

BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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FROM THE WILDERNESS—BRIGHTON

Following the Revolutionary War, the 1783 Treaty of Paris determined the border between England and the United States and ceded Michigan to the U.S. It would take the winning of the Battle of Fallen Timbers, August, 1794, to convince the British they could not continue holding onto their fur trading posts and encouraging Indian raids on Americans settling in the western lands. The Jay Treaty of 1796 reconfirmed the borders of the two countries.

During this period the US government passed the Ordinance of 1785 which determined the division of western lands into townships of six square miles at \$1.00 an acre. Surveyors prepared maps of these land divisions which included natural features such as lakes, rivers, elevations, soil conditions, timber, and locations of trails to the interior, etc.

The Ordinance of 1787 determined the governing of these western lands: easing settlers' concerns regarding the retention of their U.S. citizenship by moving west.

Construction of the Erie Canal from Albany N.Y. to Buffalo in 1825 promoted settlement of these lands. The settlement was encouraged by the Federal government as a means of securing the land and guarding against further possible incursions by the British.

With these surveyors' maps, a torrent of speculators purchased western land including the Michigan Territory. Many easterners bought 100s of acres on speculation. (Many of which later went back to the state and were sold for taxes due.)

Such a risk taker was Anthony Gale of Hartland, Connecticut. The E 1/2 of the NW 1/4 of Brighton Township, Section 31, was

purchased September 23, 1834, by Gale. William Noble, also of Connecticut, purchased land in Section 30 and 31 of Brighton Township as well including that of Anthony Gale in 1835. The Noble Plat of 1837 begins at North Street following the Grand River Trail north to Flint Road. Streets are named, lots are numbered, East Street is the east boundary and West Street the west boundary. Not all streets platted were actualized. This now comprises the intersection of Grand River and Main Street, which is the border between Sections 30 and 31.

Gale had envisioned the town to be located at the top of the hill where Grand River turns north, i.e. the location of North Street. He also sold portions to William Dutcher and James B. Lee which they platted to sell lots.

By ¹⁸³³1883 the Maltby brothers had their saw mill in operation on Ore Creek south of Franklin Street. Within two years Orson Quackenbush built his grist mill up stream. Hotels were built in the area. All these developments led to the land sales in the east just as hoped by those holding western lands.

Many owners of Michigan acreage prepared nicely designed plat maps of villages indicating streets (not yet built), mill ponds (on streams not yet dammed) and businesses (stores, hotels, blacksmith shops which were not yet constructed). William Noble, Dan Lee, William Dutcher, Anthony Gale and others provided the vision, finances and daring physical presence to bring some of these plans to fruition.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: Early Settlers and Land Owners by Milt Charboneau; Short History of Michigan by John Kern; Census records; From Settlement to City by Carol McMacken. Additions/corrections requested: 810-229-6402)