

# The Origin of Earl Young's Boulder Park

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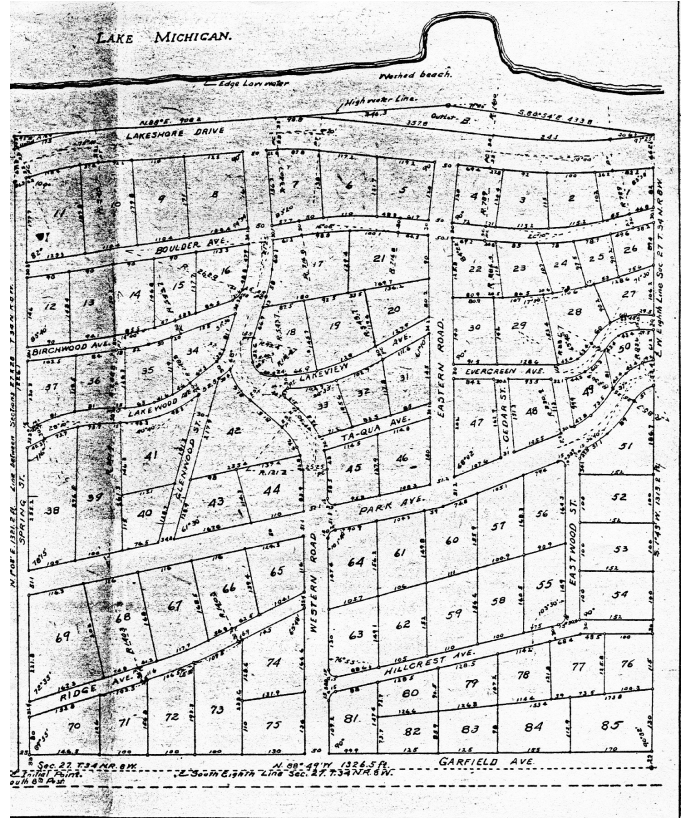
**One hundred years ago**, in 1924, Charlevoix's world-renowned builder in stone Earl Young (left) obtained just over thirty-seven acres of land on the Lake Michigan shore behind today's Munson Healthcare Charlevoix Hospital. Before that, his desire to create his dream ideas of small, intimate houses out of area stones and boulders had not gotten any traction. A drop-out from the University of Michigan School of Architecture after one year in 1909, because he didn't agree with anything they were trying to teach him, Earl returned to Charlevoix to go into the insurance and real estate business with his mother. At age thirty, now married (1915) with two children, he began his first personal residence, at 306 Park Avenue, that took two years to complete (currently called the Thatch House). No opportunity presented itself for Earl to proceed beyond that. Until lightning struck in the form of the unfortunate death of a family friend, and his creative life was finally able to take off overnight.

Beginning in 1911, Earl and his mother lived at 102 State Street (right) across the alley from the Methodist Church. Across the street from the church were neighbors Mary and Lemuel Bartholomew and their son Forrest. Their family lot is now the Charlevoix State Bank parking area. In 1881, Lemuel had purchased the thirty seven-plus acre parcel out on Lake Michigan, but never did anything with it before he passed away in 1913. Ten years later, Mary, at age seventy-nine, got the idea that she would turn the acreage into an "upscale resort colony." Forrest, at the time an architect living in Chicago, would be the driving force behind getting the project off the ground.



102 State Street

Mary asked her old friend and neighbor Earl, a realtor, to subdivide the property for them. Whimsical, nature-loving Earl did just that, creating eighty-five lots laid out in what he claimed was the “parkway” style (right). That meant the roads would follow the natural topography of the land, not a rigid grid, resulting in only three of the lots, #52-54 at lower right along the eastern border, being perfectly rectangular. Forrest even drew up complete architectural plans for a stylish house on lot #1, at top right on Lakeshore Drive, now the site of Earl’s astonishing Boulder Manor. Together, Mary and Earl came up with the name of “Bartholomew’s Boulder Park” for the land, probably from the large number of boulders that littered the shoreline, both in and out of the water, beside the north boundary road (below). On the map, Mary declared that the project would be “dedicated to the use of the public.”



Things were progressing smoothly until, over the winter of 1923-1924, Forrest's health took a drastic turn for the worse while his mother was wintering in California. He died at age 44, in Chicago, on January 31, cause unspecified. With that, Mary's desire to complete the project vanished. She turned over everything to local banker Albert Bridge to dispose of at his discretion. Not one structure had appeared in Bartholomew's Boulder Park.

As shocking and sad as the circumstances were, Earl saw his chance at last. He approached Mr. Bridge with an offer for the acreage that he had platted, and signed the papers on July 22. Now his creative life could begin. Go-getter Earl began to advertise to the summer crowd immediately after signing, as seen below. Work on clearing the land commenced at the same time, now to be known simply as Boulder Park.

**Charlevoix's  
New  
Sub Division**

**On The  
Lake Shore  
Drive**

**Large Lots For \$100  
and Up**

**Less Than a Mile From  
The Post Office**

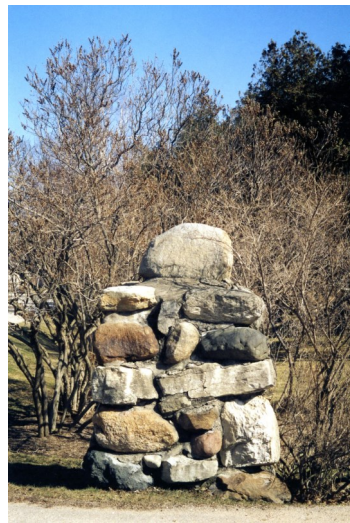
**B**EAUTIFUL BOULDER PARK  
**O**N THE LAKE SHORE DRIVE, WITH  
**O**UNOBSTRUCTED VIEW OF SUNSETS AND  
**L**AKE MICHIGAN.  
**D**ENSE EVERGREENS  
 MINGLED WITH WHITE BIRCH, MAKE  
**E**ACH LARGE LOT A  
 RESTRICTED BEAUTY SPOT.  
**P**REPARE TO ENJOY THE IDEAL CLIMATE  
**A**MID UNUSUAL SURROUNDINGS,  
**R**EALIZING YOUR DREAM COTTAGE IN STONE, AND  
**K**EEPING IN MIND THIS IS ALSO A REAL INVESTMENT.

Warranty Deed and Abstract of Title with each lot and the owner of one of the first ten deeds recorded is to receive a

**NEW FORD COUPE FREE**

Ten percent of the sale price of every lot sold August 7th, 8th and 9th to be given to the

**Charlevoix Hospital Tag Day Fund**



A century old this year, the first things Earl built at Boulder Park were the four entry pillars, two each at Eastern and Western Roads. It is evident that sometime in that one hundred years, the pillar in the color photo had to be reduced in size by one tier. Earl's first complete house in Boulder Park would appear in 1925-1926.

Until just recently, the man in the black and white photo was name unknown, until the acquisition of Earl's long-lost memoirs and personal history of Charlevoix, never published, were rediscovered in Florida and donated to the Charlevoix Historical Society. Another photo of him and the same pillar in the memoirs revealed he is millionaire Chicago industrialist and inventor George van Pelt, summer resident of Norwood and a man Earl admired greatly for his longtime interest in Charlevoix. His last name graces the tops of the buildings that flank van Pelt alley in the 200 block of Bridge Street.

A footnote to the 1923 plat map of Boulder Park: the street layout did not develop as drawn. Eastern Road did pretty much dead-end and split as indicated, but Western Road never made it straight up to Garfield Avenue.