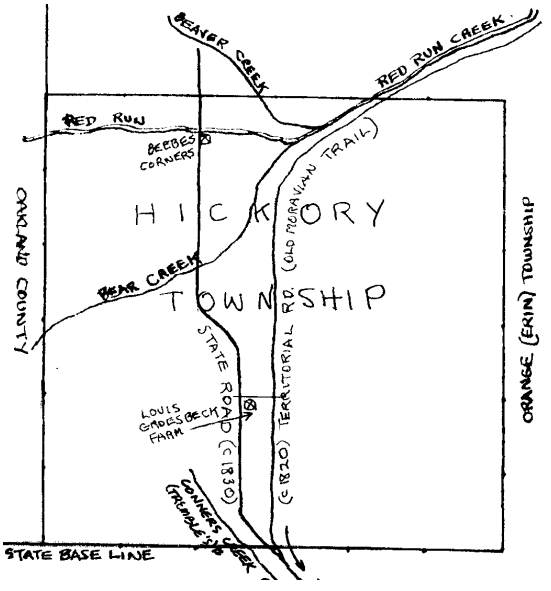
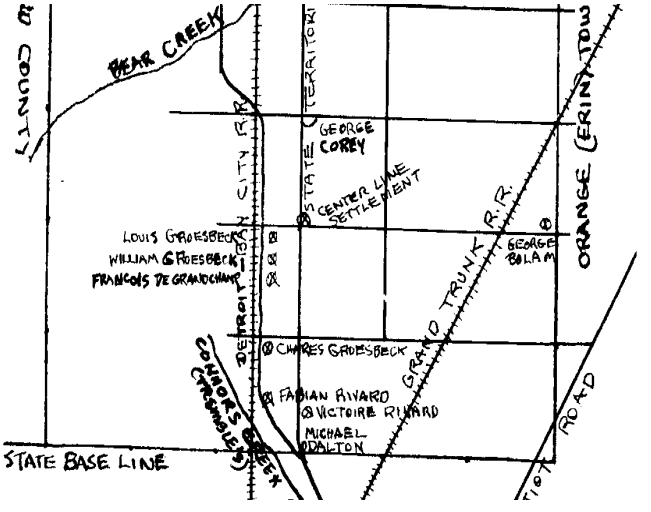
INTRODUCTION

To celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Center Line, the information on the following pages is a photo history of the city compiled from a number of sources such as the Detroit and Macomb County histories, family recollections and photos, newspapers and periodicals, yearbooks, and is the culmination of many more sources. It is organized by Settlers & Early Families and 20th Century Community. The most reliable sources have been used; we hope you enjoy this look back on your local heritage. Happy Anniversary!

SETTLERS & EARLY FAMILIES



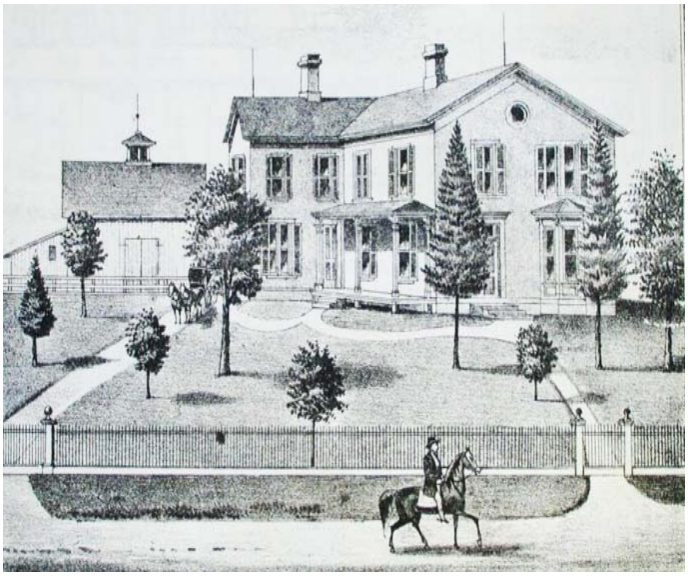
These maps show early growth in the years immediately following the addition of Michigan to the Union (1837) as the 26th state. Gerald Neil, Warren civic leader and historian, decided to publish a small collection of maps to accompany written accounts of early development of the Township. At this time, it had the name Hickory, a year later Aba, and then Warren in 1939 . At left, an 1837 view of the very earliest settlers to the area such as Louis and William Groesbeck. The horizontal line is Ten Mile Road today and State Road became Sherwood and Mound Road farther north.



At right, an 1839 view of Center Line only, as Kunrod's Corners – later Center Line – began to take shape. Louis Groesbeck married a woman from the Beaufait family in Detroit and they moved to this area. Father-in-law Louis Beaufait also purchased land and assisted in the arduous task of clearing the dense land and presiding at the first Township meetings. Brother William followed, as did the families of George Corey, Francois DesGrandchamp, Fabian and Victoire Rivard, George Bolam, and Michael Dalton.

The name of Center Line is taken directly from area Native American tribes. There were three trails leading north from Detroit that were named by the French: the western trail, known as The Saginaw Trail, followed what is now Woodward Avenue to the trail's name and Mackinaw; the eastern, or River Trail, followed today's Jefferson Avenue to Port Huron; the Centre Line, (note the French spelling), was between these two trails and led from Detroit to Utica. The name continued and was quickly used in reference to the settlement in the general area of 10 Mile and Territorial (or Moravian) Roads. The Moravian missionaries settled to the northeast and used the river and the Territorial Road to access Detroit.

Proceeding with the difficult task of clearing the swampy land, heavily wooded with ash, elm, birch, and maple trees.

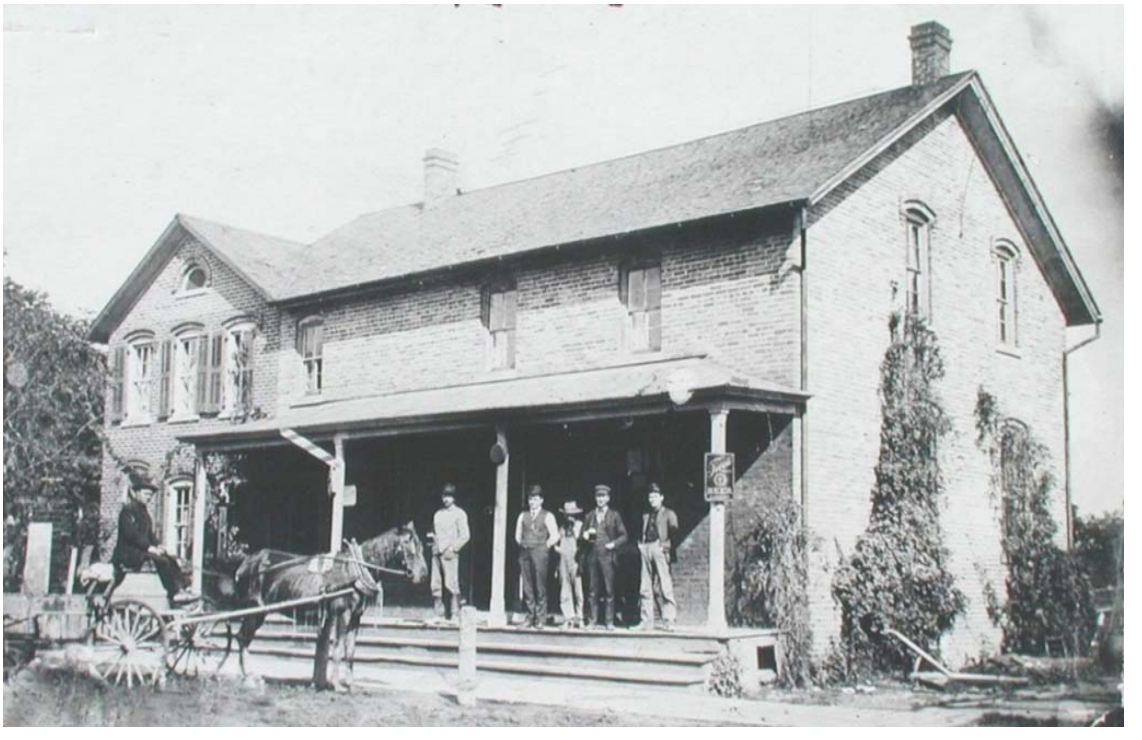


Above left: This etching of William C. Groesbeck's homestead was included in the appendix to an 1875 atlas map of the Township. Other early families to the area were Bolam, DesGrandchamp, Corey, Miller, Buechel, Busch, Rinke, Weingartz, and Grobbel.

Above right: Alexander Joseph Groesbeck (1873-1953) served as the 30th Governor of Michigan from 1921-1926. A Republican, he was known as the "road builder" and promoted the use of concrete to "take Michigan out of the mud", sanctioned prison reform, and restructured and consolidated state government. Father Louis Jr. was Township Clerk and Justice of the Peace before becoming Macomb County Sheriff. Grandfather Louis Groesbeck Sr. and uncle William C. were champions for development in this area.

The Postmasters of Michigan list shows that the area had many spellings over the years: Centre Line until 1885, then Center Line until 1893, Centerline until 1906 when the post was discontinued, then in 1923 once again - and finally - Center Line.

Painting by an unknown artist. The first edifice of St. Clement Church, 1854, was built in response to the growing need for a Catholic Church. The first muddy tracks were later covered with wood planks, both were rendered virtually impassable especially in the rain. People came from around the Township and beyond to worship here. This is the same site as the current church. It is hard to imagine that this is a view looking north on what is now Van Dyke Avenue!



This is the Mathias and Elizabeth Miller homestead around 1900, on Van Dyke Avenue near present-day Harding Street. Among those in the picture are Robert Miller, Henry DesGranchamp, Frank Miller, Jim Ines, Mott, and Dick Giff. The Millers operated a saloon, as evidenced by the sign on the porch support for Tivoli, later Altes, Beer in Detroit. The striped arm attached to another porch support is believed by most preservationists to be the precursor to the barber's pole.

Peter DesGrandchamp and Rosalie Duflot had a neighboring farm to that of William and Louis Groesbeck. All three were located on the southeast quadrant of what was State Road and now Ten Mile.

Here, the family enjoys Christmas Day 1909 at the home of Peter's son Batholomew and wife Barbara Warner, about a mile west of Peter's farm. Talented family members made up the band. According to the documentation on the back, they are:
Back row (L-R): Bill Krietmeyer, Louis DesGrandchamp, Fred Qualmann
2nd row: Mary DesGrandchamp Shaw, Barbara Warner DesGrandchamp, Mary Shaw DesGrandchamp, Caroline DesGrandchamp Krietmeyer holding Joe, Anne Elwardt DesGrandchamp, Emma Kliest DesGrandchamp holding Lawrence DesGrandchamp, Emma DesGrandchamp Rumph, Frieda Kliest Qualman
The Band: Alfred DesGrandchamp, John DesGrandchamp, Joe DesGrandchamp, Walter DesGrandchamp, William DesGrandchamp
Bottom row: Bartholomew and Edna DesGrandchamp (seated), the children are unidentified.
Seated in front at Keg: Ed DesGrandchamp

The second edifice of St. Clement was built in the later 1800s and was visible for miles around. It was demolished in 1960 when the church and school expanded.

Circa 1900. This is John F. Buechel's store (German pronunciation Beekle), acquired in the late 1800s with brother Matt on the developing area of Territorial Road (now Van Dyke) . They were busiest on Sundays as people came from miles around for church at neighboring St. Clement Church (second edifice shown at left). John Buechel is in the foreground at right with the oldest of his children Cecilia at right, and two that may be Anthony and Gertrude. Gus Miller stands behind him, and Ben Grobbel next to him. (Identification courtesy of Anna L. Kluck *for Echoes of Macomb*)

Inside the General Store on Van Dyke. Son Raymond is at left, John F. at right, and wife Dora standing next to him.

The store was later purchased and run by Aurelius Rivard; he rented the upstairs until it was purchased by the church. That block of stores was demolished in 1959 and with it, one of Center Line's oldest establishments.

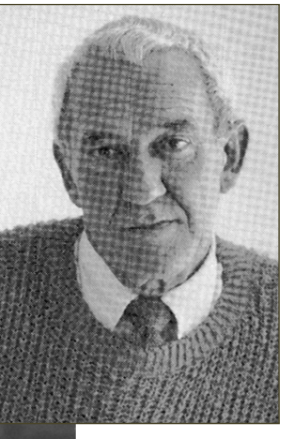
The John F. Buechel Family, c. 1910.

John and Dora (Metter) raised 10 children: Cecilia (Mrs. Norbert Rinke); Angela and Jeanette, Anthony, Raymond, Gertrude (Mrs. Gertrude Hartsig), Sylvester, Irene (Mrs. Raymond Fortin, Eleanor (Mrs. James Tranchida, and Jon.

Left to right: Wife Dora holding Sylvester; Raymond; John F.; Anthony and Gertrude. Standing, friend Mrs. Rose De Long, and daughter Cecilia.

In 1863, Joseph and wife Sophia Buechel first bought property and built a store and tavern with living quarters on the northeast corner of Ten Mile Road and State Road (now Sherwood), presumably the site of the Kunrod establishment. The first post office was at Joseph and Sophia's place with Hieronymus Engelman serving as the first postmaster in 1878, succeed by Sophia from 1885 – 1897.

John F. was the fourth of 12 children born to Joseph and Sophia. They are: Matthias, Mary, Christianna , John F., Elizabeth (Clara), Helena, Rose, Joseph Jr., George, Anna, Christina, Euphrone.



Jon Buechel was an award-winning artist and fashion illustrator for the Detroit Free Press for nearly 40 years beginning around 1949. Born and raised in Center Line, he was the youngest of the ten children born to Dora and John F. Buechel. He and wife Shirley had three daughters: Claudia (Mrs. Tom Clyne), Melissa, and Bridgit (Mrs. Gary Downing), and at the time of this writing, a grandson Paul Thomas and granddaughter Alexandria.

Jon with members of the Friends of Center Line Library in 1994, at the book signing for a cookbook put out by them.

At left, the Franz Anton Grobbel farmhouse on 11 Mile Road, circa 1885-1887. Left to right are his son Ben, wife Elizabeth, Franz Anton, (unknown), and son Anthony.

According to a Rinke family history, the farm in Section 17 remained in Grobbel family ownership for 100 years until 1963, when Raymond (Jim) Grobbel, grandson of John Grobbel, sold it and moved to another farm near Richmond in Macomb County. The farmland was then subdivided into lots for single family dwellings; however, the farmhouse remained standing well into the 1980's. The only remaining evidence of the early properties is a street named "Grobbel Drive" in the subdivision that was carved out of the old farm.

The Wiegand Family is pictured here in the late 1800s in the Village area. Note the sign at left with the family name on it.

Joseph Leander Rivard and Frances Baumgartner were married on May 14, 1899 in Detroit.
They had nine children:
Front Row (L-R): Joseph Jr., Joseph Sr., Aurelius, Frances, Ruth
Back Row (L-R): Cecil, Loyola "Sonny", Anthony, Leander, Raymond, Frances

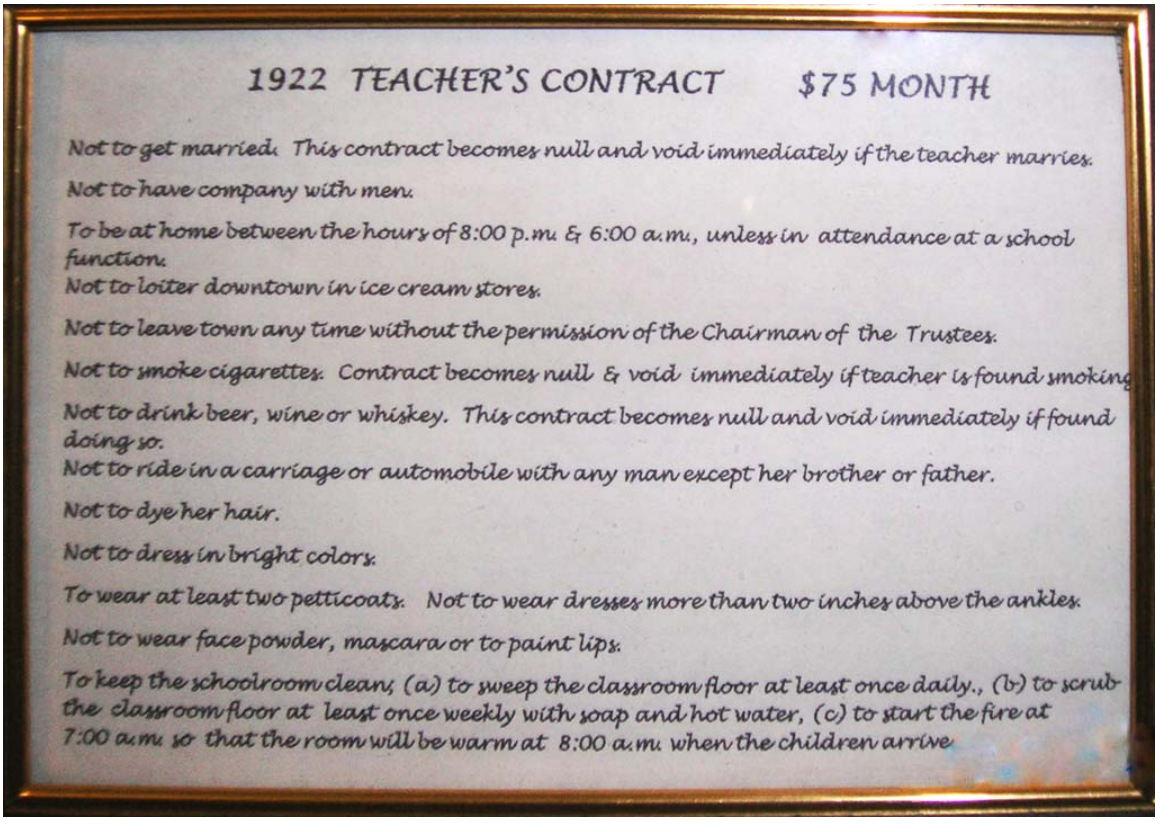
Joseph Jr. owned Rivard Appliances, Aurelius bought Buechel's Store renaming it Rivard Grocery, and Anthony owned Rivard Bros. Ford Sales

Evelyn Marshall and Loyola "Sonny" Rivard, married 1945.

Ruth married Anthony Joseph Buechel
Raymond married into the Robbinette family, and lived on Chicago Rd. & Van Dyke,
Frances married into the Trombly family

School District No. 2 pictured here around 1900, was the first school building in the Center Line area of Warren Township. This picture of Plunkett School, complete with privies to the left, was located at the northeast corner of State (now Sherwood) and Ten Mile Roads. The school was so named as Mortimer Plunkett taught alone in this schoolhouse for many years.

This picture of Busch School was taken in the 1930s was built on the property of Plunkett School (previous page) and began as a middle school and high school with grades 7 through 12. Its architectural style is English Tudor which was popular for the design of educational structures, evoking serious education in the old-world Ivy League tradition. This projected a sense of stability and strength of the country's education system. In the late 1920s, Busch School was built here and added on to in 1957. The school was later demolished.



1922 TEACHER'S CONTRACT $75 MONTH

Not to get married. This contract becomes null and void immediately if the teacher marries.

Not to have company with men.

To be at home between the hours of 8:00 p.m. & 6:00 a.m., unless in attendance at a school function.

Not to loiter downtown in ice cream stores.

Not to leave town any time without the permission of the Chairman of the Trustees.

Not to smoke cigarettes. Contract becomes null & void immediately if teacher is found smoking

Not to drink beer, wine or whiskey. This contract becomes null and void immediately if found doing so.

Not to ride in a carriage or automobile with any man except her brother or father.

Not to dye her hair.

Not to dress in bright colors.

To wear at least two petticoats. Not to wear dresses more than two inches above the ankles.

Not to wear face powder, mascara or to paint lips.

To keep the schoolroom clean; (a) to sweep the classroom floor at least once daily., (b) to scrub the classroom floor at least once weekly with soap and hot water, (c) to start the fire at 7:00 a.m. so that the room will be warm at 8:00 a.m. when the children arrive

These are actual stipulations seen on various teacher contracts around 1922!