

# —Time tracks—by Jim Ingram—

(The first in a series on the 1950s in Lake Orion)

Lake Orion continued to drift into suburbia during the 1950s. Cottages around the lake were being winterized and converted to year around homes at a more rapid rate than in the late 1940s.

The example of the Edmond Scheel family as reported in The Lake Orion Review in 1954 would be typical.

They first came here as children for their summer vacations. They fell in love with each other and with Lake Orion's charms. Later in life they realized their secret ambition, making this lakeside village their permanent home by buying and winterizing the cottage at 327 North Shore Drive.

Subdivisions were sprouting up on many of the former farms in Orion Township. The Oral and Russel Porrit farm on the east side of M-24, just north of Silverbell Road, sold to CL Ladd and Company and would become Hi Hill subdivision in 1954.

In that same year the National Homes along Sunset (now Pine Tree), just off Clarkston Road, began construction.

It seems 1954 was a banner year for subdivisions opening in Orion Township. In addition to the ones previously mentioned, Judah Lake on Joslyn Road, Perry Acres on M-24, Dunn Farms and East Lawn opened for development providing 829 new building lots.

The Red Barn subdivision on the west side of M-24 between Lake Orion and Oxford began development in 1955.

From 1950 to 1955, Lake Orion added 618 families, making it one of the fastest growing communities in Oakland County. The population figures for 1956 show Orion Township at 6,000 and the village at 2,400.

This rapid growth in population necessitated expanding the roads. The first strip of new concrete was poured on the widened and improved M-24 in the summer of 1956.

By November of that year M-24 had grown from a two lane highway to a four lane divided highway from Pontiac to Lake Orion.

Widening of M-24 involved moving two significant Orion landmarks. The roller skating rink

was moved from the shore of Buckhorn Lake to the east side of M-24. Its proprietor was Eddie Nolan.

The second historic landmark was the Andrews farmhouse built in 1866. It was moved back from the widened road. This house still exists on the west side of M-24, near Silverbell Road.

Another building known as the "Little Old Log Cabin" on the northeast corner of M-24 and Silverbell Road was a casualty of the M-24 expansion.

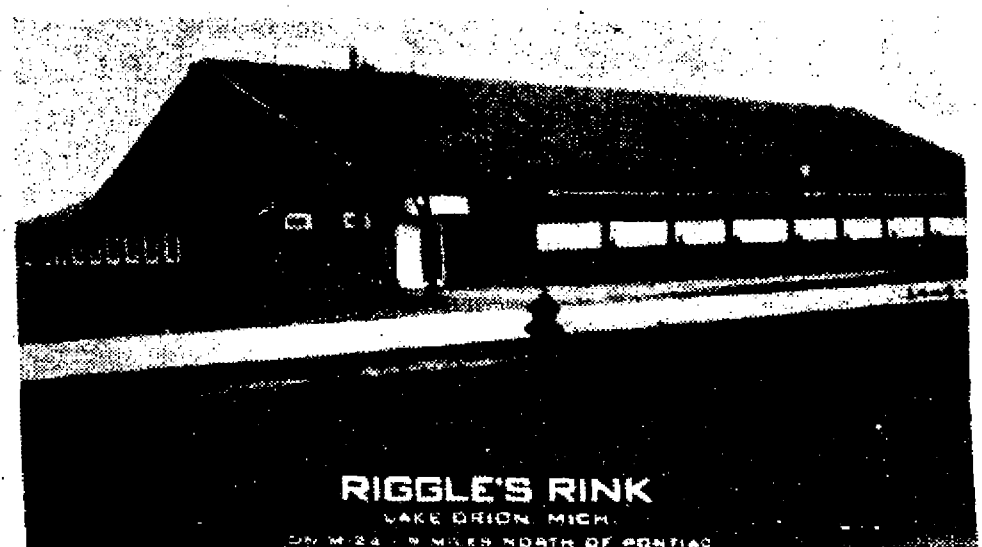
It was purchased by the state and demolished. At that time it was owned and operated by John Fortier as a gas station/grocery.

The automobile business was booming in the 1950s and jobs were plentiful. This ad appeared in the Orion Weekly Review in 1952. "Men needed on all types of jobs -- experience not necessary -- apply Pontiac Motor Division -- employment office -- Glenwood Ave -- Pontiac, Michigan."

At that time students graduating from high school could step into well paying jobs in the auto plants and many did so.

Some factory jobs were available locally. Walter Schreiber had established Artco on Indianwood Road in 1953. It is now known as Hadron. They were employing over 500 at this plant by 1957.

Nutt Manufacturing Company acquired the building at 2880 Indianwood Road, close to M-24, and expanded the job opportunities there.



The roller rink was moved from Buckhorn Lake in the '50s to the east side of M-24 because the road was being widened.