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Dune Acres Historical Commission  
Occasional Papers, #1  
February 2, 1990

The Historical Commission has been collecting materials relating to Dune Acres and its residents with the object of preserving the materials and eventually producing a history of the community. So much interest has come to light that we plan to distribute from time to time selections from the collection. Those attached have to do with the Clubhouse and former Guesthouse.

When Dune Acres was laid out between 1923 and 1926, the plans included a golf course, a marina-like harbor, and a Clubhouse and Guesthouse. All but the marina were open in the summer of 1926. The Guesthouse register, which has been preserved by the Dune Acres Social Committee, shows that the Guesthouse was open year round for a few years, but by 1930 operated only from April through October. There seem to have been six to eight guest rooms, occupied fairly fully on summer weekends, with occasional guests through the other seasons. Many were regulars, most from Chicago, but there were others from around the state, for example from Fort Wayne, Wabash, Anderson, and from more exotic places such as Flint, Michigan, Philadelphia, and Aberdeen, South Dakota. There is less information about the dining room, which was located in the Clubhouse, but there are some records of large parties, for instance on October 12, 1927, a group of 54 for dinner from the University Club of Michigan City. The facilities remained popular during the Depression and World War II. Thanks to Dan Jenkins, we have a menu from the then-styled "Harbor View Inn" from 1944 or 1945 which offered a roast turkey dinner for \$1.10, broiled lake trout for \$ .85 and a casserole of baked beans for \$ .65. Lemon cream pie or orange layer cake were 15 cents and coffee or tea were a dime.

The facilities were open through October, 1947, but in 1948, the Town Board (which always ran them as a Town function) had discontinued the operation and was considering ways of selling off kitchen equipment, bed linens and the like. The Guesthouse was eventually torn down and the Clubhouse used only for events planned by the Social Committee, formed in the late 1940's. How this came about is related by Bobbie Smith in an interview taped for the Historical Commission archives. She recalls that the Clubhouse "just sat there for a while with all these greasy skillets in the kitchen, and the stove caked with stuff. Connie Bennett spearheaded the idea of clean it up and lets use it for town parties. So we scrubbed and cleaned that kitchen up, and threw old stuff out...we really worked hard getting it all fixed. And then Mildred Swygert became the head of the first Social Committee. We had a group of people who took their sewing machines, and we made curtains -- I mean it was just really a real community effort. We made table cloths, and...and then, started having these parties up there."

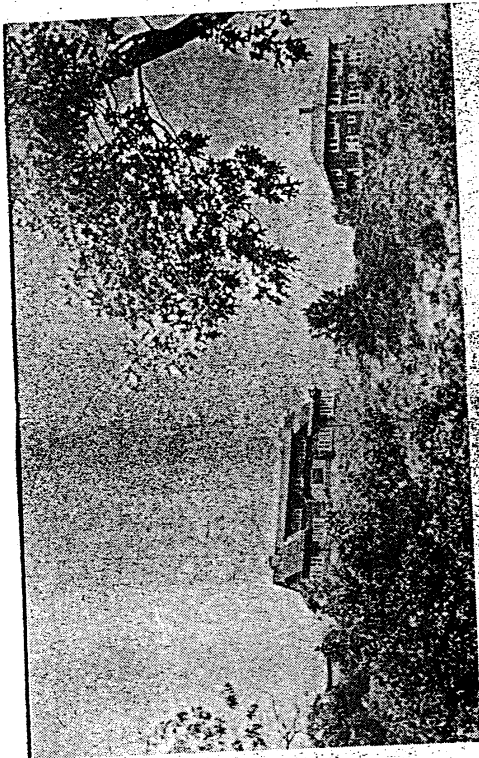
The current Town Board had the Clubhouse surveyed in the summer of 1989 by an architect and an expert on preservation of log buildings. They reported it to be in good condition; only minor repairs are needed and the addition of safety features and access for the handicapped to meet legal requirements. The South Bend office of Historic Landmarks (of Indiana) helped in providing expert advice on preservation and were so taken with the building that an article on the Clubhouse appeared in the Indiana Preservationist for November-December,

1989. A copy is included among the attached documents.

The Historical Commission would welcome other information (documents or reminiscences) about this or other aspects of Dune Acres history.

Dune Acres Historical Commission

Gertrude Conklin  
Margaret Doyle  
James Newman



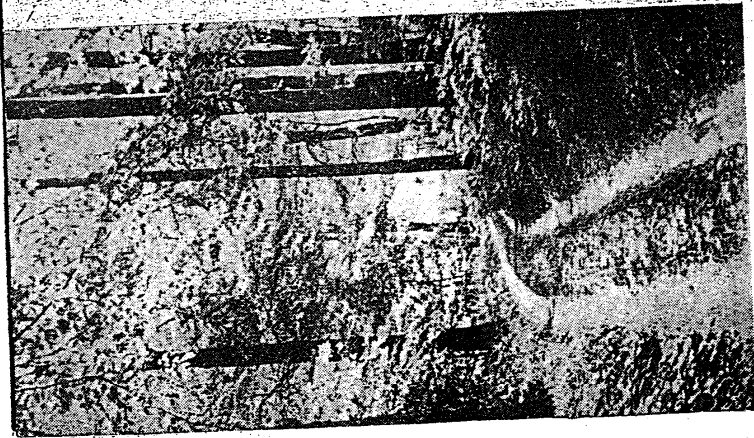
### *Club House and Guest House ---*

Natural cedar-log construction, located on the second highest hill in the Dune Country, overlooking Lake Michigan, where cool breezes temper the summer heat. The sleeping rooms are large and nicely furnished, each room with private bath. They are located in the Guest House, a separate building assuring restful, refreshing sleep. Meals are served in the Club House.

*Each property owner is entitled to Club membership. There are no dues or assessments. Reservations can be made by members and their friends. Rates are reasonable. For information on special rates for the week or the month, address*

**DUNE ACRES CLUB, CHESTERTON, IND.**

After June 1st, Telephone 2061, Chesterton, Indiana.



*Shady Roads*

CLUB HOUSE

GUEST HOUSE

DUNE ACRES CLUB

R. F. D. #1

CHESTERTON, INDIANA

Invites you to enjoy a week-end, a week or a month in attractive rustic surroundings, conveniently located fifteen miles east of Gary on highway #12.

Log buildings (all rooms with bath) overlooking Lake Michigan, a wonderful view and a mile of private beach. Rest and relax and enjoy food carefully prepared.

RATES INCLUDING MEALS

	DOUBLE	SINGLE
WEEK-ENDS	\$ 5.00 (Per Person)	\$ 6.50
WEEK DAYS	3.50 (Per Person)	4.75
WEEKLY	23.00 (Per Person)	28.00
MONTHLY	85.00 (Per Person)	105.00

Special rates are provided for children under 8 years. Accommodations are limited, the club is semi-private.

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL -- CHESTERTON 206 J OR WRITE

Date: 11938

**DUNE ACRES CLUB HOUSE**  
FRED P. GREGG, Manager  
Sunday Dinner, Oct. 10, 1926  
Served from 12 noon to 8 p. m.

CREAM CHICKEN SOUP

OLIVES - CELERY  
HALF FRIED SPRING CHICKEN,  
CREAM GRAVY  
OR  
BROILED TENDERLOIN STEAK—\$1.50

FISH FROM NETS THAT YOU CAN SEE  
FRIED PERCH  
LEMON BUTTER—\$1.25  
MASHED POTATOES CARROTS and PEAS

CABBAGE SLAW

ICE CREAM AND CAKE

COFFEE TEA ICE TEA MILK

Attention given to special parties.  
Order your dinner in advance and make sure that you will not be disappointed. Phone The Dune Acres Club House, Chesterton, exchange.  
Keep off the golf course greens, unless you have golf shoes on.  
Greens fee \$1.50 per day for guests of members only.  
You can make reservations now for rooms at guest house for yourself and friends.  
Rates for rooms with meals and golf privileges \$3.00 single—\$13.50 double. Discount by week 10%—by month 20%. Members receive credit for greens fee.

## Unusual clubhouse has roots in the dunes

Karen Kiemiec  
Director, Northern Regional Office

It's as if Dorothy lived in the Adirondacks instead of Kansas, and the twister deposited her atop a sandy hill overlooking Lake Michigan instead of in Oz.

The unlikely sight of a log clubhouse in Dune Acres, Indiana, has a more logical explanation, though—the clubhouse was originally part of a rustic cottage community planned by Dr. William A. Wurt in the early 1920s. Wurt helped form a development corporation which began promoting the area as a "restricted suburb of fine homes" nestled in the dune. Prospective buyers from as far away as Oregon and California stayed in the cozy guest house (since demolished) and socialized in the nearby clubhouse during negotiations.

The idea never quite took off, however. Eventually, the corporation turned the clubhouse over to the recently-incorporated town of Dune Acres, and since then the three-story structure has served as a general-purpose meeting place. Its situation on the second-highest hill in the area, large



▲ The creosote-treated logs were chinked with a loosely-twisted rope called oakum. The rope, commonly used on ships, was made of hemp or jute and was impregnated with tar to retard weathering. (Photo: Karen Kiemiec)

windows, and spacious rooms with double fireplaces have made it a local favorite for decades.

Even so, weather and changing times have taken their toll. The building needs repair work, and some residents feel that a new facility should replace it. The town board and others concerned for the clubhouse's future turned to Historic Landmarks' Northern Regional Office, which recommended preservation consultant Craig Leonard, who then inspected the building and made recommendations.

"It's unique in Indiana," Leonard remarked. "A lot of rustic tourist courts—little log cabins you'd stay in as motel rooms—were built in the 1930s

spring party up there, and we all come out of our winter nests. The clubhouse has always been here."

▼ "Imagine the place if the white paint were stripped off the tapestry brick of those big bearbats, and you filled the whole place up with rough-beam Adirondack chairs. It would be great!" Craig Leonard was optimistic about restoration. (Photo: Karen Kiemiec)

