



“HALL’S BOAT LIVERY”

One of the most favored concessions at Grand Beach, commencing from the very early 1920’s right through to the 1950’s was HILL’S BOAT LIVERY, located in the lagoon. It was at the extreme end of the boardwalk. As one passed the “Merry-go-round” (carousel), the boardwalk became a pathway to the lagoon. Hall’s boat livery was started by one of the original (CNoR) train conductors on the Grand Beach run, Mac Hall. He also owned and operated a boat livery on the Red River in Winnipeg, just at the South Osborne Street bridge that now spans the river. At that time, the only crossing of the Red River at South Osborne Street, was a “pontoon Bridge”, which allowed people to cross the Red River to what was then known as “Elm Park.”

As soon as a train arrived at Grand Beach, many of the passengers hurried along the boardwalk, across the little bridge, past the Grand-Stand and baseball field to Hall’s Boat livery. There they could rent canoes and rowboats, either by the hour or by the day. The canoes were mainly 16 foot in length, with two “wicker” seats, and with about a 36 inch beam at the centre.

The row boats were a little shorter, about 14 feet in length. However they were built much sturdier than the canoes. Usually they were manned with one set of oars, but a second set of oarlocks were available to provide two sets of oars.



Chuck Guarino



What was it like, Papa?

Most people renting boats at Hall’s boat livery stayed in the lagoon area, where the wave action and wind was much less than that prevailing on the big lake. However, there were some boaters that would travel through the channel from the lagoon out into the big lake. Rowboats were more manageable, but canoes, if not manned by expert canoeists usually found themselves in great difficulty. In addition to the 49 or 50 canoes and rowboats rented by Halls’ boat livery, there were always a few small sailboats hovering around the lagoon.

As Lifeguards at Grand Beach in the early 1940’s, we always kept an eye on the canoes and rowboats that ventured into the big lake from the lagoon. Especially so, if the wind was “off-shore” coming from the south. Canoeists were very vulnerable, because suddenly as the “offshore wind” blew then farther “offshore”, they found that they could not turn their canoes around to return to the shore.

We, as lifeguards did not have outboard motors, and sometimes it was a long and hard job, bringing these crafts back to the shore at Grand Beach. Nostalgically, I look back at the “GOLDEN ERA” of Grand Beach. (1917-1950)

Yours, until the next issue of the “Grand Beach Realty News”!

Chuck Guarino