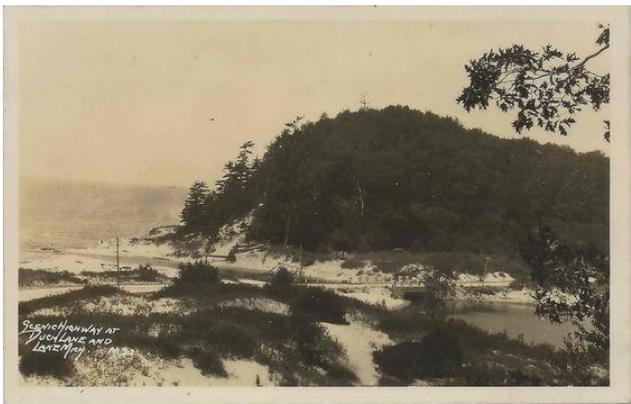


Saunterings
By C. W. Redfern

Submitted by Barbara Bedau Brow
White Lake Area Historical Society



The Old Channel and Duck Lake. Similar pictures accompanied the original article.

A pioneer of the White Lake area since 1866, Charles W. Redfern, wrote the following article which appeared in *White Lake Reminiscences* that was printed in June 1898.

For the true lover of Nature, White Lake has many varied attractions, a greater portion of which will appear only after careful and painstaking scrutiny and in the cheerful task to which we are assigned, the greatest difficulty is to choose the most inviting avenue that is nearest at hand.

For visitors at Sylvan Beach, would suggest the taking of a row-boat and making a trip down past the channel or entrance from Lake Michigan to White Lake, and into what is known as the "old channel". The banks are quite abrupt, the ground hard to the water's edge, and if an early morning hour is selected, much real pleasure may be had; the round trip is about two miles from the White Lake dock, and very full of beauty from start to finish.

Another trip, this time by "Foote & Walker's" line, and requiring at least an entire day, is to go to the foot of Duck Lake, then follow the road around to the left, and you will have Duck Lake 50 feet below, and on your right a sand dune or hilly bluff thickly wooded with a most charming variety of deciduous and conifer trees, while the banks are literally covered with think velvety mosses in many shades of green, and ferns in endless variety add to the rural beauty; and last but not least tender and delicate flowers that would not be out of place at a fairy's banquet may be found in abundance; then here the wintergreen revels in luxuriance that only comes from favorable climatic conditions; one may also find the

squawberry vine with its waxy fruit playing hide-and-seek with its coy and fragrant neighbor, the trailing arbutus.

The sand-hill rises, we dare not say how high, but a long way up, and there is a legend that one man actually made the ascent, and when he came down, said Muskegon, Whitehall, Montague, Shelby, Point Sauble and Chi--, no several other places were plainly visible.

There is a pretty little legend connected with one of the dells of this sandhill. One night the fairies were dancing, when a young man, who had hidden himself in a thicket rushed out and seized a beautiful fay, who, it is needless to add, was a lady. The rest instantly vanished, while he brought his prize in triumph home. After many entreaties, she consented to become his wife on condition that if he should ever strike her with cold iron she would leave him forever. The happy swain had no difficulty in entering into an engagement so readily, as he thought, observed. They were married, and, in course of time, a son and daughter appeared on the scene; but, unfortunately one day in throwing a missile at a horse, it hit his fairy wife, who instantly disappeared and forever. Her beautiful face was never again seen by mortal, but one evening these plaintive lines were whispered in the breeze, heard only by the bereaved husband:

Oh! Lest my son should suffer cold,
Him in his father's coat infold;
Lest cold should seize my darling fair,
For her, her mother's robe prepare.

Careful observers will find little difficulty in locating the exact spot where this incident occurred.

As far as scenery goes, there is about three quarters of a mile along here that is well worth looking at. Continuing our journey, we naturally come to a place in the road where there is a turn. Keep to the right and go down past a cleared field, (house and barn on right, back from road) for about half a mile, which will bring us to the foot of Muskrat Lake, and within a stone's throw of Lake Michigan; follow the main travelled road, which is nearly level for about three miles, which will bring us to the end of one of the finest tracts of red oak in Michigan, and through a dense virgin forest, where each step reveals new visions of beauty that will amply repay any who makes the trip.

The jaunt may be made by conveyance from the Post-office at the old mill site if desired, but if you go, take your dinner, also our humble advice, and do not hurry over the route—unless you want to.

Statistics are dry or otherwise, and we will not burden you with the number of different varieties of mosses, ferns, plants, etc., etc., the main reason being, we don't know how

many there are, but do know the number to be large, and as to their beauty, it will depend entirely upon the sense of appreciation the visitor has who views the same.

To the robust, much pleasure may be enjoyed from a tramp from Sylvan Beach to Duck Lake, on the beach; the distance is a "long" two miles going, and several times as far back, you will think; on the left, in some places the bluffs tower almost vertically with just enough room to walk between them and the water, numerous springs about, and if you sample same, it will seem that the last one is better than all the rest put together; the water is clear, and sparkles and dances in the sunlight, as only pure water can.

The music of the incoming waves is soft and quickly lulls to rest, while the pure air gives a heartiness and buoyancy to the physical man, that nothing else can do; take a sunny day for this trip, or what is still more enjoyable, a night when the moon is full and make a long or short trip as fancy dictates.

The man who will get most pleasure from these trips, will hear the droning of a honey-bee, as he flits from flower to flower, the cheerful chirp of the sharp-eyed cricket, the semi-croon of the summer locust, the voice of the Katy-did, the drumming of the partridge, the plaintive note of the mourning dove, the caw of the crow, the tinkle of a cow-bell, and a thousand and one other sounds and voices too numerous to mention.