

to the city to sell their crops at the market behind city hall, where it carries on today. Her mother used to shop there and, at the age of 16, when she got her driver's licence, it fell on her to drive her mother back and forth as she went shopping at the farmers' market.

"I remember those days the farmers did not have separate booths. They drove in great, big drays and had all their stuff in the back of it. Their horses were all around there and, when I drove in with my mother, it was quite a feat of driving to get in and out of there," she chuckled.

The ground floor of the city hall, which served as part of the market at the time, would come alive, she recalled, with the sounds of squawking chickens and snorting pigs in the background adding to the din of the hustle and bustle of the indoor market.

"The farmers brought in pigs, sheep and all kinds of things — kittens as well, if one wished to get rid of them. It was a fascinating world especially for children who often went there without their parents and misbehaved. It was a free-for-all when the farmers were in town," laughed McMurray.

The downtown storeowners too enjoyed increased sales when the farmers came to town.

"That's when they shopped downtown for the whole week. So you had to count

on having help for that day. My dad always made sure of it."

Aside from occasionally helping out at the store, McMurray was never considered to run the family business.

"My dad would never hear of it. I'm a female and my only brother, who probably would have inherited the operation, went into the air force and stayed there," she said.

With her German language course at BCI, she was able to handle all her father's business correspondences with that country as he began to import sporting goods such as tennis rackets at a later date.

Her father died in 1952 and for five years, his longtime employee Alex Glashon owned and operated the business until in Feb. 1, 1957, it came back into the family. McMurray's youngest sister, Carole and her brother-in-law Gerry Bongard, bought the store. The Bongards have been operating the business since then.

The store, located today at 288 Front Street, former home of Changing Times bookstore, had undergone five moves since its original site at 333 Front Street in 1918. Today, Stephen Licence Bicycles and Hobbies is one of the longest running business operations in downtown Belleville.

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Intell, Jan. 8 /05 Pg D2