TOUR 8
Remote Tranquility
(1.7 miles)

1. The Wine Cellar
2. The Smith House
3. The Simon Fox Farmhouse
4. The Isle of Saint George Congregational Church
5. The George Wires House
6. The Snide-Seefield House
TOUR EIGHT
Remote Tranquillity
(1.7 MILES)

Only a few miles from the Canadian border, North Bass Island (also called Isle Saint George) was settled by Simon and Peter Fox. These two brothers arrived in 1850, cleared timber, planted vineyards, and established wine cellars. Unlike South and Middle Bass, North Bass was never touched by commercial and resort development and to this day remains more or less a huge vineyard. Only four improved-surface roads cross the island, and the buildings located along these are mostly of Greek Revival or Italianate design, with residences built on a T- or L-shaped plan. Most have limestone rubble foundations. Farm buildings, a church, a twine house, and a few other outbuildings are the only structures located here. All of North Bass is owned by Meier's Wine Cellars, which also owns the Lonz Winery and the Siegrist-Lonz Farm seen at Middle Bass. Permission should be obtained from the winery's local manager before touring the area.

1. The Wine Cellar. Our tour begins at the southern end of Kenny Road. Here we see a pavilion-like structure with a foundation of native limestone. Since the stone lower level is similar to many other wine cellars on the islands, the property likely was the site of a wine cellar. The pavilion is newer than the foundation, but little is known of the history of this building.

2. The Smith House. At the northern end of Kenny, where it meets Tuhan Road, stands an L-shaped farmhouse built about 1865. Otherwise a typical island farm dwelling, it is somewhat unusual because of the circular vent in its front gable and its simple Italianate porch.

3. The Simon Fox Farmhouse. Heading east on Tuhan, we arrive at the farm of one of the earliest island settlers. Simon Fox
and his brother Peter bought five hundred acres of land on North Bass in the 1850s and established the wine-making industry on this island. Today this farmstead is the residence of Meier’s Wine Cellars’ local manager. The house was built about 1860; it is a fine Greek Revival home with the sidelighted doorway and transom typical of its style. The building is also noted for its rare Greek Revival porches. The front porch has fluted Doric columns, and the recessed side porch sports wooden arches. Just northeast of the dwelling, Fox’s dock and a two-story twine house are maintained by the present owner.

Fox Farmstead, 1874
4. The Isle of Saint George Congregational Church. Back-tracking and heading toward the western end of Tuhan Road, we arrive at the most stylistically impressive structure on the island. The land for this church and its adjacent cemetery was donated by island pioneer Roswell Nichols in 1850, and recently the forty residents of North Bass have undertaken the building’s restoration. Constructed about 1880, the church features an exotic ogee-arched stained-glass window; here graceful, double-curved molding comes to a point above the colored glass. Other impressive architectural elements include the scalloped shingle front gable with an oculus, or round window, and the large, carved brackets supporting the entrance canopy. The delicate, off-center open-air belfry particularly is worth noting.

5. The George Wires House. From Tuhan, we turn on to Peeple Road and follow it north nearly to Wires Road. Here is the large home of George Wires. Wires was forty years old when he arrived at North Bass and established a thriving orchard on the island. He later married Susan Fox, a member of the pioneering Fox family.
The couple raised ten children on the island, some of whom remained at this family homestead into the twentieth century. The Wires residence is a large Greek Revival variation of the typical L-shaped farmhouse plan. It was built between 1850 and 1860.

6. The Snide-Seefield House. On the west side of Peeple, north of Wires and set well back from the road, stands the home of J. Snide. Snide established orchards and vineyards on the island before 1874. His former residence is a farmhouse variation of the Gothic Revival architectural style.