

Regional Binder II

***THE EARLY DAYS OF PON-SHE-WA-ING***  
***By M.D. Maurice D. Woodruff***  
***April 21, 1980***

***Submitted By: Oliver Schwab***

## THE EARLY DAYS OF PON-SHE-WA-ING

In describing the location of various features of Pon-She-Wa-Ing, I refer to their position by using the points of the compass. U.S. 31 from Oden to Pon-She-Wa-Ing is a west to east road and enters a sweeping curve in this resort that turns to the north beyond the resort. The concrete sidewalk from Behan's house to Reader's is precisely on a north-south line according to a local surveyor.

The resort is in Littlefield Township with Petoskey St. being the southern end of Section 16 and the northern end of Section 21. Novacious M. Kellam owned 55.70 acres east of the railroad and 36.25 acres west of the railroad. His wife, Maggie A. Kellam had purchased the land in Section 21, south of the Section line on Petoskey St. and from Lake St. east to Crooked Lake. This is the parcel of land that contained the Pon-She-Wa-Ing Hotel, its flowing wells with pools and a boathouse. Park Ave. and Birch St. is also in this parcel. In the resort, the public road was on Petoskey St. to Lake St. where it turned north and crossed the railroad right-of-way and then turned northeastward and on into Alanson. There was no public road where U.S. 31 is now located on a 150 foot wide right-of-way east of the original road to Alanson but in 1900 this was part of the pasture belonging to the Kellams.

Rufus L. Myers and his wife, Mary E. Myers, had a home on the southwest corner of Petoskey and Lake Streets and with Herbert H. Wildman and his wife, Minnie C. Wildman, owned the land south of Petoskey St. to Crooked Lake and from Lake St. westward 1023 feet. I do not know how much of this parcel was owned by Myers but he had a boathouse near the foot of Lake St. for rowboats and a larger boathouse to the west.

It is necessary to take an overall look at the United States after the Civil War and the Union had been preserved. The modes of travel were by walking, horse, boat or railroad. The Grand Rapids and Indiana R.R., with a southern terminus at Richmond, Indiana, reached Petoskey, Mich. in May 1874. On Sept. 28, 1880, it was extended to Crooked Lake and two years later reached Mackinaw City. Steamers ran on the Inland Route and traveled from Conway on Crooked Lake to Topinabee on Mullet Lake.

Another factor was the Homestead Act passed by Congress in 1862 which permitted a citizen 21 years of age or older to settle on 160 acres of public land and cultivate it for 5 years, to obtain a title to that land. Veterans of the Union Army could acquire land on even a more favorable arrangement. Railroads sold tracts of land at \$9 to \$15 an acre as small as 40 acres.

Here was a vast land peopled with Pioneers or of Pioneer stock with everything favorable towards moving into the sparsely settled areas. People moved from Virginia to Ohio and Indiana. Some of these went West and others into Michigan. Kellams learned of Northern Michigan from their friends like Mr. Grannis, Gertrude Hinds, nee Grossman and others.

Arline M. Browne, Winchester, Indiana in writing of her father's recovery from a nervous breakdown says, "Throughout his excellent recovery of 1895, he had found therapeutic value in the peace of the woods, the pure water, relaxation of fishing and the delightful summer temperatures." They were at Walloon Lake but built their cottage at Cincinnati Point, Crooked Lake.

Draw an East-West line through Bay City, across the state, and the North Country started about there and the conditions described by Arline Browne refers to that part of the state. When you fly over that area it appears that it is about one third lakes and rivers.

In 1888 Michigan had its peak production year of 4,292,000,000 board feet of lumber and ranked first of all the states. Most of this was white pine. In 1911, Michigan's ranking in the Nation was:

- First in maple (59% of the Nation's total)
- First in beech (21% of the Nation's total)
- Second in basswood (17% of the Nation's total)
- Second in Elm (17% of the Nation's total)
- Third in Hemlock (20% of the Nation's total)
- Fourth in Cedar and Ash (5% of the Nation's total)
- Seventh in Pulpwood.

Mr. Rolland H. Maybee of the Michigan Historical Commission said in his book, Michigan's White Pine Era, "Everywhere across the countryside there remained after the Pine era, vast areas of cutover land dotted by ugly pine stumps, slashings, or the blackened scars of inevitable forest fires and wide open barren sand waste. Light soils gave out quickly under ill-advised farming. Many an unpainted or sagging farmhouse or perhaps a nearby lilac bush, a pile of field stones or a crumbling cellar wall are silent evidence of these times."

When you drive towards Harbor Springs on U.S. 101 and after passing the Airfield, you can find Hedrick Road on the north side of U.S. 101. Driving north on it a short distance you come to the Hedrick farm, about which Ulyses P. Hedrick writes in his book the Land of the Crooked Tree. He had graduated from Harbor Springs High School and was leaving for Michigan Agricultural College. "I was also sorry to say good-bye to Father. His two sons, partners in creating 'our farm', were deserting him in his old age. We had robbed the land of its magnificent trees, and had skimmed off the cream of the virgin soil, leaving Father only poor, sandy, good-for-nothing, sub-marginal fields, which none of us now loved."

Fortunately the evergreens grew well on the sandy soils and the deciduous trees are doing well except for the elm. The scars are healing but the very number of people have created new problems. For example, some of the best bass fishing reeds and weeds are gone without a trace. As Prof. Jett said, "You find good fishing where the plumbing is bad." Not because of any contamination but as an indication of a sparsely settled area.

N. M. Kellam owned a house in Alanson and also owned a 120 acre farm in Springvale Township about two miles south of the eastern end of Pickerel Lake. He owned and operated a general store in Alanson and I assume that he purchased the farm as a speculation.

In 1897, the Kellams built a large, two story home for year around occupancy at Pon-She-Wa-Ing and moved in on August 5th. They built a barn about 60 yards north of their home which could stable three horses and three cows in the west part, house a carriage in the center section and a chicken roost and nesting room on the east side. A hay mow was on a second floor of the center section. In line with the front of the barn and about thirty feet west, they built a two story wood working shop. The first floor had a work bench with vise, cupboards for saws, planes and other tools while the second floor was usually used as a bedroom for a hired man in the summer. East of the barn and spaced apart was a fenced in garden area. Starting where the Alanson road intersected the G.R. and I. Railroad fence and following it in a northeastward direction for about a half mile to a fence at right angles to the railroad to Crooked Lake formed the northeast end of the pasture. A fence in alignment with Petoskey St. and about 40 yards north of the barn ran from the Alanson road to Crooked Lake to complete the pasture enclosure. An ice house and a storage shed for farm implements were located north of the shop.

In front of the house, the yard sloped down to the sandy beach and dock. I don't know when the earthen dock was built, but probably about 1900 as Carolina Poplars were planted in several places including the dock about that time.

About the time the home was being built, Grandfather Kellam met an Indian who was familiar with that area. He told him the place was called Pon-She-Wa-Ing which meant Winter Home. (It was later confirmed that the tribes which lived near the shore of Lake Michigan spent the winter a few miles inland as it was warmer and less effected by the winter storms.) Kellam changed the meaning of Pon-She-Wa-Ing to "The Summer Home".

To grade the land they used a scoop scraper which was drawn by a team of horses. To reduce the height of a piece of ground the driver drove the team across it, at the proper place he grasp the handles and by pulling up caused the front of the scraper to dig into the ground the desired depth. By pushing down on the handles the scraper came up filled with soil. He then drove to a low area, pulled up on the handles and the scraper turned upside down, dumping and spreading the soil. Kellam supervised the grading from the house down to the lake, about 130 yards. He followed the scraper as much as time would permit and picked up the artifacts which were later given to me. When I was working around the place I would occasionally pick up an arrow point of flint - but not many.

Quoting from "In the Wake of the Topinabee" by Arline M. Browne, about the Dummy Trains which made it convenient to travel locally. "A memorable experience common to all resorters at the turn of the century and through the first quarter of the twentieth century was to ride dummy trains. They serviced all the resorts out of Petoskey including points between there and Oden (later Alanson), Harbor Springs, Walloon Lake, all operated by the G.R.&I. Railway and the Pere Marquette Railways had dummies to Charlevoix. Four trains a day came out to Oden (later Alanson).

"These trains were made up of two or three short coaches. One of them was partitioned for a baggage area and a smoker. The seats were built of wood, reinforced with metal, arranged back to back, and they looked like park benches. The conductor kept the interior very clean, in spite of the heavy traffic. Gray enamel paint was used for the seats and interior, except the floors, which were red, as was the outside of the coach. The engines were small, like the switch engines of the day. Of course, coal was used for fuel. The windows were quite wide and could be raised or lowered as weather dictated. A stray cinder sometimes lodged in an eye; this usually happened when the engine was running backward and was next to the passenger coach. Having a headlight on each end of the engine did away with the need for a roundhouse."

Pon-She-Wa-Ing was a flag stop for the dummy trains and had a summer station consisting of a slab of concrete and a roof with a plank seat on the side away from the tracks. The roof was supported on wooden columns but without walls. On Sunday mornings 25 to 30 men from the tannery at Kegonic got off the first dummy train with their fishing tackle. My father, Charlie Woodruff, and Rufus Myers would direct them to their respective boat house where they could rent rowboats, buy bait, and fill their water jugs. The Hotel boat house had a gasoline launch which would pull six rowboats with the anchor lines tying the bow of one boat to the stern of the one ahead. The string of rowboats, with their occupants, were taken to Pickeral Lake and the boats released as requested. In the late afternoon the launch returned to Pickeral Lake, got the boats in tow and returned to the dock in time for the fisherman to catch a dummy train. A few boats fished Crooked Lake. This business was regular and profitable and with the people from the weekday dummy trains both Woodruff and Myers built wooden walks from the train station to their respective places of business. The tannery men needed the fish to provide protein for part of their meals and fortunately, fish were plentiful.

Littlefield Township contains two villages, Alanson and Oden. Pon-She-Wa-Ing is a summer resort and in 1900, only two families lived there the year around; namely, N. M. Kellam's and Rufus Myer's. In the 1902 Plat Book of Emmet County, the occupations of the residents of each Township are listed. In Littlefield Township, farming was the leading occupation with farms ranging in size from 33 acres to one of 240 acres with 80 acres being the most common size. Other occupations were blacksmithing, merchants, a boat builder and a Physician and Surgeon. The farmers usually had other skills such as carpenters, painters, lumbering, guiding fishing parties and as teamsters. These skills were used to bring in cash in addition to their farm products such as baled hay, potatoes, dairy products and

livestock mainly chickens, hogs and cattle. The best source of cash was the cottagers and could be either from farm products or the skill of the farmer.

The median annual family income is tabulated below:

1900 - \$	490	1950 - \$	3,319
1910 - \$	630	1960 - \$	5,620
1920 - \$	1,489	1970 - \$	9,867
1930 - \$	1,360	1977 - \$	16,009
1940 - \$	1,300		

(From Changing Times -- A Kiplinger Magazine.)

While an 80 acre farm is considered too small to support a family today, in 1900 considering that a team of horses supplied the power and with the small cash needs, a farm family could live comfortably. The only new mode of travel was the bicycle but it was not practical on the sandy roads of northern Michigan, so people continued to walk, drive a horse, or for long distances to ride the train. A copy of the 1897 Sears Roebuck Catalogue, in hard covers, was printed in 1968 by Chelsea House Publishers. If you get a copy, possibly at the library, you can get a good idea of how people dressed, the implements and tools they used and the prices. Men's Oxfords - \$1.65; Ladies Button Shoes - \$1.98; Wheelbarrow - \$1.10; 72 teeth, 3 section Harrow - \$11.00; a steel beam Plow - \$9.75; Cook Stove, 250 lbs. - \$12.00.

During the winter, potatoes, rutabages, apples, cabbage and similar vegetables were kept in a root cellar. This was a simple cellar dug in dry, sandy ground to a depth of about six feet, fitted with a soil covered roof and an entrance at one end. Since artesian wells were relatively easy to construct and by arranging for the 50°F. water to flow thru a wooden or galvanized steel trough, it made an effective cooling device, particularly for milk. The well and trough was usually in a small room attached to the kitchen.

The Gilbert Woodruff's in Oden, my paternal grandparents, had both a root cellar and a cooler room. They operated a small dairy and sold the milk, butter, etc. to the villagers. In the summer it became a brisk business with the cottagers added.

At Pon-She-Wa-Ing, the Kellam's had a root cellar in the field north of the barn and both families set good tables. Kellam's had flowing wells, one in front and one in back of the house. The one at the back flowed into a small tank from which it was pumped, by hand operation, to a larger tank on the second floor, and then flowed by gravity to a sink on the first floor.

There were no utility bills to pay. No electricity, no gas, no telephone and in the summer time it was a very pleasant life. But - when it was 20°F. below zero and two feet of snow, you had to go outdoors about sixty feet to a little house with a bench seat in it with a Sears Roebuck Catalogue, you didn't meditate!

It was logical that the western end of Crooked Lake would develop earlier than the eastern end as both the road and the railroad reached that end first and this was a larger area of water and deeper than where Pon-She-Wa-Ing was to be. In Conway, the Inn was built in 1879 and was later remodeled into a three story building and renamed The Conway Inn in 1903. Southeast of Conway, The Hastings Heights Hotel was built about 1900 on a terrace above Crooked Lake. In Oden, the Rawdon was an impressive four story structure. The lower story was a few feet above the level of Crooked Lake. The second story was about four feet above the side walk and roadlevel. Inside, the upper three stories were designed somewhat like the interior of a ship. A skylight was part of the roof, which covered an open space where inside stairways led to balconies with doors giving entrance to the bedrooms. The lower story was where the help was quartered. A small boat house west of the dock was headquarters for fishing parties.

Apparently the popularity of this region was attracting so many people that in 1898 families would get off the train at Oden and come to Kellam's home and ask to be allowed to stay in their home. They wouldn't turn a family away so they rented a room and would also supply meals when Kellam's ate. (A similar situation occurred when the ski runs opened.) Both Novacious and Maggie Kellam were extroverts and also good business persons, so the decision was made to rebuild their new home into a hotel.

In addition to the natural beauty of the site, it was only a short distance across the lake to Pickeral Channel, up through Black Hole (which was bottomless when I was a child) through the remainder of the channel and into Pickeral Lake which was a beautiful lake. My early recollection of it was when it had two homes on the north shore and two on the south. The lake had deep areas of 40 ft. and shallower ones of 12 to 15 feet which were good for trolling. The lake was so clear and clean that fishermen dipped up a cupful and drank it when thirsty. It was about a two mile trip from the dock to Alanson which had larger stores and more variety than in Oden and a pleasant trip in a launch.

To enlarge their home, the east section was added to provide a dining room on the first floor and a hall and bedrooms on the second. The south end of the second was a gable which matched the one on the west so the frontal appearance was as though the structure had been originally planned that way. On the first floor, a screened in porch went across the front and connected with an unscreened porch extending the length of the dining room. A set of steps was built to lead down from the center of the front porch and another set lead down from the north end of the side porch. A two story addition adjoining the north end of the new addition contained a kitchen, a large refrigerator, a serving counter, table for the help to eat and dish washing area. The second story contained two bedrooms. Connected to the east side of the kitchen at the north end was a story and a half, rather crude building, which served two functions, one as a wood shed, piled high with wood for the stoves and a relatively small, finished section next to the kitchen for storage of canned goods and groceries.



The "Annex" was a two story building containing four bedrooms and an east-west hall on the first floor and a duplicate arrangement on the second. Originally this building was constructed near the lake shore and close to the dock. It was to serve as bachelor's quarters, but it was soon moved and attached to the west end of the hotel and by adding eight more rooms made a total of twenty rooms.

To serve the needs of the fishermen, a two story boat house was built where the dock joined the shore and contained a hoist and trolley on each floor. Rowboats could be hoisted through a pair of trap doors to the second floor for winter storage. Below the trap doors was a slip and a rowboat could be brought into it for hoisting onto the first floor. Usually two men worked at the task of hoisting a boat out and lowering it onto the floor. One would tip it on its side and hold it in that position while the other would wash it out by dipping buckets of water out of the lake and throw the water into the boat to rinse out sea weeds, etc. It was then picked up by the hoist, taken to the north end of the boat house and stored on the floor; or if necessary, a pair of 2"x4"s would be placed across the bottom boat and the next one stacked on it. In the morning when a guest rented a boat, he got one that was clean, had two or three cushions and a pair of oars - all for \$1.00. It was the good old days for the guests.

Adjoining the boat house on the east was a row of four stalls for motor boats. These were small boats with an inboard engine. This was a roofed building on piling with a walk of two 2"x8" planks running alongside the boat and fitted with a door on the lake side and a smaller door on the land side.

The hotel with its farm buildings, wood working shop, boat house and earthen dock made a pleasant vacation place with two beautiful lakes, with good fishing, and flourished for many years. The only hotel on Crooked Lake to outlast it was the Conway Inn. The Rawdon was the first to burn, I believe before 1910 and Hasting Heights Hotel in 1919.

Maurice D. Woodruff  
April 21, 1980

*P.S. The Pon-She-Wa-Ing Hotel burned in Aug. 1955*

*Donated By:*

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**THE BEGINNING OF THE  
PON-SHE-WA-ING HOTEL**

**By  
Maurice D. Woodruff  
March 18, 1979**

**Submitted by  
R. Oliver Schwab, Jr.**

## THE BEGINNING OF THE PON-SHE-WA-ING HOTEL

I will begin with the Kellam family and, in particular, with Novacious M. Kellam, who was Welsh and lived from 1847-1923. He was a member of Company F, 11th Regiment, Michigan Infantry during the Civil War. As far as I know, he was not in any battles. He lived in Wolcottville, Indiana. Oddly enough there is a town of Woodruff nearby and a Crooked Lake to the northeast. My mother was born in Coldwater, Michigan, which is about twenty miles north of the Indiana line. Gladeys B. Kellam was born July 19, 1881.

To digress, Novacious M. Kellam was married and had a son, Birt Kellam, by a wife who died at a time unknown to me. He later married Margaret A. Smiley at a time unknown to me. They had two children, a son who died and my mother, Gladeys.

It is necessary to take an overall look at the United States after the Civil War and the Union had been preserved. The modes of travel were by walking, horse, boat or railroad. The Grand Rapids and Indiana R.R., with a southern terminus at Richmond, Indiana, reached Petoskey, Michigan in May, 1874. On September 28, 1880, it was extended to Crooked Lake and two years later reached Mackinaw City. Steamers ran on the inland waterway and traveled from Conway on Crooked Lake to Topinabee on Mullet Lake.

Another factor was the Homestead Act passed by Congress in 1862, which permitted a citizen 21 years of age or older to settle on 160 acres of public land and cultivate it for five years to get a title to that land. Veterans of the Union Army could acquire land on even a more favorable arrangement. Railroads sold tracts of land at \$9 to \$15 per acre as small as 40 acres.

Here was a vast land peopled with pioneers or of pioneer stock with everything favorable towards moving into the sparsely settled areas. People moved from Virginia to Ohio and Indiana. Some of these went West and others into Michigan. Kellams learned of northern Michigan from their friends like Mr. Grannis, Gertrude Hinds, nee Grossman, and others.

Arlene M. Browne, Winchester, Indiana, is writing of her father's recovery from a nervous breakdown says, "Throughout his excellent recovery of 1895, he had found therapeutic value in the peace of the woods, the pure water, relaxation of fishing and the delightful summer temperatures." They were at Walloon Lake but built their cottage at Cincinnati Point, Crooked Lake.

Draw an East-West line through Bay City, across the state, and the North Country started about there, and the conditions described by Arlene Browne refers to that part of the state. When you fly over that area it appears that it is about one third lakes and rivers.

In 1888, Michigan had its peak production year of 4,292,000,000 board feet of lumber, and ranked first of all the states. Most of this was white pine. In 1911, Michigan's ranking in the nation was:

Rank	State	Production (Board Feet)	% of Total
First	Michigan	4,292,000,000	41.0
Second	Wisconsin	1,800,000,000	17.3
Third	Minnesota	1,500,000,000	14.4
Fourth	Illinois	1,200,000,000	11.5
Fifth	Ohio	1,000,000,000	9.6
Sixth	Indiana	800,000,000	7.7
Seventh	Alabama	600,000,000	5.8
Eighth	Georgia	500,000,000	4.8
Ninth	North Carolina	400,000,000	3.9
Tenth	Virginia	300,000,000	2.9
Total of the Nation's Total)		10,472,000,000	100.0

... vast areas of land were lost to the axe, the saw, the sawmill, or the inevitable forest fires and fire-scarred barren sand wastes. Light soils gave out quickly under ill advised farming. Many an unpainted or sagging farmhouse or perhaps a nearby lilac bush, a pile of fieldstones or a crumbling cellar wall are silent evidence of these times."

Fortunately, the evergreens grow well on the sandy soils and the deciduous trees are doing well except for the elm. The scars are healing but the very number of people have created new problems. For example, some of the best bass fishing reeds and weeds are gone without a trace. As Prof. Jett said, "You find good fishing where the plumbing is bad." Not because of any contamination but as an indication of a sparsely settled area. As a matter of fact, Crooked Lake is noticeably clearing since the sewer system was installed.

Returning to the Kellams, Margaret A Kellam, formerly Margaret Smiley, Irish, 1849 - 1925. She had a brother, Shannon Smiley, who visited us when I was four years old. He took me through some stores in Mackinaw City while my mother was giving birth to Maurine at home.

I don't know why they moved to Alanson, Michigan, where he operated a store which he owned. I am sure he was influenced by friends and they liked the climate. I do know that Maggie A Kellam purchased from George Rush on May 21, 1897, the land that is south of Petoskey Street (the road back of the hotel) to the lake and from Lake Street east to the lake. The rest of the land owned by Kellams your family owned and you are more familiar with this than I am as regard to information pertaining to the deeds.

N. M. Kellam owned a house in Alanson and also owned a 120 acre farm in Springvale Township about two miles south of the eastern end of Pickeral Lake. He owned and operated general stores in the various towns where they lived so I assume that he purchased the farm as a speculation.

The Kellams built a home for year-around occupancy at Pon-She-Wa-Ing around 1900. The foundation was made of brick made locally and the first floor (using the descriptions of the hotel rooms) was the back office, the family sitting room, Mom and Pop's bedroom, the dark bedroom, the parlor and the lobby. These rooms were high ceilinged with the walls and ceilings of lath and plaster. There was a second story but I'm not certain of the room arrangement. The home had a front porch and a smaller back porch. When we lived

there, in the fall and spring, we had a heating stove in the family sitting room and a cook stove in the back office. We would move into Petoskey in November and move back in early May.

About the time the home was being built, Grandfather Kellam met an Indian who was familiar with that area. He told him the place was called Pon-She-Wa-Ing, which meant Winter Home. (It was later confirmed that the tribes which lived near the shore of Lake Michigan spent the winter a few miles inland as it was warmer and less affected by the winter storms.) Kellam changed the meaning of Pon-She-Wa-Ing to "The Summer Home".

To grade the land they used a scoop scraper, which was drawn by a team of horses. To reduce the height of a piece of ground, the driver drove the team across it, at the proper place he grasped the handles and by pulling up caused the front of the scraper to dig into the ground the desired depth. By pushing down on the handles the scraper came up filled with soil. He then drove to a low area, pulled up on the handles and the scraper turned upside down, dumping and spreading the soil. Kellam supervised the grading from the house down to the lake, about 130 yards. He followed the scraper as much as time would permit and picked up the artifacts which were later given to me. When I was working around the place I would occasionally pick up an arrowpoint of flint, but not many.

You are familiar with the barn, which was about 40 yards north from the back of the house. My recollection of it is that the center part contained the carriage on the first floor with the hay mow above. About five grain bins were lined up along the west wall with the stables adjacent to it. The bins contained such animal feeds as oats, cracked corn, scratch feed for chickens, bran, etc. In that wall small doors about two feet square were hinged at the top and latched at the bottom and lined up with a stall immediately west of the wall. Each stall had a manger for the grain and a hay chute came down from the second floor into which you would put a forkfull of hay at feeding time. We had stalls for three horses and three cows. About a four foot wide aisle ran north and south behind the stalls with a door at each end. The wall which formed the western side of the aisle was of 2x4's with siding on the outside, and 8"x1" boards on the inside and the space between was filled with sawdust for insulation. The inside wall of boards was about five feet high and above this were windows at intervals. Back of the horse stalls, placed about five feet above the floor, a wooden member extended into the aisle on which the harness or saddle hung. During the high school years I had a saddle horse and we had a team of work horses....also three cows.

On the east side of the center room, we had at various times a chicken roost, a nesting room, and an enclosed chicken



room. In the latter period, one room was a hog house which communicated with a fenced area farther to the east which contained two hog troughs. Part of the eastern portion was used for storage.

West of the barn, with front of the building in line with the front of the barn, Kellam had a two story shop built for wood working. A fence with a ten foot gate joined the bar and shop. The second story, as I knew it, contained a bed for a man to use and a storage space. The first floor had a long workbench, a wood vise, a large over-bench tool storage cabinet containing saws, square, planes, etc.

Immediately north of the shop was a building which was an ice storage house. In the wintertime, when the lake ice was about 15" thick, two men would drive a sleigh drawn by a team onto the lake, clear the snow off the ice and with a special two handled saw with large teeth cut the ice into blocks and load the sleigh. They had brought with them four small evergreens about five feet tall, and placed one at each corner of the water to serve as warning signals. They drove the sleigh to the ice house, which had a bed of sawdust about 12" thick to serve as insulation. The blocks of ice were placed on it while keeping a space of about 12" between the layer of ice blocks and the outside walls. This was repeated until after several sleigh loads the ice was stacked about 12 feet tall. The stack of ice was

covered by sawdust, as well as the space between it and the walls of the ice house. In the summertime, a man would uncover some of the top layer of ice and removed usually five or six blocks of ice, then recover the pile of ice with sawdust. He used a wheelborrow to haul about two blocks to the flowing well in the rear of the house and wash the ice free of sawdust. Some of the ice was sold to cottagers, but the main use was for a refrigerator in the kitchen. This system was quite satisfactory, as the lake contained clear water (there had been no waves to rile the water since the ice formed) and men could be found in the winter who had free time.

North of the ice house was a farm implement storage shed. This was built like a car port with the west and north side walled and the ice house forming the south wall. The east side was open and had wooden posts or columns supporting that side of the roof. The columns were spaced so that a wagon or sleigh could be backed between then into the shed. Also in the shed would be a mowing machine, a harrow, a plow and other team drawn implements.

Attached to the west wall of the shed and extending north was a fence which intersecting the pasture west to east fence until that fence was in line with the east side of the barn, then running south until it was attached to the barn. Probably the distance from the fence joining

the barn to the shop to pasture fence was about 120 feet and with a 10 foot gate in the pasture fence, formed an enclosure similar to a corral. In describing the barn, I failed to mention that the full width of the barn continued northward and with the roof profile of the barn to form a large haw mow. (Later after the hotel was built it was converted to an ice house.)

To the east of these enclosures was another fenced enclosure with a ten foot gate, which was a vegetable garden. The sandy soil produced good root crops, such as, radishes, carrots, potatoes and beets. The miraculous thing was that although not a potato bug had been seen, when you planted a row of potatoes as soon as the plants came out of the ground the potato bugs appeared and began eating the foliage. The battle was on with man armed with "paris green" in a sprayer and the potato bugs on the plants.

The pasture fence ran east to west from Crooked Lake to Lake Street, then north to the railroad right-of-way fence, which the railroad had erected. The railroad, with the fence, curved to the north and ran substantially parallel to Crooked Lake. At the end of the Kellam property a fence joined the railroad fence and ran east to Crooked Lake. All the land from Petoskey Street to Lake Street and then following the railroad was described was 55.7 acres. I would estimate that about half of it was pasture, the remainder being swamp containing both evergreens and deciduous trees,

as well as the farm buildings.

The pasture was at two distinct levels, the upper elevation of sandy soil on which the barn, shop, etc. were located, then going north it dropped abruptly to within three feet of the level of Crooked Lake. The pasture soil at the lower elevation was marl which is pre-limestone, white in color and rather slippery when wet. It is fertile and produced a good covering of grass.

In front of the house, the yard sloped down to the sandy beach and the dock. I don't know when the earthen dock was built, but I would guess about 1900, as Carolina Poplars were planted in several places including the dock about 1900.

That is the general arrangement of the Kellam's home and auxiliary buildings. To get an idea of how much larger the pasture was in 1900, it included what is now U.S. 31, which has a 150 foot wide right-of-way adjacent to the railroad. The State of Michigan acquired the strip of land in 1920 and started construction of U.S. 31 in the fall of 1928. Emmet County is involved in the maintenance, but I don't know just how the responsibility is shared. This strip of land took the best of the lower pasture making it impractical to keep cows in what was left.

Littlefield Township contains two villages, Alanson and Oden. Pon-She-Wa-Ing is a summer resort and in 1900 only two families lived there the year around, namely,

N. M. Kellam's and Rufus Myer's. In the 1902 Plat Book of Emmet County, the occupations of the residents of each township are listed. In Littlefield Township, farming was the leading occupation with farms ranging in size from 33 acres to one of 240 acres with 80 acres being the most common size. Other occupations were blacksmithing, merchants, a boat builder and a physician and surgeon. The farmers usually had other skills, such as, carpenters, painters, lumbering, guiding fishing parties and as teamsters. These skills were used to bring in cash in addition to their farm products, such as, baled hay, potatoes, dairy products and live stock, mainly chickens, hogs and cattle. The best source of cash was the cottagers and could be either from farm products or the skill of the farmer.

The median annual family income is tabulated below:

1900 - \$ 490	1950 - \$ 3,319
1910 - \$ 630	1960 - \$ 5,620
1920 - \$1,489	1970 - \$ 9,867
1930 - \$1,360	1977 - \$ 16,009
1940 - \$1,300	

(From "Changing Times" - A Kiplinger Magazine)

While an 80 acre farm is considered too small to support a family today, in 1900 considering that a team of horses supplied the power and with the small cash needs, a farm family could live comfortably. The only new mode of travel was the bicycle, but it was not practical on the sandy roads of northern Michigan, so people continued to walk, drive a horse, or for long distances to ride the train. A copy of the 1897 Sears Roebuck Catalogue in hard cover was printed

in 1968 by Chelsea House Publishers. If you get a copy, possibly at the library, you can get a good idea of how people dressed, the implements and tools they used and the prices.

Men's Oxfords	\$ 1.65
Ladies Button Shoes	\$ 1.98
Wheelborrow	\$ 1.10
72 teeth, 3 Section Harrow	\$11.00
Steel Beam Plow	\$ 9.75
Cook Stove, 250 lbs.	\$12.00

During the winter, potatoes, rutabages, apples, cabbage and similar vegetables were kept in a root cellar. This was a simple cellar dug in dry, sandy ground to a depth of about six feet, fitted with a soil covered roof and an entrance at one end. Since artesian wells were relatively easy to construct and by arranging for the 50° F. water to flow through a wooden or galvanized steel trough, it made an effective cooling device, particularly for milk. The well and trough was usually in a small room attached to the kitchen.

James Whitcomb Riley described a cooler room better than I can. A verse from "Out to Old Aunt Mary's":

"And the old spring-house in the cool green gloom  
 Of the willow trees and the coller room  
 Where the swinging shelves and the crocks were kept  
 Where the cream in a golden languor slept  
 While the waters gurgled and laughed and wept  
 Out to Old Aunt Mary's!"

The Gilbert Woodruffs in Oden, Pop's parents, had both a root cellar and a cooler room. They operated a small dairy and sold the milk, butter, etc. to the villagers. In the summer it became a brisk business with the cottagers added.

At Pon-She-Wa-Ing, the Kellams had a root cellar in the field north of the barn and both families set good tables. Kellam's had flowing wells, one in front and one in back of the house. The one at the back flowed into a small tank from which it was pumped, by hand operation, to a larger tank on the second floor and then flowed by gravity to a sink on the first floor.

There were no utility bills to pay. No electricity, no gas, no telephone, and in the summertime it was a very pleasant life. But....when it was 20° F. below zero and two feet of snow, you had to go outdoors about sixty feet to a little house with a bench seat in it with a Sears Roebuck catalogue you didn't meditate.

It was logical that the western end of Crooked Lake would develop earlier than the eastern end as both the road and the railroad reached that end first, and this was a larger area of water and deeper than where Pon-She-Wa-Ing was to be. In Conway, The Inn was built in 1879 and was later remodel into a three story building and renamed The Conway Inn in 1903. Southeast of Conway, the Hastings Heights Hotel was built about 1900 on a terrace above

Crooked Lake. In Oden, the Rawdon was an impressive four story structure. The lower story was a few feet about the level of Crooked Lake. The second story was about four feet above the sidewalk and road level. Inside the upper three stories were designed somewhat like the interior of a ship. A skylight was part of the roof, which covered an open space where inside stairways led to balconies with doors giving entrance to the bedrooms. The lower story was where the help was quartered. A small boathouse west of the dock was headquarters for fishing parties.

Apparently, the popularity of this region was attracting so many people that around 1902 families would get off the train at Oden and come to Kellam's home and ask to be allowed to stay in their home. They wouldn't turn a family away so they rented a room and would also supply meals when Kellam's ate. (A similar situation occurred when the ski runs opened.) Both Novacious and Maggie Kellam were extroverts and also good business persons so the decision was made to rebuild their new home into a hotel.

In addition to the natural beauty of the site, it was only a short distance across the lake to Pickeral channel, up through Black Hole (which was bottomless when I was a child) through the remainder of the channel and into Pickeral Lake, which was a beautiful lake. My early recollection of it was when it had two homes on the north shore and two on the south shore. The lake had deep areas of 40 feet and



shallower ones of 12 to 15 feet which were good for trolling. The lake was so clear and clean that fisherman dipped up a cupful and drank it when thirsty. It was about a two mile trip from the dock to Alanson, which had larger stores and more variety than in Oden, and a pleasant trip in a launch.

To enlarge their home, the east section was added to provide a dining room on the first floor and a hall and bedrooms on the second. The south end of the second was a gable which matched the one on the west so the frontal appearance was as though the structure had been originally planned that way. On the first floor a screened-in porch went across the front and connected with an unscreened porch extending the length of the dining room. A set of steps was built to lead down from the center of the front porch and another set lead down from the north end of the side porch. A two story addition adjoining the north end of the new addition contained a kitchen, a large refrigerator, a serving counter, table for the help to eat and dish washing area. The second story contained two bedrooms. Connected to the east side of the kitchen at the north end was a story and a half rather crude building, which served two functions; one as a wood shed piled high with wood for the stoves, and a relatively small, finished section next to the kitchen for storage of canned goods and groceries.

The "Annex" was a two story building containing four bedrooms and an east-west hall on the first floor, and a

duplicate arrangement on the second. Originally, this building was constructed near the lake shore and close to the dock. It was to serve as bachelors' quarters, but it was soon moved and attached to the west end of the hotel and by adding eight more rooms made the total of twenty rooms.

To serve the needs of the fisherman, a two story boathouse was built where the dock joined the shore and contained a hoist and trolley on each floor. Rowboats could be hoisted through a pair of trap doors to the second floor for winter storage. Below the trap doors was a slip and a rowboat could be brought into it for hoisting onto the first floor. Usually two men worked at the task of hoisting a boat out and lowering it onto the floor. One would tip it on its side and hold it in that position while the other would wash it out by dipping buckets of water out of the lake and throw the water into the boat to rinse out sea weeds, etc. It was then picked up by the hoist, taken to the north end of the boathouse and stored on the floor or, if necessary, a part of 2x4's would be placed across the bottom boat and the next one stacked on it. In the morning, when a guest rented a boat, he got one that was clean, had two or three cushions and a pair of oars....all for \$1.00. It was the good old days for the guests.

Adjoining the boathouse on the east was a row of four stalls for motor boats. These were small boats with an inboard engine. This was a roofed building on pilings with

a walk of two 2"x8" planks running alongside the boat and fitted with a door on the lake side and a smaller door on the land side.

The hotel with its farm buildings, wood working shop, boathouse and earthen dock made a pleasant vacation place with two beautiful lakes and good fishing, and flourished for many years. The only hotel to outlast it was the Conway Inn. The Rawdon was the first to burn, I believe before 1910, and Hasting's Heights Hotel in 1919.

Maurice D. Woodruff  
March 18, 1979

Addendum:

In going through some old letters, I found an unused envelope on which my mother had written the following:

"Moved in our new home August 5, 1897.  
Opened to the public - Spring of 1899.  
Remodeled front porch - Spring of 1928.  
Glada K. Woodruff October 22, 1929"

The date when the Kellam home was completed and the date that it was open to the public were earlier than I anticipated. The conversion to a hotel was over a period of years as I can remember some of them.

Maurice D. Woodruff  
May 28, 1979

# **PONSHEWAING HOTEL FIRE 1953**

## **Landmark Badly Damaged by Fire**

## Ponshewaing Site Has Long History

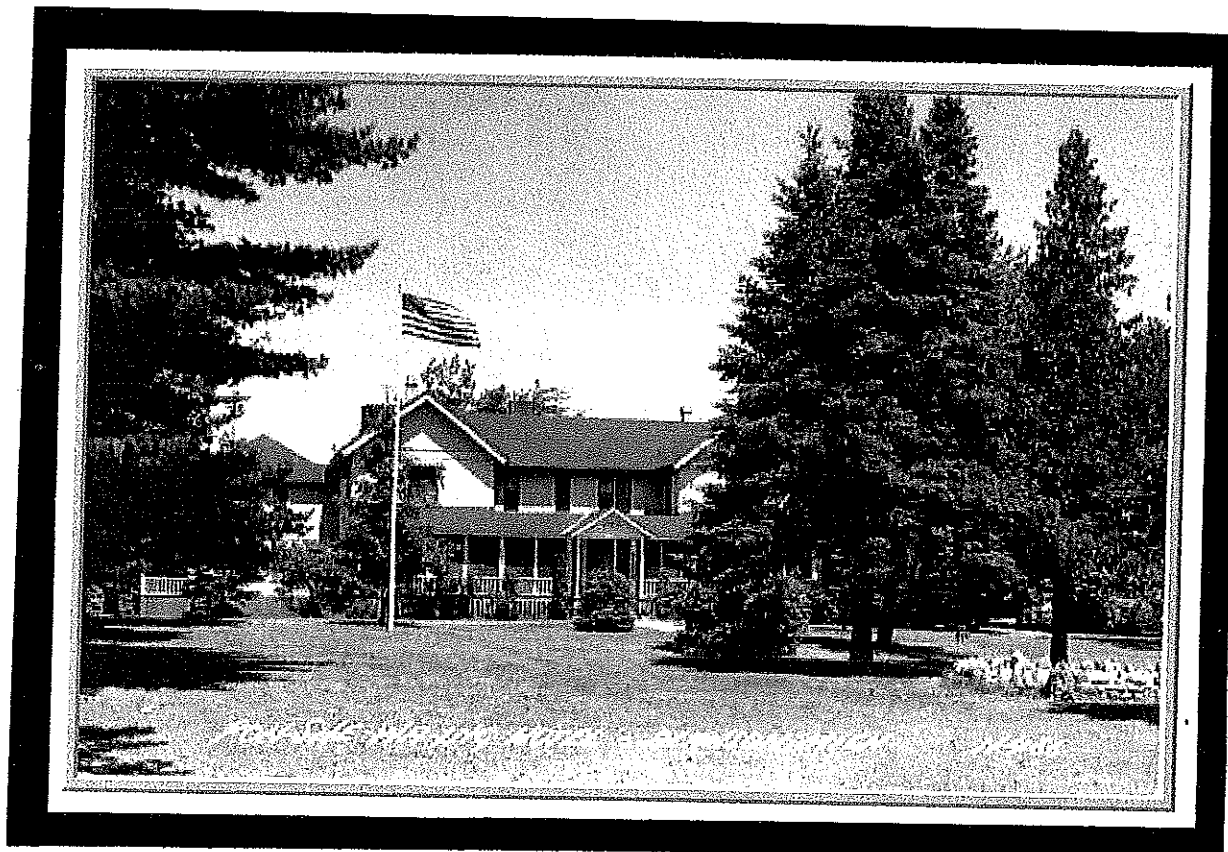
Ponshewaing Hotel, which was virtually destroyed by fire last evening, is located on property which has been used as a vacation spot as far back as Indian times when the Ottawas owned the area without benefit of the white man's deeds or written records.

News-Review files show that it was a winter home for Ottawas who liked the area because of its good hunting and fishing. The Ottawas were finally driven away during a battle with another tribe.

White men entered the scene in the late 1800's and the first land grant was given to George Rush, a retired sea captain. In 1896 N. M. Kellam, grandfather of Mrs. Reginald James, one of the present owners, started the foundation for the hotel. The east wing was built in 1900, the north and west wings in 1907.

In 1914 Charles Woodruff, father of Mrs. James, took up residence in the resort and in 1915 he became manager and he and Mrs. Woodruff operated it until his death in 1950. She continued another year, then sold it to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur J. Fox, of Cincinnati, Ohio. This year, Mr. and Mrs. James took over the hotel and their son, Jerry Kellam James, is the present manager.

**Ponshewaing Hotel**  
**Date Unknown**



## PONSHEWAING HOTEL FIRE Resort Landmark Badly Damaged By Flames

Petoskey News-Review  
AUGUST 29, 1955

Six fire departments battled a scorching blaze Tuesday evening which razed half of the Ponshewaing Hotel, a resort landmark about eight miles north of here on US-31. Loss may run \$25,000.

Cause was undetermined but it originated underneath the kitchen.

The hotel, built in the 1890's, had been in the late C. E. Woodruff family until 1952 when it was sold for \$40,000 but was repurchased by their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Reginald James of Ripon, Wis., this year.

The 20-bedroom hotel was only partially covered by insurance, according to James.

Firemen from Petoskey, Resort, Bear Creek, Alanson, Indian River, Harbor Springs and Pellston fought the blaze. It seemed impossible, James said, that any part of the building could be saved when departments started arriving. A grove and several nearby resort homes were also threatened.

Firemen, aided by spectator's and employees of the hotel, saved a great deal of the contents and personal belongings of guests.

### Intrepid Firemen

In spite of pleas from the owners, who were fearful for the firemen's safety, the men kept running in and out of the building with anything they could save. Others set up a human chain to second floor windows on ladders and brought out other belongings.

Departments worked together and set several of the trucks up as pumpers on the shores of Crooked Lake.

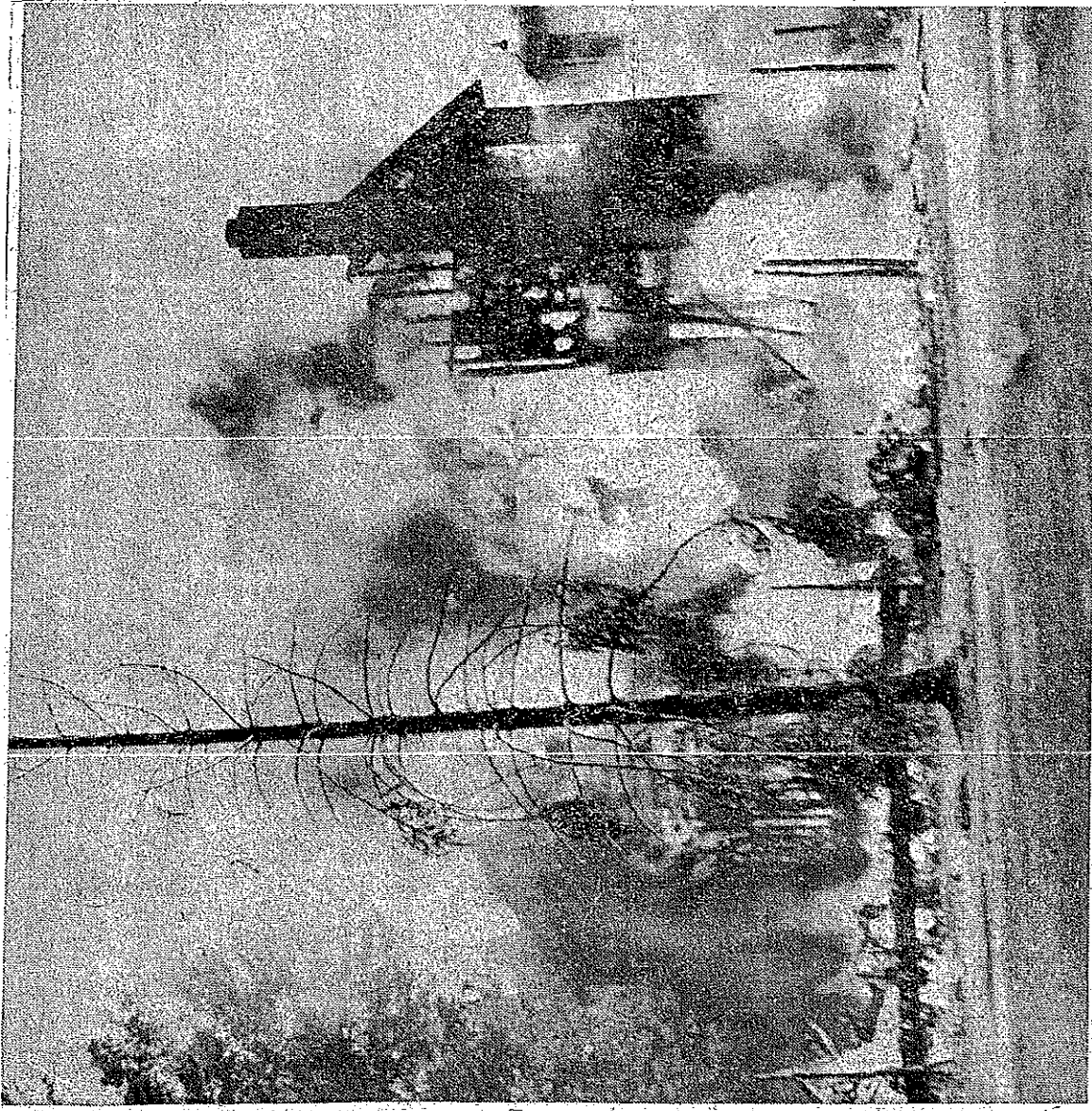
A couple working at the hotel, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Fischer of Evanston, Ill., who slept over the kitchen, lost all of their clothing. The kitchen and north side of the building were complete ruin.

### Alarm Given

Fire was discovered by James of Toledo, O., brother of the owner. It was coming from under the kitchen. He notified his sister-in-law who phoned for firemen. She rushed in the area with a fire extinguisher, turned it on, and threw it.

"I might as well have thrown nothing," she said. "The flames just grew."

She and others rushed around to make sure all were out of their rooms. Her husband was sleeping but was aroused and all — Shortly after this, gas tanks for cooking and an oil drum near the kitchen exploded. {fire continued page two}



PONSHEWAING HOTEL appeared completely doomed when this photo was taken. This is how it appeared when six fire departments started arriving yesterday afternoon. Loss may run \$25,000. Note the scorched tree in the foreground. Other fire photos in side.

## PONSHEWAING HOTEL FIRE Resort Landmark Badly Damaged By Flames

{Hotel Fire Continued}

"Then the flames really climbed," Mrs. James said. They hauled out a piano which was given Mrs. James' mother {Mrs. C. E. Woodruff} by her parents in 1893. They carried out books, book cases, lamps, beds, springs, mattresses, clothing, fishing equipment, counters, shelves full of articles, electric fans, trunks, chairs, anything they could move.

### OWNERS GRATEFUL

"We're so thankful the fire didn't happen at night," Mr. & Mrs. James said. "It would have been next to impossible to have aroused our guests or members of our staff or family because we sleep in so many different parts of the house."

"We're so grateful to those brave firemen for everything they did in saving what they did. We asked them not to go in. No life is worth risking for furniture or clothing. But the men did and we are most appreciative."

The couple said they had five guests at the time of the fire, but would have been filled on Thursday because of advance reservations. Most of the members of their family were also present.

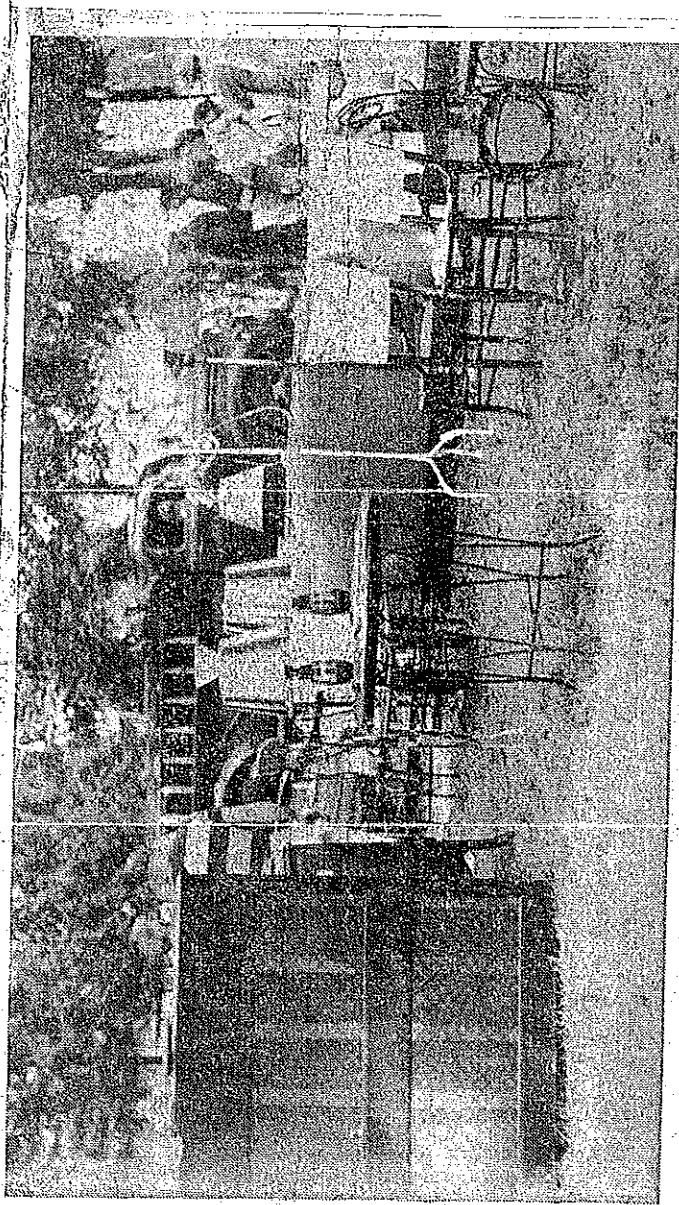
Neighbors offered sleeping quarters to the hotel owners and their guests last night.

### Cause Pondered

Mrs. James reported that the only fire in the building at the time was in a coal water heater which was to be replaced next week. She doubted if this could have been the cause because no fuel had been added since 8 a.m. She felt it may have come from a carelessly tossed cigarette.

The hotel was managed by their son Jerry Kalleem James and plans were set to remodel the hotel extensively starting next week. The elder James is general manager of Speed Queen Corporation, Ripon, Wis.

The building was acquired in 1896 by the late Col. N. M. Kalleem, who started adding to it and opened the hotel about 1898. In 1915 it was operated by Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Woodruff, who continued until 1952.



**SALVAGED.** Firemen, volunteers and the staff of the Ponshewaing Hotel carried out considerable furnishings late yesterday. The piano at the left came from the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The truck in the background is from Indian River. Other trucks were at the lake and on other sides of the building.

(News-Review fire photos by Jim Doherty)