



White Ledge – Summer home of F. G. Allen

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In January 1904 an article appeared in the Whitehall Forum revealing that F. G. Allen of Moline, Illinois was going to be building a new summer cottage in the area. While the home is a cottage, it will be larger than most houses in the vicinity and excelled in size to no other place.

The new summer home was built on the bluff at Michillinda overlooking Lake Michigan. It covered 50x60 feet of ground. Surrounding it on three sides was a wide piazza, fifteen feet in depth. A second-floor balcony covered this area. Extending over the whole area in the front was a tall portico with four large pillars reaching to the roof. These pillars were 20 feet high and 24 inches in diameter and were finished with terra cotta caps. There are 31 of the smaller pillars which were 12 inches in diameter.

One of the finest features of the interior of the cottage was the long living room that measured 21 x 46 feet and had a great fireplace. The dining room was 18x30 feet and also had a fireplace and a beamed ceiling. Thru the center of the house ran a hall 12x40 feet, with a writing room 12x14 feet adjoining. The balance of the first floor was a servant's room, kitchen, etc. The second floor is divided into six bedrooms. Altogether there were seven mantels in the house.

Cornelius O. Rosel of Muskegon was the contractor. The firm of Bauer & Beamer also of Muskegon were making all the slab sills and chimney caps. By the time the article appeared in the Forum, the roof had already been placed on the building which was expected to be completed by May 15. The estimated cost of the cottage was \$25,000.

All the building materials were brought here by boat and hauled up the sand track which then existed along White Lake. An article that appeared in the Muskegon Chronicle on 21 August 1904, reported the estimated cost of the building and grounds was \$40,000.

Frank Gates Allen was born in Aurora, Illinois in 1858. He played for the first college football team at the University of Michigan, playing forward in 1879 and 1880. Following graduation he moved to Moline, Illinois and got a job as a reporter for Moline Dispatch for a time.

He joined the Moline Plow Company in August 1881 and worked his way through all the various jobs of the company. By 1892 he was the Secretary-Treasurer and Co-Manager of the company. In 1919 he was President and General Manager of the company. He was also President of the Moline National Bank, and a thirty-third degree Mason.

He married Minnie Florence Stephens in 1882 and they had a daughter Marjorie in 1885. Minnie died in 1933, and Frank died in 1940.

William Harold (W. H.) Lewis of Lyons, IL purchased White Ledge from Frank Gates in 1929 and used it as the family a summer home. He was Vice President of F. J. Lewis Manufacturing Company, the nation's leading producers of roofing and paving materials in 1918. In 1935 the purchase of Michillinda Pines completed the property. Edna Lewis, wife of W. H. Lewis died in May 1943.

In February 1956, it was announced that Lewis had sold White Ledge and 300 feet of Lake Michigan property to John VanHaver of Muskegon. They reportedly planned to live in the house year around.

By 1960 the house had become White Ledge Convalescent Home until June 1970 when the new facilities were built on E. Lewis Street in Whitehall. The house has since been torn down.

