

*The St. Clair Inn
90th Anniversary Celebration*



*Welcome, during the next six hours,
we will share the 90 year history of the Inn.*



“It hurts that it isn’t the same. In all my travels, people knew of the St. Clair Inn. I was in Hong Kong ran into a guy in the service, he was from Boston. When he found I was from the state of Michigan, he said that he and his family would go to the St. Clair Inn. The St. Clair Inn was the place. It fed the community, it was the center of the community.” Rick Shinske 2015

FORWARD! ST. CLAIR!!

*A New and Modern Community Hotel
The Forerunner of a Greater St. Clair*

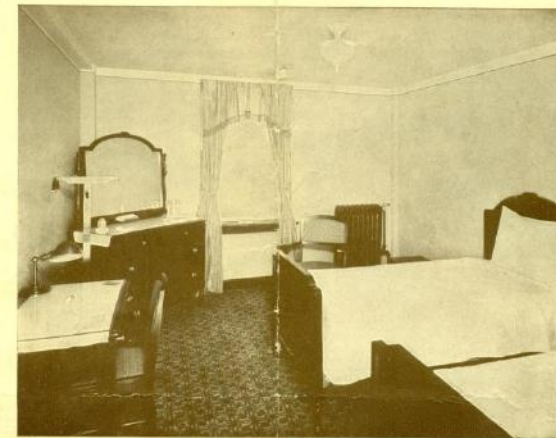


The hospitality of the inns and taverns of the days of long ago lives again in the modern up-to-date hostleries of today.



DINING ROOM

A well-appointed dining room is one of the greatest attractions of the hotels of today. St. Clair's beautiful location will increase this attraction. Travelers never tire of recommending the hotel where they find the immaculate linen, sparkling glassware, polished silver and efficient, generous service that do so much to bring a sense of ease and satisfaction



GUEST ROOM

The comfort of the guest is the chief aim of the modern hotel. Soft lights, comfortable beds, beautiful, well chosen furniture, and all the little conveniences that make a "home away from home" will cause visitors to remember with pleasure their temporary stay in St. Clair



St. Clair's New Hotel

will be dedicated to the residents and friends of St. Clair and to their splendid civic spirit which made it possible.

It will be throughout a community project, financed through community effort, owned by those who believe in the community, and operated under community supervision and by community co-operation.

This folder is designed to give prospective stockholders a visual idea of modern community hostleries. The interior views are of a hotel brought into being by the same program now being followed in St. Clair.

The Executive Committee believes in this project; they believe in St. Clair. They feel that an investment in this enterprise will mean direct financial dividends and great indirect civic dividends. In the name of St. Clair they ask your enthusiastic moral and financial support.



THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

F. W. MOORE, Chairman	JOHN H. SCHLINKERT, Associate Chairman	
H. A. BOPKINS, Secretary	RUSS S. JENKS, Treasurer	
FRANK D. BEADLE	H. A. HOPKINS	E. J. OTTAWAY
GEORGE C. BEYSLAG	RUSS S. JENKS	E. H. RECOR
OMER D. COPE	MAX JENNINGS	CHAS. R. ROBERTS
HENRY EARLE	JOS. JOACHIM	JOHN H. SCHLINKERT
JOHN G. FERGUSON	JOHN J. KANTZLER	ARTHUR A. SEWART
J. J. GANNON	JAMES McGREGOR	GEO. W. SMITH
M. J. GEARING	J. A. MILLER	GRANT A. SMITH
HUGH B. HART	FRANKLIN MOORE	W. A. SMITH
FRANK H. HERBERT	O. M. MISENAR	C. R. WALKER
LYMAN A. HOLMES	F. W. MOORE	HENRY WHITING

Since 1926, the St. Clair Inn has been so much a part of the community that outsiders often think of them simultaneously. With the arrival of the 1920's, coming of the motor car, prohibition and woman suffrage, a need was being felt all over the nation for community centers. American cities, large and small, were backing fund raising drives to raise money needed to build an establishment which would be used primarily for civic functions and social activities as well as for weary travelers. It was in this period of history that the local Rotary Club saw fit to sponsor a fund raising drive labelled the St. Clair Inn Hotel project.

Chairman
RUSS S. JENKS, Treasurer

JOHN H. SCHLINKERT, Associate Chairman
C. R. WALKER, General Sales Manager

H. A. HOPKINS, Secretary

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

JAMES MCGREGOR
J. A. MILLER
O. H. MISENER
FRANKLIN MOORE
F. W. MOORE
E. J. OTTAWAY
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ARTHUR A. SEWART
GEO. W. SMITH
GRANT A. SMITH
WM. A. SMITH
C. R. WALKER
HENRY WHITTING

St. Clair's Own New Hotel

A COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE
EVERY CITIZEN A STOCKHOLDER

HEADQUARTERS: 205 N. RIVERSIDE AVE.
TELEPHONE 431.

ST. CLAIR, MICHIGAN

IVE COMMITTEE
ANK D. BEADLE
GEORGE C. BEYSCHLAG
OMER D. COPE
HENRY EARLE
JOHN C. FERGUSON
J. J. GANNON
M. J. GEARING
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FRANK H. HERBERT
LYMAN A. HOLMES
H. A. HOPKINS
RUSS S. JENKS
MAX JENNINGS
JOS. JOACHIM
JOHN H. KANTZLER

August 7, 1925.

Mr. Omer D. Cope,
Riverside Avenue,
St. Clair, Mich.

Dear Sir:

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be held Monday evening at the usual hour, 7:30 o'clock. This will be the last meeting before the opening of the intensive campaign. Won't you please make a special effort to be present?

The Executive Committee has a goal in this campaign of \$75,000, as you know. At the last report meeting on Thursday night we were quite a bit shy of this amount. I want to ask every member of this committee to do his utmost to sell the men whose names he has so that he can make a report by Monday night.

The Executive Committee has been doing some splendid work. Do not let the committee of which you are a member fall short of its goal now that success is so near. I believe in you men of the Executive Committee. I believe that you can accomplish the task you have set for yourself if you do not falter. Remember, Monday evening at 7:30 o'clock.

Yours for St. Clair and the New Hotel,

James C. Swatte
Campaign Director.

"What St. Clair Builds, Builds St. Clair"

\$15,000.00

NEW HOTEL AT SAINT CLAIR, MICHIGAN STOCK SUBSCRIPTION AGREEMENT

To RUSS S. JENKS, TRUSTEE: St. Clair, Michigan, 1925

For and in consideration of value received, and in further consideration of other subscriptions to this form of subscription agreement, I, the undersigned, do hereby become an incorporator and do hereby subscribe for the purchase of 150 shares of the 6 per cent. Preferred Stock of the Community Hotel Corporation of St. Clair, Michigan, a corporation to be organized under the laws of Michigan, of the par value of one hundred dollars, (\$100.00) per share, and 75 shares of the non-par value common stock of said corporation. The object of said corporation being to buy and hold a parcel of real estate in the city of St. Clair and erect thereon and own a building to be occupied or leased for hotel purposes. The preferred stock is to be retired at the discretion of the stockholders.

I hereby appoint Russ S. Jenks, Trustee, to receive and hold any payments made on this contract prior to the incorporation of the proposed company to be formed, and to deliver into the hands of the Treasurer of said company immediately after incorporation and election of corporate officers, all moneys paid hereon.

I agree that this subscription is made for the use and benefit of said proposed corporation, and that upon it coming into being, this agreement shall be deemed to continue and run in its favor, and its proper officers may maintain any proper proceedings at law or in equity for the enforcement of the terms thereof. In the event of my failure to make any of the payments aforesaid within thirty days after maturity, the whole payment then remaining unpaid shall immediately become due and payable. Said Preferred Stock shall be preferred both as to assets and dividends and shall be entitled to 6 per cent. dividends per annum before any dividends are declared or paid upon the non-par value stock.

I hereby agree to pay the sum of FIFTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS at the time and in the amounts hereinafter set forth:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) Sept. 1, 1925. | Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) July 1, 1926. |
| Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) Nov. 1, 1925. | Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) Sept. 1, 1926. |
| Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) Jan. 1, 1926. | Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) Nov. 1, 1926. |
| Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) March 1, 1926. | Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) Jan. 1, 1927. |
| Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) May 1, 1926. | Ten Per Cent. (10 per cent.) March 1, 1927. |

I hereby appoint H. A. Hopkins, F. W. Moore and John H. Schlinkert my attorneys in fact, to sign and acknowledge for me and in my behalf the Articles of Association of the company to be formed.

When the full payment of this subscription has been made, according to the terms thereof and the proposed corporation has been formed, proper and sufficient certificates for stock are to be delivered to me.

It is understood that this subscription will not be called or become binding unless and until subscriptions to the amount of at least One Hundred Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$120,000.00) shall have been obtained.

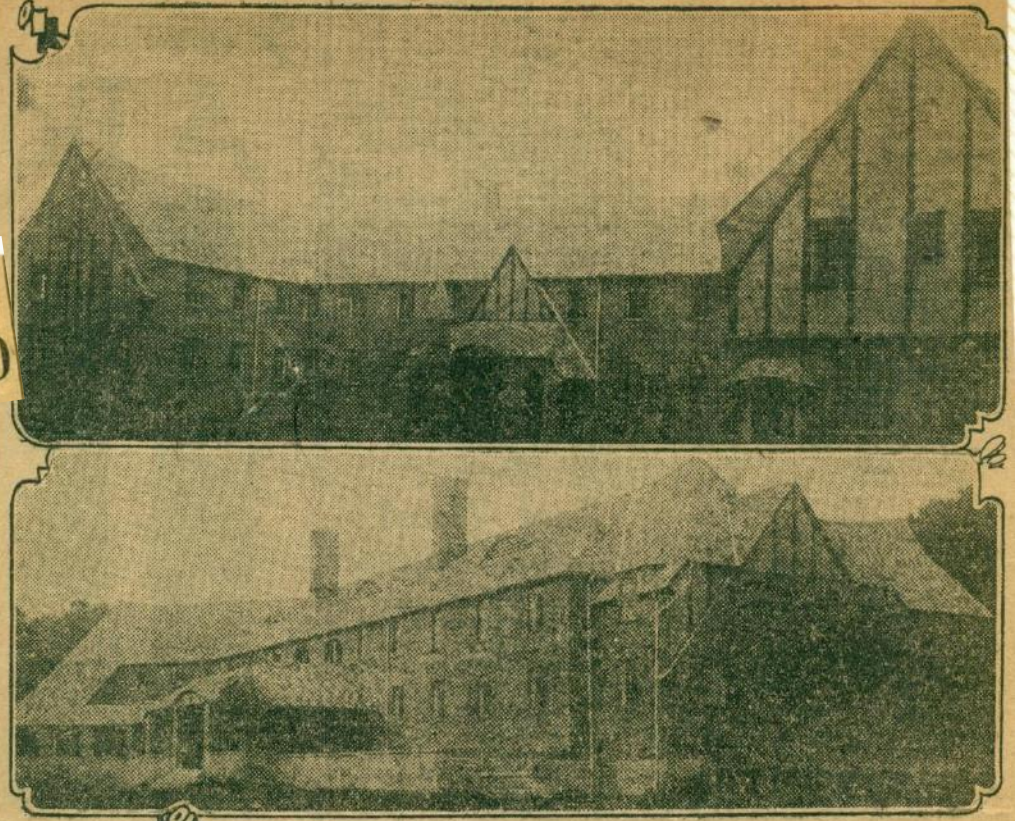
No representations, statements or agreements other than those herein recited have been made or are binding on said Russ S. Jenks, Trustee, or the proposed corporation to be formed and my entire contract is herein expressed.

Group No. _____ Signed _____
Witness _____ Address _____

Being essentially a community project, almost everyone in St. Clair bought stock in this proposed Inn, thus the money was raised. A site was selected overlooking border view of the St. Clair straits, and Walter Wyeth, Port Huron architect, was commissioned to raise the structure.

Two Views Of New Hotel 1926

**SAINT CLAIR INN OPENS ITS DOORS
TO PUBLIC WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 22ND**



The new St. Clair Inn is equally attractive from the street, as shown in the picture above, or from the river, as seen in the picture below. The English architecture of the structure is shown in a pleasing way from either point.

PUBLIC SPIRIT IS BEHIND NEW ST. CLAIR HOTEL

Business Principles Rule Or-
ganization Made Up
Of Residents

Mary McGregor, Wilbur McGregor, W. J. McRae, C. A. MacPherson, William H. Markle, John E. Mason, A. E. Maw, Israel Mayhew, Charles H. Meno, Charles L. Messmore, W. L. Millikin, J. A. Miller, Alex. Moore, Anne May Moore, Caroline A. Moore, Charles F. Moore, Emily Moore, F. W. Moore, Franklin H. Moore, Franklin Moore, Harriet Moore, Jack Moore, Jennie H. Moore, Laura Moore, Margaret E. Moore, Mary Moore, Benjamin F. Mortenson, William Munt, Edna B. Pearce, Harold T. Pettit, Margaret M. Phelps, John Pinger Jr., Herman F. Pollex, Lester A. Pridgeon, Theodore A. Murphy, Detroit; H. T. G. Naumann, Port Huron.

C. W. O'Brien, Detroit; Thomas O'Connell, Detroit; H. C. Oldfield, Port Huron; Ernest Ostlund, Buffalo, N. Y.; Paul Page, Detroit; G. H. Peasley, Lansing; E. H. Peterson, Detroit; Picard Mathers Co., Cleveland, O.; Robert C. Pringle, Cleveland, O.; George H. Quinn, Detroit; J. F. Quirk, Akron, O.; Mrs. Louis Rankin, Marine City; A. Rubenstein, Port Huron; Hale P. Saph, Marine City; Fred J. Schlinkert, Detroit; Albert J. Schroeder, Detroit; Lewis B. Scott, Highland Park; M. D. Smith, Port Huron; Burr E. Stevens, Port

**SAINT CLAIR INN OPENS ITS DOORS
TO PUBLIC WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 22ND**

Elaborate Banquet In Evening, Followed By Splendid Program of Speeches, Songs and Music by Jules Klein's Famous Entertainers; Then Dancing Until 1:00 in The Morning

OPEN HOUSE SEPT. 21, 4 TO 9 P. M. FOR PUBLIC

1926

The St. Clair Inn

St. Clair, Michigan



**Opening
Banquet and Dance**

Wednesday, September Twenty-second
Nineteen hundred and twenty-six

..Menu..

GRAPE FRUIT MARASCHINO

CHICKEN CONSOMME WITH OKRA

CELERY HEARTS GREEN OLIVES
SALTED ALMONDS

FILET OF SOLE JOINVILLE
POTATOES PERSILADE

TENDERLOIN STEAK, FRESH MUSHROOMS
SWEET POTATOES ANGLAISE
PEAS EN CROUSTADE
FRESH TOMATOE EN SUPRISE

FANCY FORM ICE CREAM
ASSORTED CAKES

COFFEE

CIGARS

MINTS

CIGARETTES

..Program..

TOASTMASTER — FRANKLIN MOORE

Invocation — Rev. Clarence M. Burkholder

SPEAKERS

F. W. MOORE, PRESIDENT
"St. Clair's New Hotel"

J. KENNARD JOHNSON,
(Secy. Bay City Chamber of Commerce)
"How the Modern Hotel Benefits a Community"

LOUIS A. WEIL,
"Future of the City Along the World's
Greatest Waterway"

W. R. FLORY,
"America's Great Hotels"

Walter Shaw—Song Leader

Music by
Jules Klein's Entertainers

- Directors -

St. Clair Community Hotel Corporation

F. W. Moore, President
John Schlinkert, Vice-Pres.
Hannibal Allen Hopkins, Sect.
Russ S. Jenks, Treas.
Franklin Moore
Lyman A. Holmes
E. H. Recor



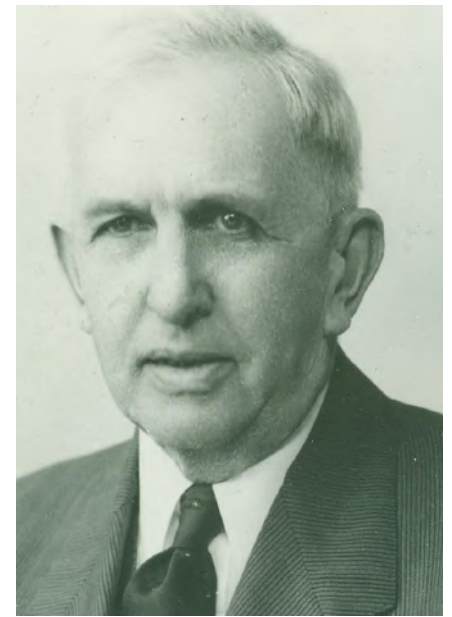
- Directors -



F. W. Moore, President



John Schlinkert, Vice-Pres.



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Franklin Moore



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OPEN HOUSE SEPT. 21, 4 TO 9 P. M. FOR PUBLIC

(By Mattie Smith, Assisted by Walter Wyeth)

Cleverly combining the fascinating atmosphere of the famous old inns of historic England with every modern comfort of hotel completeness, the St. Clair Inn will open its artistic doors to the public with a banquet and dance Sept. 22nd, the date of the official opening. For this event a large number of invitations have been issued and accepted, and the new hotel in the heart of St. Clair, is practically ready to welcome its first guests.


Tuesday, September 21st, from 4:00 to 9:00 p. m., the management will hold open house and stockholders and friends are cordially invited to inspect the new Inn. A buffet lunch will be served.





Whether one approaches the new hostelry from the street, from the river for which it is named or whether one first views the inside of the Inn, the experience is one that gives keen pleasure and deep satisfaction. This is due to the harmony of the entire building. Its design, all details of construction and its furnishings make a complete unit and offer an interesting study to those who are appreciative of atmosphere in architecture.

The style is old English of the Elizabethan period. The building consists of a central section with two gabled wings and a third wing projecting out at an angle to the river's edge on the river side, the inn has five of these interesting half timbered features. The wood used in these extended gables is cyprus, and oak, aged and weathered. The cement plaster used with this wood work is of a dark buff and blends with the soft tone of the brick walls.



An unusual and pleasing effect in masonry has been secured by using over burned English brick with some culls laid irregularly into the walls to secure the rough appearance desired. At intervals the brick are set end wise to further carry out the idea of an old time weathered exterior.

To obtain soft lines in the roof with color and age as economically as possible, asbestos shingles have been used and are very effective on the sharp gables and the eye brow dormers.





The Main Entrance.

The main entrance in the center of the building on the street side gives the key note of the details carried out in all parts of the building, and is particularly interesting if the means used to derive effects are studied. There is a porch with openings north and south and arched openings on the street side flanking the entrance steps, which are broad and shallow.

To the left is one of the happy features of the building lending originality and beauty to the whole. It is a round tower of the over burned brick, having brick shutters through which at night will glimmer rays of blue light, a clever contrivance and one that lends individuality to the whole.



The entrance door to the lobby apparently groans with age, that picturesque English age associated with the inns of the British nation in song and story. By a successful process the specially designed doors with their upper corners round appear battered by the years. The door casing is of cyprus, dignified with great cut nail heads, and the door itself is hoary with iron hinges and latch. Both of these are of wrought iron and massive to add to the ancient appearance.





The lobby has a Roman travertine wall, and a most delightful floor bricked in uneven pieces. The ceiling is beamed and plastered, and the room is lighted in harmony with the entire house, with wrought iron candle holders, and lanterns all of which are part of the artistic whole. Grayed oak is used for the main stairway which ascends from this room, which opens directly into the lounge at the rear, and is joined by the corridor that leads to the Dining Room and Coffee Shop.



Clerk's desk, switch board, telephone booths and other accessories that combine to form the heart of a hotel community.



The Tudor Fireplaces.

The architect, Walter H. Wyeth, of Port Huron, Michigan, has worked out in interesting detail the great lounge with its Tudor fireplace at either end, and its broad oak boarded floor and wide bay overlooking the river making a room probably the most pleasing in the entire house. Its high ceiling is obtained through the floor level being lowered from the lobby by three low broad steps in a timbered opening.

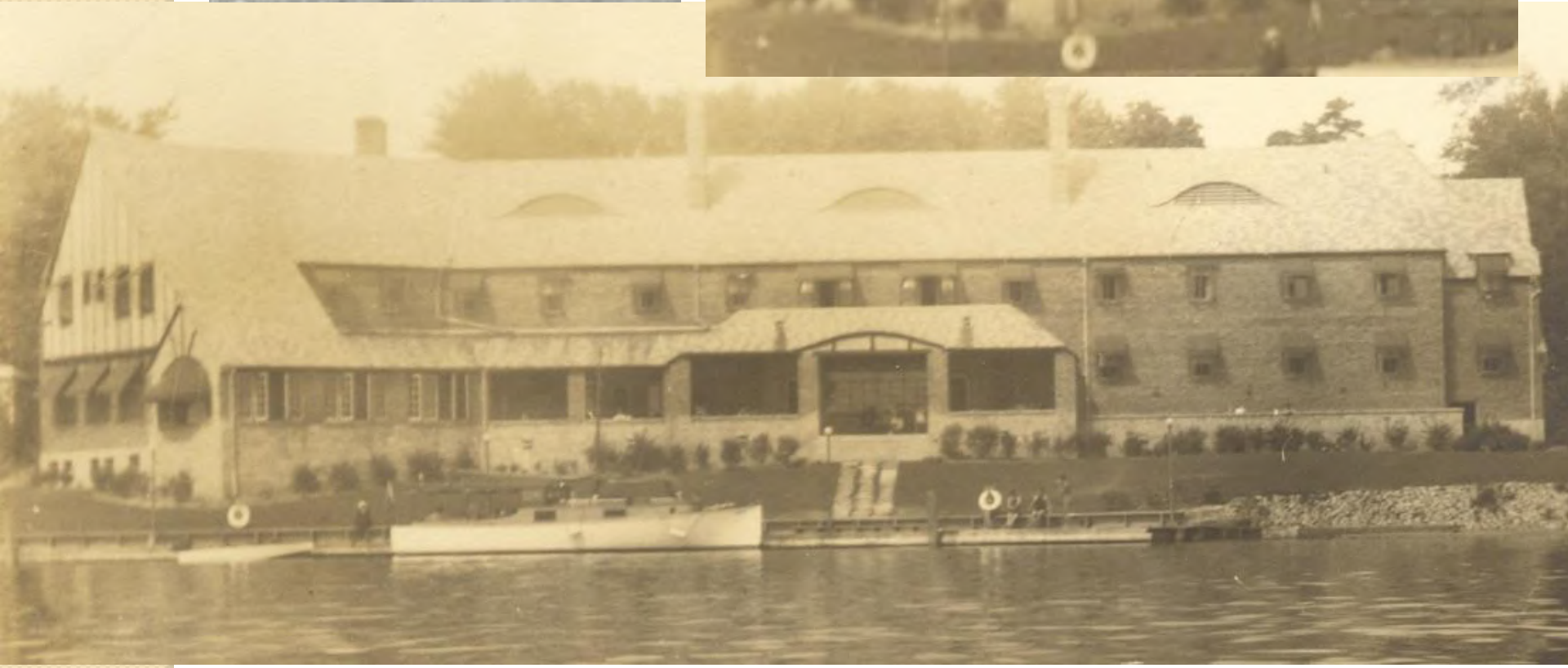




In speaking of the building which he planned, Mr. Wyeth referred to the contour of the ground as having prompted him to plan the main floor on different levels. "When one walks through the building from the lobby going east he traverses four different successive floor levels before he steps off the Cement Terrace at the north end of the porch. In other words we have preserved the slope of the ground in the building itself and built with it rather than over it. We have endeavored to obtain the practical without losing sight of harmonious proportions, the latter being something that costs nothing."



The Dining Room.



The Dining Room.

There is a main dining room and a dining porch of which should serve to meet the preference of any guest. They may dine in the large south wing, a charming room that was simply planned especially to give the view either up or down the river. It is 35 feet by 45 feet and radiates the cheer that all traditions associate with a Saxon baronial hall. Here against the textured plaster in rich buff the architect produced interesting decorative effects in half timbered work.



- *Jack & Peggy (Moore) Roll reception*



The ceiling is heavily beamed with rough hewn timbers protruding from the plaster. A raised dias for orchestra is on the west side of the dining hall with a decorative window behind it.





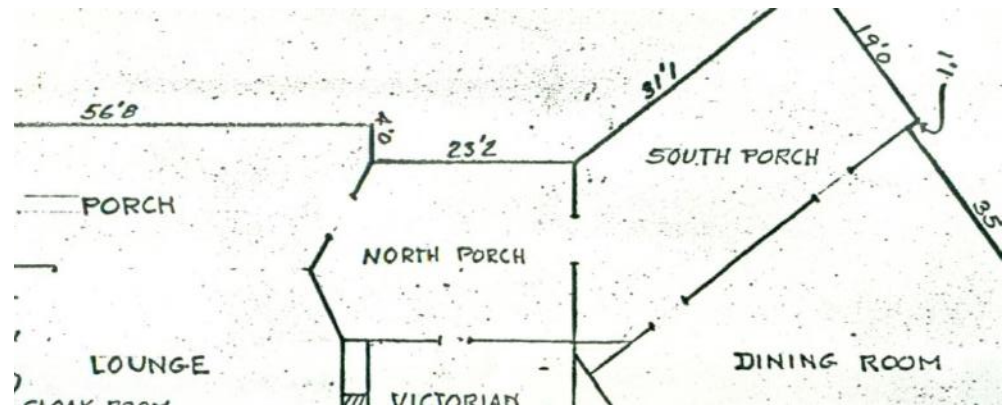
The room is designed to be used for dancing as well as dining and may be entirely cleared for this purpose while the guests are served at tables in the dining porch bordering the blue St. Clair river. It is an ideal arrangement and will, no doubt, prove its popularity at once.

Tables in the dining room proper and in the porch, which open off it, are small and of both round and square types for variety. There are accommodations for 125 guests to dine at one time.

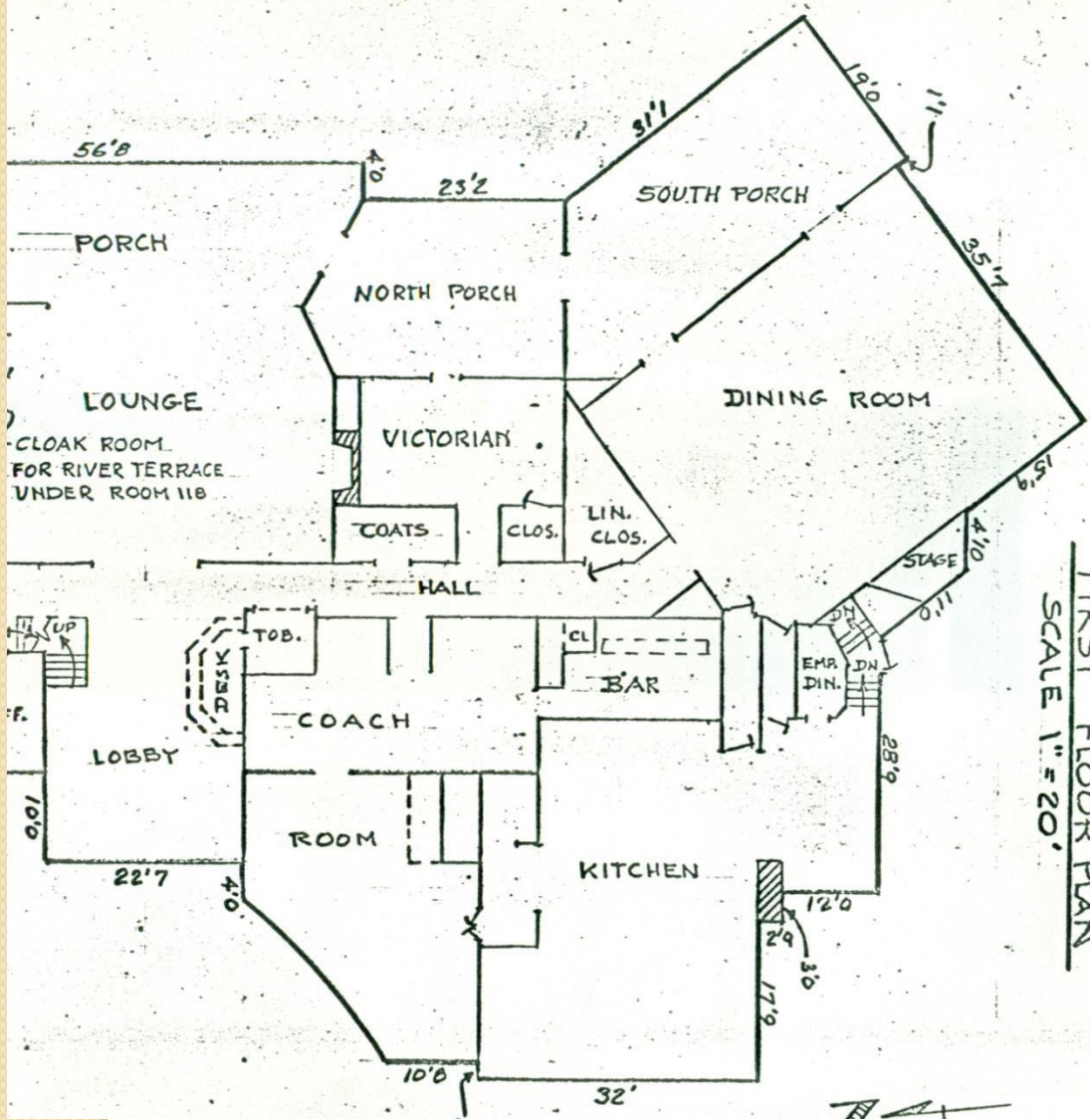
The dining room wing and the porch which adjoins it are built very close to the shore, and the latter room will later be enclosed with glass and screens so that it will be charming and comfortable for guests. It opens from the main dining room through large double doors. The porch has many interesting details, among them a ceiling of carefully worm eaten timber from which swing artistic wrought iron lanterns.









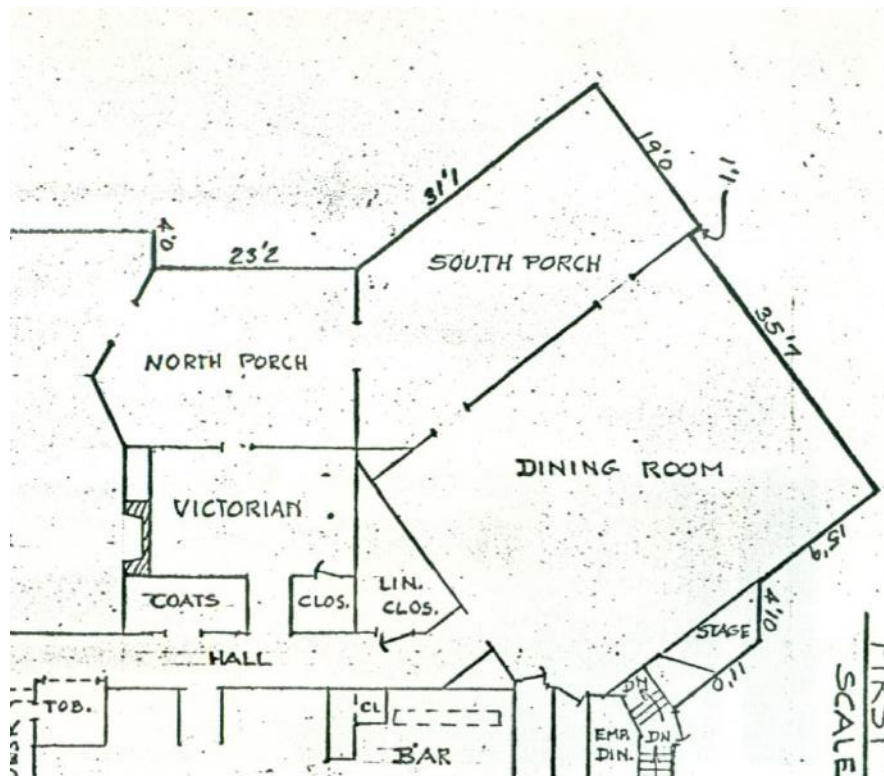


T. CLAIR INN
 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE 1" = 20'

Modern Kitchen.

Every modern contrivance has been included in the hotel kitchen which is on the west side of the house. In this room, as in the attractive coffee room adjoining, the refrigerators are huge and are supplied from the complete plant installed in the basement. An electric oven, great coal range and a charcoal burner for broiling meats are features that will add much to the cuisine.

Opposite the kitchen is a small ordinary equipped to meet the needs of the automobile party desiring dinner in a private room.



ST. C
FIRST
SCALE

Wicker furniture of grace with hangings in soft tones have been chosen for the ladies' parlor and for the prettily irregular retiring room which opens off the corridor to the right of the lobby on the river side. Broad casement windows, two of them, light it, while between them a French door opens onto the broad porch. This room, for the ladies exclusively, is paneled and tinted and is the one place in the house that is distinctively feminine in its fittings, lighting and furnishings. Here, alone, the old English massiveness is foresworn, and much of the French atmosphere prevails.



All sides of the Inn have charm, but it is on the broad porch that the full beauty of the location and of the general design are most fully noted. The porch is 18 feet wide and about 160 feet in length, the extreme north portion being an open cement terrace, open to the sun and winds. This bit of nature's own playground is suitably furnished with old hickory furniture, making an inviting place for sunny mornings.



Descending cement steps made attractive and decorative with pieces of broken tile, guests will find a lawn

sloping to the pier which the company has built for motor boats and yachts. This pier, 9 feet wide, extends the entire length of the grounds, except for a space at the north which has been made attractive as a sand bathing beach. The pier is well lighted by elevated electric lamps on iron posts, and presents an attractive front from the river.







ST. CLAIR INN

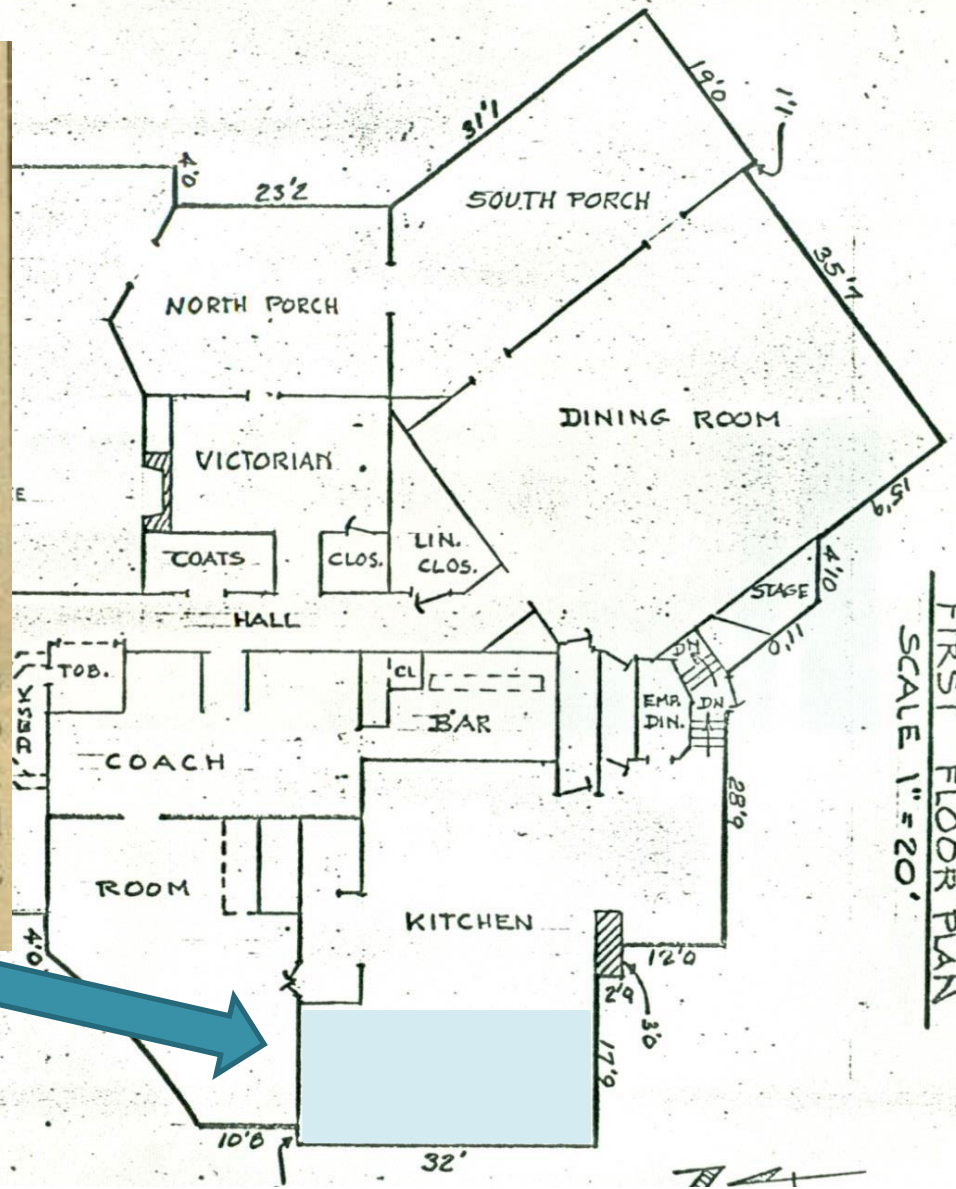
ST. CLAIR MICH





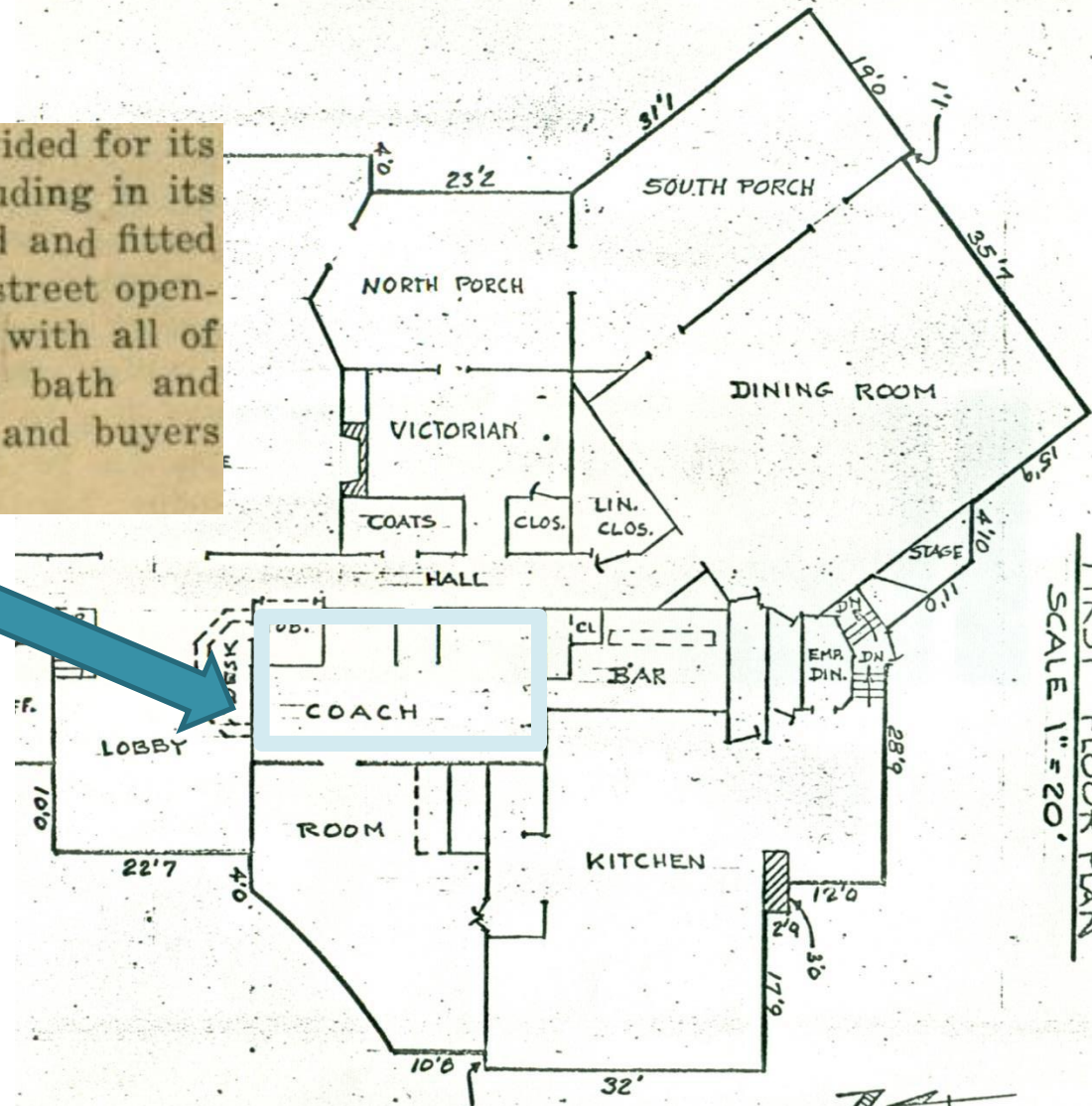
In the Coffee Room.

Since the St. Clair Inn is a commercial hotel as well as a haven for tourists and a home for summer and winter guests, there has been provided a coffee room, opening from the street and offering to the business man a special lunch. This room is attractive in forest green which is particularly lovely with the gray woodwork, and provides an inviting place for the noon-day luncheon and chat. Here are the latest devices in beverage machines and hot and cold ovens and refrigerators. Additional to table service, there is counter "quick lunch" provision with artistic stool chairs in gray and a convenient foot rail.



ST. CLAIR INN
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1" = 20'

The Inn has further provided for its commercial guests by including in its equipment a well arranged and fitted sample room. This has a street opening, also, and is provided with all of the comforts of private bath and necessities that salesmen and buyers desire.



ST. CLAIR INN
FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SCALE 1" = 20'

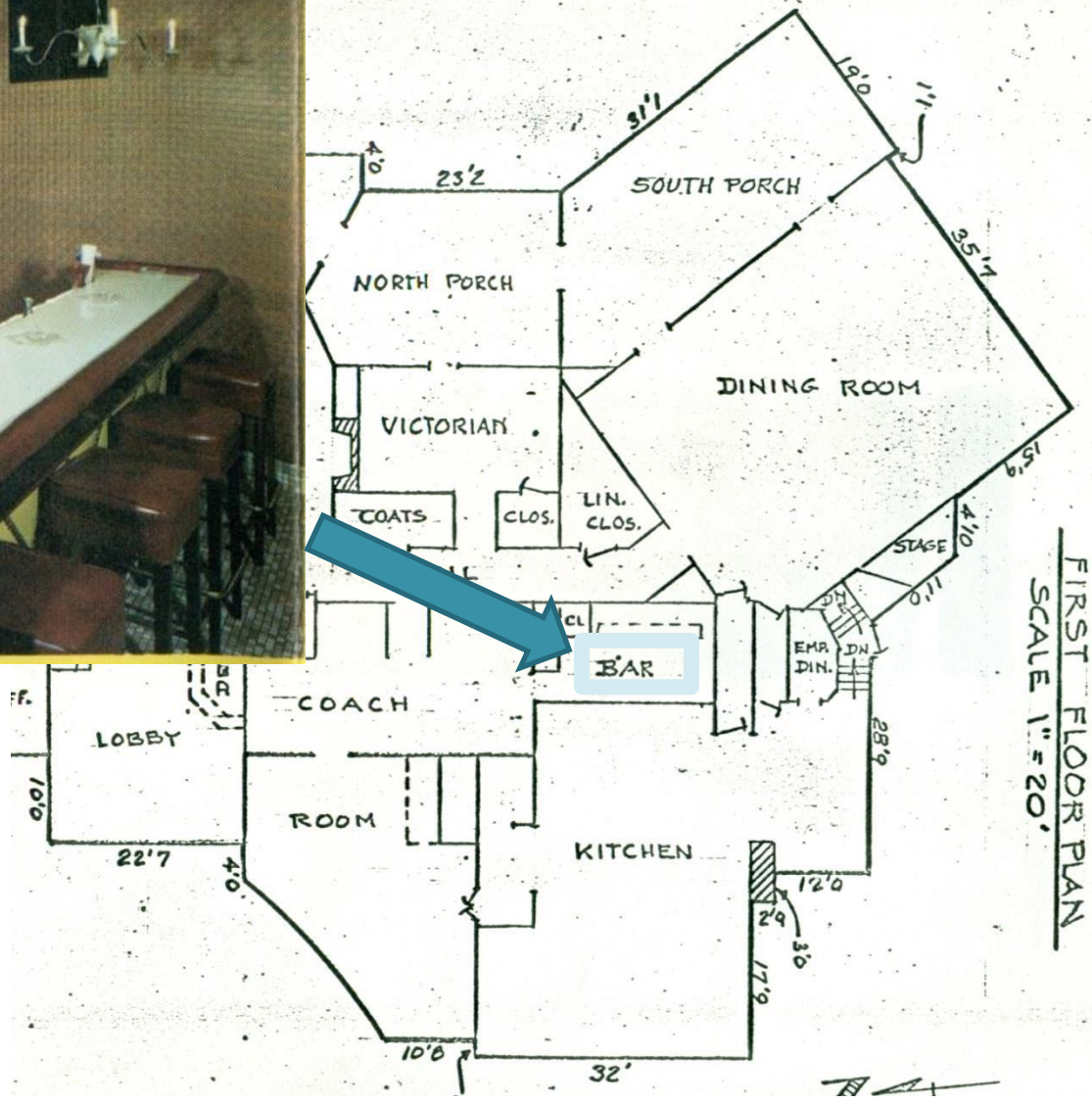
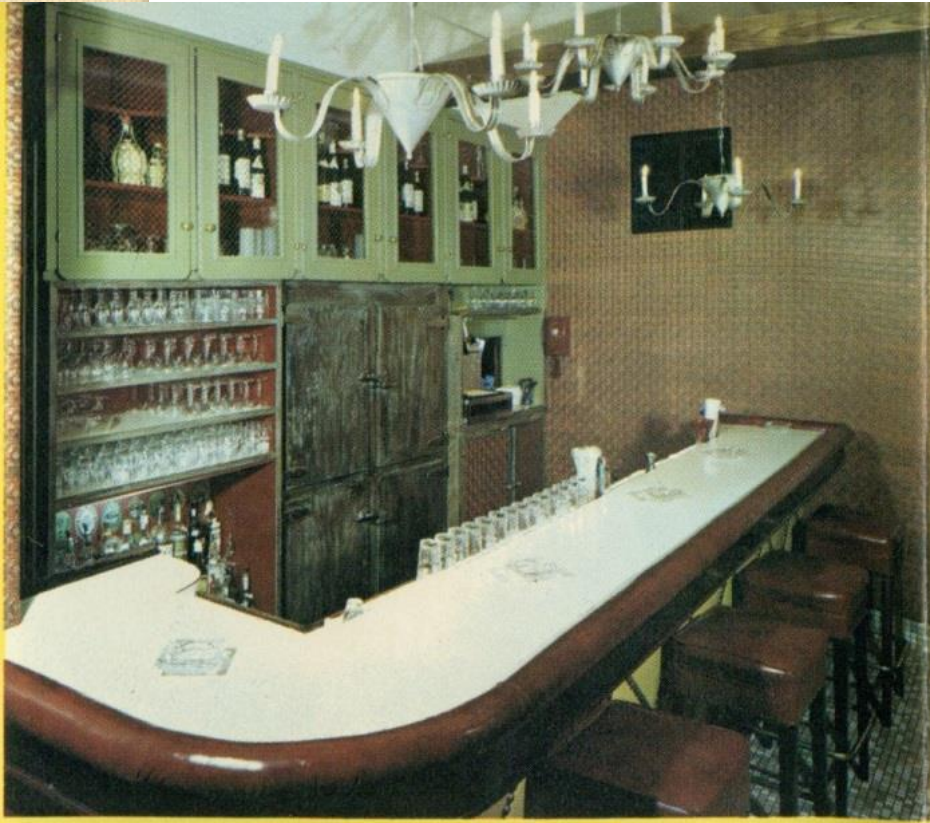


*Not sure why it had a sample room.
Since Prohibition was in full swing.
Creighten Holden was the first manager.*

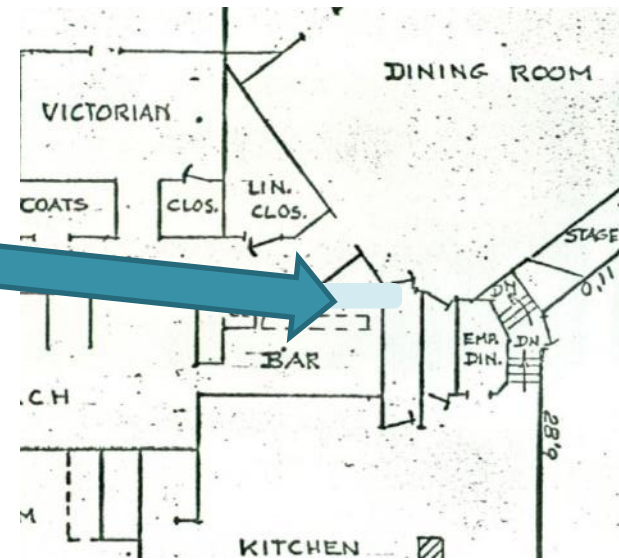


Holly Holden

“During Prohibition, my Grandfather adhered to the law and the St. Clair Inn was a “dry” establishment. One day he was approached by members of the notorious Purple Gang. They demanded that Grandpa pay them protection and they wanted to utilize the basement of the Inn as a drop off/storage spot for bootlegged booze being smuggled in from Canada. If he did not agree to their demands, they threatened to “take him for a ride” (aka kill him). My Grandfather refused to buckle under. Instead, He gave the thugs a message for their boss. He (the mob boss) would always be welcomed as a guest at the St. Clair Inn. In addition Grandpa would continue to purchase goods (produce etc) from any legitimate business operated by members of the Purple Gang Family. The Mob Boss was impressed by my Grandfather’s moxie and he was never bothered by the Purple Gang or any other mobsters again.”



ST. CLAIR INN
 FIRST FLOOR PLAN
 SCALE 1" = 20'

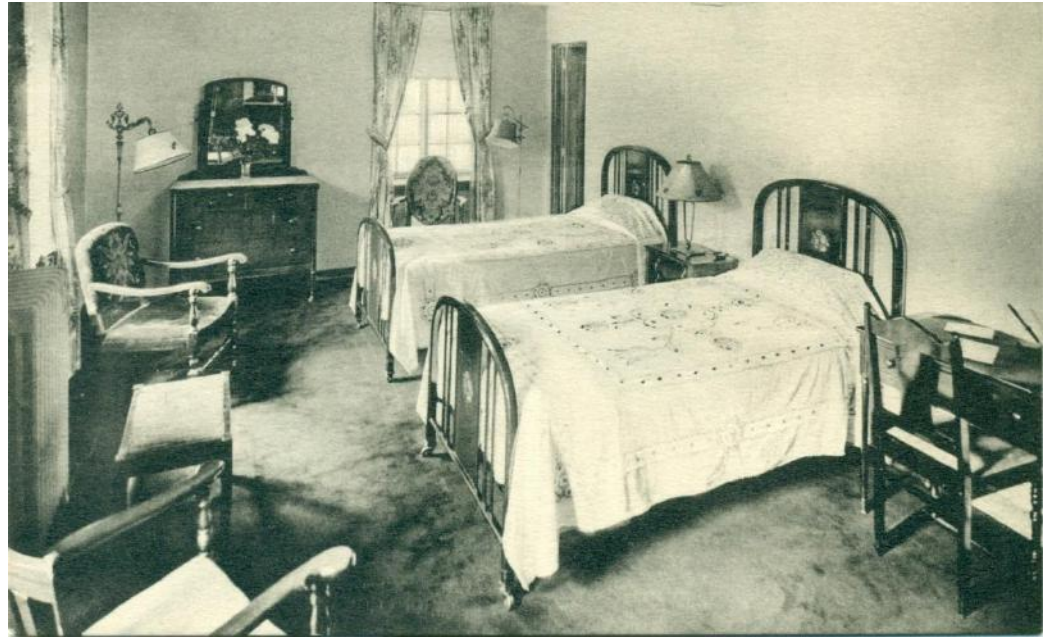


- *Pass through to dining room*

Sixty Rooms.

Provision and accommodations have been provided for sixty guest rooms, although many of the rooms are double. There are 34 rooms with bath and the balance have full fitted lavatories. In these rooms Mr. Wyeth has worked out a new feature in locating the lavatory in a wardrobe entirely closed off from the sleeping room.

This feature has been carried out by combining the clothes closet with the lavatory, in some instances, placing both in one deep recess and providing two doors the full width so that both clothing and wash room accessories may be hidden from view if a guest desires. Another practical feature is the arrangement for making suites of adjoining rooms. Between each of these connecting rooms double doors are provided so that, if they are used separately, no noise can penetrate. Every room has, of course, a well-fitted closet with shelf.



Completeness marks the bathrooms. Nothing has been omitted that will add to the comfort of the guests who use them. Here the happy bather will find even a hook for his bath robe. He will discover another for his razor strop, and will see that all details that would be provided for in the well furnished home are included in the bath equipment. This complete bathroom plan is one of the features of the house.

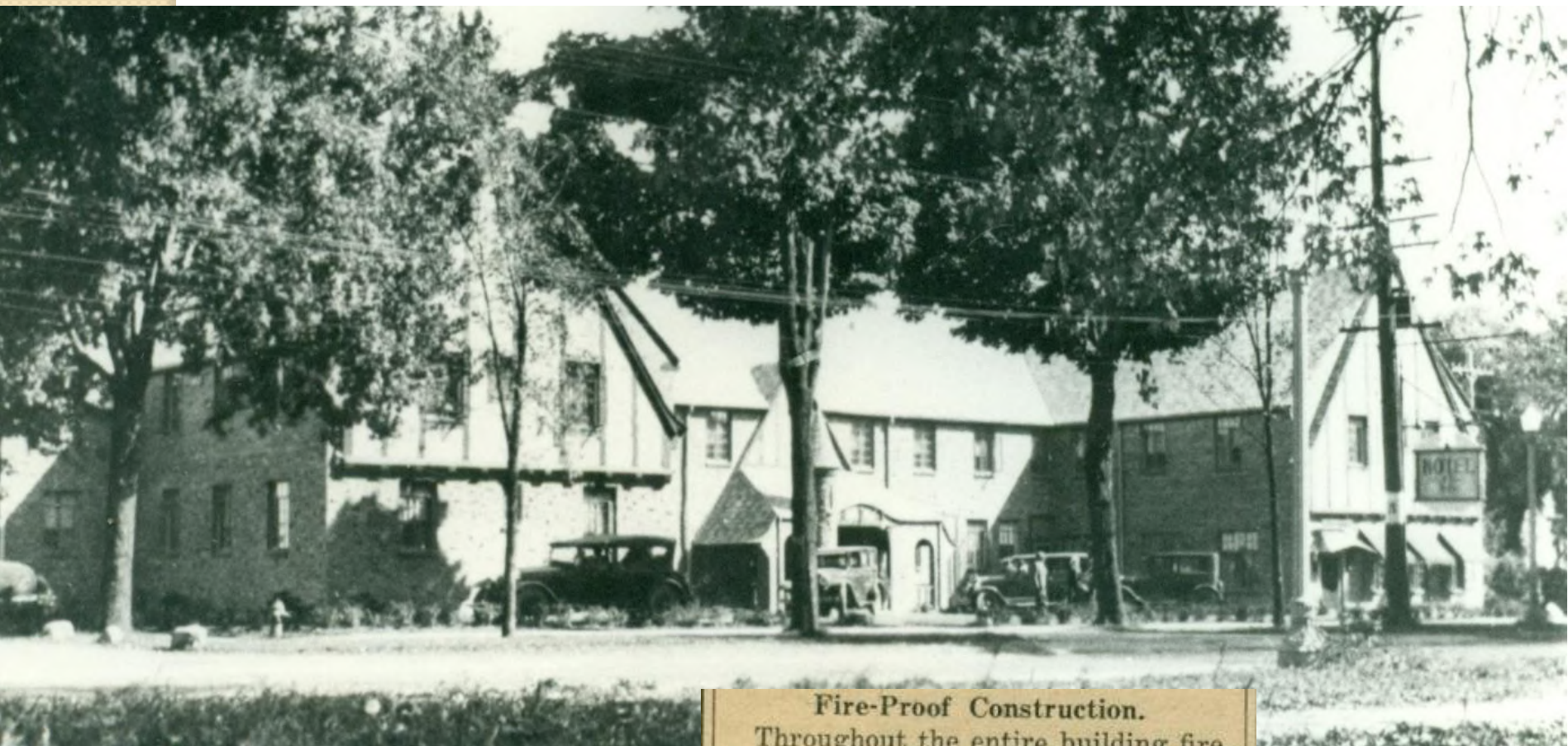
Mr. Wyeth, the architect, warmly expresses his appreciation of the cooperation given him by the Board of Directors. "My ideas at times, no doubt, seemed revolutionary to them from a standpoint of hotel design, but they never differed with me on a single thing without following through with some investigating after which they agreed, assisted and cooperated in every possible way," he stated. "They wanted a hostelry of the Inn Type and it has been delivered. The atmosphere which this type of design creates gives the proper setting and housing for the atmosphere which will be built up by the management and guests themselves so that the commercial traveler and tourist alike will feel the worries and weariness of commercial life and travel leave him as he crosses the threshold."



In the sleeping rooms the walls are gray sand finished plaster, a plan which harmonizes well with the gay cretones that have been selected for the hangings at the casement windows. Many of these rooms will not be further decorated at present. Each room has, of course, the Bell telephone and is connected through the switchboard in the lobby. Fooms are carpeted, both on the ground and second floors, the corridors being carpeted also and bordered with terrazo. Complete ventilation has been provided for all inside bath rooms by a fan in the attic, the air being expelled through the eye brow dormers in the roof.



• 1940-Merle Levy



Fire-Proof Construction.

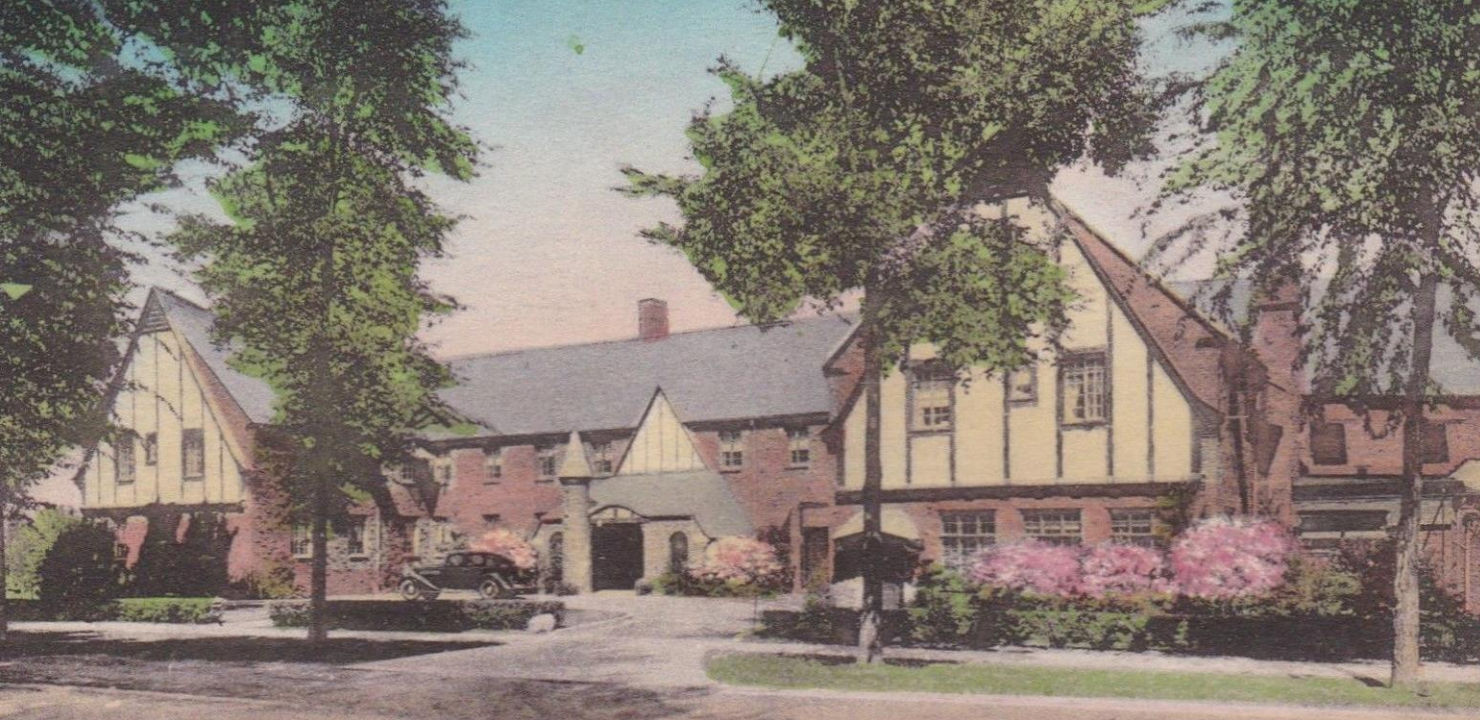
Throughout the entire building fire-proof materials have been used, and further safety has been provided by the three stairways for guests and service. No wood has been used for the support of any material except the sheathing to which the asbestos shingles are fastened. Steel, brick and cement make a practically fire-proof structure and fire house standpipes have been placed at both ends of the building to further insure safety.



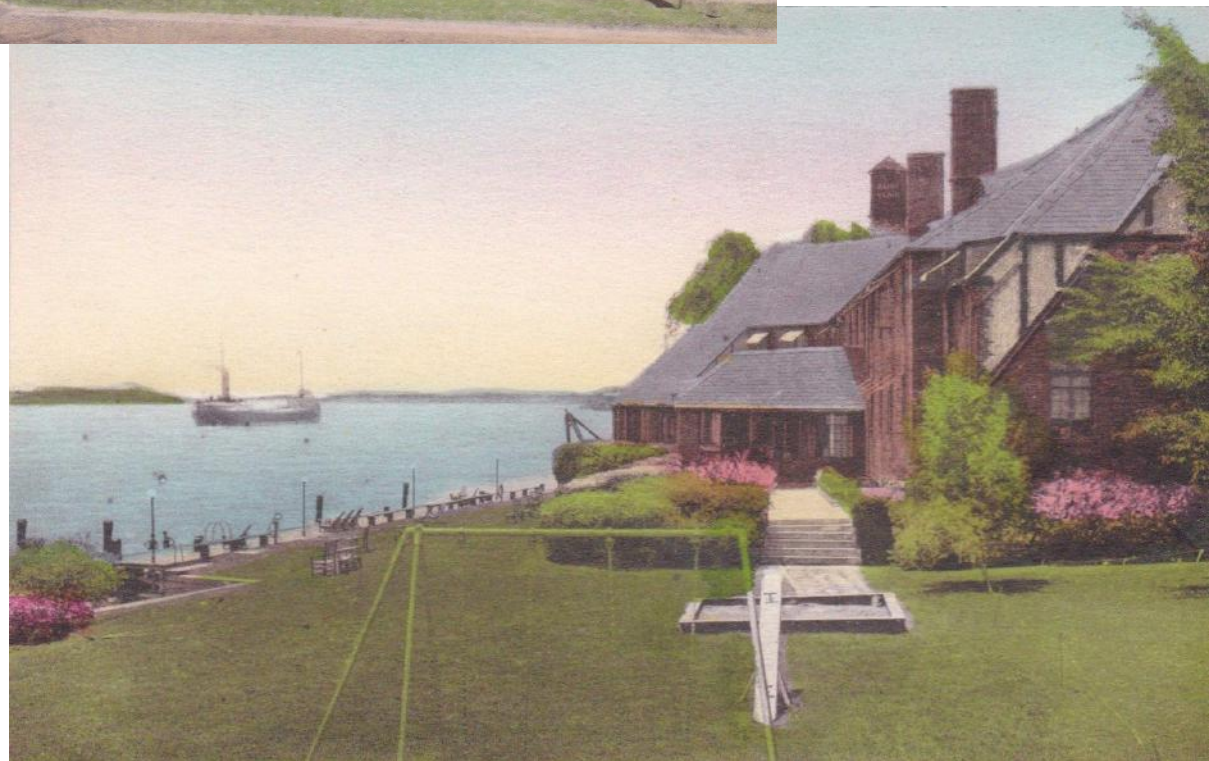
The Hockenbury Company, of Harrisburg, Pa., who promoted the financing of the hotel has written the

Board of Directors and architect at considerable length about the excellent layout of the building which they state is very practical and economical from an operating standpoint.

The company also stated this to be the first hotel out of almost one hundred that they have financed where the contracts were let immediately after the opening of bids.



An Old Fashioned Garden.
A bit of English garden country will be the setting when the landscape is complete with a circular drive on the road side bordered with the new box barbery. The lawn will be finished where it meets the house with such old favorites as fox glove, hollyhocks and larkspur. In the rear there will be grass bordered stepping stones leading to the pier, and many perennials in quaint flower beds. Wm. Munt of St. Clair, is doing this work as well as improving 160 feet of space north of the hotel for parking purposes.







Contracts for construction went to the F. R. Patterson Company of Detroit. All of the bed rooms have been furnished by Friederichs & Smith of St. Clair, while the public rooms, such as lounge, dining room and lobby, have been furnished by Mandel Brothers of Chicago, directed by Mr. Wyeth, who supervised the furnishings throughout. Silverware, linen and glass are from Kaufmans of Pittsburgh.

The vacuum steam heating plant, which is in the spacious basement, together with the linen rooms, laundry rooms and refrigerating plant was installed by Frank Robins & Son of St. Clair, and the electric wiring and fixtures by the Everson Electric Company of Port Huron, and Chamberlin Electric Company of St. Clair respectively.



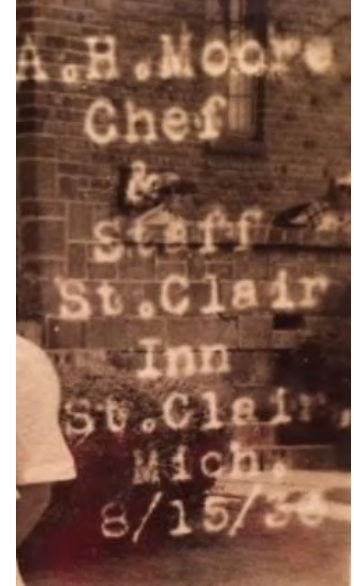
Manager and Chef.

H. L. Cook, manager of the Inn, was for six years in the Fort Pitt Hotel in Pittsburg, Pa., where he later became assistant manager. He was for one year assistant manager of the Morrow Field apartment hotel and later manger of the Hotel Virginia at Conneaut Lake Park, Pa.

Already, Mr. Cook finds, the dining room capacity is threatened with overcrowding for certain purposes, as many inquiries have been made about securing it for gatherings of all kinds.

He is enthusiastic over the beauty of the location, and the outlook for all the year around guests. The hotel will be conducted on the European plan, and the aim is to have substantial food that will win a splendid reputation for the place.

With Mr. Cook as chef is "Gus" Schneider who has been for eight years associated with the Armour experimental kitchens in Chicago. Mr. Schneider comes to the St. Clair Inn from the Morrow Field Apartment hotel in Pittsburg, and has been associated with Mr. Cook in a like capacity before.

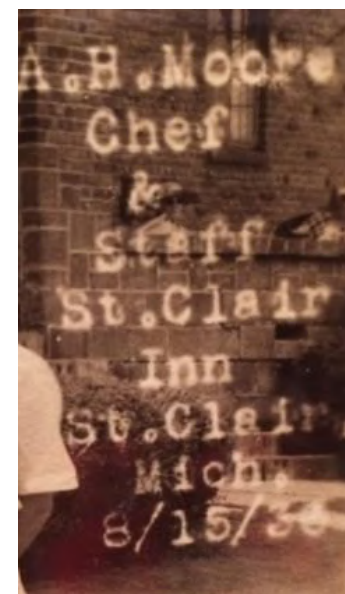




1936 photo of Clayton French, chef under the direction of A.H. Moore.

Clayton's family started French's Bakery in Port Huron in the 1930's, and it ran until the 1980's.

Clayton was also a chef aboard many Great Lakes ships. His nephew Stan Carroll was a chef at the Inn in the 1980's. Stan enjoyed sailing too, he and his wife Jennifer spent their wedding night at the inn in 1982.





Mark Zimmer
Chef



Mrs. Evelyn Cowan
Chef's Assistant



Harry Townsend
Chef's Assistant

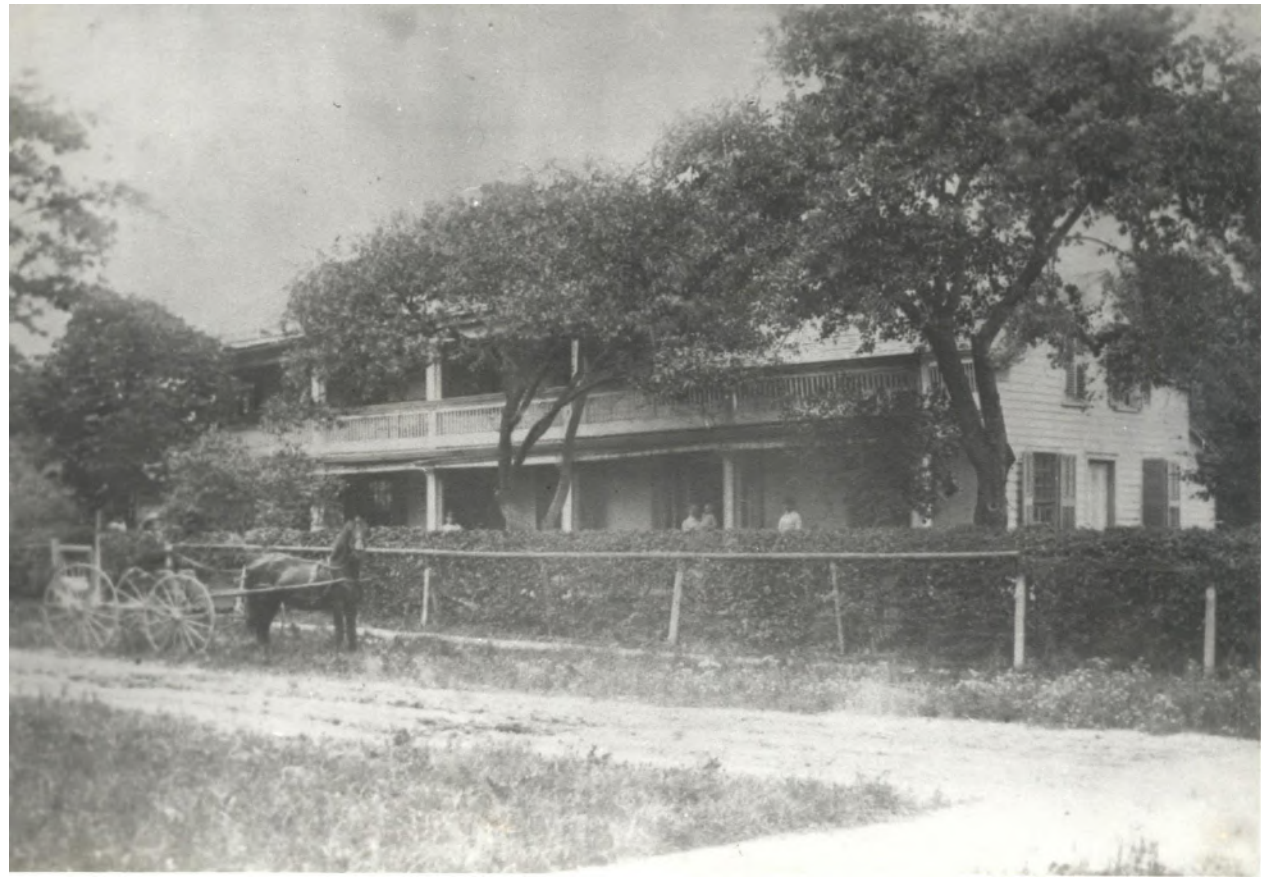
Taken from the Independent Press-

Thursday, March 14, 1963

Shortly after its completion, the times began to change. The depression came with its far reaching effects and the small river town of St. Clair suffered along with the rest of the country. In 1932, the Inn went into the hands of a receiver, A Dr. Inches, St. Clair native and former Police Commissioner of Detroit. The situation continued to be a dark one for the little Inn on the River and with in the next ten years it was handled by six or seven operations, none being very successful.



Dr. Inches & residence.



- *Creighten managed the hotel until 1934.*



St. Clair Inn

St. Clair, Michigan

C. W. Holden, Manager

SUMMER RATES FOR THE
SEASON OF 1931

June 15 to September 15

European Plan

Single Rooms, With Bath:

Day Rate - - - - \$4 to \$6

Weekly Rate - - \$25 to \$35

Single Rooms, Without Bath:

Day Rate - - - - \$3 and \$4

Weekly Rate - - \$15 to \$25

Double Rooms, With Bath:

Day Rate - - - - \$5 to \$8

Weekly Rate - - \$30 to \$50

Double Rooms, Without Bath:

Day Rate - - - - \$4 to \$6

Weekly Rate, \$22.50 to \$30

Phone 452 for Reservations

OVER



St. Clair Inn

St. Clair, Michigan

Friday, July 14--1938

Menu

Shrimp Cocktail Fruit Cocktail
Chilled Tomato Juice

Clam Chowder

Frog Legs Sauté à Sec \$1.25
Broiled White Fish-Tartar Sauce 1.10
Roast Prime Ribs of Beef au Jus 1.00
Pan-Fried Chicken 1.20
Broiled Lamb Chops 1.10
Stewed Chicken with Biscuit 1.00
T-Bone or Tenderloin Steak 1.25

O'Brien or Whipped Potatoes

Spanish Corn - Harvard Beets -

Hearts of Lettuce, Thousand Island Dressing

or
Peas with Cabbage Cheese Salad

Iced Watermelon - Banana Cream Pie

Butter Scotch Sundae - Chocolate Layer Cake

Orange Ice - Vanilla Ice Cream with Cookies

Tea or Coffee (Hot or Iced) - 25c Silk

Special 75¢ Plate Dinner

Clam Chowder or Chilled Tomato Juice

Fried Trout-Tartar Sauce

Stewed Chicken with Biscuit

Roast Prime Ribs of Beef

Whipped Potatoes

Spanish Corn or Harvard Beets

Iced Watermelon - Apple Pie

Chocolate Sundae - Orange Ice

Tea or Coffee (Hot or Iced) - 25c Silk



1938

1931

He left for Detroit . . .

Some would say, "He was just flipping hamburgers in Detroit."



About 1927 Hudson

Once the depression was behind however, the hotel found it was back where it belonged, in the hands of the St. Clair Hotel Company. Fred Moore, then president of the company, contacted Creighton W. Holden of Detroit and offered him the position of manager. Holden, who had been the Inn's first manager, felt that it could be successful if he had a free hand running it.



Fred W. Moore



Creighton Holden, Sr.



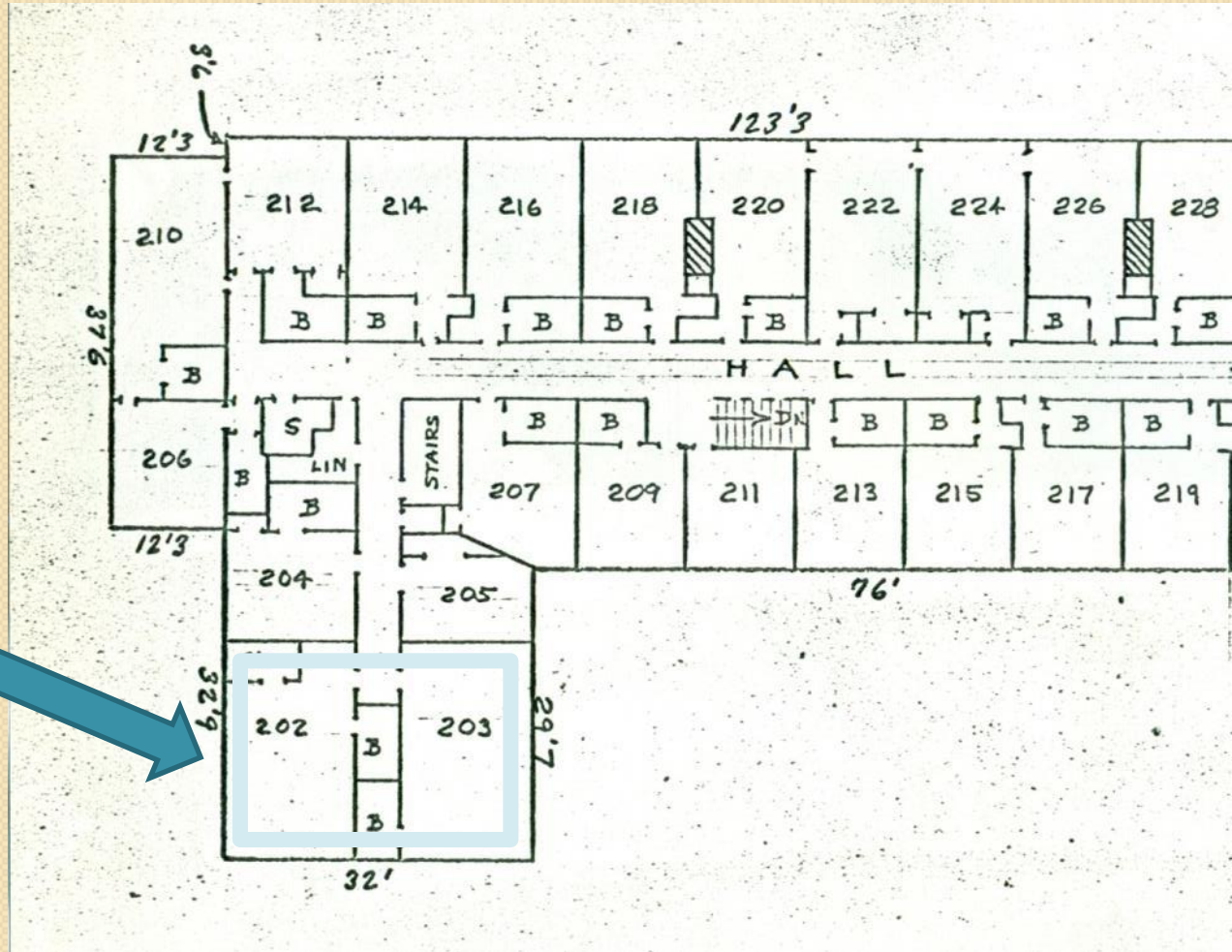
At that time he was the owner of the Holden Drive Inn Chain in Detroit the city's first drive-ins. He agreed to return to St. Clair providing he could purchase 51 percent of the hotel stock. So, 1943 he sold his Detroit interest and came home to revive a Blue Water tradition.

- *The Holden Family*





The quaint town of St. Clair, the beautiful St. Clair River, whose sand bar makes the ships turn course for an amazing view from the Inn and now a man with personality and business sense.



- Creighton and Belle Holden lived in the St. Clair Inn. On the second floor, street side.



Holden ran the hotel alone until 1946 when his two sons, Creighton, present day manager, and Robert, came to St. Clair to assist. In 1948 the boys succeeded in purchasing the remaining 49 percent of stock and the St. Clair Inn on the River became a family tradition.

Independent Press 1963



According to the story passed to me by Creighton Holden III and Laura Crawford, “Sadly the reason for the brothers buying the remaining stock, was the discovery Creighton Sr.’s lung cancer.”

“Creighton Holden Jr. & his brother Robert were told that they would buy the remaining shares of the Inn. (Creighton Jr. always said he would never say “no” to his father).”



Creighton III continued, "The Holden crest was added in 1949 to match book covers and the front awning. Late the next year, they invested in sterling silverware, sugar bowls, and put the crest on the plates, etc.



“These were stolen by many. (In fact, much of what we now have has been given to us by former employees and friends who had applied the ‘five-finger discount’ in procuring the items).”



There was much work that needed doing, Holden recalls, when he returned in 1946. In 20 years, little if any major repairs had been made. Carpets were replaced, rooms refurnished, air conditioning completed, laundry and boilers replaced, the kitchen remodelled and private baths put in all rooms. It was the beginning of an improvement and modernization plan that hasn't stopped.





4/19

BEGIN WORK ON DE-LUXE LIVING UNIT AT ST. CLAIR INN

APRIL 11, 1947

Excavation was completed and footing concrete poured this week for the first of three units of deluxe living quarters being built to supplement the overcrowded facilities of St. Clair Inn.

The unit at present under construction, which has 7 separate living rooms with bath, will be rushed to completion for occupancy by June 1, according to Creighton W. Holden, owner of the Inn. It will cost \$25,000.

Facing St. Clair River, the new structure is being built on the east half of the Inn parking lot, with its north end near the line dividing the property of the Inn and Fred Gliem.

By utilizing a unique "saw-tooth" design, in which one corner of each living room points directly out on the river, and the placing of a large picture window in that corner, all the occupants of the unit will have an unobstructed view up and down the river.

Each living room to be finished in knotty pine, have a beamed ceiling, will be carpeted and furnished with Rattanreed furniture and twin studio couches. Adjoining each living room will be a full tiled bathroom with tub and shower.

Mr. Holden said the unit will be insulated and equipped with thermostatically controlled gas heat for year-round use.

The exterior of the building has been designed by the architect, Walter Wyeth, Port Huron, in the English tradition, to match that of the Inn.

Two other units are planned which will be two-story in structure, one running east and west and the second facing the river like the one now under construction, but closer to Riverside avenue, on what is now lawn between the parking lot and the north wall of the Inn. These two will have 16 and 14 rooms respectively.

However, these are not expected to be completed before 1949, with construction on the first of them not starting before next year, Mr. Holden said.

David Nauman, St. Clair, is the contractor.

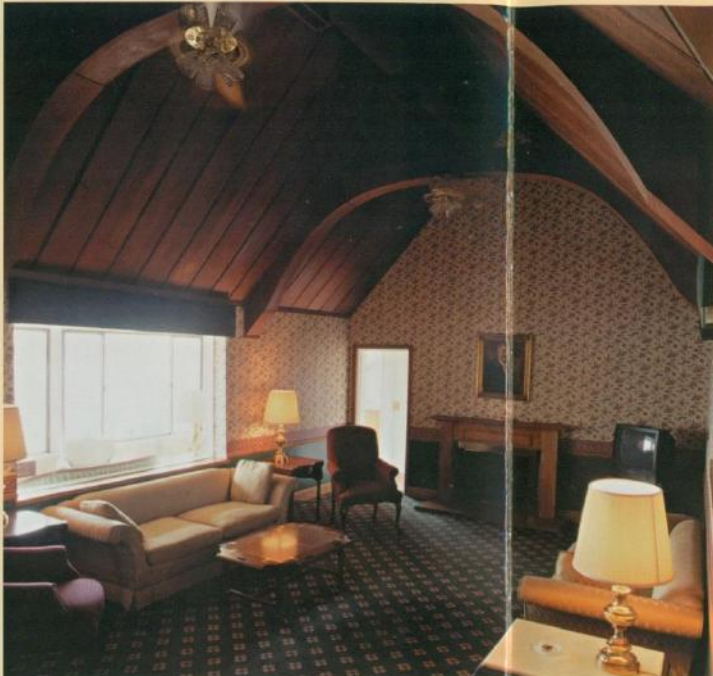


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Guest cottages, located on the north of the original building were opened and in 1950 the home of "Cap" Pringle was purchased, located to the south of the Inn. The Captain's [redacted] same part of the tavern.



Why was it called the Captain's House? Well, because it was once owned by Captain Bob Pringle. His father was Captain John C. Pringle, and mother Anna. In 1907 they were living on the hill, in this home.



The Senior Captain John C. Pringle was born in Scotland, in 1839, he navigated both land and sea. At one time walking to Detroit from Bay City, another from Sarnia. He even bought a ship off of the Langell Shipyard, the *Simon Langell*, which was built here in 1886.



But it was his son, Captain Bob, who would stay at the St. Clair Inn when he was on shore. He owned the Pringle Barge Line in Cleveland, and pictured here is one of his boats. Now, the Inn got tired of him being out on the deck in his undershirt, and he got tired of the Inn complaining about him being out on the deck in his undershirt. That is why he built his home just south of the St. Clair Inn.





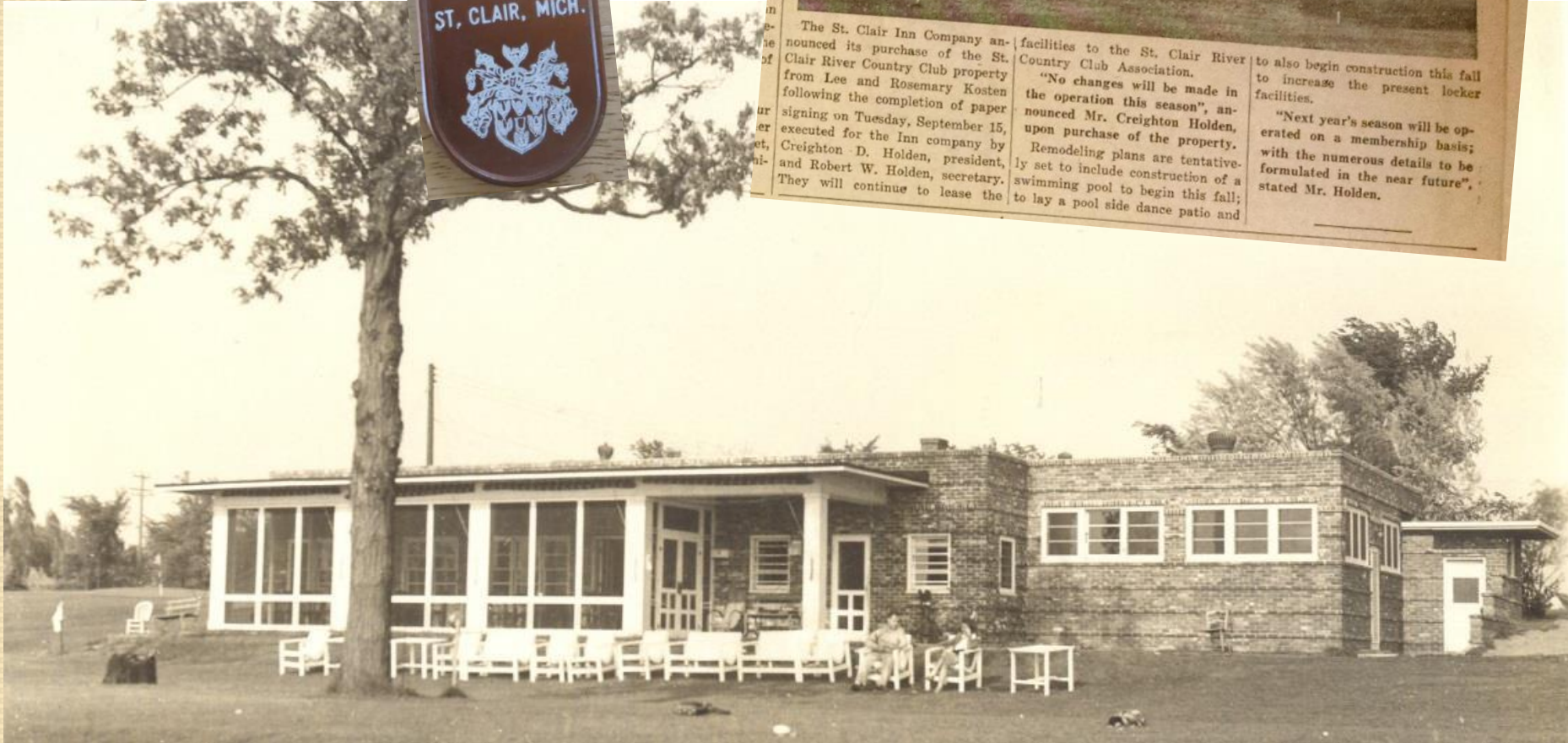
north
e home
of the





A couple of years later the Wyeth apartments were sold to Holden and converted into hotel suites. Natives probably recall the days when this building was a depot for the Interurban lines. The Redwood room and suites were then constructed joining the two buildings.

In 1953, the Holdens bought the Country Club.



Wiffi Smith came to St. Clair In May of 1955, and worked at the Country Club. In 1954 she won the USGA National Juniors, and in 55, right before coming to St. Clair, she won her Woman's Amateur North / South Title. Where does a name like Wiffi come from?

Her name was actually Margaret, but she got her nickname while she was in the womb. Her mother was in a tiny Indian village in the jungles of South America. She was walking along and this witch doctor stopped, looked, smiled, then came over and patted her stomach. "Huifi," he said, pronounced 'Wiffi' meant 'Something is coming'. She didn't even know she was pregnant, and wasn't even a month along, but returning to Mexico City, she found out it was true.



May 1955



Creighton Holden, Jr. In a 2000 interview-- “And Wiffi flew into Detroit – in those days, the airport was down on Gratiot- and they flew her up to the St. Clair County Airport in a private plane. And we sent the Inn’s station wagon to pick her up because she was going to stay with us and play out of the St. Clair golf club.”

“The Inn station wagon was an old Desoto station wagon and on the door it had “St. Clair Inn.” There was a Whiffi standing there and my brother Bob standing there and they took a picture and put it in the paper, but they erased the “St. Clair Inn” off the door because we hadn’t paid for an ad. That was how chintzy the Times Herald was in those days.”



At the Country Club, Wiffi only performed office duties, as to keep her amateur status. But she was on the course practicing, before and after work, rain or shine!

She turned pro in 1957 and went on to win eight times on the LPGA Tour, between 1957 and 1960.

Wiffi Smith later spoke fondly of the Holden's. "Bob was a wonderful man. His whole family took me in and helped me financially and encouraged me in all my endeavors. I remember I learned to dance in their kitchen. Like with the Bells, I became family and they helped me move along in the world."



Country Club



June 22, 1961

Fred Miller

"I will never forget the fire. Jim Edgette, the night clerk at the Inn and my buddy, called me at home around 2:30 or 3:00 am and told me the Country Club was on fire. I grabbed my clothes, jumped in my car and flew as fast as I could go down Cass and up Riverside. No traffic and no stops around 100 mph. Just as I was passing the water tower the fire whistle went off. I was driving flat out as fast as my car would go up the hill. I was the first one there. Strange since it was quiet except for the sound of the huge fire. I knew George the care taker was there but I could not get in. George died from smoke asphyxiation. He was a good man and my friend and I still feel bad I could not save him."

ST. CLAIR, MICHIGAN

THURSDAY, JUNE 29, 1961

Totally Destroyed



ROARING FLAMES outline the rear of the St. Clair Country Club at the height of the \$200,000 blaze early Wednesday morning. The open-air patio is at far left; the cocktail lounge at center, and the pro shop at

right. The building and its contents were so totally ruined that Fire Marshalls declared Wednesday noon that it would be almost impossible to determine the cause of the fire. (Photo by Bob Salt)

Man Killed in \$200,000 Fire Caretaker Dead of Smoke; Fire's Origin Not Known

George C. Woodruff, caretaker at the St. Clair Country Club was killed early Wednesday morning in a fire which totally destroyed the main building.

Losses were estimated at over \$200,000.

Woodruff's body was found about 4:30 a.m. lying face down in the men's locker room, about 30 feet from the room where he usually slept.

Firemen and police believe that Woodruff became confused by the heavy smoke while trying to escape and blundered into the "blind alley" end of the locker room, where he was overcome by smoke.

A coroner's autopsy was scheduled to be conducted Wednesday

the entire loss.

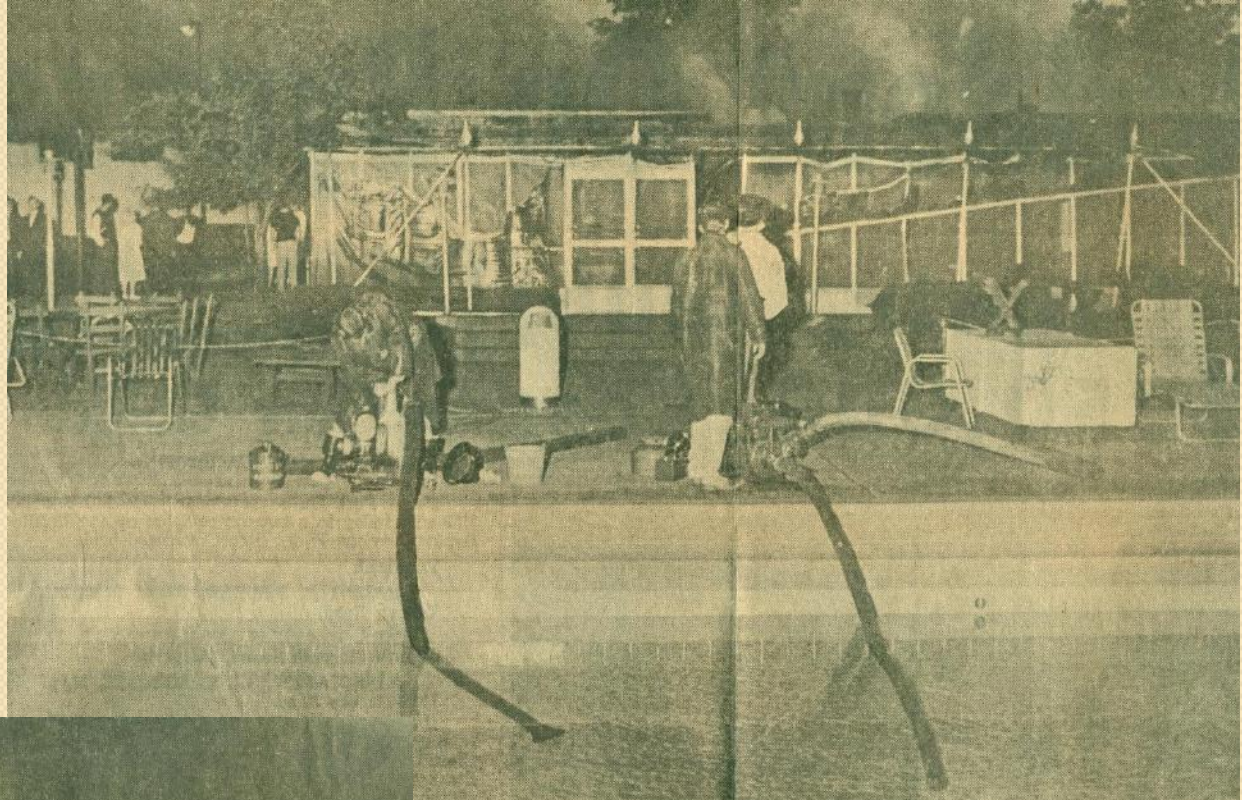
Mr. Holden said the first sign of the fire was at 2:20 a.m. when James Edgette, a switchboard operator at the Inn, noticed that the light for the private telephone line connecting the Club and the Inn came on.

He answered the phone, and got "a funny sort of sound." He then tried to call the Club on an outside line but this was busy.

He told Mr. Holden who began to leave to go up to the club to see what was wrong.


Mr. Holden remembered the exact time as 2:27 a.m. be-

“Minutes later Creight Holden and the fire department arrived. Immediately the firemen put on their gear and entered the locker room. I remember Mr. Holden requesting he get some gear to go with the firemen and told no. When the fire reached the bar the liquor blew up with a huge blue flame and quite a noise. It took some doing but the guys got the fire out. I was a total loss. Later that day I was helping clean up and I notice that if I pushed on one of the walls still standing it moved. I told Don Reynolds, the manager, he said push it down. After a few shoves the wall came down. After I did it I thought ‘what if it fell on me’. A typical young kid.”





“We saved 206 Golf bags and clubs and about 50 cases of beer. The coolers insulated the beer, only the top three or four rows were damaged. The cooler did a good job in reverse. We moved it across the street to the Feldman house which the Inn owned. I have no idea what happened to the beer.”



The area was cleaned up pretty fast. I remember a Country Club party after a member's tournament with no club house and much of anything else. A huge tent was installed. Warren Zimmer was cooking steaks over a hot charcoal fire in a wheel barrow. I still remember him standing there in the dark while the members stood in line for their steak.

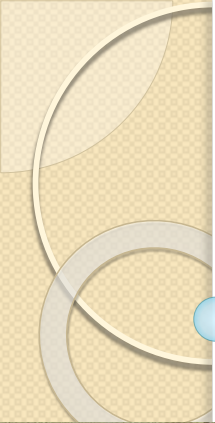


The St. Clair Golf and Country
Club Buildings

The first major addition to the original building was added two years ago. So that the new would blend with the aged, Gustave Daniel, Detroit architect, designed for Holden a room of authentic English Tudor design to be added to the front of the Inn.

Independent Press 1963





Cutty Paterson, city superintendent, did the building and the results were gratifying. In an effort to maintain the old world atmosphere, the overhead beams are actual bearing beams, completely functional. The decorative glass was imported from Germany, the carpet from Scotland.



A mural on the wall, painted by Bobby Davidson of New York, depicts the laden table. All these combined with the candle lit melodies of Merrie Miller at the piano transform the Coach Room into a place of tranquility and repose, luxuries hard to find in this day and age.



Baldwin — sing-a-long at the Inn...

When the St. Clair Inn, 500 North Riverside, decided to go all the way with the sing-a-long format of fun a time ago, some good things began to happen for those lucky enough to be around. And those good things are still going on — usually at the prompting of pianist Clay Baldwin,

area native and sing-a-long-er extraordinaire who leads the show at the Inn Monday through Saturday at the piano bar. And if it's the old tunes — or the new ones — that you're interested in, Baldwin is the man who knows them all. Just saunter in and ask...

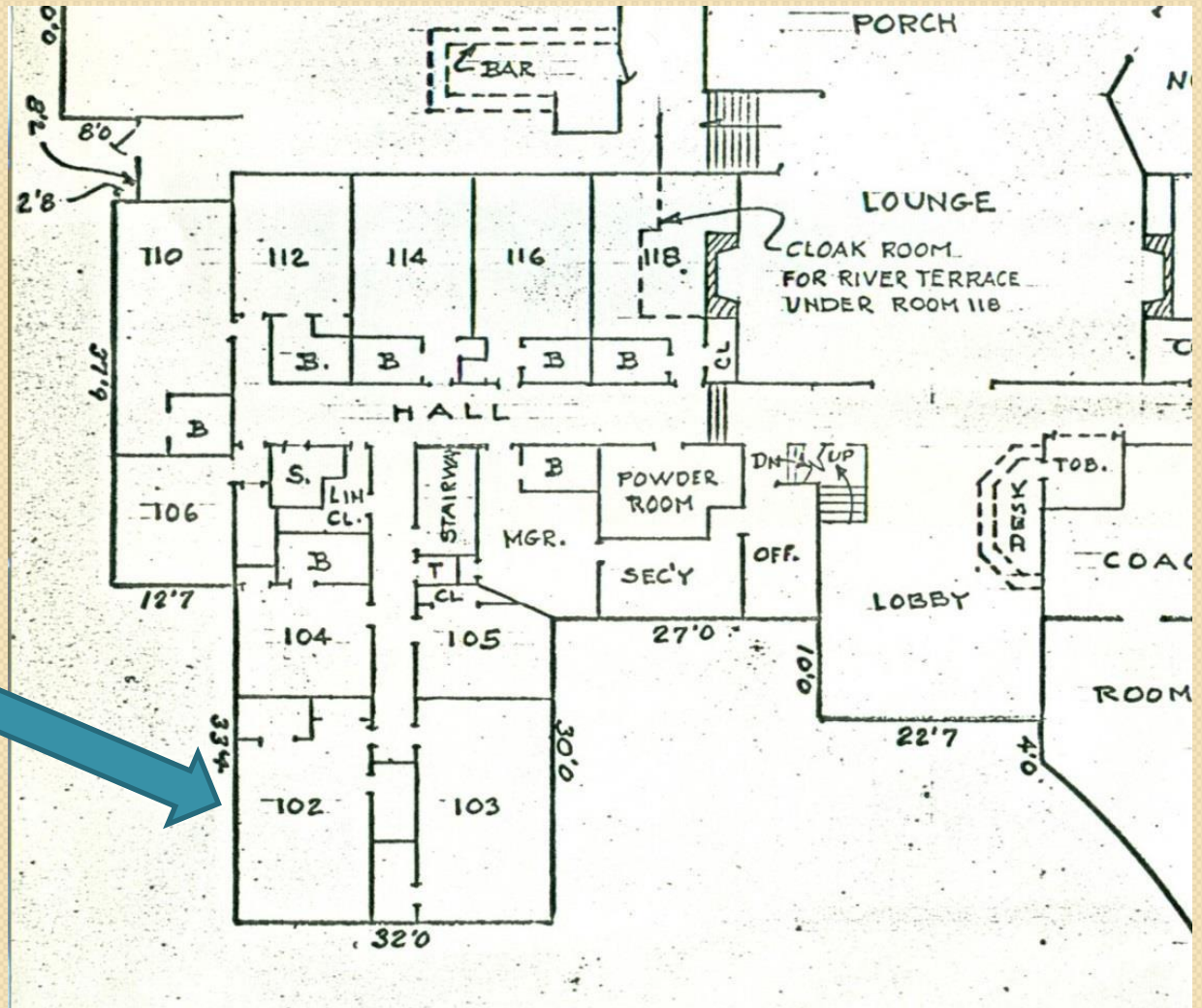
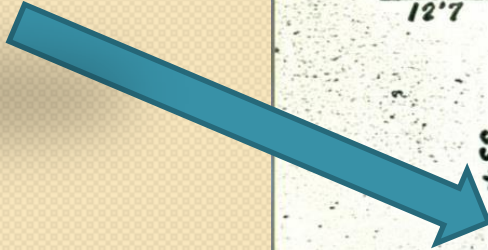
In the photo of the 1954 St. Clair River Dance Club. Creighton Sr. is the guy leaning on the piano on the right side in the back. His bride Jean sits on the floor in the front row, third from the left.



Susan Cobourn Schmidt- received via email: “We had all our special occasions there. Birthdays. Mother's second wedding reception. My rehearsal dinner, February, 1969. Sometimes my parents took me there at night to hear Lenny Dee play the organ. He was quite the comedian & told off color jocks. That was in the late 50's or early 60's.

The Inn owned one of the first color TVs in St. Clair. It was in the lobby & I remember going there to watch something. Maybe the Rose Bowl parade.”





Belle later lived on the first floor. Mike LaPorte recalled, "I can remember when we put up the tree in the in the Lobby, we did a real tree, she would bring out a chair, and tell us where to put each and every ornament. It was very particular to her, even at her age."



Amber Mareski
in front of the
St. Clair Inn
Tree.

Holly Holden agreed with Mike. “My Grandmother, Belinda Holden, was a formidable woman! It was an annual Inn tradition that Grandma Belle was in charge of the Christmas tree. No one else would dare encroach on her domain. Once the tree was delivered and set up in the lobby, Grandma was in charge. She positioned herself in front of the tree and proceeded to supervise the decorating. Grandma would point with her cane, which she wielded like a saber, to the exact spot where each ornament was to be hung. She managed her troops with the precision and demeanor of a Marine Drill Sergeant. Grandma’s minions were hapless busboys who just happened to be in the wrong place and the wrong time. NO ONE wanted to draw Christmas Tree duty. The tree was always magnificent, truly a work of art, and I don’t believe any of the young men who were pressed into service bore any lasting scars... at least I hope not.”

Peggy Moore-Roll- "Here are some photos from our wedding reception at the Inn. These were taken by Charlie Moore on November 28, 1959. Jack Roll of Marine City and Peggy Moore of St. Clair."



Beginning at the right - Mary Stuart Moore, Franklin Moore, Nancy Moore, Rob Roll, Peggy Moore-Roll, Jack Roll.



When we were kids, my father, Creighton D. Holden, established a breakfast routine; At least once a week, he would take all school age children to the Inn for breakfast. This was met with varying degrees of enthusiasm by myself and my 4 siblings. My Mom, on the other hand, was delighted! She relished the prospect of a “kid free” morning. I recall sitting on the Inn’s cozy South porch on cold, damp, gray November mornings. I would look out the window at the steam rolling off the River. My Dad would let us select our choices from the menu. Then he would proceed to “build” his breakfast, of oatmeal, butter, cream and brown sugar (always in that order).



Those mornings were punctuated with lively conversation, humor and fun. The breakfast tradition continued and eventually included my son Creighton (Trip). Today, when I see morning steam rising off a body of water, I am transported back to my childhood and breakfasts at the Inn with Dad.

57 years of making pies comes to an end

After sweetening the lives of thousands, St. Clair Inn baker in 1944 to hang up her apron

By MARY LOU CREAMER
Times Herald

ST. CLAIR — Plenty of people have come through the doors of the St. Clair Inn in its 75-year history — guests, employees and owners.

But for most of that time there has been one constant: Evelyn Cowan. The diminutive woman has been a presence in the inn's kitchen, baking desserts and making soups and salads for thousands upon thousands of guests.

Now, after nearly six decades, Mrs. Cowan is hanging up her apron. She wasn't planning on retiring, but her body decided differently, she said.

"I was setting up brunch a couple Sundays ago and my back was killing me," the 82-year-old said. "I knew I wasn't going to be able to stand for long periods of time anymore so I decided it was time to call it quits."

"Looking back, I don't know where the time has gone."

Inn general manager Bill Kirkendall said, "Anyone who is familiar with the workings of the St. Clair Inn knows what a legend Evelyn and her pies are around here. I don't know how we will ever get along without having her around every day."

Inn general manager Bill Kirkendall said, "Anyone who is familiar with the workings of the St. Clair Inn knows what a legend Evelyn and her pies are around here. I don't know how we will ever get along without having her around every day."

On-the-job training

Before Mrs. Cowan started working at the St. Clair Inn 57 years ago, she described herself as being not much of a baker.

"I had baked a few pies at home, but nothing like I was required to do here," Mrs. Cowan said. "There was a lot of trial and error."

Mrs. Cowan joined the inn in 1944, at the urging of her sister Emma Sharrow. "She was working here as a waitress at the time. She told me to come and work here so I did. She left a couple years later," Mrs. Cowan said, chuckling at the memory.

Her pies are made from scratch. Her experience came on the job, working from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. seven days a week.

"I work a day ahead so I would come in every day," Mrs. Cowan said. "I never wanted to get behind. I always felt a duty to be here because it was my job."

Mrs. Cowan's niece, Kim Sharrow, is the inn's dining room manager. Ms. Sharrow said of her aunt, "She doesn't even know the word vacation. I think the last vacation she took was forced on her."

The baker averaged 10 to 12 pies a day, depending on the season. "In the summer, I would sometimes make as many as 20 pies a day," she said.

Apple, cherry, blueberry, strawberry, banana, lemon, coconut cream and butterscotch — you name it, she made it.

"Every pie she made was excellent, but her strawberry pie was especially the best, with all that whipped cream on the top," longtime diner Bernie Khun of St. Clair said. "That's one of the reasons you go to the St. Clair Inn; to eat her pastry foods and get fat."

A rough estimate would put Mrs. Cowan's output in her nearly six decades of work at 208,000 pies, give or take a few. "That's a lot of pies," she said, obviously shocked at the number.

Don't even try to figure out the gallons of soup or pounds of coleslaw and salads she made in that time.

Changing times

Mrs. Cowan has seen numerous changes in her years at the St. Clair Inn.

In that time, the business has expanded from the original 60 rooms to its current 96. It also has added banquet and meeting rooms. She has worked for at least nine different chefs and six owners. It would be impossible to count the number of waitresses, bus boys and other help that has come and gone.

"At one point, in the



MIXING IT UP: Evelyn Cowan, 82, says she made about 10 to 12 pies a day in her 57 years at the St. Clair Inn.

1970s, everyone who worked here was from St. Clair. It's all we had," said Mr. Kirkendall, who started there as a teen-ager. "So it's safe to say that Evelyn has probably touched every family in this town at some point in her career here."

One was Michael LaPorte, who started at the St. Clair Inn as a teenager and owns The Voyageur just down the street from the inn.

"I was there 30 years and she was there that

entire time," he said. "What a wonderful woman. It was like having a mom at work. We all grew up on her cooking."

On Sunday, Mrs. Cowan, who is divorced and has no children, will find herself on the receiving end. Family and friends will honor her with a party — at the St. Clair Inn, of course.

"It isn't going to be easy to leave this place," she said. "They are like family."

"Looking back, I don't know where the time has gone."

— Evelyn Cowan



Times Herald photos by TONY FITTS



Mrs. Evelyn Cowan
Chef's Assistant

Connie Striker Hostess: After 42 years, St. Clair Inn just like home



Working
World

**John F.
Brown**

*Times Herald
7-3-88*

CLAIR — Connie Striker is a

er, 58, was orphaned at an
e. She was placed in a foster
St. Clair when she was 8

at an early age I had to go
t I wanted if I was going to
Striker said. "It was a long
but you never forget it.

Striker is a hostess and din-
manager for the St. Clair
. Riverside Ave., St. Clair.
orked there for the past 42

St. Clair Inn has been like a
ne," Striker said. "All my
wanted to have someplace
felt like I really belonged.
he I walk in that front door,
I'm home. I'm where I be-

er was 16 and looking for a job
time she walked through the
f the St. Clair Inn. That was

was working at the old Lenox
urant on Main Street washing
s when I was 12 years old,"

Striker said. "I wanted to do more,
but I was too young. But when I
turned 16, I decided to take charge of
my life."

Striker quit high school to take a
job at the St. Clair Inn. She worked
there as a waitress until she was
named dining room manager in 1957.

Today she does the hiring, sets up
the banquets and handles the training
schedules for 25 waitresses, 10 bus
boys and three set-up people.

"Most people believe that all a
hostess does is seat people for
dinner," Striker said. "Boy are they
wrong. Usually everyone wants a
window seat, and after you have
served 500 people on a Saturday
night, your feet really begin to bark."

A person has to have been a wait-
ress to really appreciate the stress,
Striker said.

Gloria Klinesteker of North Street
worked for Striker for nine years.

"Connie is all business and you
really had to work for her," Klinese-
teker said. "She knows what hard
work is all about. She is a great
lady."

Longtime customer Charles F.
Barrett of Port Huron said he has
eaten at many of the best restaurants
all over the world, and he believes
Striker is one-of-a-kind when it comes
to being a hostess.

"She is one of the best," Barrett
said. "You get the best service from
the people who work for Connie."

In 42 years, Striker has worked
practically every holiday.

Her work philosophy has been to



Times Herald — RALPH W. POLOVICH

Hostess Connie Striker greets a customer at the St. Clair Inn.

Bio box

- **EDUCATION:** Attended St. Clair High School
- **FAMILY:** Husband, Eugene R. Striker; daughter, Gail Ann
- **HOBBIES:** Reading and animals
- **GOALS:** To treat her customers like family

treat her customers like they were
guests in her home.

"I know I've probably took quite a
bit away from my family by working
so much. I was never home. I was
here. But I wanted something out of

life," Striker said. "And I believe I
have it today."

*Next Sunday's Working World will
feature Butch and Becky Agnew,
operators of a service station in Port
Huron.*

John F. Brown is a Times Herald reporter.





Port Huron's 'treasure' dies at 107

By Liz Shepard
Times Herald

Thomas Bell was a man with many stories, many adventures, but one word was enough to sum him up — a treasure.

"He was the kindest, gentlest man, he had a great sense about him, a very calming sense about him, a very God-fearing sense about him," said his niece, Adrian Taylor. "When you think of Uncle Thomas, you think treasure."

Bell, of Port Huron, died Saturday, at 107.

Taylor, who lives in Delaware, said a fall on Christmas Eve and cancer returning after seven years in remission were more than his body could handle.

His death is a profound loss for his family, Taylor said. His sister, Sandra, offered help but laughingly turned him down.



ANDREW JOWETT/TIMES HERALD

Thomas Bell smiles in November 2013 at his home in Peru Village as he talks about moving to Port Huron decades ago. Bell died Saturday at the age of 107.

"He was like our own living, seen-it, done-it encyclopedia," Taylor said.

"He always gave me guidance and unconditional love," Marks said.

Bell spoke to the Times Herald in November 2013. He was a

World War II veteran, a 22-year employee of the St. Clair Inn, and a longtime deacon at Pilgrim Missionary Baptist Church.

"I've had a good life, a very good life," Bell said in 2013.

Until his fall, Bell lived in

Peru Village in his own apartment. He moved to Port Huron in 1945 after serving in the Army during World War II.

Bell worked as bellhop in Atlantic City. He bought his first Ford for \$800. He shipped out to Europe and then the Philippines after he was drafted during World War II. He took pheasant-hunting trips to Nebraska for close to a decade. He fished the St. Clair River shoreline from St. Clair to the Fort Gratiot Light Station. After taking over John L. Portis' position as waiter at the St. Clair Inn, Bell waited on visiting celebrities and Pistons and Red Wings athletes.

He was married for 63 years to Vera Bell — whose May 2000 obituary he kept laminated by his armchair.

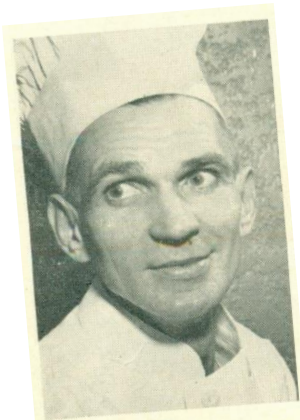
A funeral service is scheduled for 11 a.m. Wednesday at the Pollock-Randall Funeral Home, 912 Lapeer Ave.

11/13/15



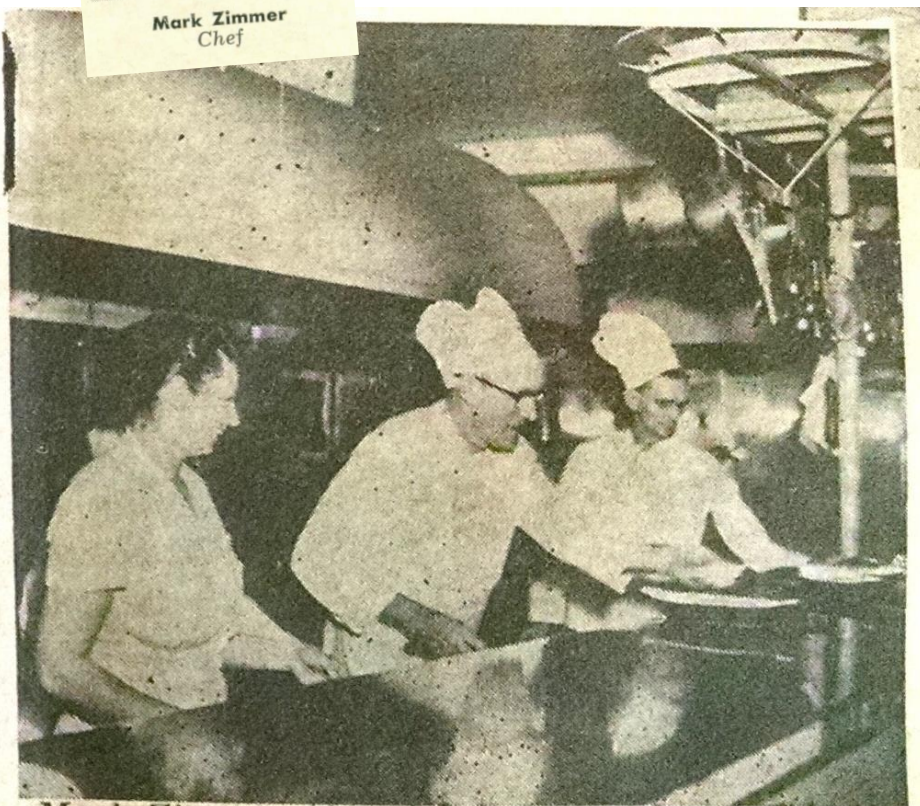
Thomas Bell, assists in handling baggage as one of his bell boy duties.

Thomas Bell worked at the Inn for 22 years, both as a Bell Hop and a Waiter. Here he is shown in an article on the Inn in 1953. He passed away in January 2015.



Mark Zimmer
Chef

By 1953 Mark Zimmer had been the Inn's Chef for ten years. By 1961 he is was whipping up poppy seed dressing for President Kennedy's Inaugural Luncheon!



Mark Zimmer (far right) as head Inn chef for ten years supervises the culinary arts, assisted by Evelyn Cowan and Harry Townsend.

March, 1961

Jack Tar Dressing Goes To Inaugural Luncheon



Chef Mark Zimmer is pictured making the famous Jack Tar Poppyseed Dressing which was a part of the menu for the Presidential Inauguration Luncheon held in Washington on January 20th.

CHARLESTON, S. C. — Thanks to the educated palate of Senator John Sparkman of Alabama, an unusual salad dressing from Charleston, S. C. had special billing at the big Presidential inauguration luncheon in Washington, D. C. January 20.

The southern gourmet touch was the result of a recent visit by the Senator to the Jack Tar Francis Marion Hotel in Charleston. He was served a big fruit salad with a liberal helping of the Jack Tar Poppyseed Dressing, a tasty, clear-type dressing which is a prized specialty of the house.

The Senator promptly decided that the delicious poppyseed concoction was just the thing to uphold the South's gastronomical honors against such challengers as Boston clam chowder on the inauguration menu. It's no secret that President Kennedy favors that home town dish.

The project was turned over to Kenneth Rapley, who helps operate the U. S. Senate Restaurant. However, there developed one slight hitch in Operation Poppyseed. It seems the Jack Tar chefs guard their special recipes as carefully as the secret service men guard the President, and even a special Senatorial request couldn't pry it out of them.

But J. William Cole, vice president and general manager of the Francis Marion, graciously and diplomatically solved the problem. He ordered Head Chef Mark Zimmer to whip up several gallons of the dressing and it was shipped to the capital in time for the big feed, compliments of the Jack Tar chain.



'The St. Clair Inn is St. Clair' 9/14/95

Riverside landmark is now a national treasure



By RALPH W. POLOVICH, Times Herald

HISTORIC PLACE: Mike LaPorte, general manager of the St. Clair Inn, stands next to the new historical marker designating the hotel a Michigan and national treasure.

Hotel rolls out red carpet for nearly seven decades

By MARY LOU CREAMER
Times Herald

ST. CLAIR — Being an innkeeper is no easy task, says Mike LaPorte.

Mr. LaPorte, the St. Clair Inn's general manager, remembers several years ago when Rita Bell, the host of a popular Detroit TV show, called for a last-minute reservation.

"I answered the phone and she said, 'This is Rita Bell and I would like a table for four for tonight.' I said, 'Well, this is Tinkerbell, it's New Year's Eve and we're all sold out.' I really didn't know it was her," he said. "Fortunately, we got the matter resolved and she got her table."

The English Tudor-style hotel along the St. Clair River has been accommodating visitors for nearly 70 years — a milestone that is being recognized this year by the National Register of Historic Places. The federal historical society is putting the inn on

its national registry.

The honor comes a year after the Michigan Department of State designated the hotel a historical site.

"The St. Clair Inn is St. Clair," Mayor Bernard E. Kuhn said. "Without that inn, St. Clair would be a very different town."

A new marker, noting the twin designations, has been placed in front of the hotel. An unveiling ceremony is planned for Sept. 26.

"I think the people of this town are very proud of this honor," Mayor Kuehn said. "I know that the inn is certainly deserving of it."

Rotary gets ball rolling

It would be difficult for a casual visitor to catch the subtle differences that mark the passage of time inside the inn.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same at the St. Clair Inn," Mr. LaPorte said.

Please see **LANDMARK**, back page, this section ►

F.Y.I.

ST. CLAIR INN

■ The inn has 161 employees

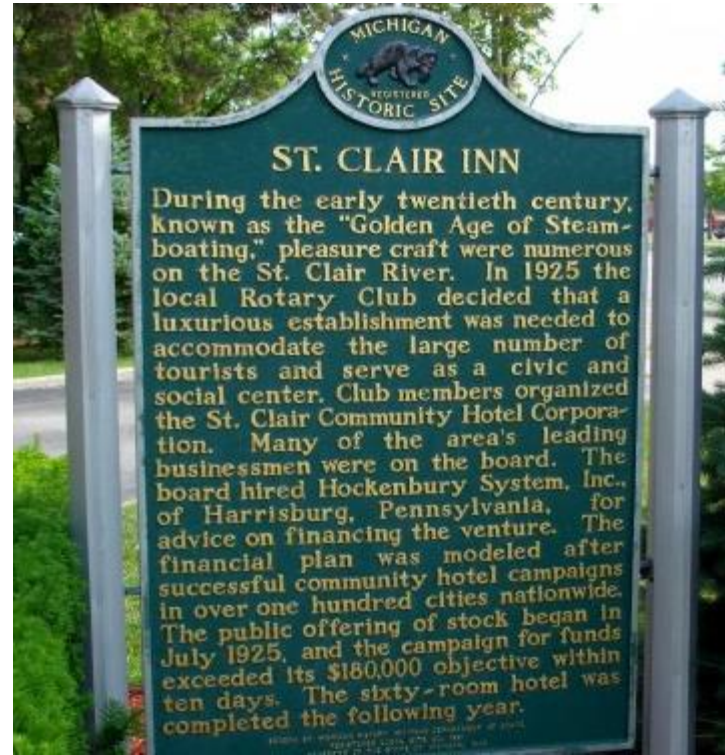
■ The inn has 96 rooms and several one- and two-bedroom suites

■ Room rates range from \$75 to \$135 a night; suites up to \$300

■ The dining room seats 240 people; eight bartenders tend bar

■ More than 90,000 people dined in the hotel's five banquet rooms last year

■ More than 30,000 people stay at the inn each year





The Mireau Family- as told by Tommy—"As a child, we fished and swam off the docks, and would do fake drownings when customers would pass by (hiding under the boardwalk). We would help dock the boats, and get tipped for doing so. The late 60's we would enjoy sitting close to where they let the fireworks off at the north end of the property. I actually kept my boat there. It was kind of our playground, we lived up on Second Street, north of Vine Street. My brother and I even got caught running from roof to roof- Gomez and Mike Laporte called my dad."



"Six of our family members worked at the Inn I think five at one time. When my brother Dave went from coat check to bus boy, I was hired to check coats. I was thirteen. In 1974 I was caddy for Creighton Holden II, he won the invitational tournament and he made me his regular Caddy. I won Rooky Caddie of the year that year. I got to know Creighton well, and laugh now when I think of him throwing his clubs if he made a bad swing."

St. Clair River Country Club Purchased By St. Clair Inn Co.

St. Clair, Sept. 26 — Creighton W. Holden, president, and Robert W. Holden, secretary of the St. Clair Inn company, announced Friday the Inn had purchased the St. Clair River Country Club from Lee and Rosemary Kosten.

The announcement was made at a country club membership meeting at the Inn.

DON FERNE, assistant pro at the Saginaw Golf club, was introduced to the members. Ferne is a former Michigan State College golfer and has served for the past two seasons under Eldon Briggs at the Saginaw club.

Jack Goodrich, who has served under the Holdens at the Inn for the past four years, will be manager of the club.

Jim Mau, a former St. Clair High School athlete, has been engaged to take charge of the course.

Plans for the operation of the private club were announced and discussed by the members at a session presided over by Harold "Mose" Werner, club president.

PLANS CALL for more traps and larger greens on the course, and construction of an outdoor swimming pool, 25 by 30 feet, has been started. The plans also call for a wading pool for the youngsters.

All facilities at the club will be improved and the project is to be

completed sometime next year. The members elected Harry Altherr, William Bower, Joseph Ernst, Franklin H. Moore, George Hunt, Creighton W. and Robert W. Holden, J. M. "Mickey" Lightbody, A. S. Charleston, Albert J. Sibilla, Peter Ruse, Harold O. Werner, Al Tucker and H. C. Anderson to the new board of directors.

CREIGHT HOLDEN GETS AN ACE



—Photo by Ferde Baiza, St. Clair

CREIGHT W. HOLDEN

St. Clair, Sept. 13—Sixty-six golf teams listing most of the top professional and amateurs in the State, competed in the St. Clair River Country club's Invitational best ball tournament Monday.

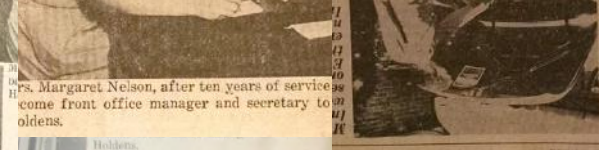
Creighton W. Holden, who has been playing the game since he learned to walk, fired his first ace on the No. 14, Par 3, 135-yard hole. Holden's No. 8 iron shot hit about three feet shy of the pin and then trickled into the cup. Holden said: "I have watched lots of them land on the lip, but never saw one drop in before."

Four teams tied for best ball honors with 63 over the par 36-37-73 course. In the following results the first player named is a pro and the second an amateur.

- Al Watrous, State Open champion from Oakland Hills, and his partner, Bill Zapf, fired a 30-33-63.
- Jimmy Johnson, Glen Oaks CC, and Leo Daigle 31-32-63.
- Hal Whittington, Midland, and Joe Sruba 32-31-63.
- J. Johnson and Andy Purdo 30-32-63.
- Whittington-Phil Oakley 32-32-64.
- Bob Solomon, Detroit CC, Dan Larkin 32-32-64.
- Walter Burkemo, Birmingham, Glen Harding 31-54-65.
- Fred Hunter, Ypsilanti, Earl Burt 31-34-65.
- Lee Mackley, Lake Orion, Joe Finnegan 33-32-65.
- Bob Solomon-Jack Brennan 32-33-65.
- Borton Smith, Detroit CC, Harry Altherr 31-34-65.
- Lee Kosten, St. Clair, John Emig 33-32-65.
- Kosten-Bob Holden 32-23-65.
- Tom Shannon, Orchard Lake, Ed Perkins 31-34-65.
- How District entries scored:
Art Scarff, Port Huron-Sanford Ladd 34-32-66.
Emil Beck, Black River, Alex Emerich 34-34-68.
Spec Meyer, Sarnia, T. Baker 32-37-69.
E. Beck-Jack Wendling 37-34-71.
E. Beck-George Steinmetz 37-35-72.
Art Scarff, Port Huron G. C.-A. Spriggs 38-35-74.
A. Scarff-Wilk Ralston 38-37-75.
- Al Watrous had low individual score of 67 and Emerick, Kocsis and Earl Burt, Ypsilanti, tied for second low with 68. Lee Kosten, Ray Malain and Hal Whittington tied with 68.



Miss Sophia Kamfu, on the Inn staff for ten years, holds the position of bookkeeper.



Mrs. Margaret Nelson, after ten years of service as front office manager and secretary to holdens.



Miss Ortman greets clients at shop, located off the main en

ST. CLAIR INN

The Inn On The River

People from coast to coast have joined with the permanent residents of the river district to retain the fame achieved by the St. Clair Inn since it was first opened in 1926 . . . a fame of exceptional service to everyday customers, the tourists, conventions, or a "must" stopping-off place for local and national dignitaries. It is a place to meet for business or pleasure . . . to dine . . . to dance . . . or celebrate in an atmosphere of leisure by the quiet scene of the recognized low waters of the St. Clair River. It is the second largest industry in St. Clair, operated on full scale the year around. Recommendations are nation-wide from Duncan Lines, AAA, and Gourmet. The St. Clair Inn maintains its record of years of excellence to serve its clientele . . . to give prestige to the City of St. Clair . . . and be a credit to its community of friends.



Miss Ortman greets clients at shop, located off the main en



Mrs. Jessie Stoddard has handled the front desk duties as reservation clerk for ten years.



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Miss Sophia Kamfu, on the Inn staff for ten years, holds the position of bookkeeper.



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Mark Zimmer (far right) as head Inn chef for ten years supervises the culinary arts, assisted by Evelyn Cowan and Harry Townsend.



Mark Zimmer and his piano...always available to entertain guests in the "Coach Room"




Redfield Duo plays for your dance



Miss Sophia Kamfu, on the Inn staff for ten years, holds the position of bookkeeper.




Mrs. Jessie Stoddard has handled the front desk duties as reservation clerk for ten years.



: Well, Bob was four years younger. When Bob quit school, Dad put him on the worst Scullery jobs at the Holden's Drive-In to get him to go back to school. And Bob just said the hell with it. He took it right in stride, worked at Holden's Drive-In at night, he'd sleep a little then he went down to the pool halls. When he was still high school age – he became a pool shark. He was really good. When he was 16 or 17 years old he was making money as a pool shark down in Brunswick pool hall, which was a four-story building by the Brunswick Pool people, down in Detroit, where all the pool sharks met and played pool for money. So by noon he'd be down at the pool hall with the sharks and making money. He thwarted my father and finally my dad gave up and realized he wasn't going to go to school and he made him a manager. He put Bob in charge of one of the stores. He did so well he wound up being Assistant Manager to my father. This is when he's about 20 years old.

To make a long story short, the army came along and Bob was drafted and sent to Camp Custer and Don Bacon came along, the son of the man who started Bacon's drug store, in St. Clair. So, Don, who was blind in one eye and was confined to a desk, had the job of assigning Bob to a unit. Bob had terrible eyes and was going to be confined to non-combat duty. Bob had always loved animals and he raised dogs. So Don told Bob about a K-9 Corps that hadn't started yet but was forming at Camp Crawford in Nebraska and its primary reason was going to be to raise dogs for scouting use in combat. So Bob was sent to Camp Crawford. He was right in on the beginning of the K-9 Corps. The K-9 Corps needed a manual and Bob and another guy wrote the manual for the K-9 Corps of the United States Army. Bob stayed with the K-9 Corps and became a Master Sergeant. I met him one time in Topeka, Kansas. He was on a train and had whole freight cars full of dogs. He'd been on a trip for the army. Mostly police dogs and these kind of dogs. He would take 'em back to Camp Crawford and train 'em for the army. They would be trained to do all sorts of things. Steve will be able to tell you all the things his dad did for the army.

After the war, Bob still kept up his hobby with horses and dogs. He met a man whose hobby was raising Tennessee Walking Horses. He and Bob became good friends and raised horses together. This is while he and I were operating the Inn. He got into amateur rodeo riding. When he'd get interested in something, he almost had tunnel vision. He did the same thing with golf. When he wasn't at the Inn, he was practicing golf. He became so proficient he won the club championship in all four clubs in the river district in one year. At any rate, Bob got tired of playing second fiddle to me. We never had an argument. Differences, but no arguments. I was older and had the same name as my dad. My dad was known by everybody in Port Huron. Then all of a sudden, Dad dies and Creight Holden is still at the Inn. Bob would always allow me to take the lead. I became very active in the Michigan Hotel Association. Bob had no interest in it at all. He had no interest in any type of politics. At any rate, I joined a group that was founded in Texas and was called... they were independently owned properties that were amalgamated. At the beginning there were eight of us including Ed Leach, who was the President of the Jack Tar Hotel chain. Jack Tar was a Texas hotel chain that was owned by a wealthy Texan who own five insurance companies. His name was Charlie Sammons. And Ed Leach was the President of the Jack Tar hotel chain, based in Galveston, Texas. I got to know Ed Leach by attending American Hotel Association meetings and we got to be friends. And Ed said "Our group in Texas is going to form a referral company and send each other business and we're going to form a chain, but we'll be



N: The museum also had pictures of St. Clair before the change. We haven't even touched on why St. Clair was torn down in the 60's and who was behind the renovation.

C: I'm afraid I was and I apologize for it. It should never have been done. George Thompson and myself and Ray Gellain and Johnny Emig, who was Mayor for years, were responsible. And we finally got Frank Moore involved because he was at the bank. My problem was I'd get the bit in my mouth and I'd run with it. I had influence with the Governor and everybody because I was Republican National Committeeman for the State of Michigan. We had Republican Governors. And anyway, I had dreamed of a boardwalk. I just said "there should be a boardwalk on the St. Clair River." That was a beautiful idea. "And there should be a park." Now, first of all, the back of the stores on the river from the Interurban Station on down to the Pine River was just slum. It just looked like a New York slum from the river. It was crummy lookin'.

I dreamed of a boardwalk from the Inn down to Pine River. I sold it to the other powers-that-be of the town – John Emig, George Thompson, he had a hardware store on the river. He later started Thompson Furniture. When he moved into the furniture business, he took over the old Joachim grocery store and started Thompson's Furniture Store. He was a natural born entrepreneur. The other man involved was Ray Gellein. We'll get

Thank You

Steve Holden

Holly Holden

Creighden Holden III

◦ *Laura Crawford*

Photographs:

Karen Alley

Joe Bailey

Carroll Bailey –Simmons

Stan and Jen Carroll

Dave & Alaina (Frantz) Ingles

Michele Jones

Ken Mareski

Gail Veros

Jack & Peggy (Moore) Roll

Gail Veros

Vintage Car Identification

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Thank You

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