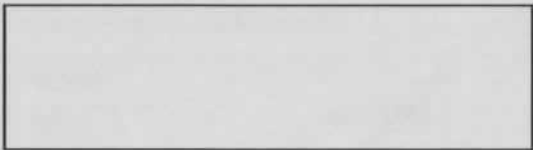


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FROM THE WILDERNESS—BRIGHTON Part 2

Of the early 1834 risk takers in what would become Brighton City, Anthony Gale, William Noble, William Dutcher and James B. Lee, only Lee remains in the Village area after 1840. By 1839 Gale is in Canada, Dutcher is in Oakland County and Noble heads back east to Massachusetts.

They, and others, came by way of the Indian Trail— the Grand River Trail. Leaving families in Detroit they headed west fording the Rouge River, the Huron River and innumerable swamps and streams. The Trail was barely travelable on horseback, much less a wagon of farming tools and household goods. Usually the men did the initial scouting for their future farm, mill, inn, store, etc., noting the surveyors' marks. They then returned to the land office in Detroit to establish ownership, a return trip of several days.

Farmington, Novi, New Hudson, Kensington and Ore Creek (Brighton) were all rest stops on the way to the interior. To encourage settlement, the Federal government ordered a trail, wide enough to allow a cart or covered wagon, to be hewn out of the encompassing forest, including three to four feet wide stumps to be removed. The abundance of swamps with ruts, mud and mosquitoes resulted in slow-paced construction. Horses had extreme difficulty going under these conditions. The most successful at dragging settlers' conveyances were teams of slow moving oxen. Following statehood, January 26, 1837, Michigan became responsible for road construction.

Among the first needs of those traveling the Trail was that of food and shelter for themselves and their horses. William Dutcher built a log tavern on his 'Addition' beneath the crest of

the hill where the Trail turns northward. By 1834, Ben Cushing is running the business for Dutcher. Robert Bigham built his "Call and C", c. 1834, past Ore Creek north of town; in the Chalis Road area. A few miles further, in Genoa Township, Lawrence Euler, a German immigrant, built a log store and tavern on the Trail at about 7300 W. Grand River, in 1835, and a frame barn for horses. The "Dutch Grocery" conducted business on that location until burning February 19, 1947. About a mile further west Lewis Dorr, in 1840, built a large frame house and operated a tavern, with shelter for horses used for stage coaches and freight wagons, in his large barn.

Not on the Trail but on Flint Road, John Dean, in 1836, built a substantial house on the east side (north of the I-96 overpass). This location became known as the Dean Settlement, where travelers heading north could count on assistance. All of these businesses were welcome sights to a weary family hoping to begin a new life.

By 1838, at least two stage coaches, run by Allan C. Weston and Benjamin J. Spring, traversed the 50 miles between Detroit and Howell in 12 hours. Teams of four to six horses, changed every 12-15 miles at these inns and horse barns, were driven at breakneck speed over a rutted trail. Today one isn't even aware of the filled-in swamps, that cuts through hills and bridges on the Grand River Trail.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: 1880 History of Livingston County; Bill Pless writings; Early Landowners and Settlers by Milt Charboneau; From Settlement to City by Carol McMacken. Additions/corrections requested: 810-229-6402.)