

## THE BRIGHTON AREA AND THE SESQUICENTENNIAL OF MICHIGAN (Cont.)

Formed in 1836, Livingston County was typical of incorporated areas. The settlers' political heritage was brought from New York and New England, organizing as townships with the various Clerks, Supervisors, Treasurers, etc.

During the time of Governor of Michigan Territory Lewis Cass' administration, Michigan changed from a land of Indians and fur traders. The southern tiers of counties became frontier farms and villages. Michigan was well on its way to statehood when the reins of leadership were transferred to 19 year old Stevens T. Mason. Many of Michigan's leaders doubted his ability but it wasn't long before they were convinced he was a very capable 'boy governor.' During his eight years of administration, population increased five fold to 86,000; much more than the 60,000 required for statehood by the Ordinance of 1787. By 1835, a constitution had been prepared; the Toledo War had been survived and by 1837, Michigan became the 26th state to join the Union.

With the preparation of the constitution a representative and two senators were elected and sent to Washington demanding statehood. Instead of seating the three Michigan legislators the Congress insisted upon the settlement of the disputed Michigan/Ohio boundary. When Ohio became a state in 1803, a proviso was included that its northern boundary would be from the southern point of Lake Michigan, but instead of running straight east it would end north of the Maumee River. Since the Michigan Territory southern line followed the 1787 Ordinance line, due east from the southern point of Lake Michigan, there was a piece of land 70 miles long by five miles wide at the Indiana border and eight miles wide at Lake Erie, the Toledo Strip.

Because Ohio, Indiana and Illinois were already populous states with representation in the Congress they had more 'pull' than Michigan Territory's three legislators. President Jackson, not wishing to jeopardize the votes of those three states offered a compromise to Michigan - Give Ohio the Strip and instead acquire a large portion of the western Upper Peninsula.

Upon learning that Ohio intended forming counties of the disputed strip, Gov. Mason called out the militia and ordered the arrest of all Ohio officials who tried to accomplish political jurisdiction over the Strip. President Jackson removed Mason from office because of his military activities but before leaving Mason directed about 1000 militia to prevent Ohio from conducting official business in the Strip. The Ohio jurists held a midnight court and were out of harm's way by the time Michigan's militia arrived. Not wishing to risk further disobedience to the President, Mason and the soldiers returned to Monroe and disbanded. (Condensed and edited from "A Short History of Michigan" by John Kern. To be continued.)

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