

Time Tracs

—by Jim Ingram

Armada Island is on the south end of the east body of Lake Orion. It sits between the Lake Orion Boat Club island and Heights Road with the shore lot being on Heights Road opposite the party store.

There are four cottages on Armada. They were probably built around 1900. I have a postcard showing the island and cottages that was mailed from Lake Orion in 1913.

Margurite Hengel who owns, with her son Fred, the cottage at the northeast end of the island estimates the cottages had been there for 50 years when she bought hers in 1940.

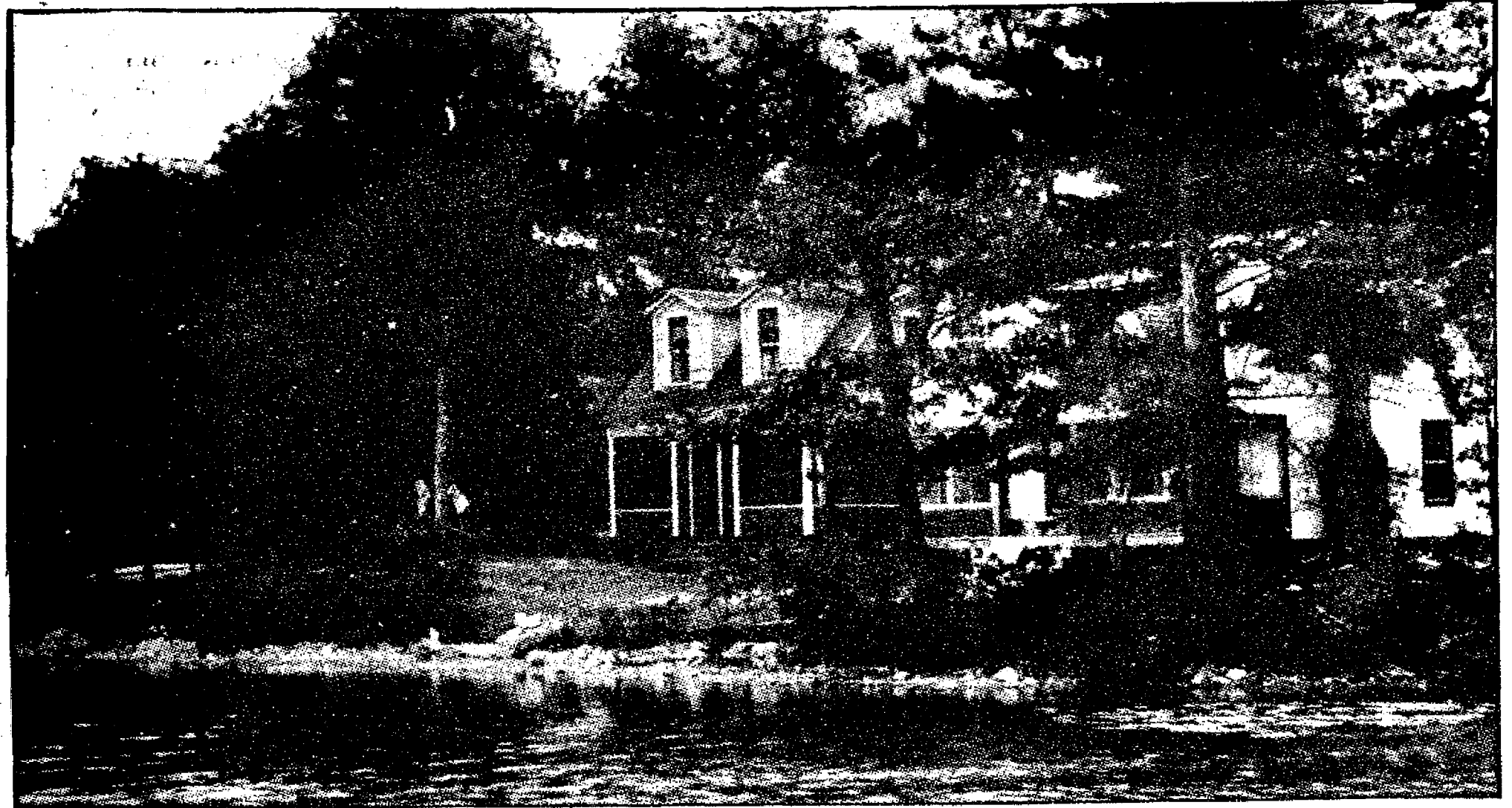
Margurite was a young single woman when she bought the cottage and recalls entertaining her friends there but always well chaperoned by her mother. She has fond memories of going to Park Island to dance to the music of the very best bands of that era.

Margurite later married and she and her family continued to summer on the island. Fred has done extensive remodeling.

Several families from Rhode Island related to Margurite the history of the island. According to them, several families from Armada, Michigan began camping on the island. Thus came the name Armada Island.

She said the children with one or two adults would camp on the island for the entire summer with the other adults coming there only on weekends. That was prior to any cottages being built on the island.

They camped in tents but did build a small barn. In this barn were stalls with individual family names on them. The stalls were used to store their camping equipment. The barn was still on the island in the 1950s.



This 1914 postcard picture of the Bell vacation home on Armada Island was brought into The Lake Orion Review by Jim Bell.

In the 1940s and 1950s the families summering on Armada were primarily from Royal Oak. "Woody" and "Bert" Emling bought their cottage in 1954. Mrs. Emling "Bert" believes the only change in their cottage was the addition of a kitchen and bath on the rear of the cottage.

Originally all four cottages shared a well located in the middle of the island.

Bert remembers that in the '50s everything, including the kitchen sink, had to be moved to the island in rowboats.

Woody Emling owns what is probably the oldest and fastest sailboat on the lake. It's the SOS class and is 22 feet in length with a 36 foot mast.

It was bought on the lake by Bill Campbell in the early 1950s. The SOS won most of the LO Boat Club sponsored sailboat races in the '50s.

While living in Florida now, the Emlings continue to summer on the island. Their daughter Pam Evans liked Lake Orion so much she now lives on the lake year around.

Dorm Bell, who owned the cottage at 482 Armada Island during the '50s and '60s gave this account of the small barn erected. The overall dimensions were approximately 12-feet by 20-feet.

The floor was of very heavy wood, probably two inches thick and 10 inches wide. It had places on the wall where children's height was marked by name and year. Dorm's son Jim Bell was so impressed with the lake that he now resides here year around.

With the exception of the Hengel cottage, the cottages on Armada are essentially the same as when built at the turn of the century.