

PLAN START OF NEW PARK

Equipment To Be Placed in Township Property Before Summer

Plans are being laid today by Bloomfield Township officials for equipping the land approved for a park in the township with a well, benches, fire grates and other features for the persons who will take advantage of the 55 acres, according to announcement made today.

The property is located east of the Kennanson road and north of the Quarten road. Its purchase was approved in the election in April 2 by the people of the township.

"While the work naturally cannot be rushed, there will be some equipment placed there so people during the summer may take advantage of it," said Robert V. Moore, supervisor.

MICHIGAN DUNES AN ASSET TO THE STATE

By ARNOLD MULDER (President Michigan Author's Association)

For years I have been preaching that the dunes of Michigan are greater assets than the state's greatest assets. This is fairly familiar doctrine now but it was not always so. Many years ago when the dunes were still regarded by most people as liabilities—mere heaps of worthless sand—used to wander over those vast expanses of sand wastes and something of the spirit of those hills entered my soul. From time to time, timidly, almost apologetically, I tried to give the people who have lived all their lives in the shadow of the dunes, something of my sense of wonder, something of the poetry of dunes that I felt myself.

Still later, after the gospel of the dunes had become at least respectable, even though it was still doubtful in the minds of most

people whether these hills should be regarded as assets or liabilities, I tried to make the dunes a sort of character in my novel, "The Sand Doctor"—a character much in the manner in which The Hardy made Egdon Heath a character in "The Return of the Native." With what success it is for me to say. I mention it merely to show that my interest in the dunes is not something that has been worked up for the purpose of writing this particular article.

The dunes of Western Michigan, to my mind, give this section a genuine claim to the title of "Land of Romance" which is traveled casually through Western Michigan by train or automobile in the manner in which The Hardy made Egdon Heath a character in these hills. I have frequently met people from other sections who smiled when the dunes were mentioned. They had read a great deal about them, had seen them lauded in song and novel, and had come from far distances expecting cathedral-like masses of sand. They expected that the dunes would catch the eye from afar, much in the manner in which a traveler going west awakes some morning and sees the snow-capped tops of the Rockies, and then travels toward them all day long stretching out before him austere and majestic. The dunes are not at all like that. There are a great many people who live in Western Michigan who are hardly conscious of them. They may pass their lives within half a dozen miles of them and yet not know that they are living near something that anyone who travels through Western Michigan by train or automobile hardly sees the dunes. He gets glimpses of them, especially at sunset when they stand outlined in clear silhouette against a cloudless sky, but travelers seldom get into intimate communion with them. The automobile roads do not often dip into the actual region of the hills, and the railroads cut through the richer farming country at a safe distance from the barren sand.

Not Like Mountains

The dunes are not like the mountains, fairly forcing the beholder into admiration. There is never any compulsion about them, and many men and women there are to whom the dunes never mean anything but useless masses of sand that spoil a certain number of acres of what might be valuable farm land but for them. The Rocky Mountains represent great convulsions of nature; one feels that there nature has labored and has brought forth sublimity. As we look we unconsciously catch something of the spirit of turmoil that troubled the bowels of the earth before these great masses

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of rock were spewed upward to the heavens, and we are awed by the tremendous forces that shook the face of the earth, and the some forgotten epochs perhaps millions of years ago.

Michigan's dunes are forced from up when we consider the dunes. Anyone who must be content with the administration will find the Western Michigan sand hills tame. Their history too is tame as compared with the story of the convulsions of nature that created the Rockies. The dunes are post-glacial and they are, therefore, very young geologically. They were formed in the slow course of time as the ice cap that once covered the Michigan record. The map of America in those days was different than it is now. There were probably no Great Lakes as we know them today. As millennium after millennium passed the climate became warmer and the ice, thousands of feet in thickness, slowly melted in the heat of the sun, and the waters began to travel their way through the newly liberated soil, lakes formed—at first thousands of smaller ones, perhaps that in time rushed together to form a larger one and a larger river. As the waters of the millenniums the outlines of Lake Michigan and Huron and Erie and Superior began to appear.

The glaciers in the slow years continued to powder the rocks that had perhaps been spewed up from volcanic mountains. The mills of the ice-ages kept on grinding century after century. Rivers formed and carried the gritty flour that was washed away from the mill-stones of ice as a sediment in its turbulent water, sweeping it along in spring freshets and depositing it in the hollows that we know as the basins of the Great Lakes.

The winds got into action and lashed the waves of these great masses of water, sending them far up on to the beach, carrying along the powdered sand and depositing it on the shore as the water receded to its natural boundary. And there it would lie wet and glistening in the sunlight, and as the storms abated the friendly sun would warm it and dry it and convert it into a beautiful lacy hue, its thousand different colors, manufactured in nature's own laboratory in the bowels of the earth, merging into a single effect that is the despair of the painter.

And then the wind came again and carried the little sand particles on its back and dropped them again into hillocks. And year after year and decade after decade and century after century the process continued, until the hillocks became single hills and the ranges formed networks and patterns of strange and ever shifting designs. And these sand masses became restless and wandering hills, hilly sometimes like the waves of their parent lake and sometimes built up into strange and grotesque designs like nothing else in nature. And birds carried seeds to the shifting sands, and cotton trees took root in the inhospitable soil, and the generations of these soft-wooded trees grew and died and turned to dust and formed the nourishment for growth of a hardier nature so that the majestic beech or oak could take root and force its way into the heavens in the never-ending search of the leaves for the light. The trees that grew on the slopes of the hills served as an anchor for the sand so that some of the dunes became more or less stationary and assumed a more or less permanent shape. But in other places the trees were helpless against the restlessness of the sand and they were engulfed by them so that the life was choked out of the grain oak and beech by the little grains of sand piled year by year against them and upon them.

The whole geological history of the dunes is innocent of the sudden and dramatic convulsions of the mountains and it is probably for that reason that some people do not find the story romantic. But in the Bible story there was a whirlwind and a great fire, and also a "still, small voice," and God was in the "still, small voice." To those who understand, there is a spirit in the dunes that requires no drama to make it effective.

I want very much to remain free from sentimentalism in speaking of the dunes. But it is a fact that poets have found in them the theme for their songs, novelists have obtained from them inspiration for their books, and painters have discovered subjects in them for their canvases. All of which to me at least proves that there is something in these sand masses that may not meet the eye of the casual observer.

A Service

As time goes on more and more people will get into close communion with this spirit of the Michigan dunes. If we of today have the wisdom and foresight to preserve the dunes intact, keeping them as much as possible as nature fashioned them, it will be a service to the Michigan of tomorrow that cannot be overestimated. There are today two powers at work, with respect to the dunes. One of these forces sees only their returns. It proposes to cart the dunes away to the big cities so that the sand can be converted into concrete for buildings. The other force is trying to make the dunes accessible to the people. If we allow the former peo-

WE HEARD IT SAID BY—

James W. Parry, village manager: "We would rather cut the width of pavements when they are being planned than to destroy the trees of Birmingham. Every effort is being made to save them in spite of the expansion of the village."

ple to have their way, Michigan will in time lose an asset that is one of its greatest charms not only but one of its greatest talking points. The people who are trying to make the dunes accessible are adding to the state's resources. A good example is the new dunes highway that has recently been built in the environs of Muskegon. This ten-mile road will make dunesland real to millions who would never see them at close range otherwise.

That is the kind of thing for all who love Michigan to encourage. Don't touch the dunes, because you can't touch them without spoiling them. Their beauty is unique only if nature is not tampered with. The dunes cannot and should not be "tamed." By all means let us carry the dunes away. But encourage every movement that will build a road to or through the dunes so the people can get to them, every movement that will set aside areas of dunes as public parks dedicated to the use of the people forever.

Each year recently has seen an

increasing number of people, both within the state and from other states, finding new interests in the dunes. It will be only a few months now before hikers and artists and poets return for their annual visit, bringing more friends and converts with them to see and feel the dunes. (The Michigan Property Owner)

LEGION HEADS PARADE HERE

Charles Edwards Post To Discuss Plans For Decoration Day

To formulate plans for a Memorial Day parade, members of the Charles Edwards Post of the American Legion will meet at 7 p. m. April 18, at the Community House, it was announced today by Lloyd L. Stanley, commander of the local post.

As in past years the parade will proceed to the cemetery where the graves of the former soldiers will be decorated.

It is expected that the parade will include a band and the National Guard unit of Pontiac. C. H. A. O'Dell, of Hillsdale will be Marshall of the affair, while J. B. Saunders will review the parade.

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