

Michigan Every Day

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Exclusive hunting club rejects Henry Ford

Prominent citizens of Marquette joined with wealthy Chicagoans and Detroiters to purchase a vast tract of land in the Huron Mountains to preserve it from logging and make it their own private hunting and fishing club. The beautiful old-growth forest is located adjacent to Lake Superior, north of Marquette and southeast of the Keweenaw Peninsula.

The club's articles of association, which were drawn up and signed on Sept. 11, 1889, limited the number of members who could build cabins on the 24,000 acre tract to 50. Today the club remains secretive and ultra-exclusive. It is patrolled by a private security force and visitors are not welcome.

Approximately 100 years ago, when the club was equally exclusive, Henry Ford wanted to join. Ford loved the Upper Peninsula, where he bought huge tracts of land. He owned logging operations to supply wood for his friends such as Thomas Edison, and Harvey Firestone.

But when Ford, considered one of the most powerful men in the world, applied for membership, the club turned him down. The 50 cabin limit was strict and Ford would have to wait for someone to die, or want to sell. That was unlikely.

Ford, however was someone who got what he wanted. As the magnate applied for a membership and was rebuffed, another development posed a danger to the club.

In 1919, the state highway department planned construction of a highway through the Huron Mountains that would run from Marquette to Big Bay, through the private club to Saganaw and around to L'anse. The highway was to be called M-35.

Ford purchased land adjacent to the Huron property and the proposed highway. M-35 was constructed in segments to the east and west of the club, but the construction was never completed through the Huron Mountains.

Somehow, Ford was able to derail the project and, in exchange, was granted membership to the Huron Mountain Club, where he lived up to his reputation and hired famous architect Albert Kahn to build a cabin for him that would outdo all others in the club.

The cabin was constructed in 1929.