

—Time Tracs— Jim Ingram—

(Fifth in a series on Park Island)

Before bringing Park Island into the second half of the 20th century, there are some additional aspects of its entertainment history that should be mentioned.

The Park Island dock sat on the north shore at approximately mid island. It's where all of the passenger boats, especially the doubled decked City of Orion, docked to dispense their passengers.

It had four proscenium arches above which signs read -- Park--Island-Amusements-Dancing. These arches were lit with hundreds of electric light bulbs and even on a foggy night it made a landmark that was unmistakable.

Just adjacent to the dock was the bathing beach. It had both a men's and ladies' bathhouse in addition to a two story observatory. I presume the observatory was a place to sit and watch the swimmers and divers and perhaps sip a cold drink.

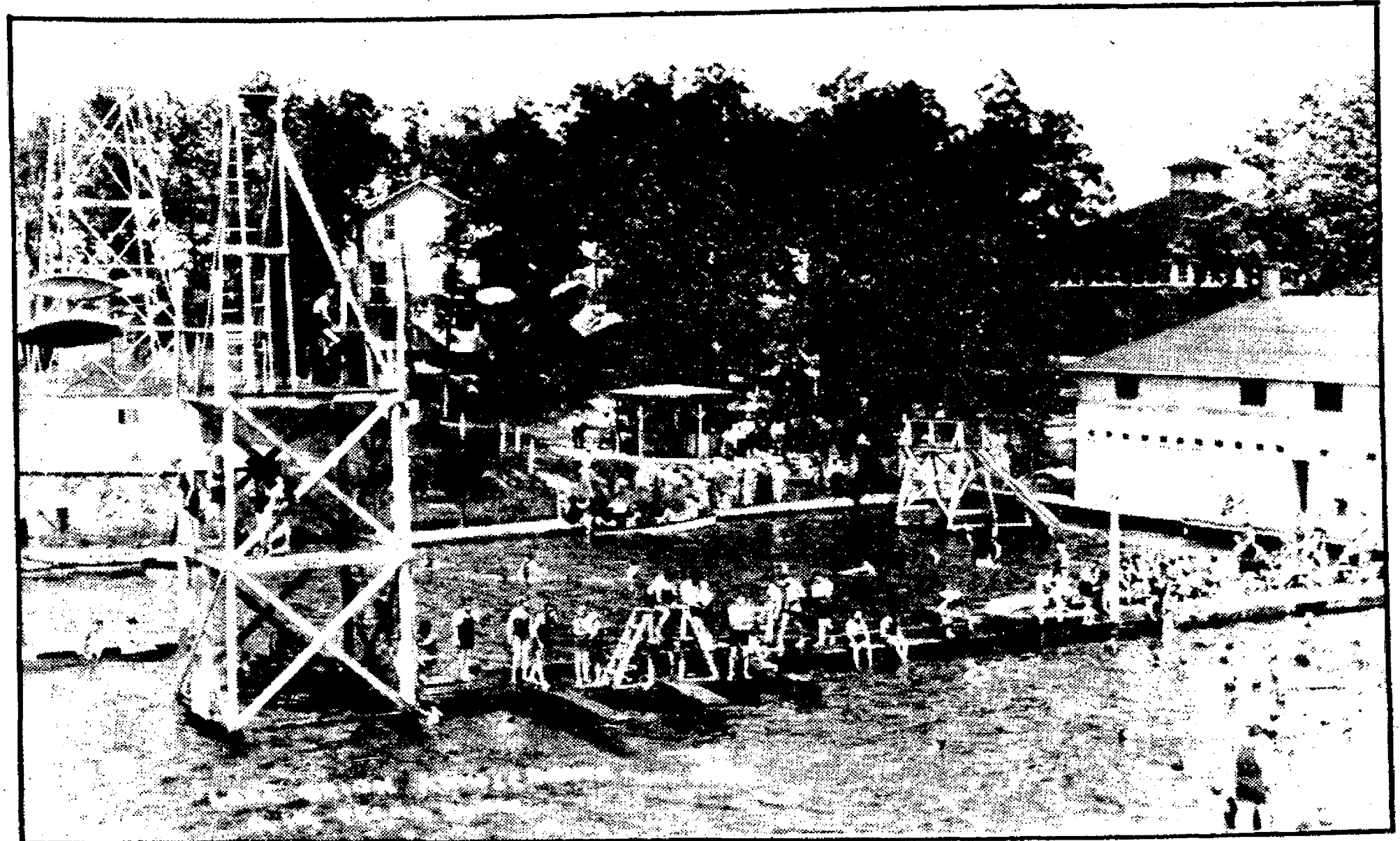
The beach boasted the largest water slide in Michigan. It also had a very large "L" shaped dock with several diving boards and platforms. The highest of these at the very end of the dock was 42 feet in height.

Helen Goerlich tells of her older brother Bob, who was a lifeguard at the Park Island beach, giving diving exhibitions on Sunday afternoons.

The dance pavilion was popular and still attracting crowds into the 1940s. It also attracted some of the more prominent bands of that big band era.

Bea Berger recalls that during the depression years of the 1930s there were dance contests on Park Island. She says Harold and Marion Page were the champions, "as good as Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers."

Marion Page modestly said, "If you danced



It's 1925 and the Park Island Beach is getting crowded. Visitors to the beach will enjoy a big water slide and several high diving boards.

together as much as we did, you'd almost have to learn something. But there were lots of good dancers. Bob Miller and Bob Gehrig were as good as we were."

Bernice Miller, with wifely pride, confirmed this. She remembers one evening when the Pages won first prize for the fox trot and Bob and Bernice won first prize for the waltz.