

HISTORY OF DAVISON

Davison was named for one of Michigan's great pioneers, Norman Davison. He and his four sons built a sawmill in Atlas Township on Kearsley Creek in June of 1831.

He was one of the delegates to attend a convention on May 11, 1835 in Detroit where they framed the first constitution of Michigan. He was also a delegate at a convention in Ann Arbor, called for the purpose of acting on the terms of a proposal to the people of Michigan. This proposal would surrender a portion of land to Ohio and Indiana in exchange for the Upper Peninsula, as set forth in an act of Congress.

He was elected as one of the judges in Lapeer County and held various other offices. He was the first supervisor of the township of Grand Blanc when a section of Atlas Township was a part of it. He died in March, 1841.

Davison Township was proposed to be Middlebury, but because there was already a Township in Shiawassee County with that name, the name was changed to Davison. In 1870, since Davison was often confused with Davisonville, the name was again changed, this time to Atlas.

Settlements in the area began in 1836. The first land purchase was recorded by James Hoise of Essex County, New York, in 1835.

In 1836, Andrew, Alson and Debby Seelye purchased 240 acres of land in Davison Township thus becoming the area's first settlers. They came from Charleston, New York in Saratoga County. Their father and mother followed a year later. After a year or two, Andrew and Alson decided to build a general store and an ashery on Ridge Road, which connected Atlas to Lapeer. From that time, about 1838, to perhaps 1865, the store and ashery were known as Seelyeville.

Christopher Miller and sons, John and Hermish settled in 1837. In 1839 he built the first frame house in the township. This 81 x 34 foot log cabin became the first school house. It was located on the Southwest corner of what is now M-21 and M-15 (Flint and State Streets). Miss Sabrina Barnes was the first teacher.

An Indian Camp was on the East Bank of Potter Lake when Ira Potter, his wife Clarissa, and their children settled there in 1838. Records show that Ira Thomas Potter was the first white male child born in the township.

Goodeough Townsend, born in Wheelock, Vermont, purchased land in the township in 1836 and settled here in 1839. The first election for township officers was held at Mr. Townsend's home on April 6, 1840. He was named as the first supervisor. He was also active in the move to annex the border townships from Lapeer County to Genesee County in 1843. In 1842 he established the first Sabbath School. During the Taylor and Gillmore Administration, 1849 to 1853, he was named the first postmaster. Mail arrived once each week by ox team, it was dropped from a train at Grand Blanc and carried by stage to Atlas.

Seth Wicker, married to Debby Seelye in 1848, took up residence here in 1852. He built the first hotel on the present site of M-15 and Lapeer Road. They sold the first goods in the area and established an ashery. He succeeded Mr. Townsend as postmaster when Pierce became President.

When the Flint to Lapeer stage line was introduced, the community at the hotel corner, called Davison Center but known as Wickers Corners, was made a Way Station to change horses, and mail was delivered there twice a day. A blaze trail from the school led through the forest to Wickers Corners, where the general store and post office were located.

School was held in two sessions: older boys and girls attended a four-month winter term with a male teacher, and the smaller youngsters were taught in classes during the summer term.

Once the railroad was put through in 1871, a larger school was needed. In 1886 a two story brick building was constructed on the corner of Main and Flint Streets. The school burned in 1930 and the original part of what is now Central Elementary School was constructed.

The first graduating class was in 1895 when Edith Hill, Bert Hurd and Will Clapsaddle completed the ninth grade. In 1906 the course was expanded to include eleven grades, the twelfth grade was added the next year. A new senior high school was completed and ready for use in September 1972. Presently, there are five elementary schools, a junior high school and the senior high school in the city.

This area began to grow in the early eighteen seventies and was called Davison Station, it was one mile North of Davison Center. A village was laid out in 1872 by E.W. Rising who served as the first village president after its' incorporation in 1889. The first Physician was Dr. L.W.Hanson, in 1872. Damon Stewart was the first postmaster and merchant.

The Baptist Church was organized in 1858, erecting the first part of the present building in 1902. The Free Methodist Church was established in 1881. Their meetings were held in Rising Hall until 1886 when they bought the original frame school building. St. John's Catholic Church began their first church in 1870 at the corner of Oak and Richfield Roads where they held meetings until 1894. The Methodist church was built here in 1873. It was used until 1970 when the present building was completed. Trinity Lutheran Church was organized here in 1940. St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, St. Andrew Presbyterian Church and the United Missionary Church were organized in 1953.

Cartwright Elevator was built in 1873 and employed 11 men. Rising Elevator was built later and employed 12 men. On April 30, 1894, a fire broke out in the Dugan building and destroyed Main Street. The only building left standing in the block was the A.E. Hurd store, now Reid's Drugs. Flint fire fighting equipment was rushed here by train on flat cars, but they were too late. The first Davison Volunteer Fire Department was organized the following year, 1895, with a hand pumper and one two-wheel hose cart.

Horse racing began here in 1904 and Main Street was cleared for racing. County Fairs were held for several years in the the area now known as the Rosemore Park subdivision, until fire destroyed the stables and the project was dropped. The Richfield Township Band under the direction of Frank Perry, provided the music for the Grand Stand Events and for similar events in other small towns in the area.

Davison State Bank was organized in 1894 after the big fire downtown. John F. Cartwright was the first cashier and A.B. Cullen was president. In 1934 after the Bank Holiday, the bank was reorganized as a member of the Federal Insurance Corporation and the Michigan Bankers Association. In 1963 the Genesee Merchants Bank & Trust became the institution for the present banking facilities.

Early industries here were; washing machine factory, brick yard, bath tubs (with heaters), buggy works, cheese factory and a saw mill. Lewis Gifford pioneered the telephone service here. The Community Telephone service grew from a single phone in 1883 to a direct dialing system in 1957. The Union Telephone Company became the present General Telephone Company we have today.

Rising Hall, destroyed in the 1894 fire, was replaced by Davison Hall. This three story, brick building was built in 1895. The total cost of the project was \$7,555. Davison Township paid \$1,500, Davison Masonic Lodge paid \$2,150 and the Village of Davison paid the remaining \$3,905.

The Davison Hall was destroyed by fire January 31, 1957. Township offices had already been moved to the new Township building, built in 1956. The fire department, which was formerly housed in the basement of City hall also moved into the new Township building that same year.

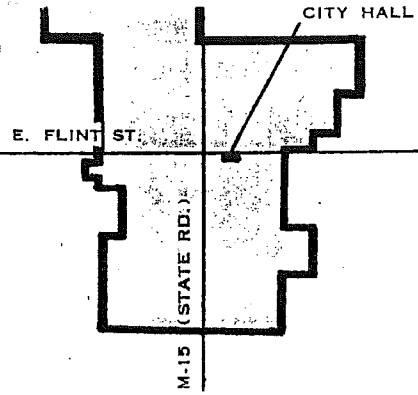
The Chamber of Commerce was organized in 1951 with 146 charter members. One of their early projects were the "WELCOME TO DAVISON FOR A VISIT OR A LIFETIME" signs erected at the four entrances to the city.

Modernization of the Main Street store fronts and construction of the store to curb canopy started in 1956, and was finished in 1958. The Diamond Jubilee of the city of Davison was celebrated in 1964. Today, thanks to the combined efforts of the service clubs of Davison there is a park and tennis courts in the city.

A Davison Area Library, at the corner of Main and Fourth Streets, was completed in 1967. A new City Hall, at Main and Flint Streets, was completed in 1969, and also houses the Davison City Police Department.

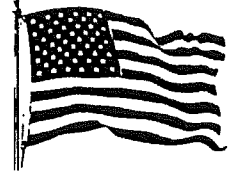
In 1989, the Davison Historical Society was established. Please contact them for additional historical information on Davison.

Davison Historical Society
263 E. Fourth Street
P.O. Box 104
Davison, MI 48423
(313) 658-2286



CITY OF DAVISON

200 EAST FLINT STREET
DAVISON, MICHIGAN 48423
TELEPHONE (313) 653-2191-2



CITY OF FLAGS

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, in 1961, the Jaycees of Davison decided to sell flags to merchants for a money making project, and

WHEREAS, in 1964, Donald Smith and Donald Parks, contemplating making a small film of the City, thought that a good slogan would be "DAVISON - CITY OF FLAGS", and

WHEREAS, in 1968, the Jaycees had a door to door Flag Campaign to the residents of the City of Davison, and sold approximately 500 flags, and

WHEREAS, in 1969, the slogan "DAVISON - CITY OF FLAGS" appeared on the stationery of the City, and

WHEREAS, in 1973, signs went up on the City Limits indicating "DAVISON - CITY OF FLAGS", and

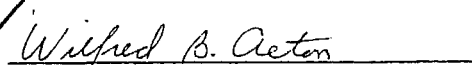
WHEREAS, in 1975, it was determined that there was never any official proclamation written to adopt the slogan;

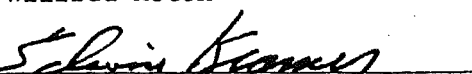
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, David B. Purdie, Mayor of the City of Davison, with concurrence of the City Council, do hereby adopt the motto "DAVISON - CITY OF FLAGS";

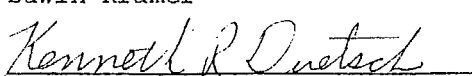
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that by this action the Davison City Council would encourage the Jaycees and the members of the Community to renew their interest in promoting Davison as a good community to live in, and one that honors the Flag of its Nation.


ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Davison this 14th day of April, 1975.


Lyle Dorr


Wilfred Acton


Edwin Kramer


Kenneth Duetsch


David B. Purdie, Mayor