



# THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF Fairy Chasm and the Fox Point Club

By Douglas H. Frazer

Students of maps will note that a portion of the Village of Bayside along Lake Michigan, bounded to the north and west by the Fish Creek ravine, is in Ozaukee County. The neighborhood is called South Fairy Chasm. The development of the area is an important piece of North Shore history.

In 1892, Jac. Donges took an interest in the 90-acre Basler farm on the north side of Fish Creek and 56-acre Kemp farm on the south side. The large ravine through which Fish Creek flows (and smaller ravines and tributaries that feed into it) were, and are, beautifully wooded and picturesque. The bluff along Lake Michigan, the beaches below, and the lake itself frame the land to the east. Donges, a land investor at heart, wanted to develop the area as a summer cottage retreat. He did not have enough money to buy the land himself, so he brought in his friend Fred Usinger (Usinger Sausage Company founder) as a partner. They organized a business corporation, the Fish Creek Park Company, in 1892 for the purpose of buying and selling real estate, in this case the Basler and Kemp farms.

In 1900, the company surveyed the property and laid out lots. Only a few summer homes were built in the first ten years, about four on each side of Fish Creek.

A similar summer migration was occurring in what is now Fox Point. Prominent and successful Milwaukeeans were purchasing and building summer cottages along the bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. Much of the Fox Point activity was occasioned by and connected to the creation in 1898 of the Fox Point Club, including its nine hole golf course with links on the west side of North Lake Drive between Hyde Way to the south, Spooner Lane to the north and the railroad tracks (south of East Bradley Road) or 150 west of what is now Links Way (north of East Bradley Road) to the west.

The seventh hole was called the "Charlie Riemer" in honor of its greenskeeper. The hole also happened to be the closest to Riemer's Tavern on East Bradley Road. The Town Club eventually acquired the old liquor license and currently operates its bar from that site.

The clubhouse, the focal point of local social life, stood on the east side of North Lake Drive within what is now Club Circle.

In the early days, the problem of getting out to the summer cottages in Fox Point or Fairy Chasm was considerable. A few means existed. First, there was horse and buggy travel over muddy rural roads. A second option involved taking the Northwestern Railroad to the Fox Point station (opposite what is now Boyd Way). A streetcar operated by the Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company eventually extended its Whitefish Bay line first to East Day Avenue and ultimately to East Bradley Road in Fox Point. Donges acquired options for the right of way through farms north of Bradley, but eventually dropped the project because of the difficulty and cost to bridge Fish Creek.

In Part 2 we will pick up the story with the construction of the massive "Lion Gates" on Lake Drive and Fairy Chasm Road.

*Douglas H. Frazer is a Fox Point resident and neighborhood contributor as well as the village president. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the Village, the village board, other village board members, or Best Version Media, LLC.*



One of the original South Fairy Chasm homes at the end of Lake Drive



The county line gate (9600 N. Lake Drive) into the South Fairy Chasm homeowners association area



Small stone gazebo built by Jac. Donges where walkers could start their ravine hikes