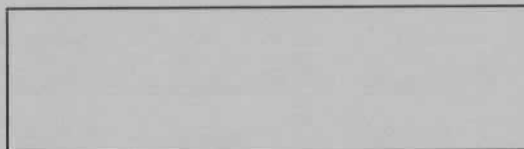


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Ore Creek (Part 1)

Brighton's merchants have always known the financial benefits of having a stream flowing through their midst. Today owing to water's efficacy in attracting shoppers; 180 years ago for its utilitarian possibilities.

Meandering along M-59, east of Howell, lies the Livingston County Watershed. On the north side, waters flow into North Ore Creek toward Flint and the Shiawassee River. South Ore Creek flows from Round and Long Lakes in Hartland Township, through Brighton and Hamburg Townships before falling into the Huron River.

It was Benjamin Blaine, a trapper, hunter and an observer of nature, who in 1832 realized the stream he explored in Brighton Township was fed by springs heavily impregnated with iron. He logically called it Ore Creek. The Grand River Indian Trail usually followed the highest, driest, easiest path. Following a westerly path from Detroit, it makes a sharp turn north in Brighton (E. Grand River/Rickett Road) crossing Ore Creek about ½ mile beyond (south of Cross Street).

Blaine, Raymond and Almon Maltby, Orson Quackenbush and others followed this same trail. The Maltby brothers immigrated from New York in 1832 seeking new opportunities. In 1833, they began construction of a sawmill on Ore Creek (east of S. Third Street). In 1838, Quackenbush built a flour and gristmill with a breast water wheel upstream from the Maltbys. The "...headrace cut along the edge of a high hill" (south of Main Street) with the mill at the corner of North and West Streets. The dam he built also formed a swimming hole for local boys. The steam and tailrace both flowed under North Street. West from the mill stood the house of "...Hugh Gordon who manufactured whiskey in a distillery which stood about ten rods south of the grist mill over the tailrace."

The proximity of both a sawmill and a flourmill was a double attraction for settlers from the east. This nucleus of a community soon became a town Maynard Maltby named Ore Creek. However, on February 13, 1838, the US Post Office Department gave it the name Brighton; the name of Sarah Maltby's home town. For many years, early area settlers continued to call it 'Ore Crick'.

The Maltbys and Quackenbushs were not the only settlers to make use of the stream. In 1837, Aaron H. Kelley installed a sawmill in the NW ¼ of Section 18 of Brighton Township. Another mill was also built above Kelley's by Rev. William A. Clark in 1839.

After leaving Clark's and Kelley's mills, the stream watered Crippen's 315 acres in Section 18 and bisected Lyman Judson's 160 acres in Section 19. Entering Section 30, it crosses the Grand River Indian Trail, becoming Quackenbush's (Brighton) millpond. Below Maltby's mill, Ore Creek makes a brief appearance in Genoa Township before heading south into Hamburg Township along the west side of Section 1, paralleling Bauer Road where Bauer intersects Hamburg Road in the valley.

Abel Peck and Bradford Campbell next make use of the stream, building the Campbellville Mill. Ore Lake is the next stop for the creek, followed by several more lakes before wedding the Huron River. To be continued...

Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: 1880 History of Livingston County; Bill Pless writings and clippings. Additions/corrections requested. 810/229-6402.