

Time Tracs by Jim Ingram

(This is the last in a series on Sibley/Bowdon Hall)

Both Elizabeth and Mary Stewart had memories of Orion Village in the late teens and the 1920s. First let's take their neighborhood.

Although their home was just off Lake Street, at the end, they took West Flint into the village at that time. They said Lake Street followed more closely the lakeshore.

They recalled a barn along Flint Street with a cider press where they would stop for a glass of cider on their way home from school. Elizabeth and Mary also described a brick barbecue along Flint with roast pork on spits.

At that time, Flint in the business district had boardwalks, not cement sidewalks.

The Stewart family purchased fresh fruit and vegetables from people in the neighborhood that had large gardens. They shopped at Guy Lyons grocery store (northeast corner of Flint/Broadway).

They also mentioned Beemer and Carlton Department Store (L shaped building running from South Broadway to Flint Street). It's now a guitar shop on Broadway and a restaurant on Flint.

They went to Dr. Arthur Watson, who at that time operated out of his home on the northeast corner of Flint/Lapeer Streets. All of these buildings still exist.

They went to Detroit to the dentist, as did their parents for most medical needs. The Stewarts probably did much of their shopping in Detroit as well.

For entertainment, the girls mentioned that a

"dancing master" came to their house to teach them dancing. However, they couldn't dance or play cards on Sundays.

They recalled going to the bandshell in the park (southwest corner of Lapeer/Flint Streets) for band concerts. Mrs. Stewart sang in a local glee club.

Elizabeth related her experience of seeing local kids put an outhouse on top of one of the local business buildings in the village at Halloween.

Both told of going to the basketball games which at that time were played in the Methodist Church House (just west of the church on East Flint). The school didn't have a gym. "The whole town went," Elizabeth said.

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Elizabeth did play basketball and at that time girls basketball was a big sport in this area. The girls' high school team played first and then the boys did.

The Stewart family had other Lake Orion ties. Mary Stewart, Robert Stewart's sister, owned the cottage to the north of Bowdon Hall on the lake.

This house still exists at the end of Lake Street and is now owned by Glen Stokes.

Mary married Claud Elkington. When she died in her 40s, Claud married a wealthy widow neighbor. The widow owned the large cottage on the hill to the east of Bowdon Hill.

It was known as "Sagamore Hill." I can remember the Elkingtons summering there in the 1950s. It burned to the ground in the late 50s.

There was a block cottage just behind Mary Stewart's cottage on Lake Street. This house still exists and is also owned by Glen Stokes.

In the teens and 1920s, Frank and Effie Herte lived there. They were friends of the Stewarts.

In 1928, the Stewart family decided to move to La Jolla, California. They sold Bowdon Hall to their neighbors, the Hertes. The Hertes lived there year round for many years.

They sold it to GC Ziliotto in 1949. The Ziliottos sold to William and Betty Grube in 1972. George Roberts, the current owner, bought it from the Grubes two years ago.

Elizabeth Stewart paid the people of Lake Orion a compliment when she congratulated them for keeping the lake non-commercial and natural looking.

She said in California where she lives, it would be plastered with neon.

The Stewart sisters and their daughters did say they would have enjoyed a nice restaurant on the lake and they were impressed with the Indianwood bed and breakfast where they stayed.