

View from Baldhead 1874

# Remembering When ...

## OUR HISTORY

**SHOREWOOD** Heading north on Lakeshore Drive ancient trees shadow the roadway and the lake is close. Just past the Douglas public beach comes a change. Now there is a place between the road and the lake. Wooden bridges and walkways lead to cottages set among the trees and dunes. In a minute the road curls around a dune and the Lakeshore Chapel looms ahead. A sharp turn to the right heads one back to the real world. A left turn down a narrow and private lane leads down to a glen of cottages, trees and sandy beach. This is Shorewood.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the setting was discovered by pioneer summer residents with the energy and the means to create a haven on Lake Michigan. They sought to create a summer place for their families away from the heat and the urban turmoil of St. Louis and Chicago. One of the group wrote, "Here is a spot where all neighbors are good neighbors, where you can turn the children loose above the age of five, and with a minimum of supervision down to the age of one, with reasonable assurance that they can be found intact when required through the use of a whistle or a bell. Not much can happen for the beach sand is soft and the water is shallow a long way from shore."

John Alvord was a Chicago engineer who specialized in planning and designing public improvements. He first found the land and then convinced others to join him in creating the Shorewood Association, a corporation organized under the Michigan Summer Resort Act. There were eight incorporators who bought stock creating the initial capital of \$10,000. The land was purchased from Grace Reid in 1901 and deeded to the association in 1902. Alvord surveyed and platted the area, creating the lots, private roads and parks. The association retained title to the land and sold shares of stock to the incorporators and others which allowed them to build cottages on their selected lot. Today there are some 25 cottages on the Association land.

In 1904 the Douglas Lakeshore residents – who had been holding church and Sunday school in their cottages - raised \$1600 through donations and built the wonderful Lakeshore Chapel – truly a historic "Little Church in the Woods."

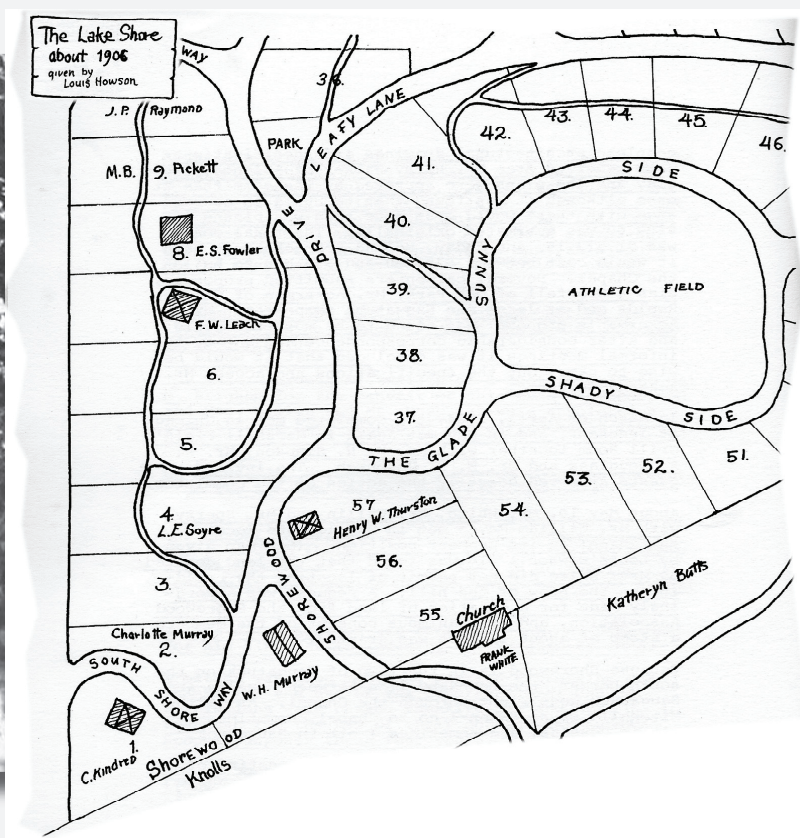
Some five generations—many descended from the founding families—have labored to create and treasure the experience known as "Shorewood". *By Jack Sheridan*



*Chapel ca 1910 - Now in use during summer.*



*The Alvords ca 1925*



*1906 Shorewood map - note that the chapel is not actually part of Shorewood and is in both Saugatuck and Douglas.*



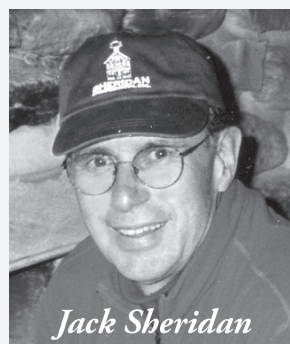
SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS OF 1903



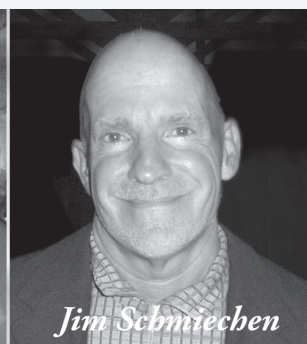
*View from the beach ca 1910*

The Remembering When feature is the creation of Jack Sheridan and Jim Schmiechen of the Saugatuck-Douglas Historical Society. Please visit the Society's museum – this years exhibit "Lincoln's Ready-Made Soldiers: Saugatuck Area Men in the Civil War" is open through December 4. The museum is located on the west side of the Kalamazoo River at the foot of Mt. Baldhead, and is open on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. There is no admission charge.

We welcome your comments on Remembering When. Call 269 857-7901, email us at [sdhistory@accn.org](mailto:sdhistory@accn.org) or write to Box 617 Douglas, MI 49406. SDHS historical images can be seen on the SDHS web site at [www.sdhistory.com](http://www.sdhistory.com) and all historical photos are available for purchase in print sizes up to 12x17. Our historical image database is growing through your contributions. We scan your old photos—you keep the originals—and we then provide you with a CD of your digitized images.



*Jack Sheridan*



*Jim Schmiechen*