
A TRIP TO SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND

By Iona E. Fox

Honor, MI. February 18, 1990

Dear Mr. Furst:

I'm writing about the time I went to South Manitou Island when I was attending Benzie Central High School. Maybe you can use the story. If not, throw it out.

Iona (Morris) Fox was the seventh child of Samuel and Mary (Beck) Morris. I cannot say if my mother was born on South Manitou or not, but she was raised on the island. I do not even know who was the oldest in Granddad Beck's family. I am not sure either of the correct date of my Grandmother Beck's death. I am also not sure about the correct year my parents moved back to the island, but I imagine it was in 1928 or 1929, as I graduated in 1931 from Benzie Central.

My youngest brother Chlore was also starting High School then, and mother and dad had found places for us to work and stay (rooms and board). Neither of us had ever been away from mother and dad, and I got home sick and wanted to go "home".

August Warner drove the mail boat, but not on his usual mail route, so dad hired him to come and pick me up and one of my girlfriends, while having our Christmas vacation. The weather was mild that December, and no snow had fallen yet. The son of the Hotel where I worked drove us to Glen Haven, and also picked us up after we came back across the Lake from South Manitou Island.

Mr. Warner met us at Glen Haven, and we started our journey across Lake Michigan to the island, We got about one half of the way across when the boat motor ceased functioning ... dead still. Ethel (my friend) looked at me; I tried not to look scared as Mr. Warner was still working on the motor. Finally he picked up a can of oil and put it in the hot motor. She tried to start, then died out again. August Warner continued to get the motor started, and then, finally choking black smoke and greasy smells just about knocked us out. At last, the boat started off, and the motor ran smoothly the rest of the way to the island. It sure was a scary experience for a couple of young school girls.

My brother Chester walked us to Lake Florence one afternoon, and on Saturday night he took us to a house party to dance. Bill and Irene Ludwick were there too, as Bill was stationed at the Lighthouse. The next day, mother, Ethel and I went to the Lighthouse and climbed to the top of it. Then on our return home we visited uncle Henry and aunt Maggie Haas.

The weather remained mild until a few days after we got home. We enjoyed every minute of our visit to the island, and returned home safely. I was now ready to buckle down to finish my studies at Benzie Central. Ethel stated that she had really enjoyed the trip, but she also mentioned that she felt so "closed in" on the island.

Iona Fox
78 yrs old. Ha! Ha!

About the author:

The above letter is self-explanatory

[Excerpt from the South Manitou Memorial Society Newsletter, July 6, 1990]