

March 12, 1983

Charter Township of West Bloomfield
4460 Orchard Lake Road
West Bloomfield, Michigan 48033

Dear Betty Sue,

Sorry to be a little late in replying but I was on my way to Colorado for a skiing trip when your letter arrived. However a daughter, Diane, who lives in Chicago met me at the airport with some of the information about the Strong family. I'll give the information to you in more or less of a chronological form. Dates unfortunately are not exact.

The Strong family in West Bloomfield had its beginning prior to 1870 with the arrival of Frances Charlotte German of Liverpool, England and James Strong of Cardiff, Wales. They probably met and married in the United States.

James originally was a fruit farmer and later ran a livery stable on Seminary Road near the old Military Academy & the present location of S.S. Ct. Cyril and Methodius Seminary). Most of his business was taking the families of cadets back and forth to the train at Pontiac. Dress parades and drills also attracted sightseers from Pontiac and no doubt contributed to business. Frances ran a small confectionary store with the cadets buying her homemade pies, cookies and other sweets. She may also have been postmistress for a time.

Frances was related to the German Sweet Chocolate Germans who were well known years ago for the quality of the chocolate they produced. She had at least one sister in the United States, Mary German Findley. The Findley farm was located at the corner of Huron and Telegraph and was sold for the present Tel-Huron Shopping Center. Her daughter is or was, Maude Findley Turnbull. (cc)

~~The~~ Frances and James had six children, the eldest of whom died young. ~~The surviving children~~ were Augusta, Florence, Alice, Archie, Lloyd, and Helen. They lived in a white frame house next to the old postoffice on Seminary road. Dee J. Wilson was the postmaster there and in later years his clerk was Mary Lee Hawkes who became the postmistress probably about the time the new postoffice was built on Commerce Road. An interesting family anecdote is that in the early years of the family's residence on Seminary Road the Ottawas, who still trekked to Apple Island, would stop at the Strong door for food.

Both of the Strong sons, Archie and Lloyd, remained in the Township. Archie married Jeannie Dickie and they had a daughter, Alma. He was a motorman on the Interurban run between Pontiac and Farmington.

James and Frances moved to Keego Harbor and started a boat livery on Dollar Lake. When James died (he is buried at Pine Lake Cemetery) Frances sold the boat livery to Lloyd. By this time he was married to Edith Raether of Albion. At the time he was working in the Beaudette factory building wooden bodies for automobiles. The boat livery business was expanded with the construction of Strong's Pavilion which became a popular summer dancing pavilion up until the legalizing of beer (in 1932 I believe) With beer gardens of the time providing free dancing for their patrons the popularity of the summer pavilions faded. (more)

Roller skating, the Walkathons, and roller skating again kept the pavilion going during Lloyd and Edith's lifetime. He died in 1962 (I believe) his wife preceeding him by several years. They had a son, Rowland, who was West Bloomfield Township clerkup until the time of his death and a daughter, Irene who died in 1970. The entire family is interred in Perry Mount Park and if you want dates just call the cemetery.

Edith Strong was one of the founders of the Community Church at Keego Harbor and worked for the establishment of the Keego Harbor Standard School in 1914. This was the first school in Keego Harbor.

On Thursday, July 21, ¹⁹⁶⁰ the Inter-Lake News published its 25th anniversary edition. There are many authenticated articles about West Bloomfield in this edition. Of particular interest is an article on page 9 forecasting growth ^{and} relating early history. Population of the township, according to growth figures predicted at that time would be 18,000 by 1980 and 43,000 by the year 2000. John Huff was the first resident to clear land in the township-along the southeast shore of Pine Lake in 1821. However he does not get the credit for being the first settler as he failed to register his claim. This distinction is Benjmin Irish' who became first legal landowner in 1823 with property on the west side of Walnut Lake.

Perhaps you have a copy of this edition in the Township files. As I only have a couple of copies left I wouldn't let them out of my possession but of course you could look at them.

Thank you for the invitation to attend I'm sorry that I have made other plans. Good luck with your undertaking.


Kenneth Treacy

First issue of the paper was July 19, 1935. Co-publishers were Irene Strong and Kenneth Treacy. The paper was called The Harbor-Lake News. The name was subsequently changed to Inter-Lake News and the co-publishers exchanged marriage vows in December of 1937.

West Bloomfield, Keego Harbor, Sylvan Lake, Walled Lake, Union Lake and Commerce were all within the circulation area of the newspaper. The plant was located in Keego Harbor and employed as many as 70 full and part time people.

After 37 years in the weekly newspaper field Kenneth Treacy retired

A second newspaper The Lakeland Tribune, was acquired in 1957. His

In 1957 his firm was purchased by the Detroit News and two years later

Other publications associated at the Keego Harbor based firm at that time