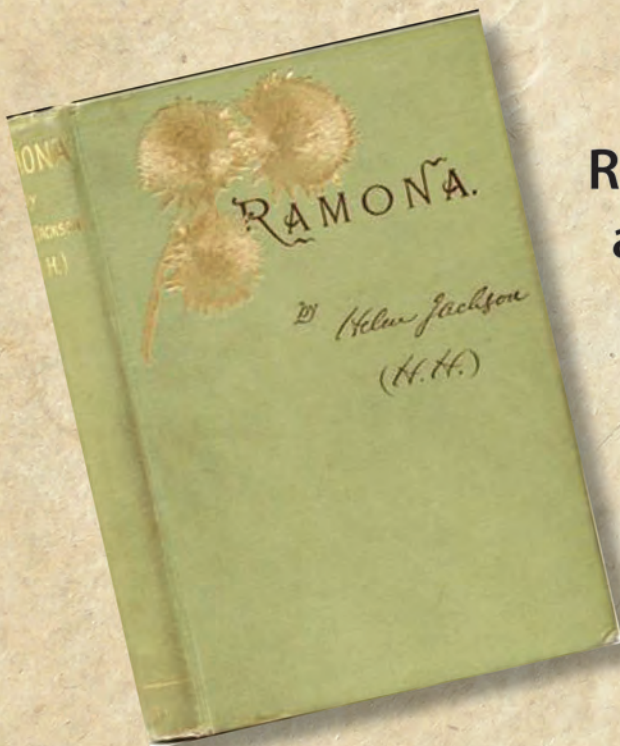


Tales of Ramona Park



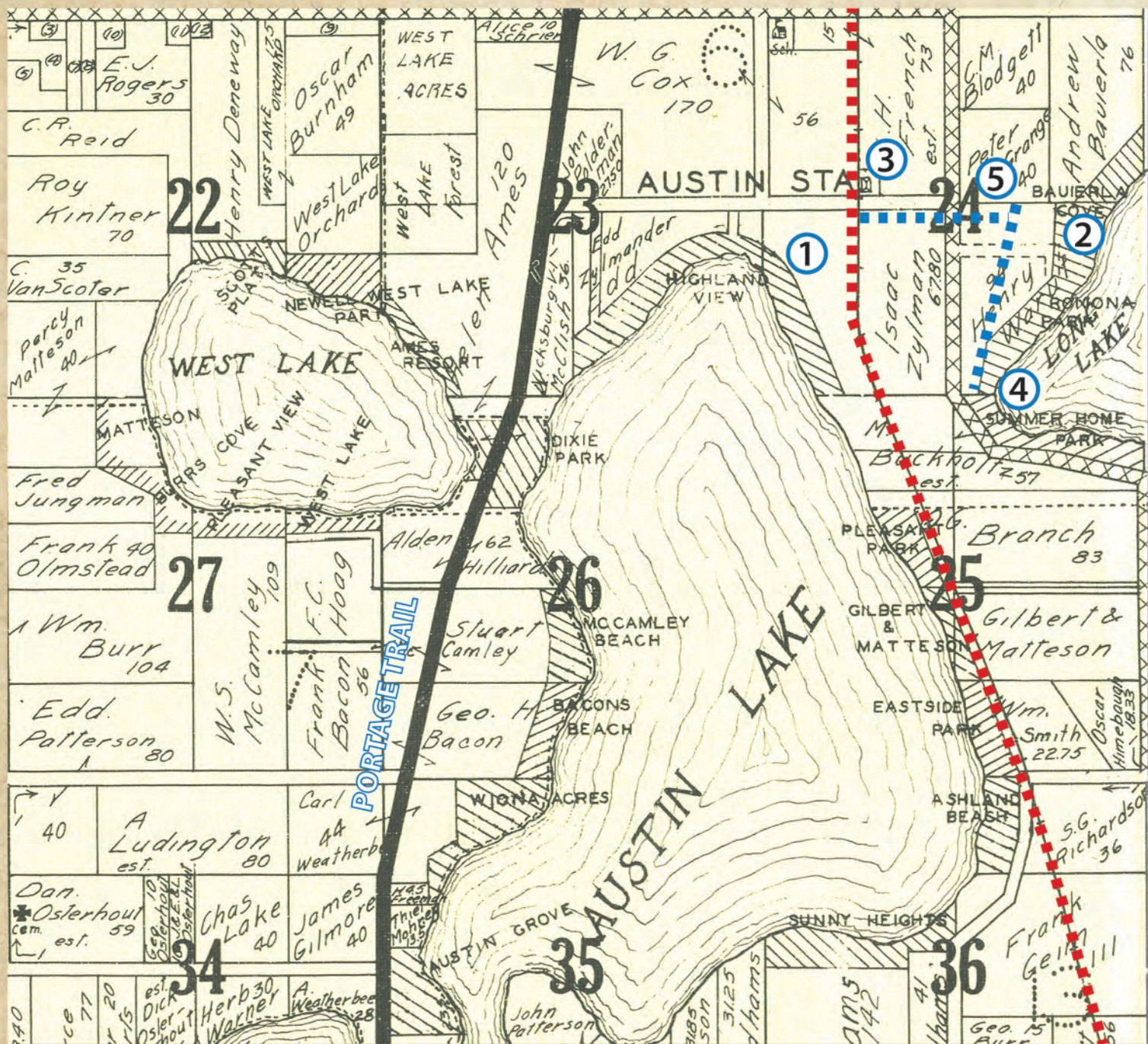
Tales of Ramona Park



Ramona Park was named after the title character of Helen Hunt Jackson's popular novel *Ramona*, which was published in 1884.

*Thank you to Luanne Castle and The Family Kalamazoo
(www.thefamilykalamazoo.com)*

*for the images and information on the history of Ramona Park,
and to the Long Lake Association of Kalamazoo County.*



Ramona Park in 1928

- ① Moses Austin Tavern
- ② Ramona Palace
- ③ Portage Train Depot
- ④ Sea Serpent Sightings
- ⑤ Henry and Carrie Waruf Home

- Ramona Rail Spur
- Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad

Early Inhabitants: The Potawatomi



Chief Pokagon, a friend of early Portage settlers.
Image from "Portage and its Past" by Grace J. Potts,
1976, Portage Public Schools

The area around Long Lake was inhabited by the Potawatomi Indian Tribe. The primary route for most Native Americans during this time was the Portage Trail (now Portage Road).

Potawatomi lands were ceded to the U.S. Government in 1817. Most of the Potawatomi were removed by the U.S. government in the 1830's and sent to reservations out West.



Potawatomi camp scene;
painting by
George Winter,
1810-1876

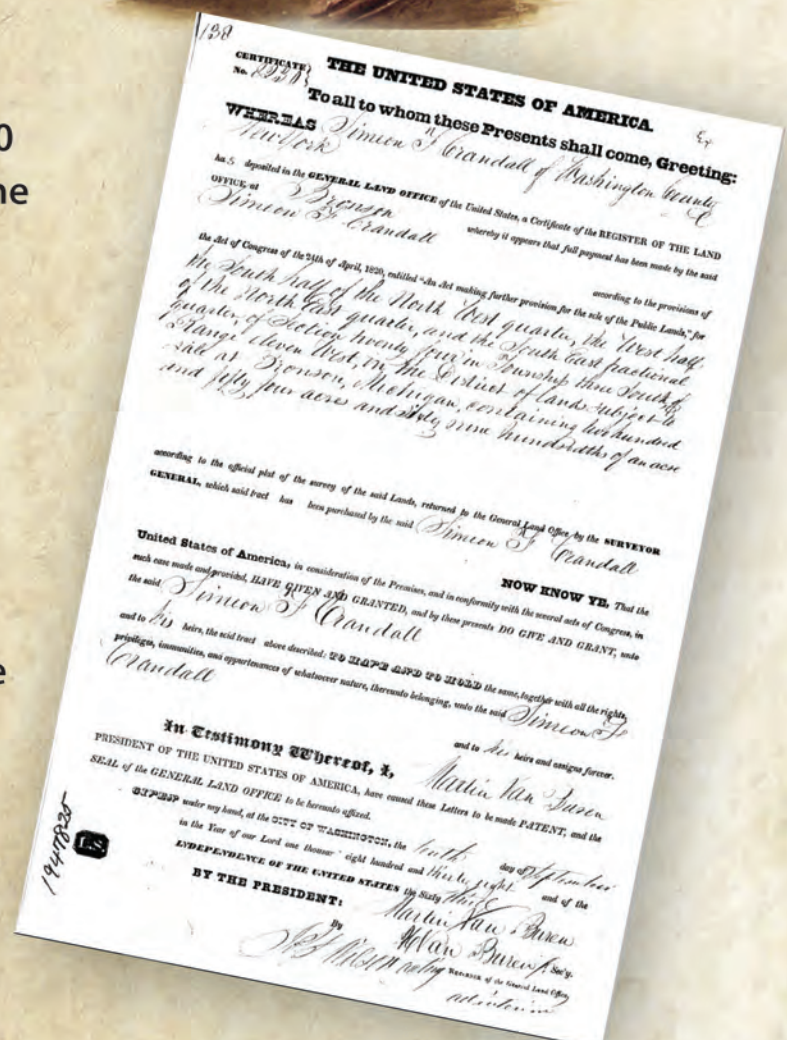
Land Ownership

1838- Simeon Crandall purchases 240 acres containing Ramona Park from the Kalamazoo District Land Office.

By 1904 - The land is owned by Henry and Carrie Waruf

1950s - Therese Remine inherits the property.

1968 - 65 acres are purchased by the City of Portage for Ramona Park



Simeon Crandall's deed

Henry & Carrie Waruf



Henry Waruf (with cigar)

Henry and Carrie Waruf were born and married in the Netherlands, and immigrated to the United States in 1868. He was a prize-winning breeder of English spaniels, and a collector of real estate.



The Warufs owned the Ramona Park resort, the Ramona Palace and many cottages in addition to their own home at Long Lake, which stands today.



Carrie Waruf

The Remine Family: Richard, Mary and Therese

In addition to collecting real estate, Henry owned a gun shop in partnership with Richard Remine. Richard "Dick" Remine married Carrie's sister, Mary; their daughter Therese Remine eventually inherited Ramona Park in the 1950's.



Mary Remine



Richard Remine



Therese Remine

DESTINATION: Ramona Beach!



The Long Lake Bus

By 1886, beachgoers could reach Long Lake and the Ramona Resort by train and by bus. The Grand Rapids & Indiana Railroad was completed and a

spur, that ran between the beach area and Sprinkle Road, brought visitors directly to the area that is now Ramona Park.



Portage Spur depot

Ramona Park Complex

The Ramona Palace and its ballroom, completed in the 1930's, quickly became a popular night spot for partiers from across the Midwest, with dancing to big band music, a soda fountain, pool tables, a lighted pier, 70 boats for rental, and an 80-room Bath House. There were also rooms and cottages to rent for overnight stays.



Cottages

*Kalamazoo Herald,
June 26, 1919*

Rental Housing



The Bath House



RAMONA PARK RE-JUVINATES LONG LAKE

Things are going big at old Long Lake, one of the most picturesque summer resort spots in Michigan, and for years the favorite spot of many Kazooans. Ramona Park, the new amusement park at Long lake, is proving very popular. Free dancing may be enjoyed every evening in the pavilion, except Thursday night, when special features are in order and a nominal charge is made. A modern fountain has been installed and ice cream, summer drinks, candy and cigars can be obtained at all times. The one feature of the new park that has been extremely popular has been the new bathing beach and 80 room bath house. An excellent beach has been constructed with a pier running out far into the lake, and at night the pier will be brilliantly lighted. Seventy-five row boats are at the disposal of the patrons of Ramona for pleasure or fishing, and within a short while a fine launch with a carrying capacity of 35 will be in service for around the lake trips. The new Ramona Park hotel is run on both the American and European plan, and is giving excellent service. Ramona Park is just the place to spend a day and evening or to have a cottage for the summer. C. B. Salisbury, a well known Kalamazoo man, is manager of the park, and his long experience in amusement lines are an assurance that Ramona Park will have a successful season and be one of the most popular resort spots in southern Michigan.



The Ball Room, Ramona Pavilion, Vicksburg, Mich.

The Ramona Palace Ballroom

Summer Fun On Long Lake



By the turn of the century, Long Lake property owners enjoyed vacation homes and resorts such as the Bucholtz Resort and the Summer Place Resort in addition to the Ramona Palace.

Popular activities included sailing, swimming, diving and fishing

Making Good Use of the Lake's Resources



Ice harvesting: note the two men holding long saws to cut through the ice in a process called "barring off". The shallow cuts were made by a horse-drawn plow.

Around the turn of the century, commercial fishing was active in Long Lake.

Prior to the City of Portage's ownership, the land was also used as storage for ice cut from the lake and packed in straw, then hauled to town by train throughout the summer months.

The Long Lake Sea Serpent

During the winter of 1901 a lake resident by the name of Frank Denner and a friend decided that they needed something to "liven things up a bit". They decided to construct a scary-looking, 10-foot, wooden sea serpent, towed it about 100 feet out and attached a wire pulley device that ran to his boat house. When he let it rise to the surface, fishermen rowed to shore, cottagers fled and some residents patrolled the shore with shotguns! The monster appeared intermittently over the years, causing panic each time. The mystery was never solved until 1942 when Denner confessed to his role on his deathbed.

Long Lake's 'Sea Serpent' One of This Area's Most Amusing Hoaxes

Only six years have gone by since the death of Frank W. Denner, veteran county conservation officer, so his personable character still remains fresh in the minds of sportsmen in this area.

But what sportsmen and his host of friends do not recall is Denner's part in one of the most enjoyable hoaxes ever staged in the Kalamazoo lake region. Until his death, 42 years later, Denner never affirmed the role he played in creating the famous case of "The Sea Serpent of Long Lake."

Like most sportsmen, Denner was a fun-lover who would go to any extreme to perpetrate a practical joke. The "Sea Serpent," it was generally agreed, was his finest piece of workmanship.

During the winter of 1901 Denner and a crony, Van Rogers, an employe of the North Lumber Company, were sitting in the Denner home on the shore of Long lake and they agreed that something was needed to "liven things up a bit." Then they conceived the idea of the Sea Serpent.

For the balance of the winter the two men spent most of their spare time planning and building

estimated 10 feet from its vicious head to its thorny tail. The monstrosity was built of wood and much of the body was hand-carved. A final paint job of brilliant hues gave Denner and Rogers the most terrifying creation seen outside a nightmare.

Fishermen Hustled for Shore

When the ice left the lake the men rowed their monster about 100 feet off-shore one dark night.

They attached a heavy wire to the serpent and strung the wire through a pulley that had been secured to a heavy iron block. The block was submerged in a deep hole in the lake bottom and the wire ran back to the shore and into Denner's boathouse.

By winding up the wire they drew their serpent to the bottom of the lake where it was left until summer residents came to occupy their cottages.

Only two other men were let in on the secret. They were Corydon McCrumb, now deceased, and Charles H. Olds, 812 West Vine street, now retired. McCrumb was superintendent of C. H. Dutton Company and Olds was superintendent of North Lumber Company. McCrumb was able to furnish a boiler and Olds furnished cypress lumber so together they built a 22-foot steamboat that operated on Long lake.

Near dusk one evening as cottagers sat on their porches and fishermen dotted the lake, Denner and Rogers decided the time had come for the serpent to make its debut. Hiding in the boathouse, they gradually let out the roll of wire and the creature rose to the surface.

Soon one cottage resident began shouting and then as others saw the object the noise increased in volume. Fishermen frantically hoisted anchors and began rowing rapidly for shore. When the entire lake area near the old ice house was in a state of uproar and confusion Denner and Rogers reeled in the wire and the serpent went back to rest deep under water.

Residents Patrolled the Shore

Within 24 hours tremendous changes took place around the

lake. Residents patrolled the shore and fishermen held bamboo poles in their hands and shotguns and rifles across their knees.

By the time the story of the Sea Serpent made the rounds it had grown with each telling until it was generally considered to be the size of an ample barn. Twice again during the summer of 1902 the two men sent their creation to the surface with



FRANK DENNER
Once Owned a Serpent

equally violent effect. There was talk of organizing a search party to drag the lake for the monster, but nothing was done — principally because no one had any desire to come face to face with the serpent.

Lake residents did not breathe easily until ice coated the surface. However, when the summer of 1903 arrived the serpent began making his periodic appearances and people of the area once more began talking — and exaggerating. By now the serpent had grown to tremendous size by virtue of the many inflated imaginations.

Toward fall, however, residents along the shoreline began taking a more sober view of the matter. They began their reasoning by assuming that such things as sea monsters just didn't exist, even though they had seen one.

Next there seemed to develop a sudden realization that no one except Denner seemed to be enjoying the whole affair. Then they recalled that the monster made its appearance in the same places — always directly in front of Denner's home. Furthermore, they recalled, Denner never seemed to be around to join the watchers on the beach although he and Rogers unfailingly turned up immediately after the serpent submerged. All this circumstantial evidence, coupled with Denner's reputation as a practical joker, pointed directly to the conservation officer as being involved somehow.

