

**BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**Early Roads in Genoa Township — Fishbeck and Seim Roads**

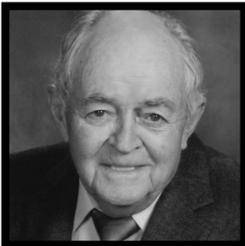
When were signs for rural roads first erected? Perhaps it can be assumed it was when Rural Free Delivery (RFD) was established? Mail carriers were then delivering mail by horse and buggy. During the 1930s, for proper delivery of statements, house numbers were probably applied by Detroit Edison. In the neighborhoods of six-eight miles it seems likely the names of residents were known and one might refer to “They lived next to the Seims” and that became Seim Road, or Fishbeck Road? These roads can still be found on the most recent Livingston County map.

In 1859, between Sections 15 and 16 in Genoa Township, Fishbeck Road followed a northeast course from Crooked Lake Road to Grand River Road about a half mile west of Dorr Road. Until the 1960s’ construction of I-96 closed Fishbeck about 3/4 mile south of Grand River, it had meandered its way in a circuitous route around wetlands and creeks.

The Freeman and Jemima Fishbeck family first purchased 160 acres in Section 21, October 23, 1835. By 1865, 200 acres were in their name. A brother, Jacob Jr., arrived shortly after and purchased 120 acres in Section 15. Other family members also bought land in the area. The Fishbecks were industrious farmers who originated in Holland and had large families. Water from Crooked Lake was used for drinking, bathing, washing clothes, for livestock and (logically with a Holland heritage) for ice skating. Members of this family recognized their responsibility to the governing of their township. Charles served as Supervisor, 1868-1871 and again in 1875. William served as Treasurer in 1871-72. At least six members of the Fishbeck family are buried in the Chilson Cemetery about one mile away.

January 1, 1863, John Sr. and Eliza Seim, living in New York, purchased 160 acres in Section 20, Genoa Township. It is c. 1870 when they arrive in Genoa and an adjoining 80 acres is acquired. The property is intersected diagonally by Chilson Road. One can safely assume they were among the many who purchased Michigan land as a speculative venture. As well as other early settlers, the Seims had to deal with wildlife on occasion. The October 19, 1883 issue of the Fowlerville Review reported: “A large black bear was seen near Joseph Seim’s in Genoa, Thursday night last. A party with dogs started in pursuit of the animal, but failed to capture him.” It can also be noted that by 1879, John Seim is serving as township Treasurer. In 1895, Seim Road, a half mile long, extends east from Chilson Road to near Crooked Lake. By then the health benefits of rural recreation were being nationally touted. Nearby Crooked Lake was beginning to develop into an ideal recreation site.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: 1880 History of Livingston County; “Early Landowners” by Milton Charboneau; local history writings by Bill Pless; Historical Society Archives. Additions/corrections requested 810-229-6402.)



**SYMPATHIES OF THE SOCIETY TO THE FAMILY OF Bernie Corrigan.** Long time resident of Brighton and Life Member of the Society.