

—Time Tracs—By Jim Ingram—

(This is the first in a series on Victoria Island)

Victoria is the third largest island in Lake Orion, just under Bellevue and Park Islands.

It's located to the west of Longpointe off Bellevue Island, north east of Romance Island. There is not a bridge to the island and it's accessed by an outlot at the foot of Highland Avenue on Bellevue Island.

There are currently 11 cottages on Victoria. Judging from the records, this number has remained fairly consistent over the years with an occasional cottage being destroyed and another built. Most of the cottages were probably built in the early 1900s.

It thought it would be interesting to get a flavor of the island by learning something about the families that owned cottages there over the years. My source for such information was Bill and Mary O'Brien who knew many of these families during the 1920s and 1930s.

The largest cottage sits on a roomy lot at the southwest point of the island. It has a large round window next to the fireplace at one end. In 1915 this cottage was owned by the Stokes family.

Stokes and Whittingham (Whittinghams owned a cottage on Longpointe) were the engineers that designed and built the current Bellevue Island bridge in 1928.

The Lattner family bought this cottage from Stokes and extensively remodeled it. They owned it into the 1950s. It was purchased last year by Mr. and Mrs. George Roberts who have completely remodeled the interior.

They intend to use this as their summer home. George Roberts owns a car dealership in Lapeer.

Proceeding east on the Bellevue side of the island is a large dark gray cottage that was owned by a Curtis family in the teens. Marie Curtis was an Olympic swimmer who frequently swam the waters of Lake Orion.

John Potter, the principal of Northwestern High School in Detroit, purchased this cottage in



This is a current photo of cottage #1 on Victoria Island.

the early 1920s and owned it for many years.

The next cottage was owned by Col. Fred Cowley Sr. in the 1920s and 1930s. He was one of Theodore Roosevelt's "Roughriders."

The Cowleys resided in Detroit. Fred Jr., who was a teacher at Denby High School in Detroit, built a home on Paint Creek at the Atwater bridge and lived there with his family through the 1960s.

To the east was Joe Octon's cottage in the 1920s. He owned a small manufacturing plant in Oxford.

"Dogway" is the next and newest cottage on the island. It was built in 1989.

The next cottage was owned by the daughter of a Dr. Gyles, who had a cottage on North Shore in the 1920s. In the 1970s I met Jack and Marty Bickert. They owned this cottage through the 1970s to approximately 1985. In the early 1980s they remodeled and winterized the cottage and lived there year around.

The Review is looking for an old picture of Victoria Island for Jim's second part of the series. If anyone has one, they can bring it in to the office Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.