



Grosse Pointe Historical Society

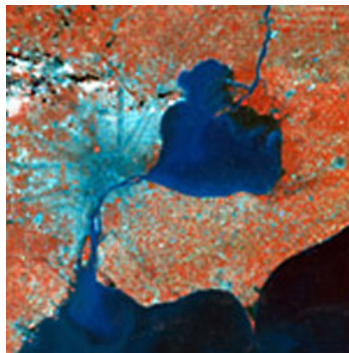
L A K E S T E. C L A I R E

Local History Brought to Life!



The History of Grosse Pointe

Portions of this history appeared earlier as the article, "Only Strangers Spoke English." The League of Women Voters was commissioned to create it for use in the Grosse Pointe Rotary Club's 1976 antiques show program. Originally written by Barbara Thompson, this chapter from The League of Women Voters, "***Know Your Grosse Pointe***", 2002, was edited and updated by Jean Dodenhoff, then curator of The Society.



Early Lake St. Clair: Geologists find Lake St. Clair's beginnings in the glacial eras. The prehistoric lake covered all of Grosse Pointe except for terrain that is now *The Hill* in Grosse Pointe Farms. The crest of this island stretched along the present Kercheval Avenue and Ridge Road. Over time, as the lake drained into an evolving Detroit River, the island expanded. Eventually, its northern beach which stretched along Mack Avenue from East Outer Drive to Eleven Mile Road served, in turn, as an Indian pathway, a French settler road and a Grosse Pointe thoroughfare.

Early Visitors: Animals and people arrived in Southeastern Michigan between glacial advances. Paleo-Indians, like their descendants, used Lake St. Clair beaches for hunting and trading. Arrow heads and pottery shards left behind have been uncovered by amateur archeologists like Jerry De Visscher, who, as a boy, found many artifacts near Mack Avenue on his father's Cook Road farm.

In historical times, the Native Americans were joined by European missionaries and illegal traders/trappers or *coureurs de bois*. In summer 1669, the Frenchman Adrien Joliet, with his Iroquois guide, was among the first white men to venture into Lake St. Clair. Aboard the *Griffin* a decade later on August 12th, the Feast Day of Ste. Claire of Assisi, Robert Cavalier de la Salle entered the waterway; his chaplain, Father Hennepin, named the lake for that saint. Soon, licensed Montreal fur traders appeared gliding near the lake shore in canoe flotillas paddled by hired voyageurs.

Cadillac's Village: Antoine Laumet de la Mothe Cadillac, who had lived in Canada since 1683, was named Commandant of Fort Michilimackinac in 1694. There, he prospered in the

fur trade, but antagonized the Jesuits by selling liquor to the Indians.

After the "western" forts closed in 1696, Cadillac obtained Louis XIV's permission to establish a post on the lower Great Lakes. In spring 1701, he embarked from Montreal with 100 men. On July 23rd this band traversed Lake St. Clair and after visiting Grosse Ile, landed the next day just west of Hart Plaza. As ordered, Cadillac named the site Fort Pontchartrain after the French Minister of the Marine. To promote the fur trade, he invited Indian tribes including the Miami, Huron, Chippewa (Ojibway), Ottawa and eventually Potawatomi, to settle near the fort. By 1710 when he departed to become Governor of Louisiana, settlers occupied land well beyond the stockade. However, no permanent inhabitants would live in Grosse Pointe for another forty years.



The Fox Indian Episode: Grosse Pointe first acquired historic significance in 1712. That summer more than a thousand Fox, Sauk and Mascoutin Indians came to Fort Pontchartrain from Wisconsin. Unhappy with their reception, they laid siege to the village. The French routed the visitors with the help of friendly braves who returned from summer raids along the Mississippi, and pursued them to marshy Grosse Pointe, later referred to as Windmill Pointe. After a four day battle, about a hundred of the intruders escaped to Wisconsin. In later years, tribal elders came to see where their families had died. Local people found Indian relics on the high ground, and a nearby stream became known as Fox Creek. Today, a plaque on the median of Windmill Pointe Drive commemorates the battle.

Life in the 1700s: Initially there was little to encourage Grosse Pointe settlements especially since a *grand marais*, or great marsh, stretched from Waterworks Park to Bishop Road. Then, the French king, Louis XV, concerned about English incursions into the Ohio Valley, offered new incentives to attract colonists like Grosse Pointe's earliest pioneers, the Trombleys and LaForests. Coming from French Canada in 1750, the Trombleys became the area's first *habitants* or farmers, and LaForest became the manager of the LeDuc grist mill on Windmill Pointe. They were soon joined by the Fretons, Deshetres, and Duchenes. Each family had a narrow plot of land, often three miles in depth. These tracts, nicknamed ribbon farms, provided access to the lake for drinking water, fishing and transportation, to the shore for fields and cabins and to the forest for timber and game.

According to *habitant* folklore, suspicious settlers saw the *feu follet*, or sprite, in low-lying fogs. They marked horses with Christian crosses to protect against *le lutin*, a hard-driving, horned nightrider. They told of youthful Archangel pursued by the *loup garou*, a wolf-headed monster with a long tail. They recited the legend of the LeDuc grist mill. When Josette LeDuc became ill, her co-owner and younger brother, Jean Baptiste, asked once too often about her share in the mill. Annoyed, Josette responded, "Oh, leave it to the devil!" During a great storm as she breathed her last, lightning split the building rendering it useless. Thereafter, in bad weather, *habitants* looked skyward expecting the devil's arrival to claim his bequest.

British Control: Grosse Pointe farmers of the 1750s would have been aware of the English westward incursions that would result in war and bring an end to French control of Fort



Pontchartrain. Indeed, the region, though escaping attack, was occupied by the British under Major Robert Rogers on November 29, 1760. The new government required an oath of allegiance, but generally treated *habitants* fairly. Nevertheless, some French

villagers, uneasy among British military and English-speaking businessmen, moved to Grosse Pointe.

Habitant Grosse Pointe: New families, including the Patenaudes, Morans, Rivards and Gouins, established farms along the shore. They cultivated fields near the water and planted fenced kitchen gardens beside their cabins. They allowed their livestock to roam free. The pride of many farms were the orchards of legendary French pear trees. Still found in Grosse Pointe today, some are as tall as oaks.

Habitant customs reflected traditional French Canadian culture. The New Year's masked *Ignolee* solicited gifts for the poor, and the mid-winter *Marti Gras* provided festive diversions before the strictness of Lent. Canoes were indispensable for travel. *Charrettes* (carts) and *carrioles* (sleighs) were often used for races behind swift ponies. The Fort remained a primary source of supplies, refuge, vital news and religious celebration. Frequently, after Catholic services at St. Anne's, the fort's only church, *habitants* sold their produce to villagers - a practice considered scandalous by later Protestant arrivals.

Chief Pontiac's War (1763): By adapting to the native way of life, early *habitants* gained the Native Americans' respect. Though sometimes asking for a meal or a place by the fire, members of the Algonquin tribes usually remained good neighbors. Only the Hurons crossed the ice from Canada to drive off *habitant* livestock.

After 1762, however, unrest increased, causing fewer families to homestead in Grosse Pointe. The British had limited the goods traded to Native Americans, not even allowing them enough ammunition to hunt for food. Anxious braves, united under Ottawa Chief Pontiac, laid siege to the Fort in May 1763. They won the major Battle of Bloody Run at Parent's Creek on July 31st. But instead of following up on their victory, by December the tribes began to seek peace. Thus, Detroit became the only western post never held by the Indians.



During the hostilities, French settlers, previously supportive of the Indians, grew ambivalent. Some *habitants* pleaded with the Chief to make peace while others smuggled necessities into the Fort. But, when certain settlers openly encouraged the natives, Fort commander Major Gladwin labeled them "the scoundrel inhabitants of Detroit."

The Revolutionary War: In the 1770s, families of Scottish or Irish origin joined French

habitants in Grosse Pointe. Alexander Grant, a British Great Lakes naval commander, built his home and headquarters - the area's first mansion later called Grant's Castle - at Moran and Lake Shore Road. Along the lake from there to Provencal Road, the Forsyth family of



traders acquired several contiguous ribbon farms. During the Revolutionary War, they, like all Grosse Pointers, had to contribute part of their meager stores, even in the severe winter of 1779-1780, to the war effort when Detroit became a major British supply center under Lt. Col. Henry Hamilton.

Though made part of the United States by the 1783 Treaty of Paris, Detroit remained under British control for

another thirteen years. Not until the 1794 Jay Treaty, did General Anthony Wayne's victories over the English enable the Americans to claim their possession. On July 11, 1796, Capt. Moses Porter exchanged the Union Jack for the Stars and Stripes, thus incorporating Michigan into the Northwest Territory.

A Third Flag for Detroit: Americans found the situation around Detroit delicate, given its inhabitants' diverse expectations and Canada's close proximity. For English loyalists, relocating across the river was always an option. While Wayne County, initially larger than the state in which it is found, was created in 1796, the Territory of Michigan was not established until June 30, 1805. Detroit had burned to the ground nineteen days before, and during its rebuilding, city residents sought refuge with farmers in areas like Grosse Pointe. American newcomers, having little patience with French informality, possibly coined the term, "muskrat French" at this time.



Because of confusion over previous Indian, French and British land grants, the U.S. Congress now passed several Acts relating to property ownership. Between 1808 and 1812, Grosse Pointers visited the Detroit Land Office to document their holdings. If able to establish possession, they received United States Land Patents and Private Claim (P.C.) Numbers.

War of 1812: Locally, the War of 1812 was concerned with the protection of borders rather than the freedom of the seas. Unlike previous conflicts, Detroit was directly involved, and following the Battle of the River Raisin, the English captured the region on August 16, 1812. The resulting British blockades and Indian raids caused Grosse Pointers many tribulations including near starvation and gave rise to a new fear of Indians. After September 29, 1813 when the United States retook the area, farmers were expected to billet American soldiers despite their previous hardships. Peace returned when the 1814 Treaty of Ghent reinstated prewar Great Lakes boundaries and the 1817 Rush-Bagot Agreement disarmed Great Lakes military fleets.

Grosse Pointe in the Early 1800s--New Neighbors, New Influences: Though fully inhabited along the lake before 1800, Grosse Pointe remained a hinterland. Occasional Catholic Masses were provided by circuit riders like Father Gabriel Richard, who arrived at Saint Anne's in 1798. A tall, crucifix, carved about 1805--possibly by a Native American--was found above Vernier Road. It was 1825 before St. Paul Catholic Parish built a small log

chapel nearby. Local schools did not appear until the 1840s even though Father Richard had earlier collaborated with Detroit's first Protestant pastor, Reverend John Monteith, to improve the city's education. Today, Grosse Pointe has elementary schools named for both men.

The arrival of Detroit's first steamboat in 1818 and the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 stimulated westward migration. Ships passing the 1838 Windmill Point Lighthouse with cargoes of immigrants and merchandise received fresh produce and fish from Grosse Pointe farm canoes. Yet French language and traditions remained prevalent in Grosse Pointe until after the Civil War, despite new arrivals. Some, with names like Vernier, Cadieux and Kerby, acquired land by marrying daughters of local families. Others bought their property. Louis Moran purchased acreage from the Alexander Grant estate while Pierre Provencal acquired part of P.C. 618 from the Forsyths. Grosse Pointe streets bear many of these names today.



In 1832 Indian raids on the Upper Mississippi developed into the Black Hawk War. Soldiers traveling to the conflict by boat brought cholera to Detroit. To escape its effects, townspeople temporarily moved into the countryside. Pierre Provencal and his wife Euphemia would eventually raise twenty-four children orphaned by this and later epidemics. Their home, moved about 1914 from Lake Shore Road to 376 Kercheval Avenue, is possibly the oldest remaining house in Grosse Pointe and now serves as the headquarters of the Grosse Pointe Historical Society.

The Effect of Statehood: On February 26, 1837 Michigan, with its capital at Detroit, joined the Union as the 26th state. One year later, at the end of the Mexican-American War, southeastern Hamtramck Township became Grosse Pointe Township; it extended from Waterworks Park to the County Line and inland beyond Gratiot Avenue. Michigan's constitution mandated that each township support district public grade schools. Along the shore, the new township's Districts #1, #2 and #3 served present-day Grosse Pointe. In 1848, the St. Paul Catholic Parish built a clapboard church at its present site on Lake Shore Road. Twenty years later, the cemetery behind this church would be moved to Moross Road. Commerce between Grosse Pointe and Detroit improved with the 1851 opening of a plank toll road along today's Jefferson Avenue.



The Civil War: In the decades before and after the Civil War, Grosse Pointe fisheries, worked by the Kerbys, Morans and Miches, supplied

Detroiters with much of their whitefish and muskalonge. During the same time, a new group of immigrants, the Belgians, began developing truck farms inland along Grosse Pointe's Black Marsh. When the Civil War (1861-1865) curtailed such activities, local men either joined or were conscripted into the Union Army and traveled to campaigns far from Grosse Pointe. Like the *voyageurs* before them, they left behind women and children to sustain farms and family businesses, frequently for the war's duration. A journal kept by Frederick Newf documented the tedium and occasional conflict experienced by Grosse Pointers at the front.



The Summer People Arrive: As Detroit began to industrialize, its affluent citizens, hoping to escape city summers, discovered the pleasures of Grosse Pointe and began to replace farms with vacation cottages. Uprooted *habitants* moved elsewhere, opened small, local businesses or sought work on the new estates. About 1850 George Lothrop, lawyer and later U.S. Ambassador to Russia, was the first to move his family to Lake Shore Road. He was joined in the 1860s by the Brushes, Hinchmans and Woodbridges. In 1875, railroad car manufacturers, James McMillan and John Newberry built Lake Terrace, twin Victorian cottages on former Grant property. After the 1880s when the Halls, Muirs, Ledyards and "Detroit" Morans added increasingly elaborate summer homes, the enclave became known as "The Newport of the Midwest."

Life in the summer colony was informal. For men with jobs in the city, a cooperatively-owned steamer, *Leila*, kept a daily schedule to and from Detroit. Private yachts were considered indispensable for both transportation and entertainment. Lounging on boat decks



or cottage verandas were accepted activities as were boat-ing, swimming, tennis and biking. Everyone enjoyed parties and special activities at the Grosse Pointe Club (est. 1886). The colony's young men, always in demand, were greatly missed during summer 1898 when they briefly joined the U.S. Navy aboard the *U.S.S. Yosemite* to serve in the Spanish American War. Later that year, some of them helped to acquire the Grosse Pointe Club, renamed

it the Country Club of Detroit and endorsed the addition of a course for the newly popular game of golf.

Connections with Detroit were improving. In 1888 streetcars traveled from the City to Fisher Road via Mack and St. Clair. Service on the Jefferson Avenue Railway began in September 1891. When summer residents objected to its proposed Lake Shore Road route, Grosse Pointe Boulevard was developed as a compromise. In 1898 the Rapid Railway System completed the Shore Line Interurban along the Jefferson route from Detroit through Grosse

Pointe to Mt. Clemens.

With the advent of the Interurban, average Detroiters, who had always enjoyed visits to Grosse Pointe, made the area a favorite destination for a day of fresh air, picnics and sports. Taverns, where betting was often intense, sponsored cockfights, archery contests and pigeon races. At roadhouses like Fisher's, Weaver's and Blondell's, patrons enjoyed fish, chicken or frogleg dinners.



Late 19th Century Churches and Schools: Before the Civil War, Grosse Pointe Protestants established their first congregation, the Grosse Pointe Protestant Evangelical Association, but had to wait until 1867 to build their church -- a steepled, wooden structure on donated Kerby land at Lake Shore Road. By 1881 this ecumenical group had sufficient members to hold services year-round and in 1894 moved to the "Little Ivy Covered Church" near Fisher Road. Meanwhile, St. Paul Catholic Church also found its parish expanding, and in 1899 dedicated its present sanctuary.



On adjacent land in 1885, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart opened the Convent, a private boarding school for "young ladies" state-wide. The next year, they started a free school for parish children and continued as their teachers until completion of the St. Paul Parochial School in 1928. To existing public schools, the Township added the Hanstein School (District #7) in 1881, the Cook School (District #9) in 1890 and the Cadieux School (District #1) in 1905. It relocated Kerby School (District #2) in 1886 and expanded Trombley School (District #1) in 1901. Of these original buildings only the Cook School on Mack and the Cadieux School on St. Clair remain.

Village Government: Grosse Pointe Township was required by law to regulate villages within its boundaries. Its first municipality, the Village of Grosse Pointe was incorporated in 1879; it reached from above Provençal Road to Fisher Road. In 1889 the boundary was extended to Cadieux Road. This community, following a foiled cottagers' attempt to create a separate, shoreline hamlet, was divided in 1893 at Fisher Road, with the eastern portion becoming the Village of Grosse Pointe Farms. In 1907, when Detroit annexed the Village of Fairview to Wayburn Avenue, the area from there to Cadieux Road was incorporated as the Village of Grosse Pointe Park. In 1911 residents along the lake established the Village of Grosse Pointe Shores, which extended into Macomb County's Lake Township. Inland, residents waited until 1927 to create the Village of Lochmoor.

The Great Estates: In 1882 Joseph Berry, of Berry Varnish and Paint, created the first Grosse Pointe year-round, lakeside residence. By 1910 second generation summer people like Philip McMillan and John Newberry Jr. and auto executives like Henry B. Joy, Horace Dodge, Harry Jewett and Russell Alger Jr. were replacing cottages and farmhouses with eclectic mansions designed by nationally known architects including Detroitier Albert Kahn and New Yorker Charles Adams Platt. Above Provencal, impressive Tudor and neoclassical homes of chemical Ford heirs preceded by more than a decade the Cotswold manor of auto baron Edsel Ford. In the late 1920s new mansions like those of Packard's Alvan Macauley and Hudson Motors' Roy Chapin looked out across broad, landscaped lawns toward the lake. Even in the difficult early 1930s, Standish Backus, Burroughs Adding Machine President, and Mrs. Hugh Dillman, formerly Mrs. Horace Dodge, added grand Lake Shore residences in Grosse Pointe Shores and Grosse Pointe Farms.



An Exclusive Suburb: By the 1910s, the advent of the car accelerated the development of Grosse Pointe. New inland roads like Oak (now Muir), Notre Dame and Beaconsfield attracted tradesmen, estate workers and village employees while streets like Beverly, Lincoln and Yorkshire lured businessmen and professionals. Estate owners used inland portions of their property for subdivisions like Lothrop and Lakeland; developers replaced farmland with boulevards like Cloverly and Lochmoor. By the 1920s, Windmill Pointe, which William Moran drained in the late nineteenth Century, was providing fashionable building sites. Regardless of location, new homes reflected diverse architectural styles including English Tudor, French Renaissance, Italianate, Georgian, Colonial and Arts and Crafts.

Village Amenities: Although town marshals in 1911 were still rounding up stray cattle near the lake, by 1925 it was illegal for local farmers to sell fresh produce along the shore. Increased population required enhanced services. Roads were paved and maintained by local contractors like Moran and Teetaert; sewage and waste water pipes were installed. In 1905,



the Peninsular Electric Light Company agreed to provide both street lights and drinking water for ten years. By the mid-teens, agreements with Detroit and Highland Park further assured water safety. By 1909 a Home Telephone Co. branch provided phone service on Fisher Road. As part of a new civic center, Albert

Kahn designed the Grosse Pointe Shores Village Hall in 1915 and neighboring Vernier School in 1916. When World War I drew young Grosse Pointers overseas in 1917 and 1918, villages had to temporarily curtail

community projects.

New Community Institutions: From the turn of the century, affluent Grosse Pointers sought diversion by creating and joining a variety of social clubs. In 1912 community expansion caused the Country Club of Detroit to transfer its golf course to the present location; in 1923 it moved its club house there as well. Preferring to remain by the water, the club's yachtsmen formed the Grosse Pointe or "Little Club". Riders and polo players created the Grosse Pointe Hunt Club in 1911, while golfers formed The Lochmoor Club in 1917. The Grosse Pointe Yacht Club, begun by ice boaters in the teens, opened its new clubhouse to all yachtsmen in 1929. In 1934 the Crescent Sail Yacht Club leased, and in 1958 purchased, Henry B. Joy's boathouse and docks.



Sensing villagers' need for recreation and social services, estate owners created The Mutual Aid and Neighborhood Club in 1911-1912 and soon opened a club house on Oak Street (now Muir Road). During the 1918 influenza epidemic, they added Cottage Hospital in a village home across from the Club. The two institutions separated amicably in 1927 when new quarters were built for The Neighborhood Club on Waterloo at St. Clair and for Cottage Hospital on Kercheval at Oak.



After members of the "Little Ivy-covered Church" became Presbyterian in 1920 and began construction of the present Grosse Pointe Memorial Church, reaction by other Protestant groups was minimal. Aside from the First Christian Dutch Reformed Church, which followed its congregation from Detroit to Grosse Pointe in 1925, Christ Episcopal Church was the

only other major denomination to emerge. Begun as a 1923 mission of Christ Church, Detroit, Christ Church Grosse Pointe dedicated a sanctuary in 1930.

Private and parochial education elicited more response. When a 1914 whooping cough quarantine prevented local children from attending Detroit private schools, the co-educational Grosse Pointe School was opened. Initially located on Roosevelt Place, it moved in 1916 to a new building on Grosse Pointe Boulevard and in 1930 changed its name to Grosse Pointe Country Day School. In 1929 Detroit University School for boys moved from Parkview Avenue in Detroit to Cook Road. That same year, Ste. Clare de Montefalco opened its parochial school on Mack, and the Dutch Reformed Church started the Grosse Pointe Christian Day School on Maryland.

Grosse Pointe Rural Agricultural School District #1: In December 1921 Grosse Pointe's five township school districts combined to insure development of new grade schools and a local high school. Defer Elementary School was completed in 1923, and by 1924 Cadieux School housed both elementary and high school students. Trombley in Grosse Pointe Park moved to its present location in 1927, while Mason in Grosse Pointe Woods was added in 1929. When a new Grosse Pointe Blvd. high school was proposed, residents' opposition to its size and location resulted in a law suit. However, the School Board prevailed, and the new building opened in February 1928.



Though the "Little Ivy-covered Church" sponsored a small lending library in the late nineteenth Century, Grosse Pointe had no public library until Wayne County opened a branch at the Grosse Pointe Shores Village Hall in 1922. In 1926 a second "station" was added at the Neighborhood Club, and in 1929 local libraries became a division of Grosse Pointe's public school system.

Grosse Pointe Commerce: Though frequent shoppers in downtown Detroit, Grosse Pointers looked to neighborhood groceries and confectionaries for occasional purchases. By the mid-1920s, The Village supported active businesses such as Piche's Barber Shop, Notre Dame Pharmacy and McMillan's Market. The community also had several local commercial greenhouses including the Grosse Pointe Florist founded in 1926. As commerce expanded, inhabitants grew concerned about maintaining the area's residential character. A 1927 Grosse Pointe Park Protective Association spurred the Grosse Pointe Park Council to pass zoning to prevent the building of a home for "aged persons of refinement." During the next year, the other Grosse Pointes passed related ordinances.

A Detroit-Windsor Connection: By state law, Michigan became "dry" in May 1918.

Passage of the 18th Amendment in 1919 and the Volstead Act soon after forbade the sale of alcoholic beverages nationally and set rules for enforcement. Nevertheless, smuggling from Canada, which allowed production and limited sale of liquor, went on along the shore. Estate docks were favorite landing sites for rumrunners. Grosse Pointe also had its share of family blind pigs and roadhouse speakeasies. Gang warfare was sometimes too close for comfort as when police investigating a "hit and run" in front of their station were shot by bootleggers. A recently published book, *Images of*



America: Grosse Pointe 1880 -1930, provides a graphic and per-sonalized view of the preceding periods.

The Depression: Despite the 1930s economic downturn, vacant lots in Grosse Pointe Park, Village, Farms and Shores were becoming scarcer. Much of the new home construction had been done by skilled craftsmen of Belgian or other old world origin. With the deepening recession, however, some houses stood unfinished while others were scaled back in size. President Roosevelt's 1933 bank closures precipitated a cash crisis with unusual local results. A Councilman had to lend money to one village to meet its payroll. Occasionally, according to Board of Education Minutes, Superintendent Samuel Brownell bought produce from local farmers to distribute to school staff in lieu of paychecks. As people struggled to remain self-sufficient, Village Councils granted many licenses to sell eggs, wood and produce door-to-door. Federally funded projects to enclose the Black Marsh Ditch in 1929, to build the Grosse Pointe Farms Filtration Plant in 1930 and to expand Lake Shore Road in 1931-1932 provided work for many in the community. Federal Civil Works Administration funds helped to build Maire Elementary School in 1936 and Pierce Junior High School in 1939.



Even in difficult times, Grosse Pointe continued to grow. For economic reasons, the Village of Grosse Pointe became the region's first city in 1936. Its full-fledged commercial center, known as The Village, grew increasingly popular. The community's first movie theater, the Punch and Judy, opened to much fanfare on The Hill in 1931. That year, the Village of Lochmoor annexed the Stanhope-Allard strip and in 1939 changed its name to Grosse Pointe Woods. In 1940, *The Grosse Pointe News* joined *The Grosse Pointe Review* as a local newspaper.

World War II Era: From 1941-1945, World War II affected every aspect of local life. The Neighborhood Club became a community support center, sending soldiers off to war and providing USO activities. Grosse Pointers assumed demanding positions in wartime industries, government and military. Women like Alice M. Scheaffler, who was elected to the Board of Education from 1942-1954, filled a wider range of jobs than ever before. At the 1950 dedication of Alger House as the Grosse Pointe War Memorial, a plaque commemorated 120 casualties from among Grosse Pointe's 3,600 men and women who served in the conflict.



Wartime regulations hampered the development of The Village and the upper portion of The Hill. Local churches, founded in the 1930s and early 1940s could not obtain materials or workmen to build sanctuaries and had to meet in schools or other public places. A convalescent facility opened by the Sisters of Bon Secours in 1938 on Cadieux Road did not become a full service hospital for seven years. In 1941 Grosse Pointe Country Day School for girls, though retaining its campus, combined administratively with Detroit University School for boys.

Postwar Growth: From the late 1940s until 1970, the community saw a major increase in population. Demand for land and cost of upkeep resulted in the first demolition of mansions along the lake. The neoclassical David Whitney House was gone by 1956. The John Newberry House was replaced by Newberry Place in 1957 and Henry B. Joy's House by the Fairacres Subdivision in 1959. Inland, remaining vacant lots were quickly occupied by new homes. Ending a five year construction moratorium in Grosse Pointe Woods, the huge Grosse-Gratiot Drain Project, approved by voters in 1958, provided the infrastructure required for previously planned residential developments.



In the face of postwar expansion, only Grosse Pointe Shores remained a village. Grosse Pointe Farms became a city in 1949; Grosse Pointe Park and Woods followed in 1950. The latter year also saw the charter of a local League of Women Voters and the relocation of the Children's Home of Detroit to Cook Road. Anticipating the opening of Eastland Shopping Center, nearby Harper Woods incorporated in 1951. The Korean War (1950 -1953) resulted in the addition of 105 veterans' names to the plaque at the War Memorial; of these, 33 died in combat. In 1953 the Grosse Pointe Symphony was founded and in 1954, the Foundation for Exceptional Children.

Obtaining full parish status in 1947, Christ Church, Grosse Pointe established its own mission, St. Michael's, in Grosse Pointe Woods. Numerous other parishes constructed new sanctuaries: St. James Lutheran in 1948, Grosse Pointe Methodist in 1950, Grosse Pointe Baptist in 1955 and Grosse Pointe Unitarian in 1965. The 1955 opening of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Grosse Pointe Woods obliged some members of St. Paul's Catholic Church to transfer to the new parish.

Increased public school enrollment prompted new construction. In addition to middle schools, Parcels in 1948 and Brownell in 1958, elementary schools -- Poupard in 1951, Ferry in 1954 and Barnes in 1956 -- were built to serve a growing enrollment in Grosse Pointe Woods. With an additional 400 students enrolled each year in the 1960s, the community soon needed a second high school. Built on Vanderbush property (one of the last working farms in the Pointes), North High School opened in 1968; its first senior class

graduated in 1970.

Changes also occurred at local private schools. In 1954, Grosse Pointe Country Day and Detroit University Schools combined to form the co-educational Grosse Pointe University School (GPUS). The world renowned architect Minoru Yamasaki was hired to enlarge the Cook Road campus. After the public school system purchased Country Day's Grosse Pointe Boulevard buildings, the former headmaster's house became the superintendent's home until its sale in 1990. Meanwhile, Liggett School, founded in 1878, moved from Detroit to a new Grosse Pointe Woods campus in 1966. In 1969, it merged with GPUS to form University Liggett School.

In June of that year, the historic day/boarding school at the Convent of the Sacred Heart closed. However, by the autumn, community leaders had created a replacement, the Grosse Pointe Academy, with co-educational day classes for pre-school through eighth grade.



The generosity of local residents, evident since the early days, continued. Contributions from citizens enabled construction of Marcel Breuer's Grosse Pointe Library - Fisher Branch in 1953, the War Memorial's Fries Auditorium in 1961, Ellsworthy Field in 1965 and the replacement for the unstable Neighborhood Club building in 1966. Major gifts also helped to develop or improve the various municipal parks.

Challenges of the 1960s and 1970s: Grosse Pointers in these decades faced conflict in all facets of life. There were debates over racial injustice, the Vietnam War, illegal drugs and family values. To deal with these problems, citizens founded new agencies like the Northeast



Guidance Center in 1963, Family Life Education Council (FLEC) in 1966 and Grosse Pointe Interfaith Center for Racial Justice in 1967. In March 1968, three weeks before his assassination, the Human Rights Council sponsored a speech by Dr. Martin Luther King at Grosse Pointe High School. From 1970 to 1979, community police departments organized the interdepartmental Youth Services Bureau to serve local young people with problems.

During the 1970s, many enterprises grew, even as population declined for the first time in thirty years. Hospitals -- Cottage in 1971 and Bon Secours in 1975 -- completed major additions. Grosse Pointe South High School, so named in 1969, added a Grosse Pointe Boulevard Wing in 1973. The next year,

Jacobson's, in The Village since 1943, expanded to cover an entire city block. In the process, buildings housing well-known businesses such as the Treasure Chest Toy Store and Notre Dame Pharmacy were demolished.

Other changes, both man-made and natural, also occurred. In 1971, SEMTA, the regional Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority, took over public transit from the Lake Shore Coach Line. Two major spring storms in 1973 combined with the highest lake levels in over one hundred years to create extensive flooding. By 1977, fuel prices had skyrocketed, giving a new meaning to energy conservation. Restoration after a major fire at St. Paul Catholic Church on June 9, 1978 forced parishioners to worship elsewhere. With demand for new housing continuing, subdivisions replaced large estates such as the Schlotman's *Stonehurst* in 1974 and Mrs. Horace Dodge's *Rose Terrace* in 1978. Only the Edsel Ford House was spared when Mrs. Ford, in her 1978 bequest, provided an endowment for its preservation and public use.



Changes Through the 1980s and Early 1990s: Though closely tied to Detroit, the Grosse Pointes were becoming increasingly independent by the 1980s. Developers continued to acquire land for homes. The area's first gated townhouse community replaced the Chapin/Ford estate in 1983. House prices soared, and commercial districts -- especially in Grosse Pointe Park -- were modernized. With the closing of family businesses such as McCourt Shoe Store (1988) and Hamlin's Grocery (1990), chains and specialty shops appeared including Laura Ashley (1988) and Walden Books (1989) in The Village. On The Hill in



1987, Brooks Brothers opened a store in what had once been the Hawthorne House restaurant just as the 1986-1987 development of office complexes at the new Kercheval Center and renovated Punch and Judy Theater Building were being finished. The 1991 completion of St. John Hospital's Pointe Plaza stimulated commerce along Mack Avenue.

Though population between 1980 and 1990 decreased by more than 3,000, local cultural groups flourished. Grosse Pointe Theatre purchased the building at 315 Fisher for rehearsal and workshop space. The Grosse Pointe Historical Society, which became active in 1980, emphasized historic preservation; Grosse Pointe Cable TV programs highlighted community activities. Social services, however, took on a more regional character. Cottage Hospital affiliated with Henry Ford Health Care System in 1986 and Services for Older Citizens, begun in 1978 as Seniors Onward for

Change (SOC), served both Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods. In 1986 the Children's Home of Detroit celebrated its Sesquicentennial--a year before the State of Michigan. When Family Life Education Council closed in 1990, its Youth Services were taken over by the Children's Home.

During this period local governments also made major changes. Construction projects included the Shores' 1984 Village Hall renovation and the Woods' 1991 Community Center addition. Resident services were enhanced through computerization of records and the 1988 implementation of 911 Emergency Service. While the City, in 1984, approved its first post-Prohibition liquor sale by the glass, the Farms, in 1985, made teen drinking a parental responsibility and, in 1989, rejected a Grosse Pointe War Memorial liquor license. Newly formed civic foundations funded Lake Shore Road beautification in 1986, Farms Pier improvements in 1983 and 1990 as well as Windmill Pointe Park renovations in 1991. After EPA violations in 1988-1989 shut down the Pointes' regional incinerator, new solutions were sought. Using findings of Grosse Pointe Citizens for Recycling, which was established in 1988, all the municipalities initiated curbside collection of recyclables by 1991.



Citizens continued to be active locally. They successfully countered a 1984 School Board Recall by opponents of school closings. They endorsed the 1985 War Memorial dedication of a plaque honoring veterans of the Vietnam War (primarily 1964-1973). Their support of 1990-1991 Desert Storm troops was symbolized by a community-wide proliferation of yellow ribbon bows. Citing cost and location, voters, in 1987 and 1991, rejected a proposed Grosse Pointe Public Library expansion. Equally upset by an expected addition to Detroit City Airport in 1990, they formed Citizens Against Airport Expansion.

Toward a New Millennium: Grosse Pointe City and Grosse Pointe Farms celebrated their 100th birthday in 1993 with a parade and special events. Citizens, appointed from the five Pointes, St. Clair Shores and Harper Woods, met to discuss their communities' future--probable needs, potential solutions and possible interrelationships. In June 1994, they submitted their conclusions in *The Spirit of Cooperation, A Report on the Future*.

Improvements to local infrastructure became a necessity. In 1993, Grosse Pointe city workers expanded into a renovated home next to their existing offices. In 1994, the Grosse Pointe Public Library became independent of the Grosse Pointe School System. As part of a 1995 municipal building renovation Grosse Pointe Park took over a neighboring, former Jefferson Avenue Chevrolet dealership. Between 1992 and 1999, all the Pointes completed separation of sewage and waste water pipes. In the Shores, lakeside homes with septic tanks had to connect to the local sewer system. A new Milk River basin and drain were constructed beginning in 1992, and in 1998 Grosse Pointe Farms upgraded its Chalfonte Sewage Plant. Community parks, which for the first time had to pay property taxes in 2000, received improved entrances, pool facilities and other amenities.



New businesses included the 1995 takeover of Perry Drugs by Rite Aid on The Hill and the 1998 opening of Farmer Jack's Food Emporium on Mack Avenue. The community-owned Grosse Pointe Cable moved into a new War Memorial studio the year before its profitable 1994 sale to Comcast. Grosse Pointe Farms used part of its proceeds to acquire the southwest corner of Mack and Moross for future redevelopment. Large properties like the Morrison and Deming estates continued to be subdivided. In 1996 a major Grosse Pointe Park condominium development was completed on Jefferson Avenue. In The Village, Caribou Coffee replaced Sanders in 1995, Borders Book Store took over Jacobson's Home Store in 1998 and a new street scape including the Valenti Memorial Clock emerged in 2000 - 2001.

1999 was a particularly eventful year. Grosse Pointe Farms created the region's first Historic District Ordinance and Commission. Grosse Pointe Shores' Neighbors Concerned about Yacht Club Expansion halted a major addition to the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club harbor. This was followed by a resident veto of an expanded Osius Park Activities Center. Bon Secours and Cottage Hospital continued a merger of services begun in September 1998. On July 23rd, a giant wind storm uprooted trees, damaged buildings and caused several deaths. In September, Barnes School reopened as a special education pre-school.



Anticipating the 21st Century: Between 1990 and 2000 Grosse Pointe's population decreased by less than two percent. Having survived Y2K, the community seemed to be stabilizing even though it was faced with a vulnerable national economy, decreased state support for schools and the lowest lake levels in more than 60 years. Despite the sobering effect of the September 11, 2001 New York and Washington D.C. terrorist attacks and subsequent conflicts, there was new construction on The Hill, a proposed Regional Recreation Commission and the opening of the Grosse Pointe Artists Association Gallery on Maryland and Jefferson. Connection of the two Schools Center buildings was begun and plans for new Grosse Pointe Woods and Grosse Pointe Park Branch Libraries were approved. As always, Grosse Pointers continued to seek new technologies, improve regional services and expand citizen participation to sustain their contemporary life style in a traditional setting.