

Dubbing the region with names

Road, town titles came from settlers

By Robert Woodring
special writer

Just as present-day developers use fancy names to lure buyers to their glades, swamps or gravel pits, speculators were no different when the Detroit area was developed during the 1800s.

When the Michigan Territory was opened to settlers with the auctioning of land under President James Monroe (1817-1825), few purchasers actually placed deposits on prospective land. A signature was enough.

Simultaneously, paper cities were created as creeks became streams, streams became rivers and rivers became steamboat thoroughfares.

With our war with the British in 1812 settled and the Erie Canal opened by 1825, pioneers ventured into the new land at a cruising speed of 1-1/4 miles per hour on the waterway. This bold engineering feat by the state of New York encouraged curious and adventurous families into the new territory which reached all the way to the banks of the Missouri River.

IN ORDER FOR Erastus Ingersoll to build his log home in this wilderness he had to cross a seemingly endless ocean of bog and swamp to arrive in what is now called Novi.

How this settlement came to be known as Novi remains in controversy in the 1980s.

Some sources say that "novi" in Latin means new. An 1830 Ann Arbor scholar insisted that it meant unknown or forgotten.

The "Oakland County Book of History" states that names with six or more letters were discarded as being difficult to write, such as Farmington or Birmingham.

When surveyors plotted the out-lands of Detroit, this area had been designated as "VI" in the second tier of planned townships. Early residents supposedly placed the abbreviation "no" before that designation, mixing this country's English with early Roman numerals.

Another school believes that the intersection of Grand River and Novi Road was tollgate No. VI for the Plank Road which passed at that intersection. If that were the case, where are No. III, No. V and No. X in other communities?

Besides, the Plank Road came later in history.

While books don't agree or can't peg the origin, Novi existed as a detached community from Farmington while 300 Indians lurked toward the north, encamped beside a walled lake.

Novi could have come from a survey's map. It could have derived from a Latin word. It might have been both.

WILLIAM STARKEWEATHER is credited with being the first settler, in 1825, in what later became Plymouth Corners.

Years later, "corners" was dropped and the community of Plymouth developed. Certain scholars insist that these early pioneers were direct descen-



dents of the Mayflower Pilgrims. Whether that's true or not would require searching numerous family trees.

Regardless, it makes for good PR.

Plymouth could have been called Tonquish if Indian history had been honored. Unfortunately, an area was not considered settled until the white man arrived.

It was an Indian trail which early travelers used to arrive at Plymouth, Livonia, Northville and northern Canton. That meandering path followed the banks of the Rouge River and is called Ann Arbor Trail. It's the same trail which Chief Tonquish and his band traveled. The chief was killed and buried in the area of Newburgh and Ann Arbor Trail.

The only thing Tonquish is remembered for as he rolls in his grave is that a creek — better referred to as a storm sewer — is his namesake.

COMMUNITIES might be named for founders, ancestors, map designations or war heroes. Such is not the case with Northville.

This community was named because it simply lay north of Plymouth. Settlers also began arriving there around 1825, and when the area was separated from Plymouth Township, it was designated Northville.

Communities such as Rochester, Birmingham and Farmington were named for sister cities in New York, whence settlers came.

Livonia was such a town.

The name is said to have originated from the ancient name for Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, a region in Russia. Its primary settlement was at Newburg corners, but Quaker farmers filtered down from Farmington sharing the northern farm-lands and Livonia's identity.

Farmington was first settled by Arthur Power in 1824. Power, a Quaker, enticed others of his faith to settle, causing the community to be called Quaker-town until 1825.

A street remains the only major tribute to Power (and this newspaper). That thoroughfare, though, is frequently called Powers Road.

People can't resist placing a plural upon his name.

A free-lance writer and photographer in Canton Township, Woodring is a former Observer & Eccentric staff member. Among his sources: "Michigan Places and Names" by Walter Romig; "History of Detroit, Wayne County and Early Michigan" by Silas Farmer; and "Oakland County Book of History" edited by Arthur Hagman.

Daniels' den

by Emory Daniels

Getting jobs: A historical perspective

Years ago, there were jobs available for persons who wanted to work.

And then came the Great Depression and for the first time in our nation's history, there were massive numbers of people who wanted to work but could not find jobs.

That situation was so unusual the federal government responded with large public works programs (WPA and CCC) to rebuild America using the unemployed.

Then World War II started. Our economy recovered, and the unemployed were either drafted or hired by private industry to build bombers, tanks, etc.

The war ended, the quiet prosperity of the Eisenhower years followed, and employment roughly remained at what economists considered normal levels.

But the idea of using the unemployed for public works became well-ingrained in the public's mind and remains so up to today.

DURING THE '60s when the economy slowed, an attempt of sorts to place the unemployed on government payrolls was made with the Peace Corps, VISTA, Job Corps, etc.

In the '70s, the federal government seemed to recognize that our economy was cyclical, and every few years significant numbers of Americans would be without jobs.

And so in 1974, Congress passed the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), which reinstated the idea of taking the unemployed and involving them with public works by placing them on the public payrolls.

A difference was that CETA attempted, in its language at least, to provide some kind of training so that when participants left CETA jobs, they would be able to obtain employment elsewhere.

During the administrations of Nixon, Ford and Carter, CETA jobs increased in number year after year, partially because the unemployment rolls were increasing year after year.

In Michigan, a lot of public improvements were done with CETA workers — campgrounds were built, beaches improved, parks cleaned and refurbished, nature, bicycle and jogging trails built, etc.

In many ways, CETA was almost a carbon copy of the old CCC and WPA. The difference, though, was that the economy of the '70s was very different from the economy of the Great Depression.

While massive numbers were unemployed by this time, our workers had become adjusted to the cycle of layoffs and call-backs. They were not "in shock" as workers were in the 1930s.

THE DIFFERENCE is that after the Great Depression the federal government and industry entered into an informal partnership to provide unemployment compensation.

There was a realization that many workers would become unemployed through no fault of their own, and the security of the employee and his/her family would be jeopardized.

There also was a recognition, although maybe not spoken aloud, that unemployment would rise and fall and that the days of steady employment were in the past.

The idea of being jobless became almost acceptable for workers because industry and government were giving them money while they were out of work.

Industry shared the expense because it knew full well the day would come when workers would be laid off. In fact, establishment of unemployment almost guaranteed that layoffs would occur. In my opinion, the "solution" anticipated and predicted the occurrence of the problem.

But most recognized that workers were being unemployed through no fault of their own and, therefore, government and private industry would try to respond to meet perceived obligations.

SO NOW the feds are backing off on the CETA program, and local governments are bailing out to avoid financial deficits in local budgets.

So the 1980s begin with government purposely getting out of the public works business. While there has been no clear national statement of what the unemployed will do, we have decided to eliminate public works and remove jobless persons from government payrolls. Some may believe that large numbers of workers are jobless because they don't want to work. But that position is hard to sustain when you look at the thousands of employees made jobless by deliberate action of private industry.

And the fact that unemployment compensation is a larger payment than the minimum wage is the result of public policy set by the federal government under its partnership with industry.

We may not know as a nation what we are going to do with our jobless citizens. But we should recognize that the vast majority are unemployed because industry does not have jobs for all who want to work.

Once we recognize that the captains of industry create unemployment (and the Fortune 500), we should be less willing to place "blame" on the unemployed.

And if we cannot "blame" the jobless for their plight, then we should not try to "punish" the unemployed because they happen to be out of work.

AS UNEMPLOYMENT rises, the number of consumers shrink, and the ability of industry to "retrench" lessens.

In the past, government intervention stopped this downward cycle. Now that we aren't intervening in domestic affairs any more, the choices of all parts of the economy considerably narrow.

Our national policy, I believe, is that we will rely on private industry (which now is in the business of eliminating jobs) to bring about economic recovery.

I'm afraid our unemployed don't have much reason for optimism yet. We ought to be patient with them because they have to live with the confusion we create.

I wonder if they feel comforted by the knowledge that they remain unemployed in challenging times.

'From one beer lover to another'

TV commercials are pains in the ears

Nervous is writing a column when you're not fired up by a burning desire.

That reminds me of a TV commercial for a deodorant. To me, commercials are pains in the eyes and ears of nationwide boob tube audiences — a time for one beer lover to another to haul out a six pack.

How about a column on boycotting commercials? I may be a Brenda Starr in the office. But in the kitchen I'm a Handi-wipe wiper. When I come home from a hard day pounding my video display terminal and stretching my coffee break with Juicy Fruit gum, I often discover my floor has yellowed. Nobody let the dog out.

That's why I use Mop 'N Glow. It's better than buying Pampers for Eli the Collie or giving him a shot of Extra Dry. It's the taste he hates twice a day.

The minute I get home, I slip into my E.J. Korvette designer jeans and stick the popcorn casserole in the microwave oven. I unplug the drain with Liquid Plumber and make Maxwell House coffee.

I KNOW what I like, and if I want to drink true percolated coffee with the rich, hearty flavor of instant — well that's what I like and that's how it tastes. What I fill to the rim is grim, but I hope it decaffeinate me.

I joined the Pepsi generation and forgot to pay my dues. That's why I enjoy the flavor of an uncola



Jackie Klein

slug of red pop with Boone's Farm strawberry wine, old fashioned Kool-aid, Country Time lemonade, Hawaiian Punch and Tang in a germ-free Dixie Cup.

There's a new me coming every day with homogenized milk. But I'll probably never live to see it. Burger Biggie, Giant Crab, Taco City — I've tried them all.

When I deserve a break today, I go to McDonald's, handle a Whopper with two hands or lick a stick of Colonel Saundser's crunchy chicken. Red Lobster caters to the seafood lover in me.

BUT WHEN all else fails, I resort to cooking. I'm famous for my Jell-O molds that melt in your hands, not in your mouth. And I have been known to burn corn flakes.

For my dishpan hands, I soak in Ivory Snow, mild enough for a baby's skin and 99 and 44/100 percent pure. I suppose it's that missing 55 hundredths of a percent that gives me those ugly brown spots. But what's a woman to do?

It's not nice to fool Mother Nature, so I use the rich, creamy expensive brand — butter, Parkay, Parkay, butter. I never squeeze the Charmin, and I've learned what to do about ring around the collar, static cling and itchy scalp.

I'm a walking testimonial to better living through chemistry. There's protein in my mascara, so how come I flunk the smudge test? There's acrasil in my shampoo. My bubble bath is biodegradable, my toothpaste contains Fluoristan, and my hair spray is full of hydrated lacquer.

I wouldn't dream of using deodorant without aluminum chlorohydrate complex with hexachlorophene or dandruff remover without ethyl dimethyl benzyl.

I may not be gorgeous, but I can always donate my body to science. That is, if they promise to shake well, keep my parts out of the reach of children, look at me, love me and take their time paying for me.

I get my kicks guzzling Scope first thing in the morning, especially when the window washer is spraying with Windex. Minty fresh breath helps keep us face-to-face. I also use toothpaste with pucker power for those all important closeups.

I'm an escapee from a smoking clinic because coughing is the only exercise I get. That's why Vic Tanny gave me a one-year body building course for the price of two.

As you can plainly see, I hate commercials.