

Historic Homes – Summer Home of J.W. Fordney

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C1910 Summer Home of J. W. Fordney

Joseph Warren Fordney was born on a farm in Hartford City, Indiana, on 5 November 1853. He became interested in lumber business when his family moved to Saginaw when he was around 16 years old. He worked various jobs in the lumber business learning the trade. He received the backing of a capitalist, eventually adding lumber mills and yards to his holdings. He was also credited with the development of the Michigan sugar beet industry.

On 28 April 1873 he married Cathern Herren (1854-1934) in Saginaw, Michigan. They had nine children: Bregetta (1876-1953); Josephine (1879-1957); Ernest (1883-1957); Agnes (1885-1957); Joseph (1890-1947); Chester (1892-1959); Grace (1896-1977); Mary (1895-1981); and Theodota (1896-1994).

Fordney was one of Michigan's leading citizens and was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for the Michigan 8th District for March 1899 – March 1923.

In 1907, then U.S. Congressman Joseph W. Fordney built his 5-bedroom summer home in the San Juan Association in Montague at a reported cost of \$8,000. It was described as having beautiful, imported hardwood ceilings and beams and a huge brick fireplace in the living room with built in benches and a

wrap around porch. In 2007 it went through some updating. In 2018, when the house was listed for sale, the asking price was \$895,000. The house received the White Lake Historical Society Award in 2007.

Fordney died in Saginaw, MI, on 8 January 1932 at the age of 78 years. His wife died there in 1934 at the age of 80 years. His summer home was then sold in 1936 to Dr. & Mrs. H. M. Grimson of Chicago, one of several owners in the home's history.