

May 21, 1980

I.

Family Memories-Mrs. Owen W. Smith (M. Corina Smith)

In 1918, I married Owen Smith and moved from Detroit to Pontiac. Soon, I became one of my husband's family and learned from his mother and his aunts of the interesting background of their parents and relations. I wish I could remember all they told of those past years.

The Cruice family lived in Galway, Ireland. Their oldest daughter Mary was married to a man named Dillon, who was ill with a persistent sickness. The doctors there thought a long sea voyage would benefit him, so they took the trip to America about 1848.

Wherever it was that they landed, they were told of the place here at Orchard Lake. A while after living here, he died. She was alone among strangers-she gave birth to a baby, who also died. She was so beside herself with grief and loneliness, that those who knew her, feared for her life. They got word to her father, Peter Cruice in Galway. He immediately made plans

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to come to her. He, his wife and their large family came to her aid, arriving in 1850.

They lived for years in a large house where the Orchard Lake Country Club now stands. It was still there unoccupied in 1923, as I took a snap shot of it.

Mary Cruice Dillon later married a man named Smith, and moved to Quincy, Ill, spending the rest of her life there.

The Dow family were neighbors at Orchard Lake, and a younger sister, Laetitia Cruice married John Dow, who had acquired a land grand from President Van Buren in 1838. They built a stone house on the land, about 122 acres between Cass and Orchard Lake, now know as Dow Ridge.

They had a daughter Elizabeth. While living there, the Curling Club which the Dows organized among the Scots in the area, came to their house for refreshment after the games. My son, Wilfred Dow Smith

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Has the soup tureen used at those times which held (I think oyster stew) He also has the original land grant issued to John Dow 1838.

John Dow died in 1867. His widow later married John McGinnis. Their children were Mary (Mamie) and Josephine (Dolly). Mary was a teacher and was principal of McConnell school in Pontiac for 32 years. Josephine married Ward Lessiter of Pontiac Their daughter Laetitia is Mrs. Wm Dunseith

When Elizabeth Dow, known as Lizzie was a little girl she was invited by the Ward family who lived on the next property, to go to their house to school taught by a private teacher. Later she attended the Sacred Heart Academy in Detroit for a spell.

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the land. They bought a farm near where the airport now stands, which was worked by Peter Smith, but they lived in Pontiac on State Ave., where their other children were born-Celia, Leo and Peter Eugene. She was an active person, had help at home, and her own horse and light buggy to get a round. In her last years, the time that I knew her, she was a victim of rheumatism, and had to use a wheel chair. She died in 1922, aged 59 years. Peter Smith died in 1929.

In her living room, given an honored place was always a painting of her uncle George Dow. That painting now hangs in the home of my son Edmund.

Peter Cruice died in 1881 and his wife in 1866-They, and others of the family are buried in Mt. Hope Cemetery Pontiac. One son died in the Mexican War, another in the civil war.

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There is some family history on the tombstone in Mt. Hope Cemetery although time has almost obliterated it, making it hard to read.

Mrs. Peter Cruice was the daughter of Captain Moore Dillon of Greenville House, Co. Galway, Ireland.

Three sons and two daughters of their large family are buried at Mt. Hope-The following inscription is on the monument. "This memorial is erected in their honor by the fond husband and Father" R.I.P.

Peter Cruice-

The Christian name of Mrs. Cruice does not appear on the monument. There was a story told by some relatives that she did not like her name which was "Bridget" not a popular name among aristocrats at that time. She asked, so the story goes, that should there be any namesakes of her in the future, that the name "Beatrice" be used.

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Mrs. Owen W. Smith

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Family of Elizabeth Dow + Peter J. Smith

John Dow-Smith 1885-1964
Bridg + St. Louis-mem. Christian

Queen William Smith 1887-1962
Superintendent Pontiac Post Office

Cassia Marguerite Smith 1890-1960
Registered Nurse - Harper Hospital
Detroit

Leo Thomas Smith 1892-1944
Pontiac Press

Peter Eugene Smith 1895-1956
Fisher Body, Detroit

Marriages:

John Smith - Viola Ball
Pontiac

Queen - Corine Harman - Detroit

Peter Eugene - Gertrude Ryan
Haskell Mich

Front (west) side of Dow Monument

James Dow
Native of Parish of Ballingway
Fifeshire of Scotland
Died July 31, 1831 (Age 51 years)

Elizabeth Hill (Betsey)
Wife of James Dow
Died March 17, 1846 (Age 61 years)

Left (north) side

George Dow
Born August 28, 1803
Died December 23, 1876

Peter Dow
Native of Parish of Ballingway
Fifeshire of Scotland
Born February 27, 1821
Died October 21, 1887

Catherine A. Thompson (wife)
Born July 8, 1818
Died June 30, 1895

Right (south) side

William Dow
Born 1811
Died January 24, 1862

Elizabeth Dow (Burns) (Eliza)
Born 1802
Died September 8, 1863

John Dow
Father of Elizabeth Dow Smith
Born 1816
Died October 25, 1867

Children of James and Elizabeth Hill Dow

Jane Thomson
Wife of William Dow
Born 1825
Died March 24, 1861

2 lots at Oak Hill, 6 graves each, bought by
George Dow at \$3.00 each. 50¢ a grave.

James Dow made the first pioneer settlement, it is said, on the shore of Orchard Lake in 1830. He, and in later years, other Scotch families from around Paisley and Glasgow obtained land grants from the government and chose that vicinity, as it resembled the area they left in Scotland.

James Dow came with his wife, Betsey, sons George, John, William, Peter and a daughter, wife of Robert Burns, a cousin of Robert Burns, the poet, James Dow had been a tenant farmer on the estate of Sir Walter Scott, living there with his family.

Some months after coming here, he fell ill with fever and ague, and died late in 1831. His son, George, worked the farm for a time, then in 1833 bought the property from his widowed mother. The farm was sold so she could pay the debts of her husband. George was the highest bidder at the sale. He bought his father's land for \$446. George Dow did not marry, nor did he build a house.

John Dow obtained a land grant in 1838 from President Martin VanBuren for 120 acres. It was the middle part of the strip of land between Orchard and Cass Lakes, known as Dow Ridge. About the early 1860's he married Laetitia Cruice, daughter of Peter Cruice of Orchard Lake. He build a very attractive stone house facing Orchard Lake. The Dow brothers built the house themselves from stone on the farm. There was a beautiful formal garden in front of the house. There was a daughter, Elizabeth. As a child she went to school at the David Ward House, on their invitation, as they had a teacher living at their house to teach their own children.

The land owned by the four Dow brothers was the entire isthmus between Orchard and Cass Lakes, extending a mile and a quarter around Orchard Lake.

William Dow bought Apple Island, then later sold it to the Coats family. He moved to California, and raised a family there.

The Dows were Presbyterians, noted in the locality, for their honesty and integrity.

Peter Dow gave an acre of land from his farm to the Campbell family for a church, "The Orchard Lake Community Church".

Peter Dow was the youngest of the brothers. He outlived all of them. He did not work his farm, himself, he hired men for the work, a tenant, etc., as landlords did in Scotland. He owned the western end of the strip. He was chosen several time as Supervisor in the locality, and was elected several times as Senator in the Michigan Legislature.

He was fond of hunting. He met his death when a gun accidentally went off when on a western hunting trip with his nephew, Mr. Burns. There was a daughter, Ellen Dow, who died at about 18 years.

John Dow married Laetitia Cruice about 1860.

John Dow died of pneumonia when his daughter Elizabeth was quite young. His widow married John McGinnis. Elizabeth Dow was heir to her father's property. She married Peter J. Smith of Quincy, Illinois. She lived at the homestead for some years. John and Owen were born there. Eventually, the house was torn down, as it was considered damp and conducive to pneumonia. The land was sold and the Smith family lived at 144 State Avenue for many years.

The John Dow home stood between Orchard and Cass Lakes. The section is now known as "Dow Ridge". Elizabeth Dow Smith was heir to her father's property. She lived there for some years. John and Owen were born there. Eventually the land was sold and the Smith family lived at 144 State Avenue, Pontiac. They either occupied or held that home until 1960.

Owen's father, Peter Smith, spent much of his young manhood in Philadelphia. When a young man he tried to get on a moving train, slipped and fell under a wheel severing his leg below the knee. He wore an artificial leg. For a time he operated a bowling alley at the corner of Saginaw and Huron, Pontiac. John and Owen, when boys, set up pins there.

When Owen was still young, his parents bought a farm of 80 acres on the Airport Road about 5 miles from Pontiac, which his father worked for a good many years, going back and forth everyday. The family always lived at 144 State Ave., Pontiac. The boys helped him on the farm at vacation time. He sold the farm in 1923. It was later subdivided.

Owen's mother was an active, lively, efficient person until her later years. She had rheumatism which kept worsening with time. She used a wheel chair the final years of her life. She died in 1922 at the age of 59 years.