier Cove platted

1869

F. Cook owned the hotel on the corner of North Main (Lakeshore Drive). H. H. Hutchins commented on F. Cook, "The dance at Pier Cove was quite well attended, and the participants seemed to enjoy themselves very much. We must say we believe Mr. Cook, proprietor of the hotel, is well versed in keeping a public house."

1856

Mr. Nichols bought wood-turning shop from Charles Richards. He put in millstone and converted shop to grist mill for flour and feed. Mill changed hands several times and was bought by Joseph Edridge in 1871. Samuel Thompson was the first postmaster; he then died and left his wife, 2 sons and 4 daughters. Weed became postmaster after notary public. Mr. Nichols raised a frame for a house but only finished the north wing. It is now part of the Orchard House

1860

In Pier Cove at the time there were 4 stores, a post office, a saloon, a hotel, a repair shop, a grist mill and 3 working lawyers. Lumber, shingles, and tanbark was being shipped from Pier Cove Mill.

1864

Instead of sidewalks there were immense piles of cordwood, and there were no steamboats. One day Darius Billings counted 28 sailing vessels from the pier and 4 boats loading at one time. Billings said that this was a shadow of earlier, when streets and piers were full and so were the woods.

1871

An advertisement stated, "the Pier Cove Mills have been lately thoroughly repaired, and refitted with new bolts, and are now ready and able to do custom work promptly and well. Every effort will be made to do your work so that you can take your grist home with you. A full assortment of flour and feed constantly is on hand." Joseph Eldridge tore down the old mill and built a new mill. The orchestra from the Pier Cove Hotel said, "On Christmas Eve, 1871, 101 couples danced in the hotel hall, music being furnished by the Chase orchestra."

1880

New stock company formed to build pier in 1877 or later. Moore and Company (of Saugatuck) took over stock and managed pier. Their boats ran between Saugatuck and Chicago, and stopped at Pier Cove twice daily in busy season. Also ran daily boat to Milwaukee at times. Joseph Eldridge rebuilt the dam to run overshot wheel in gristmill for \$500. The dam was washed out again 2 years later and mill stopped grinding. By 1889 Eldridge had died and O. C. Simonds bought land from his heir.

1887

336,730 baskets of peaches were sent over the pier, in addition to apples and other freights. This was one of the peak years of fruit shipping.

1879

Joseph Eldridge put overshot waterwheel in the gristmill at cost of \$400 and sold steam engine to run machinery in a stove and pail factory in Sherman town (later Bravo). The dam washed out in the 1880 and 1882 for the last time. The Lake Shore Commercial announced "Pier Cove is to have a new pier. Mr. Hall will have to have some new clerks to sell his good, business will be so lively."

1885

Roger and Bird built the pier a few rods south of the creek and the pier included steel tracks for large cars to carry fruit. This was not as wide as the previous pier as well. Rogers and Bird ran boats from Saugatuck to compete with R.M. Moore and Co. from Chicago. Captain Charles said "It seems almost a miracle that someone has not been killed on that pier before." The pier was very unsafe for workers and cars that were on it.

1889

Ossian Cole Simonds first saw the Beech trees that attracted him in the ravine. O.C. bought grist mill after the dam washed out second time. He rebuilt the pond, removed machinery, and used basement as ice house. The foundation crumbled away, toppling the structure into the pond.

1891

O.C. Simonds bought more land in Pier Cove. It took 6 years to clear the title to some of this property.

1894

Simonds planted silver poplars and locusts along the roads.

1897

Herbert Simonds, Austin Melcher, and Paul Johnson built Fletcher house (no longer exists) for 15 cents per hour. Then they built Melcher cottage (now Studley's). They also built Benson's (Gauntlett's), J.B. Johnson house (Porches), and A.L. Johnson cottage (Field House). Dean and Hope Curtis stayed in the old mill, where they were "soothed by the waterfall and the hydraulic ram." They learned about Pier Cove from J.B. Johnson, who said it's cool enough for a change, yet warm enough to enjoy the lake.

1902

Dean and Hope Curtis spent their second summer in Pier Cove and rented Adams' House (now Farmhouse). Dean wanted to buy land in Pier Cove and feel rooted there. Farm life, no artificial attractions, cool but warm enough to swim, ravine has essentials of a beautiful park.

1893

O.C. Simonds then purchased ravine land from Mrs. Kibbile, and the land included the beech trees that attracted Simonds in the first place. The Fennville Herald said, "With a vendor of medicine who played the banjo, the Ganges Cornet Band, steamboats at the pier, and another steamboat passing near, Pier Cove presented a lively appearance Friday evening." An excursion, a baptizing, swimming, bathing, fishing, and several row boats with parties and refreshments at the Pier Cove Exchange.

1895

The Saugatuck and Ganges Telephone Company began. A line from Saugatuck to the Ganges Pier was constructed. This was to notify the Pier Cove Warehouse that a ship was on its way.

1899

The disastrous freeze of fruit trees killed peach trees of whole lake shore district. The Fennville Herald said, "When the steamer Saugatuck landed at Ganges pier last Monday night there had gathered the usual number of people to witness the landing. When the boat was tied up and first car of fruit was run out, some of them thought it a good time to get to shore in hopes to reach the warehouse before the next car should time down the track. They had nearly reached the place of safety but were in the most dangerous part of the pier when they heard the cry of 'look out!' repeated in quick succession, and discovered that a car of fruit was gliding down the incline and not more than 50 feet away. It was going at such a rate that no time was had in which to seek a position of safety. A lady and her little daughter and H.H. Hutchins were all injured by the car. The little girl and her mother were badly bruised, and Hutchins got what he deserved."

1903

Dean and Hope Curtis spent their third summer at Pier Cove and rented the Adam's house again.

1905

Decennial reunion of old "Cove-ites" happened in this year. Dor and Marion Johnson did a skit as dwarfs with hands and heads sticking out of short puppets on a table. 34 people all swam in the lake together, even though it was cold. The crowd went up the ravine and had music on Victrola on the pond. Dinner was eaten at J.B. Johnson's (Porches).

1907

William S. Curtis agreed to exchange land with O.C. Simonds. A strip of Curtis land that was 5 rods wide and 25 rods long from the east end of the lot into the ravine. A fence was built on the new line to separate the properties.

1913

North Pier re-outfitted by Wilson Line from Saugatuck. Boats continued fruit cargo and some passenger traffic to transfer to Chicago boats in South Haven. Captain Wilson owned and operated the *John A. Aliber* and the *Anna Wilson*. He made his last stop at Pier Cove in 1917.

1904

The Fennville Herald quoted, "The Ganges Pier (south of creek) at Lake Michigan was destroyed by ice during the past winter and it is reported that it will not be rebuilt this season. The expense of building is large and the boat season is short." Dean and Hope Curtis bought Adams' house, put on a porch and got it ready as a summer home.

1906

The first tennis court was built north of the Creek. There was the annual picnic in Simonds orchard; they used ice from the Simonds's ice house to make ice cream. A disastrous freeze of all the fruit trees also occurred in this year. Jeanette and her brother, Walter Studley, carried a tin milk pail home from Mr. Link's every night as their chore. He was always late and sometimes it got dark before they got home. One night they ran home, convinced they had seen a bear. Mattie and O.C. Simonds brought a horse and a cow every year on boat from Chicago to South Haven and lead them up behind wagon to Pier Cove. O.C. also kept a short canoe up path from the little red barn near the pond. He could paddle around the curves in the creek. Walter and Jeanette often walked across the sand dunes to get to Ganges. They found and collected many Native American arrow heads and the collection is mounted in house.

1911

The Studley and Johnson families played charades and croquet in the bumpy grass. Some of them sat in the row of apple trees east of Johnson's tennis court to watch tennis. A wagon was pulled around the road for hayrides as well.

1914

Gertrude Simonds and William Walker were married under the apple trees in front of the Orchard House.. Immediately after the wedding, the bride changed out of her dress and got into a hiking outfit to go to their hiking honeymoon to Petoskey.

1917

Robert Johnson, Marshall and Donald Simonds, Robinson Studley, and Edward and Glion Benson all went to serve in World War I.

1927

Dean Curtis brought a Delco generator to run lights in the house and the barn. Soon afterward the Pier Cove group got together a ring to get electricity.

1919

Robert "Bob" Johnson just came back from fighting in Archangel, Russia and he wrote "The cove is much nearer to Heaven."

1939

Mrs. Studley installed a telephone in her house after her husband, Wilber, died.

1929

Each member of the group contributed \$50.00 to a "ring" cooperative and made many trips to Kalamazoo to arrange for electric lines to Pier Cove. Walter Studley helped wire some of houses with electricity. Dr. Studley didn't want any more than one lightbulb in the center of each room of his home.



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The various "Cove Books" beginning in 1893 from the Simonds family and The Porches reflect the life and times of the Pier Cove families. Much history and many pictures in this "Village of Pier Cove" were found in these treasures.

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Thank you all.

Betsy Ann Foster

2018