

Harbor Springs Has Its Own Lake Shore Dr.

Harbor Springs, Mich.—(Special)
—To many Chicagoans "Lake Shore dr." brings to mind a picture, not of the massive buildings lining Chicago's concrete strip of highway, but of a narrow gravel road threading its way thru the birches and pines overlooking Little Traverse bay and Lake Michigan. The famed drive locally winds its way 20 miles along the shore line to Cross Village, a historic Indian settlement high on a bluff over Lake Michigan.

A few miles along the drive one may take the cutoff, which runs on a level with the lake and parallel to the drive. The narrow cutoff curves thru deep woods for several miles until it joins with the main drive. At the foot of the cutoff, on a side road, lies Wimers lake, a tiny gem surrounded by lofty pines which come down to the water's edge. The old road, now overgrown and almost covered by underbrush, once saw many Chicago visitors, for Wimers lake was a loved retreat of the Philo Otis family, who built the road and cut away the thick tangle of trees to make a picnic place out of this woodland paradise.

Farther along the cutoff, Five-Mile creek splashes down the woods and into the lake. The wide beach at the mouth of the brook affords a breath taking view of the famed crimson sunsets of Lake Michigan, and is a popular spot for beach parties and picnics.

As the cutoff ends, you come to Seven-Mile point, a clearing situated high above Lake Michigan. Gnarled pines cling to the bluff which drops over 400 feet to wave splashed sands below. The view of azure waters under a cloud tufted sky is not easily forgotten. Here stands a row of trees which once served as a dividing line between two hostile tribes of Indians camped at the point.

Beyond, the road almost doubles back on itself to avoid a deep gorge known as Devil's Elbow. According to an ancient Indian legend, the devil became so angry with a tribe camped here that he swung his elbow into the bluff, wiping the land and all the warriors into the lake.

Midway along the Lake Shore dr. the road swings out to the edge of the bluff. Stopping here you look down on the steeple of the aged Middle Village church, present day successor of the first permanent mission in the lower peninsula, established in 1595.

Near here is the Twisting Gash, a bluff whose booming winds gave rise to the legend which Edwin Balmer's book, "The Indian Drum," immortalized.

A battered sign on one of the mighty pines near the road tells of a council held under its branches in the dim past. Here 20 tribes, the largest gathering of Indians in history, met in 1787 to sign a treaty with the United States.

A tall wooden cross on the ridge of the bluff marks Cross Village. The village, a landmark deeply etched in Michigan history, is so called because of the famous cross, which is said to stand where Pere Marquette placed the first Christian symbol in the area.

One of the Chicagoans to utilize the beauty of the drive for a summer residence is Joseph E. Otis, whose home is a few miles out of Harbor Springs, near the beginning of the shore route. Approached by a drive which leads down to the water, the lovely white home stands on a wide lawn shaded only by white birches,

which give it the name, Birchwood. Birchwood gives the visitor the impression that the woods have been pushed back to leave a tailored beauty spot in the wilds. To the right of the main house is a tiny formal garden, and nearby are rows of brilliant flowers which supply bouquets for the house thru the summer months.

Snuggled deep in the woods off the driveway are smaller cottages used by various members of the family. One of the larger is occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Otis Jr. of South Bend. Their young sons, Webb and Peter, keep the broad beach and tennis court busy thru the long summer days.

As Harborites begin to plan for another Fourth of July many will drive again along the old road, once trod by moccasined feet. At Five-Mile creek and Seven-Mile point carloads of youngsters will come to roast hot dogs and play ball on the very sands which greeted the first white men in the region. And as the last skyrockets soar over the bay, their elders will pause again to recall the legends of Twisting Gash and Devil's Elbow.