

MCCOURTIE PARK: A UNIQUE PLACE TO VISIT

McCourtie Park, just off US-12 in Somerset Township is a place to visit and enjoy.

Somerset native, William H.L. (Herb) McCourtie, dreamed of having a home he could be proud of and a place for the people of his community to gather. McCourtie made his fortunes in Texas oil speculations in the 1920s. He established the Trinity Portland Cement Co.

The park contains 17 bridges, no two alike, that criss-cross a meandering stream through the 42 acre estate. Each bridge is carved to look like logs, planks, and ropes. The bridges were designed by two men, Cardoso and Carona.

Two spring fed ponds on the property at 14 feet deep and measuring 100 by 60 feet one was originally used for swimming and the other was stocked with trout.

A unique ðapartment-rathskellerö and six garages are built into the side of a hill at McCourtie Park. They were used by McCourtie to entertain friends during the 1920s and 30s. A beautiful paneled bar dominates the tavern-style room with beamed ceilings and a fieldstone fireplace.

Other features on the property are ötreeö chimneys carved and constructed of concrete to resemble trees blending with the roadside. The chimneys vented the rathskellers heating and boiler systems.

Birdhouses made of cypress and duraluminum and anchored in concrete blocks weighting approximately 20 tons. The structures are Martin lodges capable of accommodating 192 and 288 birds respectively.

McCourtie died in 1933 and ownership of the property changed hands several times.

In 1987, Somerset Township bought the property and started to restore the park McCourtie had planned.

After months of hard work and dedication, the grounds were cleared and mowed, ponds cleaned and fenced. A picnic area is now in use.

The McCourtie Park is at the corner of US-12 and Jackson Road about three miles west of US-127. Entrance to the park is off Jackson Road.