



TDT'S COLLEGE OF USELESS KNOWLEDGE

WEQ-301

OK, by now we've covered Northern Michigan history from about 2.6 million years ago thru the late 1880's, so it's time for a little more recent history.

Weque continued to flourish & grow thru the turn of the century (wonder if they went freakin bonkers about Y19K?) & into the new one as more & more cottages were built & the hotel was enlarged several times. Weque got its own Post Office (still there, zip code 49740) as well as "The Casino", a community center of sorts where the yutes gathered during the day for crafts, lunches, day care, other activities & overall parental sanity maintenance. Then the adults took over at night for dancing, concerts, plays & possibly even an occasional game of chance where funds (US) may or may not have changed hands.

Still today, the Weque trust fund younguns descend en masse bright & early each morning for roll call at the Casino before heading out to their designated morning activities of swimming, sailing, tennis or croquet lessons. A sure sign that the kids have departed for their morning recreation is the approximately 379 bikes strewn about the Casino lawn.

Weque Casino circa 1910



Weque Post Office circa 1905

The Casino is shown above left from about 1910 with a few Wequeites in their Sunday finest on the porch. On the right is another shot with the Post Office on the left & the Casino far in the distance, just as it looks today. Of special note is a very early Horseless Carriage sitting out front of the Post Office on a dirt street.

Just imagine the Casino during the Roaring 20's as well to do upper-crust folks from Chicago, Detroit & parts south partied the summers (& prohibition years) away in their remote, private world in out of the way Northern Michigan. I suspect the poor Reverends McCord & Essex were turning over in their graves over the goings on in their genteel retreat they envisioned **"for the promotion of the cause of religion & morality."**

For the Peak/Swinford clan, the long & winding road (duh duuuh, duh duuuh) to Weque began with Dharma's maternal grandparents, Walker Hill Bowman Jr. (aka Daddy Bow), owner of the successful Louisville Foundry & wife Edith Carey Dean Bowman (aka Momma Bow), wealthy socialites from Louisville's fashionable Cherokee Park.

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Friends of the Bowmans, the Boyces, rented a cottage in Bay View Association for the first time in the mid 1930's. Mr. Boyce, a prominent Louisville banker, had been instrumental in helping Walker acquire ownership of the foundry after its previous owner had bankrupted the business. The Bowmans, influenced by their friend's pre TripAdvisor reviews, followed the Boyces to Bay View & rented cottages there themselves for 2 or 3 seasons before the Boyces switched to the new Wequetonsing. They were again followed shortly by the Bowmans where they rented a cottage from the B.G. Marshall family (also from Louisville) for about a dozen years before purchasing the cottage, along with all contents, on May 17, 1946. To this day much of the furniture in the cottage is the same that was purchased from the Marshalls 73 plus years ago. Some pieces still bear the Marshall name on the back.

In the early years, the Bowman family traveled from Louisville by train directly into Downtown Weque (really, there's even a sign there that says Downtown Weque). The Bowmans spent every long glorious summer there from mid June through Labor Day, accompanied by their two children Walker Bowman III (aka Uncle Walk) & the future Mrs. Dharma's mom Mary Ann Bowman (aka Goggi). Also in tow was the family maid, Ada (hence the room formerly known as Maid's but now better known as Pressbox Productions Executive Suite North).

The Bowmans whiled away their time in Weque playing cards at the Weque Hotel, Canasta for the ladies & Poker for the men (possibly with a glass or two of good ole Kentucky bourbon). Every Saturday night brought formal dinners & dances where flapper gowns & tuxedos were de rigueur. Wednesday evening was always Bingo



night
(no,
not
with

toothless, chain smoking, cheese fry eating, pull-tab buying rednecks) & rumor has it the prizes were frequently sizable & always paid in cash. Sundays brought after church luncheon at the hotel in which the Bowman children could participate (Uncle Walk & Goggi) but only in their finest Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes, including white gloves for the young ladies.

Summer life in Weque slowly evolved into the next generation as the Bowman kids were married & had their own families. Uncle Walk & his wife Polly had three kids & Mary Ann & John Roy Peak Jr. five. Now into the 1950's & with train travel waining, the Bowmans travelled from Louisville by car with their driver & new maid Fannie. Uncle Walk & his bunch visited only occasionally but the Peak brood spent many weeks each summer as dad Roy travelled up on long weekends, when duties on the farm & warehouse permitted.

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Among Fannie's specialties was her sinfully rich chocolate cakes with to die for icing. She'd also make bag lunches every day for the five Peak "Squatlings" (Goggi's term not mine) to tote to the beach each morning, plus hot dogs with all the fixings for the kid's weekly weenie roast at the Casino (still a weekly event during "the season"). At the end of every day Fannie would prepare a complete home cooked dinner for all in attendance which would be shared along with tales of the day's adventures around the dining room table (still there today).



With the passing of the elder Bowmans, ownership of 33 4th Avenue passed to Uncle Walk & Goggi & then when Goggi died in 1997, Uncle Walk became the sole owner. The next year he gave the cottage to the 5 Peak kids knowing that the love, care & even occasional use of the cottage was not his children's thing. All of them are reportedly brilliant successful people but all must suffer some type of rare cranium abnormality which prevents them from enjoying sitting on their butts on a porch swing in paradise, doing absofreakinlutely nothing for extended periods of time.

So the 5 Peak siblings became the heirs of the Bowman/Peak Cottage, as the locals know it. Then after sister Kathryn's 2005 passing, brothers Andy & Dean decided they had other interests so that left only Dharma & brother John Roy as the current guardians of Daddy Bow's Michigan treasure.

If you've caught the drift that things change slowly in Weque, you are correct sir! That is the singular key to the magic of this place, the timelessness of it, the feeling of another place & time, another world where things were less hectic & life was lived at a slower more enjoyable pace. Even when things do change, you must have a keen eye to notice. In recent years it's become the fashion to demolish an older non-weatherized cottage & put up a brand new one with all the now seeming requirements of daily life, even if you're only going to spend 3 weeks a year there. Unlike Lexington, where it is apparently a code requirement to remove every living thing in all adjacent zip codes when a new structure is erected, you can leave Weque after a late fall visit & return shortly after the last ice has left the bay the next spring & find a brand new cottage within the footprint of its ancestor. And we're talking complete, with mature trees, shrubbery, a full lawn & planter boxes full of flowers, looking like it's stood in that spot for decades.

The Bowman/Peak cottage has over the years served as the home base where generations of family & friends have shared happy times, sad times & where a few "cottage babies" originated (got one of those). Apparently the not even close to soundproof walls & floors (& back in the day less than Ritz Carlton quality mattresses) had a less than 100% birth control efficacy.



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One historic event of note occurred when the cottage served as the honeymoon suite for PBP's own Dharma & Greg. With the entire Peak/Bowman clan sternly threatened by Momma Bow to **STAY AWAY** for the entire week, the newlyweds arrived after midnight on July 11th, 1976 (during prime Weque season). Greg allegedly exclaimed as they turned off the highway & headed down into the pitch black darkness of the wooded, very steep bluff hill, "Where the Hell are we?". Early the next morning the cottage owner across the sidewalk, a Manhattan NYC resident, came over to greet the newlyweds with martinis & the New York Times. Greg was hooked & fell in love with Weque after only moments on that magical porch.

Next week, UFO's, the Illuminati, Sasquatch, the grassy knoll shooter, the Loch Ness Monster & one other unsolved mystery (Undissolved Mystery as Aaron used to call the late 80's TV show). And we all know YCWTMTV!



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