

Crawford's Corners Was Southfield's Hub in 1830s

THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC August 8, 1957

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the third article on the First Presbyterian church and cemetery east of Lahser and north of 10 Mile road. But in this series we will also deal with the people and conditions of the times when the early Southfield pioneers came to Michigan.)

By WILLIAM H. THOMAS

In 1820, three years after the first settler came to Oakland county, the county's population was 330. These earliest settlers came to Southfield via covered wagon until the Erie Canal was opened between Albany and Buffalo in 1825. This opened the floodgates and by 1830 Oakland's population was 4,910.

In that year 40 families settled within a four-mile area of Southfield. The first town meeting was held in the home of Benjamin Fuller who had settled on the northeast quarter of Section 20 (This is south of 11 Mile and west of Berg road.)

SO WHAT appeared to be the beginnings of a village took form, and to encourage it, Thomas donated land for a cemetery and girls' seminary in 1837, but the seminary never materialized and instead the First Congregational Church built a log building.

Until then, the church members, who had organized at the home of Asa Fuller in 1831, had met in homes and in the log school which stood across from the present cemetery north of the Lahser 10 Mile corner. They had even met in the

was soon apparent to most that Crawford's Corners was doomed.

TROWBRIDGE foresaw this and sold his building to the first doctor in the southern part of Crawford, Dr. John Jeffrey, and moved to what was then called Main street (10 1/2 Mile road) where he opened a tavern on the south side of the road.

So Crawford's Corners withered and died. Southfield Centre in later years.

ROADS WERE essential to settlement and yet they were almost non-existent in the early 1800s.

The first road was an Indian trail from Detroit to Saginaw, which would later become Woodward avenue. Mrs. Beale A. Miller remembers Old Line's tolling of a toll gate at Woodward and 13 1/2 Mile road (Beverly road, or Hunt's road as it was then called).

A corduroy (log and mud) road was started from Detroit to Pontiac in 1818 and by 1834 had reached six miles beyond Flint.

They were also three toll gates on the Old Plank road between Detroit and Farmington. The first road was named Grand River avenue.

LAHSER, according to Mrs. Miller, was a good road except from Nine Mile south. "Nine Mile was a terrible," said Mrs. Miller. "The sand was terrible."

In 1830 a Territorial road (now Franklin road south of Northwestern highway) was constructed which ran along the present

Franklin road to Main street (10 1/2 Mile) where it crossed the Rouge. Down main street a short ways it turned south on Berg road which it followed until it joined below the baseline (Eight Mile) with the Detroit-Farmington road.

"Roads were all dirt and farmers did their own road work and it was deducted from their taxes," said Mrs. Miller. They had no names for most of these roads in that time.

IN WINTER and spring surface water left roads in a semi-liquid condition, according to Mrs. R. M. Larges, whose great-grandfather, George White, came to Michigan from Connecticut.

Other descendants of these early pioneers still live in the area. Mary E. Thompson and Charles Parks are great-grandchildren of David Stewart.

Miss Thompson lives in the home of Evergreen of Mathew Erwin St. It was in this home that the United Presbyterian church was organized April 16, 1850.

THE ERWIN menfolk were so tall, according to Miss Thompson, that they had pegs on which to hang clothing, that were placed

eight feet above the floor. A six-footer can barely reach these pegs that still are intact at the Thompson home.

Mrs. Bessie A. Miller, whose grandfather, Daniel Russell was a youngster of 10 when he came to Michigan by covered wagon, stated that five generations of Russell descendants have attended school at the Brooks' school, 11 Mile and Lahser road.

"IT SEEMS that years ago we were all related in some way," said Mrs. Miller. "Now there isn't a Stephens or a Russell left and only two Michael girls and they moved away years ago."

And now that those pioneers and most of their descendants and a good deal of the pioneer buildings are gone, it seems that Southfield is at last on the threshold of a city that would have made John

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East S'field Area Folks Vacationing

EAST SOUTHFIELD—Several families from the East Southfield area spent two weeks together camping on Minnawanna lake at Metamora recreation area.

Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Henderson of Marshall and children were joined by Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Snow of Everett and Mrs. Joseph Eggermont of W. Twelve Mile road and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Hunt of Brentwood and their families.

In all, 32 enjoyed the stay. This will be an annual affair for the families, all of them deeming it a very successful adventure.

OTHER SOUTHFIELD Woods residents on vacation are Mr. and Mrs. William Bryson of Everett and children Carol and Donnie. They are spending three weeks on Minnawanna lake in the upper peninsula.

Mr. and Mrs. Roy Kent, along with Susan and Pat, of Fairfax, Fla., have a favorite spot for vacation in Cedarville, and recently spent two weeks there.

Leaving soon for Philadelphia are Mr. and Mrs. Roy Baldwin and daughter Karen of Fairfax. They will visit with Mrs. Baldwin's sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Lynn Feathers.

LEAVING this week to attend the Shriners' convention in Miami, Fla., are Mr. and Mrs. Fred Crona of Everett.

Dewey Courts of Everett will take her children to Kalkaska for a visit with friends and relatives there.

Also from Everett, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Eslick and four children spent their vacation in Florida. Mary Bush, daughter of the Robert Bushes of Webster, was a traveling guest of the Eslicks.

FLORIDA was also the destination of the Robert Cadwells of Marshall for three weeks.

From Bonnie Acres, the Theodore Welles and daughter Suzanne and Margaret spent a few days in Columbus, O., and St. Louis, Mo.

Mrs. Welch to Head Eye Test Program.

EAST SOUTHFIELD Mrs. Theodore Welch, 26517 Aberdeen, will again take over the eye testing program in Southfield and other Oakland county schools for elementary and ninth and 11th grades.

She will be the fifth year for Mrs. Welch. She will work with Mrs. Edith Blake of the special education program this fall.

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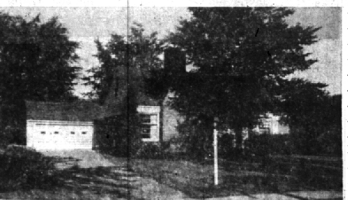
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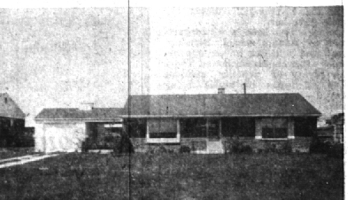
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DERBY ROAD

Owner transferred to California. Has authorized us to sell this little charmer at a sacrifice price. Of brick construction, it's near Pembroke and Derby Schools. There's water, sewer and paving; a good functional plan makes for easy housekeeping and low maintenance cost. Fine Derby Road location. Nothing better at the price. \$17,750.



MARQUIS LANE

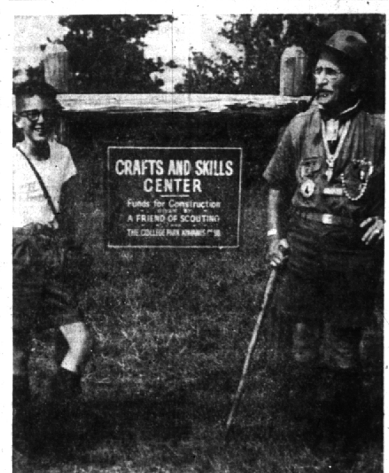
Here's a modern Cape Cod that you can buy below reproduction cost. There's marvelous accommodations with 4 large bedrooms, spacious living and dining rooms with sparkling, modern birch-finished kitchen complete with built-in oven, stove, etc. Fine construction is evident in the Glidemaster windows, copper plumbing, Roman Brick exterior and the hot water baseboard radiant heating. There's a big screened porch with barbecue and lots of features not usually included at the price. 180 ft. site near Wing Lake on Marquis Lane. Priced by owner-builder at \$39,750.

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Oldest Boy Scout

With Wing Lake Scout Bill Springer, (left), son of Mr. and Mrs. William, 6065 Franklin, was among the scouts at Camp Howell who met the Nation's oldest boy scout, "Uncle Otto C. Hornung.

Wing Lake Scout Meets 'Uncle Otto'

Whatever it was that "Uncle" Otto C. Hornung said to Bill Springer, by the expression on Bill's face, it must have been funny. But it wasn't a joke few moments before his picture was taken.

It seems that "Uncle Otto," now 81 years young, safeguards his scouting awards with a reverence, and if a boy touches his Eagle Scout medal, this provokes him and the boy who commits this sin is usually in for some verbal spanking.

Often he's lucky, indeed, if "Uncle Otto's" walking stick does not land on some part of his anatomy.

OLDER scout campers know this through their own experiences. On this occasion one of them dared Springer to pull on "Uncle Otto's" Eagle Scout medal. However, everything ended well, and after some tall scouting stories, Bill decided that "Uncle Otto" is a pretty good guy.

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