

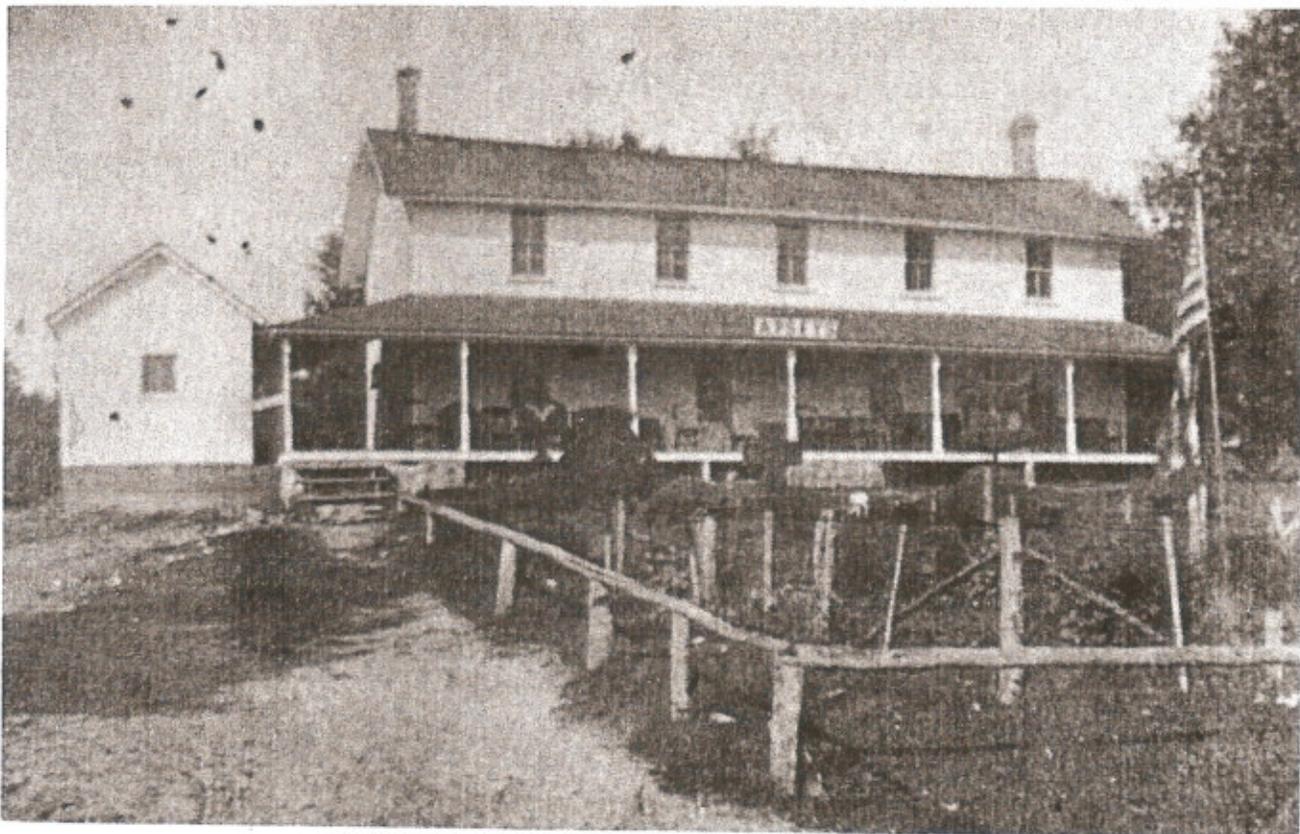
# WELCOME BACK FROM THE ATTIC

## YESTERYEAR AROUND CALEDONIA STATION

No. 8

1976

### THE STARK AND APSEY RESORTS



THE APSEY PAVILION AT CAMPAU LAKE

Brothers George P. Stark and Lou Stark of Cascade purchased 25 acres from the MacGregors, who owned a large farm bordering the north end of Campau Lake. George Stark, who was a storekeeper at Cascade, first built a cook shanty and put up a tent on his part of the land. Later in the 1890's he built a cottage. After his death, his widow and daughter sold his land and cottage.

In 1920, Fred Stark opened a small store in the cottage, from which he sold soft drinks, candy, tobacco, and ice cream, along with canned goods. On Saturdays the ice cream would come from Grand Rapids to McCords on the train. He then transported the supplies back to his store by horse and wagon, later repacking the ice cream in ice.

Later Fred Stark began building cottages for rental purposes and leased land for others to build on. He and his daughter, Grace Noble, built a bathhouse and concession stand next to the family cottage as a business venture.

Isaac and Grace Noble's daughter, Mary Croninger, continued the family business until it was sold to Joseph Weller in 1958. The area is now called Weller Trailer Park.

In 1879, Sampson P. Apsey, a stone mason by profession, purchased a section of land bordering on the northwest corner of Campau Lake that was adjacent to the Stark resort. On this property he built a house, a barn, and

a large pavilion. The pavilion had an old fashioned veranda overlooking the lake, and a ballroom on the second floor. The first floor contained a store, rooms to rent, and a do-it-yourself dining room.

The pavilion became a very popular spot for folks from neighboring farms and from Grand Rapids too. A three seated surrey, complete with fringe on top, was dispatched to the McCords train station to pick up passengers and bring them to the Apsey Pavilion for swimming, fishing, picnicing, dancing and ballgames.

The Thornapple Valley Pioneer Association held their summer picnic at Campau Lake from 1887 to 1931, first at the Stark resort and then at the Apsey resort after 1901. Several thousand area pioneers came with their families. They came with tents, horse and carriages and with wagons of hay for the horses. It was a gay time with ballgames, foot races and a more formal program. Edward Campau was the first president of the event and remained chairman until his death in 1906.

During the winter, Mr. Apsey built boats which were used for hire during the summer. Also included in the area was an icehouse. Ice was cut from the lake and stored in sawdust to be kept for the summer to be sold to the local housewives, cottage owners and renters in 25 and 50 pound blocks at a penny a pound.

Sampson Apsey lived here with his wife Martha and son Archie until he died in 1924. Archie took over the pavilion until his death in 1943. His daughter, Mrs. Gertrude Grant, still maintains a summer residence on the Apsey property. Mrs. Grant's son lives nearby in what remains of the Apsey pavilion.



SAMPSON and ARCHIE APSEY

## THE CAMPAU FAMILY — FOUR GENERATIONS



Proprietor of the National Hotel as porter and chore-boy, at \$8 per month. In December 1842 he obtained a position as stage driver on the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo-Battle Creek stage route, and continued that employment until 1846, receiving \$10 to \$12 per month.

Edward Campau was an early pioneer to live in the Caledonia area. He was a descendant of an early pioneer family in Michigan.

Edward was born in Detroit, May 9, 1825. His parents were Francis and Monique (Moran) Campau and he was a lineal descendant of Marquis Jaques Campau, who was intimately associated with M. LaMotte Cadillac, in the founding and early history of Detroit. His mother died in 1837 and in 1838 he came to Grand Rapids, making his home with his aunt, Mrs. Gideon Supernaunt and his uncle, Louis Moran for three years. He attended the only public school in the village of Grand Rapids.

He was a noted trapper, one of the first to work in this section of the country. In the spring of 1842 he engaged in a trading expedition among the Indians on the Grand River and its tributaries and was later employed by his uncles, Louis and Antoine Campau in a trading post at Grand Rapids.

On his return he entered the employ of Canton Smith,

Later William H. Witney, in connection with William (Yankee Bill) Lewis of Yankee Springs, Barry County, started the first line of stages running between Grand Rapids and Battle Creek. For driving the horses of stage between Grand Rapids and Battle Creek he was paid from \$10 to \$12 per month.

His first vehicle was an ordinary two-horse wagon; later he was enabled to obtain a more comfortable one with spring seats. Stages started at 4 a.m. from Grand Rapids and arrived at Battle Creek (if the condition of the roads permitted) at 9 p.m. The route traveled was through Ada, Whitneyville, Caledonia, Middleville, Yankee Springs and Richland to Battle Creek. Later he also drove the first stage that came into Grand Rapids from Kalamazoo on the plank road.

While driving stage between Battle Creek and Grand Rapids he made the acquaintance of Miss Phebe E. Lewis, daughter of William and Mary C. (Goodwin) Lewis and they were married February 26, 1846. They lived for a short time at Grosse Point. In 1855 he purchased 100 acres of land in the then primitive Caledonia township and experienced all of the trials and hardships incident to transforming the wilderness into fertile and productive lands. The farm was his home for over fifty years.

At the organization of the Pioneers of the Thornapple Valley Association in 1886, he was elected President which office he held continuously until his death. He was a charter member of the Grange chapter 222 of Whitneyville and an active member of the county, state and national Grange. He was a member of the Michigan Pioneer and Historical society. He served as a prominent and active member of the Patrons of Husbandry.

He won the respect of all who knew him and his integrity and honesty of purpose were never doubted. He believed and practiced being good to his fellowman and did unto others as he would have others do unto him. Campau Lake was so named to preserve the memory of Edward Campau. He died at his home at Campau Lake January 24, 1906.



Phebe E. Campau was born at Wetherfield, Genesee County, New York, July 12, 1827 and came with her parents to Yankee Springs, Barry County in 1836. She was a member of the Episcopal Church, the Patrons of Husbandry, the Thornapple Valley Pioneer Association and the Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society. She died February 11, 1907.

Frank E. Campau was born in Cascade Township December 21, 1851, the only son of Edward and Phebe (Lewis) Campau. He graduated from the Grand Rapids High School in 1869, and for six years was a school teacher in various neighboring districts, being one year principal of the Alaska school. On July 10, 1876 he resigned his position to engage in the mercantile business at Alaska, in which he was very prosperous. The store building still stands on the northeast corner of 68th Street and Thornapple River Drive.

In 1904, he organized the Farmers State Bank of Alto and was the largest stockholder, being also the cashier from the date of opening.

During his lifetime he held several township offices.

He married Carrie M. Brown in 1887. They had two sons, Edward B. and George F. Frank died at his home in Alto February 6, 1914, of acute appendicitis.

Edward B. Campau was born in Kent County February 11, 1894, the oldest son of Frank and Carrie (Brown) Campau. He graduated from Grand Rapids Central High School when 17 years old. He attended the University of Michigan for two and a half years, leaving school upon the death of his father in 1914, to take up the management of his parents' many business enterprises.

Before he was 21 years old he was cashier and director of the Farmers State Bank of Alto, cashier and vice-president of the McCords State Bank, vice-president of the Browning Realty Company of Grand Rapids, treasurer of the Alto Grain Elevator Company and of the Clarksville Grain Elevator Company.

He was married to Cecil Bancroft May 8, 1915. They had three sons, Edward Jr., Francis Charles and Elward Brown.

He was killed in an auto accident near Cascade July 7, 1918 at the age of 24.

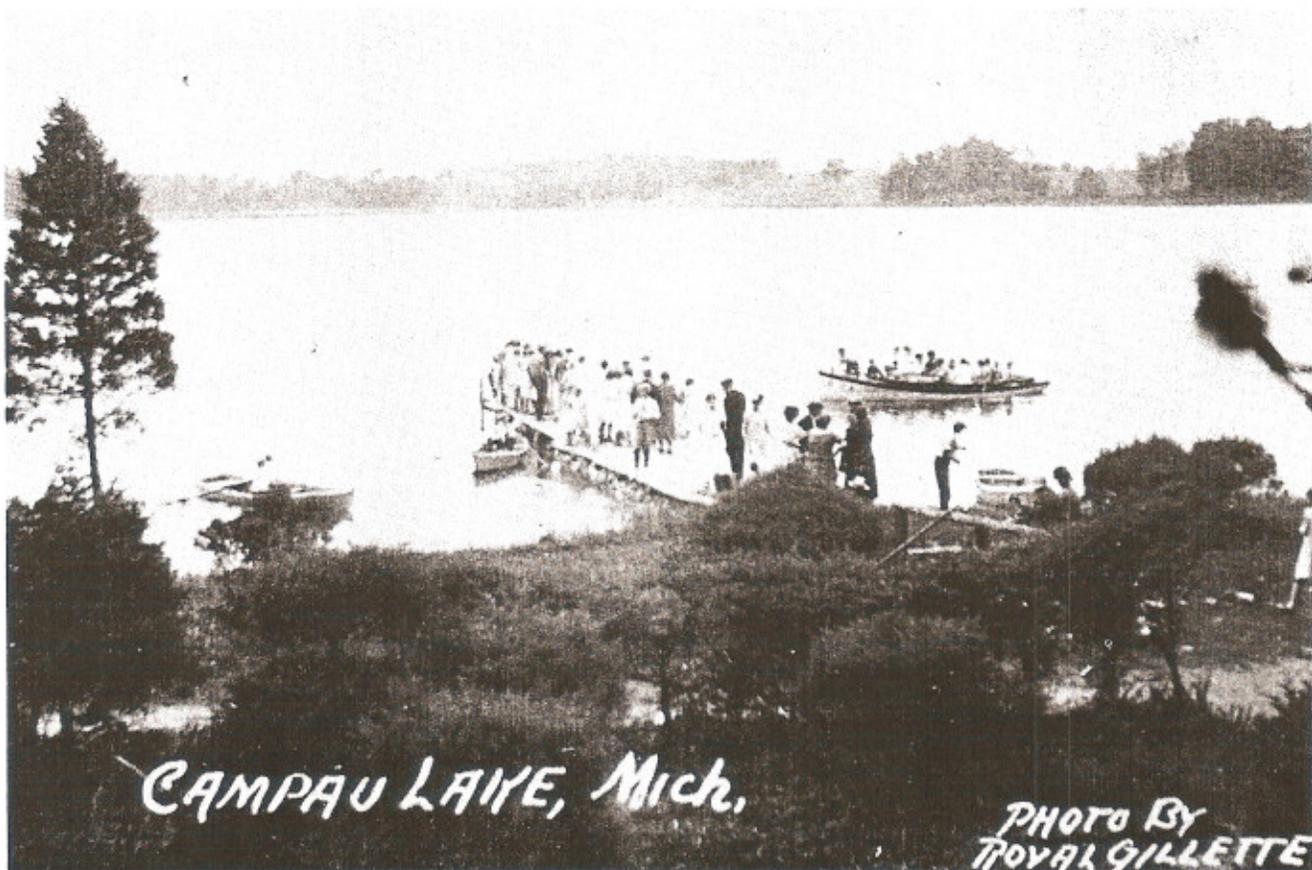
Today Francis C. Campau and his wife Ann (Buth) live at Kettle Lake on land owned by the Croninger family (Francis Campau's stepfather), which is just across the lake from the land once owned by Edward and Frank E. Campau.



#### GATHERING AT THE APSEY PAVILION

This is believed to be one of the few available photos of the picnics of the Thornapple Valley Pioneers Association.





ABOUT 1910



## PICNIC AT CAMPAU LAKE

Editor's note: The following article is the minutes of the first Thornapple Valley Pioneer Association picnic held at Campau Lake in Stark's Grove August 15, 1887.

The annual picnic of the Thornapple Valley Pioneer Association held at Campau Lake Aug. 15th was a grand success. Nature has made the location a most delightful resort, the day was auspicious, the attendance large and everyone seemed in the best of spirits. At an early hour teams freighted with life and joy began to arrive and the grove was alive with fathers, mothers and children, and words of welcome and cordial recognition were heard on every side. After partaking of bountiful supplies of refreshments the meeting was called to order by president Campau, a song of welcome by the South Caledonia choir and an invocation by the Rev. Benj. Woodward of Gaines, was followed by short and appropriate speeches by visiting friends from abroad and members of the association. The exercises were interspersed with appropriate music by the choir, and throughout the whole proceedings, the most fraternal feeling prevailed and the cordial recognitions, between old friends that had not met for many years were soul cheering. It was inspiring to see venerable grand parents countenances beaming with contentment, surrounded by four generations enjoying the fruition of a life of honest industry and self sacrifice: And as we gazed upon the many pleasant scenes before us, we felt that God has truly blessed the pioneer and "his lines have fallen in pleasant places and he has a goodly heritage." The delightful location and all the surroundings were calculated to inspire happiness and the most intense good feeling prevailed. May there be many happy returns of this annual festive occasion.

### SPECIAL MENTIONINGS

The association hereby tender their thanks to friend Stark for kindly permitting us to occupy his pleasant grounds on Campau Lake.

We regret that notwithstanding our efforts to prevent the hitching of teams to trees in the grove, some trees were nearly girdled by the horses on the outskirts of the grove.

The officers of the association wish to express their thanks to those who kindly assisted to prepare the grounds. We would especially remember the South Caledonia choir who favored us with most appropriate music. It was estimated that there were at least 800 who attended the picnic. There was also quite a large accession to our membership on that occasion.

Mail subscriptions may be ordered from "Welcome Back from the Attic," P.O. Box 1870, Caledonia, Michigan 49316, 10 issues for \$5.00. Previous issues are available from Passenger Printing Service or the subscription manager.

## CAMPAU LAKE SCHOOL

The land on which Campau Lake School was situated was purchased from the federal government by Ezra Whitney in 1852. He sold the land to John McConnell, who sold it to William Brown. William Brown deeded the land to the school district in 1864, when the school building was erected.

One of its first teachers was Mae Forbes, later Mrs. Harry Croninger. Her daughters were also teachers at the school, Lydia Croninger, Mary Croninger Dutcher, and her husband Minor Dutcher.

Friday afternoon was spell-down time. Sometimes when a child didn't want to spell, he left after eating his lunch from a tin pail, and took his time walking home. Water was pumped by hand and was drunk from a tin dipper. A wood burning stove for heat and outdoor toilets were a part of the school experience at that time.

The enrollment varied from 9 to 40 pupils, which included first through eighth grades. The eighth grade examination was given in Alaska and took two days to complete. A student must complete this examination satisfactorily or could not enter high school. A former student, Al Croninger, describes this examination as being a traumatic experience, even to the extent of praying while dragging a field, "Please, God, let me pass the eighth grade!" Graduation took place at Ramona Park and was a county wide event. Another event to look forward to was "Potato Digging Vacation" in the fall. Many initials of former students are carved in the walls of the woodshed now a part of the residence.

The school was closed in 1934, Mary (Mrs. Claude) Loring was the last teacher prior to closing. When the school was closed Al and Mary Croninger purchased the property and sold it to Ann Donovan in 1941, the present occupant at 8782 66th Street.

## PIONEER PICNIC AT APSEY GROVE



Editor's note: The following article is the minutes of the first Thornapple Valley Pioneer Association picnic held in Apsey's Grove at Campau Lake August 21, 1901.



The 16th Annual Picnic held in the Apsey Grove at Campau Lake Wednesday was a success.

Last Wednesday was the day set aside for the annual Pioneer picnic to be held at Campau Lake, and despite the cloudy, misty morning a large crowd of fully three thousand five hundred people gathered for the hearty handshake and friendly greeting.

As the dinner hour drew near, well filled baskets were brought forth, and table cloths were spread on tables and on the ground in every conceivable place in the grove, where goodies of every description were greatly relished.

The Ferris wheel proved a great attraction for the young as well as some of the older ones, as now and then you would catch a glimpse of a friend or relative taking a skyward trip. There were a number of stands on the ground where nearly all kinds of drinkables and eatables could be purchased.

All seemed greatly pleased with the new grounds as Mr. Apsey had spared no pains in improvement and erecting a speakers stand and also various eating tables throughout the grove. Mrs. Lew Smith and Mrs. Al Dutcher had charge of the dining room at the hotel, where warm meals, lunches and ice cream and cake were served.

After the dinner hour those who were interested in the program gathered in front of the speakers' stand and listened to an interesting program, which was opened by singing "My Country" by the audience, then came the welcome address by the venerable president, Edward Campau, giving a history of the Pioneer Picnic from the beginning and the place of meeting, after which a unanimous vote of thanks was extended to the Stark brothers for the use of their grove in the past. "Hail home of Liberty" was then sung by the Caledonia Quartette, composed of Mrs. W. O. Barber, Mrs. Levi Fox, Otto

Zelner and Norman Eby. After a few well chosen remarks by the president, he introduced the Hon. Aaron Clark, saying that the first remark that Mr. Clark ever made to the assembly at the Pioneer picnic was, Whoa! Haw Buck!

Mr. Clark then spoke very appropriately for some time, telling how he, himself, had driven oxen and split rails and said that he could prove it. Miss Belle Williams then recited "The Musical Museum". Mrs. Georgia Cook recited "Helen's Lament", a poem written 950 years before Christ. Rev. Appleton of Middleville was then called upon, making a few good remarks. The president then introduced Mrs. Hannah Whitney of Kalamazoo, who got the first meal for a white man in the township of Cascade; after which Mr. VanDusen of Vergennes, a resident of Kent County for 62 years, made a few remarks. Recitation by Miss Alice Wilson, entitled, "The Husking Bee". James Eardley of Eardley, was then called upon for a few remarks. The doxology was sung by the audience completing the day's program.

Everybody seemed to enjoy the day, many of the old grey headed pioneers being permitted to meet each other and we hope may be spared to meet with us at the next annual picnic or many more for that matter.



## CHURCH OF THE WOODS

In 1917 the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints held their first meetings in a 14 x 16' wall tent in a wooded grove near the corner of 68th Street and McCords on the farm of Sandford Ellis, a member of the church. The tent was set on a wood floor, had a pump organ, folding chairs, and a home-made pulpit. In 1918, when the weather became too cold to stay outside, they rented the Grange Hall in McCords, where the ladies group became famous for their chicken pie suppers. In 1931, they moved to the school house in Alaska, which is now an apartment building. After much saving and sacrifice, the church, on Easter Sunday, 1965, moved into its new place of worship, located on 68th Street west of Whitneyville Avenue. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has grown in number from 70 in 1931 to 250 in 1976.

## WHITNEYVILLE GRANGE No. 222

Whitneyville Grange was organized in the ball room of the Whitneyville Hotel January 15, 1874 with 53 Charter Members. The first Worthy Master was R. A. Peet. Granges were organized all over Michigan and in 1874 the first State Grange was held. Like other Fraternal organizations the Grange became a social center.

Meetings were held in the home of Daniel Croninger until the Whitneyville Grange Hall could be used. To pay for the hall members pledged sums of money, materials or labor. As horses were the means of transportation, a horse shed was built also. The first meeting of Whitneyville Grange in its own hall was held August 16, 1879.

The Grange was ever a family organization. Its lecture hour featured the talents of members and their families. Mothers brought their little ones and could let them sleep on the cots provided for this use. Many dances were held and very popular they were. No regular meeting was complete without a few quadrilles. The Grange had some fine callers, among these Miner Cook and Reed Cooper.

There was a dramatic club and they held shows. The Grange had a library with books which could be borrowed and with fines for overdue books. The letters and numbers on the front of the hall were the handwork of Mr. B. W. Snow who presented them to the Grange. The lettered cornerstone was a gift of the Laraway Marble Works.

A store was held for a time with groceries and staples with R. J. Dean as agent. Fence and other farm needs were sold later.

Many dinners were served to make money. Oyster suppers and warm sugar parties were favorites.

Grange ladies entered garments in the sewing contests. One year they sold tickets for concessions at the 4-H fair.

For a long time the Grange had its own orchestra which played for the dances. Later music was hired. Refreshments for the dances were furnished by the members. These dances were held until 1961.

The early membership rolls of Whitneyville Grange include the names of most of the prominent families. Among these are the Cooks, Deans, Croningers, Warners, Calkins, Bucks, Peets, Buells, Proctors, Dutchers, Barris, Hales, Campaus, Sears, Pratts, Petersons, and Linds. Later rolls are as interesting.

In 1965 Whitneyville and Alto Granges joined forces. The Alto hall and furnishings were sold. A pleasant union it proved to be. But in a metropolitan area interest in a farm organization lagged. No young members were added. So eventually Whitneyville Grange sold its historic hall. It is now used for classes in painting and the crafts.

The Whitneyville Grange has no hall but meets at the homes of its members. Worthy Master is Miner Cook, Secretary, Keith Bowman, Treasurer, Pauline Bowman, Chaplain Ethlyn Cook, Lecturer, Celesta Dutcher.



The following people supplied "WELCOME BACK" with photos, newspaper articles, books, stories, etc. for this issue: Mr. and Mrs. Francis Campau, Mrs. Gertrude Grant, Mr. and Mrs. Maynard Dutcher, Mr. and Mrs. James Sherman, Mrs. Francis Wakefield, Mrs. Shirley Venema.

The committee staff for the eighth issue has been Editor, Kenneth R. Gackler; Photo Reproduction, Jay L. Shook; Layout and Printing, Edward L. Passenger; Research, Ann Campau, Trudi Stawick and Celesta Dutcher.