

Keego Harbor and Cass Lake

An arrival in Keego Cass today finds a flourishing suburban community, boasting a good sized church, a grade school, a high school, fire department, stores, post office, and of course, its many recreational centers in addition to the lake and all its pro. offers.

And delving into our community, we find, however, that it is a mere infant - in as much as thirty years ago this locality was a practically unpopulated area, but a beautiful site with its lakes and numerous kinds of native trees. It was about this time that a desire for summer cottages brought about the settlement here.

We find that Mr. J. E. Sawyer settled in this area ^{in 1912}, and built three cottages on Willow Beach. He occupied the center cottage, the daughter lived in one, and

the son in the other. There were at this time about fifteen other cottages on the shore of Cass Lake owned and occupied ~~by people~~ ^{in the summer} ~~by~~ people from Pontiac and Detroit. Mr. Sawyer developed the land in what is now known as Cass Lake subdivision, and christened it the "Park". This was a wooded area containing at least twenty varieties of native trees. He then converted Dollar Lake into a harbor by constructing a canal which connected it with Cass Lake, and named it Keego Harbor, Keego being the name of a slender fish.

After selling several parcels of land of five acres or less, Sawyer platted all of his remaining land south of the gravel

road, now known as Orchard³
Lake Highway, and gave it the
name of Keegs Harbor Subdivision.
Every purchaser of a lot in Cass
Lake or Keegs Harbor was given
rights in common which gave
access to Cass Lake with its
splendid boating, fishing and
bathing privileges in summer
and fishing, skating and ice-
boating in winter.

Cass Lake, largest of Oakland
County's 400 lakes, requires zero
weather to freeze over. As
colder weather approaches, and
smaller lakes are enveloped with
ice, the waves of Cass Lake
keep open water in many
portions of its surface. This
winter ^{year} it was completely frozen
over for the first time on the

morning of the first sub-zero
weather, December 15th. This
beautiful body of water is
claimed to be the largest inland
lake in southern Michigan and
so far no one has challenged
its claim. Cass Lake covers
an area of 1200 acres and is
located in West Bloomfield
township, two of its numerous
ays extending into Waterford
township. It is nearly three
miles long and one and a half
miles wide. Its irregular
shore line makes the total
distance around it 15 miles.
While Cass Lake may not abound
in Indian lore, has only one
or two small islands, and not
the high banks of Orchard Lake,
its size makes it stand out

in a country of lakes. 5

The communities, settlements and scattered homes on its vast contour brings the total population contiguous to Cass Lake's shores close to 10,000. One of the most popular of the state parks is on its north shore.

Cass Lake furnishes a variety of sports. In the summer there is bathing and swimming. (Cass has an exceptionally fine sandy beach) boating, fishing and yachting. In the winter - skating, ice boating, and fishing through the ice. Muskrat are trapped on its numerous bays and inlets.

Orchard Lake Road is a section of the old Indian trail that led from Mt. Clemens to Orchard Lake and from there to the southwest.

This, probably more than any 6.
other highway in the country, follows the original Algonquin route of travel toward the southwest. Its importance was early recognized for in 1828, a territorial act was passed which provided for the establishment of a highway to follow the trail, commencing at the bridge over the Chnton river in Pontiac and running along the shores of Cass, Pine, Orchard, and Walled lakes to Ann Arbor. It was along this highway the Pontiac, chief of the Algonquin Indians lead his band to his retreat on Apple Island in Orchard Lake. Pontiac trod his highway - Pontiac, who was born in 1715,

was brilliant, crafty and powerful Indian chief. He planned a concerted attack on all the English forts and settlements in this vast area on the same day. The attack was planned for a day in May 1763 - Pontiac himself leading the attack on Detroit. Most of the attacks succeeded - the entire garrison at Fort Mackinaw being massacred - but the fort at Detroit was too strong. It was then that he led his band of warriors to his retreat in Orchard Lake. His power was broken, and he followed the Indian trail westward to the Mississippi River where, six years later, he was murdered by a treacherous Indian. The Country-side Improvement Association

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raised funds for a suitable bronze marker which was placed in a large boulder at Commerce and Shore roads in 1916. What difference would it have made in our community if Pontiac had won his conspiracy?

Our church and our school are situated in Evergreen Villa which is really a part of this community. This subdivision is bounded by Orchard Lake Road, Cass Lake Road and the old street car route. This area included "The Pines" - 97 acres sold to John¹⁸²⁵ Beach by the government in 1825. This land changed owners several times. In 1858 it was purchased by Byron G. Stout for \$4500. Some of the Stout heirs still own portions of this subdivision. A grandson of

Byron Stout now lives in the house on the corner of Orchard Lake Road and Stout Street. This house was an old farmhouse and is over a hundred years old. It was Olivia P. Stout who gave use of a tract of this land to the Pontiac and Sylvan Lake Railway Company for purposes of an electric railway, extending from the city of Pontiac to the southerly side of Orchard Lake. This strip was 33 ft. wide and extended the entire length of the Stout property. The following stipulations were made, - "The electric lines shall be built and in operation from Pontiac to Orchard Lake by the 31st day of July 1898. And in default of any of the conditions

or if the land be abandoned for ^{the} purposes stated above, this conveyance shall be void and the land herein conveyed shall revert to the grantor, her heirs or assigns."

The very heart of our community is its church - as the lives of many here are punctuated by its functions. Altho it is a Methodist Church, it has also served as a community church, and we find adherents of other faiths have taken interest, given support, and sent their children to its Sunday School.

The church had its beginning in 1917, when Rev. Ward was invited to conduct services for a small group. Previous to this time a Sunday school had been meeting in the Keego

Harbor School. Rev. Ward con¹⁰_B
tinued to direct the work for
five years, during which time
the group increased rapidly
in numbers.

Trinity Methodist Church was
~~formally~~ formally organized in
May 1922 with Rev. Emerald
Dixon as acting minister.

The Ladies Aid Society has
been outstanding. Organized
in 1922, they celebrated their
twentieth anniversary two years
ago, and we note that quite
a number of original members
participated. It was in 1923
that the Ladies Aid began
to raise funds for a church
building. They called on the
men to erect a building on
the corner of Cass Lake Road
and Hickory Drive for the

purpose of serving Saturday ^H
night suppers to summer people
and those of the community.
During that summer, they raised
over \$500 by serving suppers,
and by raising funds by other means.
This money purchased the site
for the church.

In 1927 the church building
was erected, the first sod was
turned August 7th, the corner
stone laid September 4th and
a formal dedication on November
27. This was a day of rejoicing
- crowds filled the building
at its three services.

The church structure is
approximately 35 by 70 ft - with
two floor levels. Upstairs is the
auditorium used for services
and social meetings and avail-
able for banquets

The basement of the church ¹²
contains the kitchen (connected with
the auditorium by a dumb waiter)
and several small rooms used
for Sunday School classes.

The enterprise cost \$8150, over
half of which was raised before
dedication - only \$3000 remaining
to be paid. In addition, the
new building received gifts of a
new set of pulpit chairs, offering
plates, a communion table, a
rug for the pulpit platform,
a piano lamp, and a set of
hymn books.

In 1934 came the victorious
day when the mortgage was
paid cancelling all the indebted-
ness. Rev. Ward was given the
honor of burning the mortgage.
Upon concluding, he was presented
with the chromium plate and

candlestick used for the ¹³
ceremony.

Our school district was
originally a fractional district -
in with Daniel Whitfield. In
1912, Mr. Lloyd Strong and others
got the approval of the townships
to have our own school district.
They rented the Robinson house
on Spruce Street to use as a
school. Ethel Patterson (a cousin
of Mrs. Wright) and Miss Ruthford
were the first teachers. Mr.
Lloyd Strong, Mr. Edward ^{Skinner} ~~Skinner~~
and Mr. George Clark comprised
the first school board.

In 1914 the new school was
built on Orchard Lake Road.
Mr. Joseph Sawyer donated the
site. This was the third
standard school in the county,
had two teachers and 60 pupils.

as the population increased¹⁴ the needs of a new school was apparent. The Roosevelt School building of six rooms and an office was built in 1920 and the grades were increased to include pupils through the tenth grade. Then, finally in 1928, the building was enlarged to accommodate a complete high school as well as the grades. Since then Roosevelt High School has been on the accredited university list; that is, the school has inspection from the university, which approval entitles high school graduates to enter the university without examination.

The high school has a full curriculum including literature; two languages (Latin and French), history (general and American),

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science (chemistry, physics and general science), mathematics (algebra, geometry and trigonometry), commercial subjects (short hand, typing, bookkeeping, business arithmetic, business law, and commercial geography), economics, government, sewing and shop work. The school requires a personnel of 25 teachers, a superintendent and a part time orchestra instructor.

There is a substantial library adjoining the session room. The beautiful auditorium also serves as a gymnasium. Activities participated in are athletics (foot ball, basketball, baseball and track), girls' club, scouting, glee club and orchestra. The juniors and seniors each present a play annually, and they sponsor a junior-senior prom each year.

In 1929 Roosevelt's first 16
graduating class numbered only
five. The high school is now
graduating from 30 to 40 pupils
annually.

The first store building was
erected on the corner of Orchard
Lake Road and Cass Lake Road,
and in this building Neil Mc
Millan established his grocery
store. Mr. McMillan was the
first post master in Keego Harbor,
and used a section of his store
for the post office. Previous
to this, Keego Cass was served
by rural delivery, but during
the resort season a special
carrier was allotted this area.
The post office occupied three
other buildings before being
moved to its present location
in 1938.

Our Post Office now headed by
Postmaster Peter Divalin is a

second class post office, employing 17
three clerks and one substitute and
distributing mail to over 5500
persons. The postal receipts
total \$360,000 upward per year.
We found that this figure
reached half a million previous
to the advent of the bank.
Since the postal rates on money
orders were raised and the
bank fees were not, postal ~~income~~
revenue ~~came~~ decreased. The sale of
stamps for 1943 netted \$18,000.
The post office sends out
approximately 3000 registered
letters, 500 special deliveries, and
5000 insured packages annually.
There are 596 postal boxes, and
with the exception of a few
large boxes, all are in use.
It is interesting to note that
there are 17 persons living
in Wayne and Washtenaw counties

who pick up their mail here. ¹⁸

The employees are all under civil service. At present, one employee, Carol Hageman, is in service. He may return to his position in Keego Harbor Post Office if he wishes to do so by applying for it within six months after his discharge.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars is an active organization in Keego Harbor. The Heart of the Lakes Post # 2706 is composed of 165 members, and the Ladies' Auxiliary 98 members. The members of the VFW must be citizens of the United States and must have been in service on foreign soil. Auxiliary members are the wives, widows, mothers, daughters, or sisters of men who have been in foreign service. This post was organized in 1912,

and Harold Schingek was their first commander. There were 15 charter members. They took up head quarters in the Keego School building at the turn of Orchard Lake Road. In September of 1942, the post moved into their new log cabin. This contains a roomy hall, a well equipped kitchen, a check room and rest rooms, all with steam heat. The ground covers several acres which in time will be landscaped. Men in the post have worked for years to make this home a reality, even doing much of the construction work themselves. Cost of the building, exclusive of furnishings, is estimated at \$10,000.

The hall is used for many

activities including card parties,²⁰
dances, dinners, banquets etc.
The home is also available for
use of other organizations. The
V. F. W. takes care of distressed
members, or as far as they
can they give aid to any
one in the community in
need of it. A chairman of
welfare is allotted a certain
fund for this purpose. Names
of those helped are known only
by the chairman.

To supply national and state
needs each post is taxed ac-
cording to membership. In
Michigan the V. F. W. supports
five hospitals for disabled
veterans. Just outside Eaton
Rapids is a home for widows
and orphans of veterans. They
have a farm of 640 acres,^{\$15}
houses, their own hospital, and

recreation center. However, the²¹
children must go into Eaton
Rapids to school. The annual
poppy sale is for the benefit of
this home.

On Memorial Day the V. F. W. pay
tribute to their dead. They hold
service and decorate graves.

April 27, Gen. Grant's birthday,
is celebrated as Americanization
Day. Each year for some time
two flags have been presented
to Roosevelt School with ap-
propriate exercises. Altogether
the school has received 18
flags. The V. F. W. presents a
flag wherever one is needed.
They have given flags to
Daniel Whitfield School, Blue Star
Mothers of Drayton Plains, to our
local church, and to the Lady of
Refuge Parish.
These flags are of excellent work-

manship, and each is complete²²
with staff, gold eagle, gold cords
and floor standard.

The U. S. W. is cognizant of the
many problems which will
be created by the return of
millions of our fighting men
to civilian life and is doing
something about ~~it~~ meeting these
problems. Besides launching
their nationwide campaign for
\$1,500,000 to ease the war
heroes task of readjustment to
peacetime living, they have
drafted a broad program.

This includes: -

The appointment of an active
service and welfare officer in
every post who will be trained
to assist all needy veterans and
their families.

In every state a service and
welfare program is to be

directed by officers employed²³
on a full time basis.
Plans are projected to in-
crease facilities at the U. S. W.
home in Eaton Rapids to pro-
vide shelter and care for as
many additional widows and
orphans as possible.

These problems concern every
citizen, and the fighting men
deserve to have them solved.
Let us ^{each} lend a hand.

Last but not least, we find
our own Keego-Cass Women's Club
is the oldest organization in
the community. Mrs. Eliza
Lillycrop conceived the idea
of a club which would be of
mutual benefit and of service
to the community. She, assisted
by Mrs. Galt, went from door to
door explaining the need of such

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an organization. The eleven
charter members held their
first meeting at the home of
Mrs. Lillycrop, and the club
continued to meet there for
several months. Soon, however,
others wished to entertain the
club, so they met at the homes
of various members. Mrs.
Allie West is the only charter
member who is still an
active member.

At first the club was
known as the Ladies' Aid
Society, altho not affiliated
with any church. They sewed
and participated in a con-
siderable amount of aid work.
A club house was purchased
and in 1940 the last payment
was made and the mortgage
burned. The club house has
been the center of many activities.

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Beside the regular meetings,
the members and their friends
have enjoyed cooperative lunches,
card parties in the afternoons,
and evening parties when the
men have been the guests of
the club.

Altho the club has given aid
to all worthy causes in the
community, the outstanding
achievement has been the
library. From 1934 to 1939 they
nursed it along and campaigned
for a township library. Every
member of the club did her
share, but the members feel
that Mrs. Laffrey should be
given special credit for her
faithful service to the public.
We ~~now~~ ^{now} have a library of
6500 volumes and are adding
300 volumes every three months.
The club continues continues

to house the Keego - Cass branch.²⁶

We show no hesitancy in
claiming the club has
emulated its motto: -

Ever ready to do our share:

Conservative, Progressive,
Helpful, Fair.