

She also remembered that to afford the costs associated with transporting crops to market, several island farmers would arrange to ship their products at the same time. When asked about the way they went about this, Ms. Oligney replied:

They usually tried to get together, so that when the barge came they would have a load to make it worthwhile, otherwise the cost was so great, and you couldn't afford it. But I remember that my father would make a trip over by the regular mail boat and to try to set up a buyer for whatever he had to sell¹⁰⁸.

The farmers had to make two trips, one to find a buyer or buyers and the other to transport their goods. The trip, which could easily take an entire day or more, was a substantial amount of time to spend away from the daily operations of a small family farm.

In the 1940's, several families associated with island agriculture began to leave. Many left for health purposes, especially as people became older and were unable to handle strenuous farming life. In many cases, younger individuals departed earlier to seek employment, companionship with people of their own ages, and easier lives for themselves and their families. As it became more and more complicated to reach the island, and fewer and fewer people lived there, the diverse community in which people could rely upon others to provide services and help was disbanding. As the long-time residents left, several sold their land to a developer named William Boals; with this action, the tourist era began on South Manitou Island.

Early Tourism and Development

William Boals was a member of "Lee Island Associates," a development group that intended to turn South Manitou Island into a resort. Around 1948, the organization took over ownership of the Conrad Hutzler farm, which was purchased from Louis Hutzler. By this time, the Associates already had obtained title to the Theodore and August Beck farms. According to one account, the new owners planned to continue previous agricultural practices by raising rye and beans, and eventually by

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

FABULOUS SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND
(Also known as Lee Island)

LOCATED 225 miles north of Chicago, in Lake Michigan
... 16 miles from Leland via U.S. Mail boat ... 8 miles
from Glen Arbor ... 29 miles from Traverse City ...
230 miles from Detroit

ALTITUDE—1100 feet above sea level.

COOL—20 degrees cooler in summer than on mainland

AREA—5,000 acres, 4 by 3½ miles.

SAND DUNES—450 feet high. Climbing for hardy
mountaineers, fine view.

SMALL LAKE in center of island, one mile long, half
mile wide. Fishing.

LUMBER CAMP—Old Michigan lives again.

U. S. COAST GUARD—Government dock, U. S. Coast
Guardsmen, assures safety.

PHONE connected with mainland cable.

PESTS—No rats or poisonous snakes.

AIR FIELD for small planes. Emergency.

STOCK RAISING—Farming, deep sea and small lake fishing

GEOLOGY—Underlying salt Oil 40 miles east and
Pentwater south.

COBO BAY—Mile wide, take largest ships, fine bay of
refuge for yachtsmen. Prevailing winds from west
Also beautiful sandy **BEACH** for bathing.

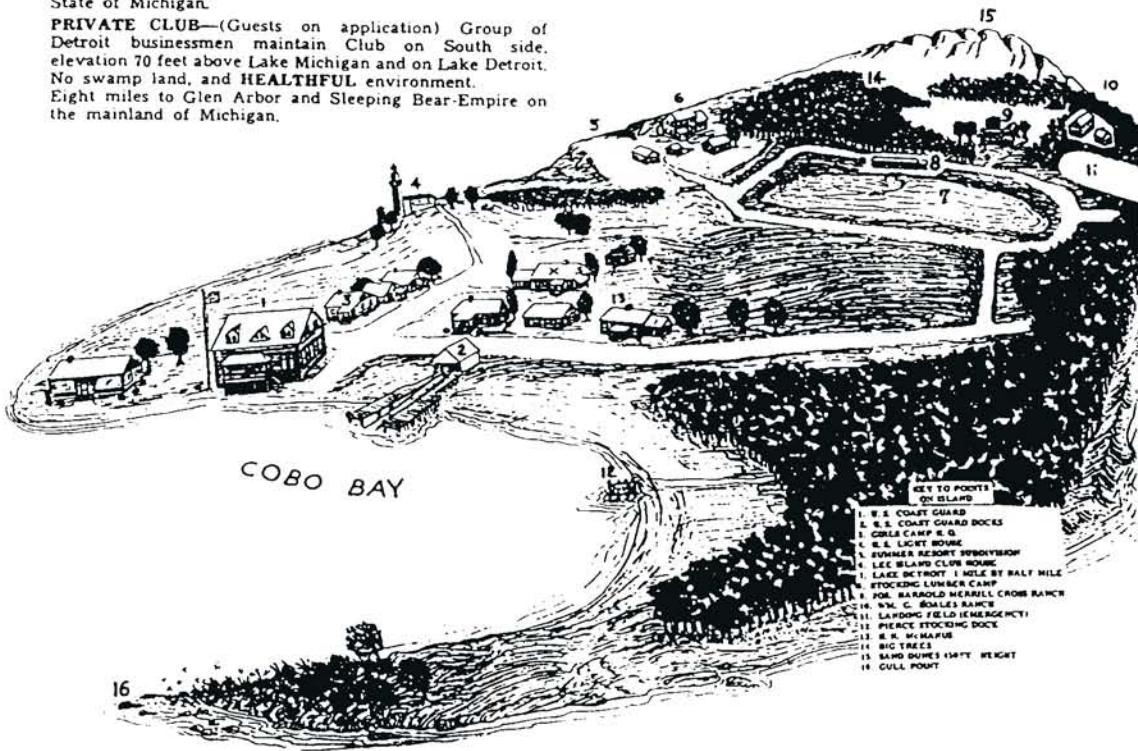
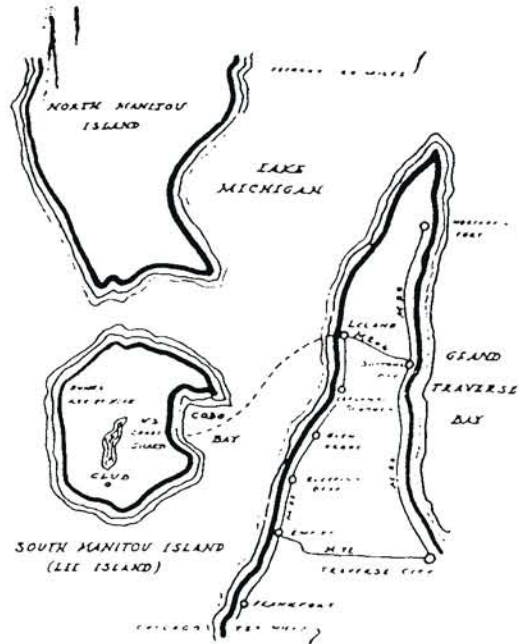
GAME—No game on Island (1200 head of deer on North
Manitou Island 4 miles North)

GOOD ROADS—Several cars on Island.

OWNERSHIP—About half privately owned and half by
State of Michigan.

PRIVATE CLUB—(Guests on application) Group of
Detroit businessmen maintain Club on South side,
elevation 70 feet above Lake Michigan and on Lake Detroit.
No swamp land, and **HEALTHFUL** environment.

Eight miles to Glen Arbor and Sleeping Bear-Empire on
the mainland of Michigan.



Artist's sketch of South Manitou Island, Michigan

Figure 32. Development Plan for South Manitou Island (1959)

adding livestock¹⁰⁹. That same year, an article in Motor News discussed South Manitou Island and a proposed development planned by the “Lee Island Company,” headed by Lee Barrett¹¹⁰. This plan never completely materialized, but the Theodore Beck farmhouse was renovated into a “lodge” for visitors. This house sits on a bluff at the southern end of the island and provides visitors with spectacular views of Lake Michigan and Sleeping Bear Point on the mainland.

Development efforts at the site were renewed in 1959 when Joseph W. Harrold announced plans to build a marina, lunchroom, and other facilities on the island for summer guests. A newspaper account from that period reported on these plans:

Immediate and long-range plans for developing South Manitou Island as a tourist and resort center were announced this week by Joseph W. Harrold of Detroit.

Harrold, president of the Lee Island Company formed several years ago by I. Lee Barratt of Detroit to develop the island, has leased for three years from the Company its lodge and 243 acres of land which includes access both to Lake Michigan and to the inland lake. He plans immediately to begin construction of a marina, lunch room, golf driving range and putting green. The marina will include a 90 foot “L” shaped dock, pilings for which already are being cut.

George Grosvenor of Leland, operator of the 52-foot island mail boat Manitou Isle, expects to make daily passenger runs to the island. The new development will be on the south end of the island. The present lodge will accommodate 12 to 15 guests. Harrold expects later to expand the marina and build guest cottages¹¹¹.

¹⁰⁹ Undated newspaper clipping located in the Betty Kramer Collection, Notebook #2, 21, on file in the Leelanau Historical Museum, Leland, Michigan; the name of the newspaper is missing and “1948” is written above the clipping.

¹¹⁰ Vent, 42.

¹¹¹ Newspaper clipping located in the Betty Kramer Collection Notebook #2, 61, on file in Leelanau Historical Museum, Leland, Michigan; the name of the newspaper is missing and “5-7-59” is written at the top of the clipping.

Again, most of the facilities were never constructed. A June 1962 newspaper advertisement for the lodge indicates that the facility operated for over a decade¹¹².

Also in 1959, other attempts were made to encourage recreation and tourism on the island. Fred Burdick returned to South Manitou, where he had been born (he is a descendant of Putnam Burdick, the second settler on the island). Joined by his wife, Bea, they began a small tourist operation. Eventually the Burdicks constructed several cottages along the edge of Florence Lake, and operated the island store (his parents had run a store and post office on the island when Fred lived there as a child)¹¹³. The Burdicks provided several other services for visitors, including jeep transportation around the island, and burro rides. A 1959 newspaper article referred to the difficulties involved in transporting the burros to the island:

Three burros, bound for South Manitou Island, displayed a natural reluctance to “walking the Plank” Thursday as they were urged aboard the mail boat “*Smiling Thru*” for their 18 mile Lake Michigan ride. The Burros, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Burdick of South Manitou and Lansing, will be used in sulky or saddle to provide rides for island visitors. Jeep transportation also is provided for the hundreds of persons expected to go to the island by excursion boat during the summer¹¹⁴.

The Burdicks, who owned a sizable portion of island property, began to partition some of it for sale and development in the 1960’s. One of these parcels was sold before the National Park Service approached island land owners to inform them about plans to make it an NPS unit. In the late 1960’s, activities were in motion to create a National Lakeshore from portions of Leelanau and Benzie counties, including all of South and North Manitou Islands.

¹¹² Undated newspaper clipping located in the Betty Kramer Collection. Notebook #2, 60, on file in the Leelanau Historical Museum, Leland, MI.

¹¹³ Fred Burdick interview.

¹¹⁴ Newspaper clipping located in the Betty Kramer Collection, Notebook #2, 60, on file in the Leelanau Historical Museum, Leland, MI; the name of the newspaper is missing and “6-4-59” is written at the bottom of the clipping.

Theodore and Alvina Beck Farm

Farmstead History and Agricultural Data

The manuscript schedules for the Federal Population Census of 1870 indicate that Theodore Beck (29) was living with his parents and two brothers.⁴⁹ In 1880 he was the head of a household where he lived with his mother and brother, Albert.⁵⁰

According to the manuscript schedules for the 1880 Agricultural Census, Theodore Beck was the owner/operator of a farm that included 25 acres of tilled land; 3 acres of permanent meadow, pasture or orchard; 60 acres of woodland; and 72 acres of unimproved land. He owned 6 milk cows, 19 other cattle, and 4 swine. The farm produced 280 pounds of butter in 1879. The crops that were grown included 3 acres of barley that produced 75 bushels; 5 acres of oats (150 bushels); 2 acres of rye (60 bushels); 2 acres of wheat (40 bushels); and 3 acres of Irish potatoes (400 bushels). He also had 6 apple trees that produced 3 bushels of apples during 1879.⁵¹

The Federal Population Census manuscripts for 1900 indicate that Theodore was married to Alvina (30) and they had three children: Minnie (7), William (5), and Ida (4). His brother Albert (55) was also living with them.⁵² By 1910 they had two additional children, Alma (4) and Arthur (2).⁵³ After Theodore Beck died in 1910 Alvina continued to farm their land and eventually married Benth (Ben) Johnson. However, they maintained separate households, and Alvina continued to operate the Beck farm.⁵⁴

After Alvina died the farm was sold to J. Lee Barrett (1947). Barrett, a developer from Detroit, intended to develop the island as a resort community. His company advertised South Manitou Island as "Lee Island," and Alvina Beck's farmhouse was called the "Lee Island Club House." Although the anticipated development never materialized,

⁴⁹ Manuscript schedules for the Federal Population Census, 1870.

⁵⁰ Manuscript schedules for the Federal Population Census, 1880; also cited in Henry, "Theodore and Alvina Beck Farm."

⁵¹ Manuscript schedules for the Federal Agricultural Census, 1880.

⁵² Manuscript schedules for the Federal Population Census, 1900.

⁵³ Manuscript schedules for the Federal Population Census, 1910.

⁵⁴ Anderson, 86; cited in Henry, "The Theodore and Alvina Beck Farm." Anderson indicated that the marriage occurred in 1920, while Henry indicates the date was 11 August 1915. Henry provides an interesting discussion of Alvina and her relationship with Benth.

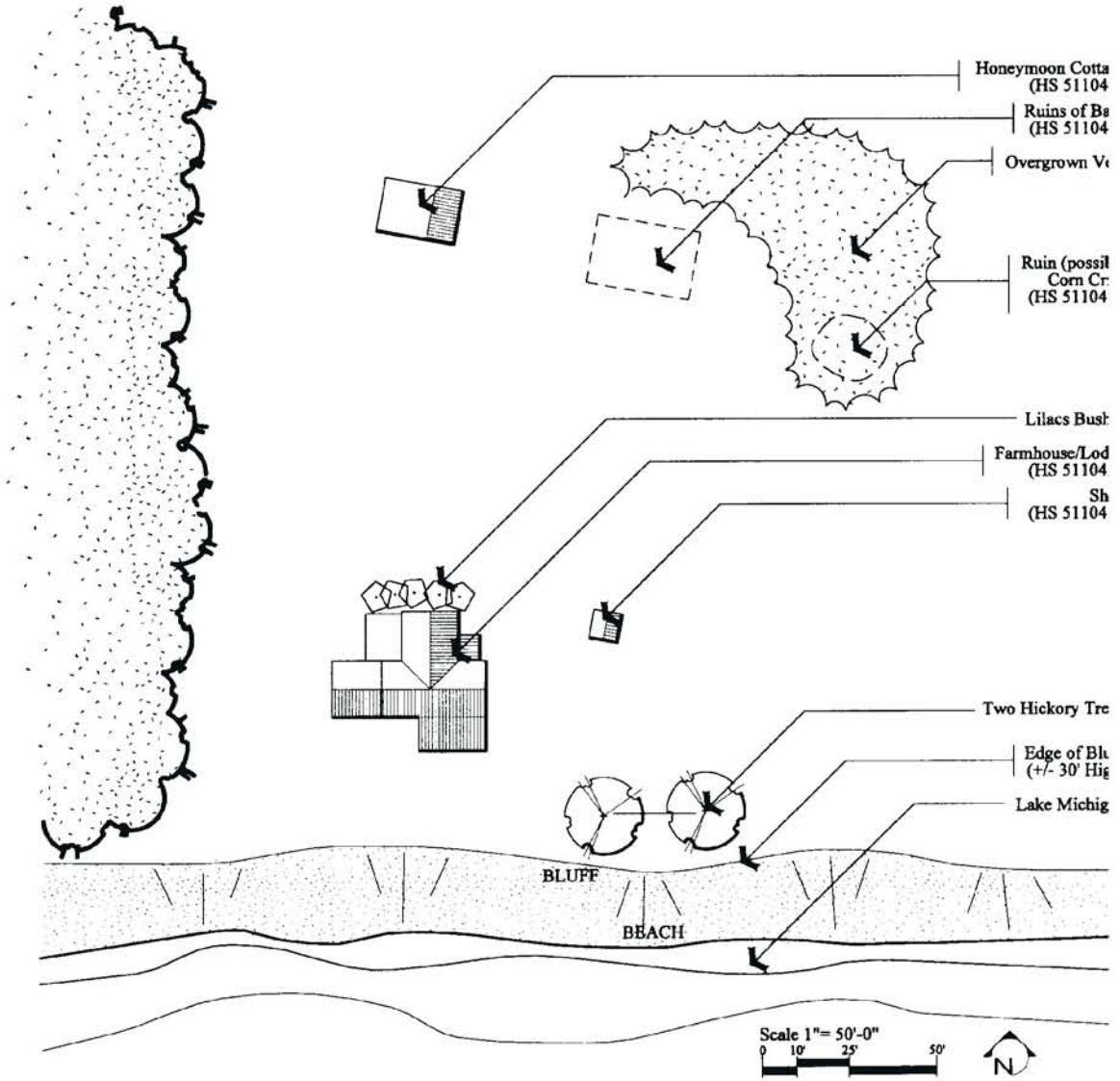
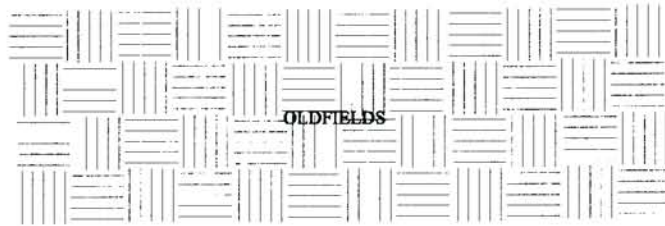
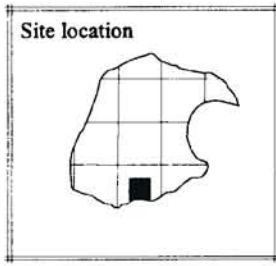


FIGURE 60
PLAN OF THE THEODORE & ALVINA BECK FARM (1994)

rooms in Alvina's house were rented to vacationers and the farmhouse came to be known as "The Lodge." The Lee Island Company sold the property to the Park Service around 1970.⁵⁵

Location

This farm is located on the southern end of the island. To find the farmstead, it is necessary to take one of the trails leading to the southern tip of Florence Lake. At the intersection of the trail that runs from north to south on the western side of Florence Lake, and the trail that runs east-west past the southern tip of the lake, it is necessary to travel west slowly and look for an old, overgrown farm road. This road leads south toward the farm site.

Landscape Setting and Cultural Landscape Elements

Upon approaching the farm site, the remnants of previous fields can be detected adjacent to the road. After passing across them, the residence can be seen in the distance, although it is partially hidden by plants. When approaching the house, the ruins of several other buildings become obvious. Upon reaching the residence, a breathtaking view is provided of Lake Michigan and Sleeping Bear Point on the mainland. The house is sited at the edge of a bluff; a thirty-foot vertical drop from the bluff ends at a white sand beach. The house has many windows that provide views of the lake and the mainland dunes. The beautiful setting makes it easy to understand why the residence was chosen for conversion into a tourist lodge.

Two hickory trees stand to the southeast of the house. Their trunk diameters range from 25 to 35 inches. It is likely that they were planted by one of the past residents of this farm for their nut-bearing potential. Behind the house (on its northern side) is a large clump of *Syrnga vulgaris* (Lilac).

The landscape elements on this site are difficult to categorize, since they have been altered several times. The use of the site for tourist operations prior to the time the Park Service took over its management led to alterations in the cultural landscape that are difficult to define.

⁵⁵ Henry, "The Theodore and Alvina Beck Farm"; also, undated newspaper clippings and brochures found in the Betty Kramer Collection, on file in the Leelanau Historical Museum, Leland, Michigan.