

# "Old Steve" Gillingham, Life Long Resident Of North Island Dies

1949

BAY PORT — One of West Huron county's most colorful, yet least-known residents, Steven A. "Old Steve" Gillingham, 84, was found dead Monday on his island domain, North Island, where he was born and where he spent all but just a few years of his life.

Known best by fishermen and duck hunters who came to North Island, "Old Steve" left his island home only occasionally. Supplies were brought to him through arrangements with relatives. He was on the mainland five years ago at the time of his brother's death, and the longest time he ever stayed away from the island was 11 years ago when he made a trip to California. In 1893 he attended the Chicago World Fair.

Gillingham, a pioneer fisherman, who received the deed to the island from President U. S. Grant.

Funeral services will be held Friday at 2 p. m. in the home of a niece, Leila Gillingham, of Bay Port. Elder Archie Harder will officiate, and burial will be in Bay Port cemetery.

"Old Steve" gained recognition and publicity through his simple living and hard work. Among his projects was construction of a long limestone breakwater, which he built by hand labor of stone which he quarried on the island.

And he died while at work, too. His frozen body was found by two Bay Port fishermen, Martin Kelly and Charles McGathy, who were ice fishing. They found "Old Steve" near a pile of fishing anchors, and his nearby wheel-