

Time Tracs—by Jim Ingram

First in a four part series on Lake Orion life from the 1920s to the 1960s.

Lake Orion as a resort was at its zenith in the 1920s. Thousands of resorters were coming out all summer to fill the major hotels like the Park Bellevue and Lakeview and the smaller ones too. Hundreds more owned or rented cottages around the lake.

A fleet of seven boats including the double decker "City of Orion", carried passengers, mail and freight to every bay and island on the lake.

All of these "summer people", as the locals referred to them, made handsome profits for the local merchants. Reon Baldwin (born in Orion in 1909) recalls some of these local businesses in the 1920s.

Beginning on the northwest corner of Flint and Broadway was Bergman's Bakery. Next, proceeding west, was Harwood's General Store, Allen's Furniture, Charlie Welche's Barber Shop, and Barney's Restaurant, owned by Barney Hart Sr.

Dr. Treat, a dentist, had his office and residence on the northeast corner of Flint and Lapeer Streets. This house later would be occupied by Dr. Watson an MD. Belles Hall Cover, Bergmans and Harwoods continued to be used for roller skating and dancing.

Guy Lyons had a grocery store on the northeast corner of Flint and Broadway and Walt Cummings plumbing shop was in a wood building on the east side of the village hall.

Griggs had their drug store on the southwest corner of Broadway and Flint and the local telephone company, owned by Herb Murphy, was located on the second floor of that building. Ida Winter was the telephone operator.

Beemer and Carlton General Store was the first store south of Griggs. It was an "L" shaped building with another entrance on Flint Street (currently Margie's Restaurant). Next was the post office which moved to the building just south of the Orion Review office in 1927.

Abe Deere had a blacksmith shop behind the Review building in the 1920s and Henry Predmore built a gas station on the northeast corner of N. Broadway and Shadbolt Streets.

Earl Abbey worked for Predmore and later bought the station. Jon Bennaway had a clothing store in Orion at that time as did George Casey. Casey would later build the Midget Market on S. Broadway, opposite Heights Road, which was owned by Bob and Bernice Miller in the 1940s and 1950s.

On the southeast corner, Charlie Mitchell had a

pharmacy.

Next to it to the south was the first movie theater. Dick Silver ran the theater and also sold Conn musical instruments.

This small theater was used by the school and community for live theater. In the middle of the block at 27 S. Broadway, George Wright had a bar and pool room. The Wright's lived on the second floor at that time.

At the end of the block on the northeast corner of S. Broadway and Front Streets was Curtis Hardware. To the north was Charlie Parker's Feed Store, which also had an entrance on Front Street.

Speaker & Son Hardware (currently Lucky's Market) and auto repair garage was on the southeast corner of Broadway and Front Streets. Earl Speaker built this building on the site of his father's blacksmith shop in the early 1920s.

Charley Howarth built the building on the southwest corner of Broadway and Front Streets. In the 1920s, it was Earl Milliman's Ford dealership.

Abe Deere had a blacksmith shop behind the Review building in the 1920s.

South of there on the corner of M-24 and S. Broadway was E.S. Letts and Son Lumber Company. Continuing south on M-24, we find that Charles W. Jacobsen and his son Harold have purchased the greenhouse in 1920.

Jacobsen's Garden Town remains in the Jacobsen family with Bruce and son Brad, being the third and fourth generations of their family to run the business.

Wildwood Farm, totaling over 2,500 acres, was the estate of William E. Scripps, owner of the Scripps Howard newspaper chain and publisher of the Detroit News.

Wildwood was located in the Joslyn, Baldwin and Clarkston Road area and was completed in 1921. The Tudor-style mansion named Moulton Manor on Scripps is now known as Guest House.

The barns of Wildwood comprise the core of Canterbury Village, one being the Haymaker Restaurant. Several of the small shops at Canterbury are the houses Scripps built for his employees. He also constructed a school for employee's children and other local children. It is now St. Mary's Episcopal

Church on Joslyn Ct.

Scripps often used an autogira, the forerunner of the helicopter. It was housed and used the field on the northwest corner of Joslyn and Waldon Roads.

The Indianwood Golf and Country Club and the upscale Indianwood Subdivision around Indianwood Lake began in the mid 1920s.

The Jacob Schick farm along Miller Road at the east end of Long Lake was sold to the newly formed Bunny Run Country Club in 1924. A beach and clubhouse were constructed as well as a nine hold course on the corner of Forest Lake and Miller. Many lots were also sold for cottages.

Frank Gingell and Ella McVean Gingell together with their sons Francis and Harold, established the community of Gingellville along Baldwin Road. It began in 1926 when they platted a subdivision named Gingellmont on what is now Elmy Drive.

The business district began in 1927 when the Gingells moved a school house acrosss Baldwin Road to the west side next to an existing house and began operation of a grocery store and gas station.

In the Village of Orion, there was a small park adjacent to the Michigan Central Train Station on the southwest corner of Flint and Front Streets on the site of the current drug store.

In the 1920s, Max Wichman, a local business man and philanthropist, donated the money to build a bandshell in this park.

Mr. Stoddard, a local musician, organized a community band which played many summer concerts there in the 1920s. In later years the high school band utilized it into the 1960s, until it was torn down to build the current building for an A&P market.

In 1921, the Franklin-Wright Settlement house in Detroit opened a day cam for children on the Pittman-Dean property on Long Lake. Through the 1920s, it was used by the ice industry in the winter and as a camp in the summer.

After the demise of the ice industry in the 1930s, it became camp Franklin, an overnight camp for under-privileged city children which would continue until 1991.

Camp Agawam opened as a boy scout camp on Clarkston Road in 1928 and continues as such today. In a 1929 vote of 268 to 88, the voters of Orion changed the name of the village from Orion to Lake Orion.