

Old Channel Inn

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The original Old Channel Inn was built in 1900 and was located at the site near where the Old Channel once emptied into Lake Michigan before the current Government Channel was completed in 1871.

Addis Lloyd's wife Lydia was the driving force behind Lloyd's Landing and the Old Channel Inn. She grew up on her father Henry Schwass' farm just north of the Old Channel Golf Course. Lydia would accompany her father to the mill area where Henry would make extra money loading lumber from the Ferry Mill onto schooners in the Old Channel. Lydia loved the mill area and when she married Addis in 1885 she convinced him to buy land in the area. Addis and Lydia had three children: Cecil in 1886, Irving in 1889 and Addis in 1905. Lydia died in 1913 at the age of 49. In May

1920, Addis, Sr. married Sarah Selby-Claeys.

In 1920, Addis Lloyd bought several acres of land south of what is now Ferry Street in White River Township. In 1924, Addis deeded 66 feet of roadway to White River Township for a park on the condition a roadway be constructed on the northern edge of the land to the Lake. This became Lloyd's Landing. The remaining property was deeded to Muskegon County. The County named the land Lloyd Park. The land remained a county park for 16 years until 1937. In February 1938, several parties sued for ownership of the land. A settlement was

eventually reached and some of the property remained in private hands. Several decades later the area finally became part of what is now the White River Township Barrier Dune Sanctuary.

In the early 1920s, the Lloyd family built a one-story restaurant with an open-air porch on the south end.

The main floor was added on to with owners living in some parts of it. During the 1930s, a second floor was added. The six rooms upstairs were rented out to tourists and meals were served to guests only. Most of the families would arrive on Friday on one of the boats from Chicago and the men would go back to Chicago on Sunday and the women and children would stay the following weekdays.

Over the years, the usage of the second floor changed from vacation rentals to an owner's apartment.

Addis Lloyd and his wife Sarah operated the Old Channel Inn until October 1933 when Addis died at 72 years old. Sarah continued to operate the Inn until 1935. She died in January 1936 at the age of 66 years.

A former icehouse located across the road from the Inn was sold to the Kutack family by Addis Lloyd in 1933. It was renovated into a house and is still owned and used by Kutack family members today.

Irving Lloyd inherited the Inn in 1936 and rented it to various parties over the next several years.

George Meyers was hired by the Lloyds and became the Proprietor of "Ye Olde Channel Inn" from 1936-1939. He had been the chef at Rochdale Inn for several years as well as cooking in southern hostelrys at St. Petersburg, FL in the winter months.

In 1940, Irving remodeled the Inn and lived it in as a private residence until 1945. The fieldstone fireplace was added as well as the pine paneling in the living room during that time.

In 1945, Mr. & Mrs. Louis Zaborsky occupied the Old Channel Inn as their home for about 3 years before moving to St. Ignace in 1948, after which the building sat idle for several years.

Carl and Erma Pratcher then purchased the Inn in 1952. They had previously operated the White Lake Barbecue. They opened the Inn following some redecorating and had 8 sleeping rooms available, all with running water, which could accommodate 16 guests. The rates were \$3.50 to \$4.50 per day. They secured a Class "A" Hotel license which enables them to serve beer and wine on the premises. They also had a "take out" license.

Myrtle Nichols-Bloomquist purchased the Inn from Erma Pratcher in 1967. A bar was installed and the partition between the two front rooms was removed to make room for tables for customers. Mrs. Bloomquist operated the Inn until 1970.

In November 1970, Gerald "Gerry" Groner purchased the Inn from Mrs. Bloomquist. Sally Johnson, Helen Ernst, Linda Kroll, Janice Johnson and Karen Bates were just some of the staff who helped to keep the Inn going. They offered a Special Sunday Chicken Dinner – roasted chicken, potatoes & gravy, homemade biscuits, tossed salad and breadbasket all for \$3.25 every Sunday from 1 to 4 PM. Groner operated the Inn until 1976.

Wayne Lynch purchased the Old Channel inn in March 1976 and operated it until 1985. Lynch was also the Montague Postmaster from 1964 to 1985.

New owners Mike Kelly and Doug Hanna took over the business in April 1985. The transition was a smooth one as the existing staff was retained: Shirley Wonders was the Manager; waitresses were: Diane Burel, Sandy Wackernagel, Sandy Veltman, Wanda Lehman and Melissa Lorenz. The kitchen staff consisted of: Kristy

Anderson, Sherri Chalmers, Janet Kittridge and Linda Roesler. Owners Mike Kelly tended bar and Doug Hanna cooked.

From 1989 until 2017, Kirk and Cheryl Davidson were at the helm of the Old Channel Inn. They actually lived in the owners' quarters for a while before purchasing their house. In January 1990, the Old Channel Inn was the winner of the White Lake Perch Festival Chili Cookoff.

The current owners, Erich and Trish Schroeder, took over the Inn in September 2017, and have managed to keep it going even during a pandemic.