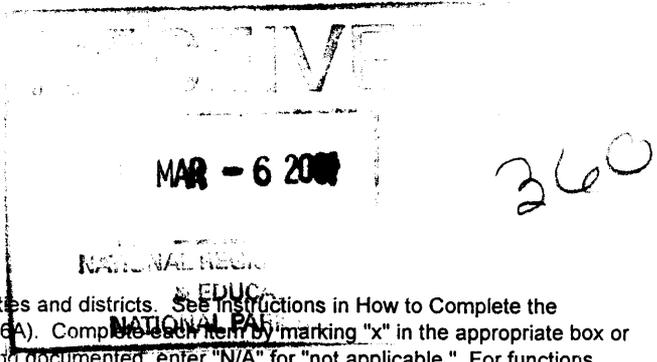


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Fox Lake  
other names/site number Fox Lake Resort

**2. Location**

street & number 60-760 Lane 130 (both sides Wilson Dr., Fox Lake) N/A  not for publication  
city or town Angola  vicinity  
state Indiana code IN county Steuben code 151 zip code 46703

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
[Signature] 1/31/01  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

- I hereby certify that the property is:
  - entered in the National Register.
    - See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register.
    - See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register
  - removed from the National Register
  - other, (explain:)

[Signature] 4.12.01  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

- private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal

- building, district, site, structure, object

Table with 3 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing, and Resource Type (buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total). Values: 27, 6, 0, 0, 0, 0, 27, 6.

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
RECREATION/CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling
RECREATION/CULTURE: Outdoor Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Lake Cottage

foundation CONCRETE
walls WOOD: Weatherboard
WOOD: Log
roof ASPHALT
other STONE
BRICK

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

ETHNIC HERITAGE: \_\_\_\_\_ Black \_\_\_\_\_  
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION \_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1928-1950 \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographic References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

\_\_\_\_\_ Fox Lake Property Owners Assoc. \_\_\_\_\_

Fox Lake  
Name of Property

Steuben IN  
County and State

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Approx. 10.7

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 

16	664980	4609130
Zone	Easting	Northing

3 

16	664800	4609610
Zone	Easting	Northing

2 

16	664980	4609610
----	--------	---------

4 

16	664700	4609120
----	--------	---------

See continuation sheet

#### Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

#### Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Glory-June Greiff  
organization Fox Lake Property Owners Association date 03/29/00  
street & number 1753 South Talbott telephone 317-637-6163  
city or town Indianapolis state Indiana zip code 46225

### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

#### Continuation Sheets

#### Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

#### Photographs

Representative **black and white** photographs of the property.

#### Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

### Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_  
street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 2.5 Page 1

Fox Lake Historic District

Steuben County IN

LOCATION/CLASSIFICATION

List of Resources

For tax and county emergency purposes, that part of Wilson Drive that runs through the historic district is now officially known as Lane 130. Locally, it is still known as Wilson Drive. For the sake of consistency, the modern numbering system will be used throughout the nomination to identify specific resources.

North Side Wilson Drive

South Side Wilson Drive

760 Lane 130	C
700 Lane 130	NC
680 Lane 130	NC
660 Lane 130	C
640 Lane 130	C
600 Lane 130	NC
580 Lane 130	C
540 Lane 130	C
500 Lane 130	C
480 Lane 130	C
K.T. Thompson Lodge	NC
420 Lane 130	C
360 Lane 130	C
220 Lane 130	C
160 Lane 130	C
140 Lane 130	C
120 Lane 130	C
100 Lane 130	C
80 Lane 130	C
60 Lane 130	C

95 Lane 130	C
115 Lane 130	C
155 Lane 130	NC
415 Lane 130	C
435 Lane 130	C
455 Lane 130	C
475 Lane 130	C
495 Lane 130	NC
535 Lane 130	C
555 Lane 130	C
575 Lane 130	C
635 Lane 130	C
695 Lane 130	C

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 2

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Fox Lake Historic DistrictSteuben County IN

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## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

The Fox Lake Historic District is located east of Interstate 69 along the south shore of Fox Lake in Steuben County, about a mile southwest of Angola, the county seat. Fox Lake lies south of US20 between two county roads, West Fox Lake Road and 150W. The surrounding area abounds with glacially formed lakes and the rolling landscape typical of moraine; Fox Lake, at 142 acres, is among the larger bodies of water in the county. The south side of Fox Lake, both inside and outside the boundaries of the historic district, is largely forested with mature hardwoods such as maple, tulip poplar, and oak; beyond the immediate area of the lake to the west and south are farms.

The Fox Lake Historic District is the core of the larger area that comprises the Fox Lake Neighborhood Association, which includes most of the south side of the lake and curves around the west end into the newer developments on the northwest side. The district lies entirely within the Original Plat, although the community has expanded considerably. (Butternut Addition immediately east was developed after World War II, and in more recent years houses have been built across the lake.) Essentially, the historic district lies on both sides of Wilson Drive and contains 32 relatively modest lake cottages, most of which were constructed before World War II. While some of the properties have been altered, overall the district retains a fairly high degree of integrity. The earliest cottages often exhibit a few elements of the Craftsman style and in any case are representative of midwestern lakeside cottages of the period. Similar cottages are found, for example, around nearby Lake James as well as some ninety miles to the west at Hudson Lake in LaPorte County.

The majority of the cottages are one-story, of frame construction with gabled roofs and concrete block foundations. Most had either open or screened porches, some of which have been enclosed to add more interior space. Although some have replacement aluminum-frame windows, several of the cottages still have their original wood frame double-hung sashes (usually three-over-one or one-over-one)--or, in a few cases, wood frame casements. Nearly all are sided with clapboard or board-and-batten, although some are now covered with aluminum or vinyl siding. A typical example is 535 Lane 130 (photo 1), with its exposed rafter ends, one of the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 3

Fox Lake Historic District

Steuben County IN

speculative cottages built in the early 1930s by Emery Boyd. On the north side of Wilson Drive, which slopes steeply down toward the lake especially at the east end of the district (see photos 2,3), several of the cottages are two stories high, with an entrance facing the lane on the upper story and a doorway to the lake on the lower level. The slope towards the water is so steep that the rooftops of the easternmost houses in the district are below the lane and are reached by way of steps. Most are constructed of concrete, but a few cottages have rustic stairways of earth and timbers.

Typically, the upper story of these cottages is completely visible and of frame construction, while the raised basement or lower story is built of concrete block into the hillside so that only a portion of it can be seen. Some of these are full basements, others half or three-quarter. A few of these types of dwellings are on the south side of Wilson Drive as well, again at the east end where the slope toward the lake is steep. An example is 95 Lane 130 (photo 4), built around 1930, which, though abandoned for the last few years, retains a high degree of integrity with its original clapboard siding, wood frame windows, two-story porch, and stone fireplace. Somewhat altered, but still contributing, is its mirror image, the house next door to the west at 115 Lane 130.

The cottages in the district are strung along both sides of Wilson Drive (see photos 5,6), a narrow, curving, tree-lined lane that roughly parallels the south lake shore. It was originally little more than a rugged dirt path, later improved with gravel, and finally paved with asphalt in the last decade. As is typical in such communities, the cottages are clustered virtually wherever the terrain permits. Some are practically touching one another, especially those nearest the lake at the east end of the district (photos 2,3). The small size of the lots, on average about fifty feet by eighty feet, is a factor as well.

Roughly in the middle of the district is a beach and recreation area (photos 7,8) that was constructed in the 1960s on what had been a patch of high ground known as "the island" surrounded by swamp, which was dredged out and ditched. A brick and frame pavilion completed in 1968 (photo 8) stands above the beach. There is a parking area above the beach at the west end, accessible from Wilson Drive by way of a narrow lane called

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 7,8 Page 4

Fox Lake Historic District

Steuben County IN

Thompson Drive. A small nondescript bridge or culvert, primarily for pedestrian traffic but capable of handling automobiles, leads from the parking area over the west part of the ditch. There is a pedestrian bridge over the east part. The original beach was located in this area, with a bath house (long gone) and a removable pier adjacent to the channel (see photo 9).

The first cottage (100 Lane 130) built in the district still stands below Wilson Drive near where it bends southward toward Fox Lake Road; immediately west of it is another (120 Lane 130) of the original cottages, both (photo 3) of which were constructed by Carl Wilson, Sr. starting in the late 1920s. They are very similar to each other, both being gabled and of frame construction over a raised concrete block basement partly built into the hillside. One of the most charming of the surviving early cottages, built ca.1935, is "The Oaks" (photo 10), a T-gabled structure with five-over-one wood-frame double-hung sash windows. It is set well back from Wilson Drive and nestled amidst the trees. At 640 Lane 130 is a "log cabin" dating to the 1930s, actually a frame dwelling on a raised concrete foundation, whose walls are constructed of logs (photo 12).

A few of the cottages are built entirely of concrete block, among them 540 Lane 130 and 480 Lane 130. Most of these have metal casement windows. A particularly impressive example is 420 Lane 130 (photo 11), effectively a two-story dwelling with a gabled roof, exposed rafter ends and fly rafters, a gabled porch, and metal casement windows, built ca.1940. Only a handful of postwar houses are scattered through the district; the earlier ones built in the 1950s tend toward variations of the ranch style, such as 680 Lane 130 (photo 12), which sits upon a raised basement.

## NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Fox Lake Historic District is significant under Criterion A in the areas of ethnic heritage and recreation, as an example of a largely intact African-American resort community developed during the 1930s. Such communities were quite rare. In the years between World War I and World War II (and for some years after), blacks generally were not welcomed in white resort communities.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 5~~Fox Lake Historic District~~ ~~Steuben County IN~~

In direct response to this situation that was a variation of the redlining African-Americans faced in large cities and small towns alike, the development of Fox Lake provided black families with a place of their own in which to enjoy the pleasures of summertime activities.

After World War I a larger black middle class began to develop in cities in the northern United States, which remained segregated--de facto if not by statute. The economic status of many families had grown to the point that they could afford--theoretically--to move out of their segregated neighborhoods, which were becoming overcrowded with the influx of African-American families from the South moving into the northern industrial cities where there were greater job opportunities. But white sentiment against integration ran high, sometimes spurred by white supremacist groups such as the White Citizens Protective League in Indianapolis or the infamous Ku Klux Klan that was a powerful force in Indiana throughout much of the 1920s. As Indiana historian James H. Madison, among others, has pointed out, "White homeowners and real estate brokers continued to co-operate to restrict black home buying or renting [in the interwar years]."<sup>1</sup>

A few resorts catering to black families developed around lakes in Michigan, the most well known being Idlewild, at Baldwin Lake north of Grand Rapids, which offered numerous amusements and brought in big-name entertainment. Until Fox Lake, there appear to have been none in Indiana. In 1922 a group of middle class black families from Chicago had attempted to purchase Sager Lake outside Valparaiso for a summer resort, but local opposition prevented it.

In 1924, a group of white businessmen, C. M. Thieme and O. L. Cristman of Fort Wayne, G. G. Eckhart and Paul Moreland of Marion, and Harry Schrader of Kokomo, purchased land along the south side of Fox Lake, just south of Tri-State Beach and east of the county road that today is called West Fox Lake Road. Incorporating as the Fox Lake Land Company, they established offices in Marion and set about to develop the property and sell lots to black families. This took some time; the land was tangled with trees and scrub growth and was swampy in many places; indeed, it had been considered a good place to go hunting. The first dirt road was

<sup>1</sup> Madison, p.11. See also Thornbrough, pp.22-26.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 6

Fox Lake Historic District

Steuben County IN

cut into the property in 1927, and the Original Plat along the southwestern shore was subdivided.

Carl Wilson had established a successful exterminating business in Fort Wayne that extended beyond the boundaries of the black community. Starting in 1928, Wilson built the first of the three cottages that he eventually constructed on lots he had purchased at Fox Lake. The access road, which led from a county road west of the lake along the south shore, turned and ended just past his cottage at the east end of the Fox Lake plat. The narrow dirt lane was named Wilson Drive.

Owing largely to changing fortunes brought about by the Depression, Lowell T. Boyd, an insurance executive--and co-owner with his brother Emery (E.H.) Boyd of a farm near Rochester--assumed controlling interest in the Fox Lake Land Company in 1932. Lowell moved the corporation's offices to Kokomo, where his insurance business was located. Emery Boyd, along with his wife Bessie and their family, moved to the Fox Lake property to take charge of the company's day-to-day operations and to farm the tillable part of the land (that originally had been intended for a golf course), along with some adjacent acreage to the west and south. The Boyds' farmhouse was located a little south off the west end of Fox Lake; it burned in the late 1980s.

Emery Boyd soon built twelve cottages on randomly scattered lots, offering them for rent until he sold them all, individually, within two to three years of their construction. He set up a lease arrangement for a farmhouse that had been on the original property so that it could be converted into a small hotel. The nearby barn was rehabilitated into a restaurant, with a clubhouse/dance hall on the upper level. Neither of these buildings survives; they were located south of the present historic district, uphill on the south side of Fox Lake Road. A succession of different managers ran the hotel and restaurant until 1943, when Frances Flemming of Indianapolis and Mabel Van Cleave of Franklin (IN) took over. It was the beginning of a lengthy and successful partnership that in the 1950s resulted in the construction of the Mar-Fran Motel overlooking Fox Lake on the west side. That structure was destroyed by fire in late 1966 and rebuilt the following year.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 7

Fox Lake Historic District

Steuben County IN

Some distance east of the present beach, a bathhouse and pier had been built in the 1930s, where the east end of the channel meets the lake. Nothing remains of either structure. Water recreation centered in this area. Eventually lifeguards were hired for the summer, and hours for swimming, along with other safety rules, were established.

Meanwhile, other black families were buying lots and constructing their own cottages as well as rental properties. Some of these families had become aware of Fox Lake's charms through holiday picnics and excursions that were organized in several cities within a wide radius. These efforts were undertaken both by Boyd and by some of the early Fox Lake property owners, who naturally were anxious that the resort succeed and who touted the joys of this tranquil oasis where African-Americans were welcome. The largest percentage of Fox Lake vacationers came from Indianapolis, and included such notables as Freeman B. Ransom (for whom the Ransom Place Historic District in Indianapolis is named). His descendants still own a cottage in the district (see photo 1). But many came from Toledo, Detroit, Chicago, and other distant places, as well as other Indiana cities such as Marion and Fort Wayne.

The early cottages had no plumbing or electricity. Community pumps (located at the Boyds' farmhouse, the clubhouse, and the beach) supplied the vacationers with water for the first decade or so. Electricity did not become available at Fox Lake until 1936. After that, the cottage owners began to dig individual wells for their water supply, and indoor plumbing rapidly replaced the "Roosevelt outhouses" (WPA-built privies) after World War II ended<sup>2</sup>.

As more and more families bought lots and built summer cottages at Fox Lake, the necessity for some sort of community organization to address such needs and desires as sanitation, road maintenance, beach improvement and upkeep, and regularly scheduled recreation programs became apparent. In 1938 the Fox Lake Property Owners' Association organized and assessed modest dues in order to get their various plans underway. During the next decade the Association set up arrangements for regular trash removal and road

<sup>2</sup> One outdoor privy still stands in the district as a reminder, at 220 Lane 130. See photo 14.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 8

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Fox Lake Historic District

Steuben County IN

upkeep and improvement. (All the lanes serving the Fox Lake community were unpaved dirt lanes, as were the surrounding county roads, originally.) Fox Lake property owners formed clubs in their hometowns during the off-season, and some organized fundraising projects to help the Association's treasury. The Fox Lake Property Owner's Association incorporated in 1952.

There had always been a great variety of activities available for young and old at Fox Lake. Over the years the Association developed a program of swimming and safety instruction, from which evolved the "Sharks" and "Sharkettes", whose youthful members had passed a certain level of swimming proficiency. At various times crafts classes were offered. Dances were held at the clubhouse on the hill, sometimes with well known regional bands providing the music. Occasionally even big-name musicians were booked. Surrounding the clubhouse were tennis courts, horseshoe pits, and basketball hoops. Until the early 1950s, saddle horses were available for vacationers. From time to time in the early years trap shooting matches were held, scheduled by the Pioneer Gun Club of Toledo, Ohio. The restaurant in the lower level of the former barn held a weekly Family Night with reduced prices for the summer residents. In the mid-1940s the Fox Lake Sunday School became a regular weekly service held in July and August under the trees on the beach.

Fox Lake became a recreational destination for black young people within driving distance, who came to swim at the beach, attend dances in the evenings, and generally socialize with other young African-Americans who had come for the summer. During World War II black troops stationed at Baer Field in Fort Wayne were invited to come enjoy the recreational pleasures of Fox Lake during their weekend passes. The community went all out to make the young men welcome, including setting up tents with free refreshments.

Given the pleasant and welcoming atmosphere of the Fox Lake summer community, along with its status as a center of African-American social life, it is not difficult to understand why numerous annual meetings of black fraternal organizations, churches, and alumni groups began to be held at Fox Lake. Of course, the initial knowledge of Fox Lake as a suitable location for summertime meetings nearly always was the result of a member of one of these organizations having a cottage there--and seizing another

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 8,9 Page 9

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Fox Lake Historic District

Steuben County IN

opportunity to share the peaceful lake with other African-Americans, as well as promote the community to an ever-wider audience.

The Fox Lake Historic District, in the face of widespread resistance and de facto segregation in the interwar years, provided black families with a resort community of their own in which to enjoy the pleasures of summertime activities. It appears to have been the only such community in Indiana--and one of the few in the Midwest--before World War II. Moreover, it was (and is largely so today) highly successful as a true African-American community, far beyond a mere vacation destination. A large number of the cottages, especially in and around the historic district, are occupied by second- and third-generation owners. The Fox Lake Historic District is significant under Criterion A in the areas of ethnic heritage and recreation, as an example of a largely intact African-American resort community of the early mid-twentieth century.

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 9,10 Page 10

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Fox Lake Historic District

Steuben County IN

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"Valparaiso May Buy Sager Lake and 125 Acres of Land." Hobart News. 6 July 1922.

Wilson, Carl Jr. Son of Carl Wilson, Sr. (the "Father of Fox Lake") and current Fox Lake property owner. Interviews with author, 5 September 1999, 27 February 2000.

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Verbal Boundary Description

Bounded on the north by the south shore of Fox Lake, starting at a point due north of the northwest corner of Lot 16, follow the shoreline eastward to a point due north of the northeast corner of Lot 57. Proceed southward along the east lot line to Wilson Drive, continue across the lane to the northeast corner of Lot 88 and continue along its southeast edge. Turn the corner and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number 10 Page 10

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Fox Lake Historic District

Steuben County IN

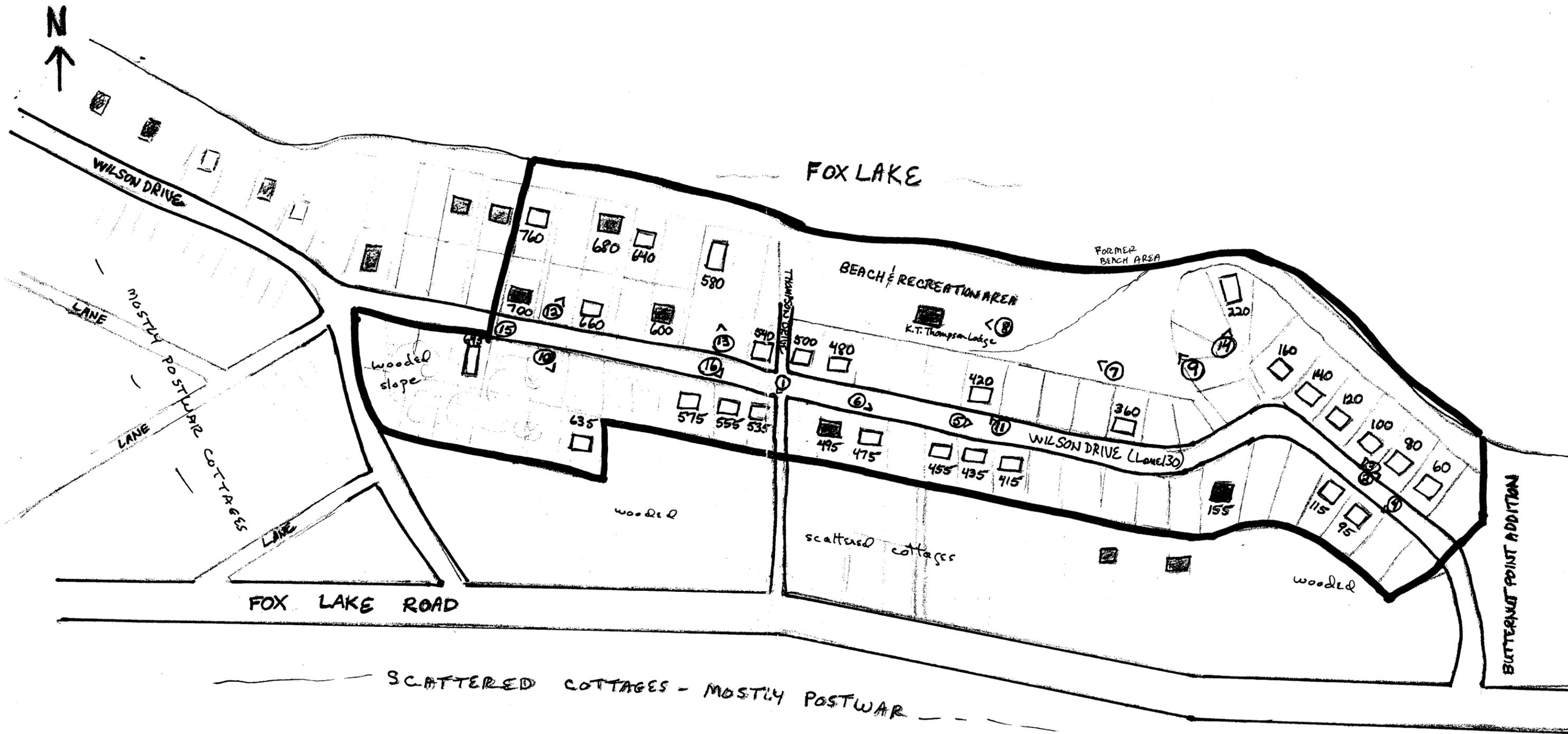
northerly along the west edges of Lots 25 and 16 to the lake shore and the point of origin.

To clarify further, the district consists of a portion of the Fox Lake Original Plat, to wit: Lots 16-20 inclusive; Lots 25-88 inclusive; Lots 92-97 inclusive, plus the beach area encircled by these lots.

(The legal description of the entire Fox Lake Original Plat is as follows: Commencing at a point where the east boundary line of the land owned by the Fox Lake Land Company in the west half of the northwest quarter of Section 34, Township 37 North, Range 13 East in Steuben County, Indiana, and described on Page 42C of Volume 78 in the deed records of said county, intersects the shore line of Fox Lake, thence south 470 feet, thence west 398 feet, thence north 79 degrees, 38 minutes west 611 feet, thence west 1300 feet to the east line of the public highway, thence north and northeasterly along the east line of said highway to the point where the same intersects the shore line of Fox Lake, thence southeasterly along the shore line to the point of beginning.)

Boundary Justification

Encompasses the bulk of the historic cottages within the Fox Lake Original Plat.



# FOX LAKE HISTORIC DISTRICT

NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES ARE SHADED

ALL HOUSE NUMBERS ARE LANE 130

CULTIVATED LAND