

How Indians forged way through Farmington

By LOUISE OKRATSKY

Until the first part of the 18th century, the Chippewa, Ottawa and Potawatomi Indians used three major trails on their way north which crossed through the Farmington area.

The Shawassee, Orchard Lake and Grand River trails have been outlined on a map for the Farmington Historical society by Paul Schreiber.

Schreiber used the map issued by the surveyor general of the United States in 1818 and an archaeological atlas of Michigan to trace the routes.

The trails were marked by trees bent into unusual shapes by the Indians. Sometimes the branches were bent outward to point in a certain direction.

THE SHAWASSEE TRAIL originated in Wayne County as a branch of a trail from the Detroit River. The Indians followed the existing Shawassee Street into Farmington and past the Baptist Church, says Schreiber.

The trail crossed through the middle of what is now Oakhill Cemetery and continued through the White Motor Co. property into the interior of the state.

Starting at Eight Mile Road, between Inkster and Middlebelt, the Grand River trail passed through Farmington near the old Cadillac winery building and continued along Freedom Road to Gill Road. It detoured to

the northwest at Gill Road to avoid a slough.

Most Indian trails avoided high and low points in the land and kept to level ground. A stream would be crossed at its shallowest point.

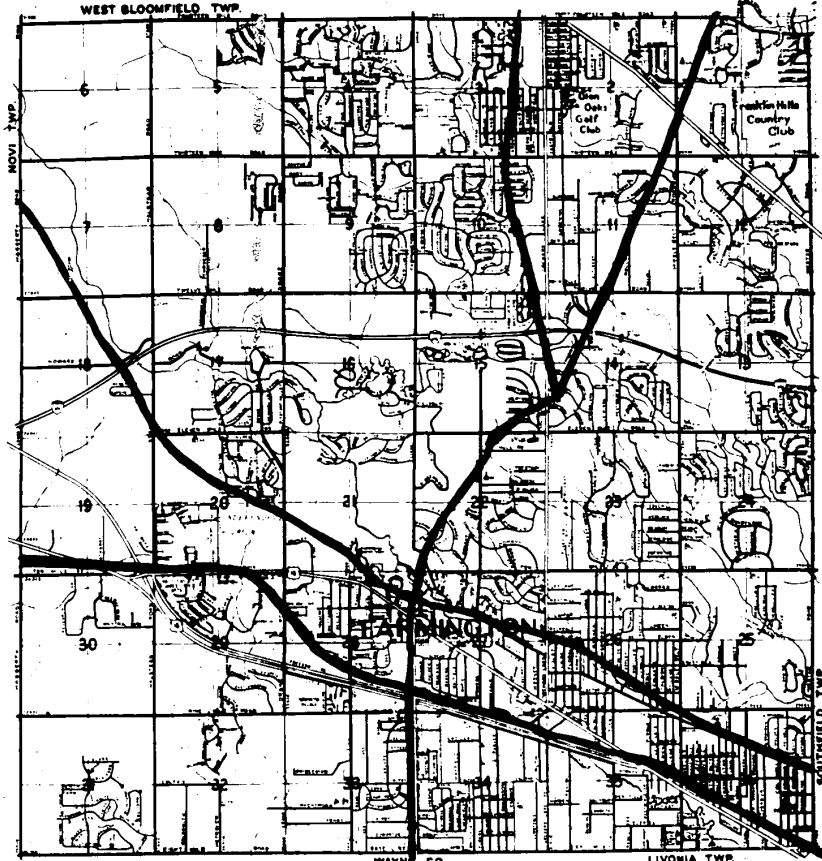
The Grand River trail passed west of the Oakhill Cemetery where it almost touched the Shawassee trail. It followed the route of Old Grand River Avenue to Lansing and then branched into a path to Lake Michigan.

THE ORCHARD LAKE TRAIL joined other trails at the east end of Orchard Lake, on the present site of the Orchard Ridge Campus.

It broke from a trail along the Detroit River and followed the course of Farmington Road until it reached the Baptist Church. There, it crossed the Shawassee trail and continued up Power Road for about a mile before angling northeast toward Orchard Lake.

The trails were well used and easy to follow in 1818 when a government surveyor mapped the area. The surveyors office was instructed to note all Indian trails on their maps. Although the instructions were sometimes ignored in the field, the Shawassee trail was recorded.

The Indians in Michigan didn't have permanent villages like the tribes in southwestern United States and moved between different hunting grounds and trading areas.



Indians from three separate tribes found the Farmington area a convenient place through which to forge their way north. The southern-most trail, running from east to west is the Grand River trail. The trail which parallels it, and then veers north, is the Shawassee trail. The trail running north and forking off north of 11 Mile is the Orchard Lake trail.

Youth pitch in to aid friends

A surge of youthful enthusiasm is already creating some new and very good vibes in the Farmington Youth Assistance (FYA) office.

Caseworker John Pinkerman who presides over the office located on the lower floor of the Farmington City Hall, says, "The Youth Involvement Committee, organized as an ad hoc committee last December, is the only group utilizing youth exclusively."

The Farmington organization, part of a countywide effort to aid young people who have either had a brush with the law or are moving in that direction, is sponsored by the two city governments, the school district and the juvenile division of the Oakland County Probate Court. Its guidelines are set by the county.

Church in Detroit to pass on to needy young people.

She explains that so many clothes given to teenagers aren't suitable because the kids feel ostracized in them. "We're getting clothes that we ourselves would not be ashamed to wear."

She adds, "Our committee is just getting started. I just wanted to do something to help and we're really getting it together very well. Our interest is there. I know it will be."

Meanwhile, another group of Youth Involvement Committee members are working with student Debbie Knighton. This sub-committee, just now being formed, plans to recruit volunteers from the community to act as friends on a one to one basis with youngsters who have come to Pinkerman's attention.

THE LOCAL YOUTH ASSISTANCE committee is made up of interested adults from a variety of disciplines. Traditionally they try and ease some of the burdens in a young person's life which may contribute to delinquent behavior.

This could be anything from getting dental work or medical care to professional family or individual counseling, Pinkerman's responsibility.

The adult committee looks at the problems of troubled youth with the idea of drawing upon community resources for help.

One of the strongest, close-to-home resources may be the young people themselves who are the core of the new ad hoc committee.

At the very least they will bring to the adults an increased level of understanding. From the sound of the plans, it will be considerably more.

High School student Linda Goodman is an enthusiastic member of the Youth Involvement Committee. She is organizing a canister drive to benefit Rapline.

"We plan to have our people with canisters at the stores and shopping centers about the first of February."

She is confident of success, saying she was involved in a very successful canister drive for arthritis a year or so ago.

Betty Arnold, director of the Farmington Area Advisory Council (FAAC), which maintains the crisis intervention telephone service, Rapline, says the money from the canister drive would be used for the Rapline training program.

"Over the past five years our training program has been consistently re-fund and we are continuing to do this through the use of films and audio-visual aids. We have access to a good library of films through the county office. We don't have a projector, however. Before moving, we were able to use the school projector and while this is still possible, it's harder for us to go over and borrow now."

MS. ARNOLD CONCLUDES that any funds raised for Rapline would be put into the training program, probably to buy a projector and several excellent films that are not available through the county.

Rapline is open seven days a week. Those who answer the 1-800 yearly calls are area volunteers from 16 years through middle age.

They are trained to deal with all kinds of problems—from the young person who simply wants to talk to those seeking places where they can go for help.

Linda's committee is also collecting clothes for the Seventh Day Adventist

Band E suspect is bound over

Richard Oberndorf, charged with breaking and entering Harrison High School with the intent to commit larceny, was bound over to Oakland County Circuit Court after a preliminary examination Jan. 9 before District Court Judge Michael Hand.

Oberndorf, 17, of 22023 W. Brandon St., and co-defendant Paul Payne, 17, of 21515 W. Brandon St., both of Farmington, are charged with the Dec. 30 break-in at the high school in which \$6,000 in damage was caused and candy, records and tote bags were stolen from the school's bookstore.

Oberndorf was released on his own recognizance and his trial is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 23, in Circuit Court. Payne's case was placed under one-year advisement by Judge Hand.

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