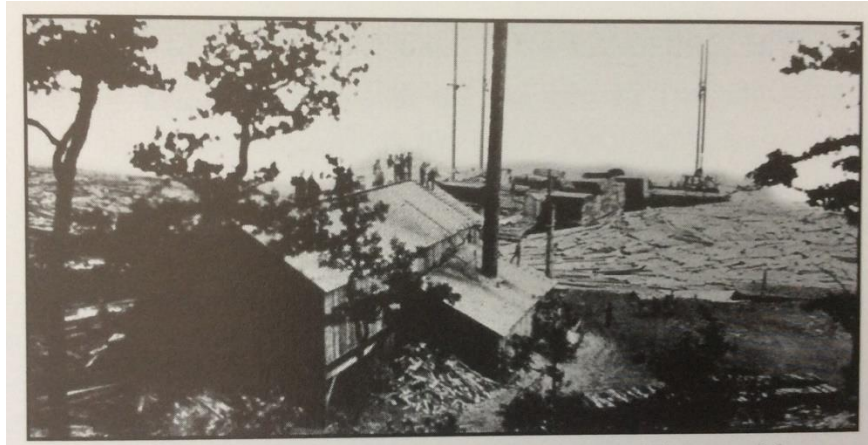


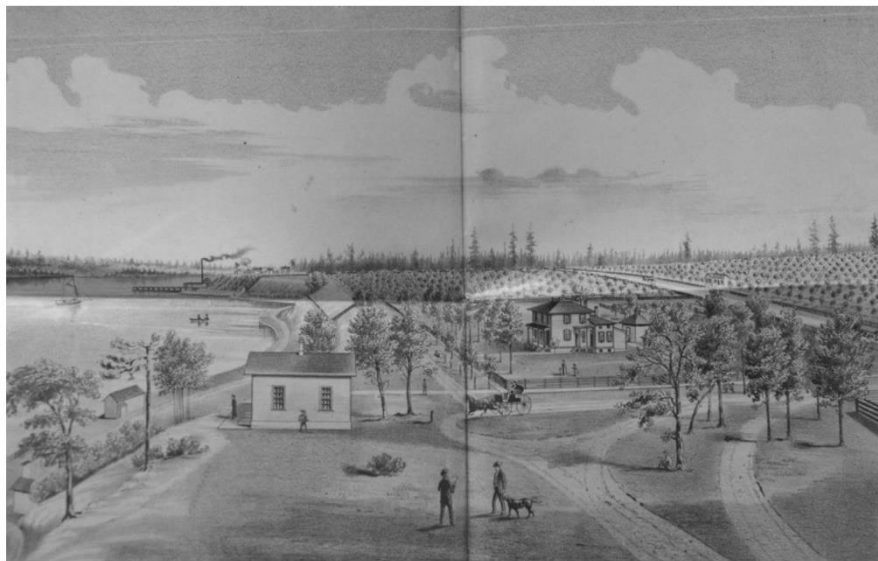
Ravenswood Resort

By Barbara Bedau Brow

The story of the former Ravenswood Resort in Montague begins as many other accounts of the area – with a lumber mill. A seven acre piece of property with over 600 feet on White Lake, Charles H. Cook established his mill on the property in 1866, built a stately two-story home, and planted the property with peach and apple trees.



Cook's Mill located below the bluff at what later become Ravenswood



Cook's residence and orchards

The property was sold in 1895 to Mr. Schenck from Chicago. In 1897, the property was sold to F.D. Pryor who converted the Cook residence into a summer hotel. Pryor owned the property for a short time before selling it to Helen Welsh and her sister, Mrs. Mary O'Keefe, who managed the hotel for a number of years.



Hotel Ravenswood on White Lake

History indicates that many of these early hotels had no electricity, indoor plumbing or telephones. (And certainly no cell phones or Wi-Fi.) Rooms were often small & toilets and washbasins, if present, were located in hallways. The former Cook residence was added to as needed, sometimes very haphazardly, eventually providing 16-18 rather undersized guest rooms.

Chicago's influence can be seen in the name of the resort hotel, likely taken from the name of a distinctive Chicago area called Ravenswood. Most vacationers in the early years came via the Goodrich Steamship Lines or by train, and then were transported to the area's resorts by motor launches. In 1914, Ravenswood was one of 25 resort hotels on White Lake, many of them former farms or mill boarding houses that had been converted to hotels.

In the mid 1920's, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph J. Meyers took ownership of the hotel, calling it the Ravenswood Point Comfort Hotel. In a promotional brochure for the Hotel offered capacity for 80 guests, promised fishing, boating, bathing, golf and tennis.

Ravenswoods longest owners were Ozzy and Lillian Grotefelds who owned the resort from 1945 to 1981 before selling it to Chick Caluwaert. The first year he replaced all the roofs on the cottages and made regular repairs and maintenance. From the second year on, the resort was fully rented out during each summer season, usually to the same families. He also repaired the former Cook residence, renovated the boathouse into a chapel, where several weddings and christenings took place, and purchased acreage across the street for a potential golf course. As family vacation times grew shorter, due in part to school sports schedule and other activities, Caluwaert sold Ravenswood to Grand Rapids area residents Mike & Sue Summers.

The Summers ran the resort for six seasons until it was no longer financially practical to continue. They officially closed Ravenwood in 2004.

Around 2008, there was a development proposal to build 29 Victorian-styled residences on the site; however, this never materialized. The property has since been divided into 4 lots with the original house on one lot and new houses currently being built on each of the other two lots.