

McCARTY'S SALOON
Now PARK GARDEN CAFÉ

Charter For Village of Petoskey Was Born
November 30, 1876

PETOSKEY CHARTER WAS BORN ABOVE THE PARK GARDEN CAFÉ **Saloon Marks Centennial – 4 Years Late**

Petoskey News-Review
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By Peggy L. Blount

The very atmosphere of the Park Garden Café is steeped with history. As you drink a schooner of beer or eat dinner, your eyes wander about and enjoy the elegant furnishings of Petoskey's oldest saloon. The huge carved walnut bar, the lovely tin ceiling panels and the double swinging doors make you feel as if you've just walked into "The Gay Nineties."

The Shier family has owned the café since 1954 and have heard many of the local legends that concern their business. They had been told that the Park Garden Café was established in 1879 so they decided to celebrate their centennial year in 1979. With this in mind they hired a local researcher to dig up their history.

As a result of this research they now know they should have celebrated their centennial in 1975, while the city of Petoskey should be celebrating the organization of the Village of Petoskey in 1979.

However, the Park Garden had an important part to play in Petoskey's history and this is the story.

In the year 1875 Petoskey was just beginning to show its potential as a resort town. The railroad had been extended this far north two years before. The area had just opened up to homesteading, most of the homesteaders being Civil War

Veterans who were allotted 80 acre parcels.

One of these homesteaders was a man by the name of Alonzo Nash McCarty. He came to Petoskey from Cadillac and immediately fell in love with Little Traverse Bay and the budding town. In the late spring of 1875, McCarty began building a two-story saloon and billiard rooms a little east of the hotel that D.J. Cushman was building and opposite the Rose House {Occidental} the first hotel built in Petoskey.

The first business center in Petoskey was built around the depot of the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad which was located in the parking lot in front of the present Elks Club.

McCarty's saloon, and the hall above it, became the gathering place for the citizens, as the article from "The Independent Democrat" reports: "Dec. 17, 1875: A dancing club has been formed and dances held in McCarty's Hall" The hall was used by the Methodist congregation from 1875 until 1877 when they built a church at the present location. In 1878 the passenger pigeons were nesting in the area and a "squabs" social hop was held in McCarty's hall which was "an enjoyable affair indeed."

But the most important event held in McCarty's hall occurred Nov. 30, 1878. A public meeting was held for the purpose of taking action in the direction of obtaining a charter for the village. A committee

was appointed to draft a map of the territory to be incorporated and take such other steps as necessary.

Hon. C.J. Pailthorp, representative in the legislature from the district, was put in charge, and in February, 1879, he secured the passage of a bill granting the charter to the Village of Petoskey

Elections were held and the first village officers were as follows: President, H.O. Rose, trustees, L.C. Watson, A. Bunnell, P.B. Wachtel, C.B. Henika, D.J. Cushman, and last but not least, Alonzo Nash McCarty, the man who owned the hall where the village organization was planned. He served as trustee in 1879, 1880, 1881 and 1885.

About 1888 the saloon was sold to Frank J. Greulich who added the garden on the lot east and renamed it "The Annex." The garden featured a large fountain in the center. He was also the man who planned the interior of the café as it is now with the black walnut bar and large plate glass mirrors. He died shortly after the improvements were completed.

The annex then became the property of Frank Fochtman, who extended it another lot east. This is where he had the Grill Café, which today is called the Penn-Dixie building. He did very well with his first class Grill Café, Palm Garden and billiards saloon until 1909 when Emmet County voted in prohibition.

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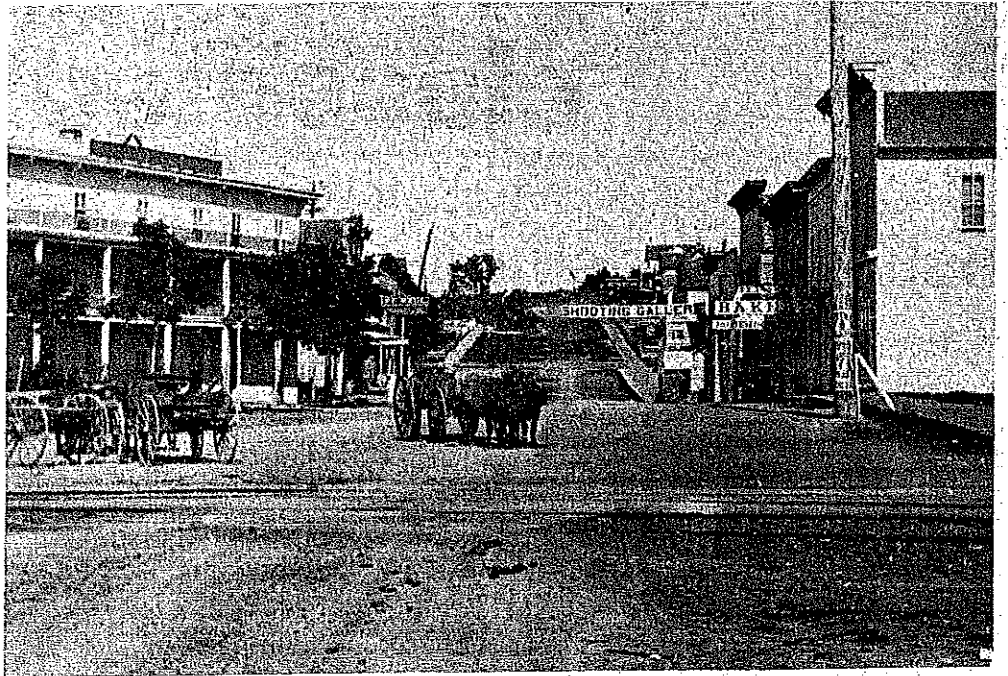
Frank obviously did not agree with the majority, as he was sentenced to four months in the Detroit House of Corrections in 1912 for violating the local liquor law. His brother Lewis also spent six months in Detroit for the same offense.

Business was great during the summer months for the Grill Café and Palm garden but the soft drinks billiard room wasn't doing well enough during the winter to support the business, so it was closed during 1915 and 1916. In 1921 Frank sold the Grill Café to the Portland Cement Co. and the annex was reduced to two lots, as it is today. Frank died in 1932 and the Fochtman family operated the business until it was sold to Robert and Lodema Shier of Pellston.

The Shier family has its roots in early Petoskey also, in the person of grandfather John Shier who opened a saloon on Park Avenue in 1875, the same year McCarty's hall {Park Garden Café} came into being. His location was also opposite the Grand Rapids and Indiana railroad depot, where Dr. Willis dental office is now. John Shier and his great grandson Bob share an interest in fine wines with the Park Garden also featuring its own house wines.

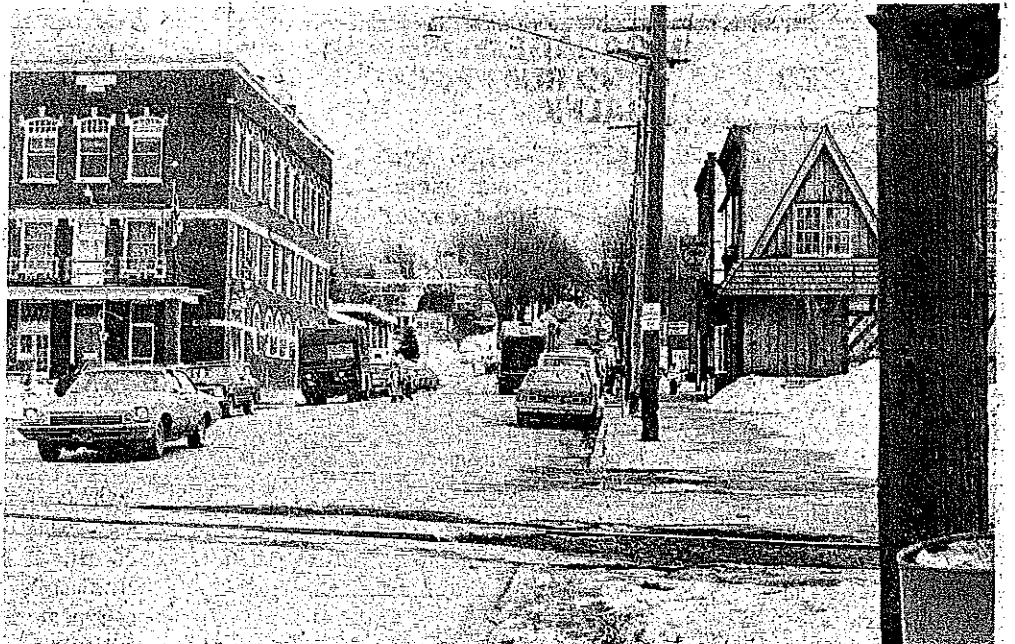
Robert, Lodema and son Bob invite everyone to come see their display of photographs and memorabilia on the history of the Park Garden Café and grandfather Shier's saloon, and

to help them celebrate their belated centennial and the centennial of the village of Petoskey.



THIS IS LAKE Street looking east from the railroad tracks around 1880. The white building on the right is now the Park Garden Cafe. A bakery and shooting gallery were located up the

block. The team of oxen (center) is pulling away from the Occidental Hotel, which advertised 294 rooms in 1889. (Photo Courtesy Little Traverse Historical Society)



THIS PHOTO of Lake Street, taken Thursday afternoon, March 8, 1979, shows the changes that have taken

place in the neighborhood since the Park Garden Cafe first opened. (NEWS photo by Jeff Blake)