

**BRIGHTON AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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**Early Roads in Genoa Township — Latson and Dorr Roads**

The 1859 map of Genoa Township indicates a north/south trail later known at Latson Road. Beginning at its junction with Chilson Road, about one mile north of Chilson, it proceeds north to the Genesee County line, a total of 16 miles. In the township it intersects Beck, Sweet and Crooked Lake Roads, and the railroad, constructed c. 1865-70. The trail, heading north, then crosses the Grand River Trail two miles east of the county seat, Howell.

The construction of I-96, beginning in 1961, dead ended Latson Road at the Beck Road intersection. The road south of the expressway was named Nixon Road. A great variety of business and commercial enterprises sprouted and flourished on Grand River and the need for an intersection with I-96 and Latson Road was recognized and completed in 2012. Latson Road now pursues its historical route and again assumes the name of Latson instead of Nixon.

November 12, 1835, Edward and Marian Latson purchased 160 acres in Section 7 of Genoa Township. By 1859 much of Section 7 had been bought and sold by Latson and by 1880 about 240 acres are still in his name. Ed, a member of the Livingston County Agricultural Society, exhibited colts at the Society’s first fair, held in 1853 in Brighton. In 1874 the “Latson & Wright” mill in Howell, was “...remodeled into a grist-and-flouring mill with two run of stones, and improved it to its excellent present condition.” (Walnut and Westmore Streets in Howell.)

Ed and Marian had six children, three boys and three girls. In 1874, son Albert, on his way home with a wagon load of recently-sawn lumber, was killed in an accident on the Detroit, Lansing, and Northern Michigan Railroad intersection at Latson Road. Ed, Marian and other members of the family are interred in Howell’s Lakeview Cemetery.

Across from Lake Chemung, Dorr Road proceeds south from Grand River two miles to Challis Road with an overpass at I-96. Genoa Township Hall is located on Dorr Road north of the railroad. Of the many who immigrated from Germany early in the 19th Century, Lewis and Elizabeth Dorr arrived with daughter, Catherine, purchasing 40 acres in Section 12, June 22, 1836. Adept at business and banking, Dorr was not a farmer. A carpenter and pattern maker by trade, he built his home in Section 14 on 80 acres and operated a tavern/stage stop on the south side of the Grand River Trail and Kellogg Road from 1840—1871. He hired a blacksmith and built a shop to better service the travelers on the Trail, a major route from Detroit to points west.

With the many other German immigrants in the neighborhood, he took part in organizing the German Evangelical Lutheran St. George Congregation, Genoa, Michigan on St. George’s Day, April 23, 1845.

Aware the future of this children would lay in land, by 1840, he has acquired 280 acres in the township. The 1895 plat map also notes the Dorr name on 236 acres bordering the east side of Crooked Lake, with about 1/2 mile of lake frontage in Section 22.

His children married fellow (often German) immigrants’ children. Much farm land was inherited by them; now sites of pleasant residences. Lewis and Elizabeth are interred in St. George Lutheran Cemetery on Herbst Road.

(Compiled by Marieanna Bair from: plat maps; writings by Bill Pless; “Early Landowners...” by Milton Charboneau; 1880 History of Livingston County; census records. Additions/corrections requested 810-229-6402.)