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What Happened to the Charles Howell Scout Reservation?

Before the Charles Howell Scout Reservation, and now Pine Creek Ridge was a farm owned by the Herbst family. In 1926 the Herbst Family owned nearly all of Section 36 in Genoa Township. The 1895 Platt map does not have Brighton Lake, but Lime Lake is very present.

In 1926, 280 acres of the Herbst property was purchased by Charles Howell for \$28,000 dollars. Mr. Howell was a land developer and investor, who after building a dam on Ore Creek created a new lake which he called Brighton Lake, with the plan of selling lots for cottages. Sadly, the depression hit and his plan faded.

In 1937 Mr. Howell's property (about 320 acres by then) was deeded to the Detroit Area Scout Council of the Boy Scouts of America for \$1.00, with the idea that it would always be used as a recreation area. The scouts acquired, in small parcels, another 320 plus acres which brought the total to nearly 640 acres. In the early years of the scout's ownership, they and the Civil Conservation Corp planted 150,000 pine trees on the property.

The Stroh family, owners of Stroh Brewing Company, purchased the property from the Detroit Boy Scout Council. In the early 1980's the Council felt that the cost of repairing the dam along with a declining number of campers, that selling this property and putting the money into a trust to support their other camp made the most sense.

The Stroh family along with Burton-Katzman, a Detroit -based real estate development company, began looking into what to do with the property. Ken Cheyne a consultant to and partner with Abby Homes of Michigan, also the Grandson of Janet Howell of the Charles Howell family, started the development of Pine Creek.

One of Ken Cheyne's dreams was to preserve and save the large log cabin/lodge that served the scouts for years. After a great deal of investigation, it was determined that the conditions of the cabin/lodge were too poor to be saved. It was then decided that a new Log Lodge/Club House/Sales office would be built. It offers a beautiful view across Brighton Lake and retains much of the good feelings many youngsters and others associated with the Charles Howell Scout Reservation remember.

Pine Creek Ridge is a three-community development. Lake Villas at Pine Creek is a community of approximately 100 attached and detached condominiums. Pine Creek Bluffs is a community of 90 site condominiums. The remainder of Pine Creek Ridge is a community of 254 single family homes.

The story of Brighton Lake can be found in the January 2020 issue of Trail Tales located on the Society's website:

BrightonAreaHistorical.com

(Thanks to Jerry Damon for researching this story.)

