

# A HISTORY OF VAN BUREN POINT, NEW YORK • 1874 : 1999



Van Buren Point, near Fredonia, N. Y.

*Presented in Honor of the 50th Anniversary of the Community Center*

1949 : 1999

Based upon excerpts of original text from  
*A Brief History of Van Buren Point Chautauqua County, New York*

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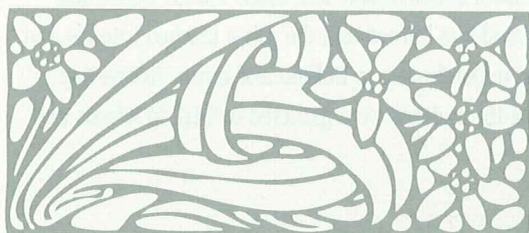


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HAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT VAN BUREN POINT?

What continues to draw generations of families back year after year? What spell does the Point hold that causes rational folk to visit once and become obsessed with purchasing their own piece of Van Buren?

Within these pages we can only hope to provide a glimpse of an answer to these questions. One undeniable fact: Van Buren Point residents are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the commemoration of the Community Center in 1999 and most expect their families to celebrate the 100th in 2049. Van Buren remains as a special spot where folks can share food and drink at the many planned social events or sit for hours alone at daybreak listening to shorebirds and the breaking Lake Erie surf. Van Buren Point—our Point.





## *Sleepy Fishing Settlement*



he history of Van Buren Point takes us back more than 200 years to the year 1784. At that time, The Holland Land Company purchased 900 acres of land from the Six Indian Nations that included what was then known as Van Buren Harbour. Early in 1800 a sleepy fishing settlement existed, known as Van Buren Point, named after a Hollander associated with the Holland Land Company.

In the year 1816, The Holland Land Co. began to dispose of its holdings. Parcels No. 1 and 2 were sold to Justus Adams for \$820.50; parcels 3 and 4 to Bishop Adams in 1835 for \$225.64. In those days, fine timber—oak, maple and walnut—abounded. With this wood, Bishop Adams fashioned a log house with dirt floor and fireplace so large, that when they wanted to put in a “back log”, they used a yoke of oxen. The home was built with low doors in the side walls and a long chain was run through the home and hitched to the log. The oxen were hitched to the other end of the chain and the log pulled into the home in front of the fireplace where it could be rolled into place. Such a back log lasted for three days.

Many Seneca Indians still roamed the area at this time and often visited Bishop Adams and his family. They were always friendly and usually hungry. The house had only one room but blankets were used as curtains to screen the beds of the family. The Indians rolled themselves in their blankets and slept on the floor in front of the fireplace. About three o'clock in the morning they slipped out quietly to come back later with a deer, one quarter of which Betsy Adams always cooked for them; the rest of the deer was left for her.

There were a few other families not far away so that at one time there was a small log school house at the Point. School was taught by a retired minister who also held preaching services in the school house on Sundays. His wife and one son died of consumption, so he determined to try the toughening process on the four remaining boys. They were allowed to wear shoes in the house or at school but out of doors, even with snow on the ground, they went barefoot and grew into strong healthy men.

In Bishop Adams' time, an Englishman by the name of Steffans settled near the lake and began to manufacture brick, building a kiln—this was simply a pit dug in the ground covered with big flat stones and banked with dirt. These bricks accumulated; some were sold and others were used later in building Van Buren City.

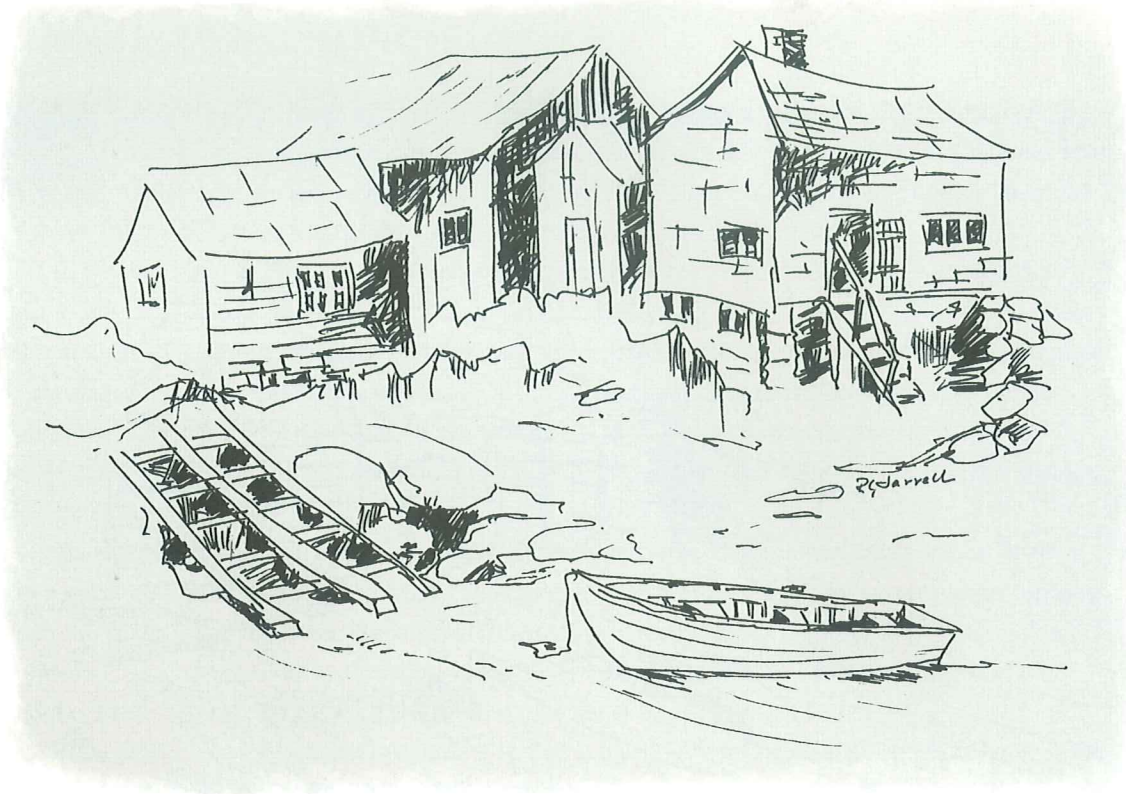
Bishop Adams built a scow that he used on the lake for several years. It had two masts and two large sails, the canvas being made from flax raised at the Point, spun and woven by Betsy Bishop and sewed into the right shape. He would sail up to Conneaut, Ohio, and load up with limestone and bring it to Van Buren and then burn it—taking the lime to Buffalo to sell. When clearing the land, the large timbers of oak, maple and black walnut were made into rafts and floated down the lake to Buffalo. The small hardwood was burned and the ashes leached into lye and taken to Buffalo. With a favorable south wind the old boat could make the trip to Buffalo and return in one day.

Medical herbs grown at Van Buren point with the help of the Indians were gathered by Bishop Adams and prepared for the Burdock Medical Company of Buffalo.





## Bustling Commercial Harbor



Records recorded show that on September 28, 1835 Squire White of Fredonia, NY (first licensed physician in New York State) purchased this property from Justus and Bishop Adams, with other lands, a total of 329 acres, for the sum of \$8,580. Shortly after this purchase Squire White with Chauncey Tucker and others, formed a voluntary joint stock association having a capital of \$12,000 divided into 60 shares of \$200 each. The purpose of this association was to acquire the lands as noted above, dividing the same into village lots, with streets and improvements, and the selling of these lots to others. Soon after this association was formed it commenced business, divided the land into village lots, improved the harbor by building wharves, piers and a warehouse, laid out and graded streets, sold and conveyed many lots upon which houses were built and in the year 1837 the village thus formed had about 300 inhabitants. Squire White and his associates expected the railroad being built to have its terminus at what was to be Van Buren Harbor.

When the New York and Erie Railroad was projected in 1836 its western terminus was fixed upon the shore of Lake Erie. The first location was about four miles from Dunkirk, where a point of land puts out into the lake (now Van Buren Point), considered to afford good landing facilities besides being a good site for a commercial town that was expected to spring up on the completion of the road.

The *Western Democrat* (a newspaper published in Fredonia—later to be the *Van Buren Times*) enlisted the advice of a “Mr. Haynes of New York”, who seemed to be regarded as an expert on harbors. He sailed the entire length of the southern shore of Lake Erie, assessing the potentialities of the harbors. “All” of them were found inadequate or unsafe; but when it came to Van Buren Harbor, Mr. Haynes waxed eloquent in his praise. It had, said he, “preeminent local advantages, equalled only by the talents and enterprise of its citizens.”



In 1838, large lake boats found our shallow bay a problem. The first large boat in the harbor was *The Wm. Peacock* that ran between Buffalo and Erie followed by *The Captain Townsend* commanded by Captain S. Fox of Fredonia.

# VAN BUREN TIMES.

ARBA K. MAYNARD, PROPRIETOR.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY.—TERMS—TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE, OR \$2 50 AFTER THE EXPIRATION OF SIX MONTHS.

(MAYNARD &amp; CUTLER, EDITORS)

VOL. I

VAN EUREN HARBOR, (CHAU T. CO. N. Y.) TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 1837.

NO. 28.

**POETRY.**

DEATH OF MR. WOODWARD, AT EDINBURGH.

By Brainard.

"The spider's most attenuated thread,  
Is cord—is cable, to man's tender tie  
On earthly bliss: it breaks at every breeze."

[illegible]

There is a world of bliss hereafter—rise  
Why are the bad above, the good beneath  
The green grass of the grave! The Mower fills  
Flowers and briars alike. No man shall breathe  
(When he by death's evil hands shall breathe  
Averred from his work) in a purer air  
Above the smoke of burning worlds;—and Death  
On scorched ploughs with the dead shall lie,  
When time, with all his youth and contention, has passed by.

### MISCELLANY.

SCRAPS FROM A SCRAP BOOK.

AMERICAN WOMEN, A.C.  
 "In the walking thoughts by day,  
 In the sightless dreams by night,  
 Whose mild tones and glances play

was this very night which made the heart of the wife of a British officer publicly acknowledge, with tears in her eyes, that she was a slaveholder, and that she had bought her slaves from the shores of America. The story of Mary Hillman, of Tibury, Mass. a woman, an infirm and old, and a petitioner for relief from the cruel and unchristian laws of the United States, is familiar to us. The commander of a British ship—the Unicorn—somewhere in the year 1800, was told a year or two ago, that the British ship, *Liberty*, sailed from New York, with the only sick of a fever that can be obtained, and a case of the citreous, whose liver of gain was the only motive for the sale of the *Liberty*—or perhaps not leaving the salute. —they were not for the standard—bitter away their liberty-pols for a small portion to the British Government, and then they were proceeding the purchase. Mary Hillman, then about fifteen years of age, with two others, Horish Allen, destroyed this liberty-pols, by boring holes in it and filling them with powder; who then set fire to the poles and totally destroyed them. The British Government, venting the benefit that would have accrued from this sale of the liberty-pols to the enemy, and sending a small number of colors to the British Government. The story is true, by no means rare, and in consideration we publish two or three additional anecdotes which

tain discord, to subserve party interests and private ends.

We again call upon you who wield this powerful instrument, to use it to the best advantage, to elevate the press, to redeem it from political degradation, to retrieve its tarnished falchion, and restore it to its primitive grandeur.

Let us not be misled by the glittering and the cause of virtue and sound morality, were they anxious to promote the best interests of our country. Let us not be seduced by the pomp and circumstance but what objects, our tendency to promote these great evils, our fair Columbia would soon become the throne of truth, justice, and shine as a beacon to the world.

**NEWSPAPER READERS!**—How endless is the variety of newspaper readers—and how hard is it to satisfy them all. Mr. A. believes that he shall discountenance his paper should it not contain a strong and decided opinion in favor of the cause which he deems too freely in the political movement of the day. Mr. B. is not content with an opinion on one side,—and D. who believes it generally expressed, does not like it because it is not severe enough upon the opposition.—He does not care to read a strong and fashionable literature—and F. cannot bear the flimsy notions of idle writers. G. will not read a paper which does not contain a vigorous and manly representation of the great questions of the day. Slavery—and

[From the *Journal of Commerce*.]

CONGRESSIONAL TEMPERANCE  
SOCIETY.

At a meeting of the Congressional Temperance Society, held in the Capitol, at Washington, Feb. 24, 1837, in the absence of the Hon. Lewis Cass, President of the Society, the following resolutions were adopted: Resolved, That taken by the Hon. Francis Grady, Senator from Tennessee, as one of the Vice Presidents.

The Rev. John Marsh, Secretary of the American Temperance Union, acted as Secretary. Mr. Marsh stated the object of the meeting, which was the reorganization of the Congressional Temperance Society. Whereupon, on motion, the Hon. Mr. Hoar, Representative from Massachusetts, the Hon. Mr. Grinnell, Representative from Massachusetts, and the Hon. Wm. Wardell, Representative from New York, were appointed a committee to prepare and report a list of names to be invited to the next meeting.

On motion of the Hon. George N. Briggs, a member of Congress from Massachusetts the following resolutions were unanimously adopted.

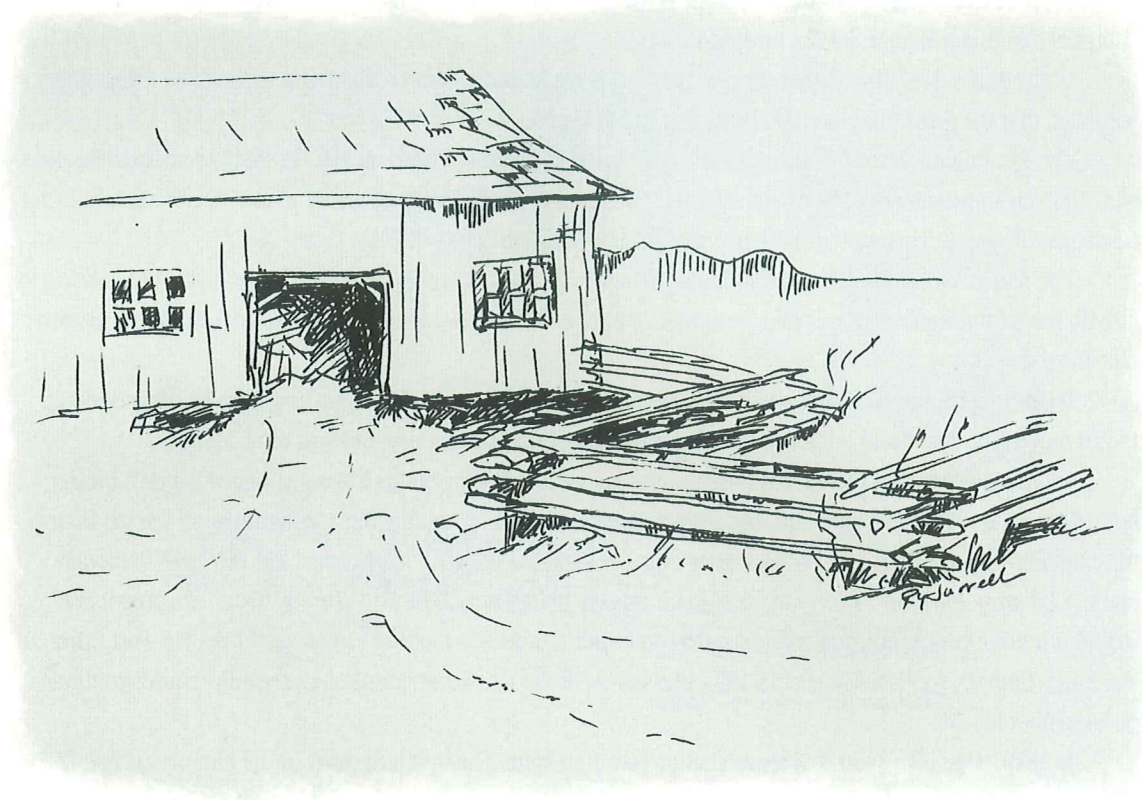
**Resolved,** That the continued success of efforts to suppress intemperance in this and foreign countries, calls for an expression of gratitude to Almighty God; and should encourage us in every means which tends to the removal of so great an evil from among men.

**ANDREW JACKSON'S Fare  
well Address to the People  
of the United States.**

**PELLOW-CITIZEN:**  
Being about to retire finally from public life I wish to express my great indebtedness to so many people of kindness and confidence which I have received at your hands. It has been my fortune, in the discharge of my duties, to have been frequently called upon to have found myself in difficult and trying situations, where prompt decision and energy were required. I am sure that the great interest of the country required that the great responsibilities should be fearlessly encountered. I am sure that I have not failed to do so. With gratitude that I acknowledge the continued and unbroken confidence with which you have honored me, I am sure that my public life has been a long one, and I cannot hope that it has, at all times, been free from errors. I am sure that I have not failed to do so. If mistakes have been committed, those errors are not seriously injured the country. I am anxious indeed to serve, and, at the same time, to be free from all other engagements. I leave the people prosperous and happy; I leave the enjoyment of liberty and peace; and I leave the country in a state of peace and order. If my humble efforts have in any degree, contributed to procure to you these blessings, I am sure that I have not failed to do so.

[illegible]

## Farm Community Again



Squire White died intestate at Fredonia, April 2, 1857. A judgment filed June 24, 1871, referring to Van Buren, recites in part "All the buildings erected and improvements made on said lands have fallen into decay and been destroyed or taken away, the inhabitants have removed, and the lands for nearly thirty years past have been, and now are, useful and valuable for farming purposes only."

Some cottages were moved to Fredonia, and were reported in the 1970s still to be in use—one at the corner of Central Avenue and Temple Street. The brick block building at the Point was dismantled and used to build the business building at West Main Street and Forest Street. Armstrong's Hotel at Van Buren City was not completely finished inside—after being dismantled, the stone was shipped by boat to Buffalo and used to build the Phelps Hotel later known as the Clarendon. The land was used by Mr. John P. Hall who had the largest farm in the county. He raised sheep and cows—sending the milk to the cheese factory.

Since most of the stockholders of the joint-stock association which had promoted Van Buren Harbor had died—their heirs removed to other places and towns, records lost and title to the remaining lands uncertain—the Supreme Court of New York appointed one Orson Stiles as Referee. By a series of deeds dated at various times in July, September and October 1871, Orson Stiles took title to all the lands remaining to the association which had been formed by Squire White and others, and deeded these lands to George Barker on September 24, 1874 for \$6,000.



# Economical Summer Resort



George Barker deeded his interest to Daniel Fairbanks on December 12, 1874. During the next few years Daniel Fairbanks sold numerous lots. Two of the transfers are noted here as being of interest:

"Daniel Fairbanks conveyed Lot No. 15 to Harriett E. Thayer by deed dated August 9, 1876 and this deed sets forth various provisions for walks, beach rights, restricting sale of intoxicating liquors, etc."

"By deed dated September 16, 1879, Daniel Fairbanks conveyed lot No. 10 to Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain) for \$115.00." (This lot was sold to Harry Raymond Rogers, M.D. of Dunkirk on November 17, 1882 for \$200; (For once in his life, Mark Twain made a profit on his investment).

The Fairbanks family lived in a good log cabin on the Point and spent much of their time improving the farm. Picnic groups frequented Van Buren Point and some lots were sold.

Beginning in 1884, J. Lansing Moore, an energetic young man from Buffalo, acquired various pieces of property at Van Buren Point.

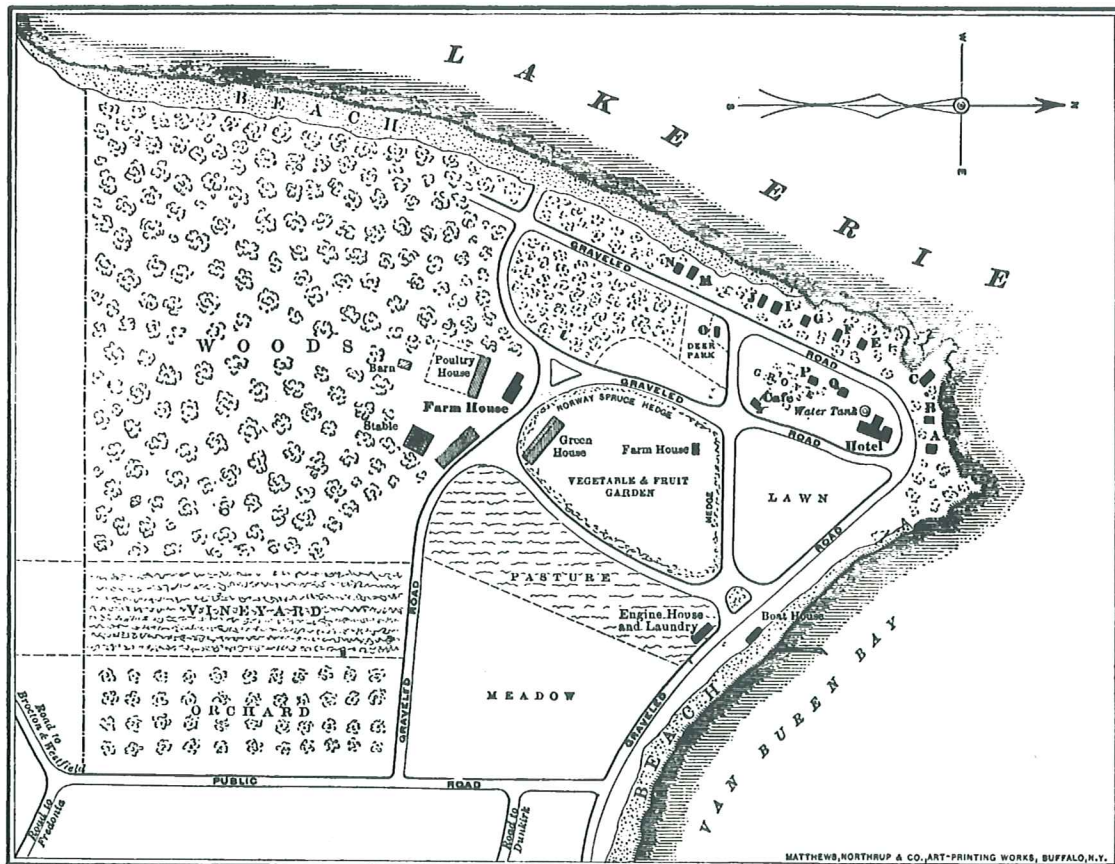
Mr. Moore, known as "The Father of Van Buren," spent much time on plantings and property improvements. He continued the picnic grove privileges but his largest income was from the sale of lots. He developed the land as a summer resort, cottages were built and beautiful shrubs and flowers started.

Mr. Moore was prepared to take boarders in the cottages and at the boarding hall. At that time, some cottage people arranged to have their meals for the season at the boarding hall.

During this same period, a line of good "busses" (horse drawn vehicles) ran on schedule from Fredonia and Dunkirk!

"Regular trips leave Fredonia at 8:25 a.m. and 6 p.m. / Leave Van Buren at 9:30 a.m. and 7 p.m."

Also, travel by lake boats was available round trip to Dunkirk depending on the weather.



Map of the grounds circa 1889.

In 1889 a booklet was published describing the advantages and beauties of the property and showing various views; Van Buren was characterized as "A Beautiful, Quiet Place for the Overworked and Weary to Rest."

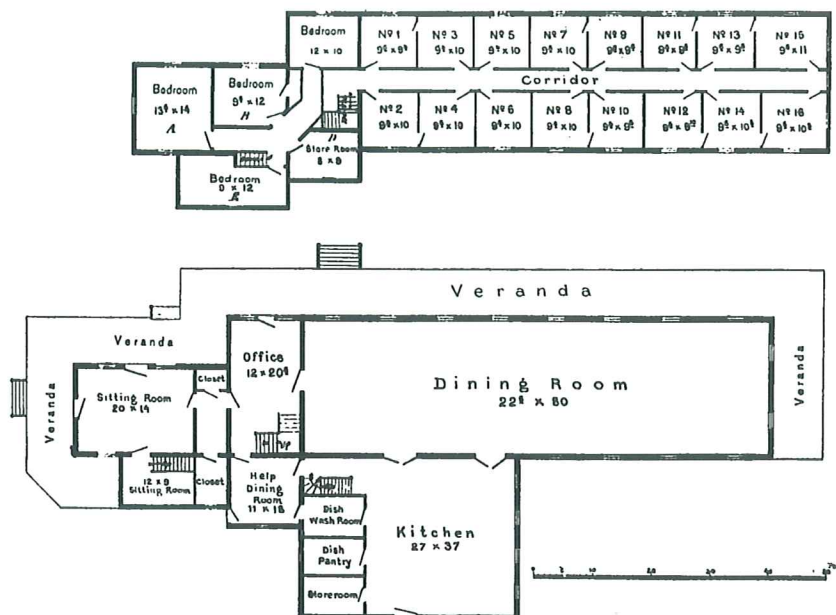
The brochure went on to say, "If persons who intend to visit the Point will notify the superintendent and inform him by what road and train and at what time they will arrive, they will be met at Dunkirk or Van Buren with suitable conveyances." (Van Buren would have been at the railroad crossing on the Van Buren Road. Usually the conveyance was a buckboard suitable for hauling passengers and trunks).

The present Victoria Cottage was part of the original hotel building of which Mr. Moore was proprietor.

The hotel had 20 bedrooms on the second floor. The first floor had a covered veranda on three sides. The dining room, size 22 1/2' by 80'; an office, a few sitting rooms, a large kitchen and service rooms completed the first floor. The published schedule of rates was as follows:

#### Van Buren Point Hotel Rates

Board per day . . . . .	\$1.50
Board per week . . . . .	8.00
Lodging . . . . .	.50
Breakfast . . . . .	.50
Dinner . . . . .	.75
Tea . . . . .	.50
Coffee per cup . . . . .	.10
Tea per cup . . . . .	.10
Milk per glass . . . . .	.05
Cream per glass . . . . .	.10
Lemonade . . . . .	.10
Cake . . . . .	.10
Ice cream . . . . .	.10



#### THE HOTEL AND COTTAGES

Surrounded by a landscape of great beauty and variety, near the extremity of the head-land, is found the hotel with its cluster of cottages scattered here and there in shady nooks and quiet retreats for the use of families who prefer the privacy of individual homes. From the verandas can be enjoyed a sweeping and unobstructed view of the lake, harbor, beach and surrounding country—a prospect which never fails to please and entertain those who delight to study the fair but ever-changing face of nature.

Ample provision is likewise made for the many who prefer walls of canvas and a gypsy experience in the white tents, which are pitched on the sunny campus, along the sandy beach, or in the shady groves.



Dance Hall Pavilion at Oakdale and Central Avenue.

An important adjunct to the hotel is the fertile farm of 100 acres, from whose fields and pastures, orchards and vineyards, vegetable gardens and berry patches, greenhouses and henneries are supplied daily to the hotel tables an abundance of fresh vegetables, berries, fruits, milk, cream and eggs.

Every possible provision is made to satisfy the material wants of the patrons of the Point, and no one ever has occasion to carry away other than pleasant memories of a spot upon which Nature has lavished her treasures so freely.





*One of the original cottages, Tower Cottage photographed in the 1880s.*

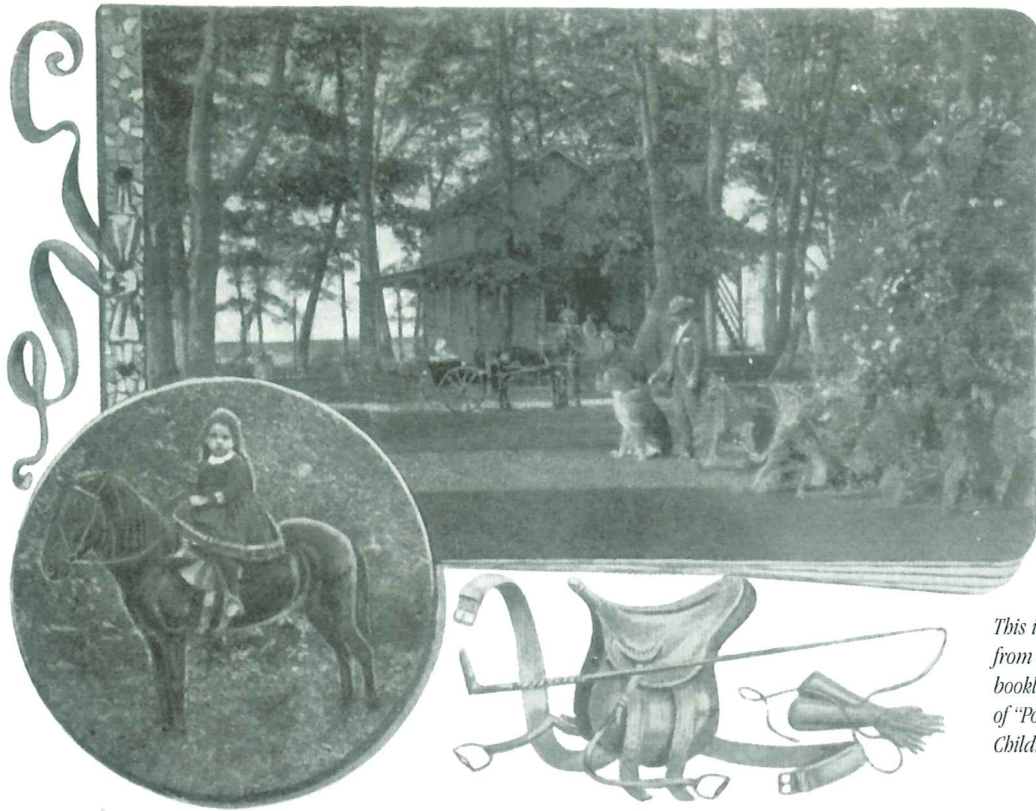
## WALKS AND DRIVES

Winding over the sunny greensward, in and out of the cool groves, through the leafy dells, and along the sands at the water's edge are wide plank walks and shady woodland paths for those who would taste the exhilaration of an early morning stroll or enjoy the calm delights of a moonlight promenade.

For others who prefer to ride, there are fine graveled drives on the grounds, kept well sprinkled, while all the adjacent country is a region of fertile farms, and excellent roads. One favorite drive is the old Lake Shore Turnpike, which follows the windings of the beach all the way from Buffalo to Cleveland, presenting an ever-changing panorama of charming land and water views. Another good road winds over the Chautauqua Hills to Mayville, 18 miles distant, at the head of the far-famed lake. Still others lead to Cassadaga, to Dunkirk, to Fredonia, and to the Brocton grape district only five miles away. The hotel livery is well stocked with well-trained saddle horses, safe riding horses which any lady can drive, and spirited animals for those who enjoy speeding over good roads. Besides, there is a fine drove of Shetland ponies, which, with dog-carts, are the delight of the children.



*Currently Park Avenue, this road was called Lakeview Avenue in the 1880s.*



*This illustration is taken from an 1889 marketing booklet with the caption of "Ponies and Carts for Children."*

#### FROM A SANITARY POINT OF VIEW

The manifest sanitary advantages of Van Buren Point have won for the place the highest endorsement of the medical profession. A number of the leading Buffalo physicians not only commend it to their patients, but likewise bring their own families here, and spend with them as many hours each day as pressing professional duties will permit.

The renowned ozone-charged atmosphere of the Thousand Islands is no more pure, no more invigorating, no more free from malarial taint than the fresh lake breezes which favor the fortunate dwellers on the Point even on the sultriest August days when not a breath of air is stirring inland.

The natural slope of the plateau upon which the hotel and cottages are built is away from the lake, and all the sewerage is drained back to the extreme rear of the farm, where it is rendered wholly innocuous. The entire sewerage and water-works system was planned by an expert sanitary engineer and constructed under his direct supervision. A pumping station supplies to the hotel, each cottage and every part of the grounds an abundance of pure lake water for all purposes.

Add to the other hygienic features of life at the Point the excellence of the food supplied direct from the farm to the table and it is little wonder that pale and puny children grow plump and rosy, that weary mothers become strong and vigorous once more as the result of restored appetites, freedom from household cares, and sound sleep; that jaded business men who come out on the evening trains return to town the next morning rested and refreshed, and even the visitors who linger on the grounds only a single day take their reluctant departure with brighter views of life."

An interesting newspaper article in 1903 relates that Van Buren camp life and all its pleasures are within the reach of everyone. It reports that "every day a cottage is rented for a whole or half month by people who are attracted by the economy of the rents—\$8.50 to \$14.00 a month."



## Lack of Vision



an Buren once again experienced a setback when, in 1896, J. Lansing Moore lost his interest in the property because of bad investments. In that year, Van Buren Point was sold to John F. Wilson who then sold it to Judge John L. Lambert of Fredonia. Apart from an elegant 1889 marketing brochure, the next fourteen years were a time of passive growth for Van Buren as a summer community. Whether it was for lack of vision held by both Wilson and Lambert or just monetary restraints, Van Buren Point did little in terms of development or promotion. It was not until the Andrews Land company of Erie, Pa. purchased the land in 1910 that major advertising resumed and subsequent development created the community we enjoy today.

However, this time period was by no means lacking in historical interest. A hand-written and illustrated diary was recently discovered in Judge John Lambert's papers by members of the Reed Library staff of the State University at New York (SUNY) at Fredonia. With the discovery of these papers, a wonderful new picture of Van Buren comes to life with the vivid descriptions of an independent, somewhat reclusive artist and naturalist named Anna Clift Smith. Anna's family had traveled from Ohio to Florida to Washington before finally settling in Fredonia around 1886. Anna was eight years old. At the beginning of her diary written December 29, 1904, she was 26 years old and had already spent ten summers and two and a half winters at Van Buren. She and her family, to some accounts, apparently rented a cottage at the Point beginning in 1895 and it was then that her love affair with Van Buren began.

The first passage of her diary written during the winter of 1904 lays witness to a storm of such magnitude that the fear of losing the cottage was quite real to her. Most interesting is the fact that she spent these winters all alone at the Point. Van Buren at this time was strictly a summer colony and how she managed or even why she decided to stay in this insanely harsh environment is never fully explained but it was during this tenure that her strength and passion for Van Buren grew to a life-long commitment to preserve and protect her beloved land.

Anna was an artist and her paintings were done in either water colors or pastels. "Water colors freeze outdoors, so I have to work in pastels. Winter painting is no cinch—the cold stiffens the fingers so that after half an hour I scarcely feel the chalk between them, and often it drops to the ground." Her sketches of the Mark Twain cottage as viewed from below Pulpit Rock are as accurate today as when they were first drawn.

Fiercely independent she not only survived the raging winter of 1904 but relished the challenges it presented. She chopped and hauled her own wood (over half a cord), stockpiled large provisions of food that she also canned and preserved to get her through the isolating winter months; she hauled pails of lake water up the cliff to fill her barrels for drinking and cooking which in return had to be boiled and strained; and she wrote of the lake and the land in wonderful self-searching prose as if to keep the legacy of Van Buren alive.

Anna eventually left the area only to return when she was around 40 years old. She built her own cottage out of wood on a tract of land across from where the current Portland water tower exists. During the prohibition era she was known to stand on the cliffs of Van Buren Point and fire warning shots at the Canadian bootleggers who were trying to get their ale ashore. She remained protective of Van Buren until the day she died, August 17, 1946.

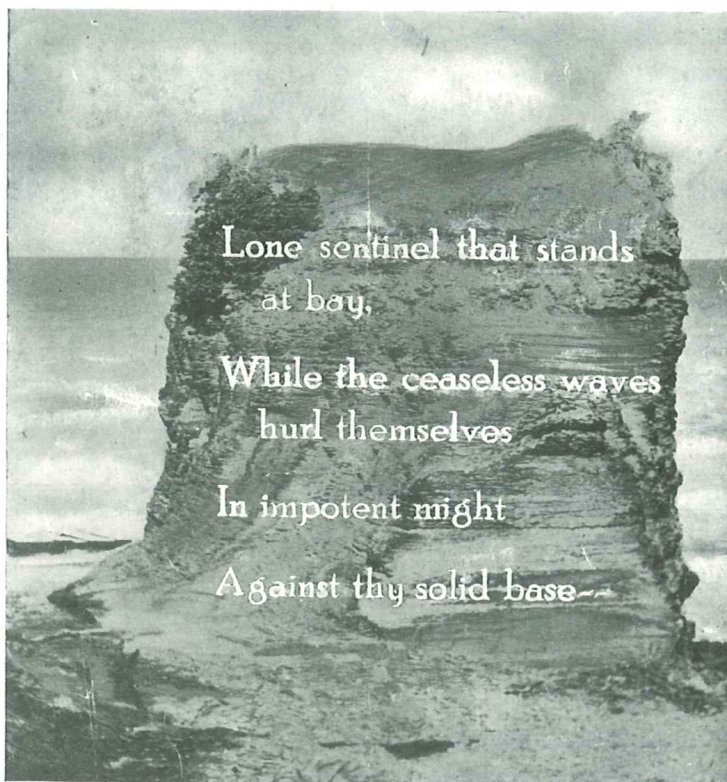
One of the mysteries of her diary is her unexplained fear for Van Buren. Anna writes:

"I will leave here in May. If what I really believe is true, this place will be one that no decent, self-respecting person will even enter, by the first of July. Isn't it pitiful—horrible! I love this old place more than any spot on Earth, and no one can feel as I do for it has been my home, virtually for the past ten years. Year after year I have returned to it, year after year I have seen my work improve here, and year after year I have sold my pictures of Van Buren. Is it any wonder, then, that I love the place as no one else can? And can any one else feel the horror as deeply as I, the awful, sickening horror of seeing a beautiful home turned into a sinkhole of iniquity? For such I believe it will become the end of July."

What was her fear? Fear of over-development by the Andrews company? Fear of loss of privacy? Anna leaves no clue as to her unsettling premonition. Her diary ends cryptically with a "finis" and a sketch of Pulpit Rock and the Mark Twain cottage bound in ice and snowdrifts.

# *The* Van Buren Point Breeze

Welcome  
Number



Lone sentinel that stands  
at bay,

While the ceaseless waves  
hurl themselves

In impotent might

Against thy solid base

Published in the interest of Van Buren Point  
by The Van Buren Point Company  
Erie Pennsylvania

Van Buren Point  
"ON LAKE ERIE"

*Covers of marketing booklets published around 1910.*



# Flourishing Summer Resort



Mr. W.D. Andrews



In 1910, the Andrews Land Company of Erie, Pa. purchased the land. Mr. A.J. "Barney" Andrews was instrumental in much of the subsequent development. After his death, his son, W.D. Andrews was in charge. This period of time saw Van Buren flourish. A marketing booklet published around 1910 by the Andrews family even espoused "the Van Buren Point Idea". From the booklet:

"But it is not alone the natural advantages which set Van Buren apart from its fellows, for sharing with these is that basic idea upon which it is founded—the Van Buren Point Idea. First of all we want to emphasize strongly that Van Buren Point is not a summer resort, as we commonly use and understand the term.

## Bathing at Van Buren

By Miss Frances Pinney

SIX years ago a company of young folks spent their first summer at Van Buren Point, and while all of us harbor memories of one pleasure and another which marked those few short months, 'tis that of bathing which most often trumps by in gay parade before us.

Strange as it may seem, not one of us knew how to swim. But what we lacked in ability we made up in enthusiasm. Like many others, doubtless, we took our bathing suits along because that seemed the proper thing to do. We feared ostracism to appear at The Point minus this part of our wardrobe.

But we had them—and of course we had to use them. I think the first time we put them on we spent an eventful half hour 'round the cottage bathtub. Finally, we stormed the Lake in a body. One girl accidentally got a foot wet. That broke up the party.

But eventually—and its is of the "eventually" that I like to think—we lived in the water. We were not content to don our uniforms once a day like other folks. Ours was a before and after each meal.

Van Buren has fully a mile of bathing beach, with neither sand holes nor dangerous rocks. The most favored spot is between two large cliffs on the west side of The Point. This is particularly beautiful in the evening, where bathers and cottagers in general congregate to view the sunset. If Nature deign to "trouble the

waters," they lose their fury in the smiling faces which greet them inshore. If calm and serene, they find an equal touch of gentleness from the hands and hearts of the revelers.

And the moonlight bathing; well do I recall that first night we took a before retiring plunge. The moon was full, and spread its light upon the waters turning night into day. The water seemed even warmer than in daytime. Across the harbor we could see the lighthouse at Point Gratiot. The tall trees on the cliffs stood in bold relief against the sky. The whole was a scene too beautiful for description.



*Would you like to join our little party?*

Nowhere can you find more ideal conditions for bathing than at Van Buren. Every summer since this same company has found its way back there to revel in its many charms.

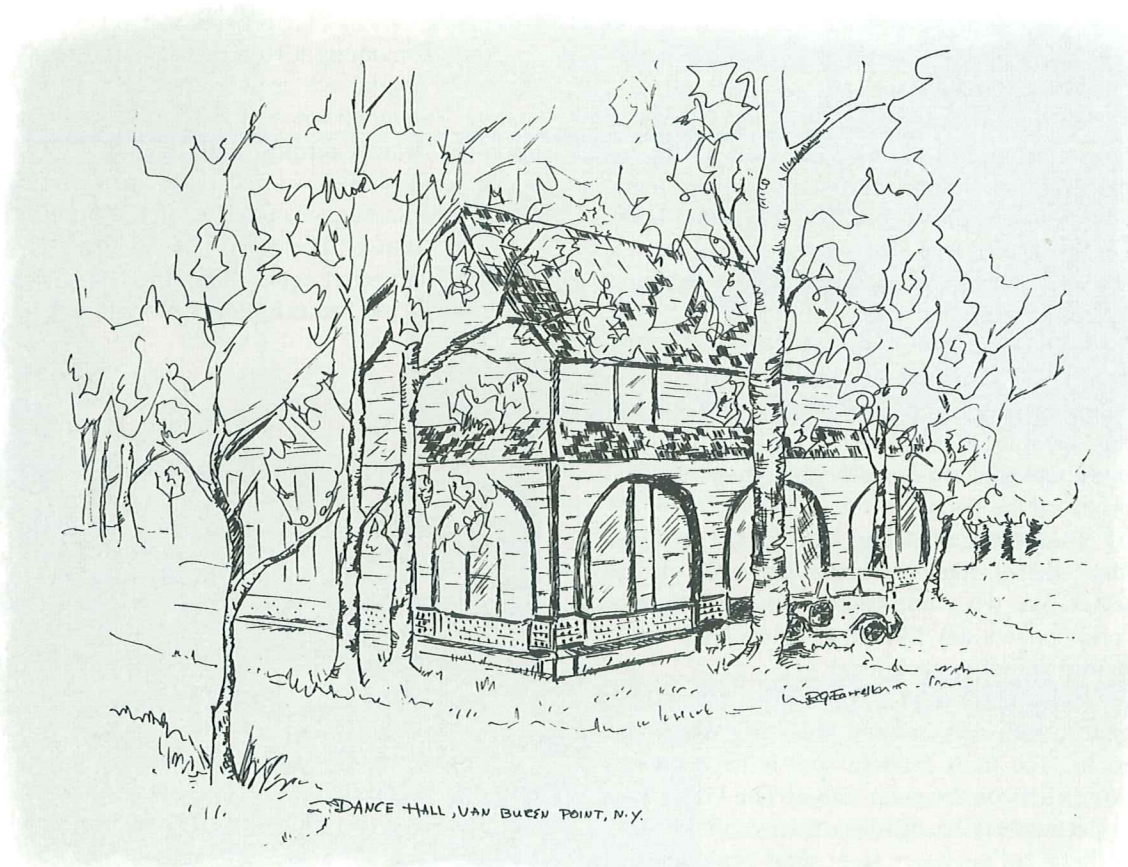
*Would you like to join our little party?*

Instead it is a Cottage Colony—a rest resort where sobriety and refinement are supreme. It is this idea, which we will develop in these pages as we go along, which has made of Van Buren a place where women and children can go about unattended without fear; it is this idea that has substituted those wholesome things to do, intermingled with that quietude which is so essential to complete mental and physical rest, for the noise and clutter of the more showy places. At Van Buren Point you find those pleasures which best suit your own fancies; there you are free to do your own bidding unhampered by social or conventional demands; there you choose your own pastimes—in a word, it is your own domain to be ruled over as you will."



*This photograph is from a marketing booklet with the caption of "And the children—God bless them."*

The pavilion at Oakdale and Central Avenue was popular at the time. It served as a recreation hall, grocery store and post office—access to the dance hall was through the store. A covered veranda on three sides served to observe the action on the dance floor. The second floor was used to house visiting band members. Card parties



*The pavilion at Oakdale and Central Avenue served as a recreation/dance hall, grocery store and post office.*



and roller skating were frequent programs. Special events included Spencerian writing lessons and sponsoring a small seasonal zoo. Mr. Arthur Brown from New Castle, Pa. managed the store and pavilion and lived in Elmherst Cottage at Central Avenue and Park Blvd. Early in the 1940's the pavilion was torn down because the building was in disrepair.

Around 1910, horseback riding became very popular; many guests at the Point came because of the beautiful horses available. A large newspaper ad, dated July 3, 1912, mentions the baseball diamond and picnic tables. "The Van Buren Point Café, under the care of Mr. Guy Gugino an experienced caterer, is now open. The best of meals is to be had here, as well as iced drinks, ice cream and the like. The Bar under new management—For hitching in the barn, 10 cents, hitching and feeding, 25 cents."

Central Avenue, as we know it today, was not open off the township road. Access was by "Common Drive" now called Lakeside Boulevard off the township road at the next set of pillars near the lake. This made a beautiful entrance through "The Willows" on up to the hotel and dining hall. The horse barn was at Grove Avenue and Park Avenue at the place where we discard leaves today. The first floor was used for the animals and the second floor housed two large water storage tanks that served the community. After streets were paved, having horses travel about was not as desirable and the horse service was discontinued. When the present water storage tank was purchased from Van Buren Bay, the horse barn was torn down.



*The main entrance was by "Common Drive" off of the township road through "The Willows," now called Lakeside Boulevard.*

This interesting paragraph, was found in a booklet *Van Buren Point on Lake Erie* published about 1910 by the Andrews, who operated the Van Buren Point Company, Erie, Pa:

### **Home Living at Home Costs**

Living at Van Buren alters the general fact that your vacation is an expense—a luxury to be afforded only the well-to-do. For here is an economy.

To prove this: \$1,200 will buy a lot and build thereon a seven-room cottage, equipped with bath, fireplace, screened throughout, and completely furnished. \$100 will cover the interest on your investment and all carrying charges, including upkeep, gas, water and garbage collection. This amount, covering our four months' season, would average a monthly rental of \$25, a sum considerably under the rental of the majority of homes in town.

Beyond this you could doubtless effect a saving in your daily living costs. You will pay from 12 to 15 percent less for groceries and vegetables than prevailing city prices; milk will cost you but 8 cents per quart; ice 40 cents per hundred; gas 35 cents per thousand. Under the open door policy, competition will regulate the prices of food and other merchandise.

Dr. Bob Steele, in his recollections of the 1920s at the 1989 Community Center celebration noted:

"As a 20 year old college student, I first came up here from Pittsburgh with a college orchestra and dance band to provide musical entertainment for the residents of Van Buren. In those days there was an open air pavilion in the Park, across the road from the Layman and Spies cottages that was used for dancing and roller skating. The orchestra was hired by Barney Andrews to play here for dances 3 nights a week. We lived in a room above the front of the Dance Hall and took most of our meals at the Van Buren Point Inn, run by Mrs. Hinckley which is where the McKinleys now live".

As an added note to Dr. Steele's recollections, it is interesting that when the McKinley house was first built, it was intended to be a religious library; a group at Van Buren Point had in mind the beauty of the land, the convenience of the Hotel and the library would interest others to come and study and participate in religion and compete with Chautauqua Institution. Without sufficient funds, this plan was short-lived—Chautauqua was able to move ahead with the backing of the Methodist Church. Dr. Steele continues:

"In those days there were four clay tennis courts where the playground and two courts are now. These were taken care of by the Kirkpatrick boys and supervised by Mr. Keetch, who was an old time tennis enthusiast. The courts had to be watered in dry weather, rolled and the lines put on with whitewash daily. I was a tennis buff myself and Mr. Keetch, Russ Bachelor, Harold Whiting, and later, Dr. Glassburn had many a game on the courts over the years."

*Originally the Van Buren Point Inn, the McKinley house is at the corner of Park and Central Avenues. This photograph is circa 1940s.*





Mr. Phil Kennedy in an article published in 1977 gives us his reflections of the 1920s at Van Buren. Here are selected excerpts:

**LIGHTING.** There was no electricity. All cottages were lit with gas—as were the street lights. Center lights of 2 or 3 round glass globes of 4 to 6 inches in diameter (ball shaped) with the upper half frosted and the lower half clear and a hole in the bottom. Wall lamps of the same globes, were common indoors, and the warmth of the glow of the gas lighting will never be reproduced with electricity (unless this is only the magic of childhood coming through. The street lights were gas, ornamental, and had to be lit nightly, a regular job of one of the youth of Van Buren. I substituted on this job once for 2 weeks, with great pride. The Point was beautiful with the old, antique street lamps. Electricity came later—not sure when—but believe about 1930-1935. Mr. Ranney, a professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Buffalo, wired a lot of the cottages—much of that still exists.

**WATER.** While the water system was in, the water was not drinkable in the 20's. A Mr. Planke (pronounced Planky) sold water, delivering it in a very antique truck. Mr. Planke was very tall and thin, a long narrow nose, and was very serious, never smiling. His water, from a local spring, came in bottles similar to his construction, tall (18 inches) and tapered at the top, 6 to a wooden crate. One was always in everybody's ice box and how sweet after a heated exercise of some sort. Several owners went to a spring just across the creek on S. Water St. in South Fredonia at a horse watering trough where Stockton Road started—by troughing the water from the pipe over the side of the horse trough (a large iron structure) into gallon jugs.

**A.J. (BARNEY) ANDREWS.** Barney Andrews laid out, ran and literally owned Van Buren—roads, water system, etc. He was a large man of rather short stature, philosophical, well fed, and while quite slow and lazy appearing, got things done. His main art was repair of water leaks. The procedure was:

- a. Find and expose the leak in pipe
- b. Apply a wad of chewing gum
- c. Wrap with friction tape
- d. Apply shellac (borrowed from nearest cottage owner—tape also if available)
- e. Cover shellacked area with more tape

Some of these "Repairs" were seen on old pipes in the 40s.

**BEACHES.** In the 1920s, a period of low water occurred and with it a marvelous sand beach on the bay side of the Point in front of Breigs, Pavlots, Swicks, Kennedys, etc. Most bathing took place there. This phenomenon occurred again in the late 40s and some think will again in the next few years. In between the west side of the Point became the bathing area. A three tiered structure consisting of steel cylinders of different heights stepped up and sat in front of the Feightner cottage. The cylinders were filled with concrete and remained for years as a jumping place into the water for kids.

TODAY'S  
ISSUE  
18  
PAGES

# DUNKIRK EVENING OBSERVER

ESTABLISHED 1882—FULL LEASED WIRE SERVICE OF THE UNITED PRESS—TUESDAY'S PRESS RUN 4871

VOL. CXXV, NO. 84

DUNKIRK, N. Y., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 1928

The Weather  
Fair tonight  
slightly warmer  
in east central  
portion.

The Per Week Unleashed  
Dance Course, 8 Weeks

## NAVAL BATTLE OFF VAN BUREN POINT

**PROHIBITION ! RUMRUNNERS.** Running liquor from Canada made life at Van Buren quite exciting in the 1920s. A real Coast Guard cutter with guns frequently used, was stationed in Dunkirk. Boats sunk to low status, loaded with contraband, would be towed on calm nights to avoid detection. If challenged, they could be cut loose and sunk. Enough real traffic existed that every log or innocent rowboat was believed by one to be rum runners and we kids didn't even know what rum was! Flahavens (now Fireside Manor) was frequently caught serving liquor and closed for various periods.

### TWO RUM RUNNERS SPOTTED TUESDAY EVENING BY GUARDS

One Was Captured After Thrilling Chase; the Other Was Sunk With Most of Cargo.

PLENTY OF EVIDENCE AND  
FOUR PRISONERS TAKEN

Men Captured Gave Buffalo and Niagara Falls as Their Homes—Fast Yacht Valued at \$4,300 Changes Hands.

## Van Buren Point Association Formed



Following the acquisition of the property which is now included in Van Buren Point, an area of about 100 acres, A.J. Andrews sold some lots and rented a number of cottages. He furnished water to the cottage owners which was pumped from the lake into a tank located across the road from the present water tank. He also arranged for the collection of garbage and rubbish and the general upkeep of the property. For all of such services he made an annual charge to each cottage.

In the year 1927, the cottage owners formally associated themselves together as the Van Buren Point Association, Inc. Incorporated July 26, 1927 under Article 2 of the Membership Corporation Law of the State of New York. The original incorporators were Dean R. Williams and William Y. English of Pittsburgh, Pa., Erma D. Allen of Wilkinsburg, Pa., Albert J. Andrews of Erie, Pa., and Glenn W. Woodin of Dunkirk, NY. This action was accepted at the cottage owners meeting of July 4, 1928. Paragraph 2 of the Certificate of Incorporation reads as follows:

"The purposes for which it is to be formed are all the general purposes authorized by law for membership corporations, especially the development of Van Buren Point in the Town of Pomfret and Portland, Chautauqua County, N.Y., as a recreational center and summer cottage colony, including the securing, construction and maintenance of parks and playgrounds, sewage, sanitation, light, heat, power, water, fire and police protection and other necessary and convenient services to that end, the arrangement and conducting of meetings and assemblies for mutual improvement and entertainment along educational, scientific, musical, recreational and other lines for its members and others, and the ownership, operation, and use of all facilities, necessary and expedient for the accomplishment of the foregoing purposes are any of them."

It appears that the acquisition of the sewer system and the need for its improvement were important considerations in the formation of the Association. Indeed, as an excerpt from the correspondence of William English, the first secretary/treasurer of the Association reveals:

"There are 120 cottages served by the sewer system which was taken over by this voluntary association of owners in 1927 when Mr. Andrews gave it up after the trouble he had with the Health Department of New York State. We were all notified suddenly one day in March 1927 that every cottage had to take care of itself and install an individual septic tank to take care of the sewage from each cottage. Rather than have the Point become a mess with 120 Septic Tanks, which cost from \$72 up and then are a grave menace to health, in addition to a nuisance if improperly constructed...the owners decided to deal directly with the State officials and raise enough money to repair broken sewers which caused trouble. It's a long story and has cost us a lot of money...."

Each cottage making use of the sewer was assessed a fixed sum for extensions and the construction of proper treatment plant, which therefore became one of common ownership.

In the season of 1934, a change was made in the matter of services performed by the Andrews interests for the cottage owners. The following paragraph is quoted from a letter dated May 8, 1934 addressed to the members and cottage owners:

"The present Board of Directors, has made an agreement with Messrs. A.J. and W.D. Andrews of the Van Buren Point Company to lease the facilities they own for the season of 1934. For this season, in addition to the sewer and street lighting systems owned by the Association, there will be added the operation of the water supply system, collection of garbage and rubbish, maintenance of roads, tennis courts and children's playground. This year, for the first time, the operation of Van Buren Point will be under the exclusive control and supervision of this Association of property owners. The successful operation now rests upon the Board of Directors and they are in duty bound to comply with the instructions of the majority vote of the cottage owners as expressed in the Annual Meeting on July 4th every year. The only services not under control and supervision of the Directors are electricity and gas."



Van Buren Point, N.Y. 7/17-34.

Friend English;

I am returning your general letter with a checked charge against me for \$5.00 for one to be returned to me clean, as I have never paid; and never will pay for an outside water connection when I am not using a hose. At this writing we cannot use our shower bath in the kitchen, or get hot water at our sink, and at times no cold water when we want it, and if the Association expect me to pay \$20 for a service I have no use of, when we are compelled to forget we have an expensive bath room on the second floor during July & August, the directors all need their heads examined when you try to collect \$5.00 extra for the use of a sprinkling can for our flowers. This inadequate water supply & system has not been improved in the past 18 years, yet the charges have gone from \$5.00 to \$20.00. & the consumption has more than doubled in that time.

Several of your letters that have been shown me, and your notation on this one, indicate that you are afraid of Andrews to my great surprise, and I want to go on record right now, if he has you buffaloed, he has not scared me, and it is high time you are taking from your slogan, "All for one" as you must be aware of the fact we are not all for Andrews, from the letters you have had rebelling against this exorbitant charge.

The well kept appearance of our two summer homes should be a credit to any community, and I have paid promptly all assessments levied by the Association, including this years exorbitant water charge, and have a right to expect an unjust charge against me promptly canceled.

Yours very truly

This anonymous letter illustrates "growing pains" residents had during this time.

A reading of the minutes and old correspondence reveals that during the early years of the Association many contributions of time and effort were made by some of the dedicated property owners who served as officers, directors and on committees. We who enjoy the pleasures and privileges of the Point today owe a great debt of gratitude to those who were instrumental in guiding the affairs through what must have been most difficult and trying circumstances. These were, after all, the lean years of The Great Depression. Cottage owners found it difficult to make ends meet. Some, unable to secure rentals for their cottages, cut short their own stays at Van Buren and were miffed to have to pay the full seasonal fees. Many were thoroughly confused by the new system of management and were hard pressed to understand why they paid fees to the Association, when in the past they had more conveniently made their own arrangements with Mr. Andrews directly. Others were simply confused about the role of the Association and their status as members within it.

Original assessment of 1927-28 .....	\$40
Assessment of 1929-30 .....	\$15
Assessment of 1932 .....	\$10
Water and Garbage collection services 1934 .....	\$35
Extra for Outside Water Connection for 1934 .....	\$5

It was Mr. English's task, as secretary/treasurer, to inform cottage owners of the new management arrangement, and also to appeal to them for collection of both current and delinquent dues. In 1934, Mr. English was still attempting to recover dues outstanding since the inception of the Association in 1927. Then, as sometimes happens today, cottage transfers could lead to a dispute about who should pay the Association dues—the new owner or the old.

May 14th. 1934.

My dear Mr. English:

Enclosed find check for Van Buren Point Assessment.

The "New Deal," for the dear old point, suits me in every respect which is more than I can say for another "New Deal," that we hear a lot about and, sometimes, wonder what it is all about.

Hoping you will have a longer, likewise happier, season at the point this year, I am cordially yours,

*Another example of typical correspondence revealing the complexity of work involved in building the foundation of the Van Buren that we have today.*



Most cottage owners, old and new, paid up, but along with their checks they sent long letters full of questions and opinion about how the affairs of the Point should be managed.

Excerpts from one of Mr. English's letters to a cottage owner—explaining why the newly formed "Association" continues to do business with Mr. Andrews—reveals some interesting details about how and why the association was formed.

My Dear Mrs. ,

As to your letter — it expresses my own feelings exactly. Permit me however to correct what I think is an error; and if any persons to whom you have already talked or may talk to in the future, have the same idea, I will esteem it a favor if you will set them right on it. None of the directors WERE or ARE NOW satisfied that the \$25 fee we pay to Mr. Andrews is the right sum. WE feel that it should be less. What you seem to overlook is that you nor any of other owner has any escape AT THE PRESENT TIME. The Directors of the Association did not have any instructions of any kind from the owners regrading Mr. Andrews and his rates. All of us have had to pay Mr. Andrews charges whether we liked same or not. The only alternative was for enough owners to come forward and pay in money to construct a new water system as we did the sewer system in 1927 when Mr. Andrews abandoned it when the State Health Department got after him for unsanitary sewer conditions. Same thing happened last year when [an owner] complained to the Public Service Commission about the gas business. Mr. Andrews abandoned the Gas Pipes and our poor Association, dubbing along for seven years dunning and pestering the owners for \$15 each since 1929 and \$10 each since 1932 was again helpless. I appreciate your interest, but frankly what is the use of you or me even talking about buying or constructing gas or water systems when we cannot get the owners to pay the very small sum of \$25 over a period of seven years to operate and maintain a sanitary sewer system?"

Mr. English's memo continued on in elegant fashion for another 3 and a half pages covering further details about the Association's obligation to the Health Department, about how paying assessments on time would allow the Association to take over the water as they had the sewer pipes, about how the water money should not be spent on the tennis courts and about how the big difference between working with Andrews before and working with the Association now is that "we must account for the money and show where it was and how it was spent and no one connected with the Association gets any pay or profit from the Association. (This last statement and all others in this letter is no complaint or criticism of Mr. Andrews)...".

When Mr. English retired from his post as secretary in September of 1936, a special resolution was passed to express the membership's "deep appreciation of the splendid services rendered by him to the association for seven years as secretary and treasurer."

# Van Buren Point Management Corporation Formed



**VAN BUREN POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION**  
**VAN BUREN POINT - - - - NEW YORK**

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**WALTER J. BRAGDON, President** - - - - -

**ARTHUR R. MAYTUM, Treasurer**

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*Letterhead from the 1940s.*



hroughout the late 30s, and into the early 40s, the Van Buren Point Association continued to contract for services with the Andrews interests who owned most of the vacant land, a number of cottages, the water supply system, roads and beaches. After the death of A.J. Andrews, his son succeeded in his ownership. The late war threatened to take the younger Andrews to the armed forces and away from the Point, and the possibility of a sale of the property to a real estate agent who might exploit it, concerned a group of cottage owners who formed the Van Buren Point Management Corporation to protect their own property and that of their neighbors. Stock was issued and subscribed to by the following cottage owners: John Bennett, Dorothy Bennett, Walter Bragdon, Robert Dalzell, Eleanor Ewing, George Ellis Jones, A.H. Keetch, H.B. Kirkpatrick, Fred Larsen, Arthur Maytem, Arch Milligan, A.W. Piehl. George Prendergast, C.O. Sellman, David Sidey and Walter Singley. When the Andrews family declared their intention of selling their interests at Van Buren, the Corporation purchased their entire interest in the Point in 1942.

The Corporation was concerned with improving services to current residents, and with preserving the character of the Point as they knew it while at the same time encouraging development. The officers of the corporation took up where Andrews had left off in the early 1900s, launching a marketing campaign that they hoped would result in the sale and rental of Corporation owned cottages. No dividends were paid to individual stockholders during this time. Any profit instead, was reinvested in the interest and betterment of the Point.

The water supply system which was constructed by the Andrews Land Company prior to 1918 became a principal asset of the new Corporation, one that was prominently featured in their marketing brochures. Over the years, replacements had been made to the system. A gas engine to drive pumps was replaced by electric motors, two wooden tanks were replaced by the present steel tank, pumps and piping replaced when necessary because of wear and corrosion. However, throughout most of 1940s, the water was not suitable for drinking and the cottage owners and renters were obliged to obtain drinking water in jugs from the Dunkirk water supply at the gas station outside the Point. In 1947 the Management Corporation installed a water purification system. A Graver reaction tank and rapid sand filter was installed, with a necessary clear well and equipment for proper treatment of water to meet the requirements of the New York State Department of Health. Cottage owners could finally avoid the necessity of hauling drinking water into the Point.



A letter from Mr. Robert Maytum, President of the Chamber of Commerce, Fredonia, is so timely and of such general interest that it is reprinted herewith for your information.

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**  
FREDONIA, NEW YORK

June 11, 1942

Walter J. Bragdon, President,  
Van Buren Point Association,  
Van Buren Point, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Bragdon:

The vacation season for 1942 is at hand and with the tire shortage and gas rationing many of the vacationers at the Point will no doubt be without cars this year.

Arrangements have been made to have a bus schedule to Van Buren Point from Fredonia in connection with the West Ridge System. Donald C. Topliffe will operate this service.

The Retail Trade Committee of the Chamber of Commerce co-operating with Mr. Topliffe will run a special shoppers trip every morning from the Point to Fredonia and return free of charge.

Special Passes will be issued, one to a cottage, for the 1942 season. Any suggestions that you may have on this service will be greatly appreciated.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT MAYTUM

President

WILLIAM G. OGILVIE

Secretary

The store opened June 15th. Ice, milk and the usual trade services are available. Consistent with the war economy, every effort has been made to assure your convenience.

*In the midst of World War II, area officials assisted in ways to make vacationing at the Point inviting.*



Park Side 220 Central Ave.



Silver Birches 137 Park Blvd.



Bide-A-Wee—13 Lakeside Blvd.



Twin View Lot A, Lakeside Blvd.

## VAN BUREN POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

### VAN BUREN POINT - - - NEW YORK

**TWIN VIEW**—A large lake front cottage located to have a fine view of the lake and also of the bay. Large living room, dining room, kitchen, bath with tub, screened front and back porches, on first floor. Five bed rooms with six double beds on second floor. Completely sealed and painted.

**CREST VIEW**—Lake front cottage near Pulpit Rock. Living room, dining room, kitchen, bath with shower, front porch, on first floor. Three bed rooms with four double beds on second floor.

**BIDE-A-WEE**—Lake front cottage. Large living room with plate glass window overlooking the lake. Screened dining porch, kitchen, bath with tub, screened rear porch, on first floor. Four bed rooms with four double beds on second floor.

**EEEE**—On a woodland street less than a block from the lake. Living room, kitchen, dining alcove, bath with shower, on first floor. Four bed rooms with four double beds on second floor.

**HARMONY**—Facing the Park, about a square from the lake. Living room, screened dining porch, kitchen, bath with shower, screened rear porch, front porch, on first floor. Four bed rooms with four double beds on second floor.

**PARK SIDE**—Facing the Park, about a square from the lake. Living room, screened dining porch, kitchen, bath with tub, screened rear porch, front porch, on first floor. Three bed rooms with three double beds on second floor.

**CHIRUP**—A bungalow type on a quiet street near the Bay. Large living room, three bed rooms with three double beds, kitchen, bath with tub, screened rear dining porch and screened front porch.

**SILVER BIRCHES**—A big cottage with large well kept lawn a block from the lake. Large living room furnished in maple, open fire place, kitchen, screened dining porch, front porch, one bed room with double bed, on first floor. Large bed room with two double beds, two bed rooms with one double bed each, bath with tub, on second floor.

**LAKESIDE**—Lake front cottage, bungalow type. Large living room with open fireplace, full width glass enclosed front porch facing lake, dining room, kitchen and rear porch. Three bed rooms with three double beds. Bath room with shower. Cottage is lined and sealed throughout.



Lakeside 15 Lakeside Blvd.

All the cottages described have electricity, hot and cold running water, natural gas for cooking, electric refrigerators. Well furnished, beds are good. Furnishings complete except bedding, linen and silver. Rental includes gas, electricity, water rent, and garbage collection. There is a well stocked store on the grounds, milk is delivered to the cottage. Fine bathing beaches, good fishing boats with, or without, outboard motors available at reasonable rates, tennis courts. An excellent golf course a mile away where the usual arrangements may be made.

Rental periods begin Saturday at 4:00 P. M. and end on Saturday noon. Cottages are clean and ready for occupancy and tenants must leave them clean and ready for the following tenants.



Harmony 217 Central Ave.



Chirup 287 Park Blvd.



EEEE—176 Cottage Ave.



Crest View 6 Lakeside Blvd.

*This was part of the marketing campaign the Corporation hoped would result in the sale and rental of Corporation owned cottages.*



## PURE FILTERED WATER FOR VAN BUREN POINT ...

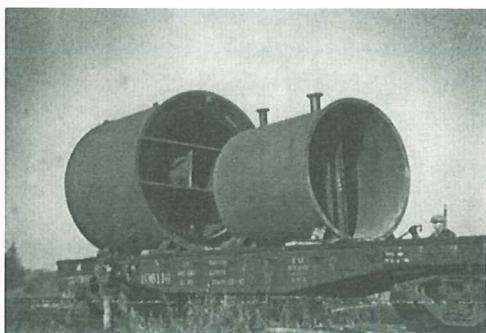
and at no extra cost to the cottage owners. No high taxes for years to come to pay for an expensive public water district system. The Management Corporation has provided this improved water service at their own expense. If you want details, here they are:

For some years the water furnished to cottages at Van Buren Point has been chlorinated and carefully tested to assure safety. In 1944-45 our engineers, Fretts and Senior prepared plans for a water treating and filtering plant but war time and post war time conditions prevented the installation until late 1946. This modern plant approved by the New York State Department of Health and constructed by Graver Manufacturing Company of East Chicago, Indiana, is now in operation.

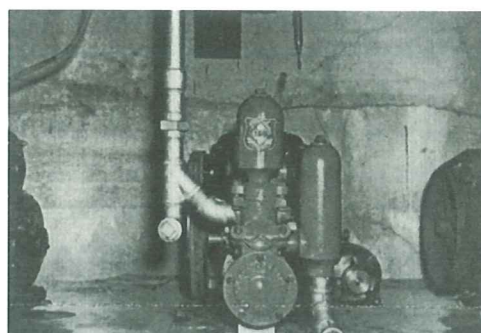
The pump inlets are well out in the lake and tests indicate the lake water at this point to be free from pollution. Water is delivered to the filter plant where it is chlorinated, treated and passes through the various passages of the reaction tank and to the filter and clearwell and is then pumped into an elevated tank for distribution through approximately two miles of pipe lines to the cottages.

Daily tests are made to check chlorine content. A weekly bacteriological test is made by the Chautauqua County Laboratory at the Brooks Hospital and frequent independent tests are made by the New York State Department of Health who also receive a report of all tests. This modern equipment, careful control and adequate tests assure you an ample supply of pure water.

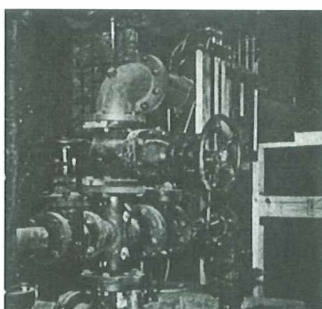
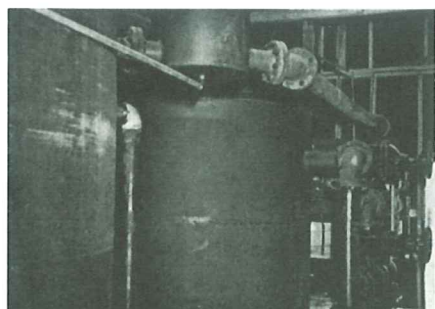
Your cooperation is requested to avoid waste. Excessive consumption through faulty fixtures and valves and wasteful methods should be avoided. Excessive demand per cottage will result in metering which we hope to avoid.



Two units of the filter equipment arrived in Dunkirk, October, 1946.



Three identical pumping units deliver lake water to the Filter Plant.



*Another facet of the marketing campaign the Corporation hoped would ease the worries of unsanitary water conditions at the Point.*

Except for a period of approximately four years between 1945 and 1949, when the Board of Directors of the Association decided to conduct the maintenance operations of the Point, the Management Corporation supervised the operations on terms similar to those prevailing when the Andrews interests held the property. During these years the active supervision of the maintenance functions was undertaken by Walter F. Bragdon who was President of the Management Corporation.

Upon Bragdon's death in 1958 the contract work for the Association was carried out by various individuals responsible to the Management Corporation Board of Directors, who in 1959 decided that the Corporation should dispose of all of its properties and cease operation. The stockholders of Van Buren Management Corporation had always intended that the Point be protected from commercial exploitation and that the tradition of the Point as a family summer resort be preserved. Accordingly, negotiations were begun with the directors of Van Buren Point Association of which T. C. Fockler was then President, to determine the feasibility of the Association's acquiring the outstanding stock of the Corporation and thereby all the property holdings at the Point. An agreement was eventually reached and subsequently approved by the cottage owners. Under date of September 3, 1960, the Association agreed to purchase all the outstanding stock of the Corporation for a total price of \$40,000 payable over five years without interest. This transaction in effect transferred ownership of all the Management Corporation holdings, including the water plant, roads and beaches, to the Association, except for eight cottages owned by the Corporation and the piece of vacant property which lies between the present police house at the gate on Central Avenue and Route 5. However, on August 30, 1962, the cottage owners approved an agreement to purchase this latter piece of property for \$8,000 payment to be made when the payments of the previous agreement had been made. All of these payments were made on schedule by 1966 by means of a \$50 a year assessment on each cottage. As a result of these transactions, all the property within the confines of Van Buren Point Association, Inc. is now owned by the individual cottage owners or by the Van Buren Point Association, Inc. Following the completion of the schedule of payments, the need for maintaining the corporate entity of Van Buren Management Corporation ceased and the corporation status was formally dissolved as of January 1, 1968.

To give you a glimpse of summers at Van Buren at this time, June Nyblade reminisces about her girlhood which spanned the years just prior to, and including the beginning of the Van Buren Point Management Corporation, which her father, Walter Singley helped form:

"Each summer on Memorial Day, we came to Van Buren from Pittsburgh. Dad would go back and forth to his dental practice in Wilkinsburg, coming every other weekend and for his two weeks' vacation the end of August. Mother, my sister Jean and I stayed through the summer until Labor Day. Those were the days of one automobile per family. Shopping was done when Dad came. Most of the time we depended on the little store at the pavilion, or Andy's store on Route 5, or the farmers that would drive by with their produce. Before the meadow was mowed in June, we would pick wild strawberries there. Norman Boorady delivered the daily papers. Milk was delivered by Mr. Briggs and ice was delivered twice a week. We'd stand in awe as the ice man swung the blocks of ice with his tongs, and wondered where the ice came from in the middle of the summer. We hauled drinking water from the tap of Dunkirk city water outside Andy's and spent our treat money for Fudgecicles, eating eagerly to see if "free" was printed on the stick...

We were lucky enough to have the stable at the top of our road, or at least we girls thought so. When Daddy came on weekends we could ride the ponies, 25 cents a half hour. At first only one pony was rented. Jean and I had to take turns while either Mother or Dad helped to hold the lead strap. Later we each got to have a pony to ride and our parents released us to independent cowgirlhood. Our favorite haunt, back in those days, was the stable yard, where we hoped we'd slide down the haystack and beg to curry the horses, hoping we'd get a free ride for our efforts. Mother complained that we always smelled like horses. During the weekdays we contented ourselves with imaginary horses, made of long forked branches, to which Mother fastened a string bridle and reins. We galloped all over the Point. Mr. Brown at the pavilion store, never failed to inquire about the health of our horses. The



stables were moved later to near Andy's store, where we graduated to riding horses. Occasional hay rides or trail rides were arranged by the Frosts, but the joys I remember most are riding through Van Buren Point, clip-clopping along, posting in our best style. The final thrill of the ride was cantering down South Road—the Woods Road, as we called it...

The 'woodcutter' was the mystery man of our childhood. His real name was Stickney. He often passed by, pushing a two-wheeled cart full of pieces of wood, or carrying a driftwood log on his shoulder. Tipping his battered hat he'd give us a toothless greeting. Where did he live? Where was he going? I wonder we never got up the courage enough to ask him. If he passed by when Mother was working in the yard he would stop to chat. One summer when I was plagued with all sorts of warts on my hands and we had tried all sorts of remedies, Mother told him about it. His remedy was to cut a raw potato in two, rub the pieces over my warts and then plant the potatoes under a tree. Did he have tongue in cheek when he told Mother that? I can't recall that we actually tried his remedy, but the warts eventually went away.

Although we carried Dunkirk city water from Andy's store (which he provided for us free of charge), the balance of our water came from Mr. Andrews water system. The pump house, with pipes extending into the lake, was at the right of way at the foot of Grove Ave. When Mr. Andrews' estate was settled and the Van Buren Corporation bought his holdings here, they upgraded the system with a water filtering plant and a new tank, making the water potable.

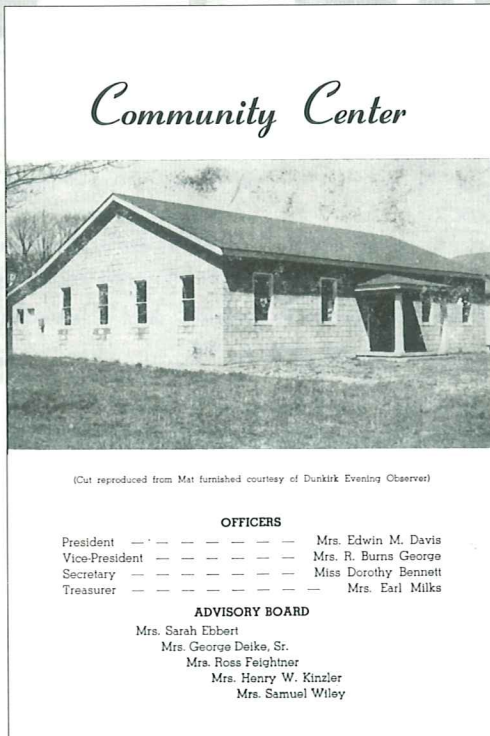
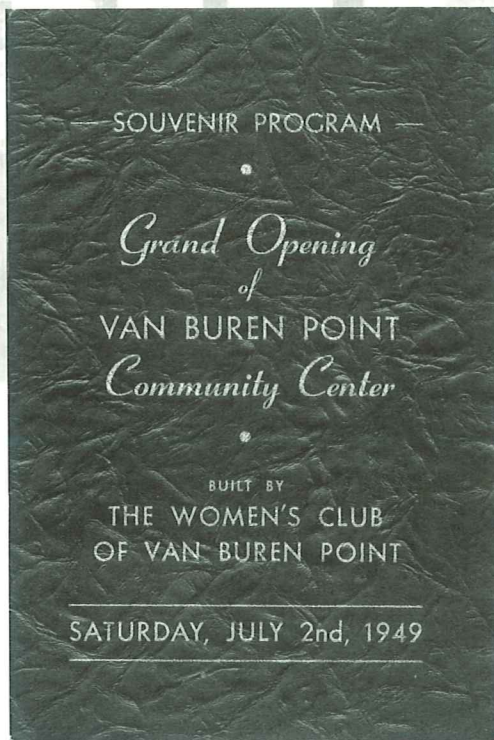
In our teens, the tennis courts were the center of our social life. Hardly any girls played and the boys were much better than we were. We would sit and wait, what seemed hours, for the court. Then swallowing our pride and ignoring the snide remarks of the boys, we took our turn for half an hour. Eventually we improved enough so the boys would let us play doubles with them. We often sat watching the exciting matches of the adult players. A few of those I remember were Dr. George and Henrietta Jones and their son, George, several Kirkpatrick's, Grahams, Cogbills, Mr. Keetch and Jim McKinley.

One year during the war when laborers were scarce, a troupe of girl scouts rented the cottage. They went out each morning to pick beans for a local farmer. Jean and I joined them thinking we would get rich. What we got was "rump sprung", with muscles so sore we could barely get out of bed the next morning. I stuck with it for a week and discovered how quick and diligent one must be, to be a farm laborer to make even a meager wage. My other wage earning opportunity was baby sitting for Lois, Joe Jr. and John Reiser..."



*June and Jean Nyblade would ride ponies on weekends in the 1930s.*

# Women's Club of Van Buren Point Formed



In 1939, at the instigation of the women of the Point, the Association purchased the two lots on which the Community Center now stands from the Andrews interest. This property also included the land on which the tennis courts and playground are currently located. The cost was \$750, all of which was contributed by the women. The Women's Club of Van Buren Point was officially formed in November 1945 at a meeting in the Congress of Clubs in Pittsburgh with the stated purpose of "raising funds to build a Community House and create sociability among cottage owners of Van Buren Point". Officers elected at that meeting were Mrs. Ross Feightner, Mrs. Azor Massey, Miss Dorothy Bennett and Mrs. H.M. Kinzler.

In 1947 the construction of the Community Center began, financed by a contribution of \$3,000 from the Women's Club and a mortgage loan from two cottage owners at four percent interest. The building was completed at a cost of approximately \$9,800. Gust Goeddel, who died in 1967, was the designer of the Community Center and supervised its construction. His work was acknowledged in the Grand Opening Souvenir Program dated July 2, 1949 and acclaimed at the meeting of the Women's Club of Van Buren Point held July 1, 1949.



## WHAT WAS 1949 LIKE?

Betty Craig, speaking at the 40th anniversary celebration of the Community Center in July, 1989, recalls:

"Drake's was serving regular dinners for 85 cents and a 1949 Super Buick sold for \$2095 completely equipped. A ball bearing lawn mower could be had for \$16.95 and Foit's restaurant in Silver Creek, the White Inn and Hillview Golf Course were popular then as they are now. The Van Buren Drive-in Theater opened the same weekend that the Community Center was dedicated."

Payments of principal and interest on the Community Center were completed in 1953, as a result of annual contributions made to the Association by the Women's Club. During these years, many of the women held bridge parties during the winter as fund raisers to generate donations for the Community Center project. When the mortgage was paid, the Women's Club of Van Buren Point voted to present the title to the Van Buren Point Association, which now maintains the exterior of the building and assumes responsibility for insurance, taxes and utilities.

Since it was built, the Community Center has been a focal point of activities of all kinds, sponsored by the Women's Club which has as its focus social and recreational activities in cooperation with the Van Buren Point Association; ... [and] any other projects that may be advisable, especially those pertaining to activities for children and youth (Women's Club By Laws, 1998).

TEL. FREDONIA 2-4768

# Van Buren

Drive-in THEATRE

\*\*\*\*ROUTE 5 FREDONIA, N. Y. \*\*\*\*

SUN. - MON. - TUE. July 5-6-7th

WGM-JOSEPH E. LEVINE PRESENT  
**KIM NOVAK JAMES GARNER TONY RANDAL**  
IN A MARTIN RANSOFF PRODUCTION  
**BOYS' NIGHT OUT**  
STARRING JANET BLAIR PATTI PAGE  
JESSIE ROYCE LANDIS OSCAR HOMOLKA  
HOWARD DUFF  
MUSIC BY IRA WALLACH  
A KIMCO FILMWAYS PICTURE - MGM  
CINEMASCOPE & METROCOLOR

AND  
MARTIN H. POLL presents  
**Glen Ford Hope Lange Charles Boyer**  
Released thru UNITED ARTISTS  
**"Love is a Ball"**  
TECHNICOLOR PANAVISION CARTOON

WED. - THUR. - FRI. - SAT. July 8-9-10-11th

**GREGORY PECK TONY CURTIS**  
in the hilarious, heartwarming adventures of  
**"Captain Newman"**  
in Eastman COLOR  
CO-STARING NGIE DICKINSON BOBBY DARIN  
A UNIVERSAL PICTURE  
CARTOON CARNIVAL

**PLUS**  
**The Vikings**  
KIRK DOUGLAS TONY CURTIS  
ERNEST BORGNINE  
in Technicolor  
A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

SUN. - MON. - TUE. July 12-13-14th

TRUE...TURBULENT...TREMENDOUS!  
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER PRESENTS THE NEW  
**MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY**  
FILMED IN ULTRA PANAVISION 70" - TECHNICOLOR  
CARTOON CARNIVAL

WED. - THUR. - FRI. - SAT. July 15-16-17-18th

An Emotional Experience You Will Never Forget  
Adults Only! Wondrous  
**Birth of Triplets**  
See The Actual  
UNCENSORED! UNCUT!  
Spectacular COLOR!  
SO POWERFUL MANY WILL FAINT!  
A DRAMATIC THUNDERBOLT!  
Shocking beyond Description!  
The Young Struck  
So Powerful It Stuns The Senses!  
All-Star Hollywood Cast  
Daring Beyond Description  
See this great educational picture in the privacy of your car.  
DUE TO THE ADULT SUBJECT MATTER OF THIS PROGRAM NO ONE UNDER 16 ADMITTED!

PLUS 3rd. FEATURE "HE RIDES TALL"

SUN. - MON. - TUE. July 19-20-21st

THE GREATEST DOUBLE FUN AND LOVE SHOW EVER!

**ROCK HUDSON DORIS DAY**  
**Pillow Talk**  
CO-STARING TONY RANDALL THEMA RITTER  
A UNIVERSAL Re-Release  
CINEMASCOPE in Eastman COLOR

**CARY GRANT TONY CURTIS**  
**Operation Petticoat**  
in Eastman COLOR - A UNIVERSAL Re-Release

Along with the Community Center, the Van Buren Drive-in opened in 1949. This is a sampling of the theater's entertainment offered around 1964.



At the 40th anniversary celebration of the Community Center in 1989, Helen King, a past president of the Club, recalled:

"The Friday evening square dance was looked forward to by everyone—young and old alike. This provided pleasure to participants and watchers. With this event I think of the Keetch's. Card parties on Wednesdays provided a social function during the week, but the beaches and swimming became a greater priority for younger women, so the Wednesday card parties have not been held for some time.

Do you remember Cease's catered dinners? Cease's brought out large Bar-b-que pits and set them up outside of the Community Center. Chicken was bar-b-que'd on these, and in addition, potato salad, fruit and other delicious Cease specialties were served. Tickets were sold for \$2.50. Card tables were set up in the playground to the back and between 250-300 people were served. One year, a Hawaiian luau was the theme. People who wished to, dressed in colorful Hawaiian mu-mus and shirts. Another had a Broadway Vaudeville theme. Les Reed wore a red and white striped jacket, straw hat and played the piano at the back porch featuring popular dance band tunes.

Another pleasant memory is the roaring twenties dances. These were scheduled when Jimmie Bennett, Ray Bennett's brother and a professional pianist, came to town and placed a metal bar in the piano, giving a delightful honkey tonk piano sound. Again, people came in costume, adding atmosphere and providing a lot of fun. The Cogbills, Libby and Mac, Marge and Russ Batchelor had old fashioned bathing suits. Don Boening had a raccoon coat. Some ladies wore fringed straight line dresses. Mine was red satin with black fringe. John danced the Charleston with Ray Bennett's wife. Mr. Burgett provided the popcorn which we got at the movie theater and we had peanuts and soft drinks. Everyone had fun.

Other special programs were fashion shows with Van Buren Point models, even men and children. Stores that provided the clothes were *Town and Country*—Mr. Burgett and Mr. Frey, and *Ricci's Boutique*—the owner of this shop was Mrs. Jeffries and Marge Valone's sister.



Young men in the 1950s "hung out" at the Van Buren Post Office next to the Community Center.



Mamie Feightner, Hilda Lerhner, the Laymans, Iris, Lori, Rick and Jeff, Russ Batchelor, and Mac Cogbill were some of the models. Joni McCann's mother was commentator.

Harriet Woodcock and her one-star playhouse, a well known Pittsburgh area performer, came to the Point. The shows she presented were *The Sound of Music* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. She told the story and sang the songs wearing a costume appropriate for the show. Tickets were sold and refreshments were served.

Flea markets were held each year as a major Women's Club money making project... Pet shows—can you imagine a pet show being held in the Community Center? Yes. We had an audience, show ring and judges. *Ken-L-Ration* provided small trophies for the lucky winner, Mrs. Marian Evashwick, head of the Western Pennsylvania Kennel Association, and Jayne Reed were in charge. The room was alive with many happy children and their pets. The categories were interesting: shortest tail etc. and would you believe, not one fight!

Funds were added to the Women's Club treasury by the sale of sweatshirts and jackets. Ginny Edwards, Bee Richards and Todd Alexander, Mrs. Wherry's son-in-law, were contributing helpers.

In 1976, Van Buren Point celebrated the bicentennial with the rest of the country. I brought up decorations for the building...Joanne Greta, the Swick's daughter, sang the Star Spangled Banner as the flag was raised. Thus began the Bicentennial year celebration here. That year it was the Van Buren Women's Club turn to entertain the Greencrest women at a luncheon. The program was presented by some Van Buren children. It was a playlet called *Woof for the Red, White and Blue*. The Layman children and John McGraw's nieces were the actors and actresses. This little theater attempt was very well received.

To explain about the luncheons—Margery Weissert lived in Greencrest. She organized her friends there for a luncheon at her home one year and we entertained them the next year. Women brought a favorite recipe in the form of a covered dish, Some of the Bay women would usually join us. For several years this was a tradition.

Sometimes, my living room would look like a candy store. I had boxes of candy which I purchased in Dunkirk. This candy was sold at Bingo along with pop which I brought down from Bob's store (Andy's). Each Tuesday about 60-70 people gathered for Bingo where pop and candy were sold. Every little bit of profit helped in building for the future at Van Buren Point. Scavenger hunts were held often on Wednesday evenings for the pleasure of the many young people. Story hour was each Thursday morning for the younger children. Dr. Humphries secured the services of the Coast Guard and several lessons in safe boating were given to interested young people in this building.

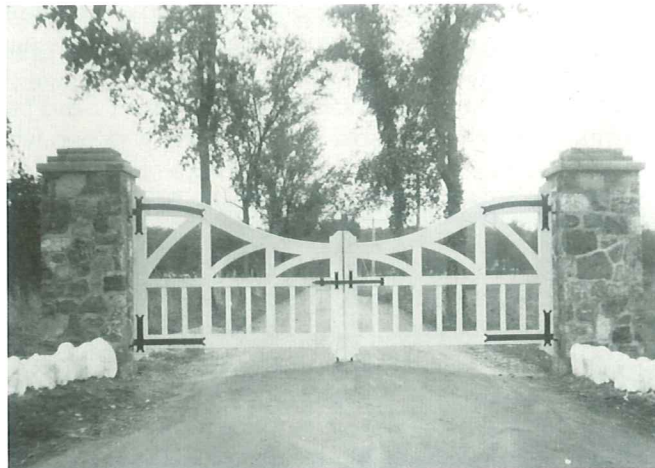
All of the people who shared in these activities looked upon this as a service of love—a love for Van Buren Point—our community. Yes, we worked, but by working together we got to know each other better, lasting friendships were formed and our goal was to make this community the desirable, relaxing family oriented vacation spot along the shores of Lake Erie”.



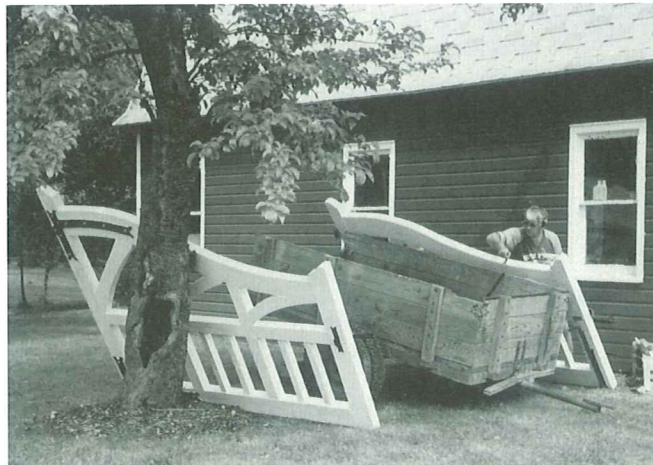
*Just outside the Point on Route 5, Andy's has been a welcome convenience since 1929. It became the area's Post Office in 1970. A fire, in late 1996, forced Bob Boorady to update the store.*

Many of these activities continue into the present, notably Tuesday night BINGO, the Ice Cream Social, the Covered Dish/Bar-b-que dinners, and of course, the 4th of July Bike Parade. We've enjoyed a renewed interest in dances recently: memorable evenings have included the Country Line Dance a few years ago, the "Disco Ball" dances, and last summer, Buffalo Swing. We've been blessed with music: concerts in the park or at the Community Center have been favorites, and have included many a Point resident or guest as performer. The Women's Club members are always ready to sponsor new activities and entertain new ideas. Cottage tours are now held biannually to give residents a legitimate chance to see the inside of their neighbor's cottages and fund raise at the same time. The Women's Club has also facilitated our enjoyment of professional theater at the newly refurbished 1891 Fredonia Opera House, by arranging for group tickets to summer stock shows there.

The Women's Club also assumes responsibility for maintaining the interior of the Community Center, playground equipment and, with the Association, helps maintain the tennis courts, the ballfield, basketball and volleyball courts. The women of every cottage-owner family are considered members—dues are now payable at \$5 per, up only recently from \$2, not much of an increase in fifty years. The Women's Club has also contributed funds to other needs in the area, including the Brocton Fire Department and Migrant Missions.



*Entrance Gates circa 1944.*



*Gates being refurbished in the 1990s.*



## The More Recent Past



s we review the more recent past, we note that certain topics of concern to our forebearers are regularly revisited. For example...

### THE SOURCE OF OUR WATER SUPPLY

No historical account of Van Buren Point would be complete without reference to the supply of water for domestic purposes. Previous reference has been made to the furnishing of water first by the Andrews interests and later by Van Buren Point Management Corporation. These sources of supply were not considered satisfactory by all cottage owners however. A reading of the minutes shows that as early as 1937 the cottage owners approved the appointment of a committee to meet with representatives of local municipal bodies and other interested parties in an endeavor to form a satisfactory water district. For reasons which the recorded minutes do not clearly explain, this effort never came to fruition. Again in 1938 the minutes indicate that a water district was actually approved by the Town of Portland but it appears this action was aborted because of legal action by certain persons. References in the minutes continue up through 1946 but no decisive actions are reported. Unfortunately, the impression is inescapable that the failure to complete plans for obtaining water from the City of Dunkirk during all these years was attributable to disagreements, apparently acrimonious at times, among certain of the cottage owners as to the procedures to be followed, and on the part of those who were furnishing the water supply, as to the need and desirability for forming a water district to obtain water from an outside source.

Subsequent to the acquisition of the property and assets of the Van Buren Point Management Corporation in 1960 the question of obtaining our water supply from Dunkirk was raised again. There now seemed to be unanimity of opinion that this would be extremely desirable. Diligent effort by the Board of Directors assisted by the Association's attorney seemed to augur success. In fact at the September 1962 cottage owners' meeting, the motion was carried unanimously that we should initiate a water district so that negotiations could be started with the City of Dunkirk for acquiring water service; also each cottage was assessed \$25 to construct the necessary installation facilities to hook-up with the Van Buren Bay Water District line at the corner of Lakeside and Orchard Avenues. Unfortunately at the July, 1963 meeting we were informed by our attorney that after approval by all the State and local boards, the Town of Pomfret refused to grant a temporary hook-up by refusing to act and without reason or explanation. Finally, in 1974 the Portland Water District No. 2 was formed and Dunkirk water was made available to the Point in August 1975. During the late 70s and early 80s, the Association reviewed, and the membership agreed, to turn the Van Buren Point sewer system over to the Portland-Pomfret Sewer District, which now assumes responsibility for its maintenance and repair.

### LOW WATER AND POLLUTION

Early residents of Van Buren Point touted the clarity and purity of Lake Erie waters surrounding them, the ideal wide bathing beaches and excellent fishing. From the *Van Buren Point Breeze*, published circa 1910, comes this telling description of fishing at Van Buren by Ralph J. Palmer:

"Van Buren Point is the best located place on Lake Erie for the various kinds of Lake fishing. Within a mile of the Point are the best fishing grounds known to the Lake. Many of you who believe you know all about the fishing grounds around Van Buren little realize that goodly catches of black bass can be had as near as a thousand feet directly off Pulpit Rock. Then in the shallower waters of the bay is a great place for sand pike, perch and pickerel."



*Low water benefited boaters and bathers with wide sandy beaches at the end of Park Avenue in the early 1960s.*

Unfortunately this bounty did not last. By the early 1960s, Lake Erie “died”. Slicks of dead fish, miles long, could be seen miles from shore. What happened? Low water and pollution. An excerpt from the *Dunkirk Evening Observer* dated July 1, 1964 describes the probable chain of events.

“Levels are down in all the Great Lakes, disastrously in Lake Huron and alarmingly in Lake Erie. Low lake levels mean less water and less water aggravates the pollution problem. Water is needed to dissolve pollution... Pollution affects Western New York in a special way because Lake Erie is the shallowest of the lakes. The volume of water in Lake Erie’s 10,000 square miles is relatively small compared to the other lakes. Because of those reasons, experts say Erie is the most heavily polluted of the lakes since it also has a high concentration of population and a watershed that serves many heavy industries. The major portion of water withdrawn from Lake Erie and all the lakes, is returned as sewage, either treated or untreated. It’s the untreated parts, of course, that are blamed for pollution.”

The rampant growth of algae and bacteria and the accompanying intolerable stench caused beach closings for weeks at Dunkirk, Van Buren Point and Van Buren Bay. More than half the cottage owners either put their cottages up for sale or did not open for the season. Faced with huge losses in shipping, power production, recreation, wildlife and human health, the Environmental Protection Agency began a strict enforcement program which prohibited dumping of industrial waste and untreated sewage into the Lake. Still, it took several decades for the Lake to recoup even a shadow of its former vibrancy.

The early 1990s saw a new threat to the Lake emerge in the form of stowaway zebra mussels on the sides of international vessels bringing goods through the St. Lawrence Seaway. These mussels propagated in alarming



numbers clogging water treatment filters and consuming food critical to larger forms of Lake fishlife. With no natural enemies, the zebras started to kill the fish. In the 1960s, local communities would have complained to themselves and worked independently. However, fully aware of the previous tragedy of the 60s, the United States and Canada immediately formed a joint commission to study the problem and brainstorm solutions. At the present time, the zebra mussels appear to have slowed their growth and Lake Erie, once again, is rebounding to new health. Yet, even in summer of 1998, a few Dunkirk beaches were closed because of high bacteria counts, a solemn reminder for all residents to be vigilant in efforts to keep the Lake as clean as possible for all to enjoy.

#### **HIGH WATER AND EROSION**

In 1972, less than 10 years following record low Lake levels and pollution, residents at Van Buren Point faced the opposite problem - high Lake water levels, erosion and the need for flood control. This problem was so prevalent in the Great Lakes that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers initiated a program of advance flood emergency measures to prevent flood damage due to high lake levels and potential wind conditions at selected locations on the shores of the Great Lakes, including Van Buren Point. Thanks to the diligent efforts of the Van Buren Point Association in cooperation with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Gabion Wall was constructed in 1973 to protect Lakeside Boulevard on the bay side of the Point. With revetment maintenance, this wall lasted more than 20 years, well beyond what even the Army Corps expected. The last several years, however, have seen the lake waters once again rise to record levels forcing residents to build expensive, unsightly, yet necessary concrete seawalls along the Point and into the Bay. The latest breach in the defenses came in 1997 when a large portion of the Gabion Wall started to collapse and threaten Lakeside Boulevard cottages. Thanks, once again, to dedicated residents, and the Army Corps, the wall has, once again, been reinforced.

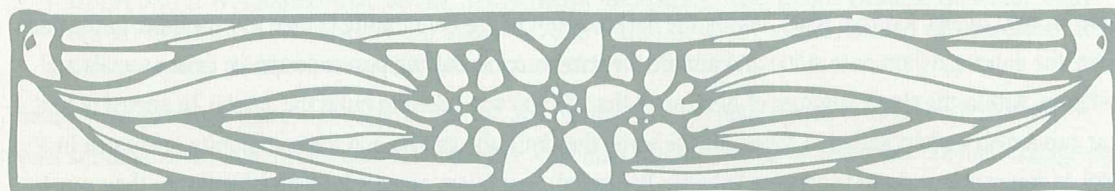
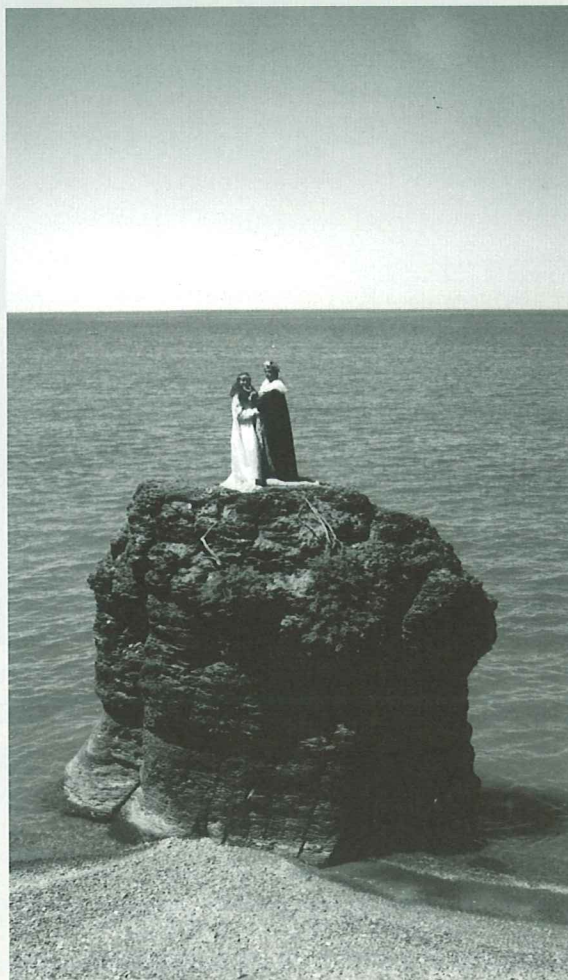
#### **VAN BUREN POINT : 1999 STYLE**

We may no longer enjoy the services of a daily milkman, the clip-clop of horses on the cottage paths or the sweet water of Mr. Planke. But we can buy flowers by the flat for close to nothing at Walmart, enjoy candlelight dinners at Fireside Manor and chicken wings and beef-onowack at the White Village. We can buy countless ice cream cones at Andy's or play endless rounds of golf at Hillview. Today the lifestyle at Van Buren Point varies as much as the current of the Lake.

An hour's walk at sunset is all it takes to sample life at the Point in 1999. In your wanderings, you leisurely stroll by the Community Center and stop and listen to the Van Buren Players practicing a play to commemorate the 50th and 125th anniversaries of the Community Center and the Point, respectively. You notice the newly landscaped front entrance to the Center, the new blue shutters and curtains and think to yourself "It's good to live in a community where folks still care about their surroundings and one another." From the back of the center, you hear childish shrills of delight and wander around to the playground, fondly remembering the dedication ceremony in 1992 to Mrs. Kathryn Wiley. Taking the back way out of the Community Center, you meander to the park where the dance pavilion once stood and admire the gazebo, remembering past concerts, ice cream socials and weddings. Within the single summer of 1988, more than \$8,000 was raised to build the gazebo. In August of that year, two Amish workers stayed at Tower cottage while they built the gazebo and the community celebrated in 1989. As you continue down windswept Lakeside Boulevard, doors slam on cars loaded with folks on their way to the White Inn for a special dinner, televisions blare from living rooms, and small groups gather in yards and on the street to exchange the latest gossip. You admire the last rays of the sun as they set on the Lake and head inland toward the calm of the playing fields. Before the fireflies make their nightly appearance, you stop and sit quietly at a bench in the Serenity Garden where a few last butterflies strain to draw nectar from the sweet bushes. Van Buren Point—1999 style.



As we look to the next century, we wonder what the future holds for Van Buren Point. Though the early 1980s saw a skirmish between the Association and non-payers similar to what our predecessors endured in the 1930s, in the 1990s we enjoy renewed interest in the Point in terms of cottage owners' financial support and enthusiastic participation as volunteers who manage Point business, plan social and recreational activities for others and participate happily in community events. Second, third and in some cases fourth generation families carry on traditions here that are hard to come by elsewhere. We hope that Anna Clift Smith would be pleased with how things have turned out. Recently, one of our friends returned after an absence of thirty years. Fearing that the Point "gone to condos," he was warned to find that the cottage his family had rented was still there, and nearly the same (though renovated) and that he could still locate the big rock in the lake by lining up the State Park with the two big trees in the front yard. The Point is still a magical place. May it be so forever.





### Additional Image Credits

Cover: Postcard postmarked 1907

Page 1: Photo taken early 1920s

Pgs 3, 4, 6, 14: Original sketches by Bob Farrell, 1998

Pgs 7-10: All illustrations and photographs  
from the booklet *Van Buren Point New York*.

Set 18 of fifty sets of proofs produced for  
Walter J. Bragdon of Pittsburgh Pa. 1942

Pg 15: Postcard circa 1920

Pg 30: Photo of *Andy's* taken in 1990

Pg 36: Photo taken during promotional set-up for the  
Arts Council for Chautauqua County, 1997

Back Cover: Image from back cover of promotional booklet  
*Van Buren Point On Lake Erie*





**THE VAN BUREN POINT SONG**  
(Sung to the tune of Auld Lang Syne)

- 1 ▪ We're at Van Buren Point once more,  
The jolly, lake-shore spot,  
We're at Van Buren Point once more,  
And sorrows are forgot.

**Chorus**

*We're here because we're here, my dear,  
We're here because we're here,  
We're here because we love to be,  
We're here because we're here.*

- 2 ▪ Our friendships here we hold most dear,  
The old ones and the new,  
So come with us and add good cheer,  
And we will love you too.

**Chorus**

- 3 ▪ The boating, swimming and such sports,  
We all do love to try,  
The old dance hall we'll not forget  
And tennis courts close by.

**Chorus**

- 4 ▪ The Pulpit Rock, the Willow Drive,  
The beach-fire's gentle glow,  
The bright sunset, the soft moonlight,  
We want you all to know.

**Chorus**