

Charity Island Excursions

Gift Certificates for Anniversaries, Birthdays, Mother's Day

www.charityisland.net

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Charity Island Icy Shoreline March 2009



Maple Sap buckets on Charity Island 2009

As we approach the end of January I can't help but begin planning another Maple Syrup making expedition to Charity Island in the next four weeks.

One of my favorite experiences on Charity Island is being out there during the first three weeks of

March and watching Spring take over the Island as winter does its reluctant retreat.

We get so caught up in day to day life, racing to and from work, appointments, cable television, the internet and all the while becoming more disconnected from the "real world", the natural world out there without even realizing what is happening to our psyche.

A walk through an old hardwood forest and one feels "connected" again and gains a sense that everything is going to be alright.

Perhaps that is why I am so eager to return to Charity Island.

Immediately upon arriving on Charity Island even time itself changes. Working outside cutting firewood, gathering sap from the sugar Maples, one just naturally begins measuring time by the Sun and clouds moving across the sky rather than the clock on the wall.

In wilderness is the preservation of the world. Henry David Thoreau

Every time I arrive on Charity Island I feel like I am one of the luckiest guys on the planet.


Especially in the early spring. What excitement when you are on an island and the first robin or Kildare show up in your front yard, or when you notice the first wild onions pushing up through last seasons oak leaves.

1910 Bird Watching Expedition Charity Island

New Window to Charity Island's Past Discovered

I realize not everyone is an avid birdwatcher, me included, But I felt I stumbled onto a real history find when I came across the 1910 Mershon Expedition Report this past week.

I had never heard of this before but evidently University of Michigan had sent a team of scientists on an eight week expedition to Big Charity Island back in August of 1910 to do research on various aspects of the island and its wildlife.

What I found far more interesting than the various species and numbers of birds recorded that year was the references the writer makes to the conversations he has with the Lightkeeper and his  assistant who were on the island that season.

(see: <http://charityisland.net/bird-watching.html>)

Anyone following the history I have been sharing in previous newsletters will be familiar with the story of the "Oconto" that wrecked on the Island in December 1885. It turns out that the lightkeeper that night in 1885 was Capt. Charles C. McDonald and we find that he is still the Lightkeeper in 1910 and that he had actually spent nine winters on the Island out of the 29 years he was the Lightkeeper on Charity Island.



Commercial Fishing in Saginaw Bay continued even after the Bay froze over. These pictures are from Caseville from the winter of 1911





The writer of this Mershon Report makes references to conversations he has with the Capt. McDonald who shares information on bird migrations he has witnessed out there during his 29 years on the island. There are also references to conversations with the local commercial fisherman who were presumably based on the south end of the island.

The fishermen report on the number of loons that arrive each spring and how they get caught in the gill nets and drown/

I find it fascinating to contemplate that the writer and his group are out there on Charity Island and World War

One is still four year away, the Panama Canal was still “under construction”, and Henry Ford’s Model T had just been introduced less than 18 months before this expedition had arrived on the island.

The writer also describes standing outside up on the edge of the light house’s metal apron at sundown as the light is turned on and witnessing waves of migrating Birds (many warblers) whizzing by him.



Anyway, for those interested the expedition Report will make for great reading.

REMEMBER !

CHARITY ISLAND

GIFT CERTIFICATES MAKE

A

PERFECT GIFT

FOR ANNIVERSARIES

AND

BIRTHDAYS

*Don't forget to
remember - you have come
keep track, size garden
even more joyful - It's fun
Don't forget to point - parlor*