

## **Let's Go on Vacation!**

By Frank DiLeonardi

The 1920s also saw another phenomenon that would forever change the Northwoods and Manitowish Waters...the vacation home. While there may have been second homes before the '20s, the decade saw a significant proliferation of vacation homes and cottages post-World War I.

One of those first vacation homes on the chain was the Barber-Greene Lodge. If you've ever been on the chain, you've been by it. It's the last home on the right as you hit the buoy at the end of Stone Lake, heading for the channel leading to Rest Lake.

That house is very important to me. My wife Kelley's great grandfather built the family's summer home in 1924, claiming to be one of Manitowish Waters' first vacationers.

The two cabins were and are called the Barber-Greene Lodge because Harry Barber was the president of the Barber-Greene Company, based in Aurora, IL. Initially, employees were welcomed to spend time at B-G but the company's growth soon made that impractical, leaving it as the family's summer cottage.

Family lore states that the logs to build the home were floated to the site, and that the road out was built after the fact. Roads were important to the family as Barber and his son Ashley hold 57 patents for inventions related to the asphalt road business, an industry they helped create, and was key to the growing number of automobiles in the '20s.

Barber's wife Blanche had asthma, and the selection of the Northwoods for a summer home was a health retreat for Blanche, not uncommon at the time.

The home has been passed down to family members over the years and today is owned by cousins from the fourth generation, another tradition of family vacation homes, multiple owners. But the lure of Manitowish Waters keeps relatives visiting from Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Montana, Nevada, Texas and Washington still today.

Oh, and besides me, Jean Bettenhausen, the graphic designer of the MWHS newsletter and my wife's cousin, visited the B-G Lodge as a child, cementing her love of Manitowish Waters at an early age.