

# Fox Point



by Douglas H. Frazer



Bacon House 2014



2014 with Douglas and Kristin Fellows

## The Bacon Estate

Frank Rogers Bacon was an early, prominent resident of the Village of Fox Point. At one time, the Bacon estate included land holdings stretching, roughly, between Bradley and Calumet Roads, from the railroad tracks to Port Washington Road. Bacon appears to have purchased the first parcels totaling about 37 acres from the Calumet Land Company in 1907 and 1908, and sometime between 1907 and 1909 he built the family's summer cottage on the property to the south on a small rise at 227 East Bradley. One of the concrete pillars marking the entrance to the property still stands partially hidden in the brush on the southeast corner of Bradley and Regent Roads.

William H. Schuchardt designed the old English manor house, which was featured in *The Architectural Record* in October 1916. Following a 1929 expansion, the house grew to 7 bedrooms and 8 bathrooms, some of which were servants' quarters.

The house has had only three owners. Frank Bacon died in 1949; his wife Ellen in 1953. At some point, the address changed to 7829 N. Regent Road. Walt and Jane Thomas purchased the house and together raised their six children. It is currently owned by Douglas and Kristin Fellows who are lovingly restoring the house and its five acre lot. Kristin Fellows befriended Jane Thomas; when she was ready to sell in 2003, the Fellows were ready to buy.

Frank Bacon founded the American Rheostat Company in 1896, producing electrical controls just as electricity was becoming a major power source. In 1898, American Rheostat acquired its biggest competitor, Cutler-Hammer. Bacon became the president and board chairman; Cutler was the plant manager and chief engineer. As the

firm's product line expanded, so the company grew. On its 50th anniversary in 1942, the *Milwaukee Journal* reported the company's electrical controls governed everything from giant cranes and marine vessels to household appliances. At Bacon's death, the company was doing over \$40 million in sales.

Frank married Ellen Alsted in 1895, the daughter of Hans P. Alsted of Alsted-Kasten Company, which later became Schwanke-Kasten,



Bacon House 2003

Bacon House Early 1900s

Inc., a jewelry store still in existence on Silver Spring Road in Whitefish Bay. The Bacons had three children: Edward A. (Ted) Bacon, Frank R. Bacon, Jr., and Elizabeth. Elizabeth married Edmund Fitzgerald, the president of Northwestern Mutual Life and the namesake of the Lake Superior cargo ship that Gordon Lightfoot immortalized in his haunting song the *Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald*. Frank Bacon's grandson, Edmund Fitzgerald, Jr., eventually became Cutler-Hammer's CEO and was serving in that position when it was acquired by Eaton Corp. in 1978.

Edward Bacon became an important Milwaukee businessman, serving as an officer and director at Cutler-Hammer. Edward was also a prominent leader in the Republican Party on the national level. He was a naval reserve commander during WWII, served at the Export-Import Bank in Washington after the war, and as an assistant secretary for the Army as well as other subcabinet offices in the Eisenhower administration. Edward even served briefly as the Fox Point Village constable until 1935 when that office was abolished.

In 1930, the Bacons acquired the Fox Point Meeting House, also known as the Little White Church. The Church was built in 1888 by the St. John's Lutheran Church congregation. In 1928, the church had expanded into its present location and no longer needed the chapel-sized building. Bacon had it moved several blocks to the south on a site that later became the Dunwood School, donating the structure to the Fox Point-Bayside School District in 1955; it was demolished in 1959.

Various other estate structures still exist: a portion of the Hipke residence at 7861 N. Regent Court was the chauffeur's quarters and garage; and the Rohmer residence at 7831 N. Fairchild Road was the stables and barn.



Original Fountain

These properties are more than vestiges; they are living, well-maintained elements of the Frank R. Bacon Estate – the size and splendor of which the Village likely will never see again.

*Douglas H. Frazer is a trustee on the Fox Point Village Board. The views expressed are his own and not necessarily those of the Village, the Village Board, other Village Board members, or Best Version Media, LLC.*

**GROWING THE NATION'S OLDEST SPORT THROUGHOUT THE MILWAUKEE AREA**

**Hot4Lax LACROSSE**

LEAGUES • CLUBS • EQUIPMENT

CAMPS IN BROOKFIELD • LAKE COUNTRY AND THE NORTHSORE

GLENDALE 414-236-5667  
7963 N. PORT WASHINGTON ROAD  
WAUKESHA 262-717-9996  
2236 W. BLUEMOUND ROAD, SUITE G

**WWW.HOT4LAX.COM**