

# Road Names in Superior Township

## The Long List

### Introduction

**There are a few terms that need explanation.**

**AD Road.** This means Assessment District Road. The passage of the Covert Act in 1915 allowed individuals to form assessment districts in which a given section of road was improved and those receiving the benefits were assessed and taxed a percentage of the cost of the improvement. The inducement was that State, County, and township funds might also be applied to the cost of the improvement. In Washtenaw County the Washtenaw County Road Commission was responsible for administrating the Assessment Road Districts.

**Edison Road.** As Detroit Edison expanded its service into the rural areas of the township, the company devised a system of house numbering to identify the location of their customers and gave the unnamed rural roads names to assist their installation and maintenance crews in finding the location of customers. The company also created maps and installed road name signs with this intent. In the 1930's this system of numbering and naming of roads was formalized with the county road commission

No information has been found regarding the criteria that the Edison Company used to name roads and no map or other information specifically telling us if any given road was, indeed, named by the Edison Company. When the term 'Edison Road' is used in this list it means that it is believed that the Detroit Edison Company was responsible for the road name, there being no other reasonable explanation.

**'Build a road.'** When county road improvement began in earnest around 1915 it was often stated that they were going to build a road, but in actual fact they were improving an already existing road although they occasionally would acquire additional right-of-way to realign, straighten, widen, or otherwise improve a road.

**Territorial Road.** There were many roads referred to as Territorial Road, it being a generic term because they were authorized by the Territorial Legislature. The two territorial roads in Superior Township are Geddes Road and Plymouth/Ann Arbor Road.

**WCRC.** This means Washtenaw County Road Commission and is used throughout the paper. When it is stated that there is no record of the WCRC officially naming a road, it is meant that no such records were found of that nature in the WCRC minutes prior to January 1, 1937, the final date for which the WCRC minutes were read. It is possible that county road names were made 'official' in some other manner or some other time that was not brought to my attention.

**Albert Drive.** Named in 1976. The east end of the western section of Warren Road had connected with Plymouth -Ann Arbor Road along the Albert Drive route. When the M-14 freeway was built no overpass was made and Warren Road was extended eastward along the north side of the M-14 freeway to Curtis Road. The remaining portion of Warren Road south of the M-14 freeway served a number of residences and was renamed Albert Drive. Albert Staebler (1877 - 1951) had owned the Staebler farm, now a Washtenaw county park just east of the road and was the father of Don Staebler, then residing on the farm. Don, who at that time was chair of the Superior Township Planning Commission, made the suggested that this portion of the old Warren road be named after his father, Albert and it was so approved.<sup>1</sup>

**Ann Arbor Road** - See Plymouth Road, the official county name for this road.

**Berkshire** - See Dawn.

**Berry Road** - An Edison Road. This road appears to have been named after Joseph G. Berry about whom nothing is known. The tax records of Superior Township show that he paid the taxes on the property located on the east side of Berry Road from Ann Arbor Road to Warren Road for the tax years 1926 and 1927. It appears that members of the Geer family owned the land before and after the Berry tenure so the supposition is that Berry had purchased the land on a land contract from the Geer family and then defaulted. No record has been found of a land contract or default at the Washtenaw County Register of Deeds and it may be that the land contract was not recorded with the county.

The 1915 plat book shows this parcel being owned by the estate of Watson Geer and the 1938 Rural Survey shows the land as owned by the estate of Thomas Geer. The Rural Survey of 1938 shows no dwellings on this land and a long time resident states that the first dwelling on the land was built by Clifford Fishbeck in the 1940's and that prior to that time the land was an open field in which cattle were pastured.<sup>2</sup>

A good deal of land speculation was occurring in Superior Township then and the indication is that Berry was a land speculator with the intention of dividing the land and selling home sites, something later done by others. Berry probably allowed The Detroit Edison to run power lines through his open field so that they would be at the rear of his intended home sites. The power lines exist in these locations today.

**Cherry Hill Road** - An AD Road. The road that led to the village of Cherry Hill from Dixboro. The Cherry Hill settlement was established at the intersection of Ridge road and Cherry Hill road in western Wayne County in 1825. The settlement was originally called "The Ridge", the name being changed in the 1860's when an inn named The Cherry Hill House was built.<sup>3</sup> The short stretch of Cherry Hill road at its west end where it intersects with Gale Road and turns north to enter the village of Dixboro, was called South Road on the original plat of Dixboro of 1826, and later changed to Mill Road because of the mill built at Fleming Creek south of Dixboro village.

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<sup>1</sup> Superior Township Board of Trustees minutes, item 5-6A-76, June 7, 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Don Staebler

<sup>3</sup> Canton Historical Society, website, January 10, 2006.

On September 29, 1920 there was entered into the minutes of the WCRC a petition to build (improve) the unnamed road from the settlement of Cherry Hill to Dixboro. A week later a second petition of this proposal endorsed by George D. Crippen, the Superior Township supervisor, was submitted. The road was improved in 1921 as AD 6. It was referred to then as the Dixboro-Cherry Hill Road and described as starting from the Wayne County line at the point between sections 13/14 in Superior Township, and running westerly between section 13/14, 15/22, 16/21, 17/20, and 18/19 to the quarter section post between 18/19 ending at the "present highway", and then running northerly on said highway to the center of Plymouth Road.

On March 6, 1924, in connection with WCRC preparing a map of county roads, this road was officially named Cherry Hill road on a motion of road commissioner Luick. Cherry Hill road was named prior to the naming of Gale Road (an Edison Road) which is why that portion at the west end running north to Dixboro is named Cherry Hill Road and not Gale Road.

Cherry Hill Road was at one time a major road in Superior Township and carried a good deal of traffic. "Yesterday we placed signs furnished by the Auto Club directing football traffic over roads from Ypsilanti and Cherry Hill to Ann Arbor."<sup>4</sup> Cherry Hill Road in Wayne County was paved from the county line to Canton Center Road as of 1924, perhaps earlier, and the WCRC road map of that year directed users of Cherry Hill in Washtenaw County that Detroit could be reached by using Warren Road in Wayne County. In 1929 Ford Road in Wayne County had been paved west to Canton Center Road and the WCRC map for that year directed Cherry Hill users to go north on Canton Center Road and connect with Ford Road. After Ford Road was paved in Superior Township in 1934, it along with the paved Plymouth Road, diminished the use of Cherry Hill Road.

**Church Street** in the village of Dixboro. This street was created in the original 1826 plat of Dixboro and was then called North Street. When the Dixboro Methodist Church was built on the street in 1858 it undoubtedly was then referred to as the church street, hence Church Street.

**Clark Road** - An Edison Road. Probably named after Crawford Clark and his wife Johanna who on March 3, 1915 purchased the N1/2 of the W1/2 of the NE 1/4 of section 1 in Pittsfield Township which fronted on the road. Clark also owned the S1/2 of the W1/2 of the NE 1/4 of section 1 and Mrs. J. Clark is shown owning both parcels in the 1934 farm plat map.

The first use of the name Clark Road in the minutes of the WCRC appears August 23, 1935. A 1934 plat map indicates that this road was not established along the south line of Superior Township section 35 and the west half of section 36 between Harris and Ridge roads. This gap was completed by relocating a portion of the road and extending it into Ypsilanti Township when the Willow Village was built during World War II. Keep in mind that there are two sections of Clark Road, one east of the Huron River and the other west of the Huron River. There is no bridge connecting the two sections.

There are no land owners by the name of Clark either in Superior or Ypsilanti Townships found along the road in the sources consulted (plat maps for Superior and

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<sup>4</sup> WCRC minutes, October 17, 1923.

Ypsilanti Townships, and the tax rolls of Superior Township for sections 31 through 36 for the years 1925 through 1936.)

**Curtis Road** - An Edison Road. Assuredly named after Leslie Curtis who from 1917 to 1952 farmed the Salem Township land originally owned by his father, Adelbert Curtis. When the land was sold the land transfer read "subject to pole line permits to the Detroit Edison Company.." <sup>5</sup> There is still today (2006) Edison utility poles located through the Curtis farm fields about 100 feet west of and parallel to Curtis Road.

This road had been earlier called Salem-Frains Lake Road, South Salem Road, Salem Road, and Superior Road.

**Salem-Frains Lake Road** was so named by the Eastern Washtenaw Good Roads District commissioners March 4, 1918. It was comprised of the present Salem Road, Brookville Road, and Curtis Road between Brookville Road and Plymouth Road.

**South Salem Road.** The entire length of Curtis road was renamed South Salem Road by the WCRC on March 6, 1924. However this name was confused with two other Salem Roads in Salem Township; the present Six Mile Road then also called Salem Road, and the present Salem Road south out of the village of Salem called South Road, and unofficially referred to as Salem Road, and Salem South Road.

**Salem Road.** So labeled on the Washtenaw County Road Commission road maps from 1924 to 1932. Six Mile Road was then also called Salem Road on the map.

**Superior Road.** In the period 1930-32 Superior Road (Prospect) running south from Plymouth Road and Salem Road (Curtis) between Plymouth Road and North Territorial Road were given the route number 421. This led to the assumption that they were to be considered the same road and the Superior Township tax records for that time show that United Memorial Gardens memorial park, then known as Booker T. Washington Memorial Park, fronted on Superior Road. In the WCRC minutes the name Curtis Road first appears May 1, 1936.

**Cynthia Drive.** This private road north of Frains Lake was built about 1960 by Fred Bevins who had purchased a residential building site from Stanley Rozwod who was selling building sites on a parcel of land that he owned. Bevins was a contractor and had the men and equipment to put in the road, but because Stanley Rozwod owned the land the road was built on, and according to Superior Township records still does, Rozwod got to name the road .

Rozwod and his wife had no children so they decided to name the road after a niece, her name being Cynthia. <sup>6</sup>

**Dawn** - Formerly called Berkshire. One of the few roads that remain from the World War II Willow Village era, the others being MacArthur, Stamford, and Wiard.. Dawn is a short road connecting Stamford Road with Clark Road. There is no explanation for the name. Many of the small access roads in the original Willow Village were given names with an English flavor such as Berkshire. The Dawn/Berkshire road is not to be confused with the present Berkshire Street in the more recent subdivision development west of the old Willow Village.

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<sup>5</sup> Information from David Curtis, grandson of Leslie Curtis

<sup>6</sup> Information from Susan Bevins Nieuwenhuis, daughter of Fred Bevins

**Dixboro Road** - The road to the Village of Dixboro from the Geddes settlement on the Huron River on the south, and South Lyon on the north. Dixboro (aka Dixborough), was surveyed and platted in 1826, the plat recorded February 28, 1828. The road is one of the earliest shown on maps but was probably not an Indian trail since it follows survey lines for a good deal of its route although south of Plymouth Road it veers to the west to avoid the lowlands of Fleming Creek and to connect with the Geddes settlement. There is no evidence that the road was ever officially named Dixboro Road. It was probably so named from common usage. Plymouth Road from Ann Arbor to Dixboro evidently was also known by this name. In naming Plymouth Road in 1918 the Good Road Commission stated that Plymouth Road from Ann Arbor was sometimes spoken of as the Dixboro Road.

**First Street** - This is the only street in the settlement of Superior which is located north of the Huron River off Superior Road. The plat for the settlement of Superior was drawn January 18, 1877 and recorded January 20, 1877. First street is so named on this drawing. This was the original location of an early proposed settlement called Lowell and the road may have existed from that time, or at least from the building of the Michigan Central Railroad in 1838-39 which passes nearby. Maps of 1856, 1864, and 1874 show a dwelling in this location although no road, and in 1874 the structure is referred to as a boarding house.

**Ford Road, M-153.** The Superior Township road acquired the name of Ford Road by default, as it was an extension of the already named Ford Road in Wayne County.

Ford Road was named for William Ford who owned a farm at what is now the intersection of Ford road and Greenfield road in Dearborn Township. A portion of the road near his farm was built at his request in 1894. William Ford was the father of Henry Ford. Ford Road in Canton Township ended at Canton Center Road and was not extended into Superior Township from Canton until the early 1930's.<sup>7</sup> The road as it currently exists in Superior Township is shown as of 1856, the section between Wayne County line and the village of Dixboro being shown on the Hubbard map of 1840.

The planning for building M-153 in Washtenaw County began in 1931 although the route had been selected several years earlier. The unnamed rural road in Superior Township was being proposed as a major highway which would eventually bypass Ann Arbor on the north. The bypass plans were dropped in 1935. By 1929 Wayne County had already paved their portion of Ford Road east of Canton Center Road. The remaining portion of the road in Wayne County from Cantor Center Road to Napier Road was constructed and paved in 1933.<sup>8</sup> In 1932 the existing rural road in Superior Township began to be improved and paving was completed in August 1934.

The road improvements planned required obtaining greater right-of-way. In 1932 sixty feet of land south of the center line of the then surveyed M-153 Trunk Road was sold to the State<sup>9</sup>. This would mean a right-of-way of 120 feet. The State must have been planning for quite a road. When the road was improved and widened, thereby

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<sup>7</sup> WCRC minutes.

<sup>8</sup> WCRC minutes, July 21, 1933

<sup>9</sup> Title abstract of William S. Rooke

cutting into the earthen bank that was part of Free Church cemetery near Gotfredson Road, several burials in the cemetery had to be relocated

**Frains Lake Road** - An Edison named road. This road is part of an early route that ran north from Ypsilanti to Frains Lake and Plymouth Road. It is shown on the 1840 Hubbard Map. It probably at one time was one of the main routes north from Ypsilanti, it and Dixboro Road being in use before Prospect Road was completed. Michael Frain was an early landowner of the area and gave his name to Frains Lake. The residential settlement at Frains Lake did not occur until the late 1920's and 1930's, after the paving of Plymouth/Ann Arbor Road in 1925.

**Gale Road** - An Edison Road. One of the first local roads created, it being a more direct route from Ypsilanti to Dixboro than the Dixboro road and avoids having to cross Fleming Creek near the Huron river. The road runs through the middle of sections 19 and 30 in Superior Township. George W. Gale purchased from William Hiscock on August 14, 1852 for \$100 the N1/2 of the W1/2 of the SE1/4 in section 19, 40 acres, fronting on Gale road. As of 1926 the estate of George. W. Gale was stilled unsettled and being taxed. The estate consisted of two parcels of 79 acres and 40 acres in section 19 and 40 acres in section 20. The Gale estate probably allowed Edison an easement over the farm fields off the road right-of-way which resulted in the road being called Gale Road. The Gale estate had been settled as of the tax year 1927.

**Geddes Road** - An AD Road. Named after John and Robert Geddes who in 1825 established a sawmill and settlement on the Huron River in section 36 of Ann Arbor Township. There is no indication when it was so named but the minutes of the WCRC for April 25, 1924 indicates that the Wayne County Road Commission had agreed to the proposal of naming that portion of the road in Wayne County as Geddes Road. Geddes road is an eastern portion of the Territorial Road that from Ann Arbor followed the St. Joseph Indian trail to the west coast of Michigan. This territorial road was authorized by the Legislative Council of the Territory of Michigan in 1829. The road started at Sheldon's Inn located on the Chicago Road at the present intersection of Sheldon Road and Michigan Avenue in Canton Township and proceeded west through the second tier of counties. It is almost a certainty that the segment east of Ann Arbor was in existence prior to the establishment of the Territorial Road, first following the section survey lines and then connecting up with the North River Road (now Geddes) into Ann Arbor.

As of 1937 Ann Arbor had both the current Geddes Avenue and a Geddes Road, the former North River Road. Geddes Avenue crossed the Huron River near the location of the present Huron Parkway bridge and connected with Geddes Road. Eventually that portion of Geddes Road west (upriver) of this intersection was renamed Fuller Road, so that there was only one route known as Geddes.<sup>10</sup>

The Superior Township tax records contain a lengthy description of land purchased in 1929 on Geddes Road by Harry Bennet, and describes the land as being on the Pottowatomi Trail. A 1930 description of the land for Arley Hickson in the same area also uses the term Pottowatomi Trail when referring to Geddes Road. A map dated about

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<sup>10</sup> 1937 map of Washtenaw County by Harry Raschbacher, University of Michigan graduate library Map Room.

1930 of Canton Township shows the portion of the road in Wayne County still named Territorial Road.

**Goss Road** - This road no longer exists in Superior Township and may have been the name of the road that ran between Gale Road and Dixboro Road in section 19. The right-of-way was officially abandoned by the WCRC in 1939. The name comes from a portion of the road that still exists west of Dixboro road in Ann Arbor Township named for A. Goss who in 1934 owned 160 acres on the road and another 150 north of it in Ann Arbor Township. The abandoned route is now the location of the Matthaei golf course and Matthaei condominium development.

It is probable that the road had been out of use for many years but it wasn't until the Matthaei's bought the land from the estate of Mary Keedle Beckman through which the road passed, that the title needed to be clarified and the road right-of-way officially abandoned. The 1845 Douglas Houghton map of Washtenaw County shows a flour mill on Fleming Creek where Goss road crossed the creek. The road evidently existed to give access to the flour mill from both Ann Arbor and Superior Townships. The road was not on a section or property line and was probably little used and difficult to maintain, it descending into the Fleming Creek valley and through the Fleming Creek wet lands.

**Gotfredson Road** - An AD Road. Named for the Gotfredson Land Company which acquired 14 parcels of land totaling 10, 756 acres in sections 23, 24, 25, 26,34, & 35, the area of Gotfredson Road and Geddes Road between 1919 and 1926.<sup>11</sup> The land company operated Gotfredson farms.

In September 1927 the road commission met with Superior Township supervisor George Gill and Mr. Clark, manager of Gotfredson Farms, in regard to improving under provisions of the Covert Act the two miles of the unnamed road than ran north-south past the farm from Geddes Road to Cherry Hill road. The project was approved. The assessment district was to be one mile either side of the road and the computed tax for the land owners was \$6.00 per acre. There were eleven other individuals who owned land affected by the assessment district. Surveys were made in late 1927, construction contracts let in March 1928, and the road ready for final inspection in August 1928.

The road was identified as AD 22 but was also referred to as Gotfredson Road in the WCRC records. There is no evidence that it was officially named Gotfredson Road but the entire road, the remainder of which was improved in subsequent years, was from then on referred to as Gotfredson Road.

Benjamin Gotfredson was an industrialist who made trucks, beginning in 1920 in Canada and then in several locations in the United States. It is likely that he was acquainted with Henry Ford who was also buying land in this area. Gotfredson probably had in mind to someday subdivide and develop the land. The two miles of Gotfredson Road that he caused to be improved ended at the already improved roads of Geddes and Cherry Hill. Cherry Hill in Wayne County had by then been paved to the county line. Land speculation for development was the order of the day but the Depression put an end to that.

Gotfredson never lived on the land and the Gotfredson Land Company, which owned and ran Gotfredson Farms, was liquidated 1931. Two transactions taking place on

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<sup>11</sup> Superior Township Tax Rolls.

January 27, 1931 and May 21, 1931, sold virtually all of the Gotfredson land to Kirk Farms, whoever they were. One small parcel was sold to Allan S. McKenny on February 5, 1931. The 1932 Superior Township tax records indicates that as of that and subsequent years Henry Ford Farms owned most of the Gotfredson land. The land is currently (2006) called Ford Farms, in sections 24 and 25 of Superior Township.

**Harris Road** - An Edison Road. Harris road originally ran south from Cherry Hill road in Superior Township to Michigan Avenue in Ypsilanti Township. At the south end of the road D.V. Harris owned approximately 100 acres on the south side of Michigan Avenue as of 1915. The Harris family had owned portions of this land as of 1856. Approximately a mile of the road between Holmes road in Ypsilanti Township and MacArthur Boulevard in Superior Township was abandoned when Willow Village was built during World War II, the northern and southern portions of the road in the two townships remain as Harris road.

**Hickman Road** - An Edison Road. Hickman Road is a very early road, it also appearing on the 1840 Hubbard map. It parallels the southern portion of Gale road one quarter mile to the east and was probably created because the terrain over which that portion of Gale road transverses is very difficult.

The Hickman name appears in the 1895 plats, Nellie Hickman owning 27 acres along Hickman Road. As of 1915 John Hickman owned 86 acres in the same location and as of 1925 he owned total of 127 acres. John Hickman died November 4, 1926 and his widow, Maude Hickman, still retained 60 acres of the land as of 1936. The Hickman's probably allowed Edison an easement over their property.

**Joy Road** - The name of this road finds its origin in Wayne County. According to Silas Farmer in his History of Detroit and Wayne County and Early Michigan (1890) the road was named in 1866 after James F. Joy, "and old citizen" of Detroit. One wonders if this was an inside joke or if Farmer had some animosity towards Joy. Presuming that it is the same person, James F. Joy was a well known Detroit attorney, President of the Michigan Central Railroad, a State legislator, a University of Michigan regent, active in the Republican Party, and the father of Henry B. Joy who became president of the Packard Motor Company, among other things.<sup>12</sup>

In 1932 the name Joy Road, in quotes, was used in Webster Township in connection with a petition to the WCRC. The road is an extension into Washtenaw County of a Wayne County road that had presumably had already been named although a map of Canton Township attributed to 1930 shows the name of the road to be Boneparte Avenue.<sup>13</sup> It likely was Detroit Edison who was responsible for extending the name Joy from Detroit into western Wayne County and Washtenaw County.

**LeForge Road** - An Edison Road. Insley LeFurge owned 160 acres, the NE 1/4 of section 29, this being at the southwest corner of the intersection of Vreeland and LeForge roads, prior to 1895 until his death May 5, 1915. His son Clinton inherited the land and owned it until sometime in 1926, at which time he sold it and purchased 40 acres in

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<sup>12</sup> Fuller, A Centennial History, volume V, page 89

<sup>13</sup> Canton Township Historical Society



section 16 of Superior Township. Clinton changed the spelling of his name to LeForge sometime prior to 1925, reportedly as a result of a disagreement within the family. From 1925 to 1933 there existed the estate of Isaac LeFurge who owned the SE 1/4 of section 29 and 47 acres in section 27. There also was William H. LeFurge who owned 85 acres in section 34 during this time, the spelling of his name having become LeForge in the tax records of 1933 and subsequent. Edison was probably allowed an easement on the LeForge/LeFurge farms which resulted in the naming of LeForge Road.

**M-14** - The only limited access road in Superior Township and the one road known only by a number. It assumed the route number previously assigned to Plymouth/Ann Arbor Road. M-14 is currently the connector between the I-96 Jeffries Freeway from Detroit and the U.S. 23 and I-94 Freeways near Ann Arbor. Construction was completed in three phases between 1964 and 1979. The M-14 designation originally was applied in 1956 to the Ann Arbor Road west of Plymouth and Plymouth Road east of Plymouth. This occurred when the US-12 route designation of the route was transferred to what became the I-94 Freeway. The M-14 route designation had been applied to two other Michigan routes between 1920 and 1942, but was not used again until 1956.

**MacArthur Boulevard** - The road was created when Willow village was built by the government in World War II. Presumably it is named after General Douglas MacArthur of World War II fame but this has not been verified.

**Midway** - No longer exists in Superior Township although it still appears on some Superior Township maps. A short stretch of Midway still exists south of Clark road in Ypsilanti Township. This was one of the more significant roads in the Willow Village complex built during World War II. When the village was redeveloped during the 1950s this road was eliminated. Presumably it was named after the World War II Battle of Midway of June 1942, although another possibility is that because it ran midway through the Willow Village development it was so named. See Road Names of the Original Willow Run Village for a complete list of the roads, streets, and courts in Superior Township from the original World War II Willow Village.

**Mott Road** - An Edison Road. Named after Bert and Daisy Mott who about 1907 purchased and moved to a farm in the southwest corner of Canton Township near Denton Road and Michigan Avenue (Chicago Road). The unnamed rural road they lived on was used as a detour during the paving of Michigan Avenue and subsequently called Mott Road.<sup>14</sup>

**Napier Road** - This road was likely named by the Wayne County Road Commission. "We have placed 'Road Impassible' signs to keep traffic off the road (unnamed) just south of Plymouth Road on the county line, it being one the poorest roads in the county."<sup>15</sup> A reference to Napier Road by name first appears in the WCRC minutes of November 22, 1935. The source of the name is unknown.

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<sup>14</sup> Wilson, page 339

<sup>15</sup> WCRC minutes, July 21, 1933

**Plymouth Road** - Believed to have originally been an Indian trail and first road into Superior Township. The road was officially named Plymouth Road on March 4, 1918 by the Eastern Good Road District of Washtenaw County commissioners: "The road running northeasterly from Ann Arbor through Ann Arbor and Superior Townships, passing through the village of Dixboro and sometimes spoken of as the Dixboro Road, connecting with the county road in Wayne County at the east county line of Washtenaw County at the northeast corner of section 1 in Superior Township. This road to be known as the Plymouth Road."

The Indian trail originally started at an area known as Springwells near Zug Island where the Rouge river flows into the Detroit river and followed the middle branch of the Rouge river to the Plymouth area, then continued west to a ford of the Huron river where Ann Arbor is located. A portion of this route is currently known as Ann Arbor Trail, but I have found no record as to when it was so named. In 1828 it was referred to as the 'road to Ann Arbor' in the Buckland Township minutes, a more logical name.

The road bearing the name Ann Arbor Trail still exists between just east of Grand Boulevard in Dearborn and two miles west of Plymouth where it intersects and terminates at a bypass built south of the City of Plymouth in the 1930's. West of this intersection the road is now called Ann Arbor/Plymouth Road and follows the Ann Arbor Trail route. East of the intersection the Ann Arbor Road does not follow the Ann Arbor Trail route. This road is called Ann Arbor Road to the point where it connects with Plymouth road in Livonia three miles east of Plymouth. The distinction between Ann Arbor Trail and Ann Arbor road is confusing to newcomers.

Between Plymouth and Ann Arbor the road is now called Plymouth Road and/or Ann Arbor Road, and Plymouth-Ann Arbor Road or Ann Arbor-Plymouth Road depending on which end of the road you are at. The divide is generally considered to be at the intersection with Curtis Road where the rural mail routes meet. West of Curtis Road is an Ann Arbor mailing to a Plymouth Road address; east of Curtis Road is a Plymouth mailing to an Ann Arbor Road address.

**Prospect Road** - An Edison Road. Most definitely named as an extension of Prospect Street in Ypsilanti. But where did Prospect Street come from? Prospect Street was earlier known as Cemetery Street, the street passing on the west side of a cemetery that we have come to refer to as Prospect Cemetery. However, neither Chapman writing in 1881 nor Colburn in 1923 refer to this cemetery by name. It is believed to have been known only as City Cemetery. By the late 1800's the cemetery was no longer in use or cared for. A civic group promoted the idea of turning the cemetery into a park. Many bodies there had been reinterred in the Highland Cemetery shortly after it was opened in 1863/64. About 1889 those remaining bodies that could be located were moved to Highland cemetery and a park created. It was called Prospect Park, the nearby Cemetery Street having been changed to Prospect Street by the Ypsilanti City Council in December 1874.<sup>16</sup> There is no indication why Prospect Street was so named. Quite possibly it was because the location offered a good *prospect* of the city of Ypsilanti.

Prospect Road was officially named Superior Center Road on March 4, 1918 by the Eastern Washtenaw Good Roads District commissioners, the State asking that Good

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<sup>16</sup> Ypsilanti Historical Museum archives, a 1947 manuscript of Elizabeth Teaboldt, and interview with Gerry Pety, archivist.

Road Districts name the roads they were improving.<sup>17</sup> Superior Center Road quickly evolved into Superior Road. The problem with the name Superior Road was that there was already a Superior Road in the township. It was a short road south from Geddes Road into Ypsilanti, named in 1877 and still called Superior Road. This confusion was resolved by Detroit Edison changing the name of Superior Center Road to Prospect Road.

According to early maps Prospect Road in Superior Township was not opened completely until sometime between 1874 and 1895, there being a large swamp on the route at the present day location of Vreeland Road. WCRC minutes indicate that historically it was a difficult road to maintain. Don Staebler says that in the 1920's Prospect road was often impassable in the spring during the thaw because of the mud. Particularly bad areas were just north of Ford road, on the high ground just south of Ford road, and the hill south of Vreeland road. One had to contend with swampy ground in the low areas and standing water on the clay on the high ground.

**Ridge Road** - An AD Road. The logical explanation, which is probably true, is that it is named such because a portion of it in Canton and Superior Townships follows a beach ridge formed by Lake Whittlesey towards the end of the last ice age resulting in raised ground that was generally passable. It was one of the main links between Plymouth and Ypsilanti. The settlement of Cherry Hill through which Ridge Road passes was named "The Ridge" prior to about 1860 because it also was located on the same ice age beach. It is possible that the road was named for the settlement rather than the fact that it ran along a low ridge. The road is considered by some to have been an Indian trail along that portion in Canton and Superior Townships.<sup>18</sup> The name Ridge Road is used in the WCRC minutes as early as 1922 but there is no record of it having been officially so named.

**Stamford Road** - One of the original roads of the old Willow Run Village built in World War II. There is no explanation for the name. Perhaps a military figure or an individual associated with the building of Willow village.

**Stommel Road** - An Edison Road. Stommel road is one mile long connecting Cherry Hill road and Vreeland road. It is offset one quarter mile east of the section line between sections 20 and 21 to avoid a swampy area which is the headwaters of Snidecar Drain. Had it remained on the section line it would have been a continuation of LeForge Road.

Peter C. & Mary A. Stommel owned the E 1/2 of the SW 1/4 in section 21, having purchased it from Clarence and Alice Crippen on May 1, 1920, "Possession to be given May 3<sup>rd</sup> or the 1<sup>st</sup> pleasant day thereafter". In the rural land survey of 1938 Peter Stommel is indicated as having his residence on the northeast corner of the intersection of Vreeland and Stommel roads. There were no other residences on Stommel road.

**Superior Road** - The name of Superior Street appears on the 1877 map created for platting of the settlement of Superior so the road may have been so named prior to that time. The presumption is that the settlement was named after the Township of Superior or possibly for a flag stop called Superior on the Michigan Central Railway, the railway

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<sup>17</sup> The name first appears in Good Roads minutes on March 19, 1917.

<sup>18</sup> Canton Historical Society

having used that name because it was the only stop in Superior Township. So the question is whether the road was named after the settlement and/or flag stop, or the settlement/flag stop named after the road. The settlement appears to have been in existence for some time prior to 1877 as the location was once known as Lowell. An 1874 map shows a paper mill on the Huron River at what would have been the end of First street in the settlement of Superior.

Superior Road originally did not cross the Huron River. Instead it turned east north of the river and connected with what is now Clark Road. The three roads, Clark, Superior, and Geddes, as a unit constituted an early trail from Ypsilanti along the north side of the Huron River to the Ann Arbor area. The Geddes portion later became The Territorial Road from Sheldon's Inn in Canton, through Ann Arbor, to the west side of Michigan. It also connected with Gale and Dixboro roads for travelers going north, thus avoiding a ford of the Huron River if one was starting from the east side of the Huron River at Ypsilanti. Except for the western portion of Geddes road all of the roads presently follow section or property lines so are not the location of Indian trails, although an Indian trail probably did exist at one time along this route.

Sometime between 1874 and 1895 a bridge was placed across the Huron River and Superior Road was then directed across the Michigan Central Railroad tracks on to the bridge. The connection with Clark Road remained and was not eliminated until later, perhaps when the gravel pit in that location forced a disconnect between the two sections of road.

**Superior Center Road** - See Prospect Road

**Territorial Road** - There are no roads in Superior Township currently called Territorial Road. The only road now carrying that title in this area is North Territorial Road in the northern part of the county. Territorial Road was a generic name for many roads because these roads were authorized by the Territorial Legislature in the lower peninsula of Michigan between 1828 and 1835. The two Territorial Roads in Superior Township were Plymouth - Ann Arbor Road and Geddes Road.

**Vorhies Road** - An Edison Road. There were a number of individuals by this name owning property in Superior Township at various times and the name has many spelling variations. The official spelling of the name is Vorhies Road although some local maps have shown it as Voorhies Road. There is no record in the Superior Township tax records or the Office of the Washtenaw County Register of Deeds of any individual of this or a similar name owning land along or nearby to what is now Vorhies Road in either Superior or Salem townships. A Voorheis Road is located in the southeast corner of Waterford Township in Oakland County but the similarity in names is likely a coincidence. There was a Frederick Voorhees, at times spelled Voorhies, who owned 115 acres of land several miles south of Vorhies Road in section 32 of Superior Township during the 1920's and 1930's, but he appears not to have a connection with Vorhies Road. On the other hand he may have been a personal friend of Meanwell, who was responsible for Detroit Edison naming some roads in the township. At this time why the road was named Vorhies Road has no obvious explanation.

**Vreeland Road** - An Edison Road. Vreeland road crosses the township from Gotfredson road to Gale road on the section lines, except in section 22 where it runs one eighth of a mile north of the section line to avoid swampland. Dr. Clyde Emerson Vreeland between 1925 and 1937 purchased over 400 acres in sections 20, 29, and 30 in Superior Township, much of it fronting on Vreeland Road. Eventually he owned 1028 acres in the township. Vreeland had a medical practice in Detroit and was primarily known as a diagnostician. He had been raised on a farm and enjoyed the farm life, moving to Superior Township in 1937, where he raised his family and did some farming in addition to his medical practice. He died in December 1966, residing on the farm until shortly before his death. Some of his land is still farmed by one of his sons.<sup>19</sup>

Vreeland Road, particularly at the east end, was probably known at one time by other names, most likely Kimmel Road. The Kimmel family, who were original land purchasers, at one time had extensive holdings at the east end of the road.

**Warren Road** - Silas Farmer states that Warren Avenue in Detroit was named in 1869 after General Joseph Warren, "of revolutionary fame".<sup>20</sup> A map of Canton Township attributed to 1930 shows the name of this road to be Perrinsville Road.<sup>21</sup> When that name was changed to Warren Road and then applied to the road in Washtenaw county is not known. The road is an extension of Warren Road in Detroit and Detroit Edison may have been responsible for applying the Warren Road name to the entire length of the road. There is no record in Washtenaw County of it having been officially named Warren Road.

The west end of the eastern portion of Warren road ends at Berry road. Early maps show it extending west past Berry road to Ann Arbor Road but this is unlikely due to the swampy conditions of that area.

The west portion of Warren Road, on a leg turned to the south at its east end, originally connected with the Ann Arbor Trail just west of the Fleming Creek bridge near the M-153/Ann Arbor Road intersection. Subsequently the west part of Warren Road was continued eastward for a mile and then turned south, crossing Fleming Creek, to connect with Plymouth Road. This area became an area of the settlement known as Frains Lake in the 1920's and 1930's.

**Wiard Road** - An Edison Road. Wiard road originally ran north from what is now Tyler Road to Holmes road in northern Ypsilanti Township. Had it been extended it would have connected with Gotfredson Road in Superior Township. As early as 1856 the Wiard family had extensive land holdings along the road in Ypsilanti Township and is undoubtedly the source of the name. Much of the land they owned was sold to Henry Ford in the 1930's. A considerable portion of the road in Ypsilanti Township disappeared with the construction of Willow Run airport and the associated roads and manufacturing facilities. A small portion of the road at its northern end was relocated and extended into Superior Township as a main thoroughfare for the government built Willow Run Village and is still in existence, as is some of the southern portion in Ypsilanti Township.

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<sup>19</sup> Information from Pamela Vreeland, daughter-in-law

<sup>20</sup> Farmer, page 947. Farmer does not further identify which roads in Detroit he called Joy and Warren. One presumes that those roads extended are the same roads in Washtenaw County.

<sup>21</sup> Perrinsville was a settlement in section 2 of Nankin Township through which this road passed.