



## **SERIOUS BANK EROSION AT LESTER BEACH**

My grandchildren and now my great grandchildren frequently ask me about when our young Guarino family were one of only a half dozen cottages at Belair. It was not yet formally called Lester Beach.

I had known Upton Lester from my days at Grand Beach when I worked for the CNR as a Life Guard from 1941 to 1944. He and his wife Edith owned the large white house at Belair.

In the early 1950's we learned that Upton Lester was thinking of leasing a few lots to prospective cottage owners. We were able to "lease" a lot from him for \$25.00 a year. It was then known as "lot 4, of Upton Lester's property at Belair", located a few cottages south of the running path (public walkway to beach near 3rd Ave).

We loved the lakefront lot because of the beautiful 1/4 mile of pure white sand beach, the wonderful sunsets each evening, and the many artesian springs along the beach. We built a nice three bedroom 760 sq. ft. cottage, and were very happy about everything.

We were thankful for the springs on the beach, and thus we were able to get excellent drinking water from them.

However, our happiness was short-lived, when we visited our cottage the next spring. It looked like an "avalanche" had hit our property and created a "disaster area". Those very same springs that we loved, had eroded the sand from underneath the land causing it to drop.

A huge area of lakefront land approximately 40 ft in width, and several hundred feet in length, had dropped downwards about 8 feet.



**Chuck Guarino**



## **What was it like, Papa?**

The trees and vegetations remained unharmed. Then about four or five years later, the same thing happened again.

Later, we learned that this phenomenon repeated itself every six or seven years. We were terribly distressed with this turn of events. Over the next five or six years, we were forced to move our cottage back several hundred feet, because of repeated "avalanche" type of bank erosion. We learned that it was the "artesian springs" that we loved so much, were causing the severe erosion .

Finally in 1963, we decided to sell our much loved cottage. Nostalgically, we looked out towards the lakefront, and we could see the area that our cottage was first located,(see photo above) and now that area was almost on the beach. However, the lovely Birch tree (shown in the photo) that used to be immediately in front of our living room was now almost on the beach.

The severe erosion area is along what is now known as Lester Boulevard. It extends from approximately 68 Lester Blvd northward passed the running path (public walkway to beach near 3rd Ave.), continuing northward to where there is a park lookout area, which has a bench seat there to overlook the lake towards Grand Beach.

Mother nature is a powerful force, and it appears that very little can be done to avert or prevent this catastrophic problem on these lakefront properties at Lester Beach from occurring again and again in the future.

Yours, Until the next issue of "What was it like, Papa?"

*"Papa Chuck" Guarino*