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**History of the General Motors Proving Grounds (GMPG) — Conclusion**

Since the conditions of the roads surrounding the Proving Ground were poor, local roads needed improvements for workers' and visitors' access.

In Brighton Township, the early road (today's Stobart Road), ran on the south side of the GMPG. It was impassable except in summer. Pleasant Valley Road on the west side was a good gravel road, but there was no direct route to get into the Proving Ground. Milford Township had several roads that could provide the needed access, and Milford Township was willing to make needed road improvements for GM.

One road became General Motors Road while the other was Milford Road that ran south to Grand River Avenue. Even though the majority of the land was located in Brighton Township, the Proving Ground became known as General Motors Proving Ground—Milford. This is due to the facility having their major entrance from the Milford side. Not much fuss was given by the Brighton people as they were just glad the Proving Ground was there.

The different divisions of General Motors had their own workspace. Chevrolet, Buick, Cadillac, Oldsmobile, Pontiac and GMC focused on improving safety and functions of the vehicles.

In 1926 GMPG took over as the highest taxpayer in the Brighton Area, surpassing the Brighton Creamery from the year before.

At the first Christmas at GMPG, a Christmas party was given for the families of the employees. Alfred Sloan paid for this out of his pocket. GMPG continued the tradition of Christmas parties through the Depression, even though GM was going through hard times like all other businesses. This practice continued for many decades. It has been said by many that the parties were so wonderful that the people who attended would never forget them.. In speaking with today's older folks that attended as children, they indeed have never forgotten. A frequent comment by many was that some of the gifts that the children received at GMPG were the only gifts they got for Christmas.

Along with the family Christmas parties, summer picnics were held for families while dances were held for the adults. Fishing and sledding on the Proving Ground was allowed by employees and their families.

GMPG was a family of sorts. Because of the guarded work being done on site, the workers were encouraged to be quiet on what testing was being done.

GMPG promoted their sports teams in baseball, golf, bowling, etc. They played other groups in the area, mainly other businesses. Stories and schedules were included in the sports information section in the Brighton Argus every week.

In the 1940's the weather station located at the Proving Ground gave the test drivers the driving conditions and provided weekly weather reports to the Brighton Argus.

The coming of WWII changed a lot at the Proving Ground. First, because of the men going to war, GMPG looked towards the women to fill jobs. In 1942 the first women were hired. Also GMPG was testing many tanks, trucks, munitions, etc. for the War Department. Not just GM products, but those manufactured by Ford, Chrysler, etc. The military was a constant presence at the GMPG. Many clerical workers were needed to keep up with all the reports. GMPG received many awards, including the "E Award" for the excellent work being done for the military.

In 1944, GMPG started a small monthly internal newsletter called "Grindings". Social information and reports were given to the employees to keep up on happenings at GMPG and its workers. A printed edition lasted until 2006. It then went online.

In 1946, the workers' union tried to come into the Proving Ground, but never was successful.

In the early 1950's GMPG increased their property, purchasing acreage from their northern property line to Commerce Road. This consisted of the northern part of Section 12 and all of Section 1. In a 1994 report, GMPG grew to 4000+ acres with 132 miles of test roads, 106 buildings and 4000 workers.

(Compiled by Mindy Kinsey from the GM Archives, Brighton Argus and Bill Pless writings.)