

## It Started with the Mill

Jeremiah Clark came first, at age 41 in 1831, to explore his fortune in Michigan Territory. His brother Nelson, eighteen years younger, joined Jeremiah in 1838 in buying 2,000 acres of land in Independence Township. The Clark brothers built a new mill here with a dam that formed the Mill Pond and harnessed waterpower to grind the region's wheat into flour. The village that grew around the mill was named Clarkston to honor them. Jeremiah went on to plant hundreds of apple trees in the area, and later became a judge and a state representative. Nelson built a fish hatchery and the school at 90 North Main Street. He also planted the village, and served as its postmaster.

Internet Job

Winter ice was cut from the Mill Pond, packed in straw and stored for year-round use in an ice house that stood along its eastern shore.

**NW  
corner of  
Main &  
Washing-  
ton Street**

at Deer Lake Hills Farm

**Over 500 acres of land at the far end of Deer Lake** were once owned by Ford Motor Company. Deer Lake Hills Farm opened in 1947 for field testing of new farm implements and for training in modern, mechanized farming. It was the home of Dearborn Motors Corporation, the marketing organization for Ford tractors and farm equipment. The facility welcomed dealers and farmers from across the country and around the world, training over 2,000 people in 1953 alone, before closing in the 1960s. Dearborn Motors' slogan was "Ford Farming — means less work, more yield per acre."

**YOU AUTO KNOW**  
The farmhouse dormitory of the tractor school had earlier been a Ford family retreat, and is still located on Holmes Rd.

They showed all makes of Ford tractors. I met people from all over the world."

Along  
sidewalk  
across  
from  
Deer  
Lake  
Beach

## Transportation in Independence Township

through this wooded region, used by Native Americans. In the 1820s, the trail became the first road in the region for travel from Pontiac through the southwest corner of Independence Township and on to Saginaw. It was vital to the settlement and growth of the area, and came to be called Dixie Highway. When the first railroad and depot were built nearby in the 1850s, Depot Road became the main link to Clarkston for mail, shipping and travelers. As automobiles became common in the early 1900s, paved roads gave drivers better access to the attractive businesses, homes and recreation of Independence Township.



The Old Laundry, c.1900

In 1900, the Elmer Laundry (now Elmer Inn) on Oak Ave. is seen in the far right of the laundry yard.

By the way, please be informed that the ending of Great Road is the end of the journey, about 1500. The spring was a perfect addition for leaders in the area.

Along  
sidewalk  
at NE  
corner  
of Dixie  
& White  
Lake  
Road

## at the Mill Pond Dam

**Clarkston grew around the mill pond**  
that was created to harness the power of water. In 1838 the Clark brothers built the original dam to hold Clinton River water to a depth of 22 feet, pressuring the mill pond and pressure to power their gristmill nearby. The dam became Washington Street, and the mill pond became a central feature in Clarkston, a place for boating, water play and ice harvesting. In 1931, Henry Ford built an enhanced dam to provide more power for his new Village Industry at Clarkston Mill.

In 1911 the emptied mill pond revealed a spectacle of tree stumps, wagon wheels, broken dishes and an old coal stove.

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## An Enduring Family Name

John and Malinda Maybese started it all when they left New Jersey in 1836 to take a chance on 80 acres of wooded land in Independence Township. Their success here as settlers was due to careful planning: They brought enough money, supplies and tools to survive for two years until their farm became productive. The family farm grew to 240 acres, including Spring Lake at its south end and a separate 80-acre "woodlot" a short distance down the road to the west. Five generations of Maybese thrived here, headed by John, Jesse, John, James Russell, and Charlotte Ann. They enriched the community and farmed this land into the 1950s.

Just back there only a year or two ago, we found a few letters, but nothing more (perhaps) in any of the papers in the box.

A portion of the 1872 map of Independence showing above the location of the Parks property. 18 is a west branch location, 19 is a west branch location, 20 is the 15000th branch, 21 is the 15000th branch, 22 is the 15000th branch, 23 is the 15000th branch.

*Myer Polkman*

To Independence

Along sidewalk on Maybee Road near the Fountains Golf Course

## at Clarkston Mills

to see where people harness the power of water to spark Clarkson's economic engine. In the place before you in 1939, the Clark Brothers built the original dam to create water power for their gristmill which became the heart of the new community of Clarkson. A century later, Henry Ford's fascination with water power drove his choice of this site and others along rivers in southeast Michigan to develop Village Industries. In 1941, Ford enhanced the dam to power a new small factory here and hired local workers to produce: durable bushings for his automobile company.

The Ford building is mostly intact, used now for retail and office spaces, with water still flowing through its foundation.

**Along sidewalk at the entrance to Depot Park**

## Preserving History at Bay Court Park

for young people. Soon after he acquired the 40-acre farm property on Greens Lake in 1917, he invited the Detroit-area Boy Scouts to camp and swim there during the summer. After his death in 1920, the property became the Scout's Camp Brady, and Brady Lodge was built as a scout assembly hall. Beginning in the 1940s, the United Way ran the camp and lodge for disadvantaged children, and after 1972 it was operated by Detroit Public Schools.

In 1988 the property was acquired by Independence Township and was named Bay Court Park. The historic property has become a popular township park, and Brady Lodge is a welcoming shelter for weddings, farmers markets and public events.

*Your Pathway  
To Independence*

**Bay Court  
Park  
at 6970  
Anderson-  
ville Road**

Historic Leader, Enduring Name

In 1819, Oakland County pioneer Oliver Williams and his family made a home along the Saginaw Trail (today's Dixie Highway). They encountered Chief Sasabawbe, the leader of a tribe of Native Americans whose ancestors had been living there. A friendship developed, and they exchanged gifts, medicines and supplies until Chief Sasabawbe's death in 1823. A wooded, flat area in the southeast portion of the township was Chief Sasabawbe's favorite hunting grounds. Settlers chose this site land for the first farms in the region and it came to be called the Plains of Sasabawbe. Today, a township road, park, arena, school and church bear Chief Sasabawbe's name.



The Institute Predeceases Curdy. SNA Bids to Merge Its Studies w. the Long Pointes Road and El Estero

*Almer, S. Driftwood*

*Dr. Anderson*

**SW  
corner  
of  
Waldon  
&  
Sashabaw  
Road**