

Earl A. Young

Earl A. Young - dreamer, designer, builder of unique and fascinating stone houses. The City of Charlevoix was his whole life and only a few people are really aware of his devotion and gifts to many of the worthwhile causes of the town.

Earl A. Young was born in Mancelona, Michigan, on March 31, 1889. When he was about ten years old he moved to Charlevoix. He graduated from Charlevoix High School and attended the University of Michigan. In 1915 he married Irene Harsha. He and his mother had an insurance agency and gradually he got into the real estate business. He had a Michigan Real Estate Brokers license for sixty years.

In 1924 Mr. Young bought property along the Lake Michigan shoreline west of the city limits of Charlevoix. This property was developed with winding streets, 85 building sites, and stone gateways at the entrances off the Lake Shore Drive. He built twelve stone houses on some of these sites and other houses have been built in Boulder Park without his supervision.

Starting in the late 1930's Mr. Young constructed several unique stone houses in the triangular block of Park Avenue, Clinton Street and Grant Street, and he rebuilt and remodeled several other houses within this block. These houses have been referred to and written about in various magazine and newspaper articles. Each house was designed to accommodate the site and have unusual stone fireplaces and unique chimneys and cedar shake roofs with flowing curves. Various types of stone were used in construction including local quarry limestone, field stone, boulders, and Onaway quarry stone. Further west on Park Avenue are three other stone houses which he designed and built and also the first three houses along the north shore of Round Lake. The stone for the two houses constructed of red stone (one on Park Avenue and one on Round Lake), was brought by barge from the area of the Soo Locks. Although he had been asked many times to design and build houses in other areas, only once under pressure from a friend did he acquiesce. This house is in Alma, Michigan.

In 1954 the old Argo Mill property just north of the Pine River channel was purchased and the Weathervane Inn was built on this site. Again the building was designed to fit and flow with the site. Very large boulders were used in the beautiful stone fireplace in the main dining room, the key stone weighing nine tons. Many of these boulders had to be put into position with the use of a crane because of their size and weight. The Weathervane Inn has a magnificent view of the Pine River channel and boats coming and going through the highway bridge as it is raised to accommodate them. The lights outside the Weathervane Inn were street lights originally used in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Mr. Young was also involved with designing The Lodge. The Weathervane Terrace was constructed a few years later and has been added to in recent years. Both of these motels have unusual fireplaces in the lobby.

Through the years additions and changes have been made to the various buildings by their different owners.

Mr. Young was an early and continuing member of the Charlevoix Chamber of Commerce and a Charlevoix booster wherever he went throughout the world on business and pleasure trips. The development of East Park along Round Lake and the acquiring of the property for the city as it

became available was a project he promoted along with other businessmen. The Park has become one of Charlevoix's prime aesthetic assets.

He also helped plan and research material for the large pictorial maps of the Little Traverse Bay Area, Grand Traverse Area, and Mackinac Island which were drawn by Irene Young in the 1930's and 1940's.

Earl A. Young's life and work have made a lasting impression on Charlevoix.