



Front - Title/Description

Idlewild

Prior to 1964, segregationist policies limited African Americans' options for where to spend vacation time. In 1915 white developers, Adelbert and Erastus Branch of White Cloud and Wilbur Lemon and Alvin Wright of Chicago, established a summer resort for blacks here, which they named Idlewild. Stores in magazines like *Ebony*, and advertisements in national newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender* promoted Idlewild as "The only place where Colored people get all they pay for and pay only for what they get." The resort drew African American members of the middle and professional classes, as well as black intellectuals such as Charles Chesnutt. Idlewild grew to encompass roughly four square miles. During the early 1960s, summer holidays drew more than 25,000 people to Idlewild.

Significant Date:

Two World Wars and the Depression (1915-1945)

Registry Year: 2009 **Erected Date:** 2009

Marker Location

Address: US-10 and Broadway

City: Idlewild

State: MI **ZipCode:** 49642

County: Lake

Township: Yates

Lat: 43.90084554 / **Long:** -85.77258110

Web URL:

Back - Title/Description

Idlewild

Beginning in 1915, African Americans from throughout the country, particularly the Midwest, came to Idlewild in the summer. During the early years the resort offered beaches, boating, and other typical summer diversions. By the 1920s and into the 1960s, however, Idlewild's rousing nightlife lured swarms of visitors to the community to see elaborate floorshows and some of America's most popular black entertainers. The Arthur Braggs Idlewild Revue toured the country during the off-season, spreading the Idlewild name. The 1964 passage of the Civil Rights Act - comprehensive legislation that prohibits segregation - opened doors for blacks to stay at previously whites-only resorts. Idlewild's heyday ended, but it remained the largest African American resort in the nation.