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As many of our readers/members enjoy researching, we will periodically publish tips/articles on how to research different topics. These were pulled together by Tim Bennett. Tim Bennett is the sixth generation owner of the Warner Homestead farm, located on Buno Road. For the past fifteen years Tim has conducted extensive research on the historical and genealogical background of the family. Archaeological excavation of the site is one of the few, if only, by a direct descendant in Michigan. He has published a number of articles and presented on his research to various groups around the state. The Warner Homestead was recently recognized as Michigan's newest historic site with the installation of the Michigan Historical Marker in the front yard.

**“Research Tips — Early Maps”**

The first survey of Brighton Township was made in 1815-1816. It was limited to notes and included unfavorable descriptions such as "poor barren land" and "scrubby oak". Other surveys with similar descriptions across lower Michigan discouraged initial large scale settlement of the state. Another survey, completed in 1823, provided a basic map along with more favorable descriptions.

One of the first named natural features in Brighton Township, "Ore Cr", appears on a map by Orange Risdon. It was compiled in 1825, years before settlers arrived. State and regional maps drawn during the 1830s, particularly by John Farmer, included paths/roads that were used as guides by pioneers to make their way to the interior of Michigan.

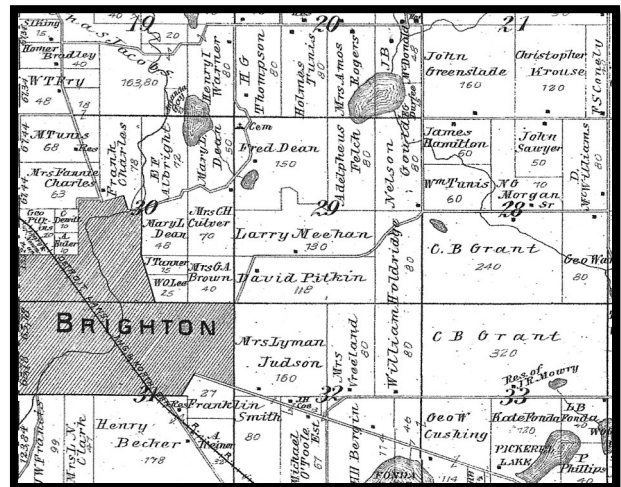
Plat maps provide a visual representation of how land was divided, its location, and who owned it. During the 19th century these maps for Livingston County were published in 1859, 1875, and 1895. Ownership information has a few exceptions as it appears data was taken from tax records and in some cases taxes could be paid on property not yet transferred. To promote local sales, inclusion in the business directory section was often dependent on the purchase of a map.

The 1859 plat shows the location of buildings including log cabins and frame houses, as well as swamps and woodlands. The notation of woodlands is important as it provides an indication on how much land was cleared for agricultural use. It is configured as a large wall map that also includes images of prominent buildings/residences around the perimeter, insets of village plats (including Brighton), and a business directory. F. W. Beers' 1875 plat map also includes information

on when pioneers arrived/settled in addition to listing in the business directory. School districts are also color coded. The 1895 map still shows the location of schools but does not delineate the districts. Town plats from the late 19th century are found in the Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. Many 19th century township atlases are available online including in the Library of Congress and the David Rumsey map collections.

While the work published by Geil, Harley, and Siverd in 1859 is the earliest plat map for Livingston County, it isn't the first to show land-owners. That distinction belongs to Bela Hubbard, an explorer and cartographer who drew early maps of townships across Michigan. His map of Brighton Township dates to circa 1838 and notes the location of some early pioneer homes including Lyon, Palmer, Maltby, Woodruff, and Marsh. Natural features are noted as well as improvements made by settlers including mills, roads, and post offices.

*(Thank you to Tim Bennett for assembling this information. Plat maps for Livingston County can be found on Brighton Area Historical Society website: [info@brightonareahistorical.com](mailto:info@brightonareahistorical.com))*



From a 1859 Plat map