

# THE STORY BEHIND LESTER BEACH

By Chuck Guarino

It all began with the construction of the navigation locks at Lockport, Manitoba. Manitoba Senator Bradbury was one of the major politician who was instrumental in having the locks constructed. Upton Lester was a young english pipefitter, who emigrated to Canada to work on the construction of the locks. While working at lockport, he and Senator Bradbury became good friends.



The senator had many land holdings on the eastern shore of Lake Winnipeg, one of which was a section of land in the Belair area. Upton Lester and the senator made several trips to the area by canoe. Finally, Senator Bradbury sold Upton a quarter section on the shore at Belair. He was also instrumental in building the first "ice-breaker" ship on Lake Winnipeg, appropriately named after him as the "MS BRADBURY". It has been retired to the Marine Museum at Selkirk, Manitoba.



I met Upton Lester, while I was a lifeguard at Grand Beach from 1941 to 1944. Each year around the second week of July, he and his wife came across the lake from their "white house" at Belair.

They used a small fishing boat loaded with a one horsepower Johnson motor. While Upton arranged with Mr. Lawton the station master about expressing the baskets of blueberries to Winnipeg, we helped Mrs. Lester to unload the berries from their boat onto a large station wagon.

About ten years later, I again met Upton Lester when he began "renting

50' x 100' lots along the shoreline south of his "white house". During our negotiations for the land rental, Upton and I talked about his coming to the Lester Beach area. I was also surprised to learn that it was he who had built the entire road from

what is now the junction of Highway #11 to his "white house" at Belair. It is now the road that leads to the East Gate of Grand Beach Provincial Park.

We enjoyed our cottage and the beach immensely, but

sold it in 1964. Lester Beach is now a thriving resort area containing approximately 500 cottages. \*