

## THE INTERESTING HISTORY OF LAKEWOOD SHORES PRIOR TO 1967!

Lakewood Shores is located on property originally owned by Carl E. Schmidt, whose family invented the processing of white leather. His income was approximately \$2,000,000. a year in royalties, and he spent it all each year. His home, which was a 13-bath, 13-bedroom mansion, stood on the east shore of Cedar Lake near the Causeway. It was torn down in August of 1967 to make way for the Beach Club and Racquet Club Complex. When he lived there the point was called Wall Hallow. The causeway was totally rebuilt. Previously, it was a road made by Mr. Schmidt and came from the west side of the lake to where his home was. During that period, old U.S. -23 went up the West side of Cedar Lake. Ownership of this portion of that road is now Cedar Lake Road.

The big farmhouse on the west side of the road, near the west end of the causeway, is where his caretaker lived. Schmidt had a guard on duty at the gate and the only way to gain entrance to his property was to come across the causeway.

He owned all the land back to the waters of Lake Huron and for eight and one-half miles north and south! He built the golf course at Greenbush (a town north of Lakewood Shores on U.S. 23) , for the pleasure of himself and his guests. He also built an 80-room hotel primarily for the use of his guests. He owned a fleet of ice boats, and touring cars, as well as herds of wild buffalo and a menagerie of other wild animals you would not believe.

An unusual incident happened during World War I: There was a fire in Schmidt's house and the local fire department, while trying to extinguish the flames in the attic, noticed an excessive amount of radio equipment. A little bit of investigation showed that one of the silos at the barn was not a silo at all, but rather in fact, was an observation tower. From this tower Schmidt would observe the French flying troops that were being trained at Skeel Field (now Wurtsmith Air Force Base). He would then short wave the information back to Germany. He was found to be a spy and a German sympathizer.....but his background was so strong among State Government Officials, and because he was such a financial giant in the State, he was not imprisoned as a "normal" prisoner of war...he was confined on his own peninsula where the Clubhouse now stands! The Government left a retinue of U.S. Army Guards at the West end of the Causeway to make sure that Schmidt could not leave. He was also well protected by the wild lands to the North and South and Lake Huron to the East. When the war was over, he was returned to civilian life. As an average citizen, he evidently felt his pangs of remorse and wanted to redeem himself with society. Consequently, he set out on a project to prove to the world that he could take sandy, arid soil and make it extremely productive. By using his money, his land, and with consultation from Michigan State University, he built an irrigation system that irrigated every square inch of the farm area where the golf course now stands. He converted that sandy soil to a rich loam that grew the tallest corn, the biggest potatoes, and produced the most bushels of wheat per acre. This farm proved to be so successful that the project was chosen to be the pilot model for all the reclamation of the deserts out in the far west. (It used to be desert but is now productive farmland). His farm was totally automated and one of our residents can personally remember as a child seeing the farm operated by remote control. As Schmidt sat on the front porch of the old farmhouse, he pushed a button that caused the plows to cable up the field, ratchet over one notch and cable back to the other end of the field. All of Schmidt's fields were worked mechanically by his ingenious system of remote control.

Upon his death, the estate was broken up. The farm was bought by the Heinz potato chip people and they farmed it until the early sixties. The North barn (where Lakewood Resort Developers, Inc. were located) was their potato storage area. With such a large area they had a steady flow of potatoes for their factory in Detroit on a year - around basis. The Heinz people continued their operation until 1962 when they sold the farm to Mr. Jim Howell. Mr. Howell used the property as a dairy farm until 1968 when he sold it to the original developer, Carl A. Brownell, Jr.

*Carl A. Brownell, Jr.*