

Pioneers of what is now Berkley:

<i>Ager. Ira</i>	Rensselaer Co., NY	Sec 2, 80 Southfield	1830 Oct 30
Ager, Ira	Oakland Co., MI	Sec 7, 79.76	1832 May 01

In 1832, Ira **Ager**, a single man of Detroit, purchased an 80 acre farm in Royal Oak Township, and in 1835 he and his wife Eliza, sold this property, located on Twelve Mile Road on the north side between Bacon Street and Robina, to George and Mary **Hoagland** for \$400. *S.McLellan: B,B p 23*

Benjamin, John: *T1NR11E Sec 8 80 acres on 5-19-1830*

and Levi Warner's land: T1NR11E Sec 8 80 acres on 11-06-1827

1827: John **Benjamin**, Sr. took up 80 acres of land in Royal Oak and in Berkley. This land straddled the turnpike. He later acquired the 2 parcels of Levi **Warner** at the death of Levi. Part of this farmland is now Roseland Park Cemetery.

The Berkley farm was criss-crossed by a number of small springs and on this location **Benjamin** established what was Berkley's first industry, the manufacture of grain cradles, used before the mechanization of grain cutting. The design and workmanship was excellent and the cradles were shipped to the east and in quantity to St. Louis for those migrating to the far west. This new grain cradle, called the Muley Grain Cradle, changed the way grain was cut. A scythe was added to the cradle so cutting grain could be done in one operation instead of two operations. It is said that this new design opened the West.

John **Benjamin**, Sr. was born in Mendon, Monroe County, New York State. His father, also named John, lost his life in the War of 1812 as a result of a bullet wound. He left a family of three boys and one daughter, John, Elisha, Milton and Sally to care for his widow, Mary.

By trade, John, the eldest of the family, was a cabinetmaker, an excellent one at that, even at the age of twenty-one. But in order to come west he drove mules and horses to pull the boats through the Erie Canal. He had come to Michigan with his mother and brothers; Sally had died. They came by way of Canada, arriving in Detroit, May, 1830, the trip taking sixteen days.

John left his mother and brothers in Detroit and journeyed northward out the old Saginaw turnpike. He informed his fellow travelers that he would not stop until he came to high land. This was reached at the ridge just north of what is now Twelve Mile Road, known as **Johnson's Ridge**. He staked his eighty-acre claim on May 19, 1830, in section 8, just north of what is now Twelve Mile Road on what later became Roseland Park Cemetery and St. John's Woods. Paying \$100.00 cash, he received his land patent on January 5, 1831, which was signed by Andrew **Jackson**. This land adjoined the property of Levi **Warner**, Oakland County's pioneer cooper.

His son, John **Benjamin**, Jr. was an ardent Whig and vigorous supporter of the New Republican party. He served in Co. "C" of the 30th Michigan Volunteer Infantry as a fifer, being discharged in 1864.

John, Jr. served his community many ways. He was township supervisor for Royal Oak Township, treasurer of School Board in District #6, a member of the Independent Order of Oddfellows, and a Methodist. He married twice: 1st to Martha

Campbell whose family owned the adjoining farm to the north, and 2nd to Ella **Parker**, also a descendant of a pioneer family whose home was at Thirteen Mile Road and the turnpike.

Bergen, Elisha:

1832 took up his grant of land on Eleven Mile Road at Coolidge, now part of Huntington Woods. He was a skilled tradesman, a weaver. He had left his family in the east until his cabin was built and he had established himself. Since Elisha was a highly skilled weaver and a terrible baker, so he walked to what is now Royal Oak and bought bread from a farmer's wife. His claim to fame occurred during his first winter in Michigan. As he returned from buying bread one bitterly cold night, and found a small pack of hungry looking wolves, gaining rapidly upon him. He ran. The wolves ran faster. Finally, he ripped off chunks of his bread and while the wolves fought over the treat, Elisha reached his cabin door without his bread.

The **Bergens** remained on their farm for nearly thirty years when Elisha gave up farming and he and his family moved to the Village of Royal Oak.

Blackmon, Lyman H.: T1NR11E Sec 17 80 acres plus 89 acres in Sec 18 on 11-10-1830 1830 November tenth he bought two 80 acre grants. The **Blackmon** family came from Wayne County, New York. His land ran from where Catalpa Drive is today, north to Twelve Mile Road on each side of what is now Coolidge Highway, west as far as what is now Kipling Avenue. He and his sons began to clear the land, built a log cabin and later, a typical Michigan farmhouse with a Michigan basement of fieldstones, with a long ell at one end and a two story wing at the other end. The house stood about where Earlmont Road is today. One half of it remained until recently, and the other portion was sacrificed to the building of Coolidge Highway. **Blackmon** cut two lanes along the section lines which formed the boundaries of his farm. The lane in front of the house was called **Blackmon's** Lane, according to custom and later became **Blackmon** Road.

The family belonged to a little Presbyterian congregation which built a church on Starr Road in Royal Oak at the corner of Crooks Road. The church duplicated one which some of its founding families had attended in the north of Ireland and was known as "The Irish Church".

In 1844 the **Blackmon** family left this church and joined in founding the First Congregational Church of Royal Oak.

In 1834, Lymon **Blackmon** donated a half acre of land, for the purpose of erecting a school. This land was located at the northeast corner of Coolidge and Catalpa Drive and was given to School District #7 to use as long as a school house stood upon it.

In 1874 Lymon **Blackmon** and his wife, Maria, now middle-aged, conveyed the farm of 160 acres to a son, Henry, for \$6,000.00 Henry signed an agreement to support his parents during their natural lives in a manner comfortable to their condition in life, support them for life, furnish them a home on the land conveyed to him. Henry became mentally ill three years later and the conveyance was set aside.

There was an eccentric streak in the **Blackmons**," said **McClure**. "George used to wear his old Union Army overcoat winter and summer, even in July."

Between **Blackmon's** farm and Catalpa, there was a flowing artesian well and a platform was built up around it with a bucket and a pole.

Bolger, Robert:

Robert bought a farm sold by the **Harris** family to the **Curtis** family, traditionally **Harris** relatives. Robert **Bolger** was a penniless Irish lad who had immigrated to Michigan with his parents from the “ould sod” at the age of three.

When the Civil War broke out, Robert **Bolger** was 18 and like many other youths, enlisted in the 24th Michigan Infantry which became part of the “Iron Brigade.” He fought with his regiment at Gettysburg where almost every man was lost. He was wounded there at Gettysburg, returned to duty and was captured. He was imprisoned in Libby Prison and survived and returned to Detroit and then spent ten years as a sailor on the Great Lakes.

He resided in Corktown and was elected to the State legislature in 1880 as a Republican in a Democratic stronghold. Mayor Hazen **Pingree** appointed **Bolger** as the superintendent of Belle Isle. It was to be developed as a public park and **Bolger** was responsible for almost all of the improvements. He retired from public life and settled on his Berkley farm with his wife Annie until 1914 when the land was sold for development. **Bolger** died in 1930 and his only memorial is the little Berkley street named **Bolger**. (About 2003 the street named **Bolger** was closed.)

Brown, Robert W: TINR11E Sec 18 79.84 acres on 12-03-1832

And additional land in Sec. 18 80 acres on 11-22-1832

Robert **Brown**, still another Scottish-Irishman, took up his first 80 acre grant west of Elijah **Stephens** in 1832, and in 1832 purchased a second 80 acre grant directly adjacent to **Stephens**.

Brown was one of the few early male settlers who could neither read nor write, and signed all his many land transactions by mark. He sold his farm next to **Stephens**, to his son, Alexander, in 1841, but Alexander failed to pay on the mortgage, so his indignant father foreclosed and then sold the farm to **Stephens**. He retained the western portion of his grant for his own use after a similar dismal experiment of selling that land to Alexander for \$600 and foreclosing.

Robert **Brown** died in 1888 at the age of 81, a resident of the village of Royal Oak. He left his farm to a daughter, Eva May **Hill**. Eva May and her infant daughter died in 1900 and the farm, now valued at \$4,000, became the property of her husband, Henry **Bechert**.

Bechert sold the farm to the **Stumpf** family, prominent in Royal Oak Village history and they in turn sold to the **Eseman** family. The **Eseman** daughters, Minnie and Edith, both taught a term or so in the District 7 School. In 1919, the land was sold for \$32,000. *S.McLellan: B,B p 22-23*

Bromley - Ackerman House located at 1178 Catalpa Drive

This became the home of Mother Betts. She was born a **Remley**

Castle, Heman: T1NR11E sec 7 79.72 acres on 5-01-1830

He was from Ontario County, New York

Chappell, Mary Ann:

Originally **Mother Handsome** had The Red Tavern, located near Franklin Road north of Eleven Mile Road on the west side on the trail before 1829 to Henry **Stephens**. **Mother Handsome** was the widow of a soldier from the War of 1812. After selling, she then obtained land closer to Detroit at Six Mile and the Trail (Woodward Avenue).

S.McLellan: B,B

In Oakland County Land Records I find the following:

Chappell, Alford of Cayuga Co., NY in Commerce Twp Sec. 14, 80 acres 6-02-1834

Chappel, John of Oakland Co., MI in Independence Twp Sec 8, 40 acres 11-08-1853
Military Bounty Land

Chappel, John & Mathew Walter of Oakland Co., MI in Independence Twp Sec 9, 40 acres on 1-17-1838

(I wonder if these men are her sons?)

Chappell, Maryann of Oakland Co., MI in Royal Oak Twp Sec 27, 40 acres 11-26-1833

Chappell, Maryann of Oakland Co., MI. in Royal Oak Twp Sec 27, 40 acres 12-05-1833

Cromie Family:

1877: The **Cromie** Family purchased 53 acres of the **Blackmon** farm. It was retained until 1916 when it was sold for subdivision.

Robert and Ellen **Cromie** were later arrivals, first purchasing 53 acres on the eastern boundary of the **Blackmon** farm and then in 1899 adding 80 acres north of Twelve Mile Road for \$4,000, for additional pasture land. Until Roseland Park Cemetery was fully developed, the **Cromie** cows also pastured in the south end of that development.

Mrs. Elmer **Cromie** said the **Cromie** farmhouse, presently occupied by **Sawyer-Fuller** Funeral Home, had had a fine well, but the water became brackish so the well was filled in. A bird bath was placed upon the site, but when it rained, the bird bath fell in the resulting hole. The family then planted an evergreen tree on the spot. The **Cromie** family continued to farm until 1925. *S.McLellan: B,B p 20*

Curtis, Major: T1NR11E Sec 6 79.84 acres on 7-23-1827 and an additional 79.84 acres on 5-02-1828, plus an additional 79.72 acres in Sec 7 on 2-13-1832 plus additional 79.84 acres in Sec. 18 on 6-05-1832. Major **Curtis** was from Greene County, New York

Dorr, Nathaniel: T1NR11E Sec 17 120 acres on 8-13-1835

Ellwood Family:

1831, late in the year, the **Ellwood** family arrived in Berkley. They came from New York State and the father, Captain Benjamin **Ellwood** (1775-1859), had been a foreman

on the Erie Canal. They also owned two 80 acre farms, one north and one south of Twelve Mile Road, extending along the section line which is now Greenfield, east to Bacon Street. Greenfield Road, although the dividing line between Royal Oak and Southfield Townships, was not developed for many years. It was platted on the maps as "Townline Road."

Cold weather and snow came early that year so the **Ellwoods** did not have time to put a real cabin up. They constructed a three sided shelter and hung the 4th side with skins and quilts, keeping a roaring fire going in front of the open 4th side. Snow drifted in and at night, sitting beside their blazing fire, the **Ellwoods** wrote they stared in fascination at a circle of yellow animal eyes on the other side of the fire, starring back at them.

The **Ellwood** family served on the District School Board and were active in Township politics. They remained in Berkley until World War I, when the farms were sold for subdivisions. *S.McLellan: B,B p 19*

Ellwood, Augustus: *T1NR11E Sec 9 80 acres on 5-17-1825 (RO)*

And Sec 9 80 more acres on 5-20-1825 (RO)

He came from Cayuga County, New York.

Ellwood, Benjamin:

Benjamin **Ellwood** replaced his original cabin with its shake roof and stick chimney and split log floor where "snakes came in" with a real farmhouse in 1845. This building stood at Twelve Mile Road near Thomas. (This farmhouse was torn down and replaced by a parking lot. The museum has the molding that was over a doorway.)

Benjamin **Ellwood** and his wife are buried in the old Royal Oak Cemetery at the junction of Crooks Road, Rochester Road, and Main Street.

S.McLellan: B,B p 19

Ellwood, Daniel: *T1NR11E Sec. 8 80 acres by voucher #761/85 dated 7-30-1832*

Daniel **Ellwood** came from Cayuga County, New York

Daniel Ellwood, the son of Benjamin Ellwood of Erie Canal fame, also took up land on the eastern boundary of Berkley, along the trail, now called the Turnpike. Daniel died relatively young, in 1845, and his farm was inherited by his father, Benjamin, who sold it to John **Benjamin**. *S.McLellan: B,B p 19*

Ellwood, Hiram: *T1NR11E Sec 7 79.76 acres on 11-2-1833 from Oakland County.*

And additional 79.84 acres, Sec. 18 on 8-12-1833.

Another **Ellwood** son, Hiram, played the drum "loud" in the William Henry **Harrison** political campaign. Hiram earned his first harness, a saddle and an overcoat by catching and selling raccoons. He was a deacon and a trustee of the Royal Oak Congregational Church and adopted a son, George **Stanley**, who was killed in the Civil War. Hiram, evidently a mighty hunter, is recorded as having probably killed more turkey and deer than anyone else in the area. Hiram **Ellwood** married Phoebe **Hall** in 1847. She was the daughter of Daniel and Letitia **Hall**, also Royal Oak Township pioneers. The couple had four children of their own and two adopted boys.

S.McLellan: B,B p 19, 20

Evans, John: *T1NR11E Sec 6 160 acres by voucher #761/85 on 5-02-1825*

Forsyth, Joseph: T1NR11E Sec 18 80 acres in 5-10-1832
Of Oakland County

Hansen, Lorenzo and Sally Ann Warren:

The final owners of this farm originally owned by William **Reed** on land adjacent to the **Hoagland** farm, were George and Sarah **Hansen**, who continued to farm until 1919, when the farm was sold for \$600 an acre for subdivision. The **Hansen** farmhouse stood until about 1970, at the corner of Twelve Mile and Prairie. It had become a multiple dwelling and had a storefront attached to the house.

S.McLellan: B,B p 25

Harris, Hamlet: T1NR11E Sec 17 40 acres in 1830 (also Royal Oak, Sec 22 80 acres 5-6-1834)

Just west of the **Hickey** farm located at Catalpa Drive and the Trail, sat a little cabin on the muddy lane. This was the home of Hamlet and Martha **Harris**, who had come from either Virginia, Tennessee, or possibly Georgia, for the records do not agree. They came in 1834 and first bought land for themselves and their family of nine, in Section 20 of Royal Oak Township. A tenth child was born in Michigan. By 1850, the **Harris** family had moved to Berkley. **Harris** was an Indian and his wife's name is given in the County records as Jane, but the family Bible carries it as Martha. Being of nonwhite extration, the records carry the **Harris** family as free persons of color. According to family tradition, **Harris**'s true Indian name was unpronounceable to Americans, so the family adopted his wife's name, Harris.

The **Harris** family attended **Blackmon** School and the Baptist Church in the village of Royal Oak.

The original parcel of land purchased by Hamlet **Harris** was added to in small purchases and several of the **Harris** sons, in turn, purchased portions of farms until the family owned a large quantity of land on the east side of Coolidge Highway from Twelve Mile south to Eleven Mile Road. Their farmhouse was moved from the south side of Catalpa to the north side and is now converted to a multiple dwelling.

Most of the children moved away as they became adults, but Abraham **Harris** remained in Berkley until just prior to World War I, and several of his descendants moved to Birmingham.

Hamlet **Harris**, according to the recollections of Ralzemond **Parker** I, of Royal Oak, a prominent member of another Royal Oak pioneer family, could not read or write but he had memorized the Bible and could quote it perfectly. When the Constitution of the United States was amended to give persons of color the franchise to vote, Ralzemond drove Hamlet to vote. As he cast his first ballot, **Harris**, tears streaming down his face, said to **Parker**, "Now I am a man."

Hickey, James and Bethiah:

1847 the **Hickey** family came from New York State and purchased the land originally owned by Henry **Stephens** which had by then passed through several other hands. The

original 80 acres had lost one acre to the enlarged turnpike and a slice for a railroad right-of-way.

He built his house some distance from the turnpike, necessitating a lane to be cut through the woods. The farm was just west of the **Hickey** farm at Catalpa Drive and the Trail..

The **Hickeys** were a large and very devout Methodist family who produced several children who were leaders of this faith in early Michigan.

James **Hickey** was a man of firm convictions, among them the belief that the earth was flat. He even had a book printed explaining his views which he gave away. Their first child was Manasseh, born in New York State and came to Michigan as a small child.

Manasseh **Hickey** studied for the ministry at Albion College which was then a seminary for the training of ministers. He was ordained in 1847 and sent to an Indian mission for the Pottawatomi Indians at Nottawa Sepe (Nottawa) in Calhoun County. The wife of the tribal chief, Mary, had also been educated at Albion and she served as his interpreter.

James **Hickey** died in 1851, leaving the farm to Manasseh. He also left the care of his youngest son, George, a very little child, to him as well. Manasseh left the Indian mission, disposed of the farm, and continued to preach in Detroit, and eventually became Vice President of Albion College.

George **Hickey** lived on the farm until it was sold to their brother, John **Hickey**. George also attended Albion College and then the University of Michigan. He graduated in 1868. He had earned his way through college by teaching in one-room schools. He taught and was an administrator for a while and then he too became a Methodist minister. He developed a "weak Chest" and his doctor suggested a change of climate in California. In San Diego he again returned to preaching and even opened a singing school. He was transferred to Los Angeles and discovered there was no school for Protestant children so he again became a schoolmaster. The new school was called "Los Angeles Academy". This school eventually became the University of Southern California.

George had a son, Paul, who was the 1st head of the Detroit College of Law, and then President of Lawrence Institute of Technology.

James **Hickey**'s daughter, Marietta, married Orange **Niles**, one of the leading pioneers of Troy Township. Another daughter, Rhoda Ann, married Edward **Ferguson**, founder of the Royal Oak Methodist Sunday School.

John **Hickey**, son of James, married Orissa **Starr**, a daughter of Orson **Starr** of Royal Oak, whose cowbell industry was known nationwide.

The John **Hickey** farm, lying on both sides of the turnpike, was later sold to Samuel **Medbury**, Mayor of Detroit, for a summer vacation home. **Medbury** developed a mineral spring on the farm and sold the bottled water for medicinal purpose.

Hoagland Family:

The **Hoaglund** family came from Somerset County, New Jersey. In 1835 the **Hoagland** family arrived and purchased 80 acres for \$400.00 from Ira **Ager**. They built a log cabin on Twelve Mile road near Wakefield, which came to be called "The Pittenger Cabin" after Maria **Pittenger**, a **Hoagland** daughter, who lived there for a number of years. This

cabin was still in existence until about World War I, was typical of all the cabins built by the early settlers. It was made of logs, plastered with clay between the cracks. It had two floors. The upstairs was originally a loft and later was roughly plastered for two small bedrooms. The two rooms downstairs were for cooking, sleeping and family living. These rooms were whitewashed each spring. In summer, the stove was moved to a shed at the back of the cabin and called the summer kitchen.

Abraham L. **Hoaglund** also purchased 162.36 acres T1NR11E Sec. 5 (RO) on 6-03-1825 George **Hoaglund** died in 1836, leaving a rather interesting will. "In the name of God, Amen," says the will, "I, George **Hoagland**, Township of Troy, Oakland County, being of sound mind, memory and understanding, blesses be God for the same, do make and publish this my last will and testament as follows:" "All my funeral expenses to be paid as soon as possible. All my wearing apparel to my, Abram. My wife, **Mary**, shall have the sole benefit of the farm where I now live, Sect. 38, Town 2 North, Range 11 E, and all the stock, farming and household utensils. My daughter, **Mariah** and her heirs the west half of the southeast quarter of Section 7 (the Berkley farm) which shall be kept in the executor's hands as long as she lives and the avails taken for her support and benefit and be equally divided among her children when they come of lawful age. My daughter, **Leah**, \$150. My daughter **Cornelia**, the east half of the southeast quarter of Section 7 (the other half of the Berkley farm). My son, **Abram**, the east half of Section 32, Troy Township, to be held in the executor's hands until he comes of age. After my wife's death, her farm to be sold and **Abraham** (sic) to get two shares, the girls one each, and **Mariah's** be kept for her by the executors. I name Dennis and James **Quick** my executors."

Mariah became Mrs. James **Pittinger**. Her father (and no one else) ever offered an explanation of why Mariah alone was not allowed to manage her inheritance.

Cornelia's share was sold and finally came into the possession of Henry **Stephens**, the former Red Tavern keeper, now resident of the Royal Oak Village and quite a land speculator. **Stephens** acquired the property by foreclosure. He, in turn, sold to Bernard Rusch. *S.McLellan: B,B p22-24*

*Hoaglund, Abraham L. T1NR11E Sec 5 162.36 acres on 6-03-1825 (Clawson)
And additional land for Abraham Hoagland in Sec. 19 40 acres on 7-13-1835*

McClelland, John: T1NR11E Sec 18 79.84 acres on 6-28-1833

At the corner of Townline Road and Eleven Mile, lived the **McClelland** family. Their home is still existent and stands at 2178 Greenfield near Oxford Street. This home still stands in good condition. A dairy farm, the **McClellands** kept a large herd of stock but were unfortunately never to be able to have a well of their own. Digging, drilling, dowsing and all, brought no result, so the family was compelled to haul all the water for their needs from **McClelland's** brother's farm across the road in Southfield Township, a half mile away.

This lovely old farmhouse was rented, occupied for a time by a herb doctor and had fallen on sad times, when it was purchased and lovingly restored in the 1950's. Several pear trees remain adjacent to the home, remains of a last orchard.

S.McLellan: B,B p 23 [No pear trees left in 2007. cjr]

McClure, John:

John **McClure**, who purchased what had been Robert **Brown**'s farm just before 1900, shared memories of what the farming community was like.

McClure had been a member and secretary of the School Board. He continued, "Our teachers had to have a County certificate. They could leave school in the tenth grade, pass an examination, and then teach. The Board was supposed to keep part of their wages for a retirement fund, but they never did. What was kept was just spent by the State, anyways."

When **McClure** purchased his farm, he said, "There was no road where west Catalpa Drive is now. The house for the farm had been built by Robert **Brown** and was on Catalpa. It was too hard to get in and out, so when summer came I cut the house in two, put it on oxcarts with rollers and hauled it to Eleven Mile Road and Tyler. The small wing we made into a tenant house and that is gone now. After we moved the house, I moved the barn. I torn it down two years later and built a new one. I always raised Holsteins."

The Brown-McClure house is still standing at the corner of Tyler and Eleven Mile Road. *S.McLellan: B,B p 26*

Fred **Puvogel**'s farm was located on the south side of Eleven Mile Road in Oak Park before it was cut into two parts. Part of the original log cabin remained in the east half of the kitchen. It was torn down in the 1970's. It was across from the **Brown** farm.

QUICK FAMILY:

The **Quick** family, of Scottish-Irish descent, had come to Michigan from Hunterdon County, New Jersey, arriving in Michigan in 1824, and first settling in Troy Township.

McClure remembers a descendant of the **Quick** family, Charlie, who was an undertaker and moved to Second and Main Streets in Royal Oak. James Bunker **Hill**, husband of Eva May **Hill**, was an old Civil War veteran as was George **Blackmon**, and George used to drive the hearse for Charlie **Quick**.

S.McLellan: B,B p 20

Quick, Dennis H.: T1NR11E Sec 5 80 acres on 6-03-1825 (Royal Oak)

Of Somerset County, New Jersey.

Dennis **Quick** remained on his farm until his death in 1887. He had married Nancy **Perrin**, daughter of Calvin **Perrin**, a pioneer of Troy Township, and after her death in 1860, he married Mrs. Sinai **Lombard**. **Quick** was a deacon and life-long member of the Presbyterian Church. The **Quick** family is buried in the **Perrin** Cemetery on Coolidge Highway in Troy.

The **Quick** farm was ultimately sold to the **Baker** brothers, owners of the **Black Meadow** farm complex in what is now Huntington Woods, and was leased by them to Frank and Mary **Grosjean**. **Grosjeans**, who maintained a farm in Oak Park until recent years, sold the farm in 1916 for land development. *S.McLellan: B,B p 21*

Quick, John T1NR11E Sec 17 80 acres on 5-25-1831

Of Somerset County, New Jersey

Quick, Parmela and Gertrude Ann: T1NR11E Sec 17 80 acres on 5-25-1831

Of Somerset County, New Jersey

North of Eleven Mile Road to Catalpa Drive, and east to about Mortenson Blvd, were the farms owned by the **Quick** brothers. Their father, Parmela **Quick** and his wife, Gitty Ann (Gertrude), bought 80 acres, and John **Quick** bought the adjoining 80. Their purchase was in 1831. By 1834 the brothers Joseph and Dennis **Quick** possessed the farms.

Reed, William:

William **Reed** took up the land adjacent to the **Hoagland** farm in 1832. He sold his 80 acre parcel the following year to Lorenzo and Sally Ann **Warren**. This property was purchased by George **Hoagland** in 1836, to form Mariah's ultimate inheritance.

The final owners of this farm were George and Sarah **Hansen**, who continued to farm until 1919, when the farm was sold for \$600 an acre for subdivision. The **Hansen** farmhouse stood until about 1970, at the corner of Twelve Mile and Prairie. It had become a multiple dwelling and had a storefront attached to the house.

S.McLellan: B,B p 25

Fred **Remole** Farm located at 1608 Eleven Mile Road east of Mortenson. They owned two farms, the other was where Huntington Woods City Hall is located today.

Remole, Fred:

John **McClure** said that "across from the **Harris** farm on Catalpa there was a little parcel that **Old Mother Bitts** had. Her brother was **Fred Remole** and he had a place on Eleven Mile Road in Huntington Woods, where their City Hall is now, and another place in Berkley."

The **Remole** family came from Alsace-Lorraine in the 1870's. Their farmhouse, much remodeled, is still on Eleven Mile Road, east of Mortenson. *S.McLellan: B,B p 26*

Robson, William: T1NR11E Sec 7 80 acres on 6-15-1831

William **Robson** acquired 80 acres in 1831, the land which now is St. John Woods and St. John Woods Subdivision 1. **Robson** cleared enough land to prove his claim by 1832, sold the land back to the State for resale that same year, and departed. The next owners were David and Ann **Stewart**, who parted with the land in 1849 to Andrew **Taylor**. *S.McLellan: B,B p 26*

Roseland Park Cemetery:

In 1906 the **Roseland Park Cemetery** Association was formed and made their 1st land purchase. In 1913 The Roseland Park Cemetery Association purchased the eastern portion of the original Robson land which was a mixture of brush, cut-over timber, marsh, sinkholes and small streams which we now know as St. John Woods and they subdivided it for sale as lots to raise the money to start landscaping the Cemetery.

Rusch, Bernard:

Bernard **Rusch** bought his land from Henry **Stephens** who had acquired the land by foreclosure from Cornelia **Hoagland**, daughter of George **Hoagland**, located at the east half of the southeast quarter of Section 7, T1NR11E..

Bernard **Rusch**, a widower, had come to Southfield Township with his father, August, from Germany. Bernard, who wrote a most beautiful German script, willed the farm to his son, another August, in 1883. August's son, George, farmed in Berkley for awhile and his family occupied the former **Pittinger** cabin until they built a more modern home on the south side of Twelve Mile Road. The **Rusch** family rented the Woods to the east, now St. John Woods, for pasture land.

George's daughter, Carrie **Rusch**, remembered from her girlhood that there was a huge snowball three in the cabin front yard and a deep well just west of the cabin. Carrie went to **Blackmon** School where Julia **Russell**, Maggie **Cannon** and Josephine **Denning** were her teachers. The **Rusch** farm was a typical one for the area – dairy, vegetables, wheat, oats and corn. They took the wheat to **Arrity's** Mill in Southfield, where it was ground and the excess sold to the miller. *S.McLellan: B,B p 24-25*

Salts, Alexander:

On the south side of Twelve Mile Road, across from the **Rusch** farm, was the land of Alexander **Salts**. He was born in 1822 in County Down, Ireland, and immigrated to Michigan with his father in 1839. An adventurous spirit, **Salts** had lived in Philadelphia and traveled to New Orleans where he arrived in time to work as a nurse in a yellow fever epidemic. He first farmed in east Royal Oak Township and then bought a semi-improved farm in Berkley.

Salts proudly boasted he was a “good Whig-Republican” and Benjamin **Harrison** had harvested his first vote. He served as a Township Supervisor and Township treasurer, member of the District 7 School Board and was a trustee of the United Presbyterian Church. *S.McLellan: B,B p 25*

Saunders. Franklin B.: T1NR11E Sec 17 80 acres on 2-16-1830

Schilling family:

The **Schilling** farmhouse near Twelve Mile Road facing the Turnpike, turned into quite a famous restaurant, **Cotter's** Tavern, and was ultimately demolished in the early 1960's. *S.McLellan: B,B p 20*

Stephens, Henry: T1NR11E Sec 17 80 acres on 7-28-1829
by 1829 owned The Red Tavern

Stephens, Elijah: T1NR11E Sec. 18 80 acres on 5-19-1832

In 1835, Elijah **Stephens** received a grant of 80 acres signed by President Andrew **Jackson** and Secretary A. J. **Donelson**. This grant was on the west side of Coolidge Highway with Eleven Mile Road as the southern boundary and extended west to about Kipling. **Stephens** sold his farm to Joseph and Dennis **Quick** in 1851, and they in turn, split the tract and sold 40 acres to John S. Stevens that same year.

The barns for this farm were razed many years ago but until the late 1960's, traces of the foundation could still be seen just south of Catalpa Drive and east of Coolidge and

was occupied by a family named **Lucas** in 1908. Elijah **Stephens** bought the original grant for \$820 and the **Lucas** sons sold the property in 1916, for \$35,000.

S.McLellan: B,B p 22

Stevens, John:

John **Stevens**, the 1851 land purchaser, ran off with his neighbor's wife about the time of the Civil War and disappeared from history forever. *S.McLellan: B,B p 22*

Stewart, David and Ann:

David and Ann **Stewart** purchased the land in St. John Woods and St. John Woods Subdivision 1 that William **Robson** had sold back to the state. They parted with the land in 1839, selling to Andrew **Taylor** who never developed the property. He died in 1887 and was buried in the old Southfield Cemetery. *S.McLellan: B,B p 26*

Taylor, Andrew:

Andrew **Taylor** purchased the **Robson** land in St. John Woods and St. John Woods Subdivision 1 in 1839. He did nothing to improve the property. He died in 1887 and was buried in the old Southfield Cemetery. The eastern boundary of the farm was bisected by the ultimate opening of the extension of Coolidge Highway in 1926. In 1913 part of the land was sold to **Roseland Park Cemetery** Association.

Thurber, William: TINR11E Sec 6 164 acres by voucher #761/85 on 4-28-1819

William Thurber assigned to Samuel Reed Sec 6 160.98 voucher #761/85 on 1-23-1819

Valentine, Cornelius: TINR11E Sec 17 80 acres 9-20-1830

Cornelius Valentine took up an 80 acre farm at the corner of the Turnpike and Twelve Mile Road in 1830, and sold it in 1836, to John and Amanda Youngs, for \$589. The Youngs in turn sold to members of the Harris family, and ultimately the farm passed to the Schilling family. *S.McLellan: B,B p 20*

Warner, Levi: TINR11E Sec 8 80 acres 11-6-1827

He was of Oakland County. He purchased 80 acres of land in Sec 18, Pontiac Twp. On 9-30-1823. He was from Niagara County, New York. He was a cooper.

Wight, Henry: TINR11E Sec 7 80 acres on 10-7-1830

Joseph **Wilcox**'s home built 1919 on Sunnyknoll west of Coolidge. The 1st building permit in the village was issued at that time.

Youngs, John & Amanda:

The **Youngs** bought the 80 acre farm at Twelve Mile Road and the Turnpike from Cornelius **Valentine** and in turn sold it to members of the **Harris** family.

So many new settlers were arriving that in 1832 a stagecoach began to run from Detroit to Pontiac, stopping at the Red Tavern. Settlers continued to pour into the area, in spite of the Black Hawk War, and the cholera epidemic.

1836:

The largest number of land sales in the entire nation had been made in Michigan – one and one half million acres.

1836-1837

As the immigrant settlers poured into southern Michigan, it became obvious almost immediately that some other method of getting to their new lands besides the Pontiac Turnpike was needed. The road's reputation did not improve with time. The Rev. W. W. **Fitch**, Post Chaplain at Fort Wayne, said in the Pioneer Historical Collection, Volume 5, "that such a reputation had travelers given that road to Pontiac that when an angry Detroitier wished to curse a man without being actually profane, he would say, 'Go to Pontiac!'"

When the farms were cleared and crops raised, the farmers needed a better way of getting their milk and produce to market. Railroads were just beginning in the East and the Territorial Legislature granted a charter in 1834, to what eventually became the Detroit-Pontiac Railroad to "transport property and persons by power and force of steam, the power of animals or mechanical power or any combination."

A farsighted young man, Sherman **Stevens**, was the primary force in bringing a railroad to this section of Michigan. **Stevens**, a businessman, had started a bank, and was the man who drew up the plan for the Village of Royal Oak. He and his railroad company proceeded to buy lands along the old Military Road on both the east and west sides.

Sherman **Stevens** tells the story of building his railroad better than anyone else. He said, "Our first cash outlay for building the Pontiac Railroad was for timbered land at Royal Oak and for building a sawmill powered by steam to make the five by seven inch oak rails. As soon as the mill was in operation, I put men to work clearing and grubbing the roadway towards Detroit."

It was hard all the way through heavy timber going from the mill to the farms fronting on the Detroit River. As fast as the trees were cut down, all that were suitable were made into ties, while the large trees were rolled to the center and so placed as to form two continuous lines of logs. On these logs the ties were placed and a notch cut in each end to hold the rails. When the rail was placed in the notch, a wooden wedge was driven alongside the rail, which fastened it solidly. After making a few rods of this style of road, we put a car upon it and by the use of a towing line to enable the horse to travel outside the ties, we were able to deliver the ties as fast as required. We made a ditch on each side of the track, throwing the soil excavated into the space between the rails which was the means of keeping water off the track and making it dry and solid."

There were two work parties of twenty men each, employed. One was supervised by "Uncle Jack" **Keyes** and the other by John **Hunter**, one of the first settlers of what is now Birmingham. John **Grout** was the engineer.

"By these methods, we reached Jefferson Avenue in a few months," said **Stevens**. The year was 1837.

"Here on Jefferson we built a depot, and also a warehouse for freight and began transporting passengers and freight to Royal Oak. The roads across the heavy timbered swamp were almost impassable and the immigration into Oakland, Genesee and Lapeer

counties was large. It was not unusual for us to get \$100 for a single day's traffic on these wooden rails. This almost paid our expenses in extending the railroad to Birmingham."

Then problems arose. "Suddenly, we found the wooden rails were beginning to wear so badly that we were afraid they would not be fit to hold the flat iron rails we hoped to put on them."

Iron cost \$90 a ton and the railroad developers needed \$100,000 for their rails. If we applied our bank funds to purchase the iron, we might lose our bank. Finally, we applied to the Legislature for power to raise a loan of \$100,000 by selling bonds good for twenty years at six percent interest. I invited a carload of legislators to make an excursion over the road to see its importance and its situation."

John **McClure**, who purchased what had been Robert **Brown's** farm just before 1900 and supplied a series of memories of what the farming community was like.

McClure had been a member and secretary of the School Board "Our teachers had to have a County certificate. They could leave school in the tenth grade, pass an examination, and then teach. The Board was supposed to keep part of their wages for a retirement fund, but they never did. What was kept was just spent by the State, anyways."

There was a little log house on the south side of Twelve Mile Road on a rented farm which burned. Across from the **Harris** farm on Catalpa there was a little parcel that **Old Mother Bitts** had. Her brother was Fred **Remole** and he has a place on Eleven Mile Road in Huntington Woods, where their City Hall is now, and another place in Berkley.

The **Remole** family farmhouse, much remodeled, is still on Eleven Mile Road, east of Mortenson.

Very few farmers rented, almost all owned or were buying their farms. The market for the dairy produce was in Detroit. Farmers took their milk to the village of Royal Oak, where it was transhipped from milk houses which stood on the southeast corner of Washington at Fourth Street. The Milk was sold for \$1.80 a hundredweight.

There were no stores of any kind in what is now Berkley. Royal Oak was the major shopping center, except for the farmers north of Twelve Mile Road who often journeyed to the Village of Birmingham. In Royal Oak, the farmers traded at Storz', Erb's or Gene Clements', on Center Street. All they really had to purchase was sugar, tea and coffee. They raised everything else that was needed.

Most of the farmers had buggies or wagons or walked, road conditions permitting. The local doctors, all in Royal Oak, had buggies and kept hipboots in them for the inevitable time the boggy road became impassible.

The first major tri-county project in Michigan was the Hubbard Drain. [I have heard that what is now Red Run rose up in the Hubbard Farms north of 8 Mile Road both east and west of Greenfield. Cjr] In McClure's day, the drain was open and ran across Berkley halfway between Catalpa and Eleven Mile Road. It is now referred to as "Red Run". This creek appears to have risen in the area of south of 9 Mile Road and Greenfield. The creek appears to have crossed the Avery School property on Lincoln Blvd. east of Greenfield and caused expensive, repetitive, draining problems on the playground. It continued across Oak Park, and is still viewable across the backyards of

the southeast part of Berkley crossing the Saginaw Trail [Woodward Avenue] near Catalpa Drive, becoming the stream that used to run under the cute bridges of Vinsetta Boulevard and into the huge sewer drains flowing eastward to the Clinton River.

This area was supposed to have the largest grove of beech and oak trees in the world. Some beech trees are still visible along Catalpa Drive and other spots in Berkley. The path of the Red Run also was lined with wonderful enormous willow trees and a few are still seen in the area and are certainly markers of the many streams in Berkley.

There were a number of branches of the Red Run. There was also a crossing from west of Normandy Road [13 ½ Mile] crossing the Saginaw Trail heading to 13 Mile Road and the Saginaw Trail that have left signs of the Run behind for us to view. It then appears at Webster and Bonnie View Drive in Royal Oak and is the basis of the lay out for Bonnie View. Another branch appears to have risen from Berkley's St. John's Woods [which could not be farmed because of the amount and depth of the water in the area until drain tiles were laid in the area] and this branch traveled through the Parker farm [now Beaumont Hospital property] and joined the northern branch of the Red Run at 13 Mile and the Saginaw Trail. Berkley had a number of streams that were fished by the local people. [As late as 1970, my sons went canoeing at Greenfield and Nine Mile Roads]

Between Blackmon's farm and Catalpa, there was a flowing artesian well and a platform was built up around it with a bucket and a pole.

There was a tiny house, that was incorporated into Northwood Inn, occupied by a crotchety Civil War Veteran who kept quite to himself.

Most of the pioneer farm families were Presbyterian and attended the Irish Church previously mentioned, or the Presbyterian Church on Evergreen in Southfield. When the Congregational, Methodist, and Baptist congregations were formed in the village of Royal Oak, some of the farmers attended these. It was not until the 1870's that a small Catholic mission was built in Royal Oak. A little Lutheran congregation, plus a school for the deaf, arrived in Royal Oak about the same period.

Life in Berkley during the farm era was quiet and peaceful, marred only by an occasional family tragedy or illnesses. The farms were large and productive. Most of the farm children only went to school as far as the eighth grade. Further education meant going to Royal Oak or to Birmingham as tuition students. Some of the girls sought County teaching certificates and taught a year or so in local schools before marrying. Most of the boys farmed the family farm or bought farms of their own in the county.

The Civil War touched the Berkley farm folks fairly heavily. Almost everyone was a Republican and anti-slavery. A number of young men from the area enlisted and some never returned.

John **Benjamin**'s service has been mentioned earlier. Also serving were Nathan **Valentine**, Eighth Infantry, killed at Annapolis in 1864; John **Wells**, Fifth Michigan Infantry; George **Blackmon**, 22nd Michigan Infantry, discharged in 1863, Andrew **Valentine**, 22nd Michigan Infantry, discharged out in 1865; Henry **Harris**, died at Annapolis, 1865; George **Saunders**, First Cavalry, missing in action, 1863; Oliver **Hickey**, First Cavalry; Perry **Quick**, First Cavalry, missing in action at Macon, Georgia, 1864.

Life was not dull. There were quilting parties, church socials, barn raisings, skating and coasting parties, Christmas parties at the schoolhouse, strawberry socials, berry picking and even a shooting club which met in Royal Oak.

Election times were highly exciting. Torchlight parades made their way through Royal Oak's village streets and there were bands and speeches plus a greased pole to climb and set banners upon. Fourth of July was a special day. Spelling bees were held at the schoolhouse and the men and boys went hunting. This was our way of life in Berkley until World War I.

When **McClure** purchased his farm, he said, "There was no road where west Catalpa Drive is now. The house for the farm had been built by Robert **Brown** and was on Catalpa. It was too hard to get in and out, so when summer came I cut the house in two, put it on ox carts with rollers and hauled it to Eleven Mile Road and Tyler. The small wing we made into a tenant house and that burned down one New Years Eve. After we moved the house, I moved the barn. I torn it down two years later and built a new one. I always raised Holsteins."

The Brown-McClure house is still standing at the corner of Tyler and Eleven Mile Road. *S.McLellan: B,B p 26*